Retrospective and prospective orientation in the construction of argumentative moves*

CHARLES GOODWIN

Abstract

Analysis focuses on how utterances opposing another position in an argument are constructed with a simultaneous orientation to (a) the detailed structure of the prior utterance being opposed and (b) the future trajectories of action projected by that utterance, which the current utterance attempts to counter and intercept. Through such practices participants treat each other as cognitively complex, reflexive actors who are reshaping a contested, consequential social landscape through the choices they make as they build each next action. Data is drawn from a dispute between a father and his son who is just entering adolescence.

Keywords: argument; family; sequential organization; projection.

1.   Introduction

Utterances in conversation occupy a uniquely interstitial position in that they are simultaneously *context shaped* (that is, they are built in response to the frameworks of intelligibility and action created by the immediately prior utterance) and *context renewing*, in that each next utterance provides the contextual point of departure for the action(s) that will follow it (Heritage 1984: 18). Such dual orientation to both the particulars of what has just occurred, and the shaping of a consequential future, is particularly acute in argument. Consider the following (from M. H. Goodwin and Goodwin 1987: 219). Huey and Chopper are part of a group of neighborhood boys preparing for a sling-shot fight:

(1)   Huey: Why don't you get out my yard.
      Chopper: Why don't you **ma**ke me get out the yard.

Chopper's utterance is built by reusing the very words spoken by Huey while transforming them (through the addition of '**ma**ke me') so that the

action constructed by his opponent is now vividly countered. Opposition occurs not only on the level of action, but also with precise orientation to the detailed particulars of what was just said. The prior speaker's own words are turned against him. At the same time, the relevant next move projected by Huey's action (Chopper leaving) is not only rejected but replaced by a new context, in which the burden of action is shifted from Chopper to Huey. Chopper's utterance is thus built with close retrospective attention to the details of what was just said, and with prospective orientation to consequential future courses of action.

The present paper will build from and contribute to a growing body of literature on argument by describing how such retrospective and prospective horizons shape the construction of utterances in a single extended dispute. Particular attention will be paid to, first, how subsequent utterances are constructed by reusing materials provided by prior talk, and second, how actors reflexively design their talk so as to avoid future trajectories projected by their opponent's actions. Such analysis sheds light on both the range of structure and contingencies participants attend to as they build relevant next moves in an argument, and on their capacity to function as complex, reflexive actors who recognize and contest the constrained futures projected by their opponent's moves.

2. The dispute

The sequence to be examined occurred on a Saturday morning in mid-December as one of the parents in CELF Family 10 was driving his twin 12-year-old children to their final choir practice before the annual Advent concert at their church. In their SUV on the freeway, approximately ten minutes before reaching the church, the son, Ed, announces that he wants to quit choir. This leads to an extended discussion between father and son. Here are three excerpts:

```
(2)  21  Ed:    Da:ddy?
     22  Dad:   What ho ⌐n.
     23  Ed:           └I wanna quit choir.
     24              (1.1)
     25  Dad:   Honey we can talk ⌐about that.
     26  Ed:                      └But I'm not doing ano:ther-
     27              (0.5)
     28  Ed:    church thing, o:k:ay?
     29  Dad:   Honey we can talk abou ⌐t it.
     30  Ed:                           └(°no)
     31         Daddy, we're not talking about it (      ).
```

```
(3)   38   Ed:     Daddy, I don't wanna sing, today.=okay?
      39                 (0.5)
      40   Dad:    Sweetie,
      41                 (0.8)
      42   Dad:    You gotta go to rehears ⌈al.
      43   Ed:                            ⌊Da:ddy- °But-
      44           *hhh We've been doing it for so long en I'(h)m ti:red of it.=
      45           =I'm ⌈not singing-
      46   Dad:         ⌊If you don't sing ⌈much that's ok.
      47   Ed:                             ⌊*hhh
      48   Ed:     I'm not sing.
      49           En I'm not going up.
      50   Dad:    Honey, you have ⌈to go.
      51   Ed:                     ⌊I:- don't- have to do anything.
```

```
(4)   53   Dad:    Ed, ⌈it's-
      54   Ed:          ⌊Why do I have to have after school activities.=
      55           =I'm not gonna (.) have any more.
      56   Dad:    But honey:,
      57   Ed:     I'm no:t.
      58                 (0.5)
      59   Dad:    Toda:y you gotta ⌈go to choi:r.
      60   Ed:                      ⌊No:.
      61           No.
```

In this dispute Father insists that Ed should attend choir practice today (e.g., lines 42, 46, 50, 59) and tries to postpone until sometime in the future a discussion about whether or not Ed will continue in the choir (e.g., 'Honey we can talk about it' in lines 25 and 29). In return, Ed repetitively refuses to back down from his position and counters what Dad has just said. Thus in line 31 he replies that he will not 'talk about it', and in response to proposals by Father says that he won't sing or go to practice (lines 48 and 49) and that he won't go to choir (lines 60 and 61).

Each party holds on to his position until they actually reach the church. At that point they asked that the camera be turned off and talked alone together. When taping resumed ten and a half minutes later, a decision that Ed would not have to attend practice was finalized:

```
(5)   219  Dad:   You'll feel better leaving than staying? *hhh
      220  Ed:    Yes.
      221  Dad:   Cause sometimes:,
      222  Ed:    I'm not going anymore.
      223               (0.6)
```

```
224  Dad:    Sometimes you feel bad after the ⌈fact.
225  (Ed):                                     ⌊(    )
226  Dad:    But you  wanna to go home?
227  Ed:     Yes. I'm not going anymore.
228  Dad:    Okay.
```

Father, while indicating that he would prefer a different decision and showing concern for how Ed will feel (line 224), ultimately agrees that Ed will not have to go to choir practice now (line 228). After getting back into the car, Ed and his dad shopped together for something that his sister needed, and then went home. Later that evening, in a larger family discussion that included both parents, it was decided that Ed could withdraw from the choir. He sat in the audience at the concert the next day, while his sister sang.

3.   The nature of the dispute

In what way is it appropriate to describe what occurs here as an argument? The extended sequence in fact possesses many of the features that have been described as central to the organization of argument in prior research (Antaki 1994; Corsaro and Maynard 1996; Coulter 1990; Dersley and Wootton 2001; C. Goodwin and M. H. Goodwin 1990; M. H. Goodwin 1990; M. H. Goodwin and C. Goodwin 1987; Hutchby 1996; Sacks 1995). For example, opposition is visible in the way in which there is a marked absence of agreement with what the last speaker said in the turn being responded to (e.g, lines 25, 29, 31, 42, 46, 48, 50, 60). Instead, prior claims are met with counter-claims that demand their own reply, etc.

   However, what can accurately be described as an argument or dispute can in fact encompass a range of activities with quite different forms of organization. In light of this, it is relevant to note how this sequence differs structurally from many of the arguments described in earlier literature. First, the entire dispute, which lasts over fifteen minutes, remains focused on a single topic: whether or not the son will attend choir practice. Sustaining a single line of complaint over multiple turns is characteristic of some disputes (Dersley and Wootton 2000). However, many arguments are characterized by rapid movement from one topic to another (Dersley and Wootton 2001; C. Goodwin and M. H. Goodwin 1990; M. H. Goodwin 1990; Heritage and Sorjonen 1994; Schegloff 1990). One reason for this appears to be that, by moving to a new topic, a state of opposition can be sustained even when one party has no direct counter to what the

other has just said. The overall organization and integrity of the sequence is provided by the sustained production of oppositional moves, rather than by continuity in content or topic (C. Goodwin and M. H. Goodwin 1990; Schegloff 1990). Through such practices, participants can negotiate aspects of their relationship and mutual affective stance by bringing up multiple examples of an opponent's soiled character. Alternatively, by issuing a series of directives, one of which might be obeyed, one party can attempt to bring about a situation in which the other is visibly doing what the first tells him or her to do, and thus arguably is shown to be under the power of the first. In contrast to this, the present dispute is entirely and seriously focused on resolving a single contested issue.

Second, previous research on argument has drawn attention to not only the variable ways in which arguments can be ended, but also the problematic nature of what constitutes a resolution to a dispute, or indeed whether dispute resolution needs to occur at all. Thus M. H. Goodwin (1990: 156–157) notes that many disputes end simply when one party fails to tie to an opponent's move, without there being any clear display that the position being advanced by either party has won. Vuchinich (1990) describes a number of quite different ways in which arguments might be ended. Deresley and Wootton (2001) focus their analysis on sequences that end when one party unilaterally walks out on the other, an outcome that can be intimately associated 'with the creation of a more enduring impasse between people'. Indeed the outcome of one 'he-said-she-said' dispute described by M. H. Goodwin (1990) precipitated the ostracism of the defendant by her peers for a month and a half, a situation that almost led to her family moving out of the neighborhood.

In light of this spectrum of possibilities, it is perhaps noteworthy that the sequence being investigated here does reach a clear outcome: Son does not attend choir practice. In contrast to the situation described by Dersley and Wooton (one of their arguments also occurred in a car), an enduring impasse between the disputing parties does not occur. Both father and son are visibly shaken emotionally by the dispute, but they go off together at its conclusion.

Many disputes become the occasion for the venting of anger. Thus Dersley and Wootton (2001: 623) investigate sequences in which 'fault in the behavior of another person is made identifiable through specific acts grounded in egregious and generic tendencies' and can end with participants stomping off 'in an indignant or distraught state' (2001: 634). However, the present dispute, though heavily charged emotionally, is not suffused with anger, and does not become an occasion for denigrating the character of one's opponent (something that does happen in some other arguments in the CELF corpus). Both parties seem to work actively

to prevent this from happening and mutual respect is maintained throughout.

The temporal and spatial framing of the dispute might also contribute to the fact that a clear resolution is achieved here. When Father and children reach their destination, the church, the issue being contested will in some sense be settled: Son will either go into the church and attend practice, or he will not. Not all disputes have such a clear slot where the outcome must of necessity be rendered visible, and, moreover, in this case that slot is immediately adjacent to the dispute (it occurs as soon as the car with its moving argument reaches its destination) and can't be postponed.

There is, however, one way in which resolution of what Son is asking —that he quit choir—can in fact be delayed. Son might attend today's practice while the decision as to whether or not he will actually quit will be made later. This is in fact the position that Father consistently advocates throughout the argument, though Son repetitively opposes it by insisting that he will not attend today's practice. In some sense, the argument is about what its outcome might look like. The actual resolution incorporates parts of both parties' positions, with Son not going today, but the ultimate decision being delayed until further discussion has occurred.

One other quite striking feature of this dispute is the presence of many extended silences, one a minute and 25 seconds long, another 22 seconds long, and many, many more that are multiple seconds in length. It appears that these silences are tied to the setting where the dispute occurs. The participants are quite literally strapped into the same moving vehicle and Father (who is driving) and Son (who is sitting in the right back seat) do not have direct eye contact with other. Schegloff and Sacks' (1973: 324–325) proposal that parties co-present to each other may be in an 'ongoing state of incipient talk' seems quite relevant here though not adequate analytically. For example, one notable feature of these silences is the way in which topic continuity is preserved across them, indeed in a quite strong fashion. For example:

```
(6)   85   Ed:      I'm not going.=okay?
      86                 (1minute 25:02 seconds)
      87   Dad:     Eddie, would you feel better if I stayed?
```

Such continuity of action across quite extended lapses provides further demonstration of the way in which opposition is being actively sustained throughout this dispute.

In sum, the distinctive shape of this dispute differentiates it from many other arguments. This is visible in its monotopical focus, clear outcome,

and the affective alignment of the participants. It resembles a vernacular legal dispute in the way in which it is organized as sustained presentations of competing positions about a single clear choice that must be made about a specific event in the future.
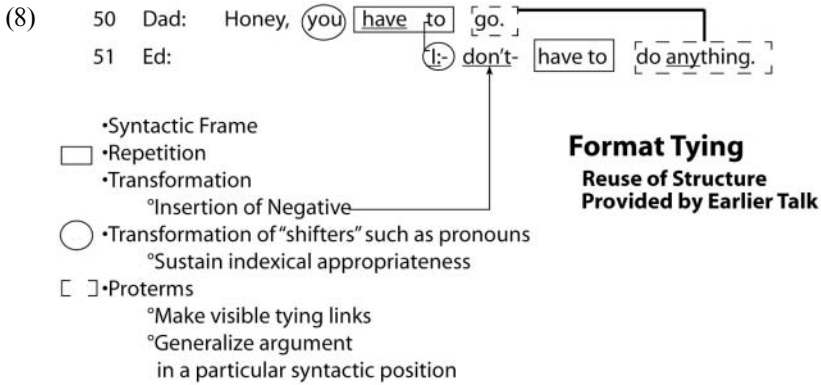
Some of the sequential practices used to build and sustain opposition in this dispute will now be investigated in more detail.

4.   Retrospective orientation: Format tying

For parties involved in the dispute, faced with the task of building, sustaining, and arguing for their positions, while countering the proposals of others, the detailed structure of the talk in progress is a far more relevant and consequential environment for action than the SUV they are sitting in, the freeway, and the landscape that is passing by. Treating language structure as an environment for action requires that one investigate how speakers explicitly attend to the talk that has already occurred as a resource for the organization of their own talk. In this dispute, subsequent speakers repetitively build utterances by using language structure that occurred in earlier talk, and especially the talk of their opponent. For example:

(7) 50 Dad: Honey, you <u>have</u> ⌈to go.
     51 Ed: ⌊<u>I:</u>- <u>don't</u>- have to   do <u>anything.</u>

As noted at the beginning of this paper, such format tying (M. H. Goodwin and Goodwin 1987) is central to the organization of argument. It provides a vivid way of explicitly marking an utterance as a counter to what the speaker's opponent has just said by reusing elements of that prior talk. On occasion it can also have something of the character of a karate move, a way of using your opponent's own actions against them. Note that the ability to analyze these deep structural ties between earlier and subsequent utterances is lost if one investigates how utterances are built by investigating single sentences as isolated self-contained wholes. The organization of format tying, and more generally the way in which next utterances are built through systematic operations on the structure of what the prior speaker has just said, will now be investigated in more detail.
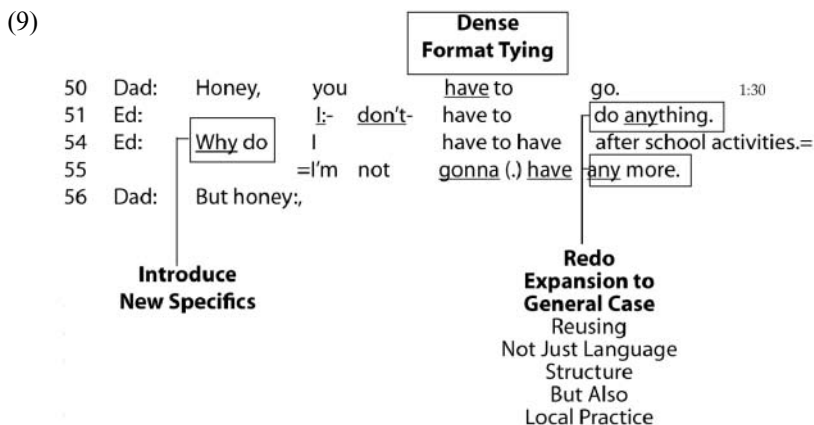
(8)   50   Dad: Honey, (you) | have to | go.
        51   Ed: (I:-) don't- | have to | do anything.

- •Syntactic Frame
- □ •Repetition
- •Transformation
     °Insertion of Negative
- ○ •Transformation of "shifters" such as pronouns
     °Sustain indexical appropriateness
- [ ] •Proterms
     °Make visible tying links
     °Generalize argument
      in a particular syntactic position

Format Tying
Reuse of Structure
Provided by Earlier Talk

In line 51, Ed first reuses the syntactic frame provided by line 50. Second, he repeats specific lexical items in that talk, 'have to'. However, third, he radically changes the force of 'have to' by inserting a negative before it ('I don't have to'). Through such transformation, he turns Father's action back on itself, using Father's own words to contradict what he just said. Fourth, the second utterance also transforms relevant deictic terms, such as pronouns, to reshape the subsequent utterance so that it remains appropriate to its current participation framework (e.g., where Ed was the addressee of line of 50, and thus correctly called 'you', he is now the speaker, 'I'). Fifth, Ed uses proterms such as 'do' to reference and tie back to something said in the prior utterance without actually repeating the lexical item used there. Despite its simplicity, such use of proterms provides a rhetorical tool of considerable power. Thus, by using general terms ('do anything', line 51) rather than the specifics talked about by Father ('go [to choir]', line 50), Ed is able to state a general refusal to be bound by the obligations that Dad is trying to impose. Such a move both substantially escalates the argument and provides some kind of reason for not doing what Father is asking, e.g., a generic refusal to be bound by such commands. By generalizing, Ed is able to transform the local dispute into a larger argument about autonomy, that is, whether he or his parents will decide what he is to do with his time.

   In building a rhetorically powerful counter to what Father has just said by reusing elements of what Father has just said, Ed is acting cognitively like one of Levi-Strauss's (1966 [1962]) *bricoleurs*, a handyman who fashions the tools he needs at the moment from whatever happens to be available in the local environment. Note if analysis of the language structure of line 51 examined it as a self-contained isolated sentence (e.g., the typical way it would be analyzed in formal linguistics) and divorced it from the sequential and linguistic context within which it emerges as a conse-

quential, indeed powerful action in the world, all of the processes de-
scribed here would be rendered invisible.

Such format tying is not an isolated occurrence. Consider what hap-
pens next:

(9)

		Dense **Format Tying**

50	Dad:	Honey,	you		have to	go.	1:30
51	Ed:		I:-	don't-	have to	do anything.	
54	Ed:	Why do	I		have to have	after school activities.=	
55			=I'm	not	gonna (.) have	any more.	
56	Dad:	But honey:,					

Introduce
New Specifics

Redo
Expansion to
General Case
Reusing
Not Just Language
Structure
But Also
Local Practice

In line 54, Ed again reuses the 'have to' lexical and syntactic structures
from his earlier talk, uses 'have' again in a different sense, removes the
negative from line 51 only to introduce it again in line 55, etc. However,
in addition to reusing language structure, he also again uses the practice
of expanding a particular into a general case. To do this, he begins line 54
'Why do I', a preface that enables him to introduce a new set of particu-
lars 'after school activities' as a complement to the 'have to' provided by
earlier structure. Then, by tying back to 'after school activities' with 'any
more' in line 55, he is able to match line 51's general claim that he does
not have to do anything, with a general refusal to have any more after-
school activities.

Lines 54 and 55 ('Why do I have to have after school activities.=I'm
not gonna have any more') can stand alone as a clarion call to rebellion
for a generation of early twenty-first–century middle-class children who
spend their 'free' time being chauffeured from one activity to another
(Lareau 2003). This utterance can thus be heard as a powerful, poetic
statement even when isolated from its local circumstances of production.
However, the details of its linguistic and rhetorical structure emerged as a
situated process within interaction in which elements of earlier talk were
progressively reused to build subsequent action.

Format tying is in fact quite pervasive in the exchange between Ed and
his father:

(10)

					Format Tying
38	Ed:	Daddy,	I don't	wanna	<u>si</u>ng,
					<u>to</u>day.=okay?
40	Dad:	Sweetie,	You	gotta go	to rehearsal.
45	Ed:		I'm not		singing-
46	Dad:		If you don't		sing much that's ok.
48	Ed:		I'm not		sing.
49		En	I'm not		**go**ing up.
50	Dad:	Honey,	you	<u>have</u> to	go.
51	Ed:		I:- <u>don't</u>-	have to	do <u>anything</u>.
54	Ed:	<u>Why</u> do	I	have to have	after school activities.=
55			=I'm not	<u>gonna</u> (.) <u>have</u>	<u>any</u> more.
56	Dad:	But honey:,			
57	Ed:		I'm <u>no:t</u>.		
58		(0.5)			
59	Dad:	Toda:y	you	gotta go	to choi:r.
60	Ed:		<u>No:</u>.		
61			<u>No.</u>		
62	Dad:		You	wanna	do things
					like go to <u>Target</u>
63	Ed:		<u>No.</u>		

Practices for transforming prior talk can give shape to larger stretches of discourse. For example, in line 49, Ed redoes his refusal to attend choir by changing 'sing' to 'going up'. With respect to the dispute at issue, the two moves are quite similar: in both, Ed is refusing to sing today (line 38) and attend rehearsal (go up to the church). However, the change in lexical items used leads to the go → do transformations that generalize his argument. Particular lexical items (e.g., 'sing' and its variants, 'go', 'gotta', various negatives, etc.) repetitively reoccur in dense local packages providing specific moments in the argument with particular forms of coherence.

Many of Father's utterances begin with an affectionate address term such as 'Sweetie' or 'Honey' (e.g., lines 40, 50, and 56 in Excerpt [10]). Kris Gutierrez (personal communication 2003) has found that such affectionate terms in fact frequently preface strong moves opposing the party being so addressed, and that is indeed what is found here.

Format tying does not operate only across adjacent utterances. Speakers can pick up resources provided at disparate places in the extended sequence to build an appropriate action:

(11)

					Format Tying
38	Ed:	Daddy,	I don't wanna		<u>si</u>ng,
					<u>to</u>day.=okay? 1:17
40	Dad:	Sweetie,	You	gotta go	to rehearsal.
45	Ed:		I'm not		singing-
46	Dad:		If you don't		sing much that's ok.
48	Ed:		I'm not		sing.
49		En	I'm not		**go**ing up.

```
50   Dad:   Honey,     you           have to     go.              1:30
51   Ed:               I:-   don't-   have to     do anything.
54   Ed:    Why do    I               have to have   after school activities.=
55                     =I'm   not    gonna (.) have  any more.
56   Dad:   But honey:,
57   Ed:                       I'm   no:t.
58                 (0.5)
59   Dad:   Toda:y    you           gotta go     to choi:r.
60   Ed:                      No:.
61                            No.
62   Dad:              You          wanna         do things
                                                  like go to Target  1:45
63   Ed:                      No.
```

Line 62 places in a new collocation the pronoun + 'wanna' structure from line 38, with 'do [things]' from line 51 to build a new action, one that again moves from the particular to the general.

The phenomenon of format tying provides some demonstration of how talk is not something ephemeral that disappears with the sound waves that carry it, but instead constitutes a dense environment and set of local resources for the construction of relevant, meaningful action. Language structure is something that participants not only explicitly attend to in detail, but also actively use and reshape to build the actions that constitute the events that make up their lives. Just as looking at the sentences spoken here in isolation would not adequately capture grammatical organization that extends across utterances and speakers, so also an attempt to describe what is happening in categorical terms, e.g., as father–son conflict, without paying attention to how language is used to build relevant action, would miss analyzing the practices the participants are using to position themselves toward each other as consequential actors, and how in so doing they build a shared cognitive, social, and moral world in concert with each other.

5.   Prospective orientation: Refusing to provide a sequentially relevant next action

The field of conversation analysis has provided extensive demonstration of how a first action creates a context in which a particular type of next action is expected to come next. Indeed, if it does not it can be seen as noticeably absent (Schegloff 1968). Repetitively, throughout the dispute between Ed and his Father, subsequent speakers refuse to provide the next action projected as relevant by what the prior speaker just said. In line 87, Father asks a question. Ed's next move in line 88 does not answer

this question (see Excerpt [12]). Instead, he states that he is not singing. In line 23, Ed says that he wants to quit choir. Instead of agreeing, disagreeing, or some other way opening a discussion about the issue Ed just raised, Father replies that they can talk about it. A similar process occurs in lines 148 and the next move that answers it in line 150:

(12)

Refusing to Provide a Sequentially Relevant Next Action   Marked by Participants

87	Dad:	Eddie, would you feel better if I stayed?	**Does Not**
88	Ed:	I'm no:t singing today, Daddy. ←	**Answer**
89		(3.4)	**Redoes**
90	Dad:	Honey, would you feel better if I stayed? ←	**Action**

23	Ed:	I wanna quit choir.	
24		(1.1)	**Refuse to Either**
29	Dad:	Honey we can talk abou ⌈t it. ←	**Agree or Disagree**
30	Ed:	⌊(°no)	**Objection to**
31		Daddy, we're not talking about it ←	**Refusal**

148	Ed:	I'm not singing on Christmas Eve.	
149		(2.8)	**Refuse to Either**
150	Dad:	Honey, we'll talk about it. ←	**Agree or Disagree**
151		(0.3)	
152	Ed:	°I'(h)m not, okay?	
153	Dad:	Jus not right no:w.	
154		(0.5)	**Objection to**
155	Ed:	I can talk when I wanna talk. ←	**Refusal**

It is not just the outside analyst who is finding a noticeable absence in the next moves these actions get. The participants themselves treat the reply given as defective and not providing what was asked for. Thus, after hearing Ed's answer in line 88, Father again asks the original question he first asked in line 87. In lines 30–31 and 155, Ed strongly objects to Father's replying that they can talk about what was just said.

Both parties to the dispute, Ed and his Father, refuse to provide moves requested by the other. Each party appears to be trying to do something different when they do this, and the actions of each will be examined in a moment. However, something that appears to be common in all cases is recognition that the prior action has created a structured context for subsequent action. If the subsequent speaker produces the kind of action that was projected as sequentially relevant next (for example, answering the question in line 87), then that party will in some way have accepted and ratified the constraints on subsequent action that the prior speaker attempted to invoke through his action. By refusing to make such a move, the subsequent speaker avoids ratifying and beginning to operate in a context with such structure.

We will begin by examining Father's refusals. In general, he proposes that they talk about the son's demands, but 'Jus not right now' (line 153). If this position is accepted by the son, it would have the immediate effect of (a) terminating the dispute and (b) would lead to the son attending practice today, while (c) leaving open the possibility that a future discussion could lead to his withdrawal from the choir. Clearly there are many reasons why Father might want to avoid having this dispute right now. First, this would resolve the immediate problem of what is going to happen when the car stops at the church. Second, even if the son eventually drops out of the choir, the face that the family publicly presents to the community will remain intact. Ed will attend this practice and most likely the concert the next day. Third, Father might prefer that such a dispute not occur while the family is being recorded. Indeed, when the car arrived at the church he asked the videographer to step out of the car while the final discussion with Ed took place, and this was not recorded or heard. He did not ask for filming to be stopped at any other time.

While all of this may be valid, during the dispute itself Father offers another reason that he treats as quite important. He argues that a decision of this importance requires the presence of not only Father and Ed but also Ed's other parent who is not present. Both of Ed's parents are male. The father currently present is addressed as Dad. Ed's other father is called Poppy:

(13) a. 103 Ed: I've been in the choir for like <u>five</u> years=
            104   =en I'm not going to be in it for anothe:r, second.
            105   (1.6)
            106 Dad: Sweetie, I don't think <u>now</u> is the time
            107   to have that conversa⌐tion.
            108 Ed: └<u>Yes</u> it <u>is</u>.=Okay.=
            109   =I am <u>not</u> go:ing.
            110 Dad: ┌Cause that's a conversation with Daddy <u>and</u> Poppy and you.┐

(13) b. 147 Ed: <u>Da:ddy,</u>
            148 Ed: I'm not singing on Christmas Eve.
            149   (2.8)
            150 Dad: <u>Honey,</u> we'll <u>talk</u> about it.
            151   (0.3)
            152 Ed: °I'(h)m <u>not,</u> okay?
            153 Dad: Jus not right <u>no:w.</u>
            154   (0.5)
            155 Ed: I can <u>talk</u> when I <u>wanna</u> talk.
            156   (1.8)
            157 Dad: ┌I'm <u>listening,</u> honey, but,
            158   I'm not gonna <u>talk</u> back.
            159   That's the kinda thing we have to talk <u>with</u> Poppy.┘

It was noted earlier that the dispute has characteristics of a vernacular political debate in which parties with very different positions must somehow come to an agreement that will lead to a common outcome. Father is arguing that the quorum necessary for such a discussion is not present. This is an important decision for the family and discussion of it must therefore include all relevant stakeholders. One crucial party to this process, the boy's other parent, is not present. It is therefore inappropriate to engage in the discussion that will decide this issue now. And indeed, though it was agreed when the car reached the church that Ed does not have to attend practice today, the larger discussion about whether or not Ed would continue with the choir occurred only later, that evening when Poppy was present. Father is refusing to provide the next move made relevant by the actions his son is performing because he has principled objections to participating at this moment, with this set of participants, in the discussion that would occur if he did so. By not making the requested next move, Father manages to avoid ratifying and participating in the context and course of action Ed's move proposes should now come into existence.

Ed also refuses to provide the kind of next actions made relevant by what Father says. His refusal seems designed to intercept a projected future that will include precisely the actions that Ed is stating he doesn't want to perform. For example, when Father says in line 46 'If you don't sing much that's ok', this presupposes that Ed will be doing at least some singing and thus that he will in fact attend practice. By answering that he is not singing and will not go up to the church (lines 48 and 49), Ed refuses to place himself in that future.

(14) **Visible Futures**

	Father's Moves Initiate a Line of Action that Delay Discussion and Presuppose Son Will Attend Choir Today		Refuse to Provide Relevant Next Action Son Repetitively Avoids Ratifying Father's Projected Future
21-23 Ed:	Da:ddy? I wanna quit choir.		
29 Dad:	→Honey we can talk abou⌜t it.		
30 Ed:	⌞(°no)		
31	Daddy, we're <u>not</u> <u>t</u>alking about it ( ).←		
45 Ed:	=I'm ⌜not singing-		
46 Dad:	→⌞If you don't sing much that's ok.		
48 Ed:	I'm not sing. ←		
49	En I'm not <u>g</u>oing up.←		
148 Ed:	I'm not singing on Christmas Eve.		
149	(2.8)		
150 Dad:	→Honey, we'll <u>t</u>alk about it.		
151	(0.3)		
152 Ed:	°I'(h)m <u>not</u>, okay? ←		

Ed's orientation to the future consequences of answering a question posed by Father is quite explicit in the following. Both agreeing and disagreeing with Father's question in line 87 buy into a future in which Ed will be attending practice. When Father then asks the question again, Ed finally answers, but immediately says that the answer is irrelevant. Ed's addition to his initial 'Yes' in which he says he will not in any event be singing (lines 92 and 93) displays his orientation to Father's question as presupposing the future being explicitly denied, one in which Ed would be going to practice:

(15) 87 Dad: Eddie, would you feel better if I stayed?
      88 Ed: I'm <u>no:t</u> singing today, Daddy.
      89   (3.4)
      90 Dad: Honey, would you feel <u>bet</u>ter if I stayed?

      91 Ed: | Ye:s.= | —**The Future Anticipated**
      92 | =But it doesn't really <u>ma</u>tter= | **by an Answer to**
      93 | =cause I'm not <u>sing</u>ing. | **Father's Action**
                                                          is Explicitly Noted
                                                          and Rejected

Both Father and Ed refuse to provide sequentially relevant next moves to the other's actions. By doing this, they avoid participating in, and thus ratifying and bringing about, visible futures projected by those actions that lie at the heart of their dispute. Father objects to having the discussion now because not all relevant participants are present. Ed refuses to participate in emerging lines of action that presuppose that he will in fact be attending choir practice. Both parties are thus using the past, and specifically the talk that has just occurred, to project a relevant future. Moreover, this future includes not just the immediate next action(s) but a larger horizon of future events in which they will be positioned as actors in specific and very consequential ways. They treat the future not as a set of hypothetical, imaginary events, but instead as something that is clearly visible as possibilities with a well-formed shape in the talk and action occurring at the moment, and, moreover, as something that will or will not be brought into existence by what they do now. Ed sustains his opposition for an extended sequence, and ultimately prevails in the argument, by refusing to get trapped into local contexts that instantiate the beginning of a path that will culminate in his attending practice. Both parties are thus taking into account not only their own position, but an analysis of what the other is attempting to do by initiating actions that shape subsequent context in significant ways. They act as cognitively complex, reflexive actors engaged in a debate in which, through the detailed organization of talk as action, they propose and intercept alternative consequential futures.

6.   Conclusion

Within the lives of these participants, the dispute is embedded within a range of more encompassing temporal, social, and cultural frameworks. For example, Ed is just entering adolescence, a stage of life that is deeply implicated in the developmental cycle of both the individual and the family. One of the classic issues posed in negotiating this transition is renegotiating the autonomy of the child vis-à-vis the parents, and this is in fact precisely the substance of the present dispute. Many societies have explicitly recognized the social and interactive nature of this process with rites of passage (Van Gennep 1960) that mark changes in social positioning for all parties implicated in a life change (parents as well as children). In our own society, family therapists argue that many of the problems that emerge for children at puberty, Ed's age, arise through patterns of interaction that include not only a child's difficulties in moving from the family to the school, peer group, and greater autonomy, but also from a parent's reluctance to give up that child. However, explicit rites of passage that mark for the community the social and developmental transition that occurs at puberty exist in modern Western society in only very attenuated forms, such as bar mitzvahs and confirmations. Both children and the adults who care for them are thus left to negotiate this transition on their own, and moreover within an unfolding flow of family life and interaction where the processes of separation that are occurring may not be explicitly marked, or even recognized.

The argument between Ed and his Father provides an example of how the issues involved in such transitions can suddenly emerge in the midst of mundane activities (driving to church on the freeway on a Saturday morning), posing for parent and child the difficult task of negotiating the straits they have entered without warning or help. Though they live in a society with impoverished ritual resources for dealing with such transitions, the choices they make, and the ways in which they treat each other, define them as moral actors, and begin to reshape both their identities toward each other and the emerging organization of the family (e.g., a young adolescent with greater voice and autonomy and a parent who chooses to exert less control over the details of how that child lives his life).

This is certainly most relevant. However, using only such a framework to explain or analyze the dispute not only ignores but renders invisible the rich ensemble of practices through which participants, faced with the task of working out such issues in mundane interaction, treat each other as complex reflexive actors as they repetitively attempt to place each other in consequential positions through detailed operations on the talk that

each other is producing. As agents contesting each other, these partici-
pants both recognize a past that provides both constraints and resources
that can be reshaped in powerful ways (including language structure), and
they attend to a visible, consequential future that they attempt to struc-
ture in specific ways, while intercepting the futures being proposed by
their interlocutor. The parties suddenly enmeshed in this act as cogni-
tively complex actors, with finely tuned retrospective and prospective
awareness, who are reshaping a contested, consequential social landscape
through the choices they make as they build each next action.

Appendix: Transcription conventions

<u>word</u>	Underlining indicates some form of emphasis, which may be signaled by changes in pitch and/or amplitude.
[	A left bracket marks the point at which the current talk is overlapped by other talk. Two speakers beginning to speak simultaneously are shown by a left bracket at the beginning of a line.
:	Colons indicate that the sound immediately preceding has been noticeably lengthened.
.	A period indicates a falling contour.
?	A question mark indicates a rising contour.
,	A comma indicates a falling–rising contour.
°	A degree sign indicates that talk it precedes is low in volume.
=	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.
(0.8)	Numbers in parentheses mark silences in seconds and tenths of seconds.
(.)	Denotes a micropause.
(words)	Material in parentheses indicates a hearing that the transcriber was uncertain about.
(h)	An *h* in parentheses indicates plosive aspiration, which could result from events such as breathiness, laughter, or crying.
-	A hyphen marks a sudden cut-off of the current sound.
*hhh	A series of *h*'s preceded by an asterisk marks an inbreath.

Notes

1. Such issues are also investigated in the work of Harvey Sacks (1995) on tying techniques, the analysis of cohesion by Halliday and Hasan (1976), and in Jack DuBois' current work on dialogic syntax ('Stance and consequences', paper presented at the 2002 Annual Meeting of the American Anthropological Association, 20–24 November, New Orleans), for example.

References

Antaki, C. (1994). *Explaining and Arguing: The Social Organisation of Accounts*. London: Sage.

Corsaro, W. A. and Maynard, D. W. (1996). Format Tying in discussion and argument among Italian and American children. In *Social Interaction, Social Context, and Language*, D. I. Slobin, J. Gerhardt, A. Kyratzis, and J. Guo (eds.), 157–174. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Coulter, J. (1990). Elementary properties of argument structure. In *Interaction Competence*, G. Psathas (ed.). Washington, DC: University Press of America.

Dersley, I. and Wootton, A. J. (2000). Observations about complaint sequences within antagonistic arguments. *Research on Language and Social Interaction* 33: 375–406.

—(2001). In the heat of the sequence: Interactional features preceding walkouts from argumentative talk. *Language in Society* 30: 611–638.

Goodwin, C. and Goodwin, M. H. (1990). Interstitial argument. In *Conflict Talk*, A. Grimshaw (ed.), 85–117. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Goodwin, M. H. (1990). *He-Said-She-Said: Talk as Social Organization among Black Children*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Goodwin, M. H. and Goodwin, C. (1987). Children's arguing. In *Language, Gender, and Sex in Comparative Perspective*, S. Philips, S. Steele, and C. Tanz (eds.), 200–248. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Halliday, M. A. K. and Hasan, R. (1976). *Cohesion in English*. London: Longman.

Heritage, J. (1984). *Garfinkel and Ethnomethodology*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Heritage, J. and Sorjonen, M.-L. (1994). Constituting and maintaining activities across sequences: And-prefacing as a feature of question design. *Language in Society* 23: 1–29.

Hutchby, I. (1996). *Confrontation Talk: Arguments, Asymmetries, and Power on Talk Radio*. Mahway, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Lareau, A. (2003). *Unequal Childhoods: Class, Race, and Family Life*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Lévi-Strauss, C. (1966 [1962]). *The Savage Mind*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Sacks, H. (1995). *Lectures on Conversation Vols. I and II*, G. Jefferson (ed.). Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Schegloff, E. A. (1968). Sequencing in conversational openings. *American Anthropologist* 70: 1075–1095.

—(1990). On the organization of sequences as a source of 'coherence' in talk-in-interaction. In *Conversational Organization and its Development*, B. Dorval (ed.), 51–77. Norwood, NJ: Ablex.

Schegloff, E. A. and Sacks, H. (1973). Opening up closings. *Semiotica* 8: 289–327.

Van Gennep, A. (1960). *The Rites of Passage*, M. B. Vizedom and G. L. Caffee (trans.). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Vuchinich, S. (1990). The sequential organization of closing in verbal family conflict. In *Conflict Talk: Sociolinguistic Investigations of Arguments in Conversations*, A. D. Grimshaw (ed.), 118–138. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Charles Goodwin's interests include video analysis of talk-in-interaction, grammar in context, cognition in the lived social world, gesture, gaze, and embodiment as interactively organized social practices, aphasia in discourse, language in the professions, the interaction of surgeons, and the ethnography of science. He has done fieldwork with families, chemists, and airline workers in the United States, oceanographers in the mouth of the Amazon, and archaeologists in the United States and Argentina. He is a Professor of Applied Linguistics at UCLA. Address for correspondence: Applied Linguistics, 3300 Rolfe Hall, UCLA, Los Angeles CA 90095-1531, USA ⟨cgoodwin@humnet.ucla.edu⟩.