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Interaction: The Infrastructure for Social Institutions, the Natural Ecological Niche for Language, and the Arena in which Culture is Enacted

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The central theme of my contribution to this volume is that interaction is the primary, fundamental embodiment of sociality—what I have called elsewhere (1996d) "the primordial site of sociality." From this point of view, the "roots of human sociality" refers to those features of the organization of human interaction that provide the flexibility and robustness that allows it to supply the infrastructure that supports the overall or macrostructure of societies in the same sense that roads and railways serve as infrastructure for the economy, and that grounds all of the traditionally recognized institutions of societies and the lives of their members.

If one reflects on the concrete activities that make up these abstractly named institutions—the economy, the polity, and the institutions for the reproduction of the society (courtship, marriage, family, socialization, and education), the law, religion, and so forth, it turns out that interaction—and *talk* in interaction—figure centrally in them. When the most powerful macrostructures of society fail and crumble (as, e.g., after the demise of the communist regimes in Eastern Europe), the social structure that is left is interaction, in a largely unaffected state. People talk in turns, which compose orderly sequences through which

courses of action are developed; they deal with transient problems of speaking, hearing or understanding the talk and reset the interaction on its course; they organize themselves so as to allow stories to be told; they fill out occasions of interaction from approaches and greetings through to closure, and part in an orderly way. I mention this here to bring to the forefront of attention what rests on the back of interaction: the organization of interaction needs to be—and is—robust enough, flexible enough, and sufficiently self-maintaining to sustain social order at family dinners and in coal mining pits, around the surgical operating table and on skid row, in New York City and Montenegro and Rossel Island, and so forth, in every nook and cranny where human life is to be found.

Accordingly, my plan is to sketch the contours of half a dozen generic organizations of practice central to the conduct of interaction, and, more specifically, that form of interaction that is distinctive to humans—talk in interaction.[1] By referring to them as *generic*, I mean to convey that where stable talk in interaction is sustained, solutions to key organizational problems are in operation, and these organizations of practice are the basis for these solutions. After sketching some of these basic organizations of practice, I turn to some of the queries our editors have put before us; in my case, each of them would require a book and will need to be treated in a few paragraphs.

Generic Problems and Practice(d) Solutions

Although it is almost certainly the case that many important organizational problems of talk in interaction and their solutions are as yet unknown, let alone understood, it appears that the following ones will have a continuing claim on researchers' attention.[2]

The "Turn-taking" Problem: Who should Talk or Move or Act Next and when should they do so? How does this Affect the Construction and Understanding of the Turns or Acts Themselves?

So far it seems to be the case that wherever investigators have looked carefully, talk in interaction is organized to be done one speaker at a time.[3] Achieving and maintaining such a state of talk may prompt the invocation of conventionalized arrangements like a chair to allocate the turns, or mapping the order of turn allocation onto ordered features of the candidate participants such as relative status (Albert 1964). But the first of these marks the setting as institutionally or ceremonially distinct

from "ordinary talk," and the latter engenders a range of problems that make it unsustainable as a general organization of interaction. What is at stake in "turn taking" is not politeness or civility, but the very possibility of coordinated courses of action between the participants (e.g., allowing for initiative and response)—very high stakes indeed.

Even with just two participants, achieving one at a time poses a problem of coordination if the talk is to be without recurrent substantial silences and overlaps: how to coordinate the ending of one speaker and the starting up by another. If there are more than two "ratified participants" (Goffman 1963), there is the additional issue of having *at least one* of the current nonspeakers, and *not more than one* of the current nonspeakers, start up on completion of the current speaker's turn. One can imagine a variety of putative solutions to these problems of coordination, but none of them can be reconciled with the data of actual, naturally occurring ordinary conversation (Schegloff n.d.a)

The simplest systematics for turn taking article by Sacks et al. (1974) sketches an organization of practices that works well, and has led to nonintuitive enhancements (Schegloff 2000b, 2002). It describes units and practices for constructing turns at talk, practices for allocating turns at talk, and a set of practices that integrates the two. So far this account works across quite a wide range of settings, languages, and cultures. Departures from interactional formats familiar to Western industrialized nations involve what might be called "differences in the values of variables"—for example, different lengths of time that count as a silence, rather than differences in the underlying organization of practices.

To give a brief example, there may be differences between cultures or subcultures in what the unmarked value of a silence between the end of one turn and the start of a next should be. Leaving less than the normative "beat" of silence or more than that can engender inferences among parties to the conversation; starting a next turn "early" or starting a next turn "late" are ways of doing things in interaction, and conversation between people from different cultural settings can result in misfiring with one another. For example, one difference often remarked on by urban, metropolitan people about rural or indigenous people is that they seem to be dimwitted and somewhat hostile; comments range from Marx on the "idiocy of the rural classes" to Ron Scollan and Suzanne Scollan's work (1981) on the relation between migrants from the "lower 48" states in the United States and Alaska Natives. Having asked them a question, the urbanites—or should I say urbane-ites—find themselves not getting a timely reply and sense resistance, nonunderstanding,

nonforthcomingness, and so forth. Often they break what they perceive as "the silence" that greeted their question with a follow-up question, which may be taken by their interlocutor to exemplify the high-pressure aggressiveness of "city slickers." But what differs between them is not that their turn-taking practices are different or differently organized, but the way they "reckon" the invisible, normative beat between one turn and the next.

I have just pointed at the organization of turn taking; an account of what that organization is, and how it works, will have to be sought out in the by-now substantial literature addressed to those matters (cf. esp. Lerner 2003).

The "Sequence-organizational" Problem: How are Successive Turns or Actions Formed up to be "Coherent" with the Prior one (or some Prior one) and Constitute a "Course of Action"? What is the Nature of that Coherence?

The most common way researchers have addressed actual spates of talk has been to ask what it is about, and how movement from one "topic" to another occurs, and what it reveals about the intentions and meanings being conveyed by the speaker or the several participants. Talking *about* things—"doing topic talk"—is surely one observable feature of talk in interaction. But it is *only one* of the things people do in talk in interaction. We would do well to open inquiry to the *full range of things that people do* in their talking in interaction—asking, requesting, inviting, offering, complaining, reporting, answering, agreeing, disagreeing, accepting, rejecting, assessing, and so forth. Indeed, doing topic talk is itself largely composed of such doings—telling, agreeing, disagreeing, assessing, rejecting, and so forth. Proceeding in this way treats action and courses of action as the more general tack and doing topic talk as one of its varieties.

A comparable contrast surfaces in contributions to this volume between what might be called "mentation" on the one hand and "action" or "practices" on the other hand. The discourse is full of terms like *understanding, knowing, inferring, reasoning, establishing common ground, intention, motive, construal, theories* (e.g., Theory of Mind [ToM]), and so forth. But *the* central question is whether human sociality is a matter of *knowing* together or of *doing* together.

At least part of this contrast turns on the terms of description used in inquiry. For example, one account of work on ToM describes an experimental setting in which infants figured out which of two

previously unknown objects is being named by determining which one the investigator–speaker was looking at. But we might well ask why this is treated as a theory of *mind*, rather than a theory of interactional *practice*: speakers can indicate what they are talking about by looking at it, and recipients can therefore look in the direction of the speaker's gaze to find what to look at to determine what the speaker is referring to. If this question and the issue underlying it have any cogency, they should prompt examination of the conversational and interactional settings in which so-called ToMs develop: what is said to the children? What is being done by what is being said to them? What do the children say back? What are they doing by saying that? Almost certainly what the children are learning is what others are doing and what they should do in turn. If there *are* theories like ToM, they are built up from and for contingencies of interaction and these are contingencies of *action or conduct*, not contingencies of theorizing. It is to the organization of action, and action realized through talk, that sequence organization is addressed.

The stance embodied in the foregoing remarks resonates harmoniously with the contributions of Goodwin and of Hutchins to this volume—most obviously in the shared preoccupation with praxis and the action-implicated and publicly displayed features of knowledge. But they are not incompatible in principle with psychological inquiry, only in currently predominant outlook and expression. For example, I take the contribution of Gergely and Csibra in this volume to be about action and courses of action and practices and interaction—which runs through the account of the experimental procedure as beginning with what conversation analysts call a summons–answer sequence (Schegloff 1968) to attract the infants' attention, and that is what their invocation of "pedagogy" introduces; the very notion of pedagogy is through and through interactional in character.

If we ask how actions and courses of action get organized in talk in interaction, it turns out that there are a few kernel forms of organization that appear to supply the formal framework within which the context-specific actual actions and trajectories of action are shaped. By far the most common and consequential is the one we call "adjacency pair based" (Sacks 1992, vol. 2:521–569; Schegloff in press; Schegloff and Sacks 1973). The simplest and minimal form of a sequence is two turns long: the first *initiating* some kind of action trajectory—such as requesting, complaining, announcing, and the like; the second responding to that action in either a compliant or aligning way (granting, remedying, assessing, and the like, respectively) or in a misaligning or noncompliant

way (rejecting, disagreeing, claiming prior knowledge, and the like, respectively).

Around and inside such "simple" pairs of actions, quite elaborate expansions can be fashioned by the participants. There are, for example, expansions *before* the first part of such a pair, such as "preannouncements" ("Didju hear who's coming?"), "preinvitations" ("Are you doing anything this weekend?"), and the like. Or, to cite actual data of a preinvitation:

(1) CG,1 (Nelson is the caller; Clara is called to the phone)

1	Clara:		Hello
2	Nelson:		Hi.
3	Clara:		Hi.
4	Nelson:	->	Whatcha doin'.
5	Clara:	->	Not much.
6	Nelson:		Y'wanna drink?
7	Clara:		Yeah.
8	Nelson:		Okay.

And of a preannouncement:

(2) Terasaki (2004):207

1	Jim:	->	Y'wanna know who I got stoned with a few(hh) weeks ago? hh!
2	Ginny:	->	Who.
3	Jim:		Mary Carter 'n her boy(hh)frie(hh)nd. hh.

Notice that these "pre"s themselves make a response relevant, and so themselves constitute an adjacency pair, and can therefore themselves be expanded (e.g., "Hey Steve," "Yeah?" "Didju hear who pulled out of the conference?" "No, who?").

And there can be expansions after the first action–turn in an adjacency pair and before the responding second part—an inserted sequence. For example:

(3) Schegloff, Jefferson, and Sacks (1977):368

1	B:->F_b		Was last night the first time you met Missiz Kelly?
2			(1.0)
3	M:->F_i		Met whom?
4	B:->S_i		Missiz Kelly.
5	M:->S_b		Yes.

Again, notice that if a first pair part is not followed by an action–turn, which could be its second pair part, then what occurs in its place is itself a first pair part and requires a response, so it too is an adjacency pair and it too can get expanded.

And after the response to the initiating action–turn there can be further talk that clearly is extending that trajectory of action. Sometimes that can be a single turn, which does not make a response to it relevant next, as at lines 3 and 8 in the following specimen, which has two such sequences.

(4) HG, 16:25-33

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1  Nancy:      =·hhh Dz he av iz own apa:rt[mint?]
2    Hyla:                                 ['hhhh] Yea:h,=
3  Nancy: ->   =Oh:,
4              (1.0)
5  Nancy:      How didju git iz number,
6              (·)
7    Hyla:     I(h) (·) c(h)alled infermation'n San Fr'ncissc(h)[uh!
8  Nancy: ->                                                  [Oh::::
9              (·)
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But it can also be something that *does* make a response to it relevant next; so it too is itself an adjacency pair and can take the kinds of expansions I have been sketching here.

(5) Connie and Dee, 9

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1    Dee:      Well who'r you workin for.
2  Connie:     'hhh Well I'm working through the Amfat Corporation.
3    Dee: ->   The who?
4  Connie: ->  Amfah Corpora[tion. T's a holding company.
5    Dee: ->>                [Oh
6    Dee: ->>  Yeah.
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Note here that the question–answer sequence at lines 1–2 is expanded after the answer by another at lines 3–4 (addressing a hearing or understanding problem), and that the latter is expanded by a single turn expansion, first at line 5 (where the "got it"-registering "oh" is caught in overlap) and then again at line 6 (with the now "knew it"-registering "yeah").

I hope that it is clear that what started as a simple two turn–action sequence can be a framework that "carries" an extensive stretch of talk.[4] There are some deep connections between what are nonetheless largely

autonomous organizations of practice—the organization of turn taking and the organization of action sequences. Just as interaction cannot do without practices for allocating opportunities to participate and practices for constraining the size of those opportunities—that is, an organization of turn taking, so it cannot do without an organization of practices for using those opportunities to fashion coherent and sustained trajectories or courses of action—sequence organization.

The "Trouble" Problem: How to Deal with Trouble in Speaking, Hearing, or Understanding the Talk or Other Conduct such that the Interaction does not Freeze in Place; that Intersubjectivity is Maintained or Restored; and that the Turn, Sequence, and Activity can Progress to Possible Completion.

If the organization of talk in interaction supplies the basic infrastructure through which the institutions and social organization of quotidian life are implemented, it had better be pretty reliable, and have ways of getting righted if beset by trouble. And so it is. Talk in interaction is as prone as any organization is to transient problems of integration and execution; speakers cannot find the word they want, find that they have started telling about something that needs something else to be told first, hear that they articulated just the opposite word from the one they are after, find that another is talking at the same time as they are, and so forth. And talk in interaction is as vulnerable as any activity is to interference from altogether unrelated events in its environment—overflight by airplanes, an outburst of traffic noise, or other ambient noise that interferes with their recipient's ability to hear, and so forth.

For such inescapable contingencies there is an organization of practices for dealing with trouble or problems in speaking, hearing, and understanding the talk. It turns out that this organization—which we term an organization of repair—is extraordinarily effective at allowing the parties to locate and diagnose the trouble and, in virtually all cases, to deal with it quickly and successfully.

The organization of repair differentiates between repair initiated and carried through by the speaker of the trouble source, on the one hand, and other participants in the interaction, on the other hand. The practices of repair are focused in a sharply defined window of opportunity in which virtually all repair that is initiated is initiated. (Schegloff et al. 1977). This "repair initiation opportunity space" begins in the same turn—indeed, in the same turn-constructional unit (TCU)—in which the trouble source

occurred and extends to the next turn by that speaker.[5] The consequence is that the initial opportunity to initiate repair falls to the speaker of the trouble source, and a very large proportion of repairs are addressed and resolved in the same turn, and same TCU, in which the trouble source occurred ("same-turn repair"), or in its immediate aftermath ("transition space repair"). These largely involve troubles in speaking, but can also be directed to anticipatable problems for recipients—problems of hearing or understanding. The "preferences for self-initiation of repair and self-repair" have as one of their manifestations that recipients of talk that is for them problematic regularly withhold initiating repair in the next turn to allow the trouble-source speakers an additional opportunity to themselves initiate repair. If they do not do so, the next opportunity for addressing the trouble falls to recipients—ordinarily in the next turn. Finally (for our purposes), a speaker may have produced a turn at talk and had a recipient reply to it with no indication of trouble, only to find that the reply displayed what is to the speaker a problematic understanding of that turn. Then, in the turn following the one that has displayed the problematic understanding, the speaker of what now turns out to have been a trouble-source turn may take the next turn to address that problematic understanding (the canonical form being "No, I didn't mean X, I meant Y"; cf. Schegloff 1992b).

As the talk develops through the repair space, there are fewer and fewer troubles or repairables that get addressed. Most are dealt with in the same or next turn, and these range from production problems (such as word selection, word retrieval, articulation, management of prosody, etc.) and reception problems (hearing and understanding of inappropriately selected usages, such as person reference terms, technical terms, complicated syntax, etc.) to issues of intersubjectivity and strategic issues of delicateness. It is hard to say which are more important: without virtually immediate resolution of the production and reception problems, the interaction can be stalled indefinitely with unpredictable consequences; without ways of spotting departures from intersubjectivity and restoring it, the shared reality of the moment is lost, again with unpredictable consequences.

It is hard to imagine a society or culture whose organization of interaction does not include a repair component, and one that works more or less like the one I have sketched. We know that details may vary in ways linked to the linguistic structure of the language spoken—either its grammatical structure (cf., e.g., Fox et al. 1996) or its phonological inventory (cf., e.g., Schegloff 1987b). But the structure of the repair space and the terms of its differentiation between same and other repair

are likely not to vary. For, among its other virtues, it is the availability of the practices of repair that allows us to make do with the natural languages that philosophers and logicians have long shown to be so inadequate as to require the invention of artificial, formal ones. It is repair that allows our language use not only to allow but to exploit many of the features that have been treated as its faults—ambiguity, polysemy, contradiction, and so forth. Designed not for automatic parsers but for sentient beings, should these usages not be transparently solvable, the practices of repair are available to get solutions (Schegloff 1989).

The practices of repair and their ordered deployment are probably the main guarantors of intersubjectivity and common ground in interaction. Intersubjectivity can, therefore, not require grounding in static bodies of shared knowledge or common ground—grounding that, if taken strictly, has often been found unattainable in any case (see, e.g., Garfinkel [1967:24–31, 35–103] for one demonstration of this). The practices of repair make intersubjectivity always a matter of immediate and local determination, not one of abstract and general shared facts, views, or stances. Built off the basic interactivity of ordinary talk, each next turn displays some understanding of the just prior or some prior other talk, action, scene, and so forth, or it displays the problematicity of such understanding for its speaker. Intersubjectivity or shared understanding are thereby always addressed for practical purposes about some determinate object at some here and now, with resources—practical resources, that is, resources that are practices—for dealing with the trouble and restoring intersubjectivity. The practices of recipient design (see below) get the talk designed for its current recipients, which serves to minimize the likelihood of trouble in the first instance, and the practices of repair provide resources for spotting, diagnosing, and fixing trouble that somehow occurs nonetheless. The reader may wish to explore the resonances between this account of repair and intersubjectivity and the chapters of Enfield, Goodwin, Hanks, and Levinson in this volume.

The Word Selection Problem: How do the Elements of a Turn get Selected? How does that Selection Inform and Shape the Understanding Achieved by the Turn's Recipients?

Turns are composed of TCUs—sentential, clausal, phrasal, and lexical, in English and a great many other languages.[6] But of what are TCUs composed? Referring to this generic organization as "word selection" is a vernacular way of putting it, or perhaps a linguistic or psycholinguistic

one for some varieties of those disciplines. And sometimes it is a relevant way of putting it in conversation–analytic work. But here I want to call attention to the interactional practices that are only incidentally lexical or about words. These are practices of referring, or describing, or—perhaps most generally—practices of formulating. In talk in interaction, participants formulate or refer to persons (Sacks 1972a, 1972b; Sacks and Schegloff 1979; Schegloff 1996c), places (Schegloff 1972), time, actions, and so on. The use of particular formulations cannot be adequately understood simply by reference to their correctness. The person writing this (and that is one formulation already) is not only a sociologist; he is also (as the pronoun inescapably revealed) male, Californian, Jewish, and so forth. The place I am writing is not only my office, it is in Haines Hall, at University of California, Los Angeles, in Los Angeles, on the west side, in the United States, and so forth. And although I already formulated my current activity as "writing this," it is also typing, rushing to finish before a student arrives, and so forth. That is, "correctness" will not do as the grounds for using this or that formulation, because there are always other formulations that are equally correct. What is central is relevance (not, obviously, in the sense of Sperber and Wilson 1986)—what action or actions the speaker is designing the utterance to embody.

Consider, for example, this bit of interaction. Hyla has invited Nancy (the two of them college juniors in the early 1970s) earlier in the day to go to the theater that night to see a performance of *The Dark at the Top of the Stairs* (Inge 1958), and they are talking on the phone in the late afternoon about that upcoming event (among other things). After a brief exchange about when they will meet, Nancy asks,

(6) Hyla & Nancy, 05:07-39

1	Nancy:	How didju hear about it from the pape[r?
2	Hyla:	['hhhhh I sa:w-
3		(0.4)
4	Hyla: ->	A'right when was:(it,)/(this,)
5		(0.3)
6	Hyla: ->	The week before my birthda:[y,]
7	Nancy:	[Ye]a[:h,
8	Hyla: ->	[I wz looking in the Calendar
9	->	section en there was u:n, (·) un a:d yihknow a liddle:: u-thi:ng, 'hh[hh
10		
11	Nancy:	[Uh hu:h,=
12	Hyla:	=At- th'-th'theater's called the Met Theater it's on
13		Point[setta.]
14	Nancy:	[The Me]:t,

15		(·)
16	Nancy:	I never heard of i[t.
17	Hyla:	[I hadn't either.'hhh But anyways,-en
18		theh the moo- thing wz th'↓Dark e'th' ↓Top a'th' ↑Stai[:rs.]
19	Nancy:	[Mm-h]m[:,
20	Hyla:	[En
21		I nearly wen'chhrazy cz I [: I: lo:ve]that] mo:vie.]
22	Nancy:	[y:Yeah I kn]ow y]ou lo:ve] tha::t.=
23	Hyla:	=s:So::, 'hh an' like the first sho:w,=
24	Nancy:	=M[m hmm,]
25	Hyla:	[wz g'nna] be:,
26		(·)
27	Hyla:	on my birthday.=
28	Nancy:	=Uh hu[h,]
29	Hyla:	[I'm] go'[n awhh whould hI love-
30	Nancy:	[(So-)
31		(·)
32	Hyla:	yihknow fer Sim tuh [take me tuh that.]
33	Nancy:	[Y a y u : : h,]

I want to call attention here to only two bits of Hyla's responsive talk starting at line 8: the time formulation "the week before my birthday," and the activity formulation "I was looking in the Calendar section" (an ethnographic note: the "Calendar" section of the *Los Angeles Times* is the Culture and Entertainment section). First note that Hyla conducts an out-loud search for "when it was"; she is taking care with this time formulation. There are many other ways of referring to the time in question: how many weeks ago; which week of the month; the date; and so forth. She chooses "the week before my birthday." And now "I was looking in the Calendar section": not "reading the paper"; not "looking *at* the Calendar section"; not the "I saw" with which she had initially begun (at line 8) and so forth. By coselecting these two formulations, she is *"doing"* a description of "I was looking for what to do on my birthday" although not articulating that description.

So, in turns at talk that make up sequences of actions, the elements of the talk are selected and deployed to accomplish actions and to do so recognizably; and recipients attend the talk to find what the speaker is *doing* by saying it in *those* words, in *that* way. Using "words" or "usages" or "formulations" is a generic organization of practices for talk in interaction because that talk is designed to do things, things that fit with other things in the talk—most often the just preceding ones. Talk in interaction is about constructing actions, which is why it does not reduce to language; treating talk in interaction only for its properties as a system of symbols or a medium for articulation or

deploying propositions does not get at its core. And the actions that are constructed by talk and other conduct in interaction compose, and are parts of, *trajectories* or *courses* of action, which is why a pragmatics that does not attend to the sequential organization of actions is at risk for aridity.

The Overall Structural-organization Problem: How Does an Occasion of Interaction get Structured? What are those Structures? And How Does Placement in the Overall Structure Inform the Construction and Understanding of the Talk and Other Conduct as Turns, as Sequences of Actions, and so Forth?

Some actions are positioned not with respect to turns or sequences (although they are *done* in turns and sequences) or the repair space but by reference to the occasion of interaction as a unit with its own organization. Greetings and good-byes are the most obvious exemplars, being positioned at the beginning and ending of interactional occasions, respectively. Less obvious, perhaps, is that greetings are just one of a number of action sequence types that may compose an opening phase of an interaction (Schegloff 1986), and good-byes are the last of a number of components that make up a closing section of an interaction. What happens in between can take either of two forms (as far as we know now)—a state of continuously sustained talk and what we can call a continuing state of incipient talk (Schegloff and Sacks 1973). The latter term is meant to refer to settings in which the parties talk for awhile and then lapse into silence (silence that does not prompt a closing of the interactional occasion), at any point in which the talk may start up again. Characteristic settings in contemporary industrial societies might be families or roommates in the living room in the evening, occupants of a car in a carpool or a long journey, seatmates on an airplane, diners at table, coworkers at a workbench, and so forth. In some societies, this may be the default organization of talk in interaction.

Although greetings and good-byes are pretty much tied to their positions in the overall structural organization, other types of action may take on a distinctive character depending on where in the overall structural organization of a conversation they occur. Some types of action are commonly withheld from occurrence early in a conversation; "requests" are a case in point. Doing a request early in the organization of an interaction can be a way of marking its urgency, or some other feature known to be recognizable to the recipient(s). By contrast, many kinds of "noticings" are ordinarily meant to occur as soon as possible after the "noticeable" is detectable. Withholding the noticing from early enactment can be taken as failing to have noticed the noticeable, or as treating the noticeable as negatively valenced.

The generic character of the overall structural organization of the unit "a single conversation" consists straightforwardly in its provision of the practices for launching and closing episodes of interaction with the commitments of attention that they place on their participants. If talk in interaction is going on, the parties will find themselves to be someplace in it by reference to this order of organization.

Interactional Practices at the Roots of Human Sociality

Contributions to this volume explore the relations, if any, between the variability of human culture and language, the workings of human cognition, and the organization of human interaction. Disciplinarily, this amounts to a reconciliation of anthropology, ethology, psychology, and sociology—not a small undertaking. Research on interaction suggests a number of beginning steps.

Candidate Universals in Human Interaction and Cultural Variability

As I have intimated, if not stated explicitly, in the preceding sections, I take the generic orders of organization in talk in interaction to be candidate universals. Other social species display an organization of interaction with conspecifics, and there is no compelling reason that I am aware of for doubting that this holds true for humans. The capacity of travelers, missionaries, conquerors, and so forth to get on with host populations they are visiting while ignorant of the language and culture—both historically and contemporaneously—is, at the very least, commonsense grounds for this as a starting position. Its import is that interaction in societies and cultures that appear different from our own be examined for their solution to what I have termed the generic organizational issues: how do they allocate opportunities to talk in interaction and constrain the duration of the talk in those opportunities? How is the talk in turns designed to embody actions and how are those actions combined to form courses of action across speakers and other participants? How are problems of speaking, hearing and understanding the talk managed? What practices underlie the formulation of what people talk about—persons, places, actions, and whatever else enters

into their talk? How are occasions of interaction launched (or avoided), how are they ended, and how is the continuity or noncontinuity of talk within some occasion organized?

The import of the claim that these organizations are generic is *not* that the way talk in interaction is done in the United States, or modern industrialized societies, is generic; it is that the organizational issues to which these organizations of practice are addressed are generic. Conversation analysis is not averse to finding, indeed celebrating, what appear to be differences in interaction in other cultures, societies, and languages. In some instances, the differences are readily understood by references to differences in the linguistic or cultural resources of that population; in others, they serve to trigger a search for a more general and formal account, under which our previous understanding and the newly encountered one are both subsumable.

Here is an example of the first of these (see Schegloff 1987b). Some years ago a graduate student working in the highlands of Guatemala in a village where Quiche was the language reported that same-turn repairs were initiated very differently there than they were in the several languages that she knew (Daden and McClaren n.d.). What is most familiar to speakers of Indo-European languages are cutoffs (e.g., glottal or dental stops) and sound stretches. But in Quiche, both stops and stretches were phonemic, and, accordingly, not used by speakers to initiate repair on the talk earlier in their turn. Long stretches, which were not phonemic for Quiche, were used to initiate same-turn repair. On the one hand, the variation in practice could be straightforwardly traced to differences in the phonemic inventory of the languages; on the other hand, our understanding of the practices of repair was reinforced by finding in this very different linguistic and cultural environment a "place" findable only by reference to the organization of repair—the initiation of same turn repair.

Sometimes what appeared to be a major difference in the practices of talk in interaction turns out, on closer inspection made possible by modern technology, not to be different at all. For example, a classic chapter by Reisman (1974) described what he called a "contrapuntal conversational" system that, in effect, was without any turn-taking organization at all. Subsequently, Sidnell's (2001) examination of video-recorded data from the same area revealed a turn-taking organization virtually identical to the one described in Sacks et al. (1974).

The second of these examples appears to involve the technology of observation more than issues of universality or variation; it was the

possibility of examining and reexamining the data at a level of detail not accessible to one exposure in real time that allowed specification of where and when each participant began and stopped talking. The first of the preceding examples, however, is one sort of instance of this issue, and it exemplifies a familiar polarity in inquiry—a preoccupation with variation versus a preoccupation with generality. Both are important, but in the domain we are concerned with, generality seems to me to have the priority (although not exclusivity). For the dimensions on which variability is observed and rendered consequential are framed by the dimensions of generality that render the comparison relevant to begin with. If I ask you how a pear is different from honesty, you will think I have a joke or a clever riddle up my sleeve; they lack the common class membership that renders comparison relevant. The generic organizations of talk in interaction offer some proposed dimensions of relevance for talk in interaction per se; languages, cultures and societies can be examined by reference to these organizations; whether what is found will be best understood as variability and differences, or as variations on a same underlying solution to a generic problem, remains to be found out.

Aside from these organizations of practice, or rather by virtue of them, certain other features of talk in interaction are plausible candidates for universal relevance and merit mention here.

One is minimization. For various of the domains we have studied, the default or base form is the minimal form. For example:

- When a party begins talk in a turn, they have initially the right (and responsibility) to produce one TCU to possible completion (Sacks et al. 1974). Getting to produce more is contingent on the conduct of the speaker and of the coparticipants (cf. Schegloff 1982) to overcome a minimization constraint embodied in the transition relevance of possible turn completion.
- The basic form of a sequence is two turns—the minimum for it to be a sequence (Schegloff in press; Schegloff and Sacks 1973); additional turns represent expansions, inspectable for what they are being used to do.
- In referring to someone, there is preference for minimization—that is, for a single reference form (Sacks and Schegloff 1979); anything more is marked and is examinable for what else, over and above simply referring, it is being used to do.

In all of these domains of practice, and others, we find this transparently simplest design: the minimal form is the unmarked default; special import is attached to expansions of it.

A second feature is the special character of "nextness," or next–prior positioning, operating at various levels of granularity (Schegloff 2000a). For example:

- The turn-taking organization serves to allocate one turn at a time—next turn.
- Absent any provision to the contrary, any turn will be heard as addressed to the just prior, that is, the one it is next after.
- The production and parsing of a turn at talk is by reference to a succession of "next elements," where elements can be words, parts of words, or sounds. This holds as well for the deployment of self-initiated repair, which turns out to be regularly placed by reference to "next word" or "next sound" of word.
- "Nextness" can operate for sequences; if a sequence type can be reciprocal (i.e., after Alan initiates to Bill, Bill reciprocates to Alan), then the default position for the reciprocal is next sequence (most familiarly in "Alan: How are you, Bill: Fine, and you?"); or, if a presequence is done (e.g., a summons making an answer relevant next), then if the response gives a go-ahead, then the base sequence should occur next (cf. Schegloff 1968).

Most fundamentally, the basic place to look to see how someone understood a turn is to see what they produced in next turn. In other words, overwhelmingly talk in interaction is locally organized—one turn at a time, one sequence at a time, and so forth.

A third feature is a preference for progressivity, again, at work at various levels of granularity.

- Recipients orient to each next sound as a next piece in the developing trajectory of what the speaker is saying or doing; pauses, cutoffs, repeats, in-breaths, and the like all involve some interference with progressivity, and are examinable for what import they have in the production and recognition of what is going on.
- Other initiations of repair are understood as stopping the course of action that was in progress to deal with some problem in hearing or understanding the talk, are on that count dispreferred, and may serve as harbingers of other dispreferred conduct in the offing.

There is plainly a relationship between these three features: progressivity is realized when some trajectory of action moves from the last-reached point to the next, delay means something occurs next other than what was due next; expansion of some unit—a turn, a sequence, a person reference—beyond its default, minimal realization can constitute a loss of progressivity, and so forth. The formality of these observations makes possible examination of a variety of cultural and behavioral settings as a way of assessing the degree to which, and the levels at which, the undergirdings of human sociality are species-generic or variable.

Implications for Human Cognition: Action Recognition and ToM

A good starting point for exploring the fit with conversation analysis is to remark on the obvious point that, whatever is to be found in the cognitive apparatus, it is not working on a blank field in its engagement with the world. As central a theme as any in the preceding sketch of conversation analysis is that talk in interaction is about action and courses of action (requesting, complaining, asking, answering, (dis)agreeing, correcting, aligning, etc.). The talk speakers do is designed to embody one or more actions and to do so recognizably; the uptake coparticipants manage is designed to recognize what the speaker (and other coparticipants) mean to be doing with their conduct so as to underwrite an appropriate next action. (Note the resonance here with the early discussion on the parsing of action in the chapter by Byrne.) A ToM has in the first instance to be furnished with methods for designing talk to do recognizable actions and methods for recognizing the actions so designed by coparticipants. In a nutshell, that is a large chunk of what conversation analysis is about. Evidences of this are scattered in the preceding pages.

- Presequences like preinvitations, preannouncements and the like are designed to be recognizable to recipients as foreshadowing doing an invitation or an announcement unless the recipient discourages doing so in their reply. "Are you doing anything tonight?" "Yeah, I've got a paper to write" warns the prospective inviter that an invitation will be rejected. That is what it is designed to do and do recognizably. A recipient hears it as something asked not for itself, not in its own right, but as a harbinger of something contingently to follow, depending on the response. That is why a question like "Are you doing anything tonight?" is often met with a return question, "Why?" The "why" askers know they are not being asked for a

behaviorally accurate account; they are being asked about their availability. I take it that this is one sort of thing that ToM studies are interested in. Getting at them will, I think, require knowing about the organization of adjacency pair based sequences and their expansions.

- How do ordinary sentences accomplish actions recognizable as requests, announcements, complaints, and so forth? As with virtually everything in talk in interaction, it is a matter of position and composition—how the talk is constructed and where it is. Consider, for example, this exchange when an undergraduate student—Carol—comes back to her room with her roommates and friends there.

(7) SN-4, 5:1-13

1	Sherie:	Hi Carol.=
2	Carol:	=H[i : .]
3	Ruthie:	[CA:RO]L, HI:::
4	Sherie: ->	You didn' get en icecream sandwich,
5	Carol:	I kno:w, hh I decided that my body didn't need it,
6	Sherie:	Yes but ours di:d=
7	Sherie:	=hh heh-heh-heh [heh-heh-heh ['hhih
8	(??):	[ehh heh heh [
9	(??):	[( )
10	Carol:	hh Awright gimme some money en you c'n treat me to one an
11		I'll buy you a:ll some [too.]
12	Sherie:	[I'm] kidding, I don't need it.
13		(0.3)

It matters that Sherie's turn at line 4 is a noticing. Noticings are meant to be done as early as possible, and one place that qualifies is just after coming into mutually visible copresence; here it is done directly after the exchange of greetings. But to leave it at that would be to miss the boat.

This is a "possible complaint,"[7] and the sequence continues past the point at which I have ended the transcript, the participants working it through as a complaint sequence. How is it a complaint? It is not a matter of divining intentions. Designing one's talk by formulating an absence is a way of doing a possible complaint; it is a practice by which complaining can get done and done recognizably. Not any absence, of course, and more needs to be said, but this is one direction that conversation analytic work pursues: how recognizable actions get done and get recognized as such; here it is the negative formulation that is at the heart of the practice—a practice for doing "possible complaint." I take it that this is another sort of thing that ToM studies are interested in.

- And more generally, formulations are part of the design of some talk to do some action. For example, referring to a person by name or by what we call a recognitional description, a speaker can build into a turn designed to do something else an invitation or demand to a recipient to recognize who is being referred to as someone that they know. Or the speaker can refer to that person as "this guy" and convey that this is not a person the recipient should try to recognize. Here again, practices of talking build into the talk something for the recipient to find in it.

This last point exemplifies another practice so central to talk and other conduct in interaction that it is as compelling a practice as any for universal status, and that is the practice of recipient design. The things one talks about with another are selected and configured for who that other is—either individually or categorically. And how one speaks about them—what words, reference forms, and so forth are to be used is also shaped by reference to who the recipient relevantly is at that moment, for this speaker, at this juncture of this interaction. The centrality of recipient design may have a profound bearing on ToM and on human cognition more generally, for what persons are required to deal with in the mundane intercourse of ordinary interaction is not the broad range of things that could possibly occur, could possibly require immediate understanding, and so forth but, rather, a presorted set of elements of interaction designed for who they relevantly are at that moment in that interaction. Talk in interaction is, in other words, designed for accessibility to its recipient, and overwhelmingly successfully so. This is the first line of defense of intersubjectivity and common ground. The demands on cognition—at least for interaction—are thereby substantially reduced and shaped. It is because the conditions of language use in ordinary interaction are very different from those in the discourse of logic and science that the problems that natural language poses for logic and science do not arise in quotidian talk in interaction. The relevant ways of studying human cognition may, therefore, not be ones designed for anonymous "subjects," because that is not what human cognition for interaction is designed to deal with.

Closing

Let me end by repeating some of the final words of Erving Goffman's Presidential Address to the American Sociological Association, "The Interaction Order" (1983:17). He wrote:

> For myself, I believe that human social life is ours to study naturalistically, *sub specie aeternitatis*. From the perspective of the physical and biological sciences, human social life is only a small irregular scab on the face of nature, not particularly amenable to deep systematic analysis. And so it is. But it's ours.

And, one might now add, it is only *this* species' social life that has made possible those physical and biological sciences, and the very notion of "deep systematic analysis."

Although Goffman was virtually apologetic for the stature of interaction studies when put next to traditional studies of social structure, this was a comparison forced on him by a career in sociology and a presidential address appropriately shaped for practitioners of its entire reach. In the present context, interaction studies need no apology, nor is it necessary to eschew the possibility of deep, systematic analysis. Such studies offer the possibility of connecting the disparate threads of anthropological, ethological, linguistic, psychological, and sociological inquiry, bringing us closer to an understanding of human sociality, and, with it, of what makes us distinctively human in the first place.

Notes

1. I mean to include under this term "talk" implemented by sign language and other forms of communication in interaction that share the basic characteristics of vocalized talking; so telephone conversation but not computer chats, for the former are synchronous moment to moment and the latter are not. It should go without saying (although the contemporary use of the term *multimodal interaction* suggests otherwise) that "talk in interaction" should be understood as "talk and other conduct in interaction," that is, as including posture, gesture, facial expression, ongoing other activities with which the talk may be cotemporal and potentially coordinated, and any other features of the setting by which the talk may be informed and on which it may draw.

2. Ideally this account would be supplemented by empirical exemplars of the several organizations of practices that are here discursively described, but, with a few exceptions, this is not possible within our space limitations. It will have to suffice to refer the reader to the works in which these organizations have been introduced: Schegloff and Sacks (1973) on overall structural organization; Sacks et al. 1974 on turn taking; Schegloff et al. 1977 on repair; Schegloff 1996d on turn organization; and Schegloff and Sacks 1973, Sacks 1992, vol. 1:521ff., and Schegloff n.d.b, in press, on sequence organization. Some works in which further specification of practices within these domains has been advanced are: Schegloff 1982 and Lerner 2002 on turn taking; Schegloff, 1979, 1992b, 1997, 2000c on repair; Lerner 1991, 1996 on turn organization; and Schegloff 1996a on action formation. Work designed as exercises displaying how the conduct of analysis works, and how it supports the stances adopted in this kind of inquiry are Schegloff 1987a and 1996b.

3. Two sorts of exception should be mentioned here. One involves the claim that there is a place in which talk in interaction is not so organized, as in Reisman's (1974) claim for "contrapuntal conversation" in Antigua; Sidnell (2001) casts considerable doubt on Reisman's account. The other involves specifications of where *in conversation* the "one at a time" claim does not hold, for example Lerner (2002) on "choral co-production" or Duranti (1997) on "polyphonic discourse"; here the phenomenon being described is virtually defined as an object of interest by its departure from the otherwise default organization of talk. Work on "overlapping talk" (e.g., Jefferson 1984, 1986, 2004; Schegloff 2000b, 2002) locates the topic by reference to its problematic relation to the default one-at-a-time organization.

4. For an analysis of quite an elaborate sequence—125 lines of transcript composing a single sequence, see Schegloff 1990.

5. The way repair is organized can have the consequence that it is sometimes initiated at a greater "distance" from the trouble while still being within the boundaries that can here be only roughly characterized. For an account of this, see Schegloff 1992b.

6. To conserve time and space, I have omitted the practices of turn construction as a generic organization in talk in interaction, although it has a key role in the organization of turn taking, on the one hand, and the organization of sequences, on the other hand (cf. Schegloff 1996d).

7. This sequence is explicated in some detail in Schegloff 1988:118–131. It may be useful to clarify the usage here and in some other conversation-analytic writing of the term format "a possible X," as in the text's "a possible complaint." What follows is taken from Schegloff 1996d:116–117 n. 8:

The usage is not meant as a token of analytic uncertainty or hedging. Its analytic locus is not in the first instance the world of the author and reader, but the world of the parties to the interaction. To describe some utterance, for example, as 'a possible invitation' (Sacks 1992: I: 300–2; Schegloff 1992a:xxvi–xxvii) or 'a possible complaint' (Schegloff 1988: 120–2) is to claim that there is a describable practice of talk-in-interaction which is usable to do recognizable invitations or complaints (a claim which can be documented by exemplars of exchanges in which such utterances were so recognized by their recipients), and that the utterance now being described can be understood to have been produced by such a practice, and is thus analyzable as an invitation or as a complaint. This claim is made, and can be defended, independent of whether the actual recipient on this occasion has treated it as an invitation or not, and independent of whether the speaker can be shown to have produced it for recognition as such on this occasion. Such an analytic stance is required to provide resources for accounts of 'failures' to recognize an utterance as an invitation or complaint, for in order to claim that a recipient failed to recognize it as such or respond to it as such, one must be able to show that it was recognizable as such, i.e. that it was 'a possible X'—for the participants (Schegloff n.d.b, to appear [*sic*; in press]). The analyst's treatment of an utterance as 'a possible X' is then grounded in a claim about its having such a status for the participants. (For an extended exploration of how a form of turn construction—repetition—can constitute a practice for producing possible instances of a previously undescribed action—'confirming allusions,' cf. Schegloff 1996b.)

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Human Sociality as Mutual Orientation in a Rich Interactive Environment: Multimodal Utterances and Pointing in Aphasia

Charles Goodwin

A primordial site for the study of human sociality can be found in a situation in which multiple participants are carrying out courses of action together, frequently through use of language.[1] These situations are not only pervasive, but in their intricacy, their processes of dynamic change, and the range of resources they draw on, quite unlike anything else found in the animal kingdom (although building from processes found in other animals). The practices used to build collaborative action frequently encompass a range of quite diverse phenomena including language structure, gesture, participation frameworks, practices for seeing and formulating structure in the environment, and embodied action and tool use. This diversity has frequently obscured the intrinsic organization of the process itself. For example, in part because of the way in which the human sciences have each claimed distinctive phenomena, language structure was treated as the special domain of linguistics, and the organization of action through language was not a focus of mainstream sociology (despite most important work by the Prague school, Boasian linguistic anthropology, Bakhtin and his followers, Mead, Goffman, and Bateson, and most recently conversation analysis).

To build collaborative action, each party must in some relevant sense understand the nature of the activities they are engaged in together. The accomplishment of joint action is also a central environment for cognitive activity. The ability of participants to publicly scrutinize both