

10. Notes on story structure and the organization of participation

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This chapter investigates the interactive organization invoked and sustained through the telling of a single story in natural conversation. Among the phenomena examined are (1) how the participants organize themselves in relation to each other through the telling, with particular attention to how telling-specific identities, such as teller, addressed recipient, nonaddressed recipient, and principal character, are made relevant, displayed, and differentiated from each other; (2) ways in which the distinguishable subcomponents of the story are analyzed; (3) how participants display with their bodies as well as with their talk orientation to the alternative possibilities for action that the different subcomponents provide, and (4) how participants, through attention to both the internal structure of the talk and their place within it, manage shifting but concurrent involvement in other activities also taking place within the setting.

The story to be examined occurred during a dinner at the home of John and Beth at which another couple, Ann and Don, were guests. The dinner was videotaped.¹ Analysis focuses upon both the vocal and non-vocal behavior of the participants.² The following provides a simplified transcript of the talk producing the story.³

[G:26:5:55] (Simplified Version)

- 1 (4.0)
2 Ann: Well- ((throat clear)) (0.4) We coulda used a
3 liddle, marijuana. tih get through the wweekend.
4 Beth: What h happened.
5 Ann: Karen has this new hou:se. en it's got

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- 6 all this like- (0.2) ssilvery:: g-go:ld
 7 wwa:llpaper, 'hh (h)en D(h)o(h)n sa(h)ys,
 8 y'know this's th'firs'time we've seen this
 9 house.=Fifty five thousn dollars in Cherry
 10 Hill.=Right?
 11 (0.4)
 12 Beth: Uh hu:h?
 13 Ann: Do(h)n said. (0.3) dih-did they ma:ke you take
 14 this [wa(h)llpa(h)p(h)er? er(h)di [dju pi(h)ck]=
 15 Beth: [hh! Ahh huh huh]=
 16 Ann: =[i(h)t ou(h)t.
 17 Beth: =[[huh huh huh [huh
 18 Don: [Uh hih huh hu:h
 19 Ann: [UHWOOghghHHH!]=
 20 Ann: =Y'kno(h)w that wz [like the firs' bad one.
 21 Beth: [Uh:oh wo::w hh
 22 (0.2)
 23 Don: But I said it so innocuously y'know.
 24 Ann: Yeh I'm sure they thought it wz- hnh hnh!

1. Some initial observations

The story that Ann produces here exhibits one of the characteristic shapes that stories take in conversation. A multi-utterance turn (lines 5–16), the body of the story, is preceded by specific moves by both the teller and the recipient: a preface offering to tell the story (lines 2–3) and a request to hear the offered story (line 4). At the conclusion of the story proper the participants engage in further talk relevant to it (lines 17–24). Sacks (1974) has analyzed how such a shape represents an adaptation to some of the basic features organizing turn-taking within conversation. For example, the preface and recipient answer to it provide one technique for negotiating the systematic occurrence of a subsequent turn consisting of multiple turn-constructural units.

The body of the story contains a number of distinct sections.⁴ It begins with relevant background information, the fact that Karen has a new house and that it has a certain kind of wallpaper (lines 5–7) and then at the end of line 7, with “(h)en D(h)o(h)n sa(h)ys,” moves to what will turn out to be the climax of the story. At this point, however, rather than producing what Don in fact said the speaker begins to provide further background information, the cost of the house and its location (lines 9–10). Only after the acknowledgment of this information by a recipient (line 12) does the speaker return to where she had left off, saying (line 13) “Do(h)n said” and then reporting what he said.

The story thus contains not only preface, background, and climax sections but also what may be called a parenthesis, a section of background information embedded (disjunctively) within the climax.

The differentiation of these subsections is not merely an analytic device for studying the story but poses a practical problem for the participants themselves. Alternative tasks are raised for them in different sections. For example, recipient action different from that called for during background sections becomes appropriate and relevant at the conclusion of the story, during (see line 15) or after the climax segment. (Other examples of alternative recipient action in different segments are examined later in the chapter.) The parenthesis poses the issue of differentiation with particular clarity. Syntactically the talk produced there could be the next component of the sentence begun with "Don says." Recipients fail, however, in their ongoing analysis of the story if they interpret "y'know this's th'firs'time we've seen this *house*" as something Don said over the weekend to Karen rather than as something the present speaker is now telling them about that event.⁵

The way in which the speaker articulates her talk is relevant to this issue in that it has the effect of heightening the contrast between adjacent segments of her story. For example laugh tokens, indicated in the transcript by "(h)"'s, occur extensively in talk constituting part of the climax, but only there. Presence of laugh tokens thus clearly differentiates "hh (h)en D(h)o(h)n sa(h)ys," in line 7 from both the background segment that precedes it and the parenthesis segment that follows it. The parenthesis is in fact precisely bracketed by laugh tokens, as the speaker places another in the very first syllable of her return to the climax segment in line 13. Laugh tokens are not simply comments by the speaker on the talk being produced but rather, as has been noted by Jefferson (1974b and Jefferson, Sacks, and Schlegloff forthcoming), may constitute invitations to laugh, moves making relevant particular types of subsequent actions by a recipient.⁶ The distribution of laugh tokens thus both emphasizes the disjunctiveness of adjacently placed segments and provides a recipient with different guides for his action within alternative segments. Contrast between segments is also manifested in other ways, not to be dealt with here, such as changes in voice and intonation. The fact that the speaker's articulation of her story is highly textured and differentiated rather than homogeneous thus constitutes a resource for the accomplishment of some of the interactive and interpretative tasks facing the participants.⁷

Several additional features of the conversation may also be noted. First, the principal character in the story, Don, is present at its telling. He is in fact seated next to Ann. Second, the talk being investigated takes place in what may be called a multi-activity setting. In addition to conversation the participants are also engaged in a variety of other activities such as eating, distributing food, and child care. Among the

phenomena to be examined in the present report are ways in which participants display different types of alignment to competing activities as well as the coordination of these multiple activities relative to each other.

2. Teller's body position

Through the way in which she handles her body during this sequence the speaker performs a number of actions relevant to the telling of her story. These include displays about the nature and extent of her orientation to the conversation itself as well as displays about the type of talk she is producing, and relevant differences within that talk.

For the telling a distinctive body posture is adopted. Ann clasps her hands together, places both elbows on the table, and leans forward while gazing toward her addressed recipient, Beth. With this posture the speaker displays full orientation toward her addressed recipient, complete engagement in the telling of her story, and lack of involvement in any activities other than conversation. The posture appears to mark the production of a focused, extended turn at talk, that is, to constitute a visual display that a telling is in progress.

Support for this possibility is provided by the sequential placement of the teller's position and by its contrast with the position of the speaker's body before and after this turn. The speaker's elbows reach the table over the word "new" in line 5 and leave the table over the word "out" in line 16, the very last word of the story. The boundaries of the position thus coincide almost precisely with the boundaries of the multi-unit turn containing the body of the story.⁸

Not all talk receives the exclusive involvement of the speaker that Ann gives hers here. For example, just after this turn Ann picks up a glass of water so that her talk in line 24 is done while displaying concurrent involvement in multiple activities, conversation and eating. By holding the glass just to the side of her face during this turn she displays that that strip of talk is being done in the shadow of another, interrupted activity which, though being held off during the talk, is nonetheless awaiting accomplishment when the talk comes to completion. The story proper stands under no such shadow but has the full and exclusive engagement of its speaker.

The speaker's actions at the beginning of the story provide further evidence that a display of full engagement in it by its speaker is in fact an oriented-to feature of its production. Just before the story begins Ann, and all of the other participants, are fully occupied with eating. Ann places food on her fork and starts to raise it to her mouth. She then

hesitates, however, puts the loaded fork back on her plate, raises her head, and produces the story preface. The activity of eating is not simply interrupted (in which case Ann might have continued to hold the fork in readiness, as she later did the glass) but noticeably abandoned in mid-course in favor of the talk. Thus even before the talk has been produced the activities of the speaker's body provide a display about the status she is proposing for it, that is, that it is something she is putting aside other activities to engage in and thus not simply a comment or remark, but potentially something such as a telling.

As was noted earlier, the production of the story is not up to the speaker alone but rather something accomplished with the collaboration of a recipient, this collaboration being established through a preface/request sequence. During her preface Ann does not adopt the distinctive teller's position used in the body of the story but rather engages in a number of actions that seem to display preparation for some upcoming activity. Specifically she raises herself in her seat, adjusts her hair and glasses, and rearranges the space in front of her by moving a glass from one side of her plate to the other. With the way in which she handles her body Ann thus differentiates the preface from the body of her story and displays that she is treating them as quite different types of events.

Other units in the talk are also differentiated by the speaker's body. For example, though her elbows remain stable throughout the body of the story the speaker's hands are mobile, their movements being coordinated with subunits within the long, multi-utterance turn in lines 5–16. This coordination is perhaps most clearly seen over the parenthesis segment, where the hands are unclasped and rubbed back and forth. The movement of the hands stops precisely when the speaker closes the parenthesis and returns to the climax segment. Subsections within the parenthesis itself are also marked. For example, just after "Right?" which transfers the floor briefly to the recipient, the speaker's hand noticeably closes.

Ann's telling is thus made visible not only in her talk but also in the way in which she organizes her body and activities during the telling. With these resources she is able to provide relevant displays about both her alignment to the talk and its sequential organization.

3. Gaze between speaker and addressed recipient

One characteristic way that orientation toward the other is displayed within the turn at talk is through gaze. Other research (Goodwin 1979a, 1981a) has provided some demonstration that participants both orient to

particular states of gaze within the turn and have systematic procedures for achieving these states. The gaze of the speaker and addressed recipient in the present data forces this analysis to be expanded to take into account the distinctive sequential organization for talk provided by a story. To establish necessary groundwork for examining this, some relevant features of the organization of gaze within the turn are briefly summarized.

One principal rule organizing the gaze of speaker and recipient within the turn can be stated as follows: When a speaker gazes at a recipient that recipient should be gazing at him. When speakers gaze at nongazing recipients, and thus locate violations of the rule, they frequently produce phrasal breaks, such as restarts and pauses, in their talk. These phrasal breaks both orient to the event as a violation by locating the talk in progress at that point as impaired in some fashion and provide a remedy by functioning as requests for the gaze of the hearer. Thus just after phrasal breaks nongazing recipients frequently begin to move their gaze to the speaker. The following provide examples of this process. The gaze of the speaker is marked above the utterance, that of the recipient below it. A line indicates that the party marked is gazing toward the other. The absence of a line indicates lack of gaze. Dots mark the transition movement from gaze to nongaze, commas indicate the dropping of gaze, and the point where gaze reaches the other is marked with an "X." If gaze arrives within a pause each tenth of a second within the pause is marked with a dash.

Beth: ^X
 Terry- Jerry's fa _l scinated with elephants
 Don: _x

Joe: ^X
 My mother tol' me th't We had a col' d wadder flat
 Pat: _l X

The rule organizing gaze also provides organization for the sequencing of the gaze of the parties at a turn beginning. If the speaker brings his or her gaze in first, as happens in the above examples, the speaker will find a nongazing recipient and thus violate the rule. Therefore if the rule is to be satisfied gaze should be sequenced in the order first recipient and only then speaker.

The present data show that the gaze of the speaker and addressed recipient during the preface satisfies the rule.⁹

Ann: Well (--- [-]) We coulda used . . . ^X_____ [a liddle, marijuana.=
Beth: . _X_____

Ann: =tih get through the wee ^X_____ kend.
Beth: _____

However, during the first segment of the body of the story, the addressed recipient withdraws her gaze from the speaker:

Ann: _____
Karen has this new hou:se. en it's got all this
Beth: _____ , , ,

When this happens a clear violation of the rule stated above occurs. The speaker is gazing at a nongazing recipient.

The participants do not, however, orient to this event as a violation. For example, the speaker does not immediately produce a restart to request the recipient's gaze but rather continues with the talk that she is producing and indeed advances the development of that talk further even after she has lost the gaze of her recipient.

Such behavior by the participants suggests that the looking away of the recipient at this point is permitted. This raises the possibility either that it is a lawful exception to the rule or that the rule has been relaxed.

To explore this possibility two phenomena are examined: first, the sequential position of the look-away, and second, the demands being made upon the participants by the multiple activities within which they are engaged.

The recipient's look-away occurs during a background segment within the body of a story. This position is a sequential one with somewhat special properties. First, by virtue of the sequence preceding it the party who is now looking away has already displayed orientation to the talk that the speaker is currently producing in several different ways: vocally, by explicitly requesting that the speaker tell her story and, non-vocally, with her gaze during the preface and at the beginning of the body. Because of its placement after these events the present look-away is quite different from lack of gaze at the beginning of an isolated turn at talk, for example, the beginning of a turn just after a lapse, where the orientation of recipient to speaker has not yet been established.

Second, this position is also special with respect to the contingencies for action operative at the termination of the unit. In general within

conversation speaker transition is a relevant possibility at the end of each turn-constructural unit (Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson 1974:704). However here, through the preface sequence, speaker and recipient have specifically negotiated the production of a turn that is to consist of multiple turn-constructural units. The unit within which the recipient looks away is recognizably not the last unit in the turn but the first. As such it is a unit within which the tasks that will face the recipient at the climax of the story, and completion of the turn, are not then to be posed.

The sequential position of the look-away is thus consistent with the possibility that the recipient is orienting to the talk then occurring specifically as a multi-unit turn and using that feature of it, and in particular the embedded position of this unit, as one reference point for the organization of her activities.

It may also be observed from the videotape that the recipient does not simply turn her eyes away from the speaker but while she is looking away engages in another activity achieved in part through the use of her gaze: putting food on her fork. Eating makes use of some of the same body material, the mouth and gaze, for example, used to do conversation, and the demands made on this body material by these different activities are not always able to be satisfied simultaneously. Insofar as multiple activities are occurring the participants are faced with the ongoing task of coordinating these separate activities with each other.

The present data suggest one possibility for accomplishing such coordination. In particular sequential positions the rule that a recipient should be gazing at a gazing speaker may be relaxed, permitting the recipient to look away and attend to competing activities. If the rule is only being relaxed, and not ignored, the participants may still provide some demonstration of their orientation to it even though it is not being strictly adhered to.

The data show that shortly after turning away the recipient does a nod:

Ann:

Karen has this new hou:se. en it's got all this

Beth: _____ , , , ((Nod))

By producing the nod the recipient is able to display that even though she is not gazing at the speaker she is still orienting to her talk.

Further, the nod is done in a different sequential position, mid-turn-constructural unit,¹⁰ from the nods performed while the speaker is

being gazed at. These occur at the boundaries of turn-constructural units:

Ann: Karen has this new hou:se. en it's got all this=
 Beth: _____ , , , ((Nod))

Ann: =like- (0.2) ssilvery:: g-go:ld wwa: llpaper, 'hh=
 Beth: _____ lX ((Nod))

Ann: =(h)en D(h)o(h)n sa(h)ys, y'know this's th'firs'='
 Beth: _____

Ann: =time we've seen this house.=Fifty five thousn dollars=
 Beth: _____ ((Nod)) , , ,

Ann: =in Cherry Hill.=Right?
 (0.4)
 Beth: Uh hu:h?

The data are thus consistent with the argument that the recipient, by doing special work to display that she is still orienting to the talk of the speaker, is attending to the possibility that her look-away is a dispreferred activity.

The speaker also performs actions relevant to the dispreferred status of the recipient's lack of gaze. Shortly after the nod the speaker produces a phrasal break, an act that may function to request gaze but here has the effect of soliciting a second nod from the recipient:

Ann: Karen has this new hou:se. en it's got all this=
 Beth: _____ , , , ((Nod))

Ann: =like- (0.2) ssilvery::
 ((Nod))

Both speaker and recipient thus perform specific actions relevant to the recipient's lack of gaze at this point. The data are therefore con-

sistent with the argument that the rule about gazing at a gazing speaker has not been abandoned but relaxed. Further, even though relaxed, orientation to the rule has consequences in detail for the actions of the participants.

Some other phenomena relevant to these issues are more tenuous but nonetheless suggestive in the data. After the phrasal break solicits a nod but not the return of the recipient's gaze, the talk of the speaker becomes noticeably more textured with phenomena such as elongations of sounds and slight hesitations. One word after this texturing begins the recipient raises her eyes from her plate so that her head is directed to the speaker while she places her food in her mouth (this position is marked in the transcript with asterisks). Once this has been done Beth raises her head higher and moves into a position of full orientation toward the speaker:

Ann: Karen has this new hou:se. en it's got all this=
Beth: _____ , , , (Nod)

Ann: =like- (0.2) ssilvery: : g-go:ld wwa llpaper.
Beth: (Nod) ***** . . X_____

The perturbations in the talk of the speaker and the two-stage return of the recipient raise the possibility that they are still negotiating the recipient's lack of gaze. The speaker provides further solicitations in her talk, and the recipient, with her first head movement, displays that even though she cannot yet return to full orientation she recognizes that this should be done and is in fact making a display of doing it as soon as possible.

The perturbations in the talk of the speaker also function to coordinate the production of her talk with the return move of the recipient. This function is most noticeable in the word "wwa:llpaper" where the sound stretch of the speaker positions the recipient's gaze arrival at a syllable boundary, but stretches in "g-go:ld" may also function to delay the beginning of "wwa:llpaper" until the first stage of the recipient's movement has been completed.¹¹

Though gaze is returned by the end of the initial background segment it soon emerges again as an issue between the participants.

Just after the speaker enters the climax segment and, through the use of phenomena such as laugh tokens, differentiates it from the unit that

preceded it, the addressed recipient leans toward the speaker (this movement starts in the midst of the word "D(h)o(h)n"). With this change in her position the recipient manages to show heightened orientation within the framework of full engagement that has been reestablished just before the beginning of this unit. It thus appears that the movement of the story from background to climax segments is achieved and ratified through the coordinated actions of both the speaker and the recipient. The recipient, with the return of her gaze at the end of the background segment (something that may be managed in part by adjustments in the speaker's talk), displays that she is prepared for the speaker to move to the climax. The speaker then does so, and then the recipient, by moving toward her, displays that she recognizes what has been done and is treating the current talk differently from the talk that preceded it.

However, after the recipient's display, instead of continuing with the climax, the speaker returns to background material by entering the parenthesis. The recipient holds her climax orientation and continues to gaze at the speaker throughout the first turn-constructural unit of this new, unprojected background segment. But shortly after the speaker enters a second turn-constructural unit in the parenthesis, thus displaying that the parenthesis will be extended, the recipient withdraws her gaze from the speaker:

- Ann: _____
 Karen has this new hou:se. en it's got all this=
 Beth: _____ , , , ((Nod))
- Ann: _____
 =like- (0.2) ssilvery:: g-go:ld wwa: [llpaper, 'hh=
 Beth: ((Nod)) X ((Nod))
- Ann: _____
 =(h)en D(h)o(h)n sa(h)ys, y'know this's th'firs'=
 Beth: _____
- Ann: _____
 =time we've seen this house.=Fifty five thousn dollars=
 Beth: _____ ((Nod)) , , ,
- Ann: _____
 =in Cherry Hill.=Right?
 (0.4)
 Beth: Uh hu:h?

At the end of the turn-constructural unit in progress when the gaze withdrawal occurs the speaker appends an explicit request for a display of coparticipation, the tag question "Right?" The recipient does not provide an answer to this request for four-tenths of a second but the speaker waits for an explicit response before producing further talk. When the response from the recipient has been obtained the speaker returns immediately to the climax segment of her story.

Although the speaker is permitted to produce a parenthesis in her talk, to project the punchline and then insert further background information, the continued production of the parenthesis is contingent upon the cooperation of the recipient to the talk, the party who provided the speaker with the opportunity to produce a multi-unit turn in the first place. Thus (1) the recipient shows that she will not continue to display full orientation during an extended parenthesis; (2) the speaker then explicitly requests a display of her coparticipation; and (3) closes the parenthesis as soon as this display has been obtained.

After providing an answer to the speaker's "Right?" the addressed recipient does not return her gaze to the speaker. Rather, like her answer to the speaker's explicit request, her principal response to the story is displayed vocally, with laughter.

The recipient's withholding of her gaze during the final climax segment may be sensitive to the details of the particular interactive event being created through the telling of this story. For example, in that her gaze is not returned she is not put in the position of looking at the principal character in the story¹² while she is laughing at what he did.¹³ Such issues will not, however, be investigated in the present chapter.

The telling is thus organized not only by actions of the speaker but also by actions of the addressed recipient. The actions of these two parties, however, are not performed mechanically with reference only to structures in the stream of speech but are also achieved and given shape through a continuous process of interaction with each other. Each takes into account both the demands being made upon her by the local contingencies of the talk and the actions of the other and, where appropriate, modifies her own actions in terms of what has been seen. Indeed, as such phenomena as the inclusion of the "Right?" in the parenthesis indicated, the talk itself may be changed.¹⁴ This process of interaction is not however arbitrary and formless but rather quite precisely organized through the use of systematic procedures and displays that are not only relevant to the talk but in part constitutive of it.

4. Principal character

Don, the person whose actions are being reported by the speaker, has not only heard the story but lived through it.¹⁵ Thus, unlike Beth, he does not need to listen to what is now being said to find out about the events being described. This does not, however, mean that he is freed from the task of attending in detail to the emerging structure of the story. Rather, the way in which his actions are presented makes it relevant for him to participate in the telling in specific ways at particular places within it.

Ann not only reports what Don said but also characterizes that action in a particular way. Through both the organization of the story itself and the details of its telling, such as the laugh tokens that punctuate the report of what was said, its principal character's actions are formulated as inappropriate, a social faux pas, an embarrassable, or, as the speaker herself says in line 20 "the firs' bad one." Given such a formulation, reaction from the party who produced the embarrassable is a potentially seeable event in its own right at a specific place in the telling: when what he said is revealed to the others present. The principal character may therefore be faced with the task of being available at a particular place in the story and of arranging his behavior there for the story-relevant scrutiny it will receive from others present.

These possibilities can be investigated by observing what Don does as the speaker reveals what he said to his hosts.

First, as the speaker produces the punchline of the story, Don's face is positioned so that it is pointed in the direction of the addressed recipient.

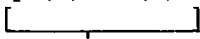
Second, Don uses his face to make displays relevant to the talk that the speaker is producing. These do not take the form of enactments of the events being reported but rather make visible an alignment to those events appropriate to the way in which they are now being formulated through the story. Thus as speaker's voice produces laugh tokens in the word "wa(h)llpa(h)p(h)er?" (line 14) his face begins to produce a smile. As both the speaker's and the addressed recipient's laughter is extended this smile is elaborated. Over the words "pi(h)ck i(h)t" the smile is noticeably escalated and renewed with a jerk of the head:

Ann: Do(h)n said. (0.3) dih-did they ma:ke you take this=
=wa(h)llpa (h)p(h)er? er(h)didju =

Don:

[
|
] *Smile*

Ann: = pi(h)ck i(h)t ou(h)t



Don: *Escalation with
Sharp
Head Movement*

The head movement that escalates the laughter is also used to begin a shift in Don's gaze away from the nongazing addressed recipient and toward the unaddressed recipient, John, who is found to be smiling back at him. At this point the speaker also moves her eyes away from the nongazing addressed recipient and to Don (the particular party being gazed at by someone is indicated by placing that party's initial at the beginning of the gaze line):

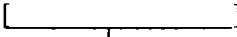
A: B _____ , D
 wa(h)ll pa(h)p(h)er? er(h)di dju pi(h)ck i(h)t ou(h)t .
 D: . B _____ , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , J _____ , ,
 J: D _____ , , ,

Thus just as the punchline of the story reaches its conclusion the principal character is the focus of the gaze of everyone who is gazing at someone. While being gazed at he arranges his own behavior, and in particular his face, for the observation it is receiving from others in terms of the story.

The possibility will now be investigated that the displays made by the principal character are a systematic part of the field of action created through the story and that his orientation to the task of producing these displays provides organization for his actions, not only when they are being done, but before they are done.

Over "Do(h)n said." in line 13 Don, who has been gazing to his side at something unrelated to the talk, moves his head back so that it is facing the addressed recipient. He does not however display full engagement in the conversation (for example, by openly gazing at the addressed recipient) but rather keeps his eyes downcast, and at the point where his face returns has his hand over his mouth and is rubbing his finger over his upper lip:

Ann: Do(h)n said. (0.3) did-did they ma:ke you take this



Don: *Face Returned but
with Eyes Downcast
and Mouth Covered*

This position, somewhat like that of an actor who has moved to the wings but is not yet on stage, appears transitional. It places the party who adopts it in a position that is relevant to upcoming events in the sequence of talk (i.e., his face is available for story-relevant scrutiny by the others present) but the party adopting this position is not yet displaying full engagement with his coparticipants.

The data therefore suggest that this is a particular type of preparatory position that is tied to an event that has not yet occurred, but that can be legitimately anticipated from the materials provided by the sequential structure of the talk.

One way to investigate this possibility would be to see what would happen if such a position were adopted but the action it was supposed to be preparatory to was then withdrawn. Fortunately this story provides materials with which this possibility can be examined.

By the end of the initial background segment the principal character has moved into a position suitable for scrutiny for the first time:

Ann: ssilvery:: g-go:ld wwa:llpaper, 'hh(h)en

Don: ↑
 Face toward
 Addressed Recipient
 with Hand over Mouth

However, after this has happened, instead of bringing the climax segment to completion, the speaker enters the parenthesis. The event that the principal character's body position is possibly preparatory to is no longer about to occur. If the body position is in fact tied to that event the removal of the event may have consequences for whether or not the body position can be maintained.

As soon as it can be recognized that a parenthesis has been entered the principal character moves his head to the side and shifts his gaze to a ladle of soup that is being passed there:

Ann: 'h (h)en D(h)o(h)n sa(h)ys, y'know =

Don: └──────────┘
 |
 Face toward Addressed
 Recipient with Hand
 over Mouth

Ann: =this's th'firs'time we've

Don: ↑
 Shifts gaze
 to Soup Ladle

systematically differentiate him from both the speaker and her addressed recipient. For example, rather than putting aside competing activities during the preface, as the speaker and addressed recipient do, he uses this time to take a drink. However, when the body of the story is begun he begins to perform preparatory activities similar to those performed by the speaker during the preface (and described on p. 229). After putting his glass down he moves an object on the table in front of him, puts his elbows on the table, looks toward the speaker, and then as the background segment is closed moves into his pre-position. Both the speaker and the principal character thus seem to perform similar activities just before they emerge as focal participants. However, because the structure of the telling places the emergence of each as focal at different points, over the same segments they are doing different things.

The actions of the principal character during the story, including his displays of disengagement from the talk of the speaker, are thus organized with reference to, and precisely synchronized with, the story that the speaker is producing. His adoption of a pre-position at a particular point in the talk, just before the focus of the participants shifts to him, is not accidental but rather something he works to achieve and is capable of renegotiating as contingencies within the interaction change.

His actions also provide some demonstration that participants are listening to the talk that is being produced not simply to comprehend the events being reported, but also in terms of the position of that talk in larger structures of talk, the possibilities for action provided for or constrained by that talk, the future talk or actions it projects, and the relevance of such material for the actions the participant doing the listening must perform.

5. Nonaddressed recipient

In a sense the position of John, the nonaddressed recipient, is complementary to that of the addressed recipient. Whereas conversation is the primary focus of the actions of the addressed recipient, and eating a subordinate activity, serving himself food is the primary activity that the nonaddressed recipient is performing and orientation to the conversation is subordinate to that. Indeed it initially appears that until John smiles at the punchline he has shown almost no attention to the speaker's story, though he does gaze at her briefly during the preface.

Closer examination reveals, however, that his serving activities are in fact being organized quite precisely with reference to the emerging structure of the story. As the speaker performs her background seg-

ments he is lifting a ladle full of soup from the soup pot. However he does not yet have the ladle to his plate when the background segment closes. He moves the ladle toward his bowl very slightly after the close of the background segment but when the speaker projects the arrival of the punchline with “hh (h)en D(h)o(h)n sa(h)ys,” he stops this movement and holds the ladle in midair. The ladle is held in this position until it has become apparent that the parenthesis has been entered, over “this’s,” at which point John brings the ladle to his bowl.

The timing of this movement, and the hesitations within it, are consistent with the possibility that John, anticipating through the projection provided by the speaker that the punchline is about to be produced, delays his actions with the ladle so that he will not be involved with them when the task of appreciating the story is posed for him.

Further support for this possibility is provided by John’s actions when the punchline is in fact produced. At this point John has returned to the pot for a second ladle of soup. He has a full ladle by the end of “wa(h)ll-pa(h)p(h)er?” the place where the job of doing appreciation arrives. Despite the fact that he has already filled the ladle he drops it back into the bowl again at this point as he looks toward the principal character in the story. He then takes another ladleful but holds it over the pot until “one” in line 20, the very end of the speaker’s appreciation of her story. His activity of serving is thus done during background segments of the story but held in abeyance, by active work on his part, during focal segments. The alternative actions he performs during different types of segments are consistent with the possibility, first raised when considering the actions of the addressed recipient during the initial background segment, that participants might orient to background segments as places where competing activities can legitimately be done, thus differentiating parts within the body of a story in terms of the interactive possibilities they provide.

The recycling of the filling of the ladle provides an example in an activity other than conversation of a technique employed frequently in conversation to coordinate talk with the actions of a coparticipant: the addition of a new segment to that action so that synchronization with the actions of a coparticipant can be achieved.¹⁶

6. Conclusion

The actions of the participants during the telling of this story make visible some of the interactive tasks such an activity engenders, as well as the types of organization it makes relevant. For example, recipients to

the story are faced with the job not simply of listening to the events being recounted but rather of distinguishing different subcomponents of the talk in terms of the alternative possibilities for action they invoke.¹⁷ The actions of the addressed recipient, principal character, and nonaddressed recipient all demonstrate that the recognition of an event in talk such as a parenthesis poses not simply problems of comprehension but practical problems for the organization of action while it is being spoken. Further, such tasks involve not simply recognition of the type of story component then being produced but also an analysis of how the person doing the analysis fits into the activity in progress. Thus the speaker and principal character operating on the same subsection of talk, a background segment for example, find that it provides for the relevance of quite different actions for each of them. The participants are engaged in a local, situated analysis not only of the talk in progress but also of their participation in it and the multiple products of such analysis provide in part for the differentiated but coordinated actions that are constitutive of the story as a social activity.

The methods of analysis developed here are relevant to a range of issues that have emerged in other work on story organization. To note just one, contemporary work in the ethnography of speaking, and disciplines such as folklore that draw from it, lays great emphasis on obtaining the "participant's perspective" and on elucidating "emic" categories. In practice what is studied usually consists either of linguistic labels obtained from informants, or of data obtained in response to requests by the researcher for phenomena that the researcher has already decided are theoretically interesting. For example, what is studied as a story characteristically consists either of talk obtained when a researcher asks someone to "tell a story" or of talk that participants explicitly label a story. The ability of participants to deal in such a fashion with the category being studied is assumed to demonstrate its "emic" status. This assumption is not warranted. Pike (1966), in his seminal expansion of the etic/emic distinction beyond the scope of phonology, defined emic analysis in terms of how phenomena are utilized within specific systems of action, not with reference to labels recognized by informants.¹⁸ In the present chapter, structures that participants attend to within a strip of talk (for example, "background" as opposed to "climax" segments of a story) have been specified, not by questioning the participants, but rather through study in detail of the actions they perform as the talk itself emerges. In addition to revealing some of the internal organization of multi-unit turns, such an approach embeds relevant structural units within the activity systems that give them meaning,

and demonstrates how participants use this structure as a constitutive feature of the events they are engaged in.

Notes

1. I am indebted to George Kuetemeyer for providing me with this tape.
2. One strong limitation of a written format for the presentation of this analysis is the unavailability of the videotape to the reader. Attempts have been made to make relevant features of the visual material accessible through both transcription and description but these efforts have not provided a completely satisfactory solution to the problem.
3. I am indebted to Gail Jefferson for transcribing this material. What has been omitted from the version presented here is talk involving the children of the hosts who are also present at the dinner. The fact that their activity is not being examined in the present report should not be taken to imply that their actions are in no way relevant to the talk that is being examined.
4. The organization of story segments has been the subject of ongoing research by Gail Jefferson for a number of years. See, for example, Jefferson (1973b).
5. For more detailed consideration of the different entities who can talk through a speaker see Goffman (1974:496–559).
6. From this perspective it is interesting to observe that after the laugh token marking reentry into the climax segment, laugh tokens disappear from the final climax segment until the recipient produces an outbreath (line 15), a sound that may be interpreted as a preparatory laugh move. Thus, after raising the possibility of laughter, the speaker delays further production of it until a display of possible coparticipation has been received from recipient.
7. Within sociolinguistics the practice of style shifting has been treated as a phenomenon in need of some systematic explanation. However, when the task of marking distinctions between units in a strip of speech for a recipient is considered, stylistic homogeneity emerges as a far more problematic practice.
8. The elbows reach the table slightly after the beginning of the turn. However, not only is this movement fluid but other research now in progress indicates that a position such as this is not organized solely with reference to the structure of the stream of speech but rather with reference to relevant interaction between the speaker and hearer. Thus the position may be withheld if the recipient has not reached orientation toward the speaker by the beginning of the turn containing the body. In the present data it may be observed that the beginning of Ann's turn overlaps Beth's request for the story. Ann's elbows reach the table at just about the place where her talk emerges in the clear.
9. The movement of the speaker in the present data is consistent with the possibility that she is actively delaying bringing her gaze to her recipient. Thus her move into orientation is divided into several distinct stages. First, there is an initial movement from a posture of disengagement. This movement does not terminate with her gaze on one of her potential recipients but rather with Ann gazing directly in front of her. This position is held for a period of time during which the addressed recipient's gaze reaches the speaker. Only after this has happened does the speaker produce a second movement, bringing her own gaze to the addressed recipient:

Ann:*****.
 Well- ((throat clear)) (-l-- -) We coulda=
 Beth: . [X_____

Ann: X
 =used l a liddle, marijuana.
 Beth: _____

The data also suggest that the recipient might utilize the expectability of a delay in the speaker's gaze to accomplish tasks of her own. Thus while the speaker is holding her pre-position the recipient wipes her lips with a napkin, finishing this job before the speaker's gaze reaches her.

10. Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson (1974:702) note that many different types of units, including sentences, phrases, clauses, and even single-word constructions can be used to construct a turn at talk but that any such unit allows in its course a projection of what will constitute an adequate completion of the unit. It is thus possible not only to locate stretches of talk containing multiple units (something that will be relevant to the analysis of the parenthesis in the present data) but also to locate systematically the middles of such units, places where they have recognizably not reached a point of possible completion.
11. The fact that these perturbations might be implicated in dealings relevant to the mutual orientation of the speaker and hearer does not of course mean that they are not also functioning in other ways, for example, providing displays about how the talk where they occur is to be heard and operated on.
12. Note that the fact that the climax would involve a laughable by Don was not available when the recipient returned her gaze to the speaker before the parenthesis but is available by the time of the parenthesis.
13. The actions of the principal character, to be examined in the next section of the chapter, indicate that receiving such looks from recipients is a possibility he anticipates and he orders his own behavior in terms of them.
14. For other analysis of how processes of interaction between the speaker and hearer might lead to changes in the emerging structure of the speaker's talk see C. Goodwin (1979a, 1981a) and M. H. Goodwin (1980).
15. The presence of someone who has already heard a story raises systematic issues for the conduct of a telling. For some consideration of these issues and the methods that participants have developed to deal with them see Sacks (October 17, 1971) and C. Goodwin (1981a, chap. 5).
16. For further analysis of this process see C. Goodwin (1981a, chap. 4).
17. The analysis that has been developed here, by showing how the story provides a field of action for a range of different types of participants, and how these participants analyze and make use of the emerging structure of the story, is thus relevant to some general questions about story organization that have been raised by workers in a number of different fields. For example, an attempt to uncover the natural units attended to by participants for the organization of speech events, such as stories, has become an important issue in both the ethnography of speaking and folklore (see, for example, Robinson's [1981] study of the "personal narrative" which deals explicitly with the place of listeners in such structures). I would, however, like to note that if analysis is restricted to "expressive" and "artistic" components of the storytelling process (see, for example, Bauman 1977:11-12) important fea-

tures of its organization may not be accessible to study. For example, the way in which the principal character during the parenthesis carefully displays *noninvolvement* in the field of action being sustained through the story is as appropriate, and interesting analytically, as his subsequent official participation during the climax. At this stage in our attempts to come to terms with such materials what is needed is less an analytic framework that specifies for us in advance the theoretically interesting phenomena in an event, than an awareness of our ignorance, and a willingness to be open to whatever phenomena the data reveal.

18. Indeed, as the study of phonemics proper amply demonstrates, the labels used by participants are not only irrelevant but frequently inaccurate. For example, the fact that three separate letters are used by speakers of English to describe the sounds in "the" in no way demonstrates the presence of three phonemes in the word. Similarly the absence of clear labels differentiating the voiced and voiceless versions of the sound spelled as "th" does not in any way mean that these variants are treated by speakers of English as phonemically equivalent. The analysis of emic structures deals with another order of phenomena entirely.