

## 4 Interstitial argument

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Recent research into the organization of argument has begun to reveal much about its intrinsic structure. For example, there has been detailed study of phenomena such as how arguments begin (Adger, 1984; Maynard, 1985b) and end (Adger, 1984: 137–143, 149–174; M.H. Goodwin, 1978: 288–334, 1982b: 87–88; Vuchinich this volume), the sequencing of actions within such exchanges (Adger, 1984; Brenneis and Lein, 1977; Boggs, 1978; Eisenberg and Garvey, 1981; Genishi and di Paolo, 1982; Haviland, 1982b; Lein and Brenneis, 1978), the internal organization of oppositional moves (M.H. Goodwin, 1983; M.H. Goodwin and C. Goodwin, 1987), and how argument is tied to both other activities and larger social processes (M.H. Goodwin, 1980b, M.H. Goodwin, 1980a; Maynard, 1985a). From a slightly different perspective, recent research has also begun to reveal that participants pay very close attention to their local environment, for example the exact words spoken in the immediately prior talk, and use that knowledge to build appropriate subsequent talk.<sup>1</sup> Such phenomena become inaccessible to study when analysis takes as its point of departure a gloss of a turn's talk as an instance of a particular type of speech act. Finally, research that pays close attention to the details of what participants are attending to as they move from utterance to utterance has demonstrated that, despite the way in which argument is frequently treated as disruptive behavior, it is in fact accomplished through a process of very intricate coordination between the parties who are opposing each other (M.H. Goodwin and C. Goodwin, 1987).

One feature of oppositional exchanges that has so far been largely neglected is analysis of the way in which the talk of the moment constitutes those who are present to it (i.e., how what is said in a given turn can make relevant particular social identities). A participant building an appropriate oppositional move must attend not only to the action that is being opposed, but also to proposals in prior talk about how those present are being positioned vis-à-vis each other.<sup>2</sup> Attributes of participants that can become relevant for the organization of particular moves encompass a wide variety

of phenomena, including the types of social personae that have traditionally been discussed as components of status and role (and which will here, following Goodenough (1965), be referred to as identity relationships),<sup>3</sup> occasion-specific social identities (e.g., accuser and defendant in a gossip confrontation), differential rights to participate in the talk of the moment, and affect displays tied to particular moves (for example, "righteous indignation"). Our approach to the analysis of such phenomena differs from that found in most sociological analysis. Rather than assuming the presence and relevance of social categories we will focus on how such events are constituted by participants in the production of their talk. Central to such phenomena is the way in which they are intimately tied to the visible activities that the participants are currently engaged in, and are locally invoked within the talk of the moment. Such attributes constitute both a constraint on the actions of the participants, something that they may be required to attend to for the organization of their subsequent action, and a resource that can be exploited; for example, by using talk that reshapes how those present are aligned to each other a speaker can attempt to strategically alter the social organization of the moment. Research into how such phenomena are organized has a clear relevance to an important question in the analysis of social processes: the issue of how actors constitute themselves as particular types of social entities.

Using as data an audiotape of talk occurring between urban black children at play on the street, this chapter will use such issues as a point of departure to investigate a range of phenomena relevant to the organization of argument including:

The dyadic organization of an argumentative exchange.

How third parties can participate in the exchange by slotting actions of their own in the interstices of the actions between the principals.

How actions in these different sequential positions make alternative proposals about the participation status of the party performing the action.

The way in which a participant can utilize such interstitial structures to build a single utterance that simultaneously constructs two different types of action to two different recipients, and which receives two simultaneous responses.

How such processes can make visible larger social activities within local talk including

changes in relevant social identities, and  
the interactive constitution of hierarchy.

The interactive, reflexive organization of context and the way in which the emerging structure of talk reorganizes context.

Analysis of such phenomena will permit us to investigate in detail how participants in the midst of argument dynamically exploit sequential organization, participation frameworks, and contextual organization as creative resources for the organization of the activities they are engaged in.

## 1. Data and transcription

For over a year and a half one of us (M.H. Goodwin) audiotaped a group of urban black children as they played on the street.<sup>4</sup> The current study is part of a larger project investigating a range of speech activities, including gossip, argument, stories, directives, etc., found in the talk of the Maple Street children (as they will be referred to here). Our study of argument is based on analysis of over 175 oppositional exchanges from a corpus of over 200 hours of transcribed conversation. Analysis of the children's activities and social organization, including a range of phenomena relevant to the organization of their arguments, are reported in detail elsewhere (M.H. Goodwin, 1980b, 1980a, 1982b, 1982c, M.H. Goodwin and C. Goodwin, 1987).<sup>5</sup>

Data are transcribed using the Jefferson transcription system (Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson, 1974: 731–733). For purposes of the analysis to be developed in this chapter, the following transcription conventions are the most relevant:

Punctuation symbols are used to mark intonation changes rather than as grammatical symbols:

A period indicates a falling contour.

A question mark indicates a rising contour.

A comma indicates a falling–rising contour.

Bold italics indicate some form of emphasis, which may be signaled by changes in pitch and/or amplitude.

A bracket joining the talk of separate speakers marks the point at which overlapping talk begins.

A dash marks a sudden cut-off of the current sound.

An equals sign indicates that talk attached by the equal sign follows prior talk without any gap whatsoever.

Colons indicate that the sound just before the colon has been noticeably lengthened.

Numbers within parentheses (e.g. "(0.5)"), mark silences in seconds and tenths of seconds.

Arrows pointing to particular lines are used to locate for the reader specific events within a longer transcript.

Round brackets around a strip of talk indicate that the transcriber is not sure of what was being said there. Blank space within the brackets means that the transcriber heard talk there but could not recover it. Empty round brackets in the speaker column indicate that the transcriber could not identify the speaker.

In the following, a number of the boys on Maple Street are preparing for a sling-shot fight. They have divided themselves spatially into two separate groups that are cutting and shaping wire coat hangers into projectiles that will serve as ammunition during the fight. Huey (age 14)<sup>6</sup> and his younger brother Michael (age 13) have emerged as the leaders of the two groups. Preparations for the fight are taking place in Michael and Huey's back yard.

Though who will be on each team is still the subject of considerable negotiation, one group of boys – Chopper, Poochie and Tokay – is working with Michael in a lower stairwell. Another group – Bruce, Robbie and Nate – is working with Huey on a platform several steps above Michael's group.

*Example 1*

1. Michael: All right who's on your *side* Huey.
2. Chopper: Pick-pick four *people*.
3. Huey: It's quarter after four and I'm not
4.       ready to *go* yet.
5. Bruce: Me neither.
6. Huey: I'm not going till four thirty.
7. Michael: Well get in there and get them papers
8.       off that couch before–
9. Huey:                                I did already
10. Chopper: Get your four *guys*,
11. Michael: You get *three* guys.
12. Huey: I only get three guys?
13. Chopper: I mean three guys.
14. Michael: That's right.

**2. Invoking activity domains within local talk**

In the data being examined, four different parties speak. However, the core skeleton of the sequence is provided by a series of exchanges between Michael and Huey. For clarity we will begin by looking in some detail at the organization of these exchanges, omitting for the moment the talk of Chopper and Bruce. We will start with the talk between Michael and Huey that occurs in lines 1–6:

*Example 1*

1. Michael: All right who's on your *side* Huey.
3. Huey: It's quarter after four and I'm not
4.       ready to *go* yet.
6.       I'm not going till four thirty.

Here Michael asks Huey to do something and Huey refuses to do it. The sequence thus provides a prototypical example of an oppositional exchange. However, simply classifying the exchange in this fashion misses the complexity of what the participants are doing in this talk. For example, what is it that Huey refuses to do? In line 1 Michael asks Huey to specify who is on his side. In his answer, Huey never directly addresses this issue but instead notes

the current time and says that he is "not ready to go yet." To be more explicit about what is happening here, and the phenomena that the participants are paying attention to in the organization of their talk, requires that we investigate how this sequence is embedded within specific activities being performed within the current interaction.

Michael and Huey are in the midst of preparations for a sling-shot battle. This activity is relevant to the organization of their talk in at least two related ways:

1. The talk invokes features of the activity (such as "sides" and the sequencing of stages within the sling-shot battle) for its proper understanding.
2. Through what they say, the participants constitute and shape the activity in progress, including the positions of those present within it.

The talk is thus informed by the activity while simultaneously it helps shape its future progress.

### **3. Organizing a sling-shot battle**

In example 1 Michael asks Huey to pick his side for the upcoming battle. The question of how sides are to be formed has been debated extensively throughout the afternoon in the events leading up to example 1. Since that discussion also focused on a range of other phenomena that participants attend to within this sequence (for example, team size), some of the ways in which these issues have been dealt with in prior talk will be briefly noted.

#### *3.1 Preparing for the fight*

Before the boys can actually have their battle with each other they have to make their weapons. Their sling shots are made from wire coat hangers and powered by rubber bands. However, the rubber bands lack a pocket to hold projectiles such as stones. Instead the boys use as ammunition small U-shaped bits of wire which can be placed around the rubber band like the notch in an arrow. Such details of the technology they employ have consequences for the larger organization of their activity. For example, since ammunition cannot be picked up from the surrounding environment, but instead must be specially manufactured, the actual fight is preceded by a period of preparing for it in which the necessary sling shots and ammunition are made. The talk currently being examined occurred during this preparation stage.

#### *3.2 Team size and membership*

Both the actual play with the sling shots, and the manufacturing process that precedes it, could be organized in a range of different ways – for

example, as a group activity or with each person working in isolation. Instead of choosing either of these alternatives the boys have begun to divide themselves into two sides or teams, one under the leadership of Michael and the other under his older brother Huey. Such patterning is visible in the details of their talk and contrasts quite markedly with the group-centered, egalitarian structures used by Maple Street girls to organize their task activities (M.H. Goodwin, 1980b).

The division into teams has emerged as an issue of some importance in the talk of the boys that precedes example 1. Two related questions about this division have been repeatedly raised:

1. Who will be allowed to play.
2. Who will be on each team.

For example, shortly after Bruce arrives the following exchange occurs. Here Michael interprets a question from Bruce about a prior game (i.e., a comparison of the present activity with a similar one in the past in which Bruce participated) as a request to join Michael's team:

### Example 2

(Simplified transcript)

1. → Bruce: Hey Michael.
2. → *They doin* what we did down in the park?
3. (1.5)
4. → Michael: You ain't on our *side*.
5. You ain't *playin* *neither*!
6. Bruce: Who.
7. Michael: *You*.
8. Bruce: Why.
9. Michael: Cu:z. We already got too many—
10. We got enough people *now*.
11. Bruce: What you talking bout?
12. Michael: We fightin war.
13. Bruce: ( )
14. (Tokay): I'm on his side?
15. (): No.
16. Michael: Me and Chuckie and Poochie
17. Jack: And Tokay.
18. (): [[ And Tokay.
19. Michael: And Tokay, Tokey.

Bruce is not only told that he can't be on Michael's team but also that he can't play. The reason given is that there are already too many players (lines 9–10), and this is followed by a listing of four people who are on Michael's team (lines 16–19).

An exchange such as this does not, however, definitively establish either who will be allowed to play, or team membership. Rather these issues remain open for considerable subsequent negotiation. For example, shortly after example 2, Bruce asked if he could be on one side if Robert went to the other. Once again Michael argued that there were already too many players:

*Example 3*

1. Bruce: Can me and Robert play if Robert be on
2. Huey's tea:m,
3. → Michael: It's already too *many* of us.
4. → It should only be *four* of us.
5. Chopper: {Eight
6. Michael: Two on- one- one-
7. Bruce: {Five on each side.
8. Michael: I got somebody on *my* side and Huey got =
9. Chopper: {You on Huey side.
10. Michael: = somebody on his side.
11. Like we played last time.
12. Remember our private game?
13. (1.5)
14. Michael: Instead of all this- instead of all
15. this block party ( ).
16. Chopper: {Who gonna be on your side then.
17. Michael: I can't stand block party games.

Note how *team size* (which sets limits on how many of those present will actually be allowed to play) is attended to as a key issue in this talk. Thus after stating that "it's already too *many* of us" Michael proposes that "It should only be *four* of us," a situation that would leave room for only two players in addition to Michael and Huey (note lines 6, 8, 10). Chopper, however, in line 5 has proposed that there should be *eight* players (i.e. four on each side), an argument that is quite consistent with Michael's earlier listing of four players on his side. However, Bruce, who was not included in that earlier listing proposes that there should be "Five on each side" (line 7).

The way in which Michael has changed from allowing four men on his team to now proposing that there should only be two both demonstrates just how much in flux this issue is, and suddenly calls into question the positions of even those who have already been listed on a team. These issues, and especially the question of who is and is not playing, become the focus of subsequent talk. Shortly after Michael proposes that the game should be restricted to four players, like their former "private game," Chopper asks, "Who gonna be your side then" (line 16) and quickly advances reasons why he rather than Poochie should be chosen (lines 19, 20, 23):

## Example 3

14. Michael: Instead of all this— instead of all  
 15. this block party ( ).
16. Chopper: { Who gonna be on your side then.
17. Michael: I can't stand block party =
18. Michael: = games.
19. → Chopper: = { I was on there before Poochie.
20. → = I'll tell you *that*.
21. Bruce: Hey Huey.
22. Huey: ( ) And bend it over like that.
23. → Chopper: { I know I'm playing. { When I win.  
 24. Bruce: { Huey.
25. Bruce: Huey.
26. Michael: Poochie playin.
27. Bruce: Huey
28. → Chopper: I'm playin *too*.
29. Bruce: Can I be on your *side*?
30. Huey: Yeah.
31. Robert: May I be on your side?
32. Nate: (Huey )
33. Michael: You wasn't on *my* side, baby.
34. Bruce: I'm on Huey side.
35. Huey: [[ If you got slings you could be on  
 36. my side.
37. Robert: I do!
38. (1.2)
39. Robert: But I'm *makin* my slings *now*.

Michael responds to Chopper's arguments by saying that *Poochie* is playing (line 26) – a move that does not explicitly deal with Chopper's status – and this leads to further claims from Chopper (line 28). Meanwhile Bruce has been trying to get Huey's attention (lines 24, 25, 27) in order to ask to be on his side (line 29). When this request is granted Robert (line 31) makes a similar bid to join Michael's team, a move that is emphatically rejected with Michael's "You wasn't on *my* side, baby" (line 33). Huey then offers to let Robert be on his side if he has slings (lines 35–36), a proposal that is enthusiastically accepted by Robert (line 37).

What happens in these data demonstrates first, how important the issue of team membership is in the organization of the boys' activities; second, that team size is crucial to decisions about team membership; and third, how proposed resolutions of this issue are constantly being called into question and re-negotiated



It has been frequently argued that one of the things that differentiates girls' groups from boys' is a concern in girls' groups with processes of exclusion (Douvan and Adelson, 1966; Eder and Hallinan, 1978; Feshbach and Sones, 1971; Lever, 1976; Savasta and Sutton-Smith, 1979; Savin-Williams, 1980) In the present data we find however that the question of exclusion is a major issue for a group of boys engaged in an activity (choosing sides for competitive interaction) that has been treated in the literature as distinctively male. As we have argued elsewhere (M.H. Goodwin and C. Goodwin, 1987; see also West and Zimmerman, 1985), analyzing gender differences in terms of such global distinctions, instead of within the detailed organization of specific activities, may lead to serious problems.

Some time later team size is defined in yet another way when Michael states that all those currently working with him are on his team:

#### Example 4

- Michael: Everybody down here right now is on *my* side.  
 Poochie: I'm *down* here.  
 Chopper: Us— us *four*.  
 Michael: So you better *pick* four *people* Huey.

Chopper uses this definition to propose that four people are on the team and Michael then tells Huey to pick four people. This same demand is made collaboratively by Michael and Chopper some time later in the sequence that will be the principal focus of this chapter.

#### 4. Indexing an encompassing activity within local talk

Returning now to example 1, we find that issues of team membership are quite relevant to what happens there:

#### Example 1

1. Michael: All right who's on your *side* Huey.
3. Huey: It's quarter after four and I'm not
4. ready to *go* yet.
6. I'm not going till four thirty.

The talk that occurs here both indexes the activity in progress, and makes proposals about the positions that those present occupy within it. Thus in line 1 Michael treats Huey as someone who occupies a special position in the sling-shot activity, i.e., he is the party who is entitled to pick the team that will oppose Michael's. In essence Michael's talk proposes that Huey occupies the activity-relevant identity of *team leader*. Moreover, while the talk is explicitly addressed to only Huey, the action that Huey is being asked to

perform, choosing a side, has consequences for others present as well, especially those working with Huey, who are not yet recognized as belonging to a team. For example, if Bruce is not chosen by Huey he will not be able to participate in the actual battle. Thus, though the scope of address in Michael's talk encompasses only a single individual, Huey, it nonetheless has very clear relevance to other participants as well.<sup>7</sup>

In replying to Michael, Huey attends to not only what he has been explicitly asked to perform, but rather analyzes Michael's talk by bringing to bear on it the larger structure of the sling-shot activity. Thus, in saying that he is "not ready to go yet," Huey treats what Michael has said as a proposal calling for immediate movement to the actual fight. With his reply, he not only refuses to perform the action requested by Michael but also argues that control over when the activity will move from one stage to another is under his control, not Michael's.

### 5. Selectively interpreting prior talk

Of central importance to this process is the way in which Huey's talk formulates what Michael has said in a particular way. Michael asks Huey to pick his side. While this *may* imply a proposal that the boys should now move to the fight itself,<sup>8</sup> that issue is not raised explicitly in Michael's talk. However, by organizing his reply in the way that he does Huey focuses on that possible reading of the talk to the exclusion of others. Indeed he effectively removes that issue from the latent position it occupies in Michael's talk and topicalizes it.

Casting what is happening in such terms has a range of consequences. Thus Huey formulates Michael as someone attempting to control a basic parameter of the activity in progress – when it will move from the current preparation stage to the fight itself – but now exhibits that *he*, not Michael, has control over this parameter.

#### 5.1 Accounting for a refusal

In the midst of a task situation a range of accounts for not doing something are available to participants (M.H. Goodwin, 1980b). For example, Huey could have argued that they had not yet made enough ammunition to have a good fight, and thus accounted for his refusal to do what Michael asked by pointing to demands imposed on him by the activity itself (Pomerantz, 1978). Instead he emphasizes the way in which he is acting purely in terms of his own desires, (e.g., "I'm not ready to go yet"). Other research (M.H. Goodwin, 1980b, 1988) has demonstrated that accounts of this type are frequently used by boys attempting to display their relative power or status *vis-à-vis* each other. Such accounts differ quite noticeably from those found in the task activities of girls which rely on

legitimate demands of the activity in progress, rather than status claims of participants. By organizing his talk in the way that he does Huey is able to undercut claims being attributed to Michael, while simultaneously arguing that he has the power to determine the very issues that Michael cannot enforce.

When considered in light of the activity in progress, Huey provides a complex, multi-faceted response to Michael's action. While demanding that Huey do something, Michael's request also treats Huey as someone in a privileged position: a team leader who has the power to determine which of the others present will get an opportunity to play. In his reply Huey affirms that identity and moreover accepts the relevance of what Michael has asked him to do. However, he refuses to do it immediately. By formulating his refusal in the way that he does, Huey calls into question Michael's claims about being able to control a basic parameter of the activity, while simultaneously arguing that that parameter is under his own control. Huey thus builds a return that ratifies some of the proposals made in the talk being answered, while opposing other aspects of that talk.

## 6. Maintaining opposition

Analysis has so far focused on the way in which the talk that occurs here is embedded within the larger activity that the participants are engaged in. It is, however, also possible to look at this sequence in more abstract terms. In line 1 Michael tells Huey to do something, and this can be noted without going into detail about precisely what the recipient of the demand is being asked to do. Indeed, much analysis in pragmatics has proceeded precisely on this level of abstraction. For example, the way in which directives include as one of their core components the proposal that recipients should perform some action has long been noted in speech act theory (see, for example, Labov and Fanshel, 1977).

Such phenomena can also be looked at from a sequential perspective. Conversation analysts have noted that a first pair part, such as the talk in line 1, creates a field of relevance that will be used to interpret whatever happens next (Sacks, 1970; Schegloff, 1968, Schegloff and Sacks, 1973). Michael is thus able to not only formulate a request to Huey, but to also build within the interaction of the moment a specific place where the issue of whether or not Huey will acquiesce to demands from him can be publicly established. Quite independently of whether or not Huey considers the moment a proper one to pick his team, he might be strongly motivated to not act in a way that could be interpreted as giving in to the demand contained in Michael's talk.

This suggests that in the actions being produced here participants may be attending to (1) the particulars of the activity they are engaged in, and (2)

more abstract social proposals about their relative standing *vis-à-vis* each other, these social proposals being negotiated through the detailed sequential organization of the talk in progress.

Do participants in fact attend to these different types of phenomena in producing their talk? The sequence that follows provides some evidence that they do:

*Example 1*

1. Michael: All right who's on your *side* Huey.  
 3. Huey: It's quarter after four and I'm not  
 4. ready to go yet.  
 6. Huey: I'm not going till four thirty.  
 7. → Michael: Well get in there and get them papers  
 8. → off that couch before—  
 9. → Huey: I did already.

Here Michael moves the subject matter of the talk to a completely different domain of activity, household chores, but makes another demand, which Huey again rejects. Though the conversation has moved to different subject matter, the talk in lines 7–9 maintains the underlying oppositional format of the prior exchange. This provides some evidence that rather than attending only to the details of the events being talked about at the moment, participants in argument also actively orient to the underlying structure of opposition moves, and can preserve that structure as the issues being disputed change.

Looking at what happens here in more detail, it can be observed that the switch to household chores in line 7 is not formulated as an action that is disjunctive with what was said in line 6. The “Well” that prefaces Michael's turn explicitly ties it to the talk that has just been heard, and proposes that that talk is being taken into account in the production of the current turn. Moreover the talk in line 7 is an appropriate next move in the opposition sequence that is unfolding. Huey has rejected Michael's prior demand by stating that he will perform the requested action at some time in the future rather than immediately. Rather than letting this rejection terminate the oppositional exchange, Michael demands that something else be done immediately. In addition to being a coherent counter to Huey's put-off of Michael's initial request, it, as well as Huey's answer to it, repeats the actions that were performed in the prior exchange.

	<i>Lines</i>	<i>Speaker</i>	<i>Action</i>
Pick team	1	Michael	<b>Demand</b> (Subject Matter X)
	3–4	Huey:	<b>Refusal</b>
Pick up papers	7–8	Michael:	<b>Demand</b> (Subject Matter Y)
	9	Huey:	<b>Refusal</b>

Thus in both cases Michael tells Huey to do something and Huey refuses by providing a reason for why the action requested won't be performed. The coherence that exists between the first exchange and the second, is provided not by ties in content, but rather through (1) the sequential organization that links exchanges to each other, and (2) the structural continuity of the oppositional format that is used to organize the material found in each exchange.

### 7. Content shift within argument

The beginning of the sequence in example 1 deals with the current sling-shot activity. However, in lines 7–9 the talk turns to household chores. On the level of content a noticeable shift thus occurs in the talk at this point. Such changes in content are frequently talked about in terms of *topic shifting*. There are, however, problems with such terminology. The notion of what precisely constitutes a topic, and how that phenomenon is oriented to by participants, has turned out to be a very intricate issue in the analysis of discourse (Button and Casey, 1984; Chafe, 1972; Jefferson, 1984; Keenan and Schieffelin, 1983; Li, 1976; Schegloff and Sacks, 1973). We will therefore call what happens here a *content shift* rather than a topic shift. One of the reasons we want to make this distinction is that, despite changes in subject matter, the two demand-refusal exchanges are not disjunctive with each other, but rather have a common, underlying coherence by virtue of their continuity in action structure. Such underlying coherence across separate turns (or sentences) within a strip of discourse seems to be one of the core concepts that the notion of "topic" attempts to capture; e.g., on the level of action it would be quite wrong to describe Michael and Huey as moving from one type of talk to another. This suggests that rather than being a monolithic whole, topic is constituted through participants' attention to a range of phenomena. It is therefore crucial that topic not be approached as a global phenomenon, but rather that studies of topic distinguish analytically different types of processes relevant to its organization.

The way in which content shifts and underlying structure interact with each other constitutes an important organizational feature of argument. One very interesting feature of argument is the way in which a single oppositional exchange can encompass talk about a range of different subjects.<sup>10</sup> Argument begun about one issue can escalate to include many points of contention between the parties.<sup>11</sup> The present data provide some insight into why this might be the case.

First, it would appear that the organization of argument and the organization of topic (in the sense of content domains) interact with each other. By virtue of the way in which the sequential structure of an oppositional exchange frames the turns occurring within it as parts of a single activity (a

cohesion that might be provided elsewhere by continuity in content), talk about diverse subject matter can nonetheless be organized as a coherent whole.

Second, argument would be severely constricted if it had to come to an abrupt halt every time someone made a statement that could not be disputed. Instead, by shifting topic participants are able to continue an opposition sequence without denying the validity of what the other has just said. Indeed, specialized machinery seems to be available for just such a contingency. For example, turn prefaces such as "well" and "so" (M.H. Goodwin, 1982b: 85, Haviland, 1986b), which occur frequently in argument sequences, function to signal both that the validity of the immediately prior talk will not be challenged, and that opposition will be continued.

Third, previous research (Adger, 1984: 104, 184; Corsaro and Rizzo, this volume; Genishi and di Paolo, 1982: 65; M.H. Goodwin 1982b: 87-88; Maynard, 1985a; Vuchinich, this volume) has revealed that, despite the way in which academic research has traditionally studied dispute within the framework of "conflict resolution," arguments frequently terminate without resolution of the issues being argued about. An argument's ability to encompass a succession of topics raises the possibility that even in cases where termination does include resolution, the issue that is resolved may not be the issue that began the argument.

### **8. Constituting context within argument**

These phenomena are relevant to another issue as well, that of how sequential organization and other aspects of social context are related to each other. Like "topic", the notion of what constitutes "context" poses important definitional questions, and indeed can become a highly charged question in debates between competing schools of discourse analysis. A common approach to the study of social context argues that to investigate language in actual social settings it is necessary to provide an ethnographic description of those settings, what Hymes (1964) has called an "ethnography of speaking." The situation encompassing the speech is described in terms of features such as the setting, the types of participants present, the speech events that occur in that setting, speech genres, the keying of speech, etc. In essence it is argued that the organization of the talk is constrained and organized by its ethnographic context. A rather different approach to context is found in the work on the sequential organization of conversation initiated by Sacks and his colleagues. Here it is argued that a key resource that participants use to build and understand talk is the precise positioning of an utterance within an environment of other talk (or other action).

That sequential environment constitutes a core aspect of the context that participants utilize to make sense out of the talk they are hearing and to engage in the activities they are performing. As noted by Heritage and Atkinson (1984: 11):

in examining talk the analyst is immediately confronted with an organization which is implemented on a turn-by-turn basis, and through which a context of publicly displayed and continuously updated intersubjective understandings is systematically sustained.

Sacks and his colleagues have argued that one cannot assume the relevance of particular contextual features, for example specific categorizations of participants or events, unless it can be demonstrated *within* the talk being examined that the participants themselves are orienting to such phenomena as a constitutive feature of the activities they are engaged in.

The activities indexed within the sequence being examined in the present paper, such as the sling-shot fight and the identities for participants it provides (e.g. team leader), are clearly relevant to the kinds of issues that are addressed when context is studied from an ethnographic perspective. However, in the present data we find that a subsequent utterance can quite rapidly change the activities and participant identities that constitute the relevant context of the moment.<sup>12</sup> When content shifts from the sling-shot fight to duties in the household that Michael and Huey share with each other, the talk then indexes a different set of activities, and in so doing provides new social identities for those implicated in these activities. Instead of formulating Huey as a team leader, Michael is now addressing him as a brother, and events within their household have replaced the sling-shot encounter as the world of relevance constituted through their talk.<sup>13</sup>

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Subject matter	Relevant "context"	
	<i>Activity domain</i>	<i>Participant identities</i>
Pick team	Sling-shot battle	Team leader–team leader
Papers on couch	Household chores	Brother–brother

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Rather than constituting a frame that shapes the speech within it, such activity structures stand in a reflexive relationship to the talk; they are invoked within the talk while simultaneously providing resources for its appropriate understanding. Moreover, the precise way in which such activity structures are made relevant is shaped by the emerging sequential organization of the talk. For example, the shift to talk about household duties, and the new social identities for participants thus invoked, provides a way for Michael to construct an appropriate next move within the emerging opposition sequence. Even within a single activity participants do not deal with context in a global way, but rather select features of it that attend to the sequential tasks they face at the moment. Thus when Huey is faced with the task of building a next utterance to Michael's initial demand, he focuses on one particular aspect of the activity, its time structure, while not addressing other features of it, such as team size and membership, that are equally salient in Michael's talk. The "external context" is thus invoked and shaped within the details of the very talk that it is context to, and because of its ties to

the emerging sequential organization of the talk, such context is not fixed and static but rather fluid and dynamic.<sup>14</sup> In brief, the sequential organization of talk provides a key locus for the analysis of context.

### 9. Multi-party argument

Analysis has so far focused largely on the talk of Michael and Huey. However Chopper and Bruce also participate in this sequence. The exchange is thus a multi-party one, in that it encompasses more than the minimum number of participants (two) sufficient to constitute an argumentative exchange. Some definitional issues arise here. We will use the expression "multi-party" to describe sequences of interaction constituted through the actions of three or more participants. However, two-party exchanges are also *multi-party* in the sense that they are built through the actions of multiple participants. Moreover, there are perfectly good ways in which the term "multi-party" could be applied to two-party exchanges in the analysis of language and interaction, for example, to distinguish approaches to language that focus on isolated speakers from others that study such processes in the midst of interaction. Thus it would be appropriate to say that C. Goodwin (1981) analyzes the construction of the turn at talk as a multi-party event even though quite frequently the only parties being talked about are speaker and hearer. Using the term "multi-party" to distinguish two-party exchanges from those in which there are more than two participants is thus somewhat clumsy. However, a clear term to separate the three-party case from situations with less than three parties does not seem to be available. Moreover, the term "multi-party" has been used to make precisely this distinction in previous research (Maynard, 1986). Thus, while we are not completely happy with this way of describing exchanges with more than two participants, we will continue to use the term in the way in which it has been used in previous research.

There are, however, good reasons to avoid use of the term "dyadic" to describe the two-party case. First, jargon-free alternatives to this term (for example, "two-party") are readily available. Second, this term carries with it a great deal of baggage that might not always be appropriate to the phenomena being examined. For example, in some previous research this term has been used to suggest that the two-party case has its own intrinsic structure, without, however, investigating whether the phenomena being investigated are indeed unique to the dyadic situation, or whether they might be examples of more general structures that would be found as well in n-party interaction. In addition, the way in which so much experimental research has focused almost exclusively on the "dyad" seems to suggest not only that this situation is easier for the researcher to manipulate, but also an implicit belief that research should work up from the dyad to the study of multi-party interaction. There are, however, good reasons to propose instead that the structures being utilized by human beings to organize interac-



tion are in fact general structures, that are easily able to adapt to variations in number of participants present, so that the two-party case does not in any way constitute a privileged locus for analysis. Claims about research into the organization of dyadic interaction might thus be more rhetorical than substantive, at least with respect to the issue of treating dyadic interaction as a domain of action with its own intrinsic properties. From a slightly different perspective it may well be the case that some structures (for example, simultaneous address to structurally different kinds of recipients [C. Goodwin, 1979, 1981; Holmes, 1984], fission of a conversation into separate subconversations (Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson 1974), etc.) are most clearly visible in multi-party talk. If this is correct, then it is a serious mistake to focus research exclusively on the dyad (a point also made by Haviland (1986a)).

While most previous research has focused on two-party arguments both M.H. Goodwin (1980a, 1982b, 1982a) and Maynard (1986) have analyzed dispute processes as intrinsically multi-party. Their research has a clear relevance to the analysis of the current sequence. Both M.H. Goodwin (1982b) and Maynard (1986) investigate how parties who are initially outsiders to a two-party dispute can display alignment to particular positions within the dispute. Maynard distinguishes a range of alignment patterns that are possible within multi-party disputes. He notes that outside parties can differentially align either with a position or with a counterposition with the effect that "parties can dispute a particular position for different reasons and by different means" (Maynard, 1986: 264). Maynard uses the term *alignment structure* to refer to a participant's position with respect to a particular perspective within a dispute. Following Goffman (1981) we will use this term in a broader way to include not only alignment to a position being disputed, but also a participant's orientation to the talk in progress (for example, treating what is being said as a laughable) and alignment to other participants.

## 10. Piggybacking

The contributions of Chopper and Bruce to the sequence in example 1 might initially appear far less substantive than those of Michael and Huey. However, analysis of their actions in fact provides an opportunity to considerably expand our study of the types of alignment structures and social organization that can be invoked within an oppositional sequence. In line 2 Chopper elaborates Michael's demand that Huey pick his team, and in line 5 Bruce states that just as Huey is not yet ready neither is he.

### Example 1

1. Michael: All right who's on your *side* Huey.
2. → Chopper: Pick- pick four *people*.

3. Huey: It's quarter after four and I'm not  
 4. ready to go yet.  
 5. → Bruce: Me neither.  
 6. Huey: I'm not going till four thirty.

The talk produced by Chopper and Bruce has a somewhat special sequential organization. Though the utterances of each build upon immediately prior talk, the parties speaking are not the addressees of that prior talk, and what they say does not reply to it. Thus though Chopper's talk occurs immediately after Michael's, unlike Huey's talk a moment later it does not constitute an answer to what Michael has said. Rather it reiterates the action just performed by Michael. Sequentially Chopper's talk has a far more optional status as a subsequent move to Michael's talk than Huey's does. More precisely, the action that Michael directs to Huey creates a situation in which an answer from Huey becomes relevant. Were Huey not to reply, the absence of his response could be not only seen but dealt with as a noticeable event.<sup>15</sup> Chopper's talk is neither tied to, nor projected by, Michael's talk in this way. If Chopper had not spoken, the action sequence initiated by line 1 would not be disrupted in any way: i.e. a response to Michael's talk would not in any relevant sense be lacking. Similarly, Bruce's talk does not reply to what Huey just said, but rather uses Huey's talk to create a second refusal to the demand that teams now be chosen.

In brief, though the actions of Chopper and Bruce are strongly tied to the actions they follow, the sequences they create do not have the characteristic features of many paired actions found in conversation, for example the structural organization analyzed by Schegloff and Sacks (1973) as constitutive of adjacency pairs. Instead of being projected by the prior action, the paired utterances found here emerge when a subsequent speaker uses the resources provided by the prior talk to create another utterance closely tied to it;<sup>16</sup> the pair thus comes into existence with the second action, not the first. Moreover, at least in the types of utterances we are now examining, the subsequent speaker, rather than producing a reply to the talk being tied to, seconds in some fashion the action embodied by the prior talk. The utterances of Chopper and Bruce thus have a distinctively parasitic structure.

One important consequence of the parasitic organization of these utterances, and in particular of the way in which they second the action of prior speaker, is that the subsequent speaker affiliates himself to the position being taken by the party whose talk is being followed. Maynard (1986: 267) notes that parties outside an original conflict can offer to collaborate with one of its protagonists by taking "a stance that is parallel or consistent with that of a principal party." In the present data, Chopper aligns himself with Michael's position in the oppositional exchange, and Bruce with Huey's.<sup>17</sup> Principal parties within the dispute can reject as well as accept such offers of collaboration.

Affiliation in argument is frequently analyzed in terms of *agreement* (or disagreement) with another's position. It is therefore important to note that the alignments made visible in the present data do not take the form of agreement with what another had said but rather are done when the affiliating party takes up an equivalent position himself. Thus Bruce does not "agree" with the proposition that Huey is not yet ready to go, but rather performs an equivalent action to the one done by Huey, saying that he, Bruce, is not ready to go. Similarly Chopper does not "agree" with what Michael has just said, but rather performs his own challenge to Huey. The affiliating parties thus state, and become responsible for, positions of their own.

Looking at such phenomena from a slightly different perspective, it can be observed that the talk between Michael and Huey creates a sequential environment with a distinctive structure that Chopper and Bruce then exploit for their own purposes. The issues involved are well illustrated by Chopper's talk in line 2. In line 1 Michael addresses an action to Huey, a request that he pick his team. However before Huey has an opportunity to reply Chopper directs an action of his own to Huey. Chopper's action thus occurs in a particular sequential environment:

After an action by A calling for a response from B,  
but before B has the opportunity to provide that response.

Chopper's talk thus occurs in the *midst* of an exchange between other participants.

The exchange between Michael and Huey is an example of what Sacks and his colleagues have termed an "adjacency pair" (Sacks 1972b; Schegloff and Sacks, 1973; Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson, 1974). Adjacency pairs, such as questions and answers, greetings and return greetings, offers followed by acceptances or refusals, etc., constitute a pervasive type of organization found within conversation. By assigning to separate participants different moves within a single coherent structure of action, they provide a prototypical example of how sequential organization provides resources for the achievement of social organization within conversation.

A key feature of adjacency pairs is the fact that the turns comprising the pair are positioned adjacent to each other. In the present data, Chopper's turn is placed *between* a first-pair part and its response, with the effect that the turns of Michael and Huey are each placed adjacent to the talk of Chopper rather than to each other.

Michael: Pick your side.	<i>First-pair part</i>
Chopper: Pick four people.	<i>Piggyback</i>
Huey: I'm not ready to go yet.	<i>Second-pair part</i>

Talk placed between a first-pair part and its answer has received extensive study within the field of conversation analysis. Most of such research has focused on the properties of *insertion sequences* (see Schegloff, 1972 for detailed analysis of their structure). The following provides an example:

*Example 5*

- |       |                        |                             |
|-------|------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. A: | Can I borrow your car? | <i>Question<sub>1</sub></i> |
| 2. B: | When?                  | <i>Question<sub>2</sub></i> |
| 3. A: | This afternoon.        | <i>Answer<sub>2</sub></i>   |
| 4. B: | Okay.                  | <i>Answer<sub>2</sub></i>   |

Here an initial question is followed by a second question as one adjacency pair (lines 2–3) is inserted in the midst of another (lines 1 and 4). Despite the fact that elements of the initial pair are now displaced from each other, the structure of such a sequence in fact provides strong support for the argument that participants are attending to adjacency-pair organization. Thus the second question (line 2) deals with issues to be resolved before an answer to the first will be provided. It is asked by the recipient of the initial request and addressed to prior speaker, the party who made that request. Once the issues raised in the insertion sequence have been resolved, the initial first-pair part (line 1) is answered by its original addressee.

Chopper's talk in line 3 occurs in the same sequential environment as an insertion sequence, e.g., between a first-pair part and its answer. However it does not have any of the properties of insertion sequences:

- 1 It is not a sequence but a single action.
- 2 It is not spoken by an addressee of the original action but rather by someone who has not been located as a participant in the exchange by the prior action.
- 3 In so far as Chopper's action expands the participation framework beyond the two parties implicated in the original action it, unlike insertion sequences, requires at least three participants in the exchange for its occurrence, i.e., this action has intrinsic multi-party properties.
- 4 It is not directed to the party who provided the original first-pair part but rather to the addressee of that action.
- 5 The issues it deals with are not prerequisites to the performance of the action requested in the initial first-pair part.

In brief, while Chopper's talk is inserted between the actions of Michael and Huey it does not have the properties of an insertion sequence, the prototypical type of action which is placed in this particular environment.

The placement of Chopper's talk in the midst of the exchange between Michael and Huey has a range of consequences. For example, in that Huey's

talk will now occur immediately after Chopper's challenge to him, it might be seen to constitute an answer not only to Michael, but also to what Chopper has said. Moreover, by performing his action where he does, Chopper is able to voice a strong demand at a very safe place, i.e., at a point where another is publicly committed to the same position. By piggybacking his talk on top of Michael's, Chopper is thus able to hitch something of a free ride on both the action initiated by Michael and its sequential implicitiveness.<sup>18</sup>

Before looking further at the social proposals made by Chopper's talk let us briefly examine Bruce's action in line 5. This talk does not occur between a first-pair part and its answer. Nonetheless it has strong structural analogs to Chopper's action in line 2.

1. It seconds the action in the prior talk by echoing Huey's refusal to Michael.
2. It is spoken before Michael has an opportunity to respond to Huey.

The placement of Bruce's action enables him to tap into the sequential organization of the exchange between Huey and Michael in much the same way that Chopper did. It therefore seems appropriate to extend the notion of where a piggyback can occur beyond the specific sequential environment of adjacency pairs. What is crucial is placement after a prior action visibly directed to another party. Such expanded placement makes it possible for both actions in an adjacency pair to be piggybacked, a point nicely demonstrated in the matching piggybacks that occur here.

Despite the apparent simplicity of Bruce's "Me neither", by saying what he says in the precise place that he says it Bruce manages to make proposals of some importance about his participation in the activity in progress. Thus, in arguing that the fight cannot begin since he is not yet ready, Bruce talks as someone who will be a participant in that fight. By not topicalizing or in any other way focusing explicit attention on this issue Bruce treats his continuing membership in the activity as something that can be taken for granted. However, as was seen earlier, many of the proposals about team membership that have been advanced so far in the boys' talk exclude Bruce from participation, and indeed when sides are eventually chosen he is not allowed to play.

The actions of Chopper and Bruce have so far been discussed as though they were essentially equivalent to each other. There are, however, significant differences in the way in which each of these parties ties their talk to that of the party they are affiliating with.

#### Example 1

1. Michael: All right who's on your *side* Huey.
2. → Chopper: Pick-pick four *people*.

3. Huey:       It's quarter after four and I'm not  
 4.               ready to go yet.  
 5. → Bruce:    Me neither.  
 6. Huey:       I'm not going till four thirty.

With his "Me neither" Bruce explicitly formulates what he is saying as an echo of what Huey just said. However, while Chopper reiterates the action just performed by Michael this reiteration does not take the form of an exact repeat of what Michael just said. Instead Chopper displays an analysis of the underlying sense of Michael's talk by using quite different words to produce an action of analogous import. The fact that Chopper substantially changes the words used to perform the action has a number of consequences.

1. Chopper adds new information, the number of people Huey is allowed to pick, to Michael's original demand that the choice of players be made now. While the number chosen is the same as one proposed by Michael earlier (see example 4) Chopper is nonetheless now able to portray himself as someone who can tell Huey how many players he can have on his side.
2. By virtue of the way it differs in both form and substance from Michael's talk Chopper's talk is formulated as an independent demand that Huey pick his team, rather than as simply a repetition of what Michael just said. In this it differs quite noticeably from Bruce's "Me neither."

In brief, though both Chopper and Bruce construct similar types of parasitic utterances, repeating in some form the action of the party who has just spoken, through the details of the way in which they build their talk they are able to make quite different types of displays about phenomena such as their relative status as independent actors.

By speaking in the way in which they do Chopper and Bruce are able to make a variety of claims about their standing in, first, the current sequence and, second, the larger activity that that sequence is embedded within. Chopper is claiming that he has the status to tell Huey what to do and when to do it, and Bruce is proposing that if he is not ready the activity should not proceed to its next stage, and in so doing acting as someone who is to be a participant in that subsequent activity. However, the status of such proposals, whether or not these claims will be honored, is not up to them alone but rather something to be worked out through interaction with their coparticipants.<sup>19</sup>

When we look at actions of others in the sequence, however, we find that none of these claims are ratified: what Chopper and Bruce say is completely ignored by Michael and Huey. However, if their proposals are not ratified neither are they explicitly challenged, as indeed they could be. For example, when Bruce earlier made what was interpreted as a bid to join the activity Michael answered him as follows:

*Example 2*

Bruce: Hey Michael.  
*They doin* what we did down in the park?  
 (1.5)

→ Michael: You ain't on our *side*.  
 You ain't *playin* *neither*!

In the present data the claims being made by Chopper and Bruce stand as proposals that have been put forth but neither ratified nor explicitly challenged. On the one hand the sequential treatment that these actions get may be a systematic consequence of their placement in the midst of exchanges between Michael and Huey; if Michael or Huey were to address Chopper or Bruce they would in effect be putting on hold their exchange with each other. Piggybacking thus provides an opportunity to make claims in a sequential environment in which it will take special work to challenge them. However, on the other hand, the liability of making such claims without having them acknowledged is that Chopper and Bruce are essentially treated as nonparticipants in the sequence, i.e., what they say is not taken into account by the others present as consequential for their action.

### 11. Interstitial participation

Despite the way in which four people manage to participate in this exchange, the structure of the sequence itself shows that the positions of each within it are not equal. Thus the actions between Michael and Huey provide the exchange with its basic structure and core skeleton. Chopper and Bruce tap into that sequential structure by slotting their actions at the interstices of the actions between Michael and Huey; rather than defining an alternative framework for action they adapt what they do to what Michael and Huey are already doing. Moreover they use the positions taken by Michael and Huey as guides for the positions they will take and the actions they will perform. Indeed they use the structure of the talk produced by Michael and Huey as a template for the organization of their own talk. For their part Michael and Huey never officially acknowledge the contributions made by Bruce and Chopper or treat them as ratified participants in the sequence. Michael and Huey thus emerge as the principal protagonists in the sequence, the parties who define its basic parameters and whose actions are used as models for the actions of others, while Chopper and Bruce, despite the energy with which they advance their positions, define themselves as interstitial players.

Such organization has a number of consequences for how those speaking

display themselves as aligned toward each other. First, the way in which multiple parties address equivalent actions to the same addressees (i.e. the pair of directives to Huey in lines 1 and 2 and the dual responses that they receive in lines 3–5) portrays what is happening as something more than one individual directing talk at another. Larger corporate entities, incipient teams or sides challenging and answering each other, become visible through the detailed organization of the talk of the individuals positioning themselves for membership on particular sides. Moreover, those on each side of the exchange differentiate themselves from each other through the way in which they speak. Michael and Huey are the only ones whose standing is officially acknowledged in the primary sequence; Chopper and Bruce shape their actions to fit those of Michael and Huey, and indeed echo what they say. For each side there is thus both a primary spokesman and another who does the activity of following that spokesman by using that party's behavior as a guide for the organization of his own behavior. It is thus possible to see some of the participants in this talk proposing an alignment of themselves into something like two teams, each of which is composed of a "leader" and a "subordinate." Of course, as the situation of Bruce makes clear, these are only proposals which can be, and indeed are, called into question in subsequent interaction. Moreover, the proposals being made by separate participants are not treated equivalently. The talk of Bruce and Chopper claims alignment with the positions of Huey and Michael but these claims are never recognized by Michael and Huey. Finally the patterns of alignment made visible within the talk are intimately tied to the larger sling-shot activity that the participants are engaged in, and indeed constitute part of the process through which that activity is being shaped.

## 12. Multiple participation frameworks

Line 11, and the sequence that follows from it, provides an opportunity to investigate how a single utterance invokes multiple participation frameworks (C. Goodwin, 1981; Goffman, 1981; Heath, 1986) that constitute different recipients to it in alternative ways. It was noted above that, unlike Bruce, Chopper did not just echo Michael but added new information, the number of parties on Huey's team, when he reiterated Michael's action. When Chopper first said this in line 2, it was not challenged. Indeed, because of the way in which Chopper's talk was embedded into the sequence between Michael and Huey, there was no slot after it for Michael to immediately comment on it, the place after Chopper's talk being occupied by Huey's answer to Michael. However, when Chopper in line 10 switches topic away from the discussion of Michael and Huey's household chores, and back to the choosing of teams by again calling on Huey to pick his four guys, Michael tells Huey that he gets only three guys.



## Example 1

1. Michael: All right who's on your *side* Huey.
2. Chopper: Pick- pick four *people*.
3. Huey: It's quarter after four and I'm not
4. ready to *go* yet.
5. Bruce: Me neither.
6. Huey: I'm not going till four thirty.
7. Michael: Well get in there and get them papers
8. off that couch before-
9. Huey: | I did already.
10. Chopper: Get your four *guys*,
11. → Michael: You get *three* guys.
12. → Huey: | I only get three guys?
13. → Chopper: || I mean three guys.
14. Michael: That's right.

Michael's talk in line 11 constructs two separate actions to two different recipients simultaneously.<sup>20</sup> What Michael says is officially addressed to Huey.<sup>21</sup> However, it also constitutes an action directed to Chopper in that it contradicts what Chopper just said (i.e. Michael tells Huey that he gets **three** guys, not the four just stated by Chopper).<sup>22</sup> In view of the differential relevance this utterance has for alternative recipients, it is not surprising that it receives two simultaneous responses (lines 12 and 13), each attending to what Michael has said in a different way.

Before looking in more detail at the participation frameworks invoked here, it can be briefly noted that these data provide yet a further demonstration of the fact that in analyzing what a strip of talk is doing it is not sufficient to investigate that utterance in isolation, i.e. it is inadequate to simply gloss the talk as instancing a particular type of speech act.<sup>23</sup> On the one hand, as has long been demonstrated in the work of Sacks and his colleagues (see, for example, Schegloff and Sacks, 1973), one must attend to the sequential organization of the talk. For example, in the present data line 11 emerges as a contradiction in large part through its placement after, and contrast with, line 10. On the other hand analysis must also include the participation framework invoked by the utterance, a structure that encompasses, among other phenomena,<sup>24</sup> the addressee of the talk as well as its speaker. Vološinov (Bahktin?) noted long ago that a

*word is a two-sided act. It is determined equally by whose word it is and for whom it is meant. As word, it is precisely the product of the reciprocal relationship between speaker and listener, addresser and addressee. Each and every word expresses the "one" in relation to the "other."* (Vološinov, 1973: 86, emphasis in the original)

In the present data, Michael's talk in line 11 gets its two-edged implicativeness from the way in which it encompasses two separate (though linked) speaker-hearer relationships; by virtue of the way in which an implicit action to Chopper is piggybacked on top of an action explicitly addressed to Huey this single strip of talk constructs separate but simultaneous actions to each of its recipients.<sup>25</sup>

The two participation frameworks found within this utterance are not simply copresent but organized relative to each other. Huey is Michael's explicit addressee, while Chopper's talk is responded to but not officially acknowledged. The action to Chopper is thus embedded within the talk to Huey, but not dealt with explicitly. Such patterning encapsulates within a single utterance the alignment structures, discussed above, that Michael is occupying toward both Huey and Chopper. Just as Chopper piggybacked his initial directive to Huey within an action already being addressed to Huey by Michael, here Michael piggybacks his answer to Chopper within another utterance that continues to treat Huey as the only other official protagonist in the emerging sequence (i.e. the only party that Michael has explicitly addressed or responded to) and the only other party who occupies a position equivalent to Michael's, that of team leader. Moreover, just as Chopper earlier showed himself willing to use what Michael did as a guide for his own behavior, here Michael performs the obverse of that activity by treating independent action performed by Chopper as something that he can call into question and modify at will.

### 13. Participation status

The way in which Michael deals with what Chopper has said sheds light on some of the subtlety with which participation status can be formulated within talk. On the one hand the talk that Chopper produced has been taken into account by Michael in the production of his talk: what Chopper says is consequential for the organization of subsequent action within the sequence. In this sense Chopper's talk constitutes something more than an "outloud", and is recognized in ways that his earlier talk was not. However, Chopper himself is not treated as a ratified participant in the sequence; indeed he is actively ignored as the address of Michael's utterance remains focused on Huey. If Michael had explicitly ratified Chopper's participation he might be seen as granting him the type of status that Chopper was claiming and Michael was denying. These data thus provide an example of how someone might produce talk that is attended to within a sequence, without, however, being ratified as a full-fledged participant in that sequence.

From a slightly different perspective it can be noted that one of the key issues in the current dispute centers on who will establish the parameters of the activity in progress (for example, team size and when the activity will move from stage to stage). With his talk in line 11 Michael not only makes

such claims toward Huey; in addition, by changing the parameters established by Chopper's talk Michael proposes that it is something that he, not Chopper, has ultimate control over, and thus treats what Chopper has said as an echo or expansion of talk that is properly his own.

The way in which Michael establishes his control over parameters that Chopper has attempted to control has the flavor of treating what Chopper has said as competitive with his own position in the activity. This suggests two other phenomena that might be relevant to the organization of the sequence. First, while analysis of the argumentative structure of this sequence has so far focused on opposition between Michael (and Chopper) versus Huey (and Bruce), the possibility emerges that a second, quite separate, axis of opposition exists *within* one of these sides, with Michael and Chopper competing with each other. The sequence thus contains two quite distinct oppositional frameworks, both of which are addressed simultaneously in Michael's utterance in line 11.

Second, the proposal in line 10 that Chopper is explicitly sanctioned for (i.e. that Huey's team should consist of four guys) was first stated in line 2 ("Pick— pick four people"). Michael's talk in line 11 can thus also indicate retrospectively that Chopper was talking out of turn in line 2 as well. It is thus possible that Chopper's earlier talk might also have been seen as competitive not only with Huey but also with Michael's status (i.e. Chopper was proposing that he could act in a way that was equivalent to Michael and indeed state parameters that Michael had failed to set).

### 13.1 *Topic-invoked participation frameworks*

These possibilities shed additional light on the content shift that occurs in line 7 right after Chopper first tells Huey to "pick four people." In addition to setting a new task for Huey, picking up the papers off the couch, this change in content indexes a new activity that does not include Chopper in the way that the sling-shot activity did. Instead of speaking within the realm of the sling-shot fight, a domain of activity in which Chopper is also a participant, Michael is now talking to Huey as one household member to another. Since the duties being talked about are restricted to members of a particular household, and Chopper does not belong to that household,<sup>26</sup> such a shift can signal to Chopper that the current talk does not include him in the way in which the earlier talk did. The content shift that occurs in line 7 might thus not only provide Michael with resources for continuing to make demands on Huey, but also be a way of restricting the focus of the dispute to issues that do not involve the participation of Chopper.

Traditionally topic has been defined largely in terms of the *content* of what is being talked about. The present data suggest that an equally important constituent of topic is the participation framework invoked by it. The talk in lines 1–6 is situated within an activity system, the sling-shot fight, that

provides situated identities, such as team-leader and potential team-member, for all who are present. However, when talk is shifted to duties in a particular household an activity is invoked that provides relevant positions within it for only two of the present parties, Michael and Huey. In essence talk has moved from one world, with its relevant set of characters, to another with a different situated identity structure that maps onto those present in a very different way, and indeed does not provide positions for all who are present in the way that the first did.<sup>27</sup> In brief, by virtue of its ability to invoke alternative situated activity systems, topic provides parties to a conversation with resources for rapidly changing how they are aligned to each other, and the activities that are relevant at the moment.

Crucial to the organization of such a participation framework is the way in which it is invoked by topic and thus can change as the topic of the moment changes. In this sense it is different from distinctions such as that between ratified participants (whether addressees or not) and overhearers; i.e. rather than separating those within the conversation from those outside it, and being a stable property of the conversation as a whole, *topic-invoked participation frameworks* apply to those within a specific conversational encounter and dynamically rearrange them and their standing toward each other as the talk in progress unfolds.

#### 14. Displaying social organization through sequential organization

We will now look more closely at Chopper's reply to this talk. In line 13 Chopper not only changes what he had said in line 10 (now saying "three guys" instead of his original "four") but also claims that the original statement was wrong by preceding the modification with a correction preface: "I mean." His action provides an example of one of the clearest procedures that can be used to terminate a dispute: in a situation where there are two discrepant positions one party modifies their position so that it is brought into agreement with that of the other party (i.e., here Chopper changes his position so that it coincides with the one that has just been stated by Michael). Since discrepant positions are no longer being held by different parties the dispute is effectively terminated.

The preface "I mean" also characterizes what is happening as a version of a correction sequence, a formulation that further highlights the way in which Chopper grants Michael ultimate rights to determine the issues being discussed here. By modifying his position in this way Chopper thus publicly displays that he is withdrawing from any competitiveness that his activities might have exhibited.

Taken together the actions of Michael and Chopper not only constitute a small dispute that is quickly resolved, but also make visible a hierarchy. Thus, in much the way that one animal can display dominance over another by forcing the subordinate animal to move, in these data Michael challenges

a position that has been taken by Chopper, and Chopper immediately backs away from that position to one that is compatible with Michael's. Note that this display of hierarchy is an interactive event that could not have been constructed by the actions of either party alone. While the talk in line 11 proposes that Michael is able to contradict Chopper, such an action could well be challenged by its recipient. A hierarchy is only definitively visible when Chopper acquiesces to Michael. It is thus a collaborative achievement, accomplished as much through the actions of the subordinate party (who actively demonstrates his willingness to change his behavior at the suggestion of the other) as through those of the dominant party. From such a perspective a hierarchy is an activity, a phenomenon accomplished by participants through a range of specific interactive work (and thus something to be explicated through concrete analysis of the details of their talk), rather than a description of a static feature of the social organization of a group.

The hierarchical relationship between Michael and Chopper that is made manifest in the present data can be found at other points in the sling-shot encounter as well. Thus, while the social organization accomplished through argument may characteristically be indigenous to the argument itself and capable of change as issues change,<sup>28</sup> the structures used to negotiate opposition can also provide participants with resources for reproducing forms of social organization that have a life that is greater than that of the argument itself.

### 15. Piggybacking revisited

Our earlier discussion of how Chopper and Bruce piggybacked their talk into the exchange between Michael and Huey might have seemed to suggest that positioning talk in this way is an inherently weak action; i.e., by sequencing their talk as they did Chopper and Bruce constituted themselves as subordinate, interstitial players in an exchange that was being given its primary shape by the actions of others. However, Michael's "You get *three* guys" in line 11 is structurally analogous to the earlier actions of Bruce and Chopper in a number of ways: first, it is also placed between a first-pair part (Chopper's "Get your four guys") and its projected answer; second, it uses what was said in the prior turn as a resource for the organization of its own talk, and, third, unlike an insertion sequence, it is addressed (at least explicitly) to the addressee of the original first-pair part. Michael's utterance thus provides a third example in this sequence of a turn that is piggybacked into an exchange between others. The patterning that becomes visible when Chopper attaches his talk to Michael's action thus becomes a structural resource for the subsequent organization of the sequence as it is picked up and utilized first by Bruce in line 5 and then again by Michael in line 11.

Michael's action is, however, treated very differently from the earlier

actions of Chopper and Bruce. Instead of remaining an appendage to a primary sequence that is not explicitly ratified in the talk of others, Michael's action reshapes the emerging sequence and becomes the talk that others respond to.

In their piggybacks Chopper and Bruce echoed or seconded the action of the speaker who preceded them. It was thus quite possible for others to ignore their talk. However, Michael challenges Chopper by contradicting him. By way of contrast, Chopper's piggyback did not direct an action to Michael. Michael thus constructs an action that is sequentially implicative for prior speaker as well as its official addressee. Indeed, when Chopper formulates his next action as a repair of his prior talk we find the structure of insertion sequences and organization of piggybacking interacting with each other. Moreover, because of the way in which Michael challenges what prior speaker said, the addressee of the initial first-pair part is not in the position of responding to a pair of roughly equivalent actions (the action of initial speaker and its second) but is instead dealing with a set of *contradictory claims* and is being invited to focus his response on the specific issue that has been called into question by the challenge. Huey is thus made answerable to a very different action than the one proposed by Chopper a moment earlier. The effect of all this is that Michael is able to utilize the piggyback environment to construct an utterance that transforms the sequence in progress by making others answerable to *it*, rather than to the talk that precedes it.

## 16. Conclusion

It is sometimes argued that the actual events of people's lives, for example the talk they produce in their mundane dealings with one another, are so disorderly that they do not provide appropriate data for the study of social or linguistic phenomena (see for example Chomsky, 1965: 3–4); to be scientific, a researcher must instead work with hypothetical, idealized versions of the phenomena being studied (as is frequently done, for example, in contemporary linguistics), or carefully control behavior through experimental manipulation (e.g. much research in social psychology). Here, however, we find anything but disorder. The participants themselves, within the space of a very few turns, produce a range of systematic permutations on a basic structure with a precision that would tax the ingenuity of even the most inventive experimental design to replicate. For example, Chopper abandons the surface structure of Michael's utterance in line 1 but builds an equivalent action; Michael, by way of contrast, *retains* with minimal transformations the surface structure of Chopper's utterance, reusing many of the exact same words, but constructs a very different type of action. In much the way that a collection of sonnets can demonstrate the diversity and creativity possible within the constraints of a particular pattern, here we find how participants can reuse the structural frameworks and sequential possibilities

provided by each other's talk to not only build a range of different products, but to radically transform the emerging structure of the events they are engaged in. Moreover, though such *bricolage* uses as its raw materials structure provided by the *talk* of the participants, its field of relevance is not confined to that talk but instead encompasses a range of social and interactive phenomena, as well as having consequences for the organization of the activity in progress. Though Chopper, Bruce, and Michael all make use of the same resources to tie to prior talk, through the way in which each uses these resources they constitute themselves and each other as very different types of social entities.

### Notes

We are greatly indebted to Douglas Maynard, William Hanks, John Haviland, Allen Grimshaw and Alessandro Duranti for detailed comments on an earlier version of this analysis.

- 1 See for example the discussion of format tying in M.H. Goodwin and C. Goodwin (1987):
- 2 For some analysis of how the structure of talk is utilized to align participants toward each other within argument see M.H. Goodwin (1980a, 1982c), M.H. Goodwin and C. Goodwin (1987) and Maynard (1986).
- 3 In his analysis of status and role Goodenough (1965) draws attention to the very important point that social actors cannot be defined in isolation from each other (hence the term "identity relationship" which encompasses a reciprocal pair of actors). While we find it necessary to expand such a framework in a number of directions (for example, tying identity relationships to the activities that are made relevant at the moment and not restricting them to only two parties) the importance of Goodenough's framing of these issues is clearly recognized.

Analysis of how participants constitute themselves through talk has been an issue of major analytic concern in conversation analysis (indeed it was the subject of the first published work of Harvey Sacks (1963, 1972a), the perspective that the present analysis takes as its point of departure.

- 4 For discussion of the relevance of examining argumentative sequences within the natural activities that participants typically engage in, rather than using data from experimental settings, see Corsaro and Rizzo (this volume).
- 5 For a description of how the boys organized the sling-shot session that the present data is drawn from see M.H. Goodwin (1980b). For a more complete description of the ethnographic research on which this analysis is based see M.H. Goodwin (forthcoming).
- 6 Huey is not only older but also bigger and more physically powerful than any of the others present.
- 7 For more detailed analysis of implicit address within conversation see Holmes (1984).
- 8 One feature of Michael's action that is consistent with the possibility that it is calling for a transition from one stage of the activity to another is the use

- of "All right" to preface the turn. Terms such as "well", "okay" and "all right" are frequently used to propose that one stage of an activity can be terminated and another begun. For analysis of the use of "okay" to bound topics and initiate closings see Schegloff and Sacks (1973).
- 9 With respect to the organization of directives Mitchell-Kernan and Kernan (1977) have argued that children may be more concerned with manipulating social face than with the specific outcomes of their actions.
- 10 See Coleman (1957) for other analysis of escalation and diffusion in argument.
- 11 Indeed many formal dispute frameworks, such as the British-American legal system, embody special procedural rules to restrict debate to the issues that are the official focus of the current litigation.
- 12 For other analysis of how features of talk can invoke alternative contextual domains see Gumperz (1982a), Duranti (1988), and Grimshaw (1974).
- 13 For other analysis of how larger social identities can be invoked through the detailed organization of local talk see C. Goodwin (1987) and Maynard and Zimmerman (1984).
- 14 For more detailed analysis of the relationship between conversational organization and context see Garfinkel (1967), Garfinkel and Sacks (1970) and Heritage (1984).
- 15 For more detailed exposition of the way in which an action such as that produced by Michael in line 1 makes a response to it relevant see Schegloff (1968) and Schegloff and Sacks (1973).
- 16 The way in which Chopper and Huey's talk uses the details of prior talk to construct a subsequent move to it, even though no action on their part was projected by that talk, is in fact a general characteristic of many self-initiated subsequent moves (see, for example, the discussion of action chains by Pomerantz (1978: 109-110). Indeed in many exchanges adjacency pairs and pairs that emerge through structural cohesion created by the tying operations of subsequent speaker work hand in hand with each other to give the sequence its larger shape. One particularly clear example of this within the domain of argument can be found in ritual insult sequences in which participants use adjacency pairs to provide insults, and returns to them, and then move to a subsequent round of such exchanges by tying a new first action to the structure of a prior closing action. Other features of the moves performed by Chopper and Huey, for example, the way in which they reiterate the action being tied to, are not, however, as common.
- 17 Maynard (1985a) has noted the importance of such alignment displays in constructing social organization within dispute sequences, and he argues that creating alignments constitutes a basic form of political activity for children.
- 18 For other research examining the distinctive types of action that can be accomplished by exploiting the sequential organization of an existing exchange in this fashion see Haviland's (1987) analysis of "piling on" in Tzotzil discourse.
- 19 Thus with respect to the issue of alignment to positions within argument Maynard (1986: 273) notes that "collaboration between an outsider and a



- principal is an achieved outcome, not an automatic consequence of an outsider exhibiting a stance that is sympathetic with a principal party's position."
- 20 For detailed analysis of how utterances can simultaneously address different participants in alternative ways see Duranti (1986); C. Goodwin (1981: chapter 5), and Holmes (1984).
  - 21 Indeed others present are specifically excluded from the scope of its official address by both the social identity invoked through the talk (i.e. Huey, as Michael's opposite team leader is the only party present who is in a position to "get" a certain number of guys) and by the personal pronoun which Michael uses to begin his talk.
  - 22 The activity of contradicting Chopper is explicitly marked within Michael's utterance by the contrast-class emphasis he places on "three." The talk is thus visibly directed toward Chopper as well as Huey. For more detailed analysis of contrast-class replacement within opposition sequences see M.H. Goodwin and C. Goodwin (1987).
  - 23 For an early but insightful statement of this position see Vološinov (1973: 98, emphasis in the original) who argues that "*The structure of the utterance is a purely sociological structure. The utterance, as such, obtains between speakers. The individual speech act (in the strict sense of the word "individual") is contradictio in adjecto.*"
  - 24 For detailed analysis of other aspects of the interactive organization of participation frameworks see Erickson (1979), C. Goodwin (1981, 1984); M.H. Goodwin (1980a)); Heath (1984, 1986); Dore and McDermott (1982) and Shultz, Florio and Erickson (1983).
  - 25 See C. Goodwin (1981, chapter 5) for other analysis of how talk can be designed for the simultaneous listening of mutually exclusive types of recipients, and of how the emerging structure of that talk can be modified as the speaker moves from one recipient to another. For analysis of multiple recipients within the framework of speech-act theory see Clark and Carlson (1982). For analysis of how the internal structure of a story can change as its recipients change see M.H. Goodwin (1982c).
  - 26 For more detailed analysis of how ties between particular types of activities and categories of person entitled to perform those activities are utilized in the understanding and interpretation of talk see the discussion by Sacks (1972a) of membership-categorization devices and category-bound activities.
  - 27 For more detailed analysis of how the categories in a particular membership device can be applied to a population see Sacks' (1972a: 334) discussion of *duplicative organization*. For analysis of how talk that marks shared access to a common domain of activity can invoke particular social relationships (for example that speaker and addressee are spouses) see C. Goodwin (1987).
  - 28 See also M.H. Goodwin (1982b), Maynard (1985a) for analysis of social organization that is indigenous to argument.