

CHARLES GOODWIN

Sentence Construction Within Interaction*

The prototypical place where sentences emerge in the natural world is in the midst of oral communication.¹ However, within linguistics approaches to the analysis of sentence construction (the study of syntax) usually presuppose abstraction from pragmatic or interactive considerations. It is assumed that the analysis of sentences can be performed upon examples isolated from the processes of human interaction within which they are habitually embedded.² In opposition to such a view it will be argued here that sentences in natural conversation emerge as the products of a process of interaction between speaker and hearer as they mutually construct the turn at talk.

Two ways in which the collaborative process of constructing the turn might lead to the modification of the speakers's emerging sentence will be examined. First, it will be argued that the accomplishment of particular interactive tasks, such as the negotiation of an appropriate state of mutual attentiveness between speaker and hearer, might require changes in the length of the turn being constructed. To lengthen the turn the speaker might change the sentence he is producing by adding to that sentence new sections, in the form of words, phrases, and clauses. Analysis will then turn to be ability of the speaker to

* I am most indebted to Gail Jefferson, Erving Goffman, Harvey Sacks, William Labov, Emanuel Schegloff and Candy Goodwin for thoughtful and enlightening comments on earlier versions of this analysis.

¹ The most thorough analysis of the structure of human conversation is to be found in work of the late Harvey Sacks (1974, 1989, 1992a, 1992b; Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson 1974 a) and his colleagues Schegloff (1968, 1972, 1986, 1988; Schegloff and Sacks 1973; Schegloff, Sacks and Jefferson 1977) and Jefferson (1973, 1974, 1979, 1984, 1987). Such work emerges from the approach to the analysis of human interaction initiated by Goffman (1963, 1971, 1974, 1981) and Garfinkel (1967). See Atkinson and Heritage (1984), Dew and Heritage 1992 and Button and Lee (1987) for collections of work in conversation analysis. For discussion of how conversation analysis is related to other approaches to pragmatics see Levinson (1983). Heritage (1989) and Goodwin and Heritage (1990) provide reviews of the field. An excellent analysis of the theoretical background that led to Ethnomethodology and conversation analysis can be found in Heritage (1984). For work demonstrating how Conversation Analysis can be integrated with ethnography for the analysis of talk as social organization in a situated setting see M. H. Goodwin (1990) and Moerman (1988).

The present paper reports on analysis developed more fully in Goodwin (1981). An earlier version of the analysis of the last example appeared as Goodwin (1979). For detailed study of how talk and gaze interdigitate with each other in medical encounters, see Heath (1986).

² See for example Chomsky (1965: 3-4).

reconstruct the emerging meaning of her sentence as she is producing it in order to maintain the appropriateness of her utterance for her recipient of the movement. Both the length and the meaning of the sentence eventually constructed within a turn at talk might thus emerge as the products of a dynamic process of interaction between speaker and hearer (see also Heritage, this volume).

1. *The addition of new segments to a speaker's emerging sentence*

The ability of the speaker to add new sections to her emerging sentence in order to accomplish particular interactive tasks will be examined first.

In natural conversation sentences are constructed to be heard by a hearer. One rule implicated in the organization of the interaction of speaker and hearer in the construction of the turn might thus be the following:

Rule #1: In order to construct a sentence in natural conversation a speaker requires the attentiveness of a hearer.

The operation of such a rule presumes the ability of the speaker to distinguish between the attentiveness and non-attentiveness of her recipient. Insofar as the speaker cannot read her recipient's mind a communication process mediated by visible, recognizable events must be involved.

A first element of such a process might be the following:

Rule #2: The object of a party's attention may be inferred from the direction of her gaze.³

Applying Rule #2 to the special case of the recipient:

Rule #2 a: The attentiveness of a possible recipient may be inferred from her gaze direction.

More precisely:

Rule #2 a.1 If a possible recipient is gazing toward the speaker it may be inferred that she is being attentive to the speaker and her sentence.

³ Though a hearer can display her attentiveness to the speaker in a number of different ways (see for example the discussion of "back channel behaviors" by Yngve 1970, Dittman and Llewellyn 1969, and Duncan and Fiske 1977), many investigators (for example Simmel 1969: 358-359; Argyle 1976: 108-109, 202; Goffman 1967: 123; and Schefflen 1974: 68-69) have noted the special importance of gaze as a display of attentiveness. Thus Kendon (1967: 36, footnote 7) states that

We make the assumption here that to perceive the direction of an individual's attention we rely largely upon the direction in which he is looking.

Rules and preference structures organizing gaze within the turn, as well as procedures available to speaker and hearer for the negotiation of appropriate states of mutual gaze, are described in Goodwin (1981).

Rules #2 a.2 However if the recipient is gazing elsewhere than at the speaker it may be inferred that she is not being attentive to the speaker or her sentence.

Actual turns will now be examined with respect to the possibility that rules of this type are in fact implicated in their construction.⁴

In the following the gaze of the recipient is marked below the utterance. A line indicates that the recipient is gazing at the speaker. The absence of a line indicates that the gaze of the recipient is directed elsewhere than at the speaker. Commas mark the actual movement of the recipient away from the speaker, while dots are used to indicate that the recipient is bringing her gaze toward the speaker. The precise point where the recipient's gaze reaches the speaker is marked with a bracket.

(1) GA.4.302

Ralph: Somebuddy said looking at m[y], son my oldest son,
 Chil: _____, , [_____]

In this example⁵ Chil, the recipient, is gazing at the speaker during "Somebuddy said looking." Over "at" Chil shifts his gaze away from the speaker but returns it over the second "my" and continues to gaze at Ralph for the rest of the sentence.

With the rules proposed above it was argued first, that in order to construct a sentence in natural conversation a speaker requires the attentiveness of a hearer and second, that a speaker might infer the state of a recipient's attention from her gaze direction. In terms of these rules the portion of Ralph's sentence produced while Chil was looking away might be located as being impaired through a recipient's disattention. What is at issue is not, however, the ability of the analyst to note and code such differences in gaze, but rather whether the

⁴ Data for this analysis consists of videotapes of actual conversations recorded in a range of natural settings such as family dinners, an ice cream social at a Moose lodge, a birthday party, etc. Over fifty hours of tape was recorded jointly by myself and Marjorie Harness Goodwin. Tape G.26 was recorded by George Kuetemeyer. Data is transcribed according to the Jefferson transcription system (Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson 1974: 731–734). The conventions most relevant to the present analysis are the following:

- 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, and a comma indicates a falling-rising (list-like) intonation.
- A dash ("–") marks a sudden cut-off the current sound.
- Colons (:) indicate that the sound just before the colon has been noticeably lengthened.
- The equal sign (=) indicates "latching"; there is no interval between the end of a prior turn and the start of a next piece of talk.
- Numbers in parentheses (0.0) mark silences in seconds and tenths of seconds.
- Low volume is indicated by a degree sign ("°").

⁵ Here is the complete text for the example:

Ralph: Somebuddy said looking at my, son my oldest son, *h
 he has the sa:me mean liddle pig eyes,
 that his father en his grandmother have.

speaker himself attends to such alternatives as consequential for his own activities within the turn. If displaying hearership in fact constitutes one of the tasks facing a recipient in the construction of the turn, and gaze is a relevant way to display hearership, then the portion of Ralph's turn produced while Chil was looking away might be located as impaired because of lack of appropriate action toward it by a recipient.

Examination of the utterance being constructed in this turn reveals that the speaker in fact locates this sentence as impaired. The portion of the sentence spoken while Chil was disattending, "my son" is recycled as "my oldest son", after his gaze is regained. By adding the repair to his emerging utterance the speaker thus succeeds, not only in marking with his action the different status of alternative recipient actions, but also in adapting to them such that he is able, despite recipient's turning away, to produce the entire sentence constructed within his turn while his recipient is gazing toward him. Having the gaze of the recipient directed toward the speaker is thus a feature of the turn that not only recipient, but also speaker work to achieve.⁶ The speaker thus succeeds in producing the entire sentence constructed in his turn while his recipient is paying attention to him. Traditionally students of social organization have left the study of sentences and how they are constructed to linguists. The present data raises the question of whether this abdication is appropriate.

First, phenomena of the type being examined here have in fact also been neglected by contemporary linguists. Their position toward such phenomena is perhaps manifested most clearly in the particular way in which Chomsky (1965: 3–4) formulated the distinction between actual language use, *performance*, and the underlying *competence* of a speaker-hearer which makes such performance possible. Competence is the primary focus of linguistic study. Noting that "natural speech will show numerous false starts, deviations from rules, changes of plan in mid-course, and so on" Chomsky concluded that such speech "obviously could not directly reflect competence" (1965: 4). Most contemporary linguists therefore, do not investigate the production of language in actual talk.⁷ This is, however, the place where phenomena of the type being investigated here become accessible to study.

⁶ Discussing mutual gaze, which he calls "perhaps the most direct and purest reciprocity which exists anywhere," Simmel (1969: 358) notes that:

So tenuous and subtle is this union that it can only be maintained by the shortest and straightest line between the eyes, and the smallest deviations from it, the slightest glance aside, completely destroys the unique character of this union.

The present data suggests that while participants do actively attend the slightest of glances away, they nevertheless have the ability to organize their actions in such a way that the union being manifested through these glances can be maintained.

⁷ For example Lyons (1969) states that:

(L)inguistic theory, at the present time at least, is not, and cannot, be concerned with the production and understanding of utterances in their actual situations of use ... but with the structure of sentences considered in abstraction from the situations in which actual utterances occur.

A second implication of Chomsky's argument is the notion that repairs and corrections, such as that provided by the added segment in the present data, are mere performance errors which only serve to indicate the defectiveness of speakers in actual talk. The present analysis has argued to the contrary that the repair in this utterance is a manifestation of the speaker's competence not just to produce sentences, but rather to produce sentences that are in fact attended to appropriately by a hearer. Viewed from a perspective that includes both speaker and hearer, the present repair constitutes a demonstration, not of the speaker's defective performance, but rather of his competence to maintain and orient to a social structure that includes the appropriate participation of both speaker and hearer.⁸

It thus seems that the processes through which human beings construct sentences require analysis from a social as well as a linguistic perspective. This is perhaps most clearly demonstrated by the fact that the social processes being investigated here lead to changes not only in the turn, but also in the sentence being produced within it. The noun phrase being recycled in the added segment is changed through the addition of an adjective to it. "My son" becomes "my oldest son." The accomplishment of a particular interactive task, maintaining an appropriate state of mutual orientation between speaker and hearer, thus leads to a change in the sentence being constructed within the turn. If the original version of this segment had not been recycled the word "oldest" would not have emerged as part of the sentence eventually produced by the speaker.

In this example the addition of a segment to the speaker's turn is accomplished by recycling an earlier section of his utterance. A procedure with such properties possesses certain advantages. For example, it enables the speaker to hold his utterance in place until some relevant event occurs. Nevertheless the use of such a procedure also incurs certain liabilities. For example, the initial version of the segment being recycled is deleted from the sentence eventually produced. This in the speaker's final sentence "my son" is replaced by "my oldest son." Such displayed deletion produces a marked break in the flow and structure of the speaker's sentence.

A turn will now be investigated in which the speaker adds a new section to his sentence without recycling an earlier part of it.

(2) G.26:19:15

John: An' how are you feeling? (0.4) °these d[ays.
Ann: [—

In this example the speaker apparently fails to secure the attention of a recipient. A slight gap occurs and rather than pursuing the matter further, the speaker begins to place an egg roll in his mouth. At that point his proposed recipient begins to move into orientation toward him. He withdraws the egg roll from

⁸ For other analysis of how repairs might provide participants with the opportunity to display their social competence see Jefferson (1974). Other aspects of the organization of repair in conversation are considered in Schegloff, Jefferson and Sacks (1977).

his mouth and adds a new segment, “these days,” to his utterance. The gap now becomes a within sentence pause, and the recipient is located as achieving orientation during the production of the single sentence that constructs the turn.

As in the previous example, the sentence emerging within the turn is modified so that particular interactive tasks posed in the construction of the turn can be accomplished. However, in this case the addition of such a segment to the speaker’s turn does not require the recycling of some earlier section of his sentence.

A process of this type again occurs in the following example. The speaker loses the attention of his first recipient, and in order to gain time within his turn to move to a new recipient, adds a new segment to his emerging sentence. The speaker’s gaze is marked above the utterance; a name in parentheses indicates the party the speaker is gazing at. In these data a disagreement is emerging between the speaker, Curt, and his initial recipient, Mike. When Curt produces a “no” in first position in his turn, both his recipients immediately begin to disattend him. Mike turns away from him and stretches, and when the first completion of Curt’s turn arrives, refuses to take the floor:

(3) G.84:08:00

Curt: (Mike) _____
No:ʔ (0.3) Uh-uh (0.2) (Th’) U:sac- uh:, sprint car

Mike: — ,

Gary: — , ,

Curt: (Mike) _____
dir-dirt track championship. (1.0)

Mike: _____ ,

By refusing to provide a next utterance to Curt, Mike avoids either openly disagreeing or backing down from his own position.

Gary however does return his gaze to Curt. After Mike refuses to provide a next answer to Curt’s turn, Curt adds a new section to his sentence, “Over I think it’s run in Gary,” and turns to the recipient who is attending him, Gary:

(3) G.84:08:00

Curt: (Mike) _____
No:ʔ (0.3) Uh-uh (0.2) (Th’) U:sac- uh:, sprint car

Mike: — ,

Gary: — , ,

Curt: (Mike) _____ , , , , (Gary) _____
dir-dirt track championship. (1.0) over I think it’s run in Gary,

Mike: _____ ,

Gary: _____

Once again, in order to obtain a recipient to his turn, the speaker extends the length of the sentence he is constructing within the turn by adding a new segment to it.

The next example provides some demonstration of how a speaker might repetitively add segments to her turn in order to negotiate an appropriate state of mutual attentiveness with her recipients:

(4) G.34:05.5

Elsie See first we were gonna have Teema, Carrie, and Clara, (0.2) a::nd myself. The four of us. The four children. But then-uh: I said how is that gonna look.

In the middle of this utterance the speaker moves her gaze from recipient to recipient. As she does so she holds the onward development of the sentence she is constructing in place by adding new sections to it in the form of appositives. The recipient toward whom the speaker is gazing near the beginning of her turn disattends her midway through her utterance. Through the attention of this recipient is regained, the speaker quickly shifts her gaze to a different recipient:

(4) G.34:0.5.5

Elsie: See first we were gonna have (Esther) _____
 Esther: _____

Move to New Recipient

↓

Elsie: _____ , . (Bessie) _____
 (0.2) a :: nd myself.
 Esther: _____ , _____

However, Bessie is not gazing at the speaker. Rather than advancing her utterance further, the speaker holds it in place with an appositive, “The four of us”, while Bessie moves into orientation:

(4) G.34:0.5.5

Elsie: See first we were gonna have (Esther) _____

Move to New Recipient

↓

Elsie: _____ , . (Bessie) _____
 (0.2) a :: nd myself. The four of us.
 Esther: _____ , _____
 Bessie: _____ _____

When Bessie finally does reach orientation this segment of the speaker’s sentence is recycled yet another time with a second appositive, “The four children”:

(4) G.34:05.5

Elsie: _____ (Esther) _____
 See first we were gonna ha[ve Teema, Carrie, and Clara,
 Elsie: _____ ,. (Bessie) _____ ,. (Connie)
 (0.2) a : : nd myself. The four of u[s. The four children.
 Esther: _____ , _____
 Bessie: _____
 Connie: _____

Near the end of the second appositive the speaker shifts her gaze to another recipient who has been paying attention to her. Only then does she resume the onward development of her utterance:

(4) G.34:05.5

Elsie See first we were gonna have Teema, Carrie, and Clara, (0.2) a::nd myself. The four of us. The four children. But then-uh: I said how is that gonna look.

The sentence actually produced by the speaker in this turn emerges as the product of a process of interaction between the speaker and her recipients as they mutually construct the turn at talk.

2. *The ability of the speaker to modify the emerging meaning of her utterance*

It has been argued that in order to accomplish relevant interactive tasks posed in the construction of the turn at talk the speaker has the capacity to modify her emerging utterance as she is producing it. Modifications considered until this point have taken the form of the addition of new segments to the sentence being constructed within the turn.

The competence of the speaker to systematically modify the meaning of her utterance has not however been specifically investigated. Analysis will now turn to a situation in which different types of recipients to the speaker's turn are simultaneously co-present. Investigation will focus upon the ability of the speaker to transform the emerging meaning of her sentence as she moves from recipient to recipient so that the appropriateness of her utterance for her recipient of the moment can be maintained and demonstrated.

Such a line of analysis presumes that possible recipients to the utterance differ from each other in some relevant fashion.

2.1 *The Differentiation of recipients*

One possible basis for differentiating recipients provided by the conversational system itself will now be examined:

An element utilized extensively in the construction of action in natural conversation projects the type of knowledge possessed by speaker and hearer about

the event located by the action.⁹ Through this element recipients with different characteristics can be located. Consider the following:

(5) G.4:12

Frank: Yih ever take 'er out again?

Joe: No I never called 'er back.

In Frank's turn a request for information is performed. Such an action proposes that the recipient has knowledge about the subject of the request that the speaker lacks. In Joe's turn an answer to the request is made, and the proposed states of knowledge of speaker and hearer reverse. Using K+ to indicate knowledge of the event located by the action and K- to indicate ignorance of that event, the differences in the distributions of knowledge about that event proposed by these two actions can be specified as follows:

	Speaker	Addressee
Request for information:	K-	K+
Answer to that request:	K+	K-

The two types of recipient located by this feature are not merely different but alternative to each other. The selection of one implies the exclusion of the other. For simplicity, a recipient who is presumed to know about the event located by the action will be called a *knowing recipient*, while a recipient presumed not to know about that event will be called an *unknowing recipient*.

In the actions being considered the states of knowledge of speaker and hearer are ordered relative to each other. If hearer has knowledge of the event at issue, speaker is ignorant of it; while if hearer is ignorant of the event, speaker has knowledge of it. Thus, despite changes in action, the states of knowledge of speaker and hearer remain complementary to each other.

The proposed distributions of knowledge found in the request for information and its answer are not specific to these particular actions, but are found in a range of actions. For example, the pattern in which a speaker has knowledge of an event that his recipient lacks is also found in stories, reports and announcements. The pattern in which the recipient has knowledge that the speaker lacks is found not only in a request for information but also in actions such as the request for confirmation and requests for stories. Thus particular distributions of knowledge locate not particular actions but classes of actions.

A situation will now be examined in which both an unknowing recipient and a knowing recipient to the speaker's turn are simultaneously co-present. Insofar as the construction of an action locating one type of recipient excluded the other, a speaker wishing to provide for the participation of both in his turn is placed in a dilemma.

⁹ For analysis of how information states are relevant to the construction of action see Labov and Fanshel (1977). Sacks (1992b: 437–443) has described the rule that a speaker shouldn't tell his recipient something that the recipient already knows and examined its consequences for the interaction of spouses in a way that is relevant to the present analysis.

2.2. *A first solution to the problem of including alternative types of recipients within the same turn: Transforming the structure of the speaker's emerging action*

A speaker might provide for the inclusion of both types of recipients within her turn by transforming an action begun to one recipient so that it becomes appropriate to a different type of recipient.

In the following, three parties, Pat, Jere and Chil, are teaching a fourth, Ann, how to play bridge. Pat is explaining the bidding system to Ann.

(6) G.23:490

Pat: Now if ya have thirteen points:, (1.0) counting voi:ds? singletons en doubletons right?

Ann is the original addressee of the utterance. By its intonation the portion of the utterance constructed to her is located as a declarative statement, an action appropriate to one presumed to be ignorant of the rules of bridge.

Ann, however, does not direct her gaze to the speaker. During the pause Pat looks at her addressee and discovers that she does not have her attention. A search for another recipient is begun, and Pat shifts her gaze from Ann to Chil:

(6) G.23:490

Pat: Now of ya have thirteen points:, (1.0) counting . (Ann) , , (Chil)

Unlike Ann, Chil is presumed to know how to play bridge. Pat is thus faced with the task of reconstructing her utterance from one that proposes the ignorance of its recipient about the event located by the utterance to one that proposes that its recipient has knowledge of that event. Explaining to a novice, such as Ann, the details of the bidding system is both necessary and helpful. Telling an experienced bridge player these same facts is either insulting or absurd.

Note that Pat is faced with the task not simply of changing the state of knowledge proposed for her recipient, but also of displaying a change in her own knowledge of the event. Specifically, a feature of the actions being examined is that the states of knowledge of speaker and hearer remain complementary to each other. Thus if Pat locates her new recipient as informed about the event under discussion she must display ignorance about it:

Pat **K+**.....Ann **K-**
 Pat **K-**.....Chil **K+**

The speaker is thus put in the somewhat contradictory position of being both informed about and ignorant of the same event within the same turn at talk.

In order to solve this apparent contradiction an object is required that will provide a warrant for the change in the state of the speaker's knowledge as well as for the change in action and recipient. One object that satisfies these criteria is the act of forgetting.

Pat accomplishes the task of moving from an unknowing recipient to a knowledgeable one by changing her intonation so that her statement becomes

marked as problematic. The pronunciation of “voi:ds”, the place in her utterance where her eyes reach her second recipient. Chil, is characterized by both a slight rise in the speaker’s intonation and a syllable break within the word:

(6) G.23:490

Pat: . (Ann) , , (Chil)
 Now if ya have thirteen points:, (1.0) counting voi : ds?

Through this change in intonation uncertainty is displayed about what Pat is saying; and the action being constructed through her utterance is transformed from a statement to a request for verification, an action proposing that is recipient has knowledge of the event located by the action that the speaker is uncertain about.¹⁰

In producing this action Pat does not simply change the state of knowledge proposed for her recipient; by displaying uncertainty about some aspects of the same phenomenon that she is elsewhere presenting herself as informed about she changes her own state of knowledge.¹¹ Further, the speaker’s display of uncertainty accounts for and warrants the changes in action, recipient, type of recipient and state of speaker’s knowledge which are occurring at this point in the talk.

The reciprocal changes of the states of knowledge proposed for both speaker and recipient have the effect of maintaining a complementary distribution of knowledge between them, despite the fact that both action and recipient have been changed. Though it is possible to find actions that have both a knowing speaker and a knowing recipient (reminiscing for example) the fact that the speaker here changes not only attributes of her recipient but also relevant attributes of herself, raises the possibility that what is at issue is not the properties of a single individual but rather an organized field of social action including features, such as complementarity, ordering the attributes of separate participants relative to each other.

In can also be noted that despite the change in action and recipient the talk to Chil is syntactically a next element in the sentence begun to Ann. Pat’s emerging sentence thus consists of distinguishable subsections within which alternative attributes for speaker and recipient are proposed to be relevant. The sentence therefore provides not only phonological, syntactic and semantic information,

¹⁰ See Goodwin (1987) for analysis how such displays of uncertainty and forgetfulness can be used strategically by one spouse to try to dislodge another from a competing conversation.

¹¹ Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson (1974: 727) note that “perhaps the most general principle which particularizes conversational interaction [is] that of RECIPIENT DESIGN.” Of particular relevance to what Pat does here is Volosinov’s argument (1973: 86) that

Orientation of the word toward the addressee has an extremely high significance. In point of fact, *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”. I give myself verbal shape from another’s point of view ... [italics in original]

but also relevant features of the social organization of the participants, specifically a particular configuration within which they are ordered relative to one another. Further, relevant attributes of this configuration can be changed within the emerging sentence itself, with the effect that the proposed ordering of participants remains appropriate to the local contingencies of the interaction.

Alternative participant configurations are ordered relative to one another by the structure of the sentence. Via its placement as a subordinate clause within the sentence, the action addressing a knowing recipient is embedded within, and subordinate to, the action to the unknowing recipient. By virtue of such syntactic organization the action to Ann remains alive across the action to Chil, not only as a point of reference and departure, but also as a point to be returned to should the contingencies of the interaction permit. The syntactic structure of the sentence thus produces not only a meaningful string of sounds, but also a proposed social order whose properties are capable of being modified in detail by changes in the emerging sentence, changes which may themselves be responsive to processes of interaction between speaker and hearer implicated in the ongoing construction of both the sentence and the turn within which it is articulated. From such a perspective the emerging structure of the sentence constitutes one of the principle methods available to the participants for achieving and displaying to each other not only linguistic but also social order as an unfolding feature of ongoing processes of action.

The knowing recipient Pat addresses here, Chil, fails however to attend her. Pat then brings her gaze to the last party present, Jere, who, though he had briefly gazed at her, is discovered to have a glass in front of his face. Having failed to secure any of here three co-participants as a recipient, Pat drops her eyes and escalates her action to the knowledgeable recipients, adding to her utterance an explicit request for verification with full question intonation, "right?" Even this falls, and a gap over a second long follows:

(6) G.23:490

Pat: _____ . (Ann) , ,
 Now if ya have thirteen points;, (1.0) counting
 (Chil) _____ , , , (Jere) , , ,
 voi ; ds? s:ingletons en doubletons right?
 Jere: _____ , ,
 (1.2)

Pat's failure to obtain a recipient generates the next item of talk. However note that her recipients are chided not for ignoring her, but for failing to pay attention to Ann:

(6) G.23:490

Pat: Now if ya have thirteen points;, (1.) counting
 voi ; ds? s:ingletons en doubletons right?
 (1.2)

Pat: You gotta prompt Ann as she goes along.
She's never gonna remember all these things.

In the next example a speaker is once again faced with the task of reconstructing an utterance originally begun to an unknowing recipient so that it becomes appropriate to a knowing recipient. Pam is telling some friends a story about her husband, Curt. Midway through the story she switches her gaze to Curt. As principal character in the story Curt can be presumed to know about the events being described within it:

(7) G.86:626

Pam: (Curt)
Well I think what's funny is when he was in gra:de school.
(Curt) _____
wa'n:t it? En y- (0.6)
(Curt)
you were up playin poker with the other: liddle kids?
(0.6)
En, these kids: wouldn' have their lunch
cuz Curt's: gettin their lunch money from em.

When Pam's gaze reaches Curt she transform the description she just had given her unknowing recipients into a request for verification by adding "wa'n" it? to her sentence. Unlike the main action of the story, this action locates its recipient as being informed about the event described through the story. Changing to an action with such a structure permits the speaker to explicitly locate the principal character in her story as one of its recipients.

In addition to the change in actions, the change in recipients in this case also requires a change in the pronouns utilized to identify Curt. When Curt is not being gazed at, and the proposed recipients of the story are unknowing recipients, Curt is referred to as "he." However, when Pam brings her gaze to Curt and locates him as her recipient, he is referred to as "you." The same person is thus referred to by both second and third person pronouns within a single sentence.

The ability of the speaker in this case to transform her original description into a request for verification, and to alter her choice of pronouns, permits her to move her gaze from an unknowing recipient to a knowing one while maintaining the appropriateness of her utterance for its recipient of the moment.

The two sequences just investigated locate one systematic procedure, changing the structure of action displayed through the talk, for specifying recipients with different characteristics in different parts of the turn, and thus building a turn capable of providing for the participation of recipients with mutually exclusive attributes.

This phenomenon provides some demonstration of how structures implicated in the production of talk might invoke the relevance of specific attributes for speaker and hearer. On the surface the attributes which have been examined

here, displays of what some party knows or doesn't know, appear to be manifestations of the internal states of individuals. However, in a variety of ways this structure provides social organization for the participants within the turn. First, as was noted above, the complementarity of the states of the parties as displayed by speaker not only categorizes the participants, but orders them relative to each other. The identities proposed for separate individuals are thus not independent phenomena, but are rather tied to each other within a single reciprocal structure. Second, the configuration achieved through this process is a feature of the activities in which the participants are in fact engaged within the turn. Indeed, the relevance of specific attributes for speaker and hearer has been invoked by structures implicated in the talk itself. Third, orientation toward the achievement of this feature may pose specific social tasks within the turn, such as the one faced by Pat of maintaining an appropriate configuration of participants as circumstances change within the turn. Indeed, one analytic gain that accrues when phenomena such as social classification are investigated as activities of the participants, rather than things to be decided by the analyst, is that work such as Pat's, which may be as interesting as the features it preserves, becomes accessible to analysis. Finally, these processes provide a systematic basis for analyzing sentences as intrinsically mutable objects. In order to maintain talk relevant participation structures organizing the mutual interaction of speaker and hearer sentences are reconstructed, even as they are being spoken, such that the talk in progress remains appropriate to the situation of the moment.

2.3. *A second solution to the problem of including alternative types of recipients within the same turn: Transforming the structure of the event being reported*

Solutions so far considered to the problem of including both an unknowing recipient and a knowing recipient within the same turn at talk all involved a change in the proposed social distribution of knowledge operative at the moment. In general this has been accomplished by transforming the original action to the unknowing recipient into one appropriate to a knowing recipient.

A turn will now be investigated in which the social distribution of knowledge remains constant while the event being reported is transformed as the speaker moves from one type of recipient to another.

The following sentence will be examined:

(8) G.26:8:30

John: I gave up smoking cigarettes one week ago today actually.

The actual production of this sentence is divided into two turns, separated by a recipient's "Yea:h,":

(8) G.26:8:30

John: I gave, I gave up smoking cigarettes::

Don: =Yeah:h,

(0.4)

John: l-uh: one-one week ago t'da:y. acshilly,

Despite the fact that the sentence is constructed in two turns, John's talk produces only a single coherent sentence. The manifest coherence of his utterances as a single sentence constitutes both an initial observation about their structure, and warrant for analyzing this talk as a single unit.

Within the coherence of this single unit it is, however, possible to locate subunits. In producing his talk, the speaker directs his gaze to three different recipients over three different sections of the sentence. Specifically, his gaze is directed to one recipient during "I gave, I gave up smoking cigarettes:", to a second during "l-uh: one-one week ago t'da:y", and finally to a third during "acshilly". More precisely:

(8) G.26:8:30

John: . . . , , (Don) , , , _____
I gave, I gave up smoking cigarettes: :

Don: = Yeah:h,
(0.4)

(Beth) _____ , , (Ann)

John: l-uh: one-one week ago t'da:y. acshilly,

In brief the sentence can be divided into three sections by plotting the gaze direction of the speaker.

An attempt will now be made to demonstrate that each of these sections is designed specifically for the recipient toward whom the speaker is gazing at the moment.

The first section of John's sentence, "I gave, I gave up smoking cigarettes:" is a member of the class of actions that propose that the speaker has knowledge of an event about which the recipient is ignorant. It would be inappropriate to announce to someone that one had given up smoking when that recipient already knew it.

Don and his wife Ann are dinner guests of John and his wife Beth. As someone who has not seen the speaker for some period of time, Don can be presumed to be unaware of recent events in John's life. He is thus an appropriate recipient to an action such as this.

However at least one other participant to the conversation would not be an appropriate recipient to such an action. Beth, the speaker's wife, has been living in the same house with him for the past week and would be presumed to know about such an event. Thus the event could not be reported to Beth in the same way in which it was reported to Don. Either the type of action would have to be changed to an action implying knowledge by the recipient about the event, or some aspect of the event that even a recipient having knowledge of the event could not be expected to know would have to be located and reported.

Such an hypothesis can be tested within this same sentence. For the next section of the sentence, "l-uh: one-one week ago t'da:y" John switches his gaze from Don to Beth:

(8) G.26:8:30

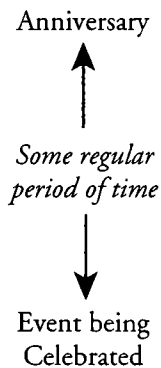
John: . . . , , (Don) , , , _____
 I gave, I gave up smoking cigarettes : :

Don: = Yeah:h,
 (0.4)

John: (Beth) _____
 l-uh: one-one week ago t'da:y.

With the addition of “l-uh: one-one week ago t'da:y” to his sentence John’s original announcement that he had given up smoking cigarettes is transformed into an announcement that “t’day” is an anniversary of that event. Such an anniversary is a new event that Beth needs to be presumed to know about.

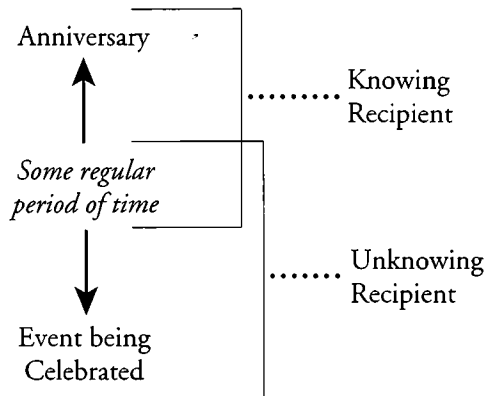
The structure of an anniversary makes it particularly appropriate as a solution to a problem such as that faced by John. An anniversary is constructed via the lamination of events at two separate moments in time, an original event which becomes the object of the celebration, and the anniversary itself. The two are related by occurrence of some regular period of time between them:



An anniversary is an appropriate object to call to the attention of someone who shared experience of the event celebrated by it with the speaker. Indeed, interest in the anniversary is contingent upon interest in the event being celebrated by it. For example, few other than a particular couple have any interest in the anniversary of their meeting. However, a party who knows of the original event need not know that a period of time appropriate for the location of an anniversary has passed. The laminated structure of the anniversary thus integrates items of common experience with novel information in a way particularly suited for the inclusion of a knowing recipient such as Beth in John’s utterance.

Such a laminated structure also maintains the relevance of this section of the sentence for the unknowing recipient. First, the original report to him is incorporated within it as the lowest layer of the lamination. Indeed the capacity to build a structure incorporating this item is what makes possible the inclusion of both classes of recipient with a single coherent sentence. Second, the report

of the anniversary continues to perform an action relevant to an unknowing recipient: the description of that original event. In particular it specifies the time at which it occurred, an item that an unknowing recipient would not be expected to know. Thus, though this section of the sentence is made appropriate to a new type of recipient, it maintains its relevance to its original recipient:



In essence each layer of the lamination locates an alternative type of recipient.

Further evidence that John is reshaping his sentence in order to make it appropriate to a new type of recipient is provided by the actual production of his utterance.

First, an alternative to the section of his sentence actually produced at this point is begun and abandoned:

(8) G.26:8:30

John: l-uh: one-one week ago t'da:y.

The word beginning “l”, plus the hesitation, “uh:”, plus the second word “one” correspond to what Jefferson (1974) has described as the Error Correction Format. The word begun by the initial fragment constitutes an alternative to the second word which corrects it. “Last week” and “last Monday” are possible alternatives to the section actually produced. These sections differ from the one eventually selected in that they do not construct action appropriate to a recipient having knowledge of the event they describe. The rejection of such alternatives provides further support for the argument that John, faced with the task of making his utterance appropriate to a new type of recipient, reshapes the event being described through the utterance.

Further evidence that the anniversary, which redesigns the sentence for its new recipient, was not projected as an element of the sentence from its beginning is provided by the speaker’s intonation, which locates surprise at the beginning of the section and places stress on the revelation of the anniversary.

(8) G.26:8:30

John: l-uh: one-one week ago t'da:y.

However when the next completion of the sentence arrives, Ann is still gazing at Beth. Thus, though his turn could come to an end at this point, John does not yet have the gaze of the proposed recipient toward whom he is gazing.

One of the resources considered earlier in this paper, the ability of the speaker to add a new section to his sentence as he is producing it, might provide John with the ability to bring his turn to completion without the impairment of not having a recipient. Specifically, if the length of the turn could be extended Ann might have the time to move her gaze from Beth to John.

Ann is provided time to bring her gaze to John through the addition of a new segment, the word “actually” to his sentence:

(8) G.26:8:30

John: (Beth) _____ . (Ann)
 l-uh: one-one week ago t'da:y. acshilly

Beth:

Ann: .(Beth) . . . (John)

A state of mutual orientation between speaker and hearer having been achieved, a no gap-no overlap transfer of the floor to the recipient obtained through this process occurs:

(8) G.26:8:30

John: I gave, I gave up smoking cigarettes::

Don: =Yeah:h,
 (0.4)

John: l-uh: one-on week ago t'da:y. acshilly,

Ann: Rilly? en y' quit fer good?

When John moves his gaze from Beth to Ann, the task of reconstructing his utterance so that it is made appropriate to his recipient of the moment is posed a second time. Like Don, but unlike Beth, Ann is presumed to be ignorant about the event being described by John. A constraint on the segment to be added to the sentence to provide for her inclusion is that it make the proposed recipient of the sentence an unknowing recipient.

“Acshilly” accomplishes this task. Through its addition the discovery of the anniversary is transformed into a report that in fact the event at issue did occur a week ago. The ability to recognize the discovered anniversary presupposes knowledge of when the event being celebrated occurred. In the report no such presumption is made. The recipient is told that the event at issue occurred a week ago and is not asked to recognize it. The addition of “acshilly” thus again reconstructs the emerging meaning of John’s sentence so that once more it becomes appropriate to its recipient of the moment.

In the course of its production the unfolding meaning of John’s sentence is reconstructed twice. The sentence eventually produced emerges as the product of a dynamic process of interaction between speaker and hearer as they mutually construct the turn at talk. The fact that the process of constructing John’s

utterance eventually produces a single coherent sentence, and that this sentence was apparently the sentence that was being constructed all along, are among the most striking features of this process.

3. Conclusion

Conversation is one of the most pervasive, as well as most intricate, forms of human social organization. The analysis of the turn at talk, and of conversation in general, provides an arena for the study in an integrated fashion of a diverse and important range of human social competence: the ability of participants to construct meaning and to create a coherent phenomenal world, their ability to produce language, and their ability to construct social order. Further, the vocal and nonverbal activities of the participants within the turn produce highly structured products such that specific interactive processes can be examined not only in detail, but also through time. For both theoretical and methodological reasons the analysis of conversation would thus seem to provide a crucial locus for the study of human social organization.

Such an integrated perspective might be not only valuable but necessary for the accurate description of the phenomena under analysis. For example, in traditional linguistics it has been assumed that the analysis of sentences can be performed upon examples isolated from the processes of interaction within which they naturally emerge. This has been stated as an explicit tenet by Chomsky (1965). The analysis presented here has argued, to the contrary, that the sentence actually produced in a particular turn at talk is determined by a process of interaction between speaker and hearer. Their collaborative work in constructing the turn systematically modifies the emerging structure of the sentence, adding to it, deleting from it, and changing its meaning. Insofar as this is the case the procedures utilized to construct sentences are, at least in part, interactive procedures.

References cited

- Argyle, M. and Cook, M.
1976 *Gaze and Mutual Gaze*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Atkinson, J. M. and Heritage, J. (eds.)
1984 *Structures of Social Action*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Button, G. and Lee, J. R. (eds.)
1987 *Talk and Social Organisation* Clevedon, England: Multilingual Matters.
- Chomsky, N.
1965 *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT-Press.
- Dittman, A. T. and Llewellyn, L. G.
1969 "Body Movement and Speech Rhythm in Social Conversation", *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 11, 98-106.
- Duncan, S., Jr. and Fiske, D. W.
1977 *Face-to-Face Interaction: Research, Methods, and Theory*. New York: Wiley.

- Garfinkel, H.
1967 *Studies in Ethnomethodology*. Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall.
- Goffman, E.
1963 *Behavior in Public Places: Notes on the Social Organization of Gathering*. New York: Free Press.
1967 *Interaction Ritual: Essays in Face to Face Behavior*. Garden City, New York: Doubleday.
1971 *Relations in Public: Microstudies of the Public Order*. New York: Harper and Row.
1974 *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience*. New York: Harper and Row.
1981 *Forms of Talk*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Goodwin, C.
1979 "The Interactive Construction of a Sentence in Natural Conversation", In Psathas, G. (eds.): *Everyday Language: Studies in Ethnomethodology*. New York: Irvington Publishers, 97–121.
1981 *Conversational Organization: Interaction Between Speakers and Hearers*. New York: Academic Press.
1987 "Forgetfulness as an Interactive Resource", *Social Psychology Quarterly* 50, No. 2, 115–130.
- Goodwin, C. and Heritage, J.
1990 "Conversation Analysis", *Annual Reviews of Anthropology* 19, 283–307.
- Goddwin, M. H.
1990 *He-Said-She-Said: Talk as Social Organization among Black Children*. Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press.
- Heath, C.
1986 *Body Movement and Speech in Medical Interaction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Heritage, J.
1984 *Garfinkel and Ethnomethodology*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
1989 "Current Developments in Conversation Analysis", in Roger, D. and Bull, P. (eds.): *Interdisciplinary Approaches to Interpersonal Communication*. Aavaon: Multilingual Matters.
- Jefferson, G.
1973 "A Case of Precision Timing in Ordinary Conversation: Overlapped Tag-Positioned Address Terms in Closing Sequences", *Semiotica* 9, 47–96.
1974 "Error Correction as an Interactional Resource", *Language in Society* 2, 181–199.
1979 "A Technique for Inviting Laughter and its Subsequent Acceptance/Declination", In Psathas, G. (eds.): *Everyday Language: Studies in Ethnomethodology*. New York: Irvington Publishers, 79–96.
1984 "On the Organization of Laughter in Talk About Troubles", In Atkinson, J. M. and Heritage, J. (eds.): *Structures of Social Action*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 346–369.
1987 "Exposed and Embedded Corrections", in Button, G. and Lee, J. R. E. (eds.): *Talk and Social Organisation*. Clevedon, England: Multilingual Matters Ltd., 86–100.
- Kendon, A.
1967 "Some Functions of Gaze-Direction in Social Interaction", *Acta Psychologica* 26, 22–63.
- Labov, W. and Fanshel, D.
1977 *Therapeutic Discourse: Psychotherapy as Conversation*. New York: Academic Press.
- Levinson, S. C.
1983 *Pragmatics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Lyons, J.
1969 *Introduction to Theoretical Linguistics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Moerman, M.
1988 *Talking Culture: Ethnography and Conversation Analysis*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

- Sacks, H.
 1974 "An Analysis of the Course of a Joke's Telling in Conversation", In Bauman, R. and Sherzer, J. (eds.): *Explorations in the Ethnography of Speaking*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
 1989 "Lectures 1964–1965 (edited by Gail Jefferson, Introduction/Memoir by Emanuel A. Schegloff)", *Human Studies* 12 (3–4), 1–408.
- Sacks, H., Schegloff, E. A. and Jefferson, G.
 1974 "A Simplest Systematics for the Organization of Turn-Taking for Conversation", *Language* 50, 696–735.
- Schefflen, A. E.
 1974 *How Behavior Means*. Garden City, New York: Doubleday.
- Schegloff, E. A.
 1968 "Sequencing in Conversational Openings", *American Anthropologist* 70, 1075–1095.
 1972 "Notes on a Conversational Practice: Formulating Place", In Sudnow, D. (eds.): *Studies in Social Interaction*. New York: Free Press, 75–119.
 1986 "The Routine as Achievement", *Human Studies* 9, 111–151.
 1988 "Presequences and Indirection: Applying Speech Act Theory to Ordinary Conversation", *Journal of Pragmatics* 12, 55–62.
- Schegloff, E. A., Jefferson, G. and Sacks, H.
 1977 "The Preference for Self-Correction in the Organization of Repair in Conversation", *Language* 53, 361–382.
- Schegloff, E. A. and Sacks, H.
 1973 "Opening Up Closing", *Semiotica* 8, 289–327.
- Simmel, G.
 1969 "Sociology of the Senses: Visual Interaction", In Park, R. E. and Burgess, W. (eds.): *Introduction to the Science of Sociology*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 356–361.
- Volosinov, V. N.
 1973 *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*. Translated by Ladislav Matejka and I. R. Titunik. New York: Seminar Press. (First Published 1929 and 1930).
- Yngve, V. H.
 1970 "On Getting a Word in Edgewise", In Campbell, M. A. (eds.): *Papers from the Sixth Regional Meeting, Chicago Linguistics Society*. Chicago: Department of Linguistics: University of Chicago, 567–578.