

7 Reflections on Language, Development, and the Interactional Character of Talk-in-Interaction

Emanuel A. Schegloff
Department of Sociology
University of California, Los Angeles

INTRODUCTION

The main theme that I want to pursue concerns what I call the *double interactivity of talk-in-interaction*. After drawing out several implications of this double interactivity for our understanding of the character of the resources of a language, I try to balance the “theoretical” tenor of these reflections with an account of a brief dinner table exchange between a young boy and his mother, which may help to ground my theme empirically. In the course of the account, I call on analytic resources drawn from conversation analysis that have no *prima facie* relation to the larger themes of the chapter, in the hope of suggesting how such basic research into the practices of talk-in-interaction can be of relevance and use to more focused or thematic inquiry, and should therefore be in everyone’s tool kit—or department. I end with some preemptive responses to potential doubts from those who worry about applying this form of analysis to neophyte interactants.

THE DOUBLE INTERACTIVITY OF TALK

In references to the double interactivity of talk-in-interaction, one level of interactivity refers to the collaborative character of what occurs in talk-in-interaction, even when to all appearances only a single speaker is in action. By now this theme should be very familiar, but in an intellectual milieu still self-absorbed by what is considered a “cognitive” revolution, it could perhaps do with some repeating.

One Order of Interactivity: Joint Production of Talk

What occurs in interaction is not merely the serial externalization into some joint arena of batches of talk, hatched in private (or even socialized) intentions, and filled out with the docile artifacts of "language" (as in many versions of speech act theory, discourse analysis, and the like). This treats the mind/brain as the scene of all the action, and the space of interaction as a structureless medium, or at least a medium whose structure is beside the point with respect to what is transmitted through it, as the composition of telephone cable is beside the point for the conversations transmitted through it. But interaction is that for which the talk is conceived; its character is shaped by the structure of opportunities to deliver a message in the first place, and so forth. And what children have to learn to get on with their lives is not just a syntax, and a lexicon, and so forth, but some of the following as well, many of them by now quite familiar.

Children have to learn not to talk when another is talking. (Except when it is allowed, as in choral greetings or good wishes—the kids at the party do not say "Happy Birthday!" one after the other.) And when overlapping talk occurs anyway, they have to learn to listen while talking, or talk while listening, so that the simultaneous talk can be adjusted to that of the other.

Then, they have to learn to recognize when another is talking—for example, that another can "be talking" even though not at the moment producing sounds as, for example, when they are trying to remember a name in the course of an as-yet-unfinished sentence/utterance.

Then (these "thens" are used to mark increments on a list, not temporal or analytic stages; if we knew the latter, we would know a lot), they have to learn that they can still be thought to be interrupting even though the speaker has finished a sentence—for example, when a story is in progress.

Then, they have to learn that they can still be interrupting though no individual speaker has any recognizable unit like a story underway—for example, when a topic is said to be in progress (by which the adults will sometimes mean a sequence, such as arrangements making, in the course of which a number of discrete and different topics may be taken up; see Schegloff, forthcoming a).

In other words, children have to learn that talk-by-one-person is nonetheless an outcome, which it takes the whole assemblage to produce. Sometimes that involves others-than-the-speaker remaining quiet; at other times it involves them in talking as well, in brief increments, precisely placed in the continuing talk of the primary speaker, the absence of such talk (or cognate body behavior; see Goodwin, 1979, 1980, 1981) being able to induce considerable modification, even disruption, in the talk of "the speaker." The "talk of the speaker" is then an interactional product, in one sense of the term (Schegloff, 1981).

And children will have to learn how the relevant interactional and sequential organization(s) here—primarily the organization of turn-taking (see Sacks,

Schegloff, & Jefferson, 1974), but I have mentioned others as well—operate formally, as well as how the local company or cohort of participants is administering them on that occasion, and with respect to children, in particular with respect to *them*. (For a discussion of the bearing of these issues concerning turntaking, and this level of detail in data, on children's acquisition of language, and socialization more generally; see Ochs, 1979.)

Related and cognate sets of considerations are posed by other of the generically relevant sorts of organization in talk-in-interaction—sequences (Sacks, 1987; Schegloff, forthcoming a, b), repair (Jefferson, 1974; Schegloff, 1979; Schegloff, Jefferson, & Sacks, 1977), the overall organization of single episodes of conversation (Schegloff, 1986; Schegloff and Sacks, 1973), reference (Sacks, 1972a, 1972b; Sacks & Schegloff, 1979; Schegloff, 1972), and so forth.

And all of these organizations incorporate recipient-design considerations; that is, a selection from and deployment of the resources available for talking and conduct generally sensitive to, and oriented to, and displaying the sensitivity and orientation to, who the co-participants are, what the context is (in the varied senses of that term that can be relevant at any moment).

Let me give an anecdotal example.

Deb and her teen-aged daughter Naomi are visiting at the home of Deb's nephew Billy, age 4 years, 11 months. Deb and Naomi are planning a shopping trip. The following exchange occurs.

Deb: We'll pick up some sunglasses for you, Naomi.

((pause))

Deb: Do you have sunglasses, Billy?

Billy: Yeah, but they're much too small for Naomi.

Among the things we can see that Billy has seen are these:

(1) Although Deb's first turn here is addressed to Naomi, Billy has attended to it.

(2) He has analyzed out of it that Naomi does not now have sunglasses, and that there is a current interest in her having some.

(3) Out of Deb's second utterance, Billy has analyzed that it is addressed to him, that he owes a response, that he owes it in next turn, which should follow directly.

(4) He has seen also that a question has been asked, but that is not all; that through that question some other action or actions are being prosecuted. He responds both to the question and to what is being done through it, and, in keeping with the canonical ordering of such multiple responses, he deals with those facets in that order—first an answer, than a responsive action.

(5) He sees that Deb's question is asked on behalf of something else, some

subsequent action that may be undertaken or not, contingent on his response to this one (what we have elsewhere termed a "presequence"). Although almost certainly Deb's question was meant to be doing a preoffer (if the answer is "no," she will invite him along on the shopping trip and buy him some sunglasses as well), he responds to it as if it were a prerequisite (if he allows that he has sunglasses when an intention has just been expressed to rectify Naomi's lack of them, he will be asked for his). So he first gives a truthful answer to the question, and then proceeds to block the progression that it implicates for a next part of the sequence—a request, by denying that the glasses he has could satisfy it.

Though he may have misanalyzed the type of "pre" Deb was doing, the grounds for it may well have been right; he uses the sequential context, the preceding utterance, and the source and relevance of what has been addressed to him, and that yields for him the reading that the glasses being asked about are for Naomi.

So, together with all the aspects of the organization of talk as an activity in its own right, which kids like Billy pick up, there is also the understanding that talk-in-interaction is an instrument for doing things, for doing practical actions, and one has to figure out what someone is doing by talking in the way that they do, if one is to respond to it properly.

All this, as I say, is what should no longer need saying. But there is another level of interactivity as well. And it goes to the lexicon, to the semantic and conceptual nets, as well. It has to do with the constitution of language, if there is such a thing and whatever it may be. What I have in mind is the following.

A Second Order of Interactivity: The Character of Language

The organization of conversation, of talk-in-interaction more generally, includes among its generic components (those apparently relevant and in play whenever talk is in progress or even incipient, the latter making it potentially relevant to interaction over-and-above talk) what we call the organization of repair (Schegloff, Jefferson, and Sacks, 1977). This is a set of practices, an organized set of practices, by which parties to talk-in-interaction can address troubles in speaking, hearing, and understanding the talk.

The presence of such an organization, its generic presence and relevance, allows language (and perhaps other domains of and resources of conduct, but not all of them—not gesture or facial expression) to be constructed differently than might otherwise have been imagined. It need not, for example, be unambiguous. It need not have invariant mappings of signs or symbols and their signifieds. It need not have a syntax that assigns but a single interpretation to a given ex-

pression. That is why what has been considered the sloppiness of natural as compared to formal languages is so deeply mistaken. It is because persons wanting to make certain uses of language for particular sorts of discourse do not avail themselves of the practices of repair—logicians and scientists, rather than rhetoricians—that natural language seems such a blunt and inelegant instrument. It is because that which converted its features into flexibility has been sacrificed to other needs. But, of course, we regularly find ways of sneaking it back in again.

Notice, then, that talk-in-interaction is interactive quite apart from (1) its contextuality, by reference to which it is virtually always responsive or propositive, and (2) its collaborativeness, in the sense that whatever gets done is a joint achievement. Those senses aside, the sorts of components from which it is fashioned—sounds, words, sentences—have the character they do, and are formed the way they are, in part because they are to inhabit an environment in which the apparatus of repair is available (although not always invocable easily and without interactional consequences, such as possibly prefiguring disagreement; see Sacks 1987), and in which flexible arrangements can be permitted, as compared to discourse domains like those of science and logic where it cannot, and whose building blocks must therefore be (so it is claimed, at least) of a different character.

And so our articulatory apparatus and our practices of articulation and hearing can have developed the way they did in part because repair is there to catch such troubles as may arise. And the lexicon. And so forth.¹

If the capacity for deploying the practices of language is a fact of the biology of humans, as it is nowadays fashionable to underscore, certain suppositions would seem to be warranted about it, of a sort quite different from those ordinarily understood to follow. Here I mention only one.

If the conduct of language as a domain of behavior is biological in character, then we should expect it (like other biological entities) to be adapted to its natural environment. What is the primordial natural environment of language use, within which the shape of linguistic structures such as grammar, have been shaped? Transparently, the natural environment of language use is talk-in-interaction, and originally ordinary conversation. The natural home environment of clauses and sentences is turns-at-talk. Must we not understand the structures of grammar to be in important respects adaptations to the turn-at-talk in a conversational turn-

¹There is increasing evidence that the practices of repair are available and employed from very early on. With respect to self-repair, see, for example, Clark, 1978; Clark & Andersen, 1979; Iwamura, 1980; McTear, 1985, which show self-repair to be in use at least as early as 1½ to 2 years of age. Garvey (1984) suggested that repair on other's talk (what she calls "contingent queries") are used by children as least as early as 32 months; they surely are understood and responded to earlier than that.

taking system with its interactional contingencies? Must we not understand the constitution of a lexicon, at least in part, by references to the organization of repair that operates in the natural environment in which the elements of the lexicon are in the first instance deployed?

A CASE IN POINT

With these themes in mind, consider the following brief episode from what must surely be one of the most recurrently central settings of talk-in-interaction across the variations within the human species—the evening meal.

A small family is having dinner. The boy, Rob, about 6 years old, has a largish piece of meat speared on his fork. He leans over the table and holds a position above his plate with the fork to his mouth, gnawing on the piece of meat. A moment after he assumes this position, his mother looks over at him, and holds the look for a few seconds. Rob straightens up, is no longer gnawing at the fork. Mother turns away from him, and the following exchange occurs. (The doubled letters in M's second turn indicate clearly enunciated consonants.)

M: Cut that (up)/(out), Rob
(0.2)

R: Hm?

M: I saidd, "Cutt itt."

R: ((Transfers fork from right to left hand))

Consider the following sets of observations:

1. In this exchange Mother looks over at Rob just after he starts doing something she is about to treat as improper, as something he should do differently. She holds that look at him and says nothing. When he stops that activity, she looks away. And *then* she speaks to the matter, "Cut that up, Rob," an utterance with which Rob exhibits himself to have some trouble.

Note then that while Rob is doing the deed, she does not comment on it, though she is looking at it, and indeed seems to be "doing looking at it," timing the arrival of her gaze on him and its departure from him by reference to his starting and stopping the gnawing. Post hoc propter hoc, here, is not so much a logical fallacy as a principle of interactional interpretation (and it is its source in the latter that very likely led to the need to formulate it as the former).

Thus, Rob sees that she looked at him gnawing without comment; did she approve then? But parents do use a fixed stare to show that they see something sanctionable going on, inviting the child to see that they see, and to adjust the behavior accordingly. But does he see that "she looked at [*him gnawing*]?"

Does he see that as what she was looking at? Does he see her "looking" as "noticing?" "Noticing" requires an object; it is a formulation of looking, a grasp of looking, that takes the looking to have had something—some event or feature—which prompted it. So for Rob to have seen her looking as "looking at" or "noticing" involves him in grasping something about himself that is/was its object.

Correlatively, if there is a way for adults to recognizably "do looking at" or "do noticing," then they can prompt a self-examination by the target to find what was being noticed, what was being looked at. Such a device by adults can turn on, can invoke, "guilty knowledge," it can invoke "examine thyself to see what blameworthy thing I am looking at." In looking without commenting, she gives him a chance to deal with whatever may be wrong first, before any overt sanction on her part. A sort of "preference for self-correction" is involved here, then, but not for trouble in speaking, hearing or understanding, but rather an aspect of table manners.

In not commenting until he stops, something else is done. She does not sanction him for this occasion, or at least not directly. She uses this occasion to provide the relevant opportunity for instructing him on how to deal with problems of this sort. How does she do that? She does it in part by waiting until the end of the current episode; saying/doing it *then* is a way of doing it "for next time."

This is a general resource in interaction. A bus rider will stand with a hand on the cord that makes the bell ring and informs the driver that someone wishes to get off. A passenger will place a hand on the cord and hold it there until the bus pulls away from one stop, lest the driver misinterpret what was meant as indicator for the next stop as a tardy indication about the prior one. (And there can be an orientation to this formal timing feature, even when no ready interpretation can be accorded its result, as when a person about to answer a ringing phone pauses with a hand on the receiver, one not lifting it until the current ring ends, another not lifting it until a next ring begins, each apparently oriented to some unequivocal orientation to nextness; see Schegloff, 1986).

Of course this issue of timing is a recurrent one for children. Are the parents' instructions meant to be carried out "now," or "when next relevant?" What is "now?" Directly after the end of the utterance in which the instruction is delivered? As the next activity after the child finishes whatever he or she is engaged in? The next time the sort of thing to which the instruction pertains comes up? When *is* the child to clean up the room?

And so mother may here hold off "cut that up, Rob" so as to bring off not that the current chewing be abandoned for the cutting, but that when a next bite is to be taken, it be gotten by cutting and not by gnawing, and one way to do this is to hold off the utterance until the current spate of activity has been brought to a close, which is what Rob's straightening up from the bent-over-plate position displays.

2. Consider mother's injunction to Rob, and what follows it. This kind of utterance makes one of a limited set of response types relevant next; it is what we call a "first pair part of an adjacency pair" (Heritage, 1984; Levinson, 1983; Schegloff & Sacks, 1973). Here the mandate is for some action, and the preferred response type is a compliant action, or some behavioral indication that such an action or course of action is being launched. In the episode being examined here, the transfer of the fork from right to left hand a bit later on is such an incipient act of compliance (preparatory to picking up the knife with the right hand?). Where the response is otherwise an embodied action, it may be marked in the talk by what we can term a "compliance marker," such as "O.K.," "right," and the like. (The absence of such a marker, as in the present data, may indicate a certain lack of enthusiasm, or even sullenness, but without detailed inspection of the relevant data such a line cannot be pursued here. Nonetheless, it may be noted that the insertion of some other conduct between a first and second pair part has generally been understood as projecting a dispreferred, or less-than-preferred, response to be "in the works" (see Pomerantz, 1978, 1984; Sacks, 1987). And here the compliant action is delayed by an inserted sequence, so that the absence of a compliance marker, with the resultant compliance-stances already suggested as possible inferences, is an orderly and not unfamiliar trajectory of events.)

As noted, between mother's injunction and Rob's incipient compliance (he does not actually go on to comply at this point) there intervenes a sequence, of the sort we term *repair*. This repair is canonical in a number of respects. It is initiated by a/the recipient of the talk containing the trouble source, who leaves it for the speaker of the trouble-source to deal with the trouble. The repair is initiated in the turn after the trouble-source turn, which is where virtually all such "other-initiated" repairs are initiated (and, indeed, is initiated there after a brief gap of silence, which is also quite common; for this and other points in this paragraph; see Schegloff, Jefferson, & Sacks, 1977). It is responded to and completed in the next turn, which is also canonical, and is responded to there by the prior speaker, the speaker of the trouble-source.

The Sacks Substitution

There is one respect, however, in which this fragment differs from a practice frequently observed in such repair sequences (though by no means as common as the regularities previously referred to as canonical). The observation was first called to my attention by my late colleague Harvey Sacks, and I will refer to it as the "Sacks substitution." Sacks noted that in the environment of repair, pro-terms² regularly get replaced by the full-forms to which they referred, even when

²"Pro-terms" are "reduced" forms used to replace so-called "full forms" in certain contexts; pro-nouns are the most familiar type used in lieu of full noun phrases, but there are "pro-verbs" as well, for example, "do" or "did" as in the data fragment taken from US:33-41, where "did it" is being used in place of "broke the glass out" which then replaces it.

those pro-terms were not, or were not clearly, the source of the trouble. For our purposes, a very few instances (selected to include pro-term references to places, persons, and actions) will have to suffice to exemplify this practice.

So, upon repetition, pro-term references to *place* may be substituted for by a fuller form of reference.

US:32³

Vic: My pail's there,
James: Hoh?
Vic: My pail is in yuh *hallway*.
(simplified transcript)

CDHQ:41-42

D: You very happy up there?
S: Pardon?
D: I say are you very happy where you are?

The replaced pro-term may be used for reference to *persons*:

CDHQ:2 The scene is a Civil Defense Headquarters in the aftermath of a hurricane.

A: . . . They haven't seen anything a' the Salvation Army.
B: Oh the Salavation Army,
B: [They- they already got there, ()].⁴
C: [No they ()]
C: They've left already.
→ C: They [came in an' left.
→ A: [I beg yer pardon?
→ C: Red Cross has been there an' *left*.
C: The Salvation Army's the one that stayed *on*.
A: I-I just gotta call from Chief Lorenzo, an' uh Superintendent Bassuto,
an' they're on the scene,
C: on [what scene.
A: [But a Red Cross unit is there.
C: Must be speakina two different locations.

Haley (1959):329

Jones: What do they want with us?
Smith: Hm?
Jones: What do they want with you and me?

³These labels identify the source of the following data citation.

⁴Empty parentheses are used to mark places where the transcriber can hear that the speaker is talking but cannot make out the talk well enough to transcribe. Their size is roughly proportional to the extent of such talk.

The pro-term may refer to an *action* (and in the following instance the repair is self-initiated, rather than being responsive to a request by interlocutor).

US:33-41 Someone has broken James' window and he repeatedly asks who it was in a very loud voice—"All I WANNA KNOW WHO IT WAS" (p. 34); later (p. 39), "AH *STILL* DON' KNOW WHO DUH HELL *DID* IT;" later (p. 40), "AH WOONA KNOW WHO *DID* IT. THEN I CN KNOW WUD DUH DO." Finally (p. 41),

James: I WANNA GET TUH WHO, DID EH BROKE THAT GLASS.
THAT'S ALL AH WANT,

Here the pro-term "did [it]" is replaced by a full form formulation of the action being referred to.

Or the replaced pro-term may refer to an "*object*," though different senses of "object" are involved in each of the following instances.

US: 23

Vic: He *plugs* it in, he *plugs* the TV in, 'n walks over duh TV en starts adjust it.

(simplified transcript)

SB: 1:10-4

B: And that went wrong.
(1.0)

A: Well, uh

B: That surgery, I mean.

SBL: 1:3-2

A: Well, if you will uh after you go by, uh then I think I could arrange for you to see it tomorrow, (0.2)

A: -to see the interior.

One practice that we find associated with repair, then, is that when repair is undertaken, pro-terms may be replaced by their full-form references, whether as the point of the repair or as its by-product.

The Sacks Substitution Applied to the Case in Point

With the practice of the Sacks substitution noted, we can observe that when mother responds to Rob's "Hm?", she does not employ it. She does not, for example, offer as her repair solution, "Cut up the meat" or "cut that piece up," or the like. She makes a point of marking that she is repeating, with the self-quotation format "I said," and then retains a pro-term reference, albeit a differ-

ent one, into the repeat (while dropping the "up"), "Cut it," but enunciating the terminal consonants with underscored clarity, almost as if it were sloppy articulation of these that engendered Rob's "problem." Although the Sacks substitution has not yet been shown to have the robustness as a practice that other features of repair have, we can explore the question, "What might mother be doing in not employing it here?"

In responding to mother's utterance with the initiation of repair, Rob takes up the position that he has trouble with the utterance. The form of repair initiation he employs is among the weakest available; it displays virtually no grasp of the preceding utterance (as, for example, a full or partial repeat might do). It displays no grasp that he has been given an injunction or instruction, or has been sanctioned in some way. Thereby it displays no grasp that his preceding conduct was in any way subject to sanctioning. That does not mean, of course, that he has no such grasp; only that the interactional tack he has adopted takes that form.

Now one need not actually hear a fully articulated, acoustically pure signal conveying an unambiguous message in order to know what someone is saying, or what they are doing in saying whatever they are saying. Regularly, an orientation to a projectable next action or course of action, an orientation to a domain of mutual relevance, allows a recipient to hear and grasp what is being said and done from a partial uptake of a partially flawed "signal." What some utterance is, and is doing, is assembled from both its content and its context, its position and its composition, the acoustic and visual "signals" and the textures of relevance with which they interact.

So claiming to have not heard or not grasped is also potentially to take the stand that there was not such a domain of shared relevance, or a projected and/or projectable course of action, that would have allowed the claimant to figure out what the other was saying/doing. Where sanctions or accusations or injunctions are at issue, this can be tantamount to a denial of "guilty knowledge." Its classic form is in the parent's severe calling of the misbehaving child's name, only to have it treated innocently as a summons, which requires in return nothing more than a "what"? (Or, like the prompt to a player whose next turn it is, or a speaker whose turn is next, who respond to the prompt with the same "what?", revealing in such cases their inattentiveness to the proceedings through not recognizing that the use of their name was not a summons but a prompt to a prescheduled, and now due, next action.) In this case, of course, we might wonder whether, on the one hand, the mother's sustained gaze at Rob's gnawing at the meat would not have been understood as establishing a domain of reference that the ensuing utterance invokes, or whether, on the other hand, withholding her comment until after the behavior in question had been arrested did not make the reference of her utterance specifically veiled.

And we have to note that mother's utterance, even held off as it is, is not just an injunction or instruction, or request. In setting out an alternative way of eating, it can do a complaint about his prior behavior. It is the reference of the

“that” to what he had just been gnawing on that makes this “future-oriented” injunction a comment on prior behavior as well. The timing by which it was held off until he broke off the gnawing was a way of positioning the target time for the relevance of the instruction, not for disengaging the utterance—qua both sanction and instruction—from the conduct that prompted it.

Now mother might well have incorporated full-form references into her initial utterance in this sequence: “Cut the meat up, Rob.” In employing a pro-term, “Cut that up, Rob,” she builds on her orientation to the gnawing on the meat that her just-concluded gazing will have made visible. Her use of “that” requires Rob to solve its reference; it shows that she takes him to have the necessary resources—to know, or to be able to figure out, what “that” is, what “cutting” might refer to here, and why cutting it might be in point. Rob’s “hm?” denies that he can do these things, denies that he knows what is being referred to, what action is being pressed on him, what in his prior conduct requires reform.

Should mother respond to the “hm?” by replacing the pro-term with its full-form reference, she will have allowed Rob his plea of ignorance. She will have shown herself to treat his trouble in grasping her utterance as having its pro-term as its source, and that he might in fact be unaware that something he did, something related to the eating of the meat on his fork, was the target of her complaint and injunction.

Instead of redoing her utterance with transformations that might remove such a source of trouble in understanding, she treats it as a sort of hearing problem, to be solved by repeating and using clearer articulation. So she not only repeats; she does “doing repeating.” (In fact, she does “doing repeating” without actually repeating. She did not actually say what she says she said. She did *not* say “Cut it;” she said “cut that up.” Though, to be sure, the argument could be developed that she here invokes and displays a *members’* equivalence rule, which it would be mistaken to criticize in the terms that I have employed.) And in repeating, she heavily emphasizes the terminal consonants of her words, as if (as noted earlier) it were the failure to articulate those clearly which had been the source of Rob’s trouble. What she pointedly does not do is relieve him of the need to solve the pro-term. Although she replaces the pro-term “that,” she replaces it with another pro-term, “it,” a shift reflecting a sequential step further removed from the target of the referent, but which also presumes, and even more deeply because it drops the proximity component of the term, that recipient will know what is being referred to. Mother thereby disallows Rob’s disavowal of guilty knowledge. In insisting that he solve the utterance in the form in which she has presented it, and in insisting on this successfully (he *does* solve it), a small ceremony of innocence is played through and punctured.⁵

⁵Compare the following two exchanges from another dinner occasion involving a different family and their guest, Madeleine. In the first fragment, Stevie is being told to stop something he is doing, and the talk is organized along the lines discussed in the text of this paper. In the second fragment,

Note that the trajectory of this episode depends on the availability of the resources of repair doubly. On the one hand, it is partially constituted through the very deployment and working through of repair relevant utterances. On the other hand, the availability of ways of talking that allow speakers (here, the mother) to invoke recipients' (here, Rob's) knowledge in an implicit way itself turns on the generic presence and invocability of repair resources in interaction. Because such resources are generically available in talk-in-interaction to resolve troubles in hearing and understanding should they arise, the resources deployable in talk-in-interaction can be very different in their constitution and composition than they might otherwise be (they can be multi-referential, for example), and their deployment can be different than it might otherwise be (it can be designedly ambiguous, for example). In this respect, the episode between Rob and his mother turns on the *invocability* of repair rather than its *invocation*.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

But hasn't a silk purse been made of a sow's ear here? Hasn't too much been made of the slightest of events? Does this occurrence even merit the honor of status as an event? I was once asked by a well respected student of children's language acquisition about my analysis of a very brief excerpt from an ordinary interaction (subsequently published as Schegloff, 1987, 1988). She remarked that before the presentation began, the data looked uninviting—neither particularly orderly nor particularly substantial or consequential, surely nothing as textured as the analysis had made it out to be. Might this not be a creation of the analytic procedures? Could any bit of talk in interaction turn out to be random or disorderly? After all, students of language acquisition find lots of things they think of as mere mistakes, as the product not of doing something subtle, but of doing something badly, incompetently.

less than a minute later, Stevie is being offered more food and the themes discussed in the text are not in point. Here, the pro-term reference ("more") is expanded on the repeat.

(1) Oolie: Chicken Dinner 13:41

Mad: Don't (plet) that,

Stevie: Huh?

Mad: Don't () that.

Dad: C'mon=

Mad: =Come on (*) [sit back up an' talk to us. ←

Dad: [Come on Stevie. Come si down.

(2) Oolie: Chicken Dinner 14:08

Mad: D'you want some more Steven,

Stevie: Huh,

(1.0)

Dad: Y'want some more chicken, ←

Stevie: mm hm.

On the other hand, we wonder how children learn language and its felicitous use; how they learn to conduct themselves properly, and effectively; how they learn to deal with the moment to moment contingencies of life, and life in interaction, including (perhaps especially) the life in interaction through which they learn about life in general. Although the argument should be pressed that interaction at this level of detail (and "below") is demonstrably real and consequential for participants of any age and skill, for the not-yet-competent—the children, the strangers, and so forth—it is even more substantial. Time is slower, each aspect larger, recognizing and negotiating through the contingencies a more robust project, and all of it potentially being both done and learned at the same time. They learn to deal with the moment-to-moment contingencies of life in interaction, and the details of language use and conduct, *in* the moment-to-moment contingencies of life in interaction, with their deployments of language and other conduct. The language learned there has its character and structure informed by the structure and contingencies of interaction, just as the practices for using the language are so informed. Until our understanding incorporates that informing as well, we will remain ill-informed.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My thanks to Elinor Ochs and Gene Lerner for guidance with respect to clarity and bibliography. Responsibility for remaining deficits in either regard, or others, is mine, of course.

REFERENCES

- Bruner, J. *Child's talk: Learning to use language*. New York: Norton, 1983.
- Clark, E. V. Awareness of language: Some evidence from what children say and do. In A. Sinclair, R. J. Jarvella, & W. J. M. Levelt (Eds.), *The child's conception of language*. New York: Springer, 1978.
- Clark, E. V., & Andersen, E. S. Spontaneous repairs: awareness in the process of acquiring language. In *Papers and reports on child language development*, No. 16, Stanford University, 1979.
- Garvey, C. *Children's talk*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984.
- Goodwin, C. The interactive construction of a sentence in natural conversation. In G. Psathas (Ed.), *Everyday language: Studies in ethnomethodology*. New York: Irvington, 1979.
- Goodwin, C. Restarts, pauses and the achievement of a state of mutual gaze at turn beginning. *Sociological Inquiry*, 1980, 50, 272–302.
- Goodwin, C. *Conversational organization*. New York: Academic Press, 1981.
- Haley, J. An interactional description of schizophrenia. *Psychiatry*, 1959, 22, 321–332.
- Heritage, J. *Garfinkel and ethnomethodology*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1984.
- Iwamura, S. G. *The verbal gains of pre-school children*. London: Croom Helm, 1980.
- Levinson, S. C. *Pragmatics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983.
- Jefferson, G. Error correction as an interactional resource. *Language in Society*, 1974, 2, 181–199.

- McTear, M. *Children's conversation*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1985.
- Ochs, E. Transcription as theory. In E. Ochs & B. Schieffelin (Eds.), *Developmental pragmatics*, (pp. 43-72). New York: Academic Press, 1979.
- Pomerantz, A. M. Compliment responses: notes on the cooperation of multiple constraints. In J. Schenkein (Ed.), *Studies in the organization of conversational interaction*. New York: Academic Press, 1978.
- Pomerantz, A. M. Agreeing and disagreeing with assessments: some features of preferred/dispreferred turn shapes. In J. M. Atkinson & J. Heritage (Eds.), *Structures of social action*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984.
- Sacks, H. An initial investigation of the usability of conversational data for doing sociology. In D. N. Sudnow (Ed.), *Studies in social interaction*. New York: Free Press, 1972a.
- Sacks, H. On the analyzability of stories by children. In J. J. Gumperz & D. Hymes (Eds.), *Directions in sociolinguistics*. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1972b.
- Sacks, H. On the preferences for agreement and contiguity in the organization of sequences in conversation. In G. Button & J. R. E. Lee (Eds.), *Talk and social organization*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 1987.
- Sacks, H., & Schegloff, E. A. Two preferences in the organization of reference to persons and their interaction. In G. Psathas (Ed.), *Everyday language: Studies in ethnomethodology*. New York: Irvington, 1979.
- Sacks, H., Schegloff, E. A., & Jefferson, G. A simplest systematics for the organization of turntaking for conversation. *Language*, 1974, 50, 696-735.
- Schegloff, E. A. Notes on a conversational practice: Formulating place. In D. N. Sudnow (Ed.), *Studies in social interaction*. New York: Free Press, 1972.
- Schegloff, E. A. The relevance of repair to syntax-for-conversation. In T. Givón (Ed.), *Syntax and semantics 12: Discourse and syntax*. New York: Academic Press, 1979.
- Schegloff, E. A. Discourse as an interactional achievement: Some uses of 'uh huh' and other things that come between sentences. In D. Tannen (Ed.), *Analyzing discourse: Text and talk*. Georgetown University Roundtable on Languages and Linguistics; Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 1981.
- Schegloff, E. A. The routine as achievement. *Human Studies*, 1986, 9, 111-151.
- Schegloff, E. A. Analyzing single episodes of interaction: An exercise in conversation analysis. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 1987, 50, 101-114.
- Schegloff, E. A. Discourse as an interactional achievement II: An exercise in conversation analysis. In D. Tannen (Ed.), *Linguistics in context: Connecting observation and understanding*. Norwood, NJ: Ablex, 1988.
- Schegloff, E. A. On the organization of sequences as a source of 'coherence' in talk-in-interaction. In B. Dorval (Ed.), *Conversational coherence and its development*. Norwood, NJ: Ablex, forthcoming a.
- Schegloff, E. A. Goffman and the analysis of conversation. In P. Drew & A. Wootton (Eds.), *Erving Goffman: Exploring the interaction order*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1988.
- Schegloff, E. A., & Sacks H. Opening up closings. *Semiotica*, 1973, 7, 289-327.
- Schegloff, E. A., Jefferson, G., & Sacks, H. The preference for self-correction in the organization of repair in conversation. *Language*, 1977, 53, 361-382.

INTERACTION IN HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Edited by

MARC H. BORNSTEIN

*National Institute of Child Health
and Human Development*

and

New York University

JEROME S. BRUNER

New York University



LAWRENCE ERLBAUM ASSOCIATES, PUBLISHERS
1989 Hillsdale, New Jersey Hove and London