

A On “Opening Sequencing”: a framing statement

Emanuel A. Schegloff

One central theme of my contribution to this volume (chapter 18) is that inquiry into new technology – like the several technologies of “perpetual contact” – is most likely to be productive of new ideas and knowledge if the technology is examined not (or not only) as an object in its own right, but by reference to its intersection with things toward which we already have a cogent analytic stance. In the case of my own work and experience, the technology of the telephone – the old-fashioned, wired, fixed telephone – served as a prism through which were refracted the practices of ordinary talk-in-interaction. The result not only pinpointed some interactional issues that were brought to the fore on the telephone (as noted in chapter 18), but provided the impetus for noticing, registering and describing practices of ordinary talk-in-interaction that pervade conversation when persons are co-present. Seeing the ways in which these practices of talking were modified on the telephone brought their very existence into sharper focus and required an account of them in non-technologically mediated contexts to allow a specification of their transformation when implemented through a new technological medium.

The document published in Appendix B presents an example of this intersection, and one that played a role in the development of Conversation Analysis. Studying the openings of telephone calls to the police in the aftermath of a disaster provided the occasion for isolating for careful description common practices for initiating conversation in a delicate, yet “routinized,” aspect of interpersonal interaction, and, more generally still, for explicating how a great variety of practices of talking in interaction, and efforts to carry through a variety of courses of action, get organized and packaged in well-structured sequences of turns at talk.

A bit of background about this text is in order. An earlier version constituted the second chapter of my dissertation (Schegloff, 1967), a revision of which was published in the *American Anthropologist* (Schegloff, 1968). Around the same time as this publication, Erving Goffman, who had recently relocated from the University of California, Berkeley (where he had

chaired my dissertation committee), to the University of Pennsylvania, contacted me regarding a series that he and Dell Hymes were to co-edit for the University of Pennsylvania Press under the title "Conduct and Communication." It was to include as its inaugural volumes his own *Strategic Interaction* (1969) and a collection of Ray Birdwhistell's work under the title *Kinesics and Context* (1970); could they include a revised version of my dissertation as another of the inaugural titles? I spent the summer of 1970 working on the revision of the dissertation manuscript (and of the paper published from it) to see if I could fashion a book I would be content to publish. I completed the revision of two of its chapters – the second and fourth – before deciding that I no longer felt that the sort of work being developed under the rubric "conversation analysis" could be defensibly done that way, and I declined the invitation.¹

To this day I am not sure whether this was the right decision, either for me or for Conversation Analysis as a mode of inquiry. It surely affected my life in major ways. But publishing a piece of work is in effect an endorsement of a way of working, and, at the time, I felt that there was too much in even the revised version that I could neither endorse as a way of working and presenting results nor remove without undermining the viability of the work as a book.

Most problematic was the recourse to "plausibly recalled" data, so-called "field notes" of scenes observed once in real time, clippings from newspapers, and the like – much of it familiar from ethnographically based research and especially from the body of Goffman's work, but hardly defensible in view of the growing evidence of the decisive and "surprising" relevance of "detail" discoverable from recorded data but inaccessible to once-in-real-time observation or occasioned and "interested" recollection. In participating in the development of a distinctive mode of research, it seemed ill advised to publish a piece of work that took the adequacy of such data apparently for granted and used it to support the sorts of analytic claims we were finding could be made compellingly. An observation key to the whole work of the dissertation was, after all, my noticing of a single second of silence from the answerer after the phone had been picked up. Although we did not yet have much well-transcribed recorded data (hence the recourse to other types of material), it no longer seemed defensible to ground claims on data that were out of keeping with what we were trying to do, whatever their role in previous inquiry.

That said, I do think there is much that was – and is – correct in these revised chapters, some that is important and has since been further developed, and some that is potentially important but is not yet developed. I publish it here under the auspices of historical documentation; conversation-analytic work has developed to the point that there is no

risk (I hope) of anyone thinking that I am endorsing the ways of working I found problematic thirty years ago. And perhaps some of its substantive findings can be of use. As noted at the outset, in the context of this volume it may serve to illustrate how the technological features of an interaction medium can lead investigators who are pursuing an analytic goal to advance our understanding of features of interaction that are by no means technology specific.

For the development of conversation analysis, this chapter offered a variety of themes and analytic tacks, such as the positioning of objects within a turn and the organization of a turn, an orientation to sequences of sequences, and the ways in which interactional practices and constraints set the context and limitations on unilateral determination of interactional outcomes – here with respect to the very availability of persons to interact. If particular advances in the larger enterprise were to be singled out, developed largely in my interaction with Sacks, they might include:

- A systematic account of a sequence type. This included (a) the identification of a particular sequence type used to do a particular activity – the summons/answer sequence; (b) the specification of an account of the notion or unit “a sequence”; (c) an important step in the development of the notion of preferred and dispreferred responses in sequences, previously introduced in the notion of asymmetric alternatives (Schegloff and Sacks, 1973, but first developed for the conference presentation of that paper in 1969), further specified here (at pp. 358–368) and later further developed by Sacks in his 1971 lectures (1992, II, pp. 414–415) and subsequently 1987 [1973]), by Pomerantz (1984), and in Schegloff (1988).
- One piece of the early study of what we term “the overall structural organization of the unit ‘a single conversation’.” Aside from Sacks’ inquiries discussed in the *Lectures* (and some papers taken from them, such as Sacks, 1975), the work on openings taken up in this chapter is further pursued in Schegloff (1970, 1979, 1986, and forthcoming), and the work on closings was pursued in Schegloff and Sacks (1973) and Jefferson (1973).
- The notion of practices and actions done “for cause,” and the linkage of that to the priority claims such actions make on their recipients.
- An exploration of what might be involved in an exhaustive exploration of a single turn or turn type, and a very brief and formulaic one at that, and doing it in a fashion compatible with what was known about other targets of inquiry.
- The first piece of work to take on an aggregate of data. The single turn or turn type was explored through a collection of 500 instances of that

turn type, and this at a time when inquiry had been limited to intensive examination of single occurrences.

- Through working with collections of instances, the introduction to this domain of inquiry of the notion of a deviant case, apparently at odds with an analytic claim, “testing” the claimed finding, allowing reformulation of the finding, finding indirect support in the apparently incompatible instance(s), and allowing further specification of the finding.
- The first efforts to deal with what I have come to call “granularity” (Schegloff, 2000).

This work, then, did spawn a line of research for which the technology involved was central – a whole genre preoccupied with telephone conversation. At the same time, the technology served to spur the development of a whole modality of research to which it was fundamentally peripheral, but to which it provided a contextually varied glimpse of its basic data. Who knows what the view in retrospect thirty years from now will reveal to have been the major payoffs of research set in motion by the devices that have engendered “perpetual contact”?

Note

- 1 The two chapters I revised were for a long time known only to my friend and colleague Harvey Sacks, with whom I discussed them at the end of the summer in 1970; they have since been read by a few people to whose work they seemed relevant. The document published here is the 1970 version of chapter 2 (modified only to accommodate publishing conventions adhered to by Cambridge University Press); Chapter 4 is to appear elsewhere (Schegloff, 1970). Chapter 1 was introductory and literature-review-ish, in the genre style of dissertations at that time. Chapter 3 had concerned something I had termed “the method of the call” in developing the dissertation work, a line of analysis that Sacks had pursued in his 1968 lectures (1992, I: 773–783 *passim*) under the rubric “the reason for the call.” The central topic of chapter 5 – transformations of the identities or “capacities” in which the participants are to be talking – turned out to require prior work (at the time still undone) about mutual identification and recognition in so-called “personal” conversations, that is, ones not in institutional contexts or with a “business” character. That work was subsequently undertaken (Schegloff, 1979), and the dissertation material on the matter in an institutional context is treated thematically in Schegloff (forthcoming).

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B Opening sequencing

Emanuel A. Schegloff

It is an easily noticeable fact about two-party conversations¹ that their speaker sequencing is alternating. That is to say, the sequencing of speakers in two-party conversation can be described by the formula “ababab,” where “a” and “b” are the parties to the conversation.²

The “abab” formula is a specification, for two-party conversation, of a basic rule for conversation: *one party at a time*.³ The strength of this rule can be seen in the members’ practice that, in a multi-party setting (more precisely, where there are four or more participants), if more than one person is talking, it can be claimed not that the rule has been violated, but that more than one conversation is going on. Thus, Bales can write (1950, p. 461; emphasis added):

The conversation generally proceeded so that *one person talked at time*, and all members in the particular group were attending the *same conversation*. In this sense, these groups might be said to have a “single focus,” that is, *they did not involve a number of conversations proceeding at the same time*.

When combined with an analytic conception of an utterance, the “abab” specification has a variety of other interesting consequences, such as allowing us to see how persons can come to say “X is silent,” when no person in the setting is talking – as in Bergler’s (1938) title, “On the Resistance Situation: The Patient Is Silent.”

The “abab” formula, in common with techniques for speaker sequencing in multi-party conversation (see Sacks, 1992), operates on an utterance-to-utterance basis. It relates each speaker’s turn sequentially to the previous one, the completion of one speaker’s turn serving to occasion a transition to a next speaker’s turn. This mode of operation may be seen to generate two associated problems: a termination problem, i.e. how to deprive some turn’s completion of its relevance for a transition to another speaker (for a preliminary report see Schegloff and Sacks, 1973); and an initiation problem, i.e. how coordinated entry by two parties into an orderly sequence of conversational turns⁴ is managed. It is the latter problem that is to be addressed below.

One way of specifying the initiation problem might be to ask: "Who talks first?" The problem would thus be seen as an allocation problem, concerned with the assignment of the term "a" in the "abab" formula to one or another party. A completely general solution would be one that, for any two possible co-conversationalists (or for any n co-conversationalists), would give a determinate finding on "who goes first." No such general solution seems operative. One reason for this might be that such a solution would seem to require some identification or categorization of the prospective participants, in terms of which an allocation might be decided. However, first, it does not appear that any collection of identification terms for members is uniformly a locus for rights of first-speakership (for example, the collection "Protestant, Catholic . . ." is not, nor are most such collections). Secondly, Sacks (1972a) has shown that, as between alternative identifications or categorization terms and as between alternative collections of them, there is a selection problem which is general, and consequently a problem of convergence in the selection of identification terms. The consequence of this is that, even if all identification terms were the locus of first-speakership rules, convergence on some set of terms would be required for an unambiguous determination of first speaker to be arrived at. Thirdly, it is not the case that the identifications that may make it relevant for the parties to talk in the first place yield a determination of who should talk first. Were that the case, a solution as general as was needed would be available, any determination of the relevance of talk being simultaneously a determination of who should begin it.

More to the point, however, is that the initiation problem formulated as an allocation problem is not general. Rather, the problem in that form arises only in a restricted class of cases. In many of the cases in which the allocation problem is seen as relevant, it is by virtue of some already selected identification of the parties. That is, "who goes first" is a problem only given some already relevant identification of the alternatives. For example, when participants are already relevantly formulated as "officer-private" or "adult-child," a rule such as "don't speak until spoken to," addressed in part to the allocation problem, is in point. Similarly, given the relevance of formulations of the parties such as "master, servant," or "clerk, customer" (and some formulation of the "setting" – for example, in the latter case, being in a business establishment the clerk serves and the customer is then patronizing), the allocation problem may be found to be relevant.⁵ In view of the fact that the relevance of the allocation problem in many cases presumes some formulation of members and setting (from a restricted set of such formulations), it is hardly surprising that available discussions of it typically offer in their findings solutions couched in terms

of those formulations (typically involving some hierarchicalized set of identifications, for example age-grade, social status, organizational rank, etc.; see Albert, 1964, and Goffman, 1963, p. 91, for examples).⁶ There are other than categorical ways in which the "who first" problem may be found relevant, for example in terms of interpersonal histories, when there is an issue about who will "break the ice" after some breach in a relationship, but those are clearly not general.

One domain in which the problem seems relevant, and within which there seems to be a generally used solution, is that of telephone conversations. There, a "distribution rule for first utterances" is: the *answerer speaks first*.⁷ The distribution rule can hold generally in its domain because it formulates the parties in terms of identification categories which are "this-conversation-specific" for any conversation in the domain, rather than in terms of categories "external" to the conversation (on "external" identifications and attributes, see Goffman, 1961, pp. 19-34). The categories "caller, called," or "caller, answerer" are relevant to participants for other parts of the conversation as well, for example in closings (Schegloff and Sacks, 1973; for another description of the relevance of "caller, called" to conversational openings, see Lewis, 1969).⁸

I shall not elaborate here on the details of the distribution rule as a solution to the allocation version of the initiation problem for telephone conversation (see Schegloff, 1968, pp. 1076-1080). In the corpus of data with which we start, it holds for all but one of the roughly 500 conversations. In the vast majority of these, the dispatcher (when calls were made to the police) or others (when calls were made by the police) spoke first. In several cases of simultaneous talk at the beginning of the conversation (occurring because the caller was still talking to the switchboard operator when the dispatcher "came on the line"), a resolution occurred by the caller withdrawing in favor of the called. That is, either the caller stopped and the dispatcher continued, or both stopped and the dispatcher went on.

#364

D: [Police Desk.
 C: [First aiders with me.
 D: Police Desk.
 C: Hello?
 D: Yes.
 C: Uh, this is... (etc.)

#66

D: Police Desk.
 C: ((simultaneously giving phone number 54377
 in background to operator))

D: Hello
 C: I am a pharmacist. I own... (etc.)
 #43
 D: [Police Desk.
 C: [Say, what's all the excitement...
 D: Police Desk?
 C: Police Headquarters?
 D: Yes.
 C: What's all the excitement,... (etc.)

Simultaneous talk is of special interest because it is the converse of "abab," which requires that only one party talk at a time. The resolution of simultaneous talk at the beginning of telephone conversation by reference to the distribution rule would support a claim for its status as a general solution to an "allocation" problem in that domain. A fully adequate demonstration might involve giving a precise explication of the notion of one party's "withdrawal," perhaps by reference to some utterance unit, for example a sentence, begun but not finished. The available data do not allow such a demonstration here.

One case clearly does not fit the distribution rule:

#9 Police make call; receiver is lifted,
 and there is a one second pause:
 (1.0)
 Police: Hello
 Other: American Red Cross
 Police: Hello, this is Police Headquarters...er,
 Officer Stratton,... (etc.)

In this case the caller talks first, whereas the distribution rule would require that the first line be "American Red Cross," the utterance of the called party.

In dealing with this datum, we come to find that the distribution rule, although it holds in most cases, is best understood as a derivative of more general rules. The more general formulation is relevant to unmediated interaction as well as to telephone conversation. By reformulating the initiation problem, we are enabled to deal with aspects of the opening structure on which the distribution rule is mute. A shift in focus from "who talks first" to how the initiation of conversation is done leads to a description of a solution for *that* problem, a solution that in turn provides for alternative "first speaker" outcomes. The distribution rule can then be understood as one specification of the more general formulation, and data such as #9 above as another, both in that sense being special cases subsumed under it.

The problem of availability

Many activities seem to require some minimum number of participants to do them. For thinking or playing solitaire, only one is required; for dialogue, at least two; and, for "eristic dialogue," at least three.⁹ When an activity has as one of its properties a requirement of a minimal number of parties, then the same behaviors done without that "quota" being met are subject to being seen as instances of some other activity (with a different minimum requirement, perhaps), or as "random" behavior casting doubt on the competence or normalcy of their performer. Thus, one person playing the piano while another is present may be seen to be performing, whereas in the absence of another he may be seen to be practicing. Persons finding themselves waving to no one in particular by mistake may have to provide for the sense of their hand movement as having been only the first part of a convoluted attempt to scratch their head.

Conversation, at least for adults in this society, seems to be an activity with a minimal requirement of two participants. Reference to such a feature seems required for the analysis of observations such as the following.

Buses in Manhattan have as their last tier of seats one long bench. Two persons were observed sitting on this last bench next to one another but in no way indicating that they were "with each other" (Goffman, 1963, pp. 102-103). Neither turned his head in the direction of the other and, for a long period of time, neither spoke. At one point, one of them began speaking without, however, turning his head in the direction of the other. It was immediately observed that other passengers, within whose visual range this "couple" was located, scanned the back area of the bus to find to whom that talk was addressed. It turned out, of course, that the talk was addressed to the one the speaker was "with." What is of interest to us, however, is that the others present in the scene immediately undertook a search for a conversational other. On other occasions, however, similar in all respects but one to the preceding, a different sequel occurred. The dissimilarity was that the talker was not "with" anyone and, when each observer scanned the environment for the conversational other, no candidate for that position, including each scanner himself, could be located. The observers then took it that the talker was "talking to himself" and the passengers exchanged "knowing glances."¹⁰ The issue here could be seen to involve what Bales (1950, pp. 87-90) has called "targeting," and to be sure that is what the persons in the scene appear to have been attending to. It is to be noted, however, that it is by reference to the character of conversation as a minimally two-party activity that the relevance of seeking a target is established in the first place. In this connection, it may be remarked that such phenomena as "talking to the air" (Goffman,

1953, p. 159) or glossing one's behavior by "talking to oneself" are best understood not as exceptions to the minimal two-party character of conversation, but as especially noticeable by virtue of it, and frequently ways of talking to others while not addressing them (of which other examples are given in Bales, 1950, pp. 89-90).

For activities that require at least two parties, an initial problem of coordination is the problem of availability; that is, a person who seeks to engage in an activity that requires the collaboration of two parties must first establish that another party is available to collaborate. For conversation, that problem may be specified as follows.

I noted earlier that one basic feature of conversation, its speaker sequencing organization, operates on an utterance-to-utterance basis, the completion of one speaker's turn occasioning a transition to a next speaker's turn. If recognizable conversation requires the effective operation of the rules that are relevant to achieving this completion-transition, then one seeking to launch a conversational course of action must attend to the likelihood that at the first relevant point the rules will operate. That point might at first appear to be the completion of his first utterance. What is required is that that point be recognized by a co-conversationalist; that is, that the first speaker's completion be recognized and be made the occasion for a transition to the next speaker, that the co-conversationalist then talk.

However, more is required. For something would be amiss if a next speaker, having "recognized" the first speaker's completion, and having effected a "transition" by speaking "next," produced talk that was not analyzably related to the first speaker's talk. Should that occur, then what might be seen is that the fact that the second speaker did not talk until the first had completed was "accidental," i.e., was not the product of the second speaker's analysis of the first speaker's utterance to find that, and when, it had been (possibly) completed, that serving as the occasion to start talking. Such a finding of non-listening when an utterance is not analyzably related to a prior one can be made not only at the initial exchange of a conversation. An illustration of this point occurring well into an ongoing conversation is the following, drawn from another body of data (BC - a corpus of calls to a radio talk show):

- A: You know it's a funny thing, any man who hires
anybody, has a choice between relatives and strangers.
B: Yeh.
A: When a man hires relatives,
B: Yeh
A: in a private business,

- B: Yeh
 A: Nobody gets excited.
 B: Yeah.
 A: Why?
 B: Yeh. I unnastan dat // ()
 A: Butchu didn' hear a word I *said*.

In addition, then, to simply being a "next speaker," the second speaker's utterance should exhibit attention to, and analysis of, the one it follows. The requirement that utterances be "fitted" to one another independently of managing the transition of one speaker to another adequately (without interruption or pause) is further suggested by the following. When conversations are started with initial "substantive" utterances (for example with a question), next speakers will frequently, in their first turn, ask for a repetition, for example "What?", "Huh?". For instance,

Standing near a bulletin board:

- A: What's Koto?
 B: Pardon me?
 A: It says here, "'Koto lessons.'" What's Koto?
 B: Oh. It's a Japanese musical instrument.

From their production of such utterances as "pardon me" as non-interruptions, it is clear that members can have found that completion had occurred and transition was relevant. But when an utterance fitted to the prior utterance and the activity it was doing is not done, the alternative is not any talk at all that would accomplish the transition to a next speaker, but rather a repetition request. A repetition would allow that analysis which is necessary to producing an utterance fitted to the prior utterance.

Given the relevance of "utterance fitting," we can see that the problem of providing that the sequencing rules will operate, and thus that a course of conversational action is being initiated, may have its locus earlier than the first completion-transition point, though it is at that point that the fruits of the collaboration may first be exhibited. Insofar as the second speaker's utterance after the first completion-transition point should exhibit an analysis of the first speaker's utterance, then "possible second speaker's" attention may be required from the *beginning* of the first speaker's utterance, thus allowing him to analyze that utterance as it is produced, find its possible completion, and be prepared in closely paced order to produce an utterance at the transition point that will exhibit his analysis of the first utterance.

The availability of another, a prospective co-conversationalist, for participation can thus be seen to involve the possibility of his analyzing a first utterance as it is produced. That availability can be open to inspection. That is, an analysis by a prospective first speaker of the appearances of a setting may yield as its product the availability of another (or some specific other). What such an analysis consists of I cannot describe here, though some categorization of others, their involvement in activities not combinable with conversation,¹¹ distance, noise, etc., would seem to be involved. When such an inspection and analysis do not show a prospective co-conversationalist to be available, when there is reason to expect non-hearing or non-analysis of a prospective first utterance, then interactional procedures may be employed to address the problem of availability. The use of such procedures is, thus, "for cause." A description of such procedures, which can constitute solutions to the problem of availability, will serve at the same time as descriptions of the accomplishment of coordinated entry into a conversation.

I turn, then, to a description of one such procedure – summons-answer sequences – and seek to describe its components, organization and properties, and show how it serves as a solution to the problem of availability and thus as a mechanism for coordinated entry into the "abab" formula.

Summons-answer sequences

What the "answerer" referred to in the distribution rule is answering is a summons, for that is the class to which telephone rings are assimilated when analyzed by members (unless explicitly agreed upon on an ad hoc basis otherwise, for example as signals of leaving, requests for return call). Summonses are not restricted in their occurrence to telephone conversation or to conversational openings. They may be used whenever members attend availability as relevantly problematic, including, for example, in the course of an already ongoing conversation (as in data excerpt #398 cited below). And mechanical devices (such as telephone rings or office buzzers) are only one sub-class of summonses, others being terms of address ("John?", "Doctor?", "Mr. Jones," "waiter," "Mister"), courtesy phrases ("Excuse me," "Pardon me"), and a variety of non-verbal actions and paralinguistic productions (a tap on the shoulder, a wave of the hand, a cough, throat-clearing).

The various items that can be used as summonses may be used to accomplish other activities as well; the finding that summoning is being done is, therefore, the product of (members') analysis. Consider, for example, terms of address. An item is a term of address if on some

occasion of address it is usable. (Although that it is usable on some occasion of address will not guarantee that it is usable on all occasions of address, or on any next occasion of address; for example, "Hello, stranger," may be usable only once at the beginning, and not thereafter in the same interaction. In particular, there may be a distribution of rights to use some particular term of address, some being entitled and others not, and some terms of address may vary in appropriateness with some formulation of the setting, for example endearment terms and obscene nicknames being inappropriate in a mixed public setting). This test may generate such sub-classes of address terms as first name, last name, title plus last name, nickname, some occupational titles (but not others – "Doctor," "Nurse," "Rabbi," "Officer," for example, but not "Secretary" or "Plumber"), kinship terms, and others.¹² The use of a member of any of these sub-classes of the class "terms of address" as a whole, can be seen as doing the action "addressing." But doing the action "addressing" in this sense is regularly (perhaps invariably) seen as accomplishing some other action as well when the term of address is produced as a complete utterance. For example, a term of address may be used to accomplish greeting, sanctioning, warning, pleading, invoking an action (as in the surgeon's "Nurse" at the operating table), or summoning. Just as not every term of address is appropriately usable on every occasion of address, so not every term of address is usable to accomplish any of these actions. But on any occasion of use, it is a matter for analysis what action is being done. And although the prior examples have concerned instances in which a term of address is produced as a complete utterance, similar analyses may be relevant in other contexts. For example, a hearer may have to distinguish between a term used as a simple addressing and a use as summons. The following considerations may be relevant to such an analysis.

First, when addressing, the positioning of a term of address is restricted. It may occur at the beginning of an utterance ("Jim, where do you want to go?"), at the end of an utterance ("What do you think, Mary?") or between clauses or phrases in an utterance ("Tell me, John, how's Bill?"). As summons items, however, terms of address are positionally free within an utterance. (This way of differentiating the usages has a "one-way" character; that is, it differentiates only when an item occurs where terms of address, as non-summons items, cannot. When it occurs within the restrictions on placement of terms of address, it clearly is non-differentiating.) As a mere address term, an item cannot occur between a preposition and its object, but as a summons it may, as in the following excerpt from the data:

#398

C: Try to get out t' -- Joe?

D: Yeah?

C: Try to get ahold of... (etc.)

Secondly, summons items may have a distinctive rising terminal juncture, a raising of the voice pitch in a "quasi-interrogative" fashion.¹³ This seems to be especially the case when a summons occurs after a sentence has already begun, as in the above datum. It need not be the case when the summons stands alone, as in "Jim," when trying to attract Jim's attention.

Thirdly, a term of address is "inserted" in an utterance. By that I mean that, after the term of address is introduced, the utterance continues with no break in its grammatical continuity; for example, "Tell me, Jim, what did you think of..." When a summons occurs in the course of an utterance, it is followed by a "re-cycling" to the beginning of the utterance. The utterance is begun again, as in datum #398 cited above. Although in that datum the original utterance is altered when started again, alteration is not intrinsic to what is intended by the term "re-cycling." Thus,

A: If you think -- Gary, if you think -- Gary?

B: (Looks at A)

A: If you think that's bad...(etc.)

Similarly, as the names I have used to refer to them may suggest, the other classes of items that are used to do summoning – "courtesy terms," paralinguistic productions such as coughs, and so on – are not intrinsically summons terms; they are used to do other actions as well. That they are on some occasion of use doing summoning is the outcome of an analysis by co-participants, an analysis to which the production of the utterance may be oriented to ensure its proper outcome.¹⁴ That availability is possibly problematic is one consideration relevant to such an analysis.

The analysis of some utterance as a summons may involve at the same time an analysis of the kind of summons it is. In this respect it is relevant not only that the terms that can be doing summoning can be doing other actions as alternatives, but that utterances used as summonses may be selected for consistency with other features of the setting, or may be vehicles for the accomplishment of other aspects of the interaction. For example, "Excuse me" may, as alternatives to summoning, be used as an apology or as part of a micro-ecological maneuver, as when getting past someone in a crowded setting. In analyzing which of these actions

is being done on some occasion of use, however, it is relevant that, as a summons term, "Excuse me" is typically selected when summoning "strangers" and is not used when summoning "acquaintances" (if so used it may be immediately corrected, as in "Excuse me," other turns around, "Oh, Jim, I didn't know you were here"). "Excuse me" can then be seen to display some analysis by a possible summoner of the prospective interactants as "non-acquaintances," serving as a vehicle for a proposed typing of the upcoming conversation as between "strangers" and being selected as consistent with such an identification of the parties. When the parties both know, and know each other to know, that such an identification (as "strangers") is incorrect, then the analysis of the utterance "Excuse me" as a summons may be rejected; for as a summons it is mis-selected, while as an apology or as part of a micro-ecological maneuver it is correctly produced.¹⁵ Where the term selected is consistent with alternative analyses, errors may in fact be made, as in the following observation.

Two policemen are conversing in front of the rear door of a bus. A lady carrying a young child approaches and says, "Excuse me." One of the policemen looks at her and says, "Yes, ma'am." The lady says, "Excuse me." The policemen step away from the door, and the lady moves toward it.

One resource, then, in deciding between alternative analyses of an utterance that can be used for both summoning and other actions is the organization of possible summonses into classes, selection of which is intendedly consistent with, serves as vehicle for, or accomplishes other features of the setting and interaction (such as a proffered characterization of the co-participants).

As summonses can be done by any of a range of terms, some of which are relevantly seen as organized into standard classes, so answers may be accomplished through a range of terms, whose class membership is also relevant to what they can be analyzed as doing. One class, what Goffman (1963) calls "clearance cues," includes such answers as "Yeah," "What," "Uh huh," as well as such non-verbal availability displays as directing the eyes on, or repositioning the head or body towards, the summoner. The other class is heterogeneous, including a variety of utterances and non-verbal actions, not necessarily precluding availability but making it, and possible conversational sequelae, problematic. Because the class is heterogeneous, each of its members as an answer to a summons requiring particularized, situated analysis by the co-participants to determine its consequences, there is relatively little that can be said about the class *per se*. I shall return to a discussion of this class of "problematic answers" to summonses and their consequences below, after a discussion of

some features of sequences made up of summonses and "clearance cue" answers.¹⁶

Non-terminality of summons-answer (SA) sequences

The sequence¹⁷ that a summons initiates is intendedly preliminary or prefatory to some further conversational or non-verbal activity. Whether at the beginning of a conversation or in its course, to produce or hear an utterance as a summons is to produce or hear it as initiating a sequence (a pair) intendedly introductory to something that will follow it. When followed by a "clearance cue," a summons-answer sequence cannot properly stand as the final exchange of a conversation. Such sequences have "non-terminality" as a specifically relevant feature.¹⁸ They are, then, members of a class Sacks (1992, I, pp. 685-692) has called "pre-sequences," a term collecting such specific forms as "pre-invitations," "pre-offers," "pre-warnings." SA sequences might, accordingly, be called (especially when occurring other than in the course of an already ongoing conversation) "pre-conversationals."

Given the relevance of some continuation upon the completion of an SA sequence with a clearance cue, two constraints may be noted here (another will be discussed below, p. 342) that are relevant to the continuation.

One constraint concerns the party whose "responsibility" it is felt to be. The non-terminality property is produced by the obligation of the *summoner* to talk again upon completion (by the summoned) of the SA sequence. This might seem to be tautological, since the completion of the answer occasions a next speaker's turn, and, in a two-party conversation, the next speaker is necessarily the summoner. The seeming tautology arises in part from the difficulty in two-party conversation of distinguishing between what a party does as formulaically generated next speaker and what he does by virtue of having in his last turn produced a summons. In multi-party conversation, however, there are other possible next speakers (other than the summoner) after the answerer; and the obligation of the summoner to talk again may be seen to select him from among the others, if a clearance cue answer is produced.¹⁹ This point should not be taken as indicating that the summoner's obligation to talk again operates in multi-party, but not in two-party, conversation; only that it may be more clearly analyzable in the former. Sequencing rules seem to operate as general rules, that is for *n*-party conversation. That two-party conversation seems to have a sequencing formula "abab," whereas multi-party conversation does not, is not a product of special sequencing rules, but is a derivative specification for two-party conversation of

mechanisms generally operative. Even within two-party conversation, the non-redundant character of the summoner's obligation to talk again after a clearance cue answer may be appreciated, if we note that, although the answer to a summons (for example "Yeah" or "What") can be a complete utterance, it need not be. The sequel could be produced by an obligation for the answerer to continue, as is the case, for example, when a chairman calls on a next speaker in a pre-set order of speakers:

Chair: Mr. Smith

Smith: Yes. I'd like to suggest...(etc.)

or when the initiator of a broken-off interaction is re-contacted by his erstwhile co-participant. These sorts of occurrences are to be distinguished, and are distinguished by members, from SA sequences. Even within two-party conversation then, the summoner's obligation to talk again is an independent sequencing mechanism. With rare exceptions (themselves having orderly consequences), the summoner fulfills this obligation and talks again. It is the routine fulfillment of this obligation that produces data in which conversations beginning with SA sequences do not terminate there.

The force of the non-terminality feature, specified in the obligation of the summoner to talk again, may be appreciated by observing what regularly occurs when the summoner, for whatever reason, does not wish to engage in the activity to which the SA sequence he originated may have been preliminary. Here we characteristically find some variant of the sequence: "Sam?", "Yeah?", "Oh, never mind." Note that in the very attempt to withdraw appropriately from the obligation to continue after a completed SA sequence, the summoner in fact conforms to it, and is not simply silent. (Note also that hearers, and the reader, "naturally" hear that he is withdrawing, or canceling, what he was otherwise about to initiate; they do not hear that he summoned the other in order to say "never mind.")²⁰ Even in telephone contacts between mutually anonymous strangers, where maintaining the intactness of a relationship or a reputation would not seem to be at issue, the obligation to continue talk upon completion of SA is regularly fulfilled. For example, in calling an establishment to learn if it is open, that fact may sometimes be established when the ringing phone (summons) is lifted and "Hello" or the establishment's name is heard. Rather than hang up, callers will often continue with the already answered question "Are you still open?" (although there is a common tendency to append to it some seemingly less superfluous inquiry). Similarly, even when a caller can detect from the answerer's first utterance that he has reached a wrong number, he may fulfill the obligation to talk again (CF corpus):

A: Hello.

B: Uh, I called the wrong number, 451 instead of 251.
I am getting absent-minded. Excuse me.

A: Alright.

Another constraint on the sequel to SA sequences is imposed by another feature – their non-repeatability. Once a sequence has been completed, the summoner may not fulfill his obligation to continue with another summons to the same party. A contrast may be helpful here with question-answer sequences (QA). QA is a sequential unit like SA (see next section), and may also be used in conversation as a pre-sequence. For example, A: “Remember Mary Jones from high school?” B: “Yeah.” Further talk from A would seem to have been made relevant, the question having been specifically preliminary to it. The obligation to talk again can be satisfied by another question (for example, A: “And remember the guy she used to go around with?”). Although a questioner may be (except for special classes of question and appropriate context) constrained not to ask the same question again, he may choose some question to fill the next slot. A summoner is barred not only from using the same summons again, but from doing any more summoning (of the same “other”).

The effectiveness of this restriction depends upon the clear recognition that an answer has been returned. This recognition normally is untroubled. However, trouble sometimes occurs by virtue of the fact that some lexical items may, in some circumstances, be used both as summonses and as answers. That “Hello” may be so used in telephone conversations can be seen at D5/S5 of the following datum:

#IPD 237

D1: Yeah.

S1: Listen uh is this the dispatcher?

D2: Mm hmm.

S2: Listen, how's the ambulance situation?
Have you got enough of 'em?

D3: Well, hold on, let me check for you.

S3: Well (now) listen, we can jury rig uh
some uh ambulances out of our motor tenders
if necessary.

D4: Uh huh, hold on, let me check.

S4: Alright
(pause)

D5: Hello.

S5: Hello.

D6: No, they've got...(etc.)

In some circumstances it may be impossible to tell whether such a term has been used as summons or as answer. Thus, for example, when acoustic difficulties arise in a telephone connection, both parties may attempt to confirm their continued mutual availability. Each may then employ a "hello" as a summons to the other. For each of them, however, it may be unclear whether what he hears in the earpiece is an answer to his check, or the other's summons for him to answer. One may, in such circumstances, hear a conversation in which a sequence of some length is constituted by nothing but alternately and simultaneously offered "hellos." Such "verbal dodging" may be resolved by one party's use of an item on which a second is conditionally relevant (see next section) where the second is unambiguously a second part of a pair (such as a QA sequence, "Can you hear me?"). In unmediated interaction, the difficulty can arise in situations where physical barriers make it difficult for the summoned person to indicate his having heard the summons and having initiated a course of answering. If the summoner does not hear the answer of the other and repeats the summons, the answerer may treat the second summons as over-insistent.²¹ Continued knocking on the door or ringing of the phone may be met with the complaint, "I'm coming, I'm coming."

To sum up, the summoner's obligation to talk again cannot be satisfied by initiating another SA sequence to the same other. This does not mean, however, that one might not find two SA sequences in tandem in the opening of a conversation. If the non-terminality property is not met – that is, should the summoner not fulfill his obligation to talk again – the answerer of the first SA sequence may start another with a summons of his own, as in lines 1–3 below:

E has called M. S
 1 M: McNamara A
 2 (pause) Ø
 3 M: Hello? S
 4 E: Yeah. A
 5 E: John?
 6 M: Yeah
 7 E: I uh just trying to do some uh intercom here
 8 in my own set up and then get a hold of you
 at the same time.

One further observation on the operation of the non-terminality property, concerning a possible misunderstanding of the use of a name, can allow us to note how the orderliness of "mistakes" in interaction is based on such formal properties. Names as address terms may be used, as suggested earlier, as both greetings and summonses (to cite but two of

their uses). Should a name intendedly uttered as a greeting be heard as a summons, the hearer will expect a continuation whereas the speaker may not be prepared to give one. This may occur if A calls B's name and waves. A greeting will have been intended, verbally and gesturally accomplished. The lexical item perceived alone, for example if the gesture is not seen, may be heard as a summons, and one who hears it as a summons may then answer and await the activity to which it was expectably preliminary. The misinterpreted initiator may then feel required to say, "I was just saying hello," thereby honoring an obligation he was mistakenly seen to have assumed.

It is worth noting about such occurrences that misinterpreted persons can see how they were misinterpreted. Such availability of the nature of an error may have important consequences, such as the following.

First, it is not only "correct" or "sequentially appropriate" utterances that can be analyzed as methodically produced, but errors can be seen as methodically produced as well (by participants and therefore by analysts). Here the error turns on the ambiguity of an address term, its usability to do alternative activities, in this case "summoning" and "greeting," where there is a differentiating feature of two otherwise closely related sequences. The non-terminality of SA sequences stands in contrast to the possible terminality of greeting exchanges; whereas an SA sequence is properly followed by further talk, an exchange of greetings can be (but need not be) all of a conversation (A: "Hi," B: "Hi"). The comparison of SA sequences and greeting exchanges is in point, for analysts and for participants, because of the special status both have as openings. Greeting exchanges properly occur as openings, that is, as the initial exchange.²² Although SA sequences may occur throughout a conversation "for cause" (that is, when the other's availability may be problematic), one place they regularly may be in point is as an initial exchange. Both greetings and SA sequences, as compared with other utterances, are then especially relevant to the opening slots of a conversation: that is, the opening slots are one place one can look for them on the one hand, and on the other hand they are preferred solutions to an analysis (by members) of utterances occurring in those slots.²³ The usability of some utterance (for example a first name) both for a summons and as (a component of) a greeting can lead to an error of analysis because either is a preferred analysis for such an item in a first slot; it can lead to a *consequential* error, since each calls for a different response, and the possible terminality of the exchange differs between them. But the error can be seen to be methodically produced via the sequential similarities of the exchanges, and the relevant differentiating feature of terminality. When one mistakes a greeting for something else, it is not anything else it may be mistaken for;

the mistake stands in an orderly relationship to a correct analysis of the utterance.

Secondly, given that there was an error, a misinterpreted person can see how it was produced. It is in point to note further that a misinterpreted person can see that there was an error. Although I cannot undertake a full explication here, I can note that detecting that an error was made in the analysis of the first utterance turns on the relevance of different sequelae to different interpretations of the first utterance. If a first utterance was a greeting, then another greeting, a greeting return or a greeting answer are relevant (respectively, "Hi," "Hi"; "How are you?", "And *you*"; "How are you?", "Fine"). If a first utterance was a summons, then an answer is relevant.²⁴ Although some utterances may be possible second parts of either sequence (for example, "Hello"), for the most part the class of utterances that can be second parts of greeting exchanges, and the class of utterances that can be answers to summonses, are not overlapping. It is via the occurrence of a member of a class that is "incorrect" as a second item that the occurrence of an error of analysis can be detected by a first speaker.

Thirdly, being able to see that an error has been made, and being able to see the methodical basis of the error upon its occurrence without extended investigation, allows immediate correction and choice of relevant correction, correction being relevant because of the difference between the sequences with respect to possible terminality.

Fourthly, that members can detect and find the basis for mistakes in differentiating greeting usages from "summons" usages, and do so methodically, gives some basis for hope that analysts will be able to do so.

Non-terminality is an outcome of the summoner's observation of his obligation to talk again. Corollary to that obligation is the obligation of the answerer, having answered the summons with a clearance cue, to listen further. Just as the summoner, by virtue of his summons, obligates himself for further interaction, so the answerer, by virtue of his answer, may commit himself to staying with the encounter. An orientation to these respective obligations may enter into the selection of an answer to the summons. Should an answerer not be in a position, or not be willing, to attend the otherwise obligated next utterance of the summoner, he may select other than a clearance cue as his answer. For example, "sometimes the reply may contain an explicit request to hold off for a moment" (Goffman, 1953, p. 197). But why should one who has been summoned reply immediately with a request to hold off for a moment, rather than hold off for a moment and then reply with a clearance cue? Several issues are involved here. First, an explication of the internal structure of summons-answer sequences and their temporal organization will

allow me to examine the timing considerations just raised. Second, I shall have to give some attention to non-clearance cue answers to summonses, though they do not appear in my data.

Conditional relevance in SA sequences

Throughout the preceding discussion, there has been repeated reference to summons-answer "sequences." In employing the term "sequences," more is intended than to refer to the feature, always present where consecutive rather than simultaneous organization holds, that one event follows another; more is intended than subsequence. Although the relationship of subsequence, and especially adjacent subsequence, is pervasively relevant to conversation (the placement of utterances, and especially what they are placed after, being central to the analysis of their use), the present use of the term "sequence" is intended to take note of a specific organization of utterances employed by members, which makes of the sequence a unit in its own right. Such "sequences in the strong sense" have determinate numbers of parts; frequently they are two-part sequences (pairs), but they may have more parts (as in "rounds"). And they have determinate components; given the first part of the sequence, some member of a restricted class of utterances will be relevant, will be a component required to complete the sequence. Thus question-answer sequences, or greeting exchanges or story rounds require contributions from a restricted class of components. The term "conditional relevance" (which, together with several of the ensuing observations related to it, is borrowed from Sacks, 1972a) is used to refer to that property. When one utterance (or member of a class of utterances) is conditionally relevant on another, or when one action is conditionally relevant on another, attention is called to their treatment by members as a "sequence in the strong sense." Given the occurrence of the first, the second is expectable; upon its occurrence it is seen (analyzed) by members as second to the first, as the second part of a pair, as produced "responsively."

The formulation of the property "conditional relevance," and the sequencing unit it serves to constitute, allow us a way of dealing in an analytic way with "absences." Members (professional analysts among them) make reference to things that did not occur, things that were not said, actions that were not taken, and so on. In principle, an indefinitely expandable list might be assembled of utterances, actions, etc. that did not occur at some point in a conversation. By reference to such a list, observed absences might be trivializable; a remarked upon or noticed absence might not be discriminable from any other on such a list. Of the indefinitely expandable list of non-occurrences however, only some

have such a relevance that allows them to be seen as absent. Some are, so to speak, "officially absent," and it is in point to search for the bases of "official absence" – that is, the orderly procedures whereby some items, actions, utterances or classes of them are discriminable from others such that their non-occurrence is relevant, is "absence." Conditional relevance is one basis for such official absence. Just as the occurrence of an utterance or action that is conditionally relevant on some other (as "answer" is on "question") is seen as paired in strong sequence with it, so its non-occurrence is its notable, official, relevant absence. Such an "absence" is an event in its own right, constituting adequate grounds for explicit conversational comment (in the ongoing or some subsequent conversation), for further action or modification of action, and/or for appropriate inference, as I shall have occasion to note below in the case here under discussion, summons–answer sequences, in which an *answer is conditionally relevant on the occurrence of a summons*.

Before focusing on conditional relevance as a property organizing the utterances making up a summons–answer sequence, however, we can note that the non-terminality of SA sequences can be seen as the outcome of the conditional relevance property operating at a different level of organization. If the utterances that accomplish the activities of summoning and answering together constitute an organizational unit – the summons–answer sequence – then that unit can itself be subject to organization, not to utterance-to-utterance organization, but to the organization of sequences of utterances. Non-terminality can then be seen to be the consequence of the conditional relevance of further talk on the completion of an SA sequence (in which the answer is drawn from the sub-class of clearance cues). It is the completion of the sequence that makes further talk (or further activity that can be analyzed as the "reason" for the summons) relevant. Should it not be forthcoming, it will be seen as officially absent; and should the answer be not a clearance cue, but one that seeks to block further talk (for a discussion of this class of answers to summonses, see below), the summoned can later ask the summoner what "he wanted" earlier, treating that as something that had been specifically absent (though on good grounds).

The consequences of absences similarly provide a convenient way of noting the operation of conditional relevance in constituting a summons–answer sequence. If one party produces a summons and no answer (of any class, not just no clearance cue) occurs, that may provide the occasion for repetition of the summons. The non-occurrence of the answer is treated by the summoner as its official absence, and its official absence provides adequate grounds for repetition of the summons. "Adequate grounds" are in point in view of the rule, previously formulated, that the summoner

In question-answer (QA) sequences, a considerable silence may follow the question before an answer is given. Although the "pause" may be grounds for inferences such as "he's thinking," "stumped," etc., an answer may remain "awaited." If certain constraints are met by the ensuing utterance (in some cases having to do with their relation to the "substance" of the question; for one proposed set of constraints, see Harrah, 1963), it may be heard as an answer to the earlier question. Even if the utterances following the question are not analyzable as an answer to it, if that talk meets certain constraints it can be heard not as displacing an answer (thus as, for example, "evasive") but as prefiguring it, and some later utterance can be awaited, and then analyzed, as "the answer." (For example, X1: "Have you seen Jim?" Y1: "Oh, is he in town?" X2: "Yeah, he got in yesterday." Y2: "No, I haven't." Y1-X2 may be called an "insertion sequence," being inserted between the components of a question-answer pair. For a more extended discussion of insertion sequences, see Schegloff, 1972).

In SA sequences, however, the conditional relevance of an A on an S must be satisfied within a constraint of immediate juxtaposition. That is to say, if an item that may be used as an answer to a summons is not produced by the summoned in close order, it will not be awaited but found absent. (It should be pointed out, however, that SA sequences do seem to allow a limited class of insertion sequences; for example, X1: "Jim." Y1: "Did you call me?" X2: "Yeah." Y2: "Just a minute.")

Although this point introduces a temporal constraint on the SA sequence, it is far from clear that "elapsed time" is the relevant consideration. Rather than clock time, a more relevant temporal ordering turns on a notion of "nextness" or priority with respect to other, ongoing action sequences. Upon the occurrence of a summons, an answer should be the "next" action of the summoned. This can be seen especially when the summoned is engaged in some action sequence or course of action that is treated as non-combinable with conversation.²⁶ Then, he may be often found to place his answer to the summons before some next action in the course of action he had been engaged in when summoned. A clear case can be found when a telephone rings during an ongoing face-to-face conversation. Then, answering the summons may have priority over continuing the conversation until it is brought to a close, although the co-conversationalists may use the occasion to bring the ongoing conversation to a close, possibly using an analysis of where they are in the structure of the conversation to find that as a possibility, and closing the conversation before the phone is answered.²⁷

This last qualification suggests the double relevance of doing an answer to a summons "next." For to place an utterance "next" requires a conception of "units" out of which the ongoing course of action is

assembled, and in terms of which there will be some unit that may be “interrupted” and/or some unit whose completion can serve as the occasion for answering the summons as a “next” action; that is, a notion of a unit with respect to which nextness will operate (“next after what”).²⁸ If the ongoing activity is conversation, such units as an extended utterance (story, argument), action, utterance, sentence, phrase, word, or syllable may be treated as units for this purpose, the end of the unit being the occasion for invoking the priority of answering a summons. There is no one fixed order of unit that is invariably the relevant one in terms of which nextness is made operative. Rather, a summoned party can select an order of unit that he will employ on a given occasion. The selection he makes – choosing to complete an extended utterance before answering, breaking off a sentence, or word, or syllable to answer – can be treated by co-participants as indicative of the relative importance or priority accorded the ongoing activity as compared with the expectable activity the summons is initiating (expectable by virtue of the status of the summons as a pre-sequence).²⁹

Although no fixed order of unit is invariably the relevant one, speakers may demonstrate that an utterance-in-its-course is being interrupted to answer the summons. One way of showing that an utterance has not been completed relies on the use of the sentence as a “constituting unit” for utterances (see Sacks, 1992, I, pp. 647–655 *passim*); since utterances are regularly produced in integral numbers of sentences, one way of displaying that an utterance has been interrupted, has been left incomplete, is by leaving a sentence incomplete.

It should be noted that the priority of an answer to a summons is attended to not only by the summoned party, but by others with whom he may be engaged in a course of action as well. If one party to an ongoing conversation is summoned, for example, it is not only he who has responsibilities in dealing with it. If someone other than the summoned is speaking when the telephone rings, the speaker may leave some unit incomplete to allow the summoned to attend to the priority answer (the non-combinability of one conversation with another otherwise forcing the summoned to choose between listening to the speaker in the conversation he has been in or answering the summons). If the summoned party is the speaker at the time the summons is done, and he leaves some unit, for example a sentence, incomplete to answer the summons, then other parties will not complete it (as they might in other circumstances where a speaker leaves a sentence incomplete). If the summoned completes his utterance, or if, without completing it, the action it was doing is nonetheless analyzable, others will not direct a response to him, or with normal pacing produce a next action in that course of action.

Kit: Well, I'm sure the cover charge isn't very much.

Bob: It's probably about two-fifty.

Kit: Oh Hell!

Bob: What'd'ya mean, 'Oh, Hell!'

Kit: O.K. Let's call up that place.

Bob: Shit. Well, look (telephone rings) most places charge, uh (answers telephone). Hello. Uh, this is her husband, uh could, uh, I uh, if it's an emergency, I'll take it. Could you inquire if it's an emergency? Sure, she'll be home in another, about fifteen or twenty minutes. Okay, Okay, thank you, good-bye. She sounded like she had a charge on.

(Throughout the telephone conversation, the two girls present talked, but their talk was untranscribable.)

When a party to an ongoing conversation is summoned, the summons has consequences for all the parties to the conversation, regardless of who the speaker is at the moment the summons is produced. Answering the summons, and the course of action the summons is a pre-sequence to, can take priority over the ongoing conversation, and an integrated set of actions by the parties is produced to manage this. Not only do the parties to the ongoing conversation no longer direct utterances to the summoned party, but they may undertake to be visibly dis-attending the conversation he has been called to. If the prior conversation was two-party, then the single party left after the summoned has turned to the interrupting course of action regularly averts his eyes, inspects the surroundings, engages in various "auto-involvements" (see Goffman, 1963, pp. 64-69), begins reading. He will, if possible, appear to engage in some action that is treated as non-combinable with listening to conversation. If the prior conversation was multi-party, then the remaining non-summoned parties may adopt, as a way of showing they are not listening, a conversation among themselves (a way of showing non-listening by virtue of the non-combinability of one conversation with another). Given that there are tasks for everybody when one party to a conversation is summoned from outside it (clearly the consequences are different when he is summoned by another party to the conversation; others in the conversation then properly listen instead of properly "not listening"; should others start to talk, it would be a violation of the one-party-at-a-time feature, although it is not a violation if they talk when the summoned has turned to the second conversation, etc.), though the summons may be directed at a particular party, the interruption is done to the course-of-action or the occasion.

The priority or "nextness" constraint on answers to summonses, combined with the pre-sequence character of SA sequences and the relevance of the sequence to all pre-present parties, allows us to see the basis for the treatment a summons may get as an "interruption," even when it is placed by a summoner so as not to coincide or be simultaneous with another's talk, and not to break a larger sequencing unit (such as QA). Since it makes an answer to the summons a priority next action for the summoned, since it makes relevant a correlative set of tasks for other parties to an ongoing conversation, and since the SA sequence is properly a pre-sequence to further talk, then, though no utterance or strong sequence is interrupted by the summons, an action sequence is interrupted, and extendedly so (potentially; that is, the summoned may not answer with a clearance cue). Although a greeting addressed to someone engaged in a conversation may have a response inserted into that ongoing action sequence, the ongoing sequence can continue because an exchange of greetings can be terminal. That is not the case with an SA sequence, which projectedly interrupts the ongoing action sequence. One can, then, exchange greetings with another otherwise engaged and leave him otherwise engaged; one cannot so summon him, though similar lexical items, similarly placed, may be employed.

Correlatively, whereas SA sequences share the conditional relevance property with greeting exchanges and QA sequences, SA sequences appear to be more constraining, and more effective therefore, as interruptions. Thus, when QA sequences are employed with someone engaged in another course of action (for example a conversation) they may fail; the question may fail to get an answer. Upon that failure, a summons may be used, and may succeed. Thus:

A: Can I have a glass of water please?

(pause)

A: Miss.

B: Yes.

A: Can I have a glass of water?

B: Yes sir.

Or:

A dog ran by.

Margaret said, "Doggie," in a quick, mandatory tone.

She called out loudly, "Do you know who he is?" and looked expectantly toward the two women.

The women were chatting and ignored her question.

Even more loudly and insistently, she repeated, "Do you know who he is?" and a slight scowl appeared on her face.

Still no response from the two women on the porch. Then she said impatiently and in an irritated way, "Grandma!"

The grandmother finally looked up and asked calmly, "What?"

Margaret said, "Do you know who he belongs to?" in a teasing, playful fashion. The grandmother said, matter-of-factly, "No."

Margaret said proudly, "Ellen."³⁰

To summarize: the operation of temporal constraints on the occurrence of an answer when a summons has been produced provides the basis for finding an answer "absent," rather than having "not yet" occurred, and thereby the occasion for repetition of the summons. (It is these constraints that preclude the possibility of substituting for a "Just a minute" with a subsequent "Yeah," a pause until the summoned is available.) The empirical outcome has the form: S – short pause – S – short pause – S – short pause . . . It is curious to note that when the actual performance of the summons is turned over to machines, the machines are built to follow this form. If each ring of the telephone be considered a summons, then it is built to summon, wait for an answer, ring, wait for an answer, and so on (Clearly, it could have been built to produce one sustained ring.) And some persons, with apparent regard to the status of a ring as a summons and thus an utterance of sorts, decline to interrupt, and wait, hand on receiver, for the completion of a ring before answering.

To this qualification concerning the temporal organization of SA sequences that affects the initiation of repetitions³¹ of S must be added another concerning the extensiveness of repetition of S upon the official absence of A. It is empirically observable that S is not repeated without limitation until an A is returned. Although it seems that repetitions of S do not exceed three to five, it does not appear that "counting" or "numbers" are the central consideration, just as clock time is not at the heart of temporal organization (but see note 32). There would appear to be some orderly basis for ending repetitions of S, although there does not seem to be anything like a "restriction" or "terminating rule" involved. Indeed, it is not quite accurate to speak of a basis for "ending repetitions," for what is ended is not "repetitions" but "summoning," not successive use of summons items, but continuing attempts to start a conversation by establishing availability. The needed qualification concerning the "extensiveness" of repetitions of S involves the summoner's finding not only that availability has not been established but that it cannot or ought not be. One element relevant to such a finding appears to be an orientation to the summoned party's expectable respect for the property of immediate juxtaposition; by reference to that it may be found that, if several repetitions of S fail to elicit an A, further repetitions will do no better. Some inferences based on the absence of an A that may support such a

finding will be discussed shortly (for example, the inference “no answer – no person”). It is perhaps the recognition that summoners employ such considerations that leads the telephone company to advise callers to allow at least ten rings to permit prospective answerers time to maneuver their way to the phone.³²

It was remarked earlier that the official absence of an item conditionally relevant on another was an event in its own right, remarkable upon, constituting good grounds for consequent action and modification of otherwise relevant rules, and warranting a variety of inferences. In turning now to the last of these features, we can note that the conditional relevance of an item (utterance, action) removes it from the domain of “naive option.” It is not that answering a summons is “obligatory,” or that it can be “enforced,” but that the absence of an answer supports a variety of strong inferences, and a member who does not answer does so “at the peril” of one or another of those inferences being made. Indeed, an explication of the notion “no naive option” involves that the legitimacy of *some* inference cannot be denied. If some particular inference is proposed, then, in denying it, a summoned party who did not answer offers a substitute, thereby conceding the legitimacy of *an* inference, though not perhaps of a *particular one*. If questioned as to the warrant for his inference, a summoner may refer to the absence of an answer, and this stands as adequate warrant. A sequence constructed to exemplify these remarks might be:

Summoner: Are you mad at me?

Summoned: Why?

Summoner: You didn't answer when I called you.

Summoned: No, I didn't hear you.

Conversely, the following observed exchange suggests what is intended by “naive option” in the character claimed for “hair playing”:

A: What are you thinking about?

B: Who says I'm thinking?

A: You're playing with your hair.

B: That doesn't mean anything.

The inferences for which the absence of an answer can be good grounds are “fitted” to the circumstances in which the summons was done. Without pretending to exhaustiveness, or to adequate attention to detail, it may nonetheless be useful to point to some classes of circumstance and relevant possible inferences.

It was proposed early in the present discussion that SA sequences are employed when availability is analyzably problematic. One kind of

problematicalness is whether there is another, potential co-participant, present and interactionally "in play" (for example, not asleep; the term is from Goffman, 1963). (I use the "kind of problematicalness" without being able to describe how a scene is analyzed to find its relevance.) One inference based on the absence of an answer to a summons, seemingly related to this circumstance, is "no answer – no person (co-participant)." Someone who dials another on the telephone and hears no receiver picked up may announce, as a matter of course, "Nobody's home" or "No one there." A man returning home, seeking to find out if anyone else is already there, may call out the name of his wife, for example, and upon not receiving an answer may take it she is not home or not "in play." (Indeed, he may take it that no one is home; others may hear in his summons that he is seeing if *anyone* is home and, if they are, they should answer; it may be no excuse to say, "But you didn't call *me*." Accordingly, attending to the way others will analyze his summons, he may find "no answer" supporting the inference not only that the one summoned is not there, but that nobody is there.)³³ It is not a primary inference that, although present and in play, they chose not to answer.

In unmediated (that is, non-telephone) interaction, the occurrence of an answer (whether clearance cue or not) may serve to establish presence (though the absence of an answer does not *require* the inference "no person"), but it does not establish availability; for that, the selection of the answer (that is, a clearance cue) is relevant. Similarly, in telephone interaction, a distinction must be drawn between presence and availability. The lifting of the receiver serves to establish the presence of a person at the number called. It does not, however, establish the availability of that person for further conversation. That person can sometimes be heard to be continuing a conversation they were engaged in while answering the phone. And the "deviant case" introduced earlier was one in which, though the phone was picked up, the summons was not answered to indicate availability, and accordingly elicited a repeat of the summons by the caller. Indeed, this can be a matter of explicit comment and joking for members:³⁴

Operator: Hello, Mister Lehroff?

Lehroff: Mm hmm,

Operator: [Mister Savage is gon' pick up an' talk to ya.

Lehroff: [Alright.

(52 seconds intervening)

Operator: Hello.

Lehroff: Yes.

Operator: Did Mistuh Savage ever pick up?

Lehroff: If he did, he didn't say 'hello
 Operator: Oh, o alright, smarty, just hold on.)
 Lehroff: [heh! heh heh heh heh heh heh
 Operator: [hhh.

Where presence is not problematic (for the co-participants),³⁵ the absence of an answer may be taken as warranting the inference "didn't hear." Although I can again not describe those features of a scene that permit members this analysis, it can be noted that this is one inference some scenes can support. It is, in a way, an inference especially suited to the circumstances; for the very conditions of "problematic availability" – that is, uncertainty that a hearer will be available for an utterance – that may warrant the use of an SA sequence in the first place may be invoked in seeing what is involved in the absence of an answer to the summons, namely that there was no hearer for the summons.

The inference "didn't hear" has the following importance: as long as it is made, although the absence of an answer may be an event, and thereby warrant repetition of the summons etc., it is not seen as an action of the summoned; it is not an event the summoned produced. As in other conversational circumstances, however, establishing hearing or, more precisely, establishing "having heard" gives the ensuing occurrences the status of actions. So, for example, parents may follow up an unheeded request or command to children with the question, "Did you hear me?" or "Did you hear what I said?", potentially converting the inaction to defiance. And a prospective passenger running after a bus leaving the bus-stop yelling, "Hold it," can be told the character of the event he has just lived through by the remark of a passerby, "He heard ya!" (Field Notes.)

Similarly, the absence of an answer in a setting that for members will not support the inference either "no person" or "didn't hear" may be transformed into a "refusal to answer." It is thereby a resource for members who wish to "ignore," "show pique," "sulk," "insult," "act superior," "give the cold shoulder." It is also for them a limitation; for, to accomplish those activities by withholding an answer, they must be able to be seen to "be withholding" rather than "not hearing." And the summoner may then have fine discriminations to make in deciding whether some bodily behavior (for example turning away) that a summoned party produces after a summons in a setting that could possibly support the inference "didn't hear" is to be seen as an extrapolation of behavior he was otherwise engaged in (or perhaps as "auto-involvement"; see Goffman, 1963), or as intendedly responsive. If the latter, then such inferences as "mad," "arrogant" or "piqued" may be supported. In settings that will not support the inference "didn't hear," then, members can "choose" to

not answer a summons but they cannot do so “naively”; in the absence of inferences about their hearing, other inferences as to their character or mood will be made. But at this point we are talking no longer about the “absence of an answer” but about answers of a particular sort, ones that are not clearance cues but make the continuation of the interaction problematic. In seeing them produced responsively, a summoner can see that he has had a hearer for his utterance; and although the hearer may have indicated a preference for hearing no more, that is a preference a summoner may not feel himself required to respect. He may then go on to talk further, a sequel summoners do not regularly produce (except in repeating summonses) if they find “no answer” after their summons. I shall return to non-clearance cue answers below.

This discussion of hearership suggests a more general point: hearership should be displayed or acknowledged. After any first utterance, if some other (or targeted intended other, if that is analyzable in the scene) does not display or acknowledge in some way “having heard” and the setting will sustain the inference “didn’t hear,” one may then get from the first speaker the initiation of an SA sequence. If there is no acknowledgment of having heard and the scene does not sustain the inference “didn’t hear,” then “ignoring,” “arrogance,” etc. may be found. In scenes that will not sustain the inference “didn’t hear,” then, such inferences may be made in the absence of acknowledgment following any initial utterance. A variety of tokens of acknowledgment are used – smiles, nods, “uh huh” – as well as extended utterances. Some of these (for example nods and “uh huh,” and its variants) have continuing use in conversation as claims of hearership,³⁶ although they may have other uses as well, such as showing (when constituting the whole of a speaker’s utterance) an appreciation that the other speaker has not yet completed an utterance or activity he is doing (serving then as “continuers”). Speakers building extended utterances or activities may, accordingly, allow places for the display of claims of continued hearership, as in slight pauses at clause or sentence boundaries; and they may treat the absence of such displays (typically when several consecutive slots for them are not filled) as grounds for suspecting the continued availability of the interlocutor, and thus as occasion for the use of SA to (re-)establish it. At the beginning of a conversation, the absence of hearership acknowledgment after the first utterance may have the same consequence, as was noted above.³⁷

A consequence of this “relevance of acknowledgment after first utterances” is that the initial two slots of a conversation regularly resemble a pair in structure and “feel”; for the non-occurrence of the acknowledgment is treated as its official absence,³⁸ with all the possible consequences suggested earlier. It is not, however, that all conversations begin with

utterance pairs,³⁹ that is, units that have the pair construction wherever they occur in conversation (such as QA and SA). It is not by reference to the pair as a unit that this phenomenon is to be understood. It is rather by reference to the overall structure organization of the unit "a single conversation," whose first two slots are regularly organized by the conditional relevance property, that these effects are to be appreciated. And that is why it is useful to keep distinct the notion of an "utterance pair" and the property of "conditional relevance," for, though the former is in large measure constituted by the latter, the property organizes utterances or slots that are not properly called an utterance pair, operating as they do at a different level of organization.

While the conditional relevance property may then relate the initial slots in a conversation whether it is an SA sequence that is being accomplished there or not, SA sequences are also a pair (that is, they constitute a unit in its own right) and they are pre-sequences. It was noted earlier that this pre-sequence, or non-terminality, property could be reformulated as the conditional relevance of further talk (or non-verbal interaction) on the SA sequence (when the A is a clearance cue). Thus, in telephone conversation, if a called person's first utterance is treated as an answer to the phone ring's summons, it completes the SA sequence (regularly with a clearance cue, although sometimes a "just a moment please" is appended) and provides proper occasion for a next utterance by the caller. If the conditional relevance of further talk on a completed SA sequence is not satisfied, we may find the same sequel as is found when an A is not returned to an S - repetition.⁴⁰ For example:

#86

D: Police Desk	A
(pause)	∅
D: Police Desk	A
(pause)	∅
D: Hello, Police Desk.	A
(long pause)	∅
D: Hello	A or S
C: Hello	A or S
D: Hello	A or S
(pause)	∅
D: Police Desk?	A
C: Pardon?	
D: Do you want the Police Desk?	

This discussion of the problem of availability and SA sequences was undertaken because it did not seem that the initiation of conversations

could be formulated as a general problem in terms of the allocation of first turns. It is therefore in order to see if the preceding discussion is responsive to the concerns that motivated it. It will be recalled that the datum inconsistent with the distribution rule began as follows:

#9 Police make call; receiver is lifted, and there
is one second of silence.

Police: Hello

Other: American Red Cross

Police: Hello, this is Police Headquarters...

In this datum, the caller produces the first utterance, whereas the distribution rule required that the called party make the first utterance. The distribution rule provides no resources for dealing with this case, other than simply to call it a violation or use it as grounds for rejecting the distribution rule. Examining the datum in terms of the "analytic machinery" for the initiation of conversation allows us to see it as equally a rule-governed phenomenon as other opening interchanges are. The ring of the phone being treated as a summons, an answer is conditionally relevant on its occurrence, and is relevant in immediate juxtaposition, as a next action. The non-occurrence of an answer is its official absence, and such an absence warrants a repetition of the summons (that is, a repetition of summoning; a different summons item may be used for the repetition). For telephone conversation, lifting the receiver establishes the presence of another but not his availability for interaction, the feature to which SA sequences are addressed. In #9 we have the occurrence of a summons (in the ring of the telephone), the establishing of presence (in the lifting of the receiver) and the absence of an answer in immediate juxtaposition (in the second of silence). A repetition of the summons is thus claimably warranted, and it is a claimably warranted action for the initial summoner (the caller), who thus produces the first utterance. Although an initial "Hello" in a telephone conversation is thus most frequently an *answer* to a summons, and therefore is produced by the summoned or the called, here it is a *repetition of the summons* in accord with a mechanism that provides for the repetition of summonses, and is produced by the summoner or the caller. The datum that was deviant with respect to the distribution rule is thereby assimilated as a methodically produced outcome; and the typically occurring sequence formulated by the rule "the called talks first" is similarly generated by the conditional relevance of an answer on a summons. As was suggested earlier (p. 329), the description of the methods for the initiation of conversation generates alternative possible "first-speaker" outcomes.

Attention to the initiation of conversation was focused on a problem generally relevant there (in contrast to the allocation problem, which did not appear to be generally relevant), the problem of availability. The problem of availability is relevant to any activity that requires at least two participants; it is relevant to conversation because conversation has such a requirement. That requirement is not satisfied by the mere co-presence of two persons, one of whom is talking. It requires that there be both a "speaker" and a "hearer." To behave as a "speaker" or as a "hearer" when the other is not observably available is to subject oneself to a review of one's competence and "normalcy." Speakers without hearers can be seen to be "talking to themselves." Hearers without speakers "hear voices" (but see Hymes, 1964b, on cultural variations in the definition of participants in speech events). Inferences about those who try to engage in an activity whose *n*-party requirements are not met aside, availability of co-participants is an operational problem for a person seeking to initiate such an activity. For conversation, that problem was specified earlier in terms of its constitutive sequencing structure (the issue of a next speaker talking upon completion of the first speaker's utterance) and the required fitting of utterances (the issue of a next speaker's utterance displaying attention to, and analysis of, its sequential placement after some last utterance or sequence of utterances). What is required is a co-participant's attention from the beginning of the first utterance, allowing its analysis as it is produced. Where inspection does not allow the finding of availability in this sense, procedures may be available for establishing it.

SA sequences are such a procedure. Their features are fitted to the work they are asked to do. The production of an item that can be an answer to a summons (in contrast to other answer terms) displays that a summoned party has heard (and was thus available to hear) the initial (summons) utterance, and analyzed it to be doing summoning. To have so analyzed it is to have analyzed it as a pre-sequence, as an activity specifically prefatory to another to follow; to have answered with a clearance cue answer is to have committed oneself to be available to the activity the pre-sequence was preliminary to. In the absence of an answer, repetitions of the summons may be warranted, any one of which may have these consequences. Alternatively, in the absence of an answer, a variety of inferences may be warranted, each of which is directly relevant to the problem of availability. "No answer-no person" settles the availability problem negatively; the activity to which S is a pre-sequence is normally estopped. "Didn't hear" may serve to verify that there is an availability problem; that is, the SA sequence having been used "for cause," it shows there was indeed cause. Again, though possibly more temporarily, the finding is "no availability," and the pre-figured activity is estopped until the SA sequence can

be completed. When completed, it will have shown "hearing" and availability for the analysis of a next utterance. The SA sequence, then, can establish availability if it can be established, and can show its absence if it cannot. There is, however, an intermediate possibility, suggested earlier in another sort of inference that can be warranted by the absence of an answer, when the "no person" and "didn't hear" inferences are not supportable, namely "unwillingness" of various sorts (pique, condescension, sulking). It was suggested that here we were dealing not so much with the absence of an answer as with an answer of a special kind; not clearance cue answers, but problematic answers. We shall turn to them shortly.

Before doing so, it may be in point to remark on telephone conversation in particular, since that is the character of the corpus of data with which we started. It might be claimed that, certainly for telephone conversation, the issue is much simpler, and more technically physical, than this discussion would suggest. It is simply the issue of opening some acoustical channel to serve as the medium for conversation. That is certainly a problem. But it should be noted that that problem could be solved technically in a variety of ways. For example, dialing a number could in itself open a channel to the telephone dialed, no action on the receiver's part being necessary (just as visually no complicity is required of an object seen). In fact, however, the technical problem's solution has been assimilated to the SA format, a format that involves some element of "listener's choice." Although that "choice" or "control" is circumscribed, as was suggested above, by an inferential structure, it is operative. One central resource for hearers (that is, summoned persons) is the selection of answer terms, and that selection includes a set of possible answers to which repeated allusion has been made. This chapter will conclude with some discussion of "problematic answers" to summonses, a discussion that is necessary for completeness but that is necessarily speculative in the absence of relevant data.

Problematic answers to summonses

By "problematic answers" I intend to refer to the class of utterances after summonses, including utterances such as "Just a minute," "What now?" "I'm busy," "I'm in the shower," "I'm doing X," "Z is talking," "Go away," "Leave me alone," "Don't bother me," as well as eye aversion, body realignment away from the summoner, and so on. These are possible answers, because when placed after a summons they can be analyzed by members as produced in sequence to the summons, as responsive to it; they satisfy the conditional relevance property; on their occurrence, repetition of the summons may not be warranted. They are problematic because they make proceeding with the interaction to which

the summons was a pre-sequence problematic, and this finds expression in the SA sequence itself. Some of the features claimed for SA sequences when the A is a clearance cue do not hold, or hold problematically, when the answer is a member of this class. For example, the non-terminality property holds only problematically when a summons is answered with "Don't bother me" (the sense of "problematically" used here is to be explicated below). As another example, the immediate juxtaposition feature of the conditional relevance of further talk (or non-verbal interaction) on a completed SA sequence is modified if the A is "Just a minute"; as was suggested earlier, such an answer may be selected specifically with an orientation to the nextness constraint on further talk (and the corollary obligation to listen assumed by the answerer), and serves to suspend that feature while some other course of action is continued, to be reinvoked when a clearance cue answer is later produced. In suspending the nextness constraint on the relationship between the SA sequence and further interaction, that constraint operating on the relationship between an A and an S is respected. That is one reason for giving a "Just a minute" answer immediately, and a clearance cue later, rather than simply waiting until later to give a clearance cue. If the latter were done, it might warrant the finding "didn't hear" and repetition of S.

In suggesting that problematic answers may modify the features of SA sequences as they have previously been described, the adequacy of that description may be called into question. Should we not reformulate the account of the opening sequence so that the features of SA sequences with problematic As are naturally assimilated, rather than being treated as modifications? Or, if the basic description of SA sequences is to be formulated for one class of answers and not both, why not formulate the basic description on sequences that include problematic As and then consider clearance cues in terms of that description? Neither of these procedures is preferable.

First, the classes "clearance cues" and "problematic answers" are not symmetrical alternatives. Although the occurrence of a summons makes relevant the occurrence of an answer, without specification of the class of answer it is not a matter of indifference which class is drawn on – not a matter of indifference to the summoner. If the summons is produced as a pre-sequence utterance, then it is produced in search of a clearance cue answer. One feature of pre-sequences as a class is that whether or not the base sequence (that to which the pre-sequence is "pre") is produced may turn on the outcome of the pre-sequence. Thus certain answers to "pre-invitations" (for example, "Are you doing anything?") can have the consequence that no invitation is offered. Given the occurrence of a pre-sequence item, parties can see that some returns to it are

produced to allow the occurrence of the base activity (perhaps with intended guaranteed results; for example, the invitation will be accepted),⁴¹ whereas others are produced to block the occurrence of the base activity or to make it problematic. In either case they are responses to the pre-sequence utterance, and attend it as a pre-sequence to some base activity. But they are not, on that account, symmetrical alternatives. (We can note without elaboration here, for example, that problematic responses are regularly accompanied by, and sometimes constituted by, accounts, excuses, apologies, etc., whereas clearance cues are not.) In the case of SA sequences, clearance cues are the centrally relevant answers, problematic answers being marked and specific alternatives. Problematic answers are alternatives to clearance cues; the reverse is not the case. For the basic formulation of SA sequences, therefore, it is non-arbitrary to work with the assumption of a clearance cue answer. As was suggested earlier, some problematic answers may be designed precisely to deal with some feature of basic SA sequence structure as formulated on that assumption.

A second feature, related to the asymmetry of the classes "problematic answers" and "clearance cues" as answers to summonses, is the "complexity" of the former class and the "simplicity" of the latter. (I use the terms "complex" and "simple" in a manner similar to that of Sacks, 1972a, in his discussion of the contrast set "joke-serious" in the analysis of utterances.) Whereas the utterances which may be used as clearance cues may serve as the vehicles for other interactional accomplishments (as was suggested earlier re personal style, and will be elaborated below), and are in that sense not "simply" answers, with respect to the first-order business of SA sequences the class "clearance cues" is simple; any of its members, whatever else it accomplishes, in whatever setting, for whatever parties, with whatever anticipations concerning what will be done in the ensuing conversation, is produced and heard to be produced to allow the occurrence of the base activity, further interaction. And what properly follows is some interactional activity for which the SA can be seen to have been a pre-sequence. The class "problematic answers" is not "simple" in this sense. In referring to the class as "problematic," attention is drawn to the feature that occurrence of members of this class does not per se preclude proceeding to the interaction that was pre-sequenced. It makes proceeding a problematic matter (in a sense to be discussed below); and attention to this problem – deciding whether to go on or not, and, if to go on, whether to go on with what was otherwise being pre-sequenced⁴² – requires particularized attention to the problematic answer employed, the setting, the parties, and so on. It is in this sense that the class "problematic answers" is complex, and does not have a single homogeneous analysis and consequences over members of the class.

A fully adequate discussion of the "problematicalness" of problematic answers to summonses would require detailed analysis of a range of actual occurrences. Such data are lacking, but it may be useful nonetheless to suggest some aspects of that issue, for this may add to our understanding of SA sequences with clearance cue answers as well.

In referring to such things as "problematic answers," let us consider for what and how they are problematic. In terms of the problem to which we originally proposed that SA sequences are a solution – that is, the availability of a second party as a hearer for the first utterance and prospective producer of a second fitted utterance – the production of an answer to a summons, or the analysis by the summoner that a response has been produced, establishes availability in the sense employed, *whatever the character of the answer*. To have analyzed some behavior as an answer is to have seen that the other heard the initial utterance, analyzed it as a summons and behaved responsively to it. Whatever the answer, a completed SA sequence establishes availability, as that was earlier formulated. The consequence is that the option of proceeding is available to the summoner; in other words, to continue the interaction will not subject him to reviews of competence such as "talking to himself."

What is problematic, then, is not whether he *can* continue, but whether he should. However, that issue involves doing not the activity "conversation" or "interaction," but whatever activity might have been undertaken through conversation. (Or it may involve doing conversation per se, if that was the pre-sequenced activity, i.e. "just to talk"; also some problematic answers, whose business is to suggest the impaired character of the relationship, an impairment extending to "not talking," may make the task or problem "talking" as a way of repairing the relationship.) So problematic answers can go to three issues: "not talking," "not talking now," "not doing through talk what it might be figured was to be done through talk (now)." The particular problematic A selected poses for the summoner the issue of finding which of these is being done, with consequences for his further continuation, given that continuation is possible, availability in the technical sense having been established. For example, a finding that what is being made problematic is a range of actions doable in conversation that require consequent actions from the summoned (which an answer of the form "I'm Xing" is designed to show may not be forthcoming) may be consistent with proceeding with the conversation if what is to be done is an action that does not require a consequent action (other than, for example, acknowledgment) from the summoned, for example an announcement ("I'm leaving"). Or it may be consistent with not proceeding with the conversation for the duration of the activity in which the summoned announces himself to be engaged (if it and the pre-sequenced

one are non-combinable; if they are combinable then the conversation may proceed). Or it may be consistent with proceeding with the conversation, given a claimed assessment of the relative priorities of the ongoing activity and the pre-sequenced one ("Jim." "I'm working." "The house is on fire"), or their relative prospective duration (as for example when a single request for information is to be done).

To elaborate a bit on the preceding, consider the different sorts of work accomplished by, or analyzable out of, "Just a minute" on the one hand, and such forms of problematic answer as "I'm Xing," "I'm busy," "I'm in the middle of X," on the other. (I omit here utterances such as "X is talking," which is used mainly with children, and typically when what is thereby announced is in any case available to inspection. In that case, such an utterance is used for socialization and/or sanctioning, re interrupting. When the form is used with adults, announcing what is otherwise available to inspection, "I'm Xing," it is heard as testy and insulting, perhaps because its base use is with children as a sanction.) First, announcements of the latter sort offer an account for the absence of a clearance cue. Second, they appear to be used when summoned by one not in visual range, or when what the summoned is doing is not available to inspection ("thinking," "listening to the music"). In those circumstances, it may be seen that the summoner has not fitted his summons (and, in such cases, his interruption) to some assessment of the ongoing activity. The selected formulation by the summoned of what he "is doing" can then be seen to select an order of priority for the ongoing activity, in terms of which the summoner should assess the proposed prospective activity to decide whether to proceed or not, in terms of dimensions such as were suggested earlier. "Just a moment" does not lay that burden of comparative assessment on the summoner, but leaves the control of the timing with the summoned. It seems to be based on some assessment by the summoned of where he is in the ongoing course of action in which he is engaged, being used when the completion of that course of action, or some sub-unit of it, and consequent readiness to attend to the summoner, fall within some relevant temporal constraints. But here, it should again be noted, we are dealing not with availability but with readiness to engage in the interaction.

It should be clear that the "problematic" character of the answer is non-definitive; it does not preclude a continuation, but requires a particularized, situated analysis. The consequence is variability in the terminality/non-terminality feature, although in many cases the outcome is similar to that noted earlier, in which, after a clearance cue, the summoner seeks to withdraw, and does so not by silence but by some utterance that thereby respects the non-terminality feature. So, with problematic answers, the summoner may withdraw with "Sorry," "Never

mind," "O.K.," "It's not important," thereby achieving non-terminality, and perhaps also showing that the incident has not been taken amiss and has not been seen as suggesting the impairment of the relationship. Should the summoner not talk again, the non-observance of the non-terminality feature may be warranted by the problematic answer. (We may note in passing that in SA pre-sequences we find a sequel also found in other sorts of pre-sequences; when the outcome of the pre-sequence is to block the base sequence, the initiator of the action may announce what he would have done had he had the opportunity to proceed. In pre-invitations, this takes the form, "I was gonna say, let's go to a movie"; in pre-conversationals, one may find such sequences as "Alice?" "Go away," "I was just gonna say I'm sorry.")

In noting that answers of the form "I'm doing X" may be used when the summoned's ongoing activity is outside the summoner's visual range or is not subject to inspection and has thus not been available for comparative assessments of priority with respect to the pre-sequenced activity, it is further suggested that, when a summons is done under conditions of visual access, the summoned may take it that the comparative assessment has been made, and the outcome was the production of the summons. That may be one reason for not using the form "I am Xing" where that is open to inspection and for hearing it as "testy" when it is used. It further suggests that summons are heard to introduce interaction that has passed some priority test, and therefore that SA sequences will not often be found as pre-sequences to, for example, "Gesundheit" (and, if they are, then it may be heard that it was not merely acknowledging the occurrence of a sneeze, but sharing some common private joke or allusion, and thus the SA was preliminary not to the ritual but to the intimacy). If it is the case that potential summoners of those otherwise engaged (that is, potential interrupters) engage in some assessment of the comparative priority of the ongoing versus the prospective activity, and that those summoned treat the summons as having been produced as the outcome of such a comparative assessment, then we should expect that only infrequently will we find (under conditions of visual access) problematic answers; for, on the one hand, potential summoners will forbear when priority cannot be claimed for the prospective activity, and, on the other hand, summoned parties will hear the claimed priority finding in the fact of the production of the summons. Here, in the assessment of the comparative priorities of activities, is one place "status" may enter as an important feature in conversation, the lesser activities of higher-status persons taking priority over the activities of lower-status persons; that may therefore become a procedure for claiming status, or "pulling rank."

It may be noted in passing that the once frequently discussed complaint about the telephone's capacity for the "invasion of privacy" is related to the inability of a summoner to analyze ongoing activities to assess comparative priorities, and the summoned's inability to do so before answering. No alignment is therefore possible. When, in addition, status differentials are introduced, an "important man" finding his activities interrupted for activities of little comparative weight, the import of interposing a secretary to make such assessments, and provide problematic answers ("He's not in," "He's in conference") is clear,⁴³ as is the competition that is rumored to go on between executives and executive secretaries as to who should get on the line first.

It has several times been suggested in passing in the preceding discussion that temporal assessments may be relevant to the selection of an answer to a summons when the summons has been produced as an interruption to some ongoing course of action. The simple use of the term "interruption," however, glosses two distinct types of occurrence. One sort of interruption occurs when some ongoing unit of action is stopped (or is subject to an attempt to stop it) before completion, and is seen as not, as a matter of natural course, to be resumed after the interruption. Interruptions of utterances are regularly of this sort (see, on "interruptions," Sacks, 1992, I, pp. 624-646). Utterances, or component sentences, are not regularly resumed at the point of interruption once the interrupting utterance has been completed. The interrupting utterance may become the one to which subsequent utterances are fitted. When resumed, interrupted utterances are typically pointedly accomplished as "resumptions"; that is, they are not simply re-begun from the point of interruption, or from their initial beginning, but are marked with an "As I was saying . . ." or "Anyhow . . ." "Resuming" in this fashion may then be heard as a way of taking notice of the interruption, and perhaps of "complaining" about it, and may draw an apology from the interrupter (an apology rather than a counter-complaint, which is another possible return, because the first-order activity is not "complaining" but "resuming"). Interruptions of which the above is descriptive are regularly interruptions by other co-participants in the ongoing conversation.

Different from these are "interruptions" that are "insertions," that is, where it is taken that the interrupted course of action is held in abeyance while some other course of action is inserted. Upon completion of the inserted course of action, the abeyance is lifted and the interrupted activity is resumed as a matter of course. Such interruptions may be seen as intended when the interrupter is not a participant in the ongoing conversation; what is then seen as interrupted is not an utterance (though the interruption may have been initiated so as to intervene in the course

of an utterance) but the conversation, and the conversation may be held ready for resumption upon completion of the interruption.

For "insertion interruptions" a temporal assessment seems relevant within which there is attention to a proper "ratio" of the extensiveness of the interruption (the "insertion") to the interrupted course of action (a ratio that may itself be shifting, depending on assessments of comparative seriousness, importance, priority, and so on). When the interruption begins to exceed certain boundaries, the party common to both interactions (the interrupting and interrupted) may feel he should cut short (or in any case bring to an end) the interrupting activity to return to the interrupted ("Can I call you back?"), an obligation to which the interrupter may also be sensitive ("I don't want to keep you any longer"). The parties to the interrupted course of action who are not parties to the interruption may feel restive, and may use the event to terminate the interaction (or occasion) in which the other course of action was being pursued (an action they may also take upon the occurrence of the interruption to relieve the party involved in both courses of action of the obligation to cut the one short to return to the other; hence the observation earlier, p. 346, that persons in a conversation when the phone rings may use the occurrence of that event to bring the conversation to a close). What started as an interruption, subject to constraints on its proper extensiveness when inserted into an ongoing course of action, may thus have its status changed in its course and be relieved of those constraints. And "Just a moment" as an answer to a summons may be selected to allow completion of some ongoing course of action and the undertaking of the pre-sequenced conversation as a course of action in its own right, subject to its own temporal development, rather than as an insertion interruption.

An orientation to this "relative extensiveness" propriety concerning interruptions and interrupteds may require of a prospective interrupter some pre-assessment of the possible temporal requirements of his interruption, adding this temporal assessment to the assessment of comparative priorities discussed earlier. Similarly, it may warrant a reliance by those interrupted that the interruption will stay within appropriate temporal boundaries, since it would not have been proposed if it could not be expectably accommodated temporally into the ongoing activity. Those who have a priority matter that may not fit to the temporal requirements of an insertion interruption may as alternatives ask the relevant engaged party to leave the ongoing conversation or may request the termination of the ongoing course of action in favor of the priority one.

As with assessments of comparative priority, the circumstances in which telephone conversations are initiated may partially preclude such

temporal assessments (partially only, because callers may time their contacts so as not to coincide with what they know to be busy times of the day for others). Not knowing whether any courses of action were in progress at the time of the initiation of the call, callers may not know whether or not they are engaged in an insertion interruption, and whether, therefore, the temporal boundaries appropriate to such interruptions are relevant (this circumstance is not limited only to telephone conversations; it holds as well for un-prearranged dropping in on someone's home or office). In such cases, the initiator of the possibly interrupting contact may, as an utterance early in the conversation or prior to some expectably extensive part of it, inquire about the matter. One may then find what have elsewhere (Schegloff and Sacks, 1973) been referred to as "pre-topic closing invitations," such as "Are you busy?" "Are you in the middle of something?" "Are you preparing dinner?" It is the inability to monitor for those possibilities before doing the interruption, for example before summoning, that contributes the telephone's capacity for "invasion of privacy."

I have suggested that some problematic answers may force a reconsideration by the summoner of the grounds for starting up a conversation, especially if starting up a conversation involves interrupting some ongoing course of action in which summoned is engaged. The issue of "adequate grounds for starting up a conversation" or "adequate grounds for interrupting an ongoing course of action" is distinct from the issue of the availability of a hearer and of the utterance-to-utterance organization of summons-answer pairs that is addressed to it. Although these are separate issues, operating at different levels of organization of conversation, the opening pair is a site for the working out of both. Although the opening slots have a "local" utterance-to-utterance organization (one instance of which is the summons-answer sequence organization), that "local" structure may be seen to be in the service of, or under the jurisdiction of, higher-order levels of organization.

One higher-order level of organization relevant to conversational openings (and also to conversational closings; see Schegloff and Sacks, 1973) is the articulation of the conversational course of action with the occasion or setting in which it occurs. For a prospective conversation, one feature of the setting includes courses of action relevantly already in progress (where "relevantly" intends that the ongoingness of those courses of action has consequences for whether, and how, the prospective conversation is to be accomplished). The articulation of a prospective conversation with its occasion or setting can first of all affect the selection of conversational opening; thus, problematic availability can make relevant the use of a summons-answer sequence as the opening structure. Further, however, the articulation of the prospective conversation with the setting is

effectuated through the properties of the structure that accomplishes the opening. There is a fit between the assessment of the comparative priority of the ongoing and prospective courses of action and the priority occurrence of an answer upon the occurrence of a summons. If a summons is used, and heard to be used, properly only upon a finding of priority for the activity that its use pre-sequences, then upon its occurrence that priority is given effect by the priority occurrence of an answer, a clearance cue for that priority activity. Conversely, were the priority that is accorded an answer within the local organization of the pair not fitted to the restraints on the use of the first part of the pair by the relevance of a priority analysis of what it pre-sequences, then perhaps some other way of ordering competing courses of action within a setting would be needed. It is perhaps because children early acquire the local structure of the SA sequence, and its power, while not yet (in adult eyes) making acceptable assessments of comparative priorities, that children's interrupting summonses so frequently go unheeded (with the understanding that "he just wants attention").

It is a pervasively relevant issue for parties to a conversation concerning any utterance in it, "Why that now?" The import of the above discussion is that, for the occurrence of a summons, the answer to that question may be found on different levels of organization. The pre-sequence use of SA sequences entails one answer: more to come. Its relationship to the availability problem entails a search for the scenic features that have made availability seemingly problematic. And where those include some ongoing course of action, the use of the summons entails, as an answer to "Why that now?" the claimed priority of the "more to come" over ongoing courses of action. The use of the summons initiates one articulation of a prospective course of action with ongoing ones, and lays an immediate constraint on the summoned. Alteration in the initiated course of action must be done within the local structure already under way.

This discussion has focused almost exclusively on one regular occasion for the use of problematic answers, that is, when the summons has been used as one way of accomplishing an interruption, or when it is interrupting "by the way." The involvement of a summoned party in some ongoing activity, not combinable with a prospective conversation, is one basis for possibly problematic availability, and thus is one place where SA sequences are regularly used (as is the absence of the prospective co-participant from visual monitoring range), and where there is a settinged basis for the selection of a problematic answer as one component. Another circumstance in which problematic answers may be employed, another analysis a summoner may make of the use of a problematic answer, is severe impairment of the relationship or the

summoned's declining to initiate one (as in looking away from a beggar on the street). Such circumstances cannot be described here.

Several points suggested by the preceding discussion may serve to close, for now, the consideration of the sequencing of openings. The relevance of assessments of relative priority and temporal fit that the possible use of problematic answers reflects has the consequence that, when a prospective initiator of conversation finds that such an answer might be employed, and might warrantably be employed, he may not produce the summons, and the talk the summons was to pre-sequence may not be initiated. When, further, such assessments yield a clear analysis that problematic answers would not be warranted, then no summons may be produced, the talk being initiated without need for a special opening sequence. When there is no clear outcome of such assessments, an SA sequence may be initiated; but the option of forgoing the sequence and the talk it might initiate if the prospective answer to a summons is possibly a problematic answer makes the centrally relevant sequel to a summons a clearance cue answer. For the summoned, the summons can be seen to have been produced as the outcome of an assessment by the summoner of the prospects of a warranted problematic answer, and can be seen to have "survived" such an analysis of relative priority and temporal fit. Responding with a problematic answer may then be seen not merely as making availability problematic, but as reflecting on the adequacy of the summoner's assessment, for example as having insufficient respect for one or for one's activities. (Persons, categories of persons or relationships may develop histories in this regard, in which the values in terms of which assessments of relative priority and temporal fit are made are found inappropriate, or are contested. Thus, the regular inattention to the summonses of children, mentioned earlier, may be an instance where this applies to categories of persons.)

These considerations lead to a modified understanding of the notion of "availability" with which this discussion began. "Availability" is better thought of not as a "state of the other" with respect to possible prospective conversation (a state that it is the initiator's business to figure out and be controlled by), but rather as a matter of "relative states" of the prospective initiator and his intended co-participant, each assessing the prospects of initiating a conversation, and each oriented to the other's assessments in doing his own. For each, then, an analysis is required that is oriented to the particularities of the instant case, the present possible co-participant, the currently ongoing and possibly prospective activities, the relevantly formulated setting (i.e. the local situation), and the relative states and circumstances of the parties in it, not some absolute characterization

of some candidate co-participant. Availability is, therefore, thoroughly interactional, not only in being a prerequisite to interaction but in being interactionally assessed.

Once availability is seen to be, for members, a matter of relative states of the co-participants, then it can be seen as well that availability is a matter of continuing interest throughout the course of a conversation, once initiated, and not only as a condition for its initiation. The suspension of conversation by co-participants when one of their number may be responsible for a ringing phone as a priority matter (on persons' responsibility for answering, see Schegloff, 1967, ch. 4, and forthcoming) reflects this attention to the relative states and competing priorities of co-participants. And members may be attentive to others' so-called "wandering attention," that is, their continuing availability throughout the course of an initiated conversation. Because availability is a matter of continuing concern, the conversational sequence that supplies one resource for dealing with it, SA sequences, may be found to be used not only at conversational beginnings but throughout their course. In this respect, SA sequences are one of a range of resources that may be addressed to fluctuations in availability, another being, for example, "voice raising." An exploration of the range of devices addressed to problems of continuing availability and the basis for selection among them is yet to be undertaken.

The structure of SA sequences described in this discussion is in many respects applicable to their use across variations in setting or context. In some respects, however, there are important modifications in their use in telephone conversation.⁴⁴ In discussing the utterance forms that are the components of SA sequences in telephone conversations (which supply the corpus of data with which we started), some attention will have to be given to the ways in which SA sequences are treated differently when the conversations being initiated are telephonic.

Acknowledgments

This text is a revision, completed in 1970, of chapter 2 of my PhD dissertation (Schegloff, 1967), modified only to accommodate publishing conventions adhered to by Cambridge University Press. Parts of that dissertation chapter, in revised form, appeared in the *American Anthropologist* (Schegloff, 1968). The text presented here does not, however, include all the text of Schegloff (1968), and it incorporates extensive revision and expansion of what did appear both there and in the dissertation. Chapter 1 of the dissertation had included a description of its data, to which reference is made in the text that follows. Briefly, the data consisted

of a corpus of some 500 telephone calls to the police of a mid-western city in the immediate aftermath of a disaster. Calls were routed from a central switchboard to a so-called "complaint desk," at which point the recording of them by the Police Department began. The material was made available to me by the Disaster Research Center, then at The Ohio State University, which had collected it for its own studies of community response to disaster. Work on these materials was supported by the Advanced Research Projects Agency, Department of Defense, through the Air Force Office of Scientific Research under Contract number AF 49 (638)-1761, administered through the Bureau of Applied Social Research, Columbia University.

Notes

- 1 I use "conversation" in an inclusive way. I do not intend to restrict its reference to the "civilized art of talk" or to "cultured interchange" as in the usages of Oakeshott (1959) or Priestly (1926), to insist on its casual character, thereby excluding service contacts (as in Landis and Burtt, 1924), or to require that it be sociable, joint action, identity related, etc. (as in Watson and Potter, 1962). "Dialogue," while being a kind of conversation, has special implications derived from its use in Plato, psychiatric theorizing, Buber, and others, which limits its usefulness as a general term. I mean to include chats as well as service contacts, therapy sessions as well as asking for and getting the time of day, press conferences as well as exchanged whispers of "sweet nothings."
- 2 I am indebted to Sacks (1992, I, pp. 95-103) for suggesting the significance of this observation, and some of its implications.
- 3 For an extensive development of the consequences of this and other fundamental features of conversation, see Sacks (1992, I, pp. 523-524, 633-684; Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson, 1974).
- 4 Notice that I do not mean to identify a "turn" necessarily with any syntactic unit or combination of units, or with any activity. In the former case, it should be clear that a turn may contain anything from a single "mm" (or less) to a string of complex sentences. In the latter, it is crucial to distinguish a single turn in which two activities are accomplished from two turns by the same party without an intervening turn by the other. An example of the latter occurs when a question must be repeated before it is heard or answered; an example of the former is the line, following the inquiry "How are you?" "Oh, I'm fine. How are you?" A "turn," as I am using the term, is thus not the same as what Goffman (1953, p. 165) refers to as a "natural message," which he describes as "the sign behavior of a sender during the whole period of time through which a focus of attention is continuously directed at him." There are, of course, other views of the matter, such as using a period of silence or "appreciable pause" to mark a boundary (as in Stephen and Mishler, 1952, p. 600, or Steinzor, 1949, p. 109). But unanalyzed pauses and silences are ambiguous (theoretically) as to whether they mark the boundary of a unit or are included in it (as the very term "pause" suggests).

- 5 A less usual case may be found in a story in the *New York Times* of January 12, 1968, reporting on an interview with the official executioner of Canada on the occasion of the abolition of capital punishment. Among other things, the *Times* reports: "Those condemned died quickly and painlessly," he said, adding that before he got down to business he sometimes talked 'with them about whatever they want to talk about.' However, he added that the condemned man had to start the conversation."
- 6 "Who starts" is treated as related to, and indicative of, stratified status even when such matters are far from the topic under investigation. For example, in Berelson, Lazarsfeld and McPhee's (1954) study of *Voting*: "The people who talked with equal or higher occupations were more likely to have started the discussion themselves than those who talked with lower occupations" (p. 104, emphasis in original), although it is unclear whether it is the initiation of the conversation or of the topic that is involved.
- 7 The term "answerer" is used in preference to "called" to avoid the implications of intentionality in the latter, the rule holding even if a wrong number is reached.
- 8 The orientation of members to "caller-called" as a relevant formulation of the parties, its status as a preservable and reportable feature of a conversation, and the sort of conversational features it may be used by members to account for are suggested by the following:

A: Hello.

B: Hi.

A: Oh!! i!!! 'ow are you Agnes?

B: Fine. Yer line's been busy.

A: Yeah, my fu(hh)! hh my father's wife called me.

hh So when she calls me!! hh I always talk fer a long time. Cuz she c'n afford it 'n I can't.

hhh//heh ehhh.

(NB, 4 calls, call.2)

- 9 I touch here only tangentially on a larger area – what might be termed "*n*-party properties and problems." What is suggested by that term is that, for activities that have a common value for *n* (two-party activities, three-party activities, etc.), there may be, by virtue of that common feature, some common problems or properties. For example, two-party activities may share some problems of coordination, or some properties as compared with three-party activities. Alternatively, activities that have a minimum-number-of-parties requirement may have common properties as compared with those whose relevant parameter is a maximum number of participants. It is the latter possibility that is being touched on here.

On "eristics," see Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyceta (1969, p. 166): "Were there any need for a clear sign enabling one to contrast the criterion of eristic dialogue with that of the other kinds, it would be found in the existence of a judge or arbiter charged with giving the casting vote between the antagonists, rather than in the intentions and procedures of the adversaries themselves.

Because the purpose of the debate is to convince not the adversary but the judge; because the adversary does not need to be won over to be beaten; for this very reason the eristic dispute is of no great interest to the philosopher.”

10 Similar observations are reported from elsewhere. For example, on Thailand:

While sitting in a small sidewalk coffee shop in Bangkok, I noticed that a Thai man sitting alone at a table across the aisle was talking. Beside the proprietor and myself, there were only two other people in the shop, neither of which were seated at the same table as this man. As the man spoke, all of us looked at each other in an unsuccessful attempt to see who was the object of his conversation. No one spoke back to him, and a few moments later he said something else, again not appearing to address his remark to anyone in particular. (The second remark, as I recall, was a mildly profane comment about some unspecified male; I did not understand the first remark.) At this second remark, the proprietor said something in a low voice to each of the other two customers, which elicited the identical replies of ‘mai lu’ (don’t know). The proprietor then asked me in English if I knew the man, to which I replied no. A third remark by the man was then spoken, and it was again disparaging some unknown male. At this point, the proprietor asked the man, in a rather impolite manner, to whom he was speaking, and indicated that only crazy people talked to themselves. When the man didn’t reply, the proprietor told him to leave. After some hesitation, the man did (without paying, I might add). For the next several minutes, his behavior was the subject of an animated conversation between the proprietor and the two remaining Thai customers. (I was left out, presumably because I was a foreigner.) The conversation was interspersed with many comments of ‘ba’ (crazy).

I am indebted here to an unpublished paper by Francis K. Lengel.

11 Which activities are combinably doable by an actor and which are not combinable seems to be part of the corpus of common-sense knowledge defining competent membership. In much of Western culture, for example, conversing and reading are not combinable, whereas conversing and knitting are. The consequences of such treatments are various, including, for example, whether one is “interrupting” another or not; to begin talking to one who is reading is to interrupt him; to do so to a knitter is not. The availability of a single member physically “just sitting” may thus turn not only on whether he is “doing nothing” or doing a one-party activity such as “thinking,” but also, in the latter case, whether that activity is combinable or not with another; in the case of “thinking,” it is in this society not seen to be combinable with conversing; whether or not it is combinable with “listening to music” is sometimes a matter of dispute.

Concerning the presumed non-combinability of reading and conversing (that is, speaking and/or hearing), I take it that it is by invoking that common-sense “assumption” as a resource that the “point” can be made in the following report (*New York Times*, February 14, 1970):

The Premier denied that there had ever been a difference of opinion among Cabinet members about Israel’s position, although by now it is fairly generally conceded privately by Government officials that Foreign Minister Abba Eban and a small group in the Cabinet were outnumbered when they

tried Sunday to raise an old proposal that a conciliatory approach to the Arabs be tried... Defense Minister Moshe Dayan is said to have read a newspaper while Mr. Eban was speaking.

- 12 For an extensive bibliography on terms of address, see Hymes (1964a); for a recent discussion, see Ervin-Tripp (1969).
- 13 Bolinger (1958); "quasi-interrogative" because American English seems not to have an intonation pattern that is necessarily and invariably interrogative.
- 14 Such analysis is subject to error, as will be suggested below. That the utterance of a name could be analyzed as a summons can lead to various circumlocutions to avoid that possibility. For example, Westermarck (1926, I, p. 263) accounts for the elaboration of circumlocutions to refer to evil spirits (the "jnun" or "jinns") by noting that, for the Moroccans, "[t]o pronounce their name would be to summon them."
- 15 Another possibility is that it will be heard as an ironic summons, using a form intentionally mis-selected, the irony being done, perhaps, as comment on a "distance" between intimates that hints of being "strangers." For another case of mistake and irony as alternative analyses, see the comments in note 33 below on answers to summonses and answers to roll-calls.
- 16 At that point, a rationale will be offered for treating sequences completed with "clearance cue" answers, instead of ones including "problematic" answers, as the point of departure. See the first three paragraphs (pp. 358-360) of the section below, "Problematic answers to summonses."
- 17 The sense in which "sequence" is used here will be explicated below in the section on "Conditional relevance in SA sequences."
- 18 It is this feature that especially fits "summonses" for the work of reopening otherwise completed conversations. Conversations that have been properly closed – a properly initiated closing section having been completed with a terminal exchange (see Schegloff and Sacks, 1973) – can be reopened even after the completion of the terminal exchange; one regularly employed method for doing so involves the use of a summons. For example, after interaction is brought to a close, two parties walk in opposite directions. About 25 yards apart, "A" turns and yells:

A: Jerry...Jerry...Jerry

B: Yeah

A: I forgot to ask how are things with you.

Or, in a case of telephone conversation (NB: 9/10/68, 1:1),

A: Hello

B: Is Jessie there/

A: (No) Jessie's over et 'er Gramma's fer a couple days.

B: Alright Thank you.

A: Yer welcome/

B: Bye

A: Dianne/

- 19 It is crucial that the obligation is contingent on the answer. Otherwise, it might appear that, in relying on this sequencing structure, a member could, by starting an SA sequence, self-select as second-next speaker, and this would undermine, or be an exception to, the utterance-to-utterance organization of speaker sequencing. Determination of next speaker may be seen, by contrast, to be in large measure under the control of the one to whom a summons is directed; clearance cue (and some problematic) answers do select the summoner as next speaker, but other utterances may select others. Summoners cannot, therefore, unilaterally select themselves as second-next speaker.
- 20 Sequences of the latter sort do seem to occur, as when A has asked B to do something, and, before B has done it, one gets the sequence: A: "Sam?," B: "Yeah," A: "Never mind." The sequence cited in the text differs from this in the "Oh" attached to the last utterance; this suggests the use of "oh" as a marker of unplanned utterances, and may be used here to allow a hearer to distinguish which course of action the "never mind" is being placed in, the "local" utterance sequence or the course of action in which the request was an action.
- 21 Sacks (personal communication, 1966) has pointed out that "repetitions," as contrasted with second occurrences, are distinctively done as "repeats." Even if the first was not heard, the second can be heard as a "repeat." It is this that allows us to see how someone can respond, "I didn't hear you," without either lying or raising the puzzle how he could know there was something he didn't hear if he didn't hear it.
- 22 See Sacks (1992, I, pp. 96-99 passim); Schegloff (1967, ch. 4); Schegloff (forthcoming).
- 23 By "preferred solution" I intend to notice the following. Some persons improvise in answering the phone; their initial utterance is a grunt, or some unorthodox sound. That does not appear to make problematic for callers "what he said" or "whether he answered" (though it may make it problematic whether the caller reached the one he was trying to reach, especially if it is the first time he has encountered such an "answer"). Rather than making it problematic whether that sound was "an answer," it may be heard as "the way he answers the phone," as his "style" (alternatively it may be treated as displaying "mood," to non-natives it may display "regional practice," etc.). While, in a literal sense, one who answers his phone "hello" has that as "his way" of answering the phone, it is not so heard; though he answers that way, it is not his way of answering. This treatment seems to involve seeing that it is a standardized way. The recognition of style, of someone's "way of doing things," therefore, seems to imply a recognition that it is not a standardized way, and therefore an orientation to the availability of standardized ways.

One consequence of this point is that, when reference is made to classes of terms usable as summonses or as answers, and to those classes as bounded (i.e. there are utterances that are not members of them), it does not follow that a summons or answer can be done only by selecting some member of those classes. The consequence may be that a "standardized" summons or answer is done by selecting from those classes. Where sequential placement is critical, as in second slots of utterance pairs, a much wider range of terms inserted there will be analyzed as proper (for example as answers) if they can be; "answer" is a "preferred analysis" of utterances placed in the second slot of

an utterance pair whose first slot had a summons. The non-use of a standard class member is then one way of displaying personal style (or mood, etc.).

This discussion has the following outcomes: class membership (in classes such as summons, answer, term of address) may define not possible use but possible standardized (or unmarked) use. This is quite aside from the point that selection from among members of the standardized class can serve as a vehicle for marking features of the conversation or setting, as "Excuse me" displays an analysis of prospective co-participant as "stranger." And one strategic place for accomplishing "personal style" is where sequential placement is especially relevant, where a wider range of terms will accomplish the relevant first-order action because of a preferred analysis of utterances placed there. Although in the first place doing the work of establishing availability, SA sequences, through the selection of their components, can be used as vehicles for other accomplishments as well, a theme to be elaborated below.

24 For the sense in which "relevant" is used here, see the next section below.

25 See above, p. 339.

26 See note 11 on combinable activities; for example, reading and conversation may be treated as non-combinable, as may a second conversation with a first.

27 For further discussion, see below, pp. 347-348, 365.

28 As is suggested by the unexplicated use of terms such as "action sequence" or "course of action," the notion of "nextness" (a property not specific to the organization of conversational events, but possibly relevant to all kinds of activities) involves us in a series of very knotty problems. Most centrally, how are courses of action organized within streams of simultaneously ongoing events that are not part of them? Or, observationally, how are some events selected out of a large set and isolated as an organized course of action? For example, when one asks an "expert" (for example a car mechanic) what he "is doing" and he says "X," one may not know (if one lacks any of the relevant expertise) whether only the thing he is doing at the moment is X, or whether what he started ten minutes ago and will finish in five minutes is X but what intervenes is not. Nor, perhaps, does one know what is X about it, not being able to distinguish which parts or aspects are his personal style, which are idiosyncratic contingencies of this case and treatment of it, or which are paradigmatically, and definitionally, X; that is, what is the "course of action, X." Or consider the directions A may give B for getting somewhere or instructions for making something. Such directions, instructions, recipes may have explicit, but at least implicit, "nexts" between the steps ("Do A; next do B; . . ." or "do A; then do B . . ."). Now we observe B "following the instructions." We may find him to have followed them correctly, although many nameable actions or activities may have occurred between any two steps of the instructions, steps that were to stand in the relationship "next." Nonetheless, the "nextness" property is not found to have been violated on that account. For "next" may be used not only, perhaps not even primarily, to intend "immediately following" but also "in the proper sequence" or "immediately following in *that course of action*," the course of action being foregrounded from other events in which it is embedded. "Nextness" and "correct sequence" are respected when the events named in the instructions are produced in the order in which they are named in the instructions, all other events not being counted; when

the instructions, transformed in tense from the imperative or future to the past, stand as a description of what was done. Accordingly there seem to be "orders" of events that can enter into some course of action, and others that are of a different "order of event." (Some such issue seems to be involved in the strangeness of children's telling and retelling of stories; for example, "First he ran away from home, then he took a horse, then he went to the city, then he picked his nose . . .," where an item from a different order of events seems to adults to have been misplaced into a course of action. When the storyteller is adult, and is telling a mystery story for example, it may be seen that this otherwise misplaced item, drawn from a different "order of event," will turn out to be crucial.) And from events of a same order, some will be parceled into different courses of action, as when someone instructed to go to X street and then turn left goes to X street and turns right, "into a café for coffee," before continuing on his way, where "into a café for coffee" serves to indicate that a separate course of action is inserted into the one he is otherwise pursuing.

The problems of organizing a stream of events into different orders, or layers, and those into courses of action seem to be fundamental problems of cognitive order underlying normative order. They are relevant to all action, not only conversation; they involve relations not only of nextness but also of intermittence (or, rather, may involve as a discovery for both analysts and members that what might otherwise be seen as discrete is organized by intermittence, or what might be seen as discrete or intermittent is to be seen as organized via nextness, thereby providing for the "discovery" of a "covert" course of action where accident might have been supposed). Since an explication of "immediate juxtaposition" in SA sequences seems to require at least some reference to these considerations, it is worthwhile to consider superficially for a moment the iceberg whose tip is making an appearance.

- 29 As evidence that attention may be paid to the order of unit completed or interrupted in an ongoing course of action in the face of the claims of a competing course of action that intervenes (of which the occurrence of a summons in an ongoing conversation is one instance), and that the relative priorities thereby displayed may be treated as evidence of characterological features, consider the following account of an attack on the American embassy in Saigon:

With no warning, the wooshing sounds of a projectile, then a bang, flooded into the room from the open veranda along one side. The other explosions followed at once, the whole series lasting perhaps five or ten seconds.

Most people flinched. Some women ducked behind their husbands. General Westmoreland, resplendent in black tie, gold braid, a short white jacket and medals, did not so much as blink. He *finished a sentence in conversation with friends without interrupting himself*, and then commented evenly: "It sounded like recoilless-rifle fire to me, and incoming." (*New York Times*, November 1, 1967; emphasis added)

- 30 From unpublished data of Roger Barker's group at the University of Kansas. I am indebted to Harvey Sacks for bringing it to my attention, and for suggesting that I try to elaborate the notion of "immediate juxtaposition" in terms of "nextness."

- 31 Reference to "repetition" of S does not intend that the same lexical item need be repeated. Rather, successive utterances are each drawn from the class of items which may be summonses, though the particular items may change over the series of repetitions. There may be shifts from one term of address to another (from "Jim" to "Jim Smith," as, for example, when trying to attract someone's attention from the rear in a crowded setting), from a ring of a door bell to a knock on the door, from a mechanical ring of the phone to a lexical item (for example, "Hello" when the receiver is lifted and nothing is said, as in the deviant case introduced earlier and to be reconsidered below), or from one car to another, both stopped for the same traffic light (A: "Excuse me." [pause] A: "Hello." [other turns to summoner] A: "Is Route 25A ahead?"). In addition, as was noted earlier, repetitions may be given distinctive intonation that allows them to be heard as repetitions without hearing earlier occurrences; and some summons terms, in some settings, may be specially used as "summons repeats" (as I think may be the case for "hello" in face-to-face interaction, for example, in the data just cited).
- 32 In telephone contacts, "number of rings" supplies a temporal measurement system for the relation of answer to summons. Thus, the "ten rings" referred to in the text; and the following report in the *New York Times* (March 18, 1969, p. A12) about the Prime Minister of Israel:

When Mrs. Meir, who is 70 years old, knew Israeli soldiers were going out on a military operation, she would say, "Phone me when the boys come home," Mr. Dinitz said, adding: "I'd be called by the army and then I'd phone Golda - at 2, 3 or 4 in the morning. She always answered at the first ring."

And the following incident in an interview with an actress:

The phone rang, and the 5-foot-5-inch, 110 pound actress reacted like a child who has just heard the Good Humor Man's bell on an August day. She grinned mischievously, jumped to her feet, and ran so fast she caught it on the second ring. It was her husband in Toronto, just wondering how she was, and she talked to him - in animated French - for about 10 minutes. "We are really still newlyweds," she explained, blushing, as she hung up. ("Who's Playing Saint Joan? Genevieve Bujold?" *New York Times*, October 22, 1967, Section 2)

Just as, if some number of rings pass without an answer, that may be treated as evidence that no one is home (see below), so one who answers at the first or second ring may be seen (for example by the caller) as "waiting for the (a) call," "being eager," etc. And prospective answerers may give attention to what a caller may make of the number of rings, rushing to answer if many have passed and pausing so as to avoid answering "too quickly." Recognition that it is the rings and not the silences between them that are counted, that the caller counts them as well and that answering after one or two may display eagerness or uninvolvedness in other activities, thus prompting a waiting before answering, leads to an alternative account (suggested by Harvey Sacks) of the earlier observation about persons who wait, hand on phone, before answering; namely, that in waiting to answer after a reasonable

number of rings they thereby wait to answer after some particular ring, it being the number of rings, and not the completion of a ring, they are waiting for.

33 Where SA sequences are initiated to address this sort of availability problem, a clearance cue answer will entail subsequent talk, even if only greeting exchanges. I note this point to suggest that, although this usage may seem to be a kind of "roll-call," it bears all the features of SA sequences, whereas roll-calls do not. That roll-calls are different can be seen from the following:

- (1) Roll-call exchanges may be terminal for the two parties in a single exchange (A: "Jones." B: "Here").
- (2) The class of answer terms is different from the class of answer terms for summonses, terms such as "here" and "present" being members of one, but not the other, class. There are terms that are members of both classes, for example "Yes" or "Yeah." The class of answers to roll-calls is a class especially open to innovation; where standards of formality have been relaxed, persons (especially persons well into the roll) may employ a wide range of terms and sounds to indicate presence. The partial overlap of the classes of answers to summonses and roll-calls is treated as providing a resource for levity and playfulness, by using roll-call answers in responding to summonses (for example, A: "Jim." B: "Present." A: etc.) or answers to summonses to respond to a roll-call. In this connection, it is interesting to note that the levities are not combinable; those who play by using a roll-call answer to respond to a summons use a "standard" roll-call term ("Here," "Present") and not an innovation, though innovations may be used to respond to roll-calls. It is also interesting that using an answer to a summons as a response to a roll-call can often be immediately seen as ironic, and not as an error; that is, the caller of the roll can see that the roll was being correctly answered with an incorrect term, rather than that his activity was incorrectly analyzed as a summons, and thus corrective action need not be taken. This may be a fruitful site for the investigation of irony, but this is not the place to undertake it.
- (3) They occur only at beginnings (or re-beginnings, for example after intermission) of occasions or meetings (whereas SA can be used throughout a conversation).
- (4) They are used only in multi-person settings.
- (5) They typically involve the use of a list, so that attention to the prospective calling of one's name is focused by an attention not to availability problems but to how lists are ordered (alphabetically, ecologically, etc.). Consequently, only the first person called is likely to have to analyze whether a roll-call or an availability summons has been done, although persons can display their non-attention to the "official goings-on" if they respond to a calling of their name well down the list in a roll-call with an item that shows they are answering a summons (this being an analysis alternative to irony). For another case where persons are expected to have been analyzing the proceedings so as to see that a calling of their name is not a summons, see Sacks' 1967 and 1968 lectures (e.g. 1992, II: 65), and the following item from the *New York Times* (cited by Sacks in a lecture from the Spring 1967 set not included in the published version):

As the President spoke, he looked across from his armchair to a sofa on which Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara sat with General Earle G. Wheeler, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and General William C. Westmoreland, commander of American forces in Vietnam. "The troops that General Westmoreland needs and requests, as we feel it necessary, will be supplied," Mr. Johnson said. "Is that not true, General Westmoreland?"

"Yes, sir."

"General Wheeler?"

"Yes, sir."

"Secretary McNamara?"

"Yes, sir."

- 34 I am indebted to Gail Ziferstein (now Jefferson) for calling the datum to my attention.
- 35 How, for members, the "presence" of another is established is not entirely clear. "Seeing" the other is not definitive; one may see him at a great distance and not count him as present, or not see him because he is in another room, yet take his presence for granted. The latter point suggests that, at the least, "not seeing" is not definitive. With respect to the former point, it may be that "exchanged seeing" – seeing the other, the other seeing one, and each seeing that the other saw and saw one see – may be definitive.

That finding another's presence is a member's achievement, the methods for whose accomplishment remain to be described, suggests that the analyst's term "co-presence," which has been taken as referring to an unambiguous, transparent and entirely non-problematic property not only in sociology but in disciplines such as animal ethology, should be seen as problematic indeed. For whether two persons (or objects) are "co-present" or not may depend on the order of place formulation in terms of which the matter is considered. Two persons not "co-present" in a room may be in an apartment. This exercise can be extended for the range of place formulations at will. Since the selection of relevant place formulation can be considered problematic, and solutions to it orderly (Schegloff, 1972), features such as "co-presence" that are dependent on the formulation are equally problematic. For analysts, this entails not using "co-presence" as an intrinsic or transparent feature with direct consequences for actors' behavior, but attending to members' findings of "presence" and "co-presence" as achievements. In writing in the text "where presence is not problematic," I intend that, for the summoner, some place formulation is established as relevant and techniques employed by reference to which he and the summoned are co-present, and which he takes it would be the same for the summoned.

Another sense of "presence not problematic," and of subsequent usages in the text such as "will not support the inference 'no person,'" is relevant in the case of some items of common-sense knowledge concerning places that are always "staffed" (for example hospitals, operators' switchboards). Persons calling "operator" may not use the fact of "no answer" after "many rings" as evidence for "no person"; presence not being treated as problematic (and the "didn't hear" inference also not being supportable), inferences regarding "being busy" or "inefficiency" may be treated as warranted.

- 36 It is important to see that these are *claims* of hearership, claims that may be discreditable or discredited. Thus, the following remark by a disabled girl concerning her attempts on the phone to get officials to keep a service for the disabled operating:

... and I'd be giving my all and I could hear him say, "Yes, yes... I understand," and I know he wasn't listening and wanted me to hang up. (*New York Times*, August 18, 1968, p. 92)

To notice that such hearership claims are discreditable is not to say that they are regularly so treated by interlocutors; that is, to say "claim" is to not be heard as intending "false claim." It is only to contrast it implicitly with hearership displays that *show* hearership, by, for example, completing an utterance in a syntactically and semantically coherent way, thereby demonstrating that the completer had been hearing and analyzing the utterance to that point. Harvey Sacks has developed the consequences of this last point extensively in his unpublished lectures (now Sacks, 1992). The possibly subversive use of hearership claims are recognized in a standard joke, in which a husband, returned from work, is absorbed in the newspaper, while his wife recounts the day's troubles, regularly leaving a slot of silence into which the husband inserts a "Yes, dear." Aware that all is not as it is claimed to be, she says, "Dear, you're ignoring me," to which he replies, "Yes, dear."

That "hearership" be seen as a locus of rules, and a status whose incumbency is subject to demonstration, is suggested by some of Sacks' work (1972b; 1992, I, pp. 236-266).

- 37 The not infrequent occurrence of "Pardon me?" (or variants) as the second utterance in a conversation may be related to this phenomenon. Acknowledging hearership requires some utterance or substitute, and not all acknowledgment tokens may appropriately follow any initial utterance; thus, in some circumstances, it may be required to in fact hear in order to acknowledge hearing appropriately. This may be especially in point if the first utterance was at least heard to be a question, or was not heard not to be a question; for many of the acknowledgment tokens are answer terms if used after a question (nods, "uh uh," "yes," etc.), and what is produced as an acknowledgment of hearership may in effect become a positive answer if the question was a "yes-no answerable" one, and self-evident disproof of hearership if it was not. On the other hand, acknowledgments may be made of utterances that were "not heard," as in the following, in which A makes a remark while passing B and C who are seated together:

A: ()

B: Mm hmm.

C: What'd she say?

B: I dunno.

- 38 For example, it is noticeable and reportable, as is shown several times in the following report on a visit by Vice President Agnew to Singapore; the report is used to characterize his trip as "not illustrious":

Mr. Agnew spent a total of five minutes in the Fung apartment. His visit went like this: He shook hands with Mrs. Fung, with her sister, Rosey Tan, and with her mother, Chionh Kim Lien. He looked at the Fung's son, Daniel, $3\frac{1}{2}$ years old, standing shyly behind his mother and said, "Hi, young man, how are you?" None of them responded.

The Vice President then said: "Certainly is nice of you to let us see your house. We appreciate it." He looked through the kitchen door at the bright sunlight and said: "It's nice and cool up here, isn't it? Breezy."

Again no one responded. Mr. Agnew's hosts merely smiled and watched him as he went past a door on which a bumper sticker proclaimed "Zoom with the Supershell Girl."

He looked into Daniel's sparsely furnished bedroom and exclaimed, "There are a few toys in there."

Then the Vice President peered into the parents' bedroom, turned quickly and walked into the kitchen. He dallied there as American photographers were ushered out and Singapore photographers were escorted in, and left within minutes. (*New York Times*, January 11, 1970)

Smiles may, of course, sometimes be recognized as acknowledgments.

39 For example: A and B at a bus stop; A tamps down some snow with his boot.

B: They really should clean that away.

A: Pardon me?

B: They really should clean that away so people can get on the bus.

A: Mm hmm.

It does not appear that either BA sequence is properly considered an utterance pair, though the AB sequence may be a QA pair.

40 And there are association inferences should no further talk be forthcoming; for example, "wrong number," "crank call," "prankster," "crossed wires."

41 Here, as throughout the discussion of pre-sequences, I am indebted to Harvey Sacks.

42 The notion "what was otherwise being pre-sequenced" suggests a set agenda. That such a notion is used by members where SA is involved can be seen, as was suggested earlier, in the practice of later asking one who has unsuccessfully summoned earlier "what he wanted."

43 That the selection among problematic answers can be a delicate matter, and its sequential placement in the conversation analyzed to find how it was selected, is suggested in the following advice to doctors:

Is your aide careful not to be too abrupt in asking who's calling and why? Getting even such basic facts as these requires the tactful wording of questions. Suppose, for example, your aide asks who's calling and then says that for some reason you can't take the call. That's enough to make the caller suspect you'd have talked to him if he'd been somebody more important... if you prefer to have all calls screened, your aide will get the best results if she says something like this: "Yes, Dr. Williamson is here, but I'm not sure he's free to talk. May I tell him who's calling, please?" That way, she has an out if you

decide not to take the call. But it's not a transparent out and thus doesn't irritate the caller. (Morgan, 1967; emphasis in original)

- 44 There are other sorts of occurrences than face-to-face conversational exchanges that seem to be produced and recognized in terms of the SA structures, as described above or with modifications. For example, the act of "entering a commercial establishment" seems to be treated as embodying an SA sequence structure. The action "entering" for such places seems to serve as a virtual summons to some service person there. The developing features of interactions in such settings appear to be produced by reference to such a model. For example, after a person enters an eating establishment and seats himself at a table or counter (if there is no host(ess); if there is, the sequence will be played out by arrival and the host(ess)), a service person may approach without any further communication or signal, and upon arrival produce as the initial utterance, "Yes sir."

Though in such a circumstance the service person talks first, what he produces is not a "first utterance." That utterance, and others that may be produced in that slot (for example, "Can I help you?"), are occasioned utterances, some basis for their production having to be available to warrant their occurrence. The warrant seems to be that the act of entering is treated as initiating a course of action related to the formulation by which the establishment presents itself (see Schegloff, 1967, ch. 4, and forthcoming, for discussion of self-identification forms of answering the telephone). The structure of that initiation is an SA structure: it is seen as intendedly pre-sequential, an answer (of some form) is seen as conditionally relevant, further interaction is conditionally relevant on the completion of the sequence, etc. When that structure does not supply the form of the initiation of interaction, violations may be found by the participants and/or observers to occur, as in the following observation:

Customer: You look like you're waiting for something.
 Waitress: You look like you want something.
 Customer: Well, we don't, so go away and just leave us alone.

Observers of this scene in an eating and drinking establishment may comment that the waitress was warranted in standing by the table and waiting for an "order" that was expectably forthcoming. The "waiting" is conditionally relevant on the virtual summons the customers accomplished in entering and seating themselves. It is warranted. The customer's first utterance, in seeming to treat its warrant as unclear or unestablished, might be treated as intendedly non-serious, as "Kidding around with the waitress," and not as questioning the warrant that his own action had provided. His seeming insistence in his second utterance on the seriousness in questioning the warrant is then analyzable as converting the whole sequence into a violation, making the act of entering and seating into a "naive option," one with no interactional consequences, which is not an enforceable version of such an action unless that is in some way announced. The self-service format is one way of providing that one's entrance will not be treated by service personnel as a summons directed at one of them.

Several other points may be mentioned to relate “entering establishments” to SA sequencing structures, and to suggest some modifications in that structure adapted to this use of them. In the settings under discussion, a greater lag between summons and answer may be “tolerated” by summoners than was suggested in the prior discussion. Still, the relationship of nextness is relevant in the relation of summons and answer, the answer being expectably “next” after some unit of ongoing activity. In the present context, the intervening activity after which an answer to any particular customer’s summons should come “next” is expanded to accommodate other summoners whose summonses are seen to have temporal priority – the phenomenon of the queue. One does not, therefore, get repetitions of S if an answer is not “immediately forthcoming”; one does get them when the “nextness” of one’s own “next” is violated; it is then that customers may wave, call “Waiter” or “Miss,” or seek eye engagement with service personnel, though the latter may also be sought to establish one’s place in the queue.

Similarly, the conditional relevance of further interaction on completion of the sequence is treated as relevant. Customer–service person talk may be treated as having priority once the virtual SA sequence is completed (as it may be when someone has entered and been seated and a service person “comes up to them,” and faces them, though no utterance has yet been produced). A couple sitting at a table may, for example, “suspend” their conversation (leaving an utterance in its course incomplete) when the service person arrives. Here, then, there may be a period of asymmetric availability, the customer being committed to availability by his entrance, it being the servicer’s availability that he awaits. When the latter is established, the summoner’s further talk is conditionally relevant “next,” it has priority.

It is by reference to the status for some places of “entering” as a virtual summons that we may, in part, understand utterances such as “I’m just browsing” after a salesman’s, “Can I help you?” Such utterances seem to be structurally equivalent to the “Never mind” after conversational SA sequences such as were discussed in the body of this chapter.

What has been done here is to start with some conversational occurrence; describe some of its properties; and then locate other occurrences that do not have or may not have the conversational parts, but that have the same properties and thus appear to be members of the same class of events. A way may thereby be furnished for seeing the interactional texture of otherwise seemingly uninteresting non-verbal events, indeed for seeing them *as* events, and for warranting some formulation of the actions they accomplish.

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Perpetual Contact

*Mobile Communication, Private Talk,
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Edited by

James E. Katz and Mark A. Aakhus



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