DISCOURSE IN PROFESSIONAL AND EVERYDAY CULTURE
ON COMMUNICATION, 5

Selected papers from a seminar arranged by the Department of Communication Studies, on 30-31 May, 1988.
ABSTRACT


The papers deal in different ways with communication in institutional contexts. Two of the contributions are concerned with doctor-patient dialogues focussing, in the first instance of genetic counselling, on the use of incomplete speech and coping with emotions. In the second instance cases of discretion in psychiatric intake-interviews from the side of the doctor are understood as a phenomena where the paradoxical meaning structure of psychiatry is reproduced. The third paper on news interview interaction aims to see similarities and differences from "ordinary" conversation.

Linköping, 1989
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INTRODUCTION

On May 30-31, 1988, the fifth interdisciplinary seminar, "Communication on Communication", was arranged by the Department of Communication Studies in Linköping. These regular gatherings of scholars in the field of communications research usually focus on a limited number of subjects. This time we chose to have a main theme Professional culture and everyday culture, from which some sub-themes of relevance for the field of communications research could be derived. The sub-themes were selected so as to treat communicative aspects in or between the different cultures, for example such as:

* Discourse in institutional contexts
* The development and maintenance of different communicative traditions
* Encounters between different aesthetic subcultures.

During the course of the seminar, almost one hundred participants attended the lectures and the twenty presentations on the above mentioned subjects.

We hereby wish to thank all the participants who contributed to the success of our seminar. The paper presented by professor David Bleich (Rochester), "Homophobia and Sexism as Popular Values" will be published in a 1989 Spring issue of SPIEL (Siegener Periodicum der Empirischen Litteraturwissenschaft). Unfortunately we cannot publish all the papers that were presented at the seminar in one single volume but we want to acknowledge the great variety within the area of communications studies which were realized during the seminar.

In this volume we have chosen to publish three of the plenary lectures which were given on the first day of the seminar. They all contribute to the first mentioned sub-theme, of the seminar. Since this area of research is well represented in the Department of Communication Studies in Linköping, it is a pleasure hereby to manifest the international interest in the study of discourse in institutional settings. They also fit very well into the general theme of professional culture and everyday culture. The professionals in these papers have the roles of therapist, psychiatrist and news interviewer. Representatives from the everyday culture who enter the arena where the different cultures meet may be patient or interviewee. An underlying assumption of the three papers is that the general concepts of "professional" and "everyday" only could be analyzed through the "local" roles which the participants enters into. The need of establishing connections between the local practice and other strata of the socio-cultural context is especially dealt with in the paper by Bergmann.
The introductory historical perspective given by social psychologist **Ivana Markova** (Stirling) makes the German experimental psychology and linguistics of the 1880s, Humboldt, Paul, Delbrück and Wundt, look very up to date with contemporary pragmatics. Their shared emphasis on the importance of studying language as activity might turn the dominant 20th century perspective of language as structure, into a parenthesis. A consequence of studying language as activity is that it is always incomplete due to contextual factors. In this article Markova wants to argue for the relevance of understanding incompleteness of speech, not as a meaningless deviation from a language norm but as an inevitable outcome of regarding speech as contextualized activity. She uses 22 therapist-patient dialogues on genetic counselling to see how different varieties of incompleteness are realized. This incompleteness becomes especially frequent when the interlocutors are talking about emotional issues. Another argument by Markova is that mainstream pragmatics mainly have studied "ordinary" conversation which is non-problematic while discourse in institutional settings more often are problematic and thus more often contains incompletenesses.

Through close observation of 100 psychiatric intake interviews sociologist **Jörg R Bergmann** (Konstanz) noted that the doctors did not always ask questions directly, but rather indirectly. By telling ("information-eliciting tellings") something about themselves ("fishing") the doctors could make the patient talk. These devices are used as a sophisticated interview technique by the psychiatrists. The first part of Bergmann's article uses the methods of conversation analysis. In the second part the assumptions of the CA-method are deconstructed and Bergmann uses instead the continental method of rhetorical analysis. By this methodological change he can analyzes the talk by using the rhetorical figure of *litotes* and watch the psychiatric practice from the point of view of the ideological context to give a cultural diagnosis of psychiatry itself. Bergmann’s argument is that the element of discretion in psychiatric interviews must be understood both as a medical and moral phenomenon in which "the peculiar and paradoxical meaning structure of present day psychiatry is reproduced".

The final paper, on news interview interaction was presented at the seminar by sociologist **John Heritage** (UCLA). The paper is written jointly with David Greatbatch (Oxford). This contribution starts out with an overview of CA work on "ordinary" conversation but is more in line with later developments in this tradition towards analyzing "institutional talk". Still their paper is an authoritative example of conversation analysis as developed within ethnomethodology. One of their general aims is to point to some differences between "ordinary" and "institutional" talk. Drawing on some different empirical sources of British news interviews, their argument is that this type of interaction strives to resemble "ordinary" conversation.
but still it is different from that. What seems to be "ordinary" conversation is actually a turn-taking consisting of questions and answers and this is a result of journalistic ambition. News interview interaction resembles "ordinary" conversation, but there are some very different contextual constraints on them. Heritage and Greatbatch also argue that there are two main institutional characteristics in news interviews. The first is that the talk is produced for overhearers and the second that interviewers are constrained by the media-embedded ethics of a neutralistic stance. This is shown by some deviant cases where interlocutors actually violate these implicit norms.

Without the assistance of the staff and my colleagues at the Department of Communication Studies, neither the seminar nor this report would have materialized in any way. I would like to especially mention Elisabeth Kihlberg, Marianne Axelson and Lotta Strand for their valuable help and support.

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INCOMPLETENESS OF SPEECH AND COPING WITH
EMOTIONS IN THERAPIST-PATIENT DIALOGUES

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SPEECH AS A DEVELOPING ACTIVITY

In his highly acclaimed Introduction to his three volumed Über die Kawisprache auf der Insel Java, Wilhelm von Humboldt (1836-9) presented the point of view that language 'is not a product (ergon) but an activity (energeia)'. And because language is an activity, it must be studied as an activity, that is as a phenomenon that is in constant change and development, incomplete in all its forms, whether spoken or written. Language or speech, Humboldt maintained, is never a complete product because it is continuously created and re-created by the people who use it. It is a product of people, it develops only in social interaction and is forged by speaking. Since language is a developing activity it can be properly understood only in connected discourse rather than from separate and diverse elements of a discourse. This particular fact must be kept in mind as

the fundamental factor in all investigations, designed to penetrate into the living existentiality of language. Breaking it down into words and rules is but a lifeless tour de force based on scientific dismemberment (Humboldt, 1836-9, p 27).

At another place Humboldt says that under no circumstances should language be investigated 'like a dead plant' (p 73). 'Language and life are inseparable concepts' and we cannot learn anything about language from the artificial isolation of elements because language is an all embracing unity. It is vital in any attempt to analyse language that one bear in mind its essential unity.

Humboldt's work had a tremendous influence on whole generations of philologists and anthropologists whose aim has been to establish the science of language as a historical discipline. Thus, Müller (1861, pp 21-2) maintained that the science of language, commonly called comparative philology, should be based on the same principles as the physical sciences and should use the same methods as botany, geology, anatomy and other natural sciences. At the same time, in contrast to the physical sciences, as a historical discipline, the science of language should use proper historical methods. Paul (1886), too, emphasized the importance of the study of the
historical development of language. He pointed out that the conception of
development is absolutely alien to the exact sciences such as mathematics;
indeed, the conception of development 'seems irreconcilable with their
principles; and they stand in sharp antithesis to the historical sciences'
(Paul, ibid p xxii). Language is a human activity and must be studied as a
process in its development. Paul particularly questioned the cause of a
change, and he maintained that variability in language must be sought
through the study of normal linguistic activity. Any new usage in language
has its origin in the speaking and thinking individual. Just like Humboldt,
he argues that it is wrong to study grammar and meaning in isolation from
actual language use. A conception of language based on the idea of
something complete and consisting of all possible words and forms is an
unreal abstraction since language has no existence except in actual usage.

During the eighteen eighties a considerable shift occurred in the study of
language. While previous generations of philologists had been preoccupied
with the question of the origin of language, in the eighteen eighties the
students of language turned their attention to problems concerning actual
changes in already developed languages (Jespersen, 1922). The shift in
research interests led to shifts in methodology. While previous generations
were preoccupied with the study of ancient languages, the new generation
became aware of the importance of exploring the ways individuals
employed language in daily social intercourse and took new attitudes to the
study of living speech. Much greater stress than before was put on phonetics
and on the psychology of language, using the methods of observation of
actual everyday speech. Discussing this issue Jespersen (1922) mentioned
the work of Georg Gabelentz and Wilhelm Wundt as particularly important,
although he pointed out that in spite of the excellence of their work these
two researchers did not influence the further course of the study of language
so much as their predecessors.

For Wundt the study of language was one aspect of folk psychology, and
folk psychology was 'in an important sense of the word, genetic psychology'
(Wundt, 1916, p 4). Just like Humboldt, Wundt emphasized the social origin
of language and its close relationship with thinking. Wundt's particular
contribution was that he turned attention to the study of actual social
interaction and, in particular, to the analysis of gesture-language both in
primitive society and in the 'deaf and dumb'. Wundt's view of language
reminds one of Humboldt for whom, too, speech was not just the product of
the speech organs but an expression of a person's whole activity,
accompanied by facial expression and by gestures of hands: 'speech thus
wishes to be associated with everything that designates the humanity of
man' (Humboldt, 1836-9, p 35). Among those who were influenced by
Wundt's conception of language was Delbrück, who, in his Grundfragen der
Sprachforschung (1901), evaluated Wundt's contribution to the study of
language alongside that of Humboldt. Like Steinthal and Paul, Delbrück emphasized that Wundt’s approach to the history of language had been through psychology, which added a totally new dimension to it. Wundt’s influence on Delbrück’s own work is indicated in the sub-title to his book: ‘mit Rücksicht auf W. Wundts Sprachpsychologie erörtert’. Delbrück particularly pointed to Wundt’s gesture-language, both in its natural and artistic contexts.

All of these eighteenth and nineteenth century studies of language were based on the assumption that language is incomplete in the sense that it is an activity that develops continuously through every act of its use; that, consequently, it can be understood only by studying it as an activity; and that the meanings of messages are jointly constructed by the participants in the process of interaction. These assumptions clearly imply that the study of meaning, including semantic analysis, can only properly be studied through the process of interpersonal communication.

It remains a historical curiosity that although the basis for the study of speech as a developing and dynamic activity was established in the above work it has not been followed up in the twentieth century. Quite paradoxically, semantic analysis, as developed in the nineteen sixties within linguistics and psycholinguistics, was based on the a-developmental and static framework of Cartesian philosophy (Linell, 1982; Markova, 1982). Just as it has been assumed that words have precise meanings that can be decomposed into elementary semantic components, so sentences, too, have been analysed in separation from interpersonal communication. It has been completeness that has become the basic presupposition for the study of language.

Completeness and incompleteness of speech

There are two main meanings of the expression ‘incompleteness of language and speech’. First, language/speech is incomplete in the sense that it continuously develops throughout the history of mankind. Its potential to develop presents itself in every single speech action. Therefore, in every speech action the individual contributes something to the development of language as a whole. Thus, although language is a relatively stable phenomenon that is in the permanent possession of people and passed from generation to generation, each speech action is unique. In this sense every speech action has both permanent and transient characteristics.

The second meaning of incompleteness is related to the dependence of language/speech on the social and linguistic context in which it is used. It is commonly recognized by students of language that ordinary speech and conversation rarely consists of well-formed sentences complying with
prescribed grammatical rules. Speech is context-dependent, and therefore speakers abbreviate their utterances, use ellipsis and do not finish what they have started saying. Indeed, it is an important aspect of communicative competence that speakers are sensitive towards the relationship between speech and its social context and constantly monitor their utterances. The social context comprises not only the physical aspects of the situation in which a conversation is carried out but also the interlocutors’ shared point of view and knowledge with respect to the subject of conversation and relevant previous utterances.

However, this commonly acknowledged phenomenon, that speech is mostly incomplete, has usually been ignored by the researchers. For example, the starting point of models of conversation based on speech act theory is a well-formed and fully-fledged sentence, pre-planned and produced by the speaker with the intention of fulfilling a particular goal. A clear definition of this position is given by Searle (1974) in his principle of expressibility, stating that everything that can be meant can be said. The principle of expressibility, Searle maintains, has the consequence that cases where the speaker does not say exactly what he means — the principal kinds of cases of which are nonliteralness, vagueness, ambiguity, and incompleteness — are not theoretically essential to linguistic communication (Searle, 1974, p 21).

The preoccupation of linguists with well-formed speech acts has also been noted by Lyons (1981), who pointed out that, in their studies of language, ambiguity is commonly described by philosophers and linguists as if it were of its nature pathological — something which stands in the way of clarity and precision.

Speech act theorists do not deny that in most usages speech is incomplete. However, for them incompleteness, abbreviation and indirectness of speech are phenomena to be explained in terms of complete and well-formed speech forms. The theory of speech acts implies that incomplete forms are, in principle, derived from complete speech acts by chains of inferences and that speakers use incomplete speech forms simply because complete forms are redundant. Therefore, incomplete forms of speech, according to speech act theory, do not pose any special theoretical problems.

It appears that it is for this reason that incompleteness of language has not been given any systematic attention and is rarely discussed in linguistic textbooks. If discussed at all it is usually mentioned in the context of syntax as a matter of grammatical incompleteness (cf. e.g. Shopen, 1973, Allerton, 1975, Matthews, 1981). Such treatments of incompleteness have commonly been concerned with different categories of incomplete sentences,
utterances and other sentence-fragments, but, as Lyons (1968) pointed out, the distinction between grammatical and contextual completeness, fundamental to any theorizing about incomplete forms of language, traditionally has not been made. Social scientists concerned with language such as Bakhtin (1981), Vygotsky (1962) and Rommetveit (1974) have pointed out that speakers use full sentences usually when their personal relationship are distant and formal, whilst ellipsis, on the other hand, is used under conditions of mutual understanding. And Labov and Fanshel (1977) presented an illuminating analysis of the embeddedness of speech acts in their social context, showing that the assumptions of what is said can be expanded almost indefinitely. However, in spite of these isolated cases recognizing the important role that incomplete forms of language play in social relationships, there have not, to the best of my knowledge, been any systematic studies in this area either by psycholinguists or by social psychologists of language. There are thus two basic meanings of the expression ‘incompleteness of speech’, referring either to developmental or to contextual incompleteness, although it is often difficult to distinguish between them. In this paper I shall be concerned with both of these meanings and I shall argue that the study of incompleteness of speech deserves more attention than it has attracted so far. Although in some cases incomplete sentences and utterances can be derived from the complete ones, it is certainly not the norm. Moreover, the concept of context-dependency of speech itself requires clarification. Speech and its social context can be interdependent in a variety of ways, and thus context-dependency may refer to different kinds of phenomena. The phenomenon of context-dependency on which I shall focus in this paper is that of mutuality between the speaker and the listener in therapeutic dialogues. While in some situations participants in conversation may abbreviate their speech because they assume a mutually shared point of view about the issue in question, in other cases they may abbreviate their speech in an attempt to cope with an assumed lack of such a mutually shared point of view.

Dialogues between patients and therapists

In order to develop my arguments explaining certain characteristics of incompleteness of speech I shall present some data and examples from interviews between patients suffering from one of two chronic genetic disorders, either haemophilia or polycystic disease of the kidney, and their therapists. Altogether, data were collected from 22 dialogues between patients and therapists, 7 of the patients suffering from haemophilia, and 15 from polycystic disease of the kidney. The purpose of these dialogues was to discuss with these patients their views about the desirability of raising
certain issues with sufferers from these conditions in the course of genetic counselling. These issues included the advantages and disadvantages of testing those who might have inherited the disease, the screening of relatives, the possibility of adoption rather than having one's own children, fostering, voluntary childlessness, sterilization and artificial insemination by donor. Some of these issues appeared to be very threatening for some patients and they elevated their emotions quite highly, while other issues did not pose such a threat and therapists and patients discussed their attitudes towards the issue in question in a relaxed manner.

Briefly, the following are the main characteristics of the genetic disorders in question. Hæmophilia is a sex-linked recessive disorder of blood clotting. This means that the mother carries a defective gene on one of her sex chromosomes and that there is a 50 percent chance that any of her sons will be affected by the disease and a 50 percent chance that any of her daughters will become a carrier of the disease. None of the sons of a hæmophilic male will suffer from the disease but all of his daughters will be carriers, by inheriting the defective sex chromosome from their fathers. The main problem of people with hæmophilia are bleeding into joints and muscles, and the most life-threatening are intra-cranial bleedings that are responsible for about 50 percent of deaths due to hæmophilia. In the last twenty years the problems of patients with hæmophilia have been considerably reduced with the improvement of their treatment. Unfortunately, with the emergence of AIDS, patients with hæmophilia, as recipients of blood products, have become one of the risk groups for HIV infection. This problem, though, has been resolved with the screening for blood donation and with heat-treatment of blood products required for treatment of hæmophilia. In contrast to hæmophilia, polycystic disease of the kidney is a dominant genetic disorder, which means that there is a 50 percent chance that any child of a patient with this disease, whether male or female, will be affected by the disease. The disorder manifests itself usually in the fourth decade of the sufferer's life by generally declining health, high blood pressure, pain and tiredness. Renal failure is due to cysts that are formed in the kidney and it occurs usually in the fifth decade although sometimes much earlier, eventually leading to maintenance dialysis and transplantation. By this time the affected person will have had children and they will have inherited the disorder, although it may not yet have been detected. The primary way to prevent occurrence is, at an early age, to identify individuals who carry the abnormal gene and to offer genetic counselling to all relatives in the hope that they will decide to reduce their fertility.

Although the main purpose of our interviews was to discover patients' views on the question of the prevention of the disease and on the
alternatives to having one's own children, another aim was to identify in speech different strategies of coping with emotional issues provoked by such discussions. Incomplete forms of speech have played an important role in this respect, and in our analysis we focused on two forms of incomplete speech as strategies of coping with emotionally loaded issues, namely unfinished sentences and semantic indeterminacy.

Unfinished sentences

Traditionally, the most common type of unfinished sentence has been ellipsis. Ellipsis is usually defined as an incomplete sentence in which those parts are omitted that are implied by the context in which the sentence appears (cf. e.g. Long, 1961). Although ellipsis has a long history in grammar and was discussed by Aristotle, there has been no agreement amongst linguists with respect to a precise definition of the term (Matthews, 1981). While Shopen (1973) and Allerton (1975) appear to consider that any sentence-fragment is an ellipsis, Lyons (1968, 1977) seems to restrict ellipsis to those kinds of sentence-fragments that are produced because a fully-fledged sentence would be redundant given the particular linguistic context. Thus a speaker may start saying something with certain linguistic intentions to his or her interlocutor. However, while talking the speaker may realize that the listener has already decoded the message he or she was about to deliver and so may stop talking, leaving the sentence unfinished. For example, 'Would you please...' may remain unfinished if the listener has already made a movement with his hand to pass the salt over to the speaker. Or a sentence may be contracted if the previous utterances provide the context, as in the following example:

A: How many children do you have?
B: Two.
A: Two!
B: Two.

It thus appears that most linguists restrict ellipsis to cases where sentences are incomplete because of redundancy and thus limit it to situations in which the speaker has a clear linguistic intention before he or she starts talking. In fact for Quirk et al. (1972), for a sentence-fragment to be called ellipsis, the missing parts must be uniquely recoverable from the context. The question, then, is what status those sentences and utterances have that remain unfinished for reasons other than redundancy due to the context, or where it is not clear whether their incompleteness is due to redundancy. For example, the speaker may start saying something but in the process of talking may realize the unsuitability of what he or she was about to say, and
does not finish the sentence so as to not offend his or her counterpart or to avoid confrontation. Or, an unfinished sentence may be due to thinking aloud when the speaker tries to formulate for him or herself the problem in which he or she is involved; or a sentence may stay unfinished if the listener interrupts the speaker in an attempt to take up the floor instead; or the sentence may not be completed if emotions aroused for some reason disrupt the speaker's speech; and so on. At present no classification of unfinished forms of speech in conversations is available. Neither has there been any attempt to categorize or otherwise organize reasons for incompleteness. One of the problems is that any such categorization would have to consider seriously the reasons for incompleteness which, in itself, is a difficult task. No attempt to do such things will be made in this paper. Instead, I shall be concerned only with those forms of incompleteness that are due to the interlocutor's attempt to acknowledge their mutual consideration for the other's point of view. Therefore, I shall exclude incomplete forms of speech such as thinking aloud, various forms of egocentric talk that do not take into consideration the other participant in conversation, habitual vagueness, and so on. The purpose of the typology of reasons for unfinished sentences due to mutuality given below is not to make a rigid categorization of such reasons but, instead, to explore the possibility of understanding the incomplete forms of speech in conversation. In the above dialogues between therapists and patients, three main reasons for the use of unfinished sentences were identified independently by two judges on the basis of the context in which the given sentences appeared.

1. A SHARED POINT OF VIEW AND AN EXPRESSION OF CO-OPERATION

It is a basic characteristic of a dialogue that the speaker is listener-oriented and the listener is speaker-oriented (Rommetveit, 1974). The speaker constantly monitors his or her speech with respect to the listener, and the listener tries to decode, with anticipation, the speaker's message. This mutuality between the speaker and listener often results in incomplete utterances. For example:

a) **Therapist:** We said that we had a slight problem that we didn't know why you should be the only...

   **Patient:** member of the family
b)  P.: But I really would not go for fostering.
    T.: No, aha.
    P.: 'cos I think you'd get attached to a child and you've...
    T.: and then you've got to hand it back'
    P.: You've got to hand it back. With adoption, once you adopt...
    T.: that's it...
    P.: the child is yours..

In such cases, common in any conversation, incompleteness stems from the fact that the interlocutors share their presuppositions about the discussed topic, understand each other and jointly construct their sentences. A similar example of this kind, although expressed linguistically in a different manner, is the case where the speaker, while talking, is given repeated positive feedback or confirmation such as 'hmm', 'aha' 'sure', 'yes', and so on by the listener. For example:

a)  P.: I mean all things are relative. I'm not too well qualified to know...
    T.: Sure...
    P.: the degree of seriousness...
    T.: Sure...
    P.: of the condition...
    T.: Sure...

b)  P.: I think about that and I think it's something that...
    T.: Yes...
    P.: is a family decision, you know, your wife and yourself.
    T.: Mhmm..
    P.: You know...
    T.: Mhmm.

In this case, the feedback occurs either concurrently with the speaker's talk or the listener injects his or her positive feedback while the speaker pauses.

2. AN ATTEMPT TO BUILD A SHARED POINT OF VIEW

In this case, it is not taken for granted by interlocutors that they share their point of view but in the discussion they attempt to do so. Although the transcript of the conversation may be superficially similar to that in the former case, i.e. in the case of the shared point of view, here intonation often reveals that the speakers actually are not sure about their respective positions. For example:

a)  P.: all of this I am viewing on my own which I have to because I don't have...
    T.: the scope?
    P.: The scope and understanding of the problem of the disease across the community.
While in this case it was the listener who made the suggestion for completing the sentence, in another case it was the speaker who invited the listener to take up the floor by making a pause and keeping intonation up:

b) T: For some people...
P: It is a correct path through.
T: It is a delicate area.

In the next example the therapist confirmed to the patient that she shared with him his hesitation and recognized the complexity of the issue.

c) P: Well, I think that's a...
T: It's difficult, it's a difficult one.

3. AN ATTEMPT TO COPE WITH SITUATIONS WHEN THE POINT OF VIEW IS NOT SHARED

While in the previous examples the two participants intersubjectively decoded each other's message, in the following example the patient tried to free himself from the power of the therapist because he did not consider the therapist's point of view with respect to adoption to be an acceptable alternative to having his own children:

T: One shouldn't be ... shutting everything out - um - one of the possibilities would be to discuss with them adoption, the possibility of adoption, if that... was for them. Do you think that should be mentioned at all?
P: Well, immediately you point them to adoption you are closing the doors.
T: You're closing the doors... Yes...
P: Yar... n' that'
T: Yes... Mmm Like a...
P: I-I-I don't, I don't, I wouldn't, er, I wouldn't...
T: Wouldn't...
P: I wouldn't, no.

The participants used different strategies to cope with the situation. When the patient was asked whether the question of adoption should be raised in genetic counselling, there was a pause of four seconds. With the therapist's question the limitations of genetic disease became clear to him although nothing had been said about what these limitations are. It was the example of an alternative, i.e. of an adoption, that made it clear that it means not having one's own children. So he disputed the meaning of 'closing doors'. Both he and the therapist thought that childlessness closes doors for a person, but the patient did not agree that adoption opens any doors. So the patient did not refer to adoption as closing doors because nobody is forced to adopt, but he referred to the action of pointing patients to adoption as
closing the door. However, in fact, the therapist had not suggested pointing patients to adoption but discussing this as a possibility. The patient then started repeating himself and trailed off into 'n' that'. He saw that he was getting some support from the therapist and so tried to answer the question he thought the therapist had asked. He then took a very personal stance, as the repetition of 'I' shows.

The therapist, on her part, retreated to repetition of part of the patient's utterances as a strategy of coping. By repetition she gained time. Her strategy was to avoid provoking a confrontation, and she supported the patient in his denial of adoption as an opening of doors. She gave him some reinforcement and was about to give an explanatory example, perhaps to clarify the 'closing of doors', but was interrupted by the patient. She repeated the patient's words, more interested in giving him support than in clarifying the situation. Repetition was here a very important means of coping with raised emotions. Repetition consolidates what has been done in joint construction of meaning and provides time to catch one's breath. The issues raised in these dialogues, that is such different alternatives to having one's own children as adoption, fostering, sterilization and artificial insemination by donor, created a great deal of tension. Whenever a question came up that was not found as difficult as the previous one, repetition was used to release tension and to stabilize balance in the dialogue:

T: What about deciding to have no more children?
P: Well, I think that one's - I think that's an easier one
T: It's definitely a much easier one
T: Yes, it's easier to stop
P: That's right, that's right
T: Yes. If you've already got, yes.

It is to be hoped that these examples make it clear that a decision as to whether a sentence has not been completed because of redundancy and is to be called ellipsis according to the traditional criteria, cannot be decided only on the basis of the text. In order to make such decisions, a number of social psychological factors must be considered, and only then can linguistic analysis of such sentence-fragments reveal whether there are any specific linguistic characteristics of different types of such fragments.

**Semantic indeterminacy**

Such terms as 'semantic indeterminacy', 'vagueness' and 'overlapping of domains' all refer to the fact that words can apply to a variety of referents and that different words can apply to the same referents (Shopen 1973, Kooij, 1971). In addition, although for language to be a means of communication it is essential that there are conventions with respect to
which words and referents go together, every language user has his or her idiosyncratic understanding of the meaning of words, and this makes his or her use slightly different from everybody else's (Humboldt, 1836-9). It is only in the individual that language acquires its finite characteristics:

Nobody conceives in a given word exactly what his neighbour does, and the ever so slight variation skitters through the entire language like concentric ripples over the water. All understanding is simultaneously a noncomprehension, all agreement in ideas and emotions is at the same time a divergence. In the manner in which language is modified by each individual there is revealed, in contrast to its previously expounded potency, a power of man over it. (Humboldt, ibid, p. 43)

For example, although individuals speaking the same language name objects by the same word, their concepts are slightly different, e.g. in naming a horse 'a horse' everyone means the same kind of animal but each person's concept has variations based on the person's individual experience, imagination and intellectual capacity. Thus, although there are similarities in the way individuals form concepts, there are also important differences. Any linguistic investigation 'must recognize and respect this phenomenon of freedom, but it must also meticulously trace its limits' (ibid, p.43).

Thus, at one level users of language share common meanings that enable them to understand each other, and yet at another level each individual's meaning of a word possesses characteristics that make it different from everybody else's. It is the speakers' awareness of the overlap between these two domains that enables them to choose certain words rather than others according to their sensitivity towards the situation. There are at least two main reasons for semantic indeterminacy:

**1. REDUNDANCY AS A REASON FOR SEMANTIC INDETERMINACY**

Just as with a sentence, each word is inseparable from its linguistic and social context. Thus, if context specifies unambiguously the what of communication, the specific names of activities, persons, events, objects and processes can be substituted by means of deixis and anaphora such as 'it', 'that', 'she', 'her', and so on. Deixis and anaphora are therefore a means of simplifying speech and reducing redundancy:

T: Do you think we should mention this in the discussion?

P: I think, I think if you could get these people along, I think it would be a help.
In the above dialogue 'this' stands for the full phrase 'screening of your brothers and sisters'. 'These people' refers to the patient's brothers and sisters who are at risk of carrying the defective gene and thus transmitting it to the next generation.

2. COPING WITH EMOTIONS AS A REASON FOR SEMANTIC INDETERMINACY

Deixis and anaphora, however, do not just abbreviate speech that would otherwise be redundant. In a sense they are semantically empty, because they can be treated, if so desired, as referring to virtually anything. From the psychological point of view, such desemanticized words are less accountable, which is an important asset because in situations threatening confrontation, embarrassment or a breakdown of communication, their use may defuse the created tension. In a similar way, words with multiple referents are desemanticized and can be used to defuse tension. In the following example the therapist does not know how the patient will cope with what she is about to tell him:

T: The next thing is the screening of brothers and sisters, er-um, the childbearing age group that's the laterals, that's not, that would be in your case your brothers and sisters rather than your children. Er-um, some people here feel that it is important that everybody is um informed that this, that this condition exists and what the ramifications of it are. Do you think we should mention this in discussion?

This extract could be written more fully as follows:

The next item on the questionnaire concerns the question as to whether, in a genetic counselling session, the screening of brothers and sisters of childbearing age should be discussed. These are called laterals, and in your case they are your brothers and sisters rather than your children. Some of the doctors, that is, people with authority who work in this hospital, think that it is important that everybody who may have inherited adult polycystic kidney disease should be informed about the nature of this disorder and what having polycystic disease of the kidney entails. Let us consider how some of the desemanticized words in the above example can be filled with semantic content:

'some people' — i.e. people who know about the disease and are in authority, that is doctors.
'here' — in the hospital
'everybody is um informed'— surely not literally everybody but the counsellor is avoiding saying 'patients with polycystic disease of the kidney'
'condition' — a 'neutral' word preferred to 'polycystic disease of the kidney'
'exists' — surely not in vacuo but in people like the patient himself
The purpose of this example is not to make judgements as to whether the therapist could have raised the issue with the patient in a more effective way. The point I am making is that if one is uncertain about the other's views or attitudes the use of incomplete speech is a way out of the difficulty. The use of incomplete speech under ego-threatening and relationship-threatening situations is characterized, not by shared knowledge but by uncertainty of each other's knowledge, views and opinions. It is used because it is much less accountable than opinions. It is used because it is much less accountable than fully-fledged sentences and words whose meaning cannot be questioned. Thus, if in a conversation one uses a non-committal word such as 'mention' and the other participant reacts against it, it is not difficult for the speaker to retreat; 'I did not say 'discuss' or 'persuade' or 'assert', I only said 'mention'. If challenged, one can always deny the particular meaning of which one is being accused and offer a different interpretation. Using a vague utterance or a word with multiple meanings is a means of trying a message out on the other person; of expressing feeling that one does not want or does not have the courage to express openly, and even of expressing thoughts and feelings that one has not clarified for oneself.

**Reflexive and unreflexive characteristics of speech**

Students of the evolutionary nature of consciousness have argued that reflexive consciousness has developed because it is highly efficient in terms of adaptation and the survival of the species (Crook, 1980, Humphrey, 1983). To be aware of the other individual implies the possibility of responding to him or her as an individual and to his or her idiosyncratic characteristics. Responding to the other as an individual requires a kind of communication that is highly flexible. Flexibility and efficiency of communication appear to be particularly important for the co-operation and complex interaction that occurs in mutually interdependent individuals functioning in social groups (MacLean, 1973, Humphrey, 1983). A number of researchers claim that through the history of human civilization reflexive consciousness has undergone remarkable development. For example, historical analyses have
shown that different conceptions of the self and of the other have evolved in close relationship to cultural, societal, and personal values, to the level of education and literacy, and to the structure of the family and social organizations. Thus, particular cultural and economic conditions in Europe in the last four hundred years have given rise to a kind of self-consciousness that focuses on the self and its relationship to others in a way quite unfamiliar in non-western traditions. For example, while in the western conception the conflict between the self and others is considered essential to self-growth, in Japanese Confucianism the idea of harmony in social relationships and avoidance of conflict appears to be the major principle in the development of the individual's self- and other-awareness (DeVos, 1985).

Studies in child social development show that as the child grows older he or she acquires more complex forms of reflexive consciousness. Thus, empirical research has demonstrated the child's developing ability to be aware of and reflect on the feelings, thoughts, intentions and actions of others; to conceptualize his or her own and other selves; to be aware of him-or herself as an agent and to wish to be recognized as such by others (Markova, 1987a).

Human social development, however, is not just the development and practising of reflexive consciousness. We are born into an existing social world, into existing societal ways of seeing and understanding the world, and into accepted conventions and language. Much of the existing social reality we accept unreflexively, not realizing the effect of this commonly shared and accepted social reality upon ourselves. Indeed, as Moscovici has pointed out, the less aware we are of the influence of social reality upon ourselves, the greater its effect (Moscovici, 1984).

A child is born into society and learns its language both unreflexively and reflexively. Concerning the former, he or she learns the meanings of words and uses them as others do. Goffman (1968) in his analysis of stigma pointed out that we often use words such as 'cripple', "bastard", or 'moron' as a source of metaphor and imagery without giving a thought to their original meaning. We do not realize the perpetuating stigmatizing effect such words have on others so labelled. More generally, words and speech actions have diagnoses and prognoses built into their meanings.

Similarly, interlocutors follow rules and norms of conversation automatically and unreflexively and interpret them habitually (Gumperz, 1982). Only if a participant does not respond to such conversational rules or responds in ways that are not habitually adopted do the interlocutors become aware of the existence of such rules, which then become the focus of their attention. Discussing the relationship between reflexive and unreflexive processes with respect to non-problematic and problematic activities, Mead (1934) pointed out that reflexive consciousness comes into operation when an individual can no longer carry out automatized, i.e. non-
problematic activities. Reflexive consciousness arises when a person is faced with a problem and must consider the possibilities for its solution open to him or her on the basis of his or her past and likely future experience.

Conversational analysis in the last two decades has focused mostly on the study of relatively non-problematic ordinary conversation guided by regularities and organization of talk. These issues are important. If it were not for organization, structure and other common characteristics amongst different conversational activities, there would be hardly any possibility for generalization of findings and there would be no possibility of developing a scientific discipline with the study of conversation. These aspects of speech, however, because they are relatively stabilized, become automatized and conventionalized, and therefore often fall under the level of consciousness. This is the same as in the case of other activities; once we learn them we no longer need to focus attention on them and to think about them. And it is these stabilized, conventionalized and automatized aspects of speech that are characteristic of relatively non-problematic conversation and that have become the focus of most research. Non-problematic conversation, as Malinowski (1923) pointed out, is based on 'phatic communion', that is, much of what is said is said not in order to convey information, give commands, and ask questions but to establish a feeling of social solidarity and form a relationship with the other. Discussing similar issues Sapir (1921) compared language to a generator capable of producing power to run an elevator. Under such circumstances language becomes easily desemanticized (Weinreich, 1963). In other words, since language in ordinary conversation very often has primarily a phatic function, what is said is of less importance than the creation of the social solidarity that Malinowski was talking about.

In contrast to relatively non-problematic ordinary conversation, which is mostly conventionalized and desemanticized for the reasons given above, much of the institutional conversational activity concerned with solving problems has different characteristics. It is when we have a problem to solve in conversation that our speech and linguistic routines are broken and the meanings of words are reflected upon. Thus, in such a situation words are semanticized to their full capacity and the meaning that a word carries becomes tremendously important in determining the direction that a conversation takes. Even nuances in word-meaning may lead to misunderstanding, offence and distortion of what the other intended to convey, and therefore choosing one's word is of major importance. In fact, some dialogues, such as negotiations, interviews, interrogations and counselling are arranged precisely to resolve misunderstandings of a semantic nature. In order to cope with a problem that the speaker may, therefore, actively attempt either to desemanticize words or use words that
are semantically less loaded for the listener, such as, for example, as ‘some people’ instead of ‘patients with haemophilia’ and ‘mention’ rather than ‘discuss’ in genetic counselling. If challenged one can always deny the particular meaning of which one is being accused and offer a different interpretation. This approach also enables the speaker to decide backwards what he and she actually communicated. Discussing similar issues, Rommetveit (1974) referred to Kierkegaard’s 'living life forward and understanding it backwards' and to the work of the Norwegian writer Vesaas who wrote forward but left it to his readers to choose the level of which to read and understand his work. Incompleteness of speech thus directs our attention towards a living language in its development and change.

A three step model of development

Any dialogue is an activity in which each participant’s awareness of his or her own and of the other’s perspective is changed by every individual speech action. It cannot, therefore, be conceptualized in terms of a two-step model since a response by individual B to speech action by individual A is directed to a changed awareness of A. Thus we need a three step model (Markova 1987b). Using as an example Mead’s (1934) concept of ‘conversation of gestures’ one can map out a three-step model as follows: The first step, ab, for example a turn or an utterance, can be initiated by the first participant A. It then evokes a response, b(ab) from the interlocutor B and is aimed back at participant A. However, he or she reaches the A’s changed state of awareness, i.e. A₁. A has changed not only because of his or her reflexion on his or her own communicative action directed at B but also because of his or her reflexion on B’s response. A’s reflexion constitutes the step a₁b, which counts logically, though not necessarily temporally, as step three. A’s reflexion on his or her communicative action may involve a re-interpretation of what was originally intended. It is important that each turn is open both towards past turns and towards the future ones because the third step, as can be seen in figure 1, becomes then the first step of the next triad of steps. The assumptions of the three step model thus contradict the speech act analysis approach which is orientated only towards the future and assume clear intentions and planning of speech on the part of the speaker. Linell et al (1988) apply their own version of a three step model in the analysis of dyadic interaction.
Finally, one can consider the question of incomplete speech from yet another point of view. In his book *Thinking and Experience* (1953) H.H. Price, also, was concerned will full dress thinking on the one hand and with scrappy thinking on the other. And although, as he pointed out, scrappy thinking is sometimes due to habit and familiarity, scrappiness of our symbols cannot be explained entirely in this way. Such an explanation would imply that we first think about a subject matter in full dress symbols and then these symbols become abbreviated through habit. Price says:

> On the contrary when we do a new piece of thinking, as we all do on occasion, we certainly do not use full dress symbols, completely formulated sentences and paragraphs. We use them then least of all. The full dress stage, of complete verbal formulation comes later, if it ever does come. When one is doing the real work of thinking, thinking out an argument for the first time or actually composing a complicated narrative, one is farthest of all from full dress symbolization (Price, 1953, p.307).

Following this line of thought Price distinguishes three stages in which thinking proceeds: at the first stage, when we are thinking about something for the first time, one's ideas and symbols are sketchy and scrappy. Then, when the thought has become familiar, we formulate it in more or less full
dress symbols, whether privately or publicly. Indeed, the education process aims at precise formulations of thoughts and elaborated language. Finally, when the thought has become very familiar to us, or when we know that other people share the thought with us, we may become, once again, very scrappy and use shortened thought and speech. And, Price concludes, 'full dress symbolization, either in words or images, is the exception rather than the rule' (Price, ibid, p 308).

In conclusion, in this paper I have attempted the following: First, I have drawn attention to the dynamic and developmental conception of language and speech established by the eighteenth and nineteenth century researchers. Secondly, I have described some cases of incomplete forms of speech involving both problematic and non-problematic conversation. Thirdly, I have pointed to reasons for such incompleteness based on the mutuality between speaker and listener. Finally, I have referred to a three-step-model of development applicable to the study of language and speech. Detailed social psychological and linguistic analysis of dialogues are necessary in order to reveal the subtle relationships between language and its social context much emphasized by researchers in the last decade but not systematically explored. In this paper I have attempted, by examples, to indicate the direction in which such analyses could develop. Indeed, a proper study of language in its social context is, by definition, a study of its incompleteness and of its openness with respect to change and development.

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INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon that I will consider in my paper was first noticed in the course of working on tape recordings of psychiatric intake interviews which I collected in various mental hospitals in West Germany. In these interviews the psychiatrists' official work assignment was to decide upon the — voluntary or involuntary — hospitalization of a person as a mental patient on the basis of that person's observable behaviour during the interview. The psychiatric examination usually did not include any physical check-up or formal testing of the candidate patient; instead it consisted of talk, — talk which seemed to be organized into the well known series of pre-allocated 'questions' and 'answers'.

While studying these recorded and transcribed interviews I noticed that the psychiatrists regularly did not carry out their exploratory talk by interrogating the patients directly, but they rather choose more indirect forms of inquiry. To put this observation the other way round: Very often the candidate patient as the psychiatrist's recipient answered and gave information without being asked explicitly by the psychiatrist. This indirect way of exploration could roughly be described as the psychiatrist's method to get information not by asking but by telling the recipient something about him-/herself. An example of this indirect way of interrogation can be found in data segment (1), which comes from an intake interview in which a psychiatrist and a married couple are talking about the problem whether or not the wife, who is the candidate patient, should be committed to the mental hospital. The data segments contains the very beginning of that intake interview:
Dr. F. just finished a phone call with the medical doctor, who referred Mrs. B. to the mental hospital and turns now to Mrs. B.>

01 Dr. F. (I just) got the information, (---) (that you’re)
02 Mrs. B. not doing so well.
03 Dr. F. Is that correct?
04 Mrs. B. of Doctor Hollmann
05 Dr. F. I see
06 Mrs. B. but it isn’t mine
07 Dr. F. It isn’t your’s
08 Mrs. B. No:
09 Mr. B. I’m doing very well.

In this segment there occur two interrelated events which somehow immediately appear to be of interest. I shall deal only with one of them in my paper, and therefore I just mention the other which already has been analyzed in detail by Gail Jefferson (1981).

Working on that selfsame piece of talk Jefferson noticed a phenomenon which struck her as very odd. She noticed that in line 04 the interviewing psychiatrist seems to be soliciting a response (‘Is that correct?’), when, in fact, the recipient has already started to produce one in line 03 (‘Yea::h well that is the opinion...’). That means: A response is asked for despite of the fact that a response is already on its way. Jefferson called this apparently nasty phenomenon ‘Post-Response Pursuit of Response’, and in her paper she thoroughly analyzed this object and a range of related phenomena. So much for the second object.

The object I am concerned with precedes Jefferson’s object insofar as it might be asked, why in the first place Mrs. B., the doctor’s recipient, starts with her response at the point where she does. After all, the psychiatrist’s utterance —

01 Dr. F. (I just) got the information, (---) (that
02 you’re) not doing so well

— does not formulate a direct question; instead it includes a report to the recipient on how her personal state of affairs is seen by some other non-present party (‘Doctor Hollmann’). Why then does Mrs. B. start to produce a response to Dr. F.’s first utterance immediately upon its first possible completion? Doesn’t the continuation of doctor’s turn show, that his first utterance was a preparatory turn-part leading up to a question? So, why doesn’t she wait with her response? Could that simply be a precipitate reaction? Could it be just a quirk of this particular speaker? Just an idiosyncratic personal habit, of no sociological interest at all?
Or is it possible to identify in the doctor's utterance some sequential implications which allow or even oblige the recipient not to wait for a direct question to be added, but to respond to it right there and then? In that case the event observed should be produced in other situations and by other interlocutors, too, and it should occur with a certain kind of regularity. Mrs. B.'s response (in line 03) would not be precipitate, it would not be 'verrückt', ¹ but precisely timed and positioned.

The search for other instances, in which a recipient produces a response without having been directly asked for it, turned out to be not very difficult. Half a minute later in the same intake interview, from which segment (1) originated, the psychiatrist, who meanwhile talked for a short time to the intervening husband (cf. already line 10), turns back to Mrs. B. and the following exchange occurs:

(2) **[INTAKE: A-13:II:2/20 sec. later/Free translation]**

<Having told Mr. B. that he first wants to talk to his wife, Dr. F. now turns again to Mrs. B.>

31 Dr. F. <to Mr. B.> We've got time to talk about that
32 Mr. B. afterwards
33 Dr. F. <to Mrs. B. again> hhh okay u::h I mean I can see (from) your face that the:- (1.0) mood (-)
34 * Dr. F. apparently is not-ba d
35 * Mrs. B. hhh yea:h now let me tell you this.
36
37 Mrs. B. If you:-
38
39 Mrs. B. know-
40
41 Dr. F. God-
42
43 Mrs. B. is my father;
44
45
46
47
48 Dr. F. Hm-m,
49 Mrs. B. I am his child:.....

In this segment the doctor's utterance —

34 Dr. F. <to Mrs. B. again> hhh okay u::h I mean I can see (from) your face that the:- (1.0) mood (-)
35 * apparently is not-ba d
36 Mrs. B. hhh yea:h now let me tell

¹ The meaning of the German expression 'verrückt' is twofold: Literally it means 'dislocated', but its usual metaphorical sense is 'crazy'.
— neither asks the candidate patient directly, nor is it continued by a follow-up question. But just like the doctor's initiating move in segment (1) it nevertheless leads to an immediate response from the recipient (the immediacy of which can be taken from the onset of Mrs.B.'s inbreath). Retrospectively it is apparent that the psychiatrist's utterance in segment (1) did not succeed to elicit new information from the recipient. Its implicit assertion ('You are not doing so well') was disconfirmed by the recipient, who furthermore moved to a counterassertion ('I am not doing very well'). In segment (2) the psychiatrist has changed position and has adjusted himself to the candidate patient's version. Whereas he suggested in his first attempt that Mrs.B. is 'not doing so well', he now suggests that her 'mood apparently is not bad'. This — as it seems — opportunistically reshaped second attempt not only attains confirmation by the recipient but leads to an elaborate account of the reason for her extraordinary good disposition.

Exploring by 'fishing'

Holding against each other the psychiatrist's two initiating turns —

(I just) got the information, (--)
(that you're) not doing so well.

and—

<to Mrs.B. again> hh okay u::h I mean I can see (from) your face that the:-- (1.0) mood (-)
apparently is not ba.d

— it can be seen that they both have a number of features in common; for the moment I want to mention two of them:

- Both turns include a report to the recipient about the recipient, more specifically: a report to the recipient about her personal state of affairs, i.e., her state of health and her mood, respectively. With regard to these personal states of affairs the recipient can be seen to have first-hand knowledge.

- In both turns it is indicated that the speaker has only indirect knowledge, an outsider's knowledge of the referred-to facts. This is done by including in the utterance a description of the sources of his knowledge. In segment (2) reference is made to a non-present third party from whom the speaker says he 'just got the information'. In segment (2) the speaker makes mention of an observable part of the recipient's appearance ('can see from your face'), which provides the ground for his inference about her internal state ('mood').
The description of these two common features reveals that I am here dealing with an utterance format which not only occurs in psychiatric interviews and other interrogative contexts, but which is well known in everyday interaction, too. How such a telling of an experience may serve as an elicitor of information has already been analyzed in a paper by Anita Pomerantz (1980), which is entitled "Limited Access as a 'Fishing' Device". In her paper Pomerantz draws attention to instances like the following —

(3) [NB: II:2.-1/quoted from Pomerantz, 1980]

| 01 | B:  | Hello::,  |
| 02 | A:  | Hi:::  |
| 03 | B:  | Oh:hi:: 'ow are you Agne::s, |
| 04 | *A: | Fine. Yer line's been busy, |
| 05 | B:  | Yeuh my fu (hh)-hh my father's wife called me |
| 06 |   | .hh So when she calls me::; .hh I can always |
| 07 |   | talk fer a long time. Cuz she c'n afford it'n I |
| 08 |   | can't. hhhh heh .ehhhhhh |

— where a speaker simply by saying 'Yer line's been busy' may successfully attempt to have the recipient disclose the party she was talking to and the reason for talking such a long time. This manœuvre of getting an interactant to volunteer information has been called 'fishing' by Anita Pomerantz, and her suggestion is that these information-eliciting tellings operate with regard to certain knowledge constraints: A speaker, referring with an assertion to an event, about which he himself has only indirect knowledge, indicates that he has only 'limited access', but at the same time he claims that the recipient, given he is a subject-actor in that event, has direct knowledge and 'authoritative access' to it. In describing as a speaker the occassioning of my knowledge of an event, I am referring to an 'objective event', of which my report can only give an outsider's version or — to use Pomerantz' expression — a 'my side telling'. 'Telling 'my side' when the recipient is an object in the told experience is a speaker's device for casting the recipient into the position of speaking as a subject-actor in the referred-to event' (Pomerantz, 1980, p. 193).

It can now be easily seen that the transcribed segments from a psychiatric intake interview include two instances of 'fishing'. In both segments the doctor refers with an assertion to a personal state of affair (state of health, mood), to which he as an outside-observer has only limited access. In describing the occassioning of his restricted knowledge the doctor invites or proffers the candidate patient to present — so to speak: voluntarily — an authoritative version and an account of her personal state of affairs.

A search through the corpus of about 100 transcribed intake interviews provided a large collection of instances, in which psychiatrists do not
formulate direct questions but try to get whatever it is they might want to know from the candidate patients by information-eliciting tellings. In these instances a range of techniques can be found which a speaker may use for marking his restricted access to the events or circumstances he is focussing on.

One device a speaker may apply is to point out the specific derivative character of his knowledge. This can be accomplished by referring to a third party or a case file as originator of one's knowledge, instances of which may be found in segments (1) and (4):

(1)
01 Dr.F. (I just) got the information, (---) (that
02 you're)

(4:3) [INTAKE:A-13:II:7/Free translation]
11 Dr.F. Doctor Hollmann told me something like you were running across the street

Another way of showing the specific derivative character of one's knowledge would be to describe this knowledge as a product of one's observation or impression. This may be done by mentioning the process of perception itself, —

(2)
34 Dr.F. u::h I mean I can
35 see (from) your face that the: (1.0) mood (-)

—or by formulating the referred-to facts as an outward appearance (— as is the case in utterances like: 'You look a little bit nervous', or 'You sound kind of depressed').

A second device which a speaker may use to mark his restricted knowledge consists in pointing out the general uncertain character of this knowledge. Again there are several possibilities how that can be accomplished. In segment (2) —

(2)
34 Dr.F. <to Mrs.B. again> .hh okay u::h I mean I can
35 see (from) your face that the: (1.0) mood (-)
36 apparently is not bad

—we find an instance, where through the insertion of the qualifier 'apparently' an assertion of fact ('The mood is not bad') is turned into a statement of what seems to be the case (in contrast to a possible statement of what is the case). And in segment (4:2) —
Dr. F. and somehow also a behaviour seems to have occurred where you really- (-) uh acted a little bit peculiar.
Doctor Hollmann told me something like you were running across the street not so completely dressed or something like that.

— the speaker not only qualifies his assertion with 'somehow', but he also uses the phrase 'a behaviour seems to have occurred' and he furthermore finishes his utterance with the expression 'or something like that'. In all these instances the speaker is taking pains to indicate that his assertions rest on fragmentary and uncertain knowledge and could therefore be regarded only as possibly correct descriptions. Presenting his knowledge as fragmentary and uncertain may be seen as a speaker's method for inviting or seducing the recipient to deliver an authentic version, should he know better.

The usefulness of indirectness in the context of psychiatric exploration

Having described what may be called the technology of information-eliciting tellings the question remains why this device is so frequently used in the context of psychiatric exploration. At first sight the frequent occurrence of 'my side' tellings in intake interviews may appear strange since interviews and examinations usually are seen and described as speech-exchange systems, whose main feature is that, whatever is done there has to be done in the sequential environment of questions and answers. So why should a psychiatrist attempt to explore a candidate patient in an indirect, 'fishing' manner, given that all his questions will be treated as questions anyway?

My argument for the moment is that there are several structural reasons for the observable rich occurrence of information-eliciting tellings in psychiatric intake interviews. I shall describe two of them:

1) In carrying out an exploratory interview the psychiatrist faces a task and is provided with a resource which together facilitate if not predetermine the employment of 'my side' tellings. To describe the resource first: There are many sources from which the psychiatrist usually derives knowledge about the candidate patient well before the beginning of the intake interview: Phone calls with the referring doctor, with a social worker or with the
police, conversations with a member of the candidate patient's family as well as the letter of admission or the already existing patient's file provide the psychiatrist with a variety of information, which he may retrieve when he starts the interview with the candidate patient. In the course of an intake interview the psychiatrist's prior knowledge about the candidate patient is relevant insofar as it is a representative of all the voices and actions which accompanied the patient's psychiatric trajectory or were instrumental to it. This prior information are then supplemented by the psychiatrist's observations of the candidate patient's behaviour during the actual interview.

While this occasioned knowledge will provide outside versions of the case at hand, it is the psychiatrist's work task to get access to the candidate patient's view during the course of the exploratory interview. Instead of asking the candidate patient for his authentic version of an event, which he could then compare by himself with already known versions of other parties, the psychiatrist might as well use his prior information as an economical and efficient means for the elicitation of authoritative descriptions. Taken together, the psychiatrist's task of getting access to the candidate patient's view and his resource of being already equipped with external knowledge about him appear to be an extremely apt constellation for the employment of an utterance format, whose operating principle is to achieve just that type of task by using just this type of resource.

2) A second structural reason for the affinity of information-eliciting tellings and the context of exploratory talk can be found in segment (5):

(5) [INTAKE:B-15:5/Free translation]

Dr.D. is reading in the letter of admission and in the candidate patient's file>

01 Dr.D. Uh you've already been with us.
02 Mrs.P. Yes that right.
03 Mrs.P. Once.
04 Dr.D. Four times!
05 Mrs.P. Or four times.
06 Dr.D. Four times

In response to the telling 'Uh you've already been with us' the recipient does not simply produce a confirmation or disconfirmation, which may be seen and treated as an accountable withholding. Instead she 'voluntarily' discloses the precise number of her past admissions ('Once:'). In the ensuing course of talk the number of admissions she gave gets immediately rejected by the psychiatrist who is confronting her with quite another number of admissions, namely 'Four times'. By confirming this statement (line 06) the candidate patient implicitly confesses that she was caught lying. — evidence
of which may be found furthermore in the transition from her determined
‘Once:’ to a subdued ‘Or four times’.

This telling of a lie — whatever it’s particular motive may have been —
has as a general structural condition its placement after a ‘my side’ telling.
Casting the recipient into the position of someone who is invited to present
there and then an authoritative, true version may lead the recipient to
‘confess’, — and the general readiness for confessions after information-
eliciting tellings is indeed surprising. But the same feature may also lead
the recipient into temptation to tell — under the cloak of assigned authority
— an expectably successful lie. However, an information-eliciting telling
does not reveal what knowledge the speaker has beyond that which is
shown in the utterance itself. This is of course a general restriction for the
production of a lying response, since the danger of lie-detection becomes an
imponderable matter.

In the intake interview, from which segment (5) originated, the candidate
patient may have found evidence that Dr.D. does not have any knowledge of
the case at hand beyond that which is displayed in her telling. Dr.D’s
utterance starts with the turn-initial token ‘Uh’, which is a shortened
colloquial version of the German particle ‘ach’ and which is used to index
that its producer right at the moment, finally and surprisingly found
something out that he/she was searching for. Thus the token ‘Uh’ displays
as a kind of ‘success marker’ that the knowledge which is reflected in Dr.D’s
assertion is locally generated, not based on prior information, therefore
unsure and in need of confirmation. In this situation it may appear to be a
safe move for the candidate patient Mrs.P. to ‘volunteer’ the precise-but-
wrong number of her past admissions, thereby making her present contact
with a psychiatric institution a second slip instead of the fifth in a series of
commitments. But she was trapped.

I want to claim that information-eliciting tellings, given their
operational structure, can successfully be used as a lie-detecting machine
and are therefore highly suitable for exploratory interviews, examinations
and interrogations (e.g. police interrogations). The recipient is addressed as
someone, who has authoritative access, and with this local identity he may
be tempted to tell a profitable lie, if necessary. But the speaker who presents
himself as someone, who has limited access, may derive further knowledge
from a variety of other sources, — knowledge which enables him to doubt
the recipient’s supposedly authoritative version or even to reject it as a lie.

Methodological objections

Having described two structural conditions for the affinity of ‘my side’
tellings and psychiatric intake interviews, I will now stop treating my topic
in the way I did so far. I suspect that the analytic considerations, I offered, at least partly share some of the shortcomings which tend to occur, when conversation analysis is used to study institutional interaction. Let me shortly mention two methodological objections:

- Simply identifying utterances as instances of 'my side' tellings is a way of proceeding which is governed by a peculiar type of logic which is characteristic for legal action and which may be called the 'logic of subsumption' (to use an expression from the German sociologist Ulrich Oevermann). This expression denominates a way of proceeding in which events in the social world a priori are sorted out and arranged under aspects of general, pre-constructed concepts. No attention is paid to the question, how the structure of a concrete social object is reproduced in and through the course of action.

- In connection with this logic of subsumption there occurs a second shortcoming, observable at least in German sociology and linguistics, namely the tendency towards — what might be called — the 'Balesianization' of conversation analysis (— if you forgive this horrible German expression). I mean to describe with this term the process in which the concepts, which have been introduced and developed in conversation analysis, lose their processual, 'local production' character and gets more and more treated like Robert Bales' system of categories, i.e. they get treated canonically and are used with the aim of determining the distribution of prespecified conversational objects in various social settings.

It is my impression that the analysis of interaction in task oriented, formal organisations to be worthwhile and rewarding in major parts depends on the skill to avoid just these shortcomings. But that is not an easy task; there are no recipes which guarantee success. The shortcomings may sneak in at every point, and I think their effect can still be found in the previous part of my paper. For example, in talking about the 'affinity' of information-eliciting tellings and exploratory interviews I might be heard as treating both objects as independent entities, whose co-variation is at issue. Another example: Starting with the identification of a clear-cut conversational object, the 'my side' telling, may have the implication, that the psychiatric intake interview as the interactional context gets minimized to the size of a marginal condition for the application of conversational norms.

These self-critical considerations, suicidal as they may be, nevertheless induce me to take a second run. The leading question for this second attempt will be: Is it possible to identify and describe features of the
interaction, which are locally produced in the sense, that they are the result of the interactant’s analysis of and orientation to the context, which simultaneously is reproduced in and through their actions?

**Descriptive practices (I): ‘Litotes’ formulations**

To answer this question, I go back again to the already well-known instances of information-eliciting tellings in the first two segments, but now with the aim to find out whether these two explorative utterances —

'\(\text{[I just] got the information, (---)}\)
\(\text{(that you're) not doing so well.}\)

and

'I mean I can see (from) your face
that the:-- (1.0) mood (-) apparently is not bad.'

— have some other significant features in common, which make it possible to analyze these instances of psychiatric interaction as instances of psychiatric interaction. A not yet mentioned, but salient feature of these two utterances is the following: they both describe what they tell to the recipient, by using a certain rhetorical form, which in classical rhetorics is called *litotes*. The *litotes* describes the object it is referring to, not directly, but through the negation of the opposite. So in segment (1) Dr.F. uses the expression ‘not so well’ instead of the possible *verbum proprium* ‘bad’, and in segment (2) he tells the candidate patient that her mood apparently is ‘not bad’, where he could have said instead ‘good’ or ‘excellent’.

The *litotes* is quite frequently used by psychiatrists within the intake interviews, — at least frequently enough to pose the question, what this rhetorical figure is doing there. E.g.:

(4:1)

01  Dr.F.  Okay. d.hh there are obviously- (1.0) your
02  husband is not (-) of the same opinion as
03  you and h

(4:3)

12  Dr.F.  you were running across the street not so
13  completely dressed or something like that,

Even after the reading of various rhetorical textbooks it is still ‘not very clear’ to me what the meaning of the rhetorical figure *litotes* consists of. Let me offer the following considerations:
The first accomplishment of the element of negation in the *litotes* figure is twofold: On the one hand the negation ensures that an indefinite reference occur at the functional slot in which a definite reference is due; on the other hand it provides for the possibility, that the ongoing interaction can be continued without the actual production of a definite reference, which otherwise is a pre-requisite for such a continuation. That means: with the *litotes* one can go on talking without specifying what one is talking about.

Secondly, a speaker's avoidance of definite reference given precedence to his co-interactant insofar, as it is now up to him, to introduce the first definite descriptor. Take for example segment (4):

(4) [INTAKE:A-13:II:7/Free translation]

11 Dr.F. Doctor Hollmann told me something
12 like you were running across the street *not so* completely dressed or something like that,
13 Mrs.B. (h) yes: that's- I am a child of God=
14 = I am his child
15
16 Mrs.B. Does a- does=
17 = Do you have children Doctor Fisch-
18 er? [*Yes:
19 Dr.F. Yes at which age,
20 Mrs.B. uh around s-seven eight and eleven
21 Dr.F. yes and when they
22 Mrs.B. were little these children
23
24 Dr.F. Yes:
25 Mrs.B. didn't they sometimes run around *naked*
26 Dr.F. [t (hh) u (h)
27 Mrs.B. know that they must not do that.

In this segment Dr.F. uses in his information-eliciting telling (line 11-13) the *litotes* phrase 'not so completely dressed'. In her response to this 'fishing' Mrs.B., the candidate patient, then uses the term 'naked' (line 25) to describe the very same event, Dr.F. was referring to. And if one follows the ensuing talk, one can find in segment (6), a few seconds later —

(6) [INTAKE:A-13:II:9/15 sec later/Free translation]

01 Dr.F. So you ran- (-) like a child naked in the
02 (-) u:b stree-
03 Mrs.B. In the street?= I was in the
04 hall-way

— that now the psychiatrist uses this *verbum proprium*, too. So it seems to be the case, that a speaker, using the form of *litotes*, not only abstains from describing an object in direct terms, but he does so in the service of his
recipient insofar, as the recipient is invited and given the opportunity, to go first in properly denoting the referred-to object. Once the object is named by the recipient, the speaker can take over.²

Thirdly, this means, that a speaker who is referring to an object in the indefinite form of litotes displays herewith a certain kind of caution and defensiveness. The litotes presents the description it is used in as a cautious description. It avoids to preoccupy the proper naming of an object and leaves that instead with the recipient.

But even more: the avoidance of a proper reference form may imply that there are good reasons for such an avoidance, i.e: the not-naming of an object may be an accountable matter. In using a litotes a speaker may indicate that there is something ‘special’, something ‘peculiar’ in the referred-to object, which motivated the indirect way of its denomination. What that ‘special feature’ is, is left unclear in the description and has to be decided by the recipient.

It is evident from the features described so far that the litotes is a descriptive device which is typically used for the purpose of alluding or hinting. Referring to an object with the negation of the opposite is a way of dealing with presumably delicate, touchy or embarrassing matters, — where the delicacy of the matter is constituted by the very fact of talking about it allusively.

Alluding to a delicate issue can only be successful if the recipient correspondingly has the knowledge to decode this indirect way of reference. That is to say: The litotes works on the basis of shared knowledge, or more precisely: the litotes displays, that its producer has knowledge of something delicate, of which he presupposes that his recipient also has knowledge of. Therefore the litotes may be regarded as an ‘Intersubjectivity Invoking Device’.

Taken all my remarks together I want to claim that the rhetorical figure litotes is one of those methods, which are used to talk about an object in a discreet way. It clearly locates an object for the recipient, but it avoids to name it directly. I’ll come back to the issue of discretion shortly.

In closing my remarks on the issue at hand I want to re-introduce the fact, that all of the instances of litotes I am dealing with here, occur in the doctor’s information-eliciting tellings. This is relevant insofar as now a very stunning resemblance may be detected: The rhetorical figure litotes

² This may be seen as an instance of the (X,Y,Y) series of consecutive reference, which Gail Jefferson (1987) described as ‘embedded correction’. There seems to be a peculiar relation between this by-the-way form of correction and the litotes format insofar, as the litotes not only invites the recipient to substitute the first speaker’s ‘defensive’ description but it also makes the recipient expect that his replacement item will be accepted.
reproduces exactly the structure of the turn-type it is used in. In the same way an information-eliciting telling leaves the implicit question unformulated, the litotes leaves, what it is going to describe, unsaid. So, the speaker, i.e.: the psychiatrist not only avoids to directly ask for something, he also avoids to name that 'something' in proper terms.

**Descriptive practices (II): Mitigators and euphemistic descriptors**

The litotes is not the only descriptive practice which regularly occurs in the psychiatrists' explorative utterances. There are at least two other practices, which are of interest here but it is not possible to treat them at that point in a similar detailed way as the litotes. Some observations and remarks must suffice.

In addition to the litotes the psychiatrists' descriptions of an event, in which the candidate patient is a subject-actor, are very often interspersed with elements which may be grouped together as mitigators. Mitigators are descriptive elements which generally weaken a claim or diminish the directness or roughness of an assertion. Examples may be found in segments (4) or (7):

(4:2)
06 Dr.F. Lthe surrounding neither, and
07 somehow also a behaviour seems to have
08 occurred where you really- (-) uh acted a little
09 bit (-) peculiar.

(4:3)
11 Dr.F. L Doctor Hollmann told me something like
12 you were running across the street not so
13 completely dressed or something like that.

(7) [INTAKE:D-19:2/Free translation]
01 Dr.F. L You're kind of irritated a little bit?*
02 Mrs.W. *Pardon?
03 Dr.F. You're kind of irritated a little bit,
04 Mrs.W. l Yes because
05 I'm living there in a house with lunatics...

Here the psychiatrist does not say to the candidate patient, that she acted peculiar, that she ran not dressed or that she is kind of irritated, but that she acted 'a little bit' peculiar, that she 'was not so completely dressed' or that she is 'kind of irritated a little bit'. In the same manner as the litotes these mitigators operate in a defensive way thereby trying to prevent quite
early on a possible upcoming disagreement of the psychiatrist’s co-
interactant.
The third descriptive practice, which can be found in psychiatric
information-eliciting tellings, comes to the surface quite early in segment
(8):

(8) [INTAKE:A-6:10/Free translation]
<Dr.B. is reading the letter of referral>

01 Dr.B. Obviously you withdrew very much
02 (-)
03 recently
04 (-)
05 in your flat.
06 (---)
07 Mrs.K. 
08 Hu! That's private business. There is nothing
to talk about! =
09 =Withdraw.=I can do what I want.
10 (---)
11 Dr.B. Well here it says you had yourself -
12 Mrs.K. Say ing such things. =
13 Dr.B. =Here it says you had yourself barricaded
14 and (-) you we-re-
15 Mrs.K. (---)
16 Dr.B. you had simply disappeared in your flat
17 and had no longer shown up, and uh
18 (1.5 sec)
19 Dr.B. and were-
20 Mrs.K. I can do what I want,
21 that's really ridiculous what (=)
22

The interesting thing that happens in segment (8) is that Dr.B. delivers
shortly after the other two different descriptions of the event he focusses on.
One remarkable feature of these two descriptions is that they come along
with two different knowledge claims. The first description is introduced
with the qualifier 'obviously' (line 01), claiming thereby that the
description given is based on common knowledge without specific evidence.
The second description in contrast is connected with the remark 'here it
says' (line 11/13), which makes reference to the candidate patient’s case
record and which claims officially confirmed validity of the second
version. With this transition Dr.B. can be seen to upgrade the
authoritativeness of his knowledge.
In connection with the change of knowledge claims the description of the
referred-to event itself is substituted in the psychiatrist’s second
formulation. Whereas in the first version (line 01: 'you withdrew very
much') the referred-to event is described as a strange-but-nevertheless-
possibly-normal-and-understandable event, the second formulation (line
13: 'you had yourself barricaded') rephrases the same event as a
documented-bizarre-and-crazy behaviour. This transition exhibits that the speaker *withheld* in his first telling a description which is (or would have been) much more offensive and embarrassing for the recipient than the one, which was actually used. Thus, the first telling can retrospectively be seen as one which is built on — what I want to call — a ‘euphemistic descriptor’. In all cases, in which the actually used descriptor is not substituted in the subsequent course of talk by an evidently less sympathetic descriptor it is of course difficult to show, that it was euphemistic in character. Nevertheless, I would claim that many descriptors which can be found in the psychiatric information-eliciting tellings can be taken as at least slightly euphemistic.

Take for example segment (5) —

(5)

01 Dr.D. Uh you've already been with us.
02 Mrs.P. Is that right.
03 Once.

— where the phrase ‘with us’ could easily be substituted by some real derogatory descriptors.

Let me summarize now the last part of my paper: I have identified and laid out a group of observable descriptive practices which regularly occur in psychiatric information-eliciting tellings, namely: the rhetorical figure ‘litotes’, the range of ‘mitigating’ elements and the ‘euphemistic descriptors’. All three practices are used in the description of events and circumstances, in which the candidate patient is a subject-actor and which presumably were instrumental to the commitment of the candidate patient to the psychiatric institution. The common effect of these practices is, that the object, they are referring to, is described with discretion. So in my use the term ‘discretion’ means two things at the same time: It implies on the one hand that within psychiatric interviews the act of exploration is regularly done indirectly in the format of information-eliciting tellings. And it implies on the other hand, that the object of exploration is regularly described in these tellings in an indirect, cautious and euphemistic manner.

Given this pervasive character of discretion, — what is it doing and how is it related to the psychiatric locality of its occurrence? In answering these questions I am not interested in trying to find out what motivated the speaker to use these discreet forms of exploration. My way of proceeding is instead to take these elements of discretion reflexively as providing for an implicit account for their use. By describing something with caution and discretion, this ‘something’ is turned into a matter, which is in need of being formulated cautiously and discreetly. Sociologically viewed, there is not first an embarrassing, delicate, morally dubious event or improper behaviour about which people then speak with caution and discretion,
instead the delicate and notorious character of an event is constituted by the very act of talking about it cautiously and discreetly.

**Psychiatric discretion: Between medical and moral version**

I want to claim — and this leads to the title of my paper — that the pervasive element of discretion in psychiatric interviews must be viewed and analyzed as a phenomenon, *in which the peculiar and paradoxical meaning structure of present day psychiatry is reproduced.*

Evidence for this claim is derived from the observation that a discreetly exploring utterance in psychiatric interviews usually gets treated by the recipient, i.e. the candidate patient, as one of two very different types of activity. The first option is, that such an utterance is seen as a considerate, affiliative invitation to the recipient, to openly formulate private problems, to disclose personal feelings, to talk about troubles. The recipients are not directly asked or forced to answer, they are instead solicited in a mild way to give authentic descriptions, to put feelings into words, to releave their hearts. They are given the opportunity to talk about issues, which they themselves would not have topicalized in the first place, and this way of prompting implicitly assures them that, whatever they are going to disclose, will find understanding and affirmation. They are offered the right to talk about their problems in their own words and to unfold parts of their interior life, which usually must be hidden. In this sense, the psychiatric ‘my side’ tellings imply a component of empathy, of ‘Mitgefühl’, of affiliation, and it is therefore not surprising, that this utterance format is frequently used in various types of psychotherapy (especially Non-directive Psychotherapy) and in those groups, whose members like to ‘psychologize’ everything. Let me call this first option the *medical version* of the discreetly exploring utterance.

Now the same type of utterance may on the other hand be treated by the recipient in a very different manner. By telling a candidate patient something about himself and thereby urging him softly to give away more or less voluntarily information and opinions about an issue he is involved in, the psychiatrist is intruding his co-interactant’s private, personal sphere. He draws attention to something which in the first place is not his but his recipient’s business. Thereby the psychiatrist deprives his recipient of his right to decide by himself what part of his personal life he wants to disclose and share with a stranger. The psychiatrist transgresses borders of responsibility, his ‘fishing’ attempt may therefore be seen as an insidious attempt to make the recipient disclose the experiences, feelings or information which the candidate patient may prefer to keep by himself.
In addition to this character of intrusion the psychiatrist's discreetly exploring utterances have a further and even stronger offensive meaning: In reporting about an event a speaker makes of that event a reportable event. To mention something makes this a mentionable something, i.e. a something worth mentioning. So, a discreetly exploring utterance displays that the event it topicalizes, must somehow be worth talking about, but by its very construction it conspicuously avoids to give the speaker's reason for turning just this event into a topic of talk. In this situation the pervasive character of discretion becomes an important interpretive resource for the candidate patient. The very fact of discretion may lead the candidate patient to the suspicion that the explorative utterance topicalized a behaviour which needs to be formulated with discretion, i.e. some improper, deviant or morally questionable behaviour. At the same time this supposed impropriety can be seen as the psychiatrist's unformulated reason for drawing attention to just this behaviour in the first place. So the very discretion, which was used to hide and to cover the improper character of a referred-to behaviour, may be used by the candidate patient to detect and to uncover that the psychiatrist is dealing with the topic he has just introduced, in moral terms. Let me call this second option the moral version of the discreetly exploring utterance.

Because of its indirectness and because of its suggestive telling-format a discreetly exploring utterance can be regarded as a prototypical carrier of insinuation, — insinuating in the official medical version some trouble, and in the unofficial moral version some improper behaviour. The seemingly innocent, helpful and affiliative utterances, with which a psychiatrist attempts to seduce a candidate patient to disclose his feelings and opinions, have structurally inbuilt a hidden, a veiled morality.

Now, candidate patients may of course respond solely to the medical version of the psychiatrist's discreetly exploring utterances. But if recipients voluntarily give the information, such an utterance is asking for, they not only accept what is being insinuated in that utterance, but also that it is conveyed to them via insinuation. By responding 'neutrally' and friendly to the psychiatrist's 'fishing' attempts a candidate patient avoids to reject and therefore implicitly accepts the veiled morality and supposed accusation in that utterance. Given this situation, many candidate patients do not join the insinuation game, but choose instead to turn against the psychiatrist, protesting — quite often in an unarticulated way — against the kind of business they are drawn in:
Discreetly exploring utterances are extremely vulnerable of being heard by the recipient in moral terms and may therefore trigger uncontrollable, interactionally disastrous social situations. That is, an utterance, which not only looks quite innocuous but also seems to sympathetically assist the recipient, may lead to a kind of explosive reaction. Since such reactions in the psychiatric intake interview will unavoidably lead the psychiatrist to the judgement, that the candidate patient is showing strange if not aggressive behaviour and — in any case — is in need of treatment, the psychiatric discretion, which triggered that reaction, may be called fatal.

Of course I do not mean to blame the psychiatrists for playing dirty tricks with the candidate patients. The psychiatric discretion is an object in which the contradictory meaning structure of present day psychiatry crystallizes into a unique phenomenon. The discreetly exploring utterances reproduce in their duality of medical and moral version, that psychiatry is an institution with two conflicting frames. On the one hand psychiatry has to deal — as a subdiscipline of medicine — in a neutral, disengaged way with what psychiatrists themselves have come to call ‘mental illness’. On the other hand psychiatry has to deal with people whose improper behaviour in our culture was treated, is treated and — as I would claim — will be treated in moral terms. Psychiatry is an institution caught and twisted between medicine and moral, and detailed analysis reveals that this contradictory structure materializes itself at the level of turn-by-turn interaction in the various manifestations of psychiatric discretion.
References


Appendix: Original German transcripts

(1) [INTAKE:A-13:II:1]
<Der Aufnahmearzt Dr.F. hat soeben ein Telefongespräch mit dem einweisenden Arzt beendet und wendet sich nun an Frau B.>

01 Dr.F. (Ich hab) g’rad Nachricht, (---) (daß es
02 Ihnen) nich’ ganz gut geht.
03 Frau B. Ja:: also das ist-dann die Anschicht
04 Dr.F. Is’ das zutreffen.H?
05 Frau.B. dess Herrn Doktor Hollmann.
06 Dr.F. A ja
07 Frau.B. also meine ist es nicht.
08 Dr.F. Ihre isses nicht.
09 Frau.B. Nein
10 Herr B. ([ mir geht es sehr gut.]
11 Frau B. 

(2) INTAKE:A-13:II:2/20 sec. später]
<Nachdem er Herrn B. kurz erklärt, daß er zunächst mit dessen Ehefrau sprechen möchte, wendet sich Dr.F. wieder an Frau B.>

31 Dr.F. <zu Herrn B.> Wir könn’ uns-nachher noch drüber
32 Herr B. ( 
33 Dr.F. unterhalten
34 Dr.F. >wieder zu Frau.B. gewandt> .hh ja ä::h ich
35 mein ich seh Ihrm Gesicht aus daß die:-
36 (1 sec) Stimmung (-) anscheinend nicht
37 Frau.B. nicht schlecht-is::
38 ich Ihnen mal was sang
39 

(-)
Wenn Sie: -
wissen -
Gott (h)
ist mein Vater;

Hm - ich bin sein Kind: ...

Ja, das nun: gibt's ja offensichtlich nicht ganz der gleichen Meinung -

Was Sie seien da über Straße gelaufen' nich so ganz angezogen oder so

Läuft e- läuft -

=Haben Sie Kinder Herr Doktor Fischer? - Ja: 

Ja wie alt,
ah so: acht und elf
ja und wo sie klein waren

diese Kinder

Ja -
sind die nicht auch mal nackt irgendwoher gelaufen' weil se ja noch - weil se ja nicht -

wissen daß sie das nicht dürfen.
Ja und wo sie klein waren

meinem Verhältnis zu Gott
(6) **[INTAKE:A-13:II:9]**

01 Dr. F. S' sind also- (-) wie ein Kind nackt auf der
02 Straße (-) a:h (rum)-
03 Frau B. auf der Straße? Ich war im
04 Haus|tur war das

(7) **[INTAKE:D-19:2]**

01 Dr. F. "S' sind so: 'n bißchen gereizt?"
02 Frau W. Was?
03 Dr. F. S' sind so: 'n bißchen ge-reizt,
04 Frau W. Ja weil ich da eben
05 in e'im Haus bei Verrückten läbe...

(8) **[INTAKE:A-6:10]**

<Dr. B. liest im Einweisungsschreiben>

01 Dr. B. Sie haben sich offensichtlich sehr zurückgezogen
02 ()
03 in der letzten Zeit
04 (-)
05 in Ihrer Wohnung.
06 ((--))
07 Frau K. Hal das ist doch Prifatsache da gibt's nix
08 darüber zu re:den= =Zurückgezogen= Ich kann machen was ich will
09 (---)
10 11 Dr. B. Also hier steht Sie hätten sich-
12 Frau K. So: w a s z u s a ̈ gen= 
13 Dr. B. =Hier steht Sie hätten sich verbarrikadiert 
14 und (-) Sie hättn-
15 Frau K. Bitte?
16 (-)
17 Dr. B. Sie seien einfach in Ihrer Wohnung verschwunden 
18 und hätten sich nicht mehr gezielt, und äh
19 (1,5 sec)
20 Dr. B. und hätten-
21 Frau K. Ich kann doch machen was ich will,
22 das ist doch l-lächerlich was da ( ) -
Dr. F.: "Oh, Sie ärgern sich drüber, daß Doktor Kluge Sie einge-wiesen hat."  
Frau K.: "Nehmen Sie mich nicht so ernst, Herr Doktor Kluge eingeliefert hat..."

Dr. F.: "Was?"
Frau K.: "Bitte..."<Frau K. fegt mit einer Handbewegung die vor ihr liegenden Unterlagen des Arztes vom Tisch>  
Frau K.: "Ich**: (Sie nicht leide) Herr Doktor Fischer"
ON THE INSTITUTIONAL CHARACTER OF INSTITUTIONAL TALK: THE CASE OF NEWS INTERVIEWS*

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1. INTRODUCTION

In this paper we examine some of the basic characteristics of turn taking in broadcast news interviews using data derived from UK news sources.1 Our objective is to show the ways in which these characteristics are involved in the constitution of the talk they organise as "news interview talk". In so doing, we aim to demonstrate some ways in which basic, but superficially unremarkable, features of the organisation of talk in news interviews are deeply implicated in the recognisable production of news interview conduct as an institutionalised form of interaction. We further seek to show that turn taking procedures for the news interview represent institutionalised resources for dealing with some of the fundamental tasks and constraints that bear on its management. We begin with brief overview of conversation analytic approaches to forms of institutional interaction.

2. INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT: THE CA APPROACH

Over the past two decades conversation analysis (henceforth CA) has established itself as perhaps the pre-eminent approach to the empirical analysis of talk-in-interaction.2 Developing from the detailed analysis of relatively elementary facets of the organisation of talk, the approach has grown and diversified in recent years to encompass a very wide range of conversational practices.3 While the mainstream of development in the field has remained centred on the analysis of mundane conversational interaction between peers, a significant and growing corpus of studies — initiated independently in Britain and the U.S. and now also carried forward in a number of European countries — has begun to focus on interaction in 'institutional' settings.4 This is interaction in which more or less official or formal task- or role-based activities are undertaken: doctor-

* We would like to thank Steve Clayman and Manny Schegloff for their valuable comments on an earlier draft of this paper. Conversations with Doug Maynard stimulated a number of our introductory remarks.
patient interaction, courtroom trials, job interviews, classroom lessons, news interviews and emergency calls to the police are clear examples of interactions of this type.

In recent years, the main approach to the analysis of institutional interaction has embodied a strongly comparative dimension. The rationale for this approach is relatively straightforward. Following the initiative of Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson (1974:729-31), the practices underlying the management of ordinary conversation are treated as primary and as collectively constituting a fundamental matrix through which social interaction is organised. One way, then, in which the 'institutional' nature of interaction in institutional settings may manifest itself is in a range of differences from ordinary conversation. Guided by this notion, a considerable body of research has focused on variations in the use of specific conversational practices and variations from such practices as, at least in part, constituting the 'institutional' character of specific forms of institutional interaction. These variations, it has been suggested, should provide for the recognizability — both for participants and for professional analysts — of such distinctively non-conversational events as an 'interview', a 'cross-examination', or a 'lesson'.

By contrast with the strongly cumulative body of research that has emerged from studies of mundane conversation, CA work which has an institutional focus has, until recently, advanced in a rather piecemeal, even ad hoc, fashion. In large part, this may have been a product of the inherent difficulties of analysing 'institutional' interaction. As Schegloff (1989) points out, if it is to be claimed that some interaction has a specifically 'institutional' character, then the relevance of the institutional context in question must be shown to inhabit the details of the participants' conduct. Thus in addition to the normal CA tasks of analysing the conduct of the participants and the underlying organisation of their activities, that conduct and its organisation must additionally be demonstrated to embody orientations which are specifically institutional or which are, at the least, responsive to constraints which are institutional in character or origin. This additional task is by no means a straightforward one. Although it is easy enough, on an intuitive basis, to identify a variety of ways in which activities seem to be 'done differently' in institutional settings, it is much more difficult to specify these differences precisely and to demonstrate their underlying institutional moorings.

These difficulties are compounded by the fact that, as several authors have noted, CA works with an elaborate and complex approach to the analysis of social context. Rather than working with a conception of context in which some pre-established social framework is viewed as 'containing' the participants' actions, the CA perspective treats each action within a sequence of actions as both context-shaped and context-renewing.
Actions are context-shaped in that they are understood, and produced to be understood, in relation to context of prior utterances and understandings in which they are embedded and to which they contribute. They are context-renewing because every current action forms the immediate context for a next action and will thus tend to renew (i.e., maintain, alter or adjust) any more generally prevailing sense of context which is the object of the participants' orientations and actions. Given this perspective, CA researchers cannot take 'context' for granted nor may they treat it as determined in advance and independent of the participants' own activities. Instead 'context' is treated as both the project and product of the participants' own actions and therefore as inherently locally produced and transformable at any moment. Thus the methodological constraints raised by Schegloff (1989) concerning the relevance of particular social identities and the procedural consequentiality of context are generic to CA approaches to the analysis of social interaction. The study of institutional interaction cannot by any means be exempted from this constraint (Heritage 1984a:280-90).5

Given these constraints, analysts who wish to depict the distinctively 'institutional' character of some stretch of talk cannot be satisfied with showing that institutional talk exhibits aggregates and/or distributions of actions that are distinctive from ordinary conversation (for example, aggregates of questions and answers that are assymmetrically distributed between the incumbents of particular roles). They must rather demonstrate that the participants constructed their conduct over its course — turn by responsive turn — so as to progressively constitute and hence jointly and collaboratively realise the occasion of their talk, together with their own social roles in it, as having some distinctively institutional character (Schegloff, forthcoming). There is, it appears, no single 'royal road' to such demonstrations because the character of institutional interaction varies widely across different institutional tasks and settings. In what follows, therefore, we distinguish two main avenues of research in this area.

**Approaches to the Analysis of Institutional Interaction Formal Settings**

Among published studies that have focused on institutional talk, several of the more significant and influential have dealt with data in which the institutional character of the interaction is embodied first and foremost in its form — most notably in turn-taking systems which depart substantially from the way in which turn-taking is managed in conversation and which are perceivedly 'formal' in character. Following Sacks et al.'s (1974) initiative, interactions in courtrooms (Atkinson and Drew 1979),
classrooms (McHoul 1978) and news interviews (Greatbatch 1985, 1988; Clayman 1987) have been shown to exhibit systematically distinctive forms of turn-taking which powerfully structure many aspects of conduct in these settings.

The studies which have reported these findings have been influential for two reasons. First, turn-taking organisations — whether for conversation or institutional contexts such as courtroom interaction — are a fundamental and generic aspect of the organisation of interaction. They are organisations whose features are implemented recurrently over the course of interactional events. This characteristic gives them a special methodological interest for students of institutional talk. For if it can be shown that the participants in a vernacularly characterised institutional setting such as a courtroom pervasively organise their turn-taking in a way that is distinctive from ordinary conversation, it can be proposed that they are organising their conduct so as to display and realise its 'institutional' character over its course and that they are doing so recurrently and pervasively. The 'problem of relevance' raised by Schegloff (1989) is thus resolved — at least at the grossest level — at a single stroke.

The second source of interest in institutional turn-taking systems also derives from their generic and pervasive character. To the extent that the parties confine their conduct within the framework of some distinctive 'formal' institutional turn-taking system, other systematic differences from ordinary conversation tend to emerge. These differences commonly involve specific reductions of the range of options and opportunities for action that are characteristic in conversation and they often involve specialisations and respecifications of the interactional functions of the activities that remain. The ensemble of these variations from conversational practice may contribute to a unique 'fingerprint' for each institutional form of interaction — the 'fingerprint' being comprised of a set of interactional practices differentiating each form both from other institutional forms and from the baseline of mundane conversational interaction itself. Both severally and collectively, the members of each ensemble of practices may contribute to what Garfinkel (Garfinkel et al. 1981) has termed the 'identifying details' of institutional activities.

These institutionalised reductions and specialisations of the available set of conversational options are, it should be stressed, conventional in character. They are culturally variable; they are sometimes subject to legal constraints; they are always vulnerable to processes of social change; they are discursively justifiable and are often justified by reference to considerations of task, efficiency, fairness, and so on in ways that the practices making up the conversational 'bedrock' manifestly are not. Associated with these various institutional conventions are differing participation frameworks (Goffman 1981) with their associated rights and
obligations, different footings (ibid.) and different patternings of opportunities to initiate and sanction interactional activities. The special character of these conventions is also associated with subjective sentiments. Those elements of 'formal' institutional interaction which are experienced as unusual, irksome or discomforting are experienced as such against a tacitly assumed background which is supplied by the workings of ordinary conversation (Atkinson 1982).

In several of these 'formal' forms of institutional interaction — most notably 'formal' classroom interaction, courtroom interaction and news interviews — turn taking is strongly constrained within quite sharply defined procedures. Departures from these procedures systematically attract overt sanctions. The pattern of turn-taking in these settings is uniform and exhibits overwhelming compliance with these procedures. In the case of courtroom and news interview interaction, for example, it can be difficult to locate the 'deviant cases' with which to exhibit the normativity of the procedures under investigation. It is notable that these settings all involve the production of 'talk for an overhearing audience'. In two of the settings (courtrooms and classrooms), the audience is co-present and the turn taking system is designed, at least in part, to control or curtail the nature of audience participation in any on-going exchange (Atkinson 1979, 1982; McHoul 1978; Mehan 1979). In all three settings, the presence of an audience whose members may assess the moral character of the focal participants may help to limit the extent to which the latter depart from formal turn taking procedures. In contrast, there are other types of institutional interaction where neither turn taking organisation nor other aspects of the talk exhibit the qualities of formality and uniformity so far described and it to these that we briefly turn.

**Non-Formal Settings**

In a variety of less formal forms of institutional interaction — commonly occurring in medical, psychiatric, social service, business and related environments — patterns of interaction exhibit considerably less uniformity. Although they may show aggregative asymmetries in the patterning of activities between role incumbents (e.g., as between doctors and patients in the asking, and answering, of questions in private consultations (Byrne and Long 1976; West 1984; Frankel forthcoming)), these asymmetries are apparently not the products of turn-taking procedures that are normatively sanctionable. These interactions, for the most part, take place in private rather than public contexts. There is room within them for considerable negotiation and/or stylistic variation as to how they will come to be managed (Byrne and Long op. cit.; Heritage and Sefi
forthcoming). In many cases, although the talk in these settings is clearly institutional in that official task-based or role-based activities occur at least some of time, turn-taking procedures are either conversational or 'quasi-conversational'. When considered in turn-taking terms at least, the boundaries between these forms of institutional talk and ordinary conversation can appear permeable and uncertain.6

These characteristics have the following methodological consequence. It is unlikely that a single recursive procedure (such as is found in special turn-taking procedures) can be found that would pin-point the participants' turn-by-turn instanciation of institutional role-based identities at a single stroke. Accordingly, the participants' orientation to the institutional task- or role-based character of their talk will have to be located in a complex of non-recursive interactional practices that may vary in their form and frequency. Systematic aspects of the organisation of sequences (and of turn design within sequences) having to do with such matters as the opening and closing of encounters, with the ways in which information is requested, delivered and received, with the design of referring expressions, etc. are now beginning to emerge as facets of the ways in which the 'institutionality' of such encounters are managed (Atkinson, forthcoming; Bergmann forthcoming; Boden forthcoming; Heath forthcoming; Maynard 1989, forthcoming; Pomerantz forthcoming; Whalen and Zimmerman 1986). Other studies have been begun on the management of specific activities — such as the physical examination in a medical consultation — that are specifically task-oriented in character (Heath 1986).

The Present Paper: Objectives.

The present paper represents an exercise in the analysis of a setting — the news interview — that is, we argue, constituted in substantial part in and through the participants' compliance with a formally distinctive turn-taking procedure. In the following discussion, we show (1) that news interview interaction is organised through turn-taking procedures that are normatively oriented to but distinctive from ordinary conversation; (2) that adherence to these procedures establishes and maintains the relevance of the local "news interview identities" of the participants; and (3) that these distinctive procedures embody systematic and institutionalised solutions to the management of core tasks and constraints that are central to the practice of broadcast journalism. We further propose (4) that where the participants depart from the formal provisions of news interview turn-taking, they continue to manage the tasks and constraints that the turn-taking system would otherwise automatically handle through the use of
3. TURN TAKING IN THE NEWS INTERVIEW

In the news interview, turn taking is organised through a distinctive normative procedure in which — unlike conversation — the types of turns that may be produced by each speaker are provided for in advance. These constraints on the production of types of turns operate with respect to the institutional identities interviewer (IR) and interviewee (IE). They specify that news interview talk should proceed as sequences of IR questions and IE responses to those questions. Correspondingly, speakers who act as IRs may not properly engage in actions other than questions,7 while those who take part as IEs should refrain from initiating actions (such as unsolicited comments on prior talk) or sequences (e.g., asking questions to which the IR or other IEs would be obliged to respond). A further consequence of this turn-taking procedure — which, following foundational work by Atkinson and Drew (1979:61 et seq), we term a turn-type preallocation procedure — is that, subject to certain minor qualifications,8 the order in which the speakers may talk is largely confined to the following pattern regardless of the numbers of IRs or IEs involved.9

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IR:</th>
<th>Question</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IE:</td>
<td>Answer</td>
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<tr>
<td>IR:</td>
<td>Question</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IE:</td>
<td>Answer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Compliance with these procedures is, in part, what distinguishes a radio or TV 'interview' from a 'discussion'. Similarly, in the ways that the participants adhere to these procedures, they constitute themselves — for one another and for the news audience — as IR and IE respectively.

Extract (1) below, which is taken from a British 'political' news interview and which is broadly typical of such interviews in the UK, illustrates these elementary points. In it, the interaction is entirely conducted through turns which are constructed as questions and answers by the IR and IE respectively. As later extracts will demonstrate however, these terms only minimally characterise the data. IRs may, for example, challenge or cast doubt on IE statements and positions while IEs may resist or evade such challenges. Nonetheless, these challenges and responses overwhelmingly remain packaged within turns that remain minimally recognisable as questions and answers respectively.
In this interview, Labour defence spokesman Brynmor John is discussing his walkout from the defence debate at the Labour Party Conference at which he was not permitted to speak.

BJ: Well I walked out because I was angry at not being called by the chairman after two personal attacks. But I don't complain about those attacks. But I think that any fair chairman would have given me an opportunity of replying to them.

IR: Was it intentional not to call you?
BJ: Well I don't think it was malicious but it was intentional in the sense that he referred at the end to the fact that I had put in a note asking to be called, and couldn't be called. So it obviously was intentional. It wasn't an oversight on his part.

IR: What sort of intention was it then. What lay behind it?
BJ: I think that what he had done is to get an idea in his mind which ought to have been changed as soon as he heard the two attacks on me from the rostrum but that his mind was on train lines and he failed to be flexible enough to carry out elementary justice in a party that calls for justice.

IR: Are you going to remain as a defence spokesman, supporting a policy which is against the overwhelming feeling of the party, quite clearly?
BJ: The unilateral stance has not become the party policy as a result of this vote. It does not automatically become the party policy. I think that the parliamentary party will have to take into consideration and as I say another three years having elapsed multi-lateralism as pioneered by Michael Foot and Denis Healey in Moscow recently. I don't espouse a cause in which I do not believe.

IR: What is the likelihood in your view of a Labour manifesto at the next election containing the firm commitment to unilateralism that the party here at Brighton wants?
BJ: Don't think that that at the moment is a likely result. I think that the parliamentary party will have to take into consideration all these factors and if as I say another three years having elapsed multi-lateralism as pioneered by Michael Foot and Denis Healey in Moscow recently I don't
think the party will have the same despair with multi-lateralism which lay behind the unilateralist decision this morning.

We stress that the management of this event as an 'interview' is the collaborative achievement of the parties. Across their various questions and answers — whether hostile or not — IR and IE collaboratively sustain a definition of their joint circumstances as 'an interview' (rather than a 'discussion') by restricting themselves to the production of questions and answers.

The fact that news interview participants generally respect these constraining provisions in the design of their turns has a number of elementary consequences for the formal structure of news interviews which we summarily note without supportive discussion. (1) The provision that IEs are confined to responsive activities has the corollary that they cannot properly open or close interviews and this task is exclusively allocated to IRs (see note 7). Moreover (2) the turn taking system makes no provision for IEs to allocate next turns among the speakers or, with the exception of a particular contingency (detailed in note 8), to select themselves to speak next, in contexts where there are more than two parties (i.e., two or more IEs and/or two or more IRs). Finally (3), IR questions have 'agenda setting' characteristics which may require IEs to engage in complex courses of action if they are to challenge or evade IR questions within a turn taking framework that essentially confines them to responses to IRs' questions.

While these gross features of news interview interaction are plainly the products of an orientation to the provisions and constraints of the news interview turn taking system, this same orientation is also manifested in more detailed aspects of news interview interaction. We will briefly look at some of these details in the management of questions and answers.

(a) The Interactional Management of Turn-Type: Questions

In news interviews, substantial numbers of IRs' turns are built from more than a single 'questioning' turn constructional unit (Greatbatch 1988; Clayman 1988). Instead these turns commonly take a compound form which, adapting a suggestion from Graham Button, we term a 'question delivery structure'. A simple example of this compound form is displayed as (2) below — in which an initial 'prefatory' statement (arrow 1) establishes a context for a subsequent question (arrow 2).
In a conversational context, in which turn size is systematically minimised by a current speaker's initial entitlement to a single turn constructional unit (Sacks et al. 1974), the IR's initial turn component could be treated as a completed turn and responded to as such, e.g., in this instance, by a confirmation such as 'that's right'. In news interviews, where the expectation is that IE statements will be produced as responses to questions, such statements are only rarely responded to as complete IR turns.

By withholding responses until a recognisable question has been produced, IEs orient to and help to produce the 'interview' character of the interaction in which they are engaged. They 'do interview' (Schegloff forthcoming (a)). Such withholding embodies the IE's acknowledgement that, in the context of an interview, s/he has no rights to a turn until a question is produced and the corollary expectation that the IR's turn should properly consist of a question (Greatbatch 1988).

By withholding responses at such points and thereby permitting IRs to proceed to a subsequent questioning turn component, IEs not only exhibit an analysis that such statements are 'prefatory' to a question, they also collaborate with the IR in realising that expectation as an accomplished fact (Clayman 1988). In turn, IRs rely on that collaboration so as to produce 'long' multi-unit questions free of 'early' or 'interjective' responses by IEs. Very commonly, the 'prefatory' status of IR pre-question statements is analyzable to IEs either from the substance of the initial statement or from an action projection which may precede it (Schegloff 1980; Greatbatch 1985; Clayman 1988). However there are many cases where such prefaces could readily be treated as turns in their own right and the general absence of response to these stands as unambiguous evidence for the general IE expectation that an IR's turn will properly be completed as a question. For example, in (3) below, the initial statement of the IR's second turn (arrow 1) strongly challenges the IE's previous statement that he does not describe himself as a Marxist.
IR: .hhh er What's the difference between your Marxism and Mister McGarhey's Communism.

AS: er The difference is that it's the press that constantly call me a Marxist when I do not, () and never have (.) er er given that description of myself..hhh I-

IR: But I've heard you- 1-->

AS: I've heard you'd be very happy to: to: er .hhhh er describe yourself as a Marxist. Could it be that with an election in the

IR: offering you're anxious to play down that you're a Marxist. 2-->

AS: Not at all Mister Day.=And I'm (.) sorry to say I must disagree with you.=you have never heard me describe myself .hhh er as a Marxist.=I have only ((continues))

Here, where the IE clearly might move immediately to reject the IR's initial statement as an object in its own right, he nonetheless waits for the IR to come to a question (arrow 2) before initiating a response (arrow 3).12 Moreover his response initially deals with the question as the sequentially implicative component of the IR's prior turn (Sacks 1987), and only then does he turn to reject the IRs initial assertion. Here, as in other less problematic multi-unit IR questions, the IE orients to the production of an IR turn over its course and withholds any response until a recognisable question has been produced. In all such cases, IEs collaborate (and IRs rely on their collaboration) in the production of multi-unit questioning turns. That collaboration is consistent with and conducted within the provisions and constraints of the basic turn taking system for news interviews.13

(b) The Interactional Management of Turn-Type: Answers

We have seen that IEs systematically orient to IR turns in a way that departs from normal conversational turn-taking practices which exert a systematic pressure towards the minimisation of turn size (Sacks et al. 1974). The character of IE turns also exhibits departures from these ordinary conversational practices. In general, IEs' responses normally take the form of extended multi-unit turns. In ordinary conversation the production of long multi-unit turns normally involves the active collaboration of recipients through the production of 'continuers' and related objects (Schegloff 1982; Jefferson 1981b, 1984). In news interviews, by contrast, long IE turns are not managed by such means. For example in (4) below, the IE's answer passes through a series of possible completion points (arrowed) without response from the IR.
(4) (ATV T:15.11.79) (Interview with a man who claims he was jailed for a crime he did not commit)

IR: Have you any sort of criminal connections or anything.
IE: No at all.
IE: I was working for the Gas Board at the time as a salesman.
IE: I had no (0.2) emphatically no er: associates that
IE: or I did not associate with people with criminal records.
IE: I was living a life o- o- of a family man in Stockton-on-Tees,
IE: where I was a representative for the Gas Board,
IE: and it was out the blue to me.
IR: Were you surprised when you went to court, an- and indeed went down,

Extended multi-unit IE turns of this type are prototypical in the news interview (see e.g., example (1), lines 1-5; 8-12; 15-21; 25-35; 39-48). The creation of these extended turns is the product of shared expectations about news interview talk which are realised as a collaborative achievement in which (1) the IE talks extendedly and (2) the IR withholds any form of intervention that would influence the IE's extended talk. These turns clearly represent a departure from the ways in which turn-taking is managed in ordinary conversation and, in themselves, exhibit an orientation to the institutional character of the talk they embody. The expectation that IRs will permit — and even require — IEs to occupy extended turns by withholding turn initiation until some Nth possible completion point in an IE's turn is especially apparent in cases where IEs finish their turns at points where their answers are hearably unextended. Such occurrences regularly engender gaps as in (5) and (6) below:

(5) (WAO:21.2.79)
IR: And d'you expect these reforms to be passed?
E: Yes I do:
(1.2)
IE: The major ones certainly.

(6) (AP:7.3.79)
IR: Is it your view that victims get a raw deal in British justice?
IE: Very. uhhh
(0.7)
IE: And- and what would you like to see done about that.
Moreover, as Greatbatch (1985:154-158) and Clayman (forthcoming b) have noted, the generalised expectation that IEs will talk extendedly is further evidenced when IRs urge IEs to 'be brief' in their responses in contexts where the interview is about to be terminated and time is short.15

In sum, the management of IE responses in news interviews indicates a strong contrast with ordinary conversation where turn-taking procedures tend to minimise turn size. In news interviews, IE turns are routinely extended as a collaborative achievement of IR and IE. The shared expectations informing this achievement further point to a shared orientation to the 'non-conversational' character of the interview encounter. (c)

(c) The Normative Character of the Turn Taking System for News Interviews

The fact that news interviews overwhelmingly proceed as sequences of IR questions and IE answers, taken together with the features of turn management described above, constitutes massive evidence for the existence of a Q-A preallocated turn-taking system for news interviews that is distinctive from conversation. Moreover, this turn-taking system naturally manifests itself on an iterative turn-by-turn basis and thus constitutes extremely powerful evidence for the conclusion that their engagement in "news interview talk" — as IR and IE respectively — has an endemic and ubiquitous relevance for the participants.

That this turn-taking system and its associated relevances have a normative character can most readily be seen through 'deviant case analysis' when interview participants depart, however briefly, from the provisions of news interview turn taking. Such departures most commonly involve the IE in moving away from the provided for responsive position within an interview by initiating an action or a sequence. A common context for such departures arises in multi-IE interviews where a currently unaddressed IE seeks to comment on some aspect of the talk in progress — in breach of the turn-taking provision that IE turns should properly be produced as responses to IR questions. In (7), a second IE (MW) requests permission for such a comment (line 5) and only proceeds after the permission has been granted by the IR (line 6).
...and therefore I'm not going to accept the criticism that I haven't tried to help victims—I've been trying to help them off and on for twenty-five years.

...and therefore I'm not going to accept the criticism that I haven't tried to help victims—I've been trying to help them off and on for twenty-five years.

Can I say something about this. Yes indeed.

As Frank Longford knows so well...

Here the IE clearly orients to his restricted rights to volunteer a contribution to the topic on the floor of the interview. And this orientation is also visible in 'token' requests for permission to speak, as in (8), where the IE proceeds to make his contribution immediately after a turn component that solicits permission to do so and without waiting for the IR to respond to his request.

In this case, although the IE's request is a 'token' request, it nonetheless acknowledges that his action represents a departure from the turn taking provisions of the news interview which, by this acknowledgement, he treats as normative.

A similar orientation is manifested in the following case where, rather than initiating a comment, the IE initiates a Q-A sequence addressed to a co-IE.

...the sooner they join the Social Democrats the better.

...the sooner they join the Social Democrats the better.

Well let me ask David may I ask Mister Scargill a question you asked him and he didn't answer a moment ago. I've been in the Labour Party for thirty two years—I was campaigning for it in South Yorkshire when you were campaigning for a different party. I think my socialist credentials stand up against yours in any analysis.

Do you think people like me ought to leave the Labour Party. Do you want us in.

That's a decision that you have to make...
Finally an orientation to the normative character of the turn-taking provisions of the news interview is manifested in a range of instances in which IRs sanction IE departures from those provisions. In (10), the IE (industrial magnate, Sir James Goldsmith) initiates a hostile Q-A sequence directed at the IR. In this example, Goldsmith's complaint (lines 1-9) concerns the coverage given to his business affairs in a previous edition of the programme in which he is presently appearing.

(10) (O:21.4.81)

1 JG: ...despite the fact there were four major factories that
2 you knew about,=-despite the fact there was a two hundred
3 and thirty million capital investment programme that you
4 knew about,=.hhh that we dealt in companies you stated
5 and restated toda:y, .hhh despite the fact that ninety
6 one per cent of our companies are still there:=and only
7 the marginal ones which you knew were gold, .hhh and you
even mislead people by suggesting for instance that we
9 owned the Parisian publishing house Brooke. Why=
10 IR: =s- s- s- Sir James I'm so sorry ( ) I'm so s-
11 JG: =No,=I'm asking a question now.=
12 IR: =It's more conventional in these programmes for:
13 JG: don't mind about convention.=I'm asking you why
14 IR: =me to ask questions,=I'm asking you why
15 ()
16 JG: you distorted those facts.
17 (0.2)
18 IR: Well we didn't distort them. [I mean er ]
19 JG: Well we then did you

In this sequence, the IE's lengthy turn culminates in the claim (lines 8/9) that the previous edition of the programme misled the audience about his business activities. He then proceeds (at line 9) with the beginning of a question that would demand an explanation for this coverage. This question is intersected by the IR (line 10) who attempts to pre-empt its production. This action is, in turn, intersected by the IE (line 11) who sustains his questioning stance, overtly acknowledging and asserting his reversal of normal interview conduct. The IR again resists the IE's attempt to adopt a questioning role, sanctioning his conduct with an appeal to the normal conventions of news interviews (lines 12/15) already implicated in the IE's prior turn (at line 11) and this, in its turn, is resisted by the IE who rejects the appeal and again presses for a response with a fully articulated demand for an explanation (lines 13, 14 and 17). Finally the IR responds to the question by rejecting the claim that the programme had distorted the facts (line 19).
Here then the central turn-taking provision of the news interview is explicitly formulated by both parties in the context of a major and contested departure from its provisions and this provision itself becomes the object of dispute. 16

So far, we have been concerned to sketch an outline of the turn-taking system for news interviews and to argue for the normative character of its provisions. We stress that the overwhelming mass of news interview conduct is compatible — and compatible in fine detail — with this turn-taking system and that departures from its provisions are routinely treated as normatively accountable. This turn-taking system is, by comparison with the turn-taking system for ordinary conversation, both distinctive and restrictive. By managing their talk so as to respect the provisions of this system, the parties collaboratively instanciate both its 'interview' character and, simultaneously, their roles as IR and IE within the context thus created. Respect for this system thus encodes an orientation to both context and role that is pervasive insofar as it is collaboratively sustained, turn-by-turn, across the course of the interaction.

4. THE INSTITUTIONAL DISTINCTIVENESS OF NEWS INTERVIEW TURN TAKING PROCEDURES

Having established that turn-taking procedures in the news interview are distinctive from those operative in ordinary conversation, we now proceed to our second objective of showing how this distinctiveness is related to the particular orientations, tasks and constraints which are characteristic of the news interview. The achievement of this task will not only establish the specifically 'institutional' character of news interview interaction, it will also move us towards the task of showing the ways in which quite small scale elements of conduct which are characteristic of the news interview are systematically related to the macro-institutional structures within which the news interview is embedded. Among a range of important news interview tasks and constraints we will here focus on two: (1) the task of producing talk for an 'overhearing' news audience, and (2) the constraint that interviewers should maintain a stance of formal neutrality towards interviewee statements and positions.

The news interview is, of course, a form of professional journalism. Its fundamental function is the communication of information or opinion from public figures, experts or other persons in the news for the benefit of the news audience. As such it stands as an alternative to direct reportage of the views of public figures. Within this process, the IR essentially functions as a catalyst whose task is (1) to provide a context in which IEs can communicate information and opinion and (2) and to challenge or press
IEs, where appropriate, on the views they express. The primary recipients of the expressed information or opinions are the news audience for whose benefit the talk is ultimately produced. Within the news interview, it is conventional to maintain the news audience as primary recipients of the talk rather than attempting to create the impression that they are eavesdroppers on a putatively 'private' interchange. This must be managed in and through the design of the talk. So a first task we will be concerned with is the production of talk for an overhearing audience.

Second, IRs must manage this task while meeting a constraint that specifically bears on broadcast journalists at the present. This constraint is that they retain a stance of neutrality towards the statements and opinions of the IE. Because IRs' questions often (and in many cases unavoidably) embody assumptions that are supportive or hostile to IEs' stated positions and cannot, strictly speaking, be regarded as neutral, we will speak of this stance as embodying a position of 'formal neutrality' or, more simply, as a 'neutralistic' stance. A central feature of this stance is that IRs should avoid making statements — whether hostile to or supportive of an IE's stated position — that could be construed as a personal opinion or as the position of their employers — the news organisation that is ultimately responsible for the broadcast. This general stance is required of news organisations by law in some countries (including Britain) and by convention in others. This neutralistic stance is, once again, something that must be sustained over the course of IR conduct in the interview situation.

In what follows, we will propose that the turn taking system for news interviews is one which is geared to the management of these two tasks: (1) the task of producing talk that maintains an 'overhearing' news audience as its primary recipients and (2) the maintenance of a neutralistic stance towards IE statements and positions.

We begin by looking at the management of the parties' talk as 'talk for an overhearing news audience'.

5. NEWS INTERVIEW TURN TAKING AND THE MANAGEMENT OF NEWS INTERVIEW TALK AS 'TALK FOR OVERHEARERS'

In this section, we seek to demonstrate that compliance with the turn taking procedures for news interviews embodies a 'footing' (Goffman 1981; Levinson 1988) in which the parties treat their talk as geared to the 'overhearing' news audience. In particular, we will focus on the fact that while IE talk is produced in response to, and thus addressed to, IR questions, it is hearably geared to a ratified audience of 'overhearers' — the news
audience. Our proposal is that this footing is a generic product of the news interview turn-taking provisions outlined above.

At first sight it may appear distinctly quixotic to develop this argument when so many other facets of the news interview context already point to the relevance of the parties’ orientation to the news audience. In the first instance, the general role of the news interview as a vehicle for conveying information to the general public is almost universally understood and is unlikely to be overlooked by the participants. IRs are, after all, professional broadcasters who, in commenting on their role, frequently characterise it as essentially one of asking questions on behalf of an audience. Similarly, IEs have normally arrived at the interview situation as a result of a prior decision by the news organisation that their activities or positions are of significance to the general public. Additionally, both parties are surrounded on all sides by the physical apparatus of broadcasting technology and IEs are confronted by an individual with whom they may well have predetermined the main topics of the interview and who will have received explicit training in the tasks of interviewing. Moreover these background features of the news interview are complemented by many of the participants’ own actions. For example, IRs’ questions may make explicit reference to the news audience; they may embody information that is already known to IR and IE and whose inclusion can only be understood as aimed at the news audience. Further IRs commonly summarise IE answers and positions in ways that, insofar as they are of primary relevance to the news audience rather than the IE, can be heard to be audience-directed (Heritage 1985a). These and other features of IR and IE conduct overtly display their orientation to the presence of an overhearing audience.

Against these considerations however, two major points should be stressed. First, notwithstanding the obvious weight of the physical context and background understandings of the news interview, the parties may not comport themselves in ways that reflect those understandings. In a context in which, notwithstanding the physical and social context of the interaction, the participants did not operate within the conventions of news interview conduct but instead oriented to one another ‘conversationally’ or — as in the case of the recent Bush/Rather encounter — ‘confrontationally’, we should be justified in concluding that an ‘interview’ was not taking place (Heritage 1984a:280-290; Button 1987; Schegloff 1989, forthcoming a; Clayman and Whalen forthcoming). Second, the facets of conduct outlined above as evidencing an orientation to an overhearing audience only emerge intermittently during the course of an interview. Yet it is not the case that a news interview is only intermittently hearable as a news interview. It is a rare event to switch on a radio and to be unclear for
more than a few seconds as to whether a news interview or some other form of social interaction (e.g., a 'discussion') is taking place.

These points suggest that the footing of news interview talk as oriented towards the overhearing audience is managed at all points over the course of the talk and not merely at those points where an overt reference to the audience or some other specially audience-directed activity takes place. Since the turn-taking system for news interviews is a facet of their organisation that, as noted above, manifests itself throughout the news interview on an iterative basis, it is here that we may look for a basis for the general maintenance of news interview footings. In what follows, we will trace the connections between the turn taking provisions of the news interview and these special footings. In particular, we will specify how the provision that IRs are confined to questioning turns is associated with the management of the IE's talk as geared to the overhearing audience.

(a) IR Conduct and the Management of IE talk

As we have noted, almost all IE contributions to news interviews are built as responses to IR questions. We have also noted that they are almost always 'long' responses that take the form of extended multi-unit turns that pass through several possible completion points. Examining examples of these long responses however, we find that, while they are long, they are not attended by any forms of response from the IR over their course. A number of such response forms would be possible or characteristic of conversational conduct by a recipient of such a multi-unit turn. These would include response tokens such as 'continuers' or 'acknowledgement tokens' (such as 'yes' and 'mm hm') [Schegloff 1982; Jefferson 1984]) and news receipt objects (such as 'oh', 'really', 'did you' etc. [Heritage 1984b; Jefferson 1981a, 1981b]) which treat the prior talk as 'informative' or 'news' for the producer. Examples 1 and 4 contain a number of instances in which an IE's multi-unit turn is not accompanied by such response tokens (see e.g., example (1), lines 1-5; 8-12; 15-21; 25-34; 38-46). The systematic absence of these tokens in this example is wholly prototypical of IR news interview conduct both in the UK (Greatbatch 1985, 1988; Heritage 1985a) and the US (Clayman 1987).

As Schegloff (1982) and Jefferson (1981b, 1984) have shown, response tokens such as continuers are produced in ordinary conversation at the boundaries of turn constructional units in multi-unit turns. In these contexts, they overtly 'pass' on a substantive response to the talk-so-far and thus permit continued turn occupancy by the producer of the multi-unit turn. Such response tokens, in overtly passing on the opportunity to speak, also identify their producers as the primary addressees of the prior talk.
and, in principle, as havingsch itst os to respond to the talk at those points in
virtue of the turn taking procedures for ordinary conversation. The
systematic withholding of these objects, conversely, is a means by which
the IR can decline the role of primary addressee of the IE's remarks.

Although, as Greatbatch (1988) has noted, response tokens are
sometimes produced in chat show and celebrity interview contexts in the
UK, contrast cases in which IRs use response tokens to receipt IE statements
over their course have proved impossible to locate in our corpus of news
interview materials. However contrast cases have been found in special
data that approximate the 'heavyweight' political news interview. Because
we will employ other aspects of these data in subsequent sections of this
paper, we introduce the data here with a rather full ethnographic
description.

The data (labelled "Williams in Conversation") derive from a series of
interviews in which British (Labour) ex-Cabinet Minister, Shirley
Williams, interviewed a number of prominent politicians for a BBC series
that, significantly, was broadcast under the general title "Shirley Williams
in Conversation". By this title, the BBC indicated, not only a departure from
the normal procedures adopted by professional interviewers, but also that —
because Williams was not a professional interviewer employed by the BBC —
it was not to be treated as accountable for her expressed opinions. At the
time of these interviews (1980), Williams had recently lost her
parliamentary seat in the 1979 General Election, but had not yet left the
Labour Party (in 1981) to join the SDP. In the interview from which we draw
extensively, she is interviewing ex-Labour Prime Minister James
Callaghan who had been a Cabinet colleague six months previously. In
these data IR response tokens, while occurring very much less frequently
than would be apparent in a conversational context, are more frequently
occurring than in any other interview data from any source that we have
examined.

The response tokens occur, for example, after an initial component of a
response to a question:

(11) (Williams in Conversation 1980:71) ((The question concerns
the control of wage inflation in the UK economy))
Williams: .hhh Now do you think that there's (0.2) a more permanent
machinery some different way that we can get at this
problem.
Callaghan: I don't think there's a different machinery, I think you've
got to have a different climate of opinion.
Williams: --> mhm
Callaghan: In other words you have got to win the trade union's and
their members. — It's not the leaders of the trade unions so
much .hh as the members on the shop floor r. ((continues))
They occur as receipts (arrow 2) to a repair by the IE that was initiated (arrow 1) by the IR.

(12) (Williams in Conversation 1980:221)
Callaghan: .hh But going to (0.7) the next question what do we do. = we've neglected education. (0.5) We've allowed it all to fall into the hands of the militant group. (0.6) (I mean) they do more education than anybody else

Williams: 1--->[ You mean political education.]
Callaghan: Ye: s. Yes. Political education. =I- they- they .hh they-
Williams: 2--->[ Yes. mhm. mhm. ]
Callaghan: =do more than anybody else. =I'm- they've come into the party and they run their newspaper and heavens knows what. .hh They're making the pace on education...

(continues)

Significantly, they also occur (arrow 2) after Callaghan has specifically targeted Williams (arrow 1) as the primary addressee of a remark as in (13) and (14) below:

(13) (Williams in Conversation 1980:71)
Callaghan: My own view is and I guess the trade union leaders would bear this out is that no figure could have satisfied them or their members last year.

....

hhh Although I never disbelieved their good will I didn't believe that they could do it. (0.6) er- And I'm afraid the result has borne that out. I am an unrepentent believer in an incomes policy. .h And let me say Shirley this is not a post war phenomenon. =

Williams: 2--->[ mhm]
Callaghan: .hh You know I g- I a trade union official literally in the early thirties. .hh And I remember Douglas Houghton who's still alive saying to me in about nineteen thirty (continues)
Callaghan: It must survive. It must survive. hhh After all there will be no real alternative to a Conservative Government unless the Labour Party survives.

... (7 lines of text omitted)

... there must be an alternative. We- we- and we are the natural alternative to the Conservatives. I think the Conservative policy hhh although for my country's sake I would like it to succeed if you will understand what I'm saying I t's bounded. I fear it's==

Williams: =going to fail. I- I- I hh feel it in my bones it's going to fail.

Although, as noted above, the response tokens are by no means densely present in these data by comparison with conversational materials, they are strikingly prominent when they are viewed from the perspective of regular IR conduct in news interviews. In the "Williams in conversation" data, the presence of the response tokens imparts a quasi-conversational character to the talk in which the audience, rather than being the primary addressees of Callaghan's remarks, are, at least momentarily, formulated as non-ratified 'eavesdroppers' on — as the BBC title characterises it — a 'conversation'.

In sum, we propose that the consistent absence of IR response tokens in the news interview is systematically associated with the tasks and constraints of news interview conduct. As we have seen, the turn-taking system for news interviews provides only for IRs to engage in 'questioning' activities. It does not provide for IRs to engage in other forms of activity that are responsive to IE statements. The non-production of response tokens in the news interview is thus consistent with the provisions of turn-taking for this context. These provisions and the conduct associated with them thus enable IRs to decline the role of recipient to IE talk while maintaining (through questioning) the role of its elicitor (Heritage 1985a). Thus the maintenance of the audience as the primary addressees of IE talk is managed as a product of IR conduct during the course of IE responses — conduct which is specifically consistent with the turn taking provisions for news interviews that we have outlined.
(b) Departures from the News Interview Footing and their Management

In the previous section, we have been concerned to show that the management of IE talk as directed to the news audience is, in substantial and systematic measure, accomplished through the conduct of IRs. IE responses to IR questions are 'deflected' towards the news audience by virtue of the fact that IRs systematically withhold response tokens across the component segments of IE turns. However the success of this procedure is ultimately dependent on the maintenance of news interview turn taking procedures which provide that IE statements should be produced as responses to IR questions. This consideration suggests that departures from these turn taking procedures may tend to undermine the overall audience directedness of the talk. In what follows, we briefly address this possibility.

As we have already seen, most IE statements are produced as responses to IR questions. However some are not. Many of these cases, as we have seen, involve IEs in direct comments on a co-IE's previous remarks and, notwithstanding the fact that they formally depart from the provisions of the news interview turn taking system, they are routinely allowed to pass without intervention or comment from the IR. It is noticeable however that, in the course of these departures, IEs are normally careful to maintain the IR, rather than the co-IE, as the direct addressee of their statements. If, in such a context, the IR continues to 'withhold' response, the outcome is that the news audience is sustained as the primary, if indirect, addressee of the IE's remarks and the character of the news interview as 'talk for overhearers' is maintained.

For example, in the following case, an IE (PJ) initiates a disagreement with the assertion of a previous IE in overlap with the initiation of the IR's turn. Notwithstanding this departure, the IE continues to address the IR — and through the IR, the overhearing audience — by referring to his co-IE in the third person (references arrowed).

(15) (WAO:15.2.79)
SB: The most important thing .hhh is that Mister Healey .h
should stick to his gu:ns.=
PJ: =\You s \ee
IR: \Well I-"
()
PJ: --\ I disagree with- with Sam Brittan on a- in a most (.)
fundamental way about this, (.) because (0.2) it may well be
--\ so.=I mean he would arg- Sam Brittan would argue from a
monetarist point of vie:w.=But what Mister Healey does about
the money supply over the next few months. .hhh will...
(continues)
In this disagreement sequence, an ancilliary procedure — third person reference to a co-present IE — is used to sustain the overall footing of the talk. Here, where the turn-taking procedures for news interviews are departed from, the footing which adherence to those procedures embodies is nonetheless sustained by this ancilliary means. The procedure of third person reference to a co-present IE is a central means by which an IE can depart from ordinary interview turn taking procedures while sustaining the footing of an IE.

As Greatbatch (forthcoming) has shown however, when disagreements are escalated in extent and seriousness, IEs sometimes abandon this footing by entering into direct, unmediated disagreement with one another. Such cases are normally of limited duration, with IRs intervening to restore the Q-A format and the footing of the participants — sometimes sanctioning the IEs' conduct in the process.

The following case, which is a seriously escalated disagreement, involves an abandoning both of news interview turn taking procedures and of the footings which they embody. Here an IE's (JK) initial 'out of turn' disagreement (arrow 1) with a previous IE is intersected by the previous IE (OM) with a post-response initiation continuation (cf. Jefferson 1981a:39-49) of her earlier remarks (arrow 2). This continuation is then heckled with a series of interjective disagreements by JK (arrows 3, 4 and 5). It can be seen that with her remark: 'unless they come under pressure from the kind of counselling organisation that you have in mind such as Life' (lines 4, 5, and 7) OM does not employ the procedure of third person reference and directly addresses her co-IE. Thereafter both IEs address one another, rather than the IR, in sustained disagreement and overlap competition (Jefferson and Schegloff 1975).
(OM and JK are being interviewed about proposed revisions to the legislation on abortion. OM's post response continuation of her defence of abortion referral agencies incorporates an attack (lines 7, 9, 11-12) on an anti-abortion organisation ("Life") which JK supports.)

1 OM: The point is .hhh that by and large when people seek
2 out an agency like that they have made up their minds. =
3 JK: 1 --> =Not necessarily because .hhh certainly the ones
4 OM: 2 --> Unless they come under
5 JK: 3 --> pressure from the kind of counselling organisation=
6 OM: 4 --> no
7 JK: 4 --> =that you have in mind, such as Life, which
8 OM: 4 --> =no pressure at all. =no.
9 JK: 4 --> =no pressure at all. =no.
10 OM: 5 --> No I- I've u- this is no-[there's]-
11 JK: 5 --> tries to make a woman feel guilty and takes no
12 IR: 5 --> responsability for the consequences
13 OM: 5 --> [ Now can I put one point to you. ]
14 JK: 5 --> [ Now can I put one point to you. ]
15 IR: 5 --> that I- I- I- as I hear you arguing yet again, 
16

In this case, where both IEs have abandoned the turn taking procedures for news interviews and abandoned the footing which those procedures sustain, the IR terminates the sequence (at lines 13/14) with a question whose preface sanctions the parties as 'arguing yet again'.

In sum, by managing their talk within the constraints of the turn taking system for news interviews, the parties not only establish and sustain the accountable identities of IR and IE but also maintain the stance that their talk is directed to an overhearing audience. Departures from this turn taking system occur, but are commonly associated with the use of ancilliary procedures for the maintenance of this stance. These procedures are ancilliary in that they emerge most commonly in the context of departures from the news interview turn taking system and they clearly serve to maintain the 'talk-for-overhearers' footing of the interview notwithstanding such departures. In the cases to hand, departures from turn taking procedures that are not associated with the use of these ancilliary procedures are the ones which encounter sanctions from IRs who simultaneously seek to restore both the turn taking procedures and the footings of the news interview by asking a new question.
6. NEWS INTERVIEW TURN TAKING AND THE MAINTENANCE OF IR NEUTRALITY

We now turn to consider the role of the news interview turn taking system in relation to the second dimension of the IR's task which was mentioned earlier: the maintenance of a 'neutralistic' stance over the course of news interview interaction. The IR's maintenance of such a stance is a facet of the broader range of external constraints that bear on news organisations in the UK and the US.

In the UK, which is the source of the data in the present paper, broadcast news organisations are controlled through a series of charters and licences which oblige them to maintain impartiality and balance in their coverage of news and current affairs and to refrain from editorial comment on matters of public debate or policy. Until recently the US Federal Communications Commission's "Fairness Doctrine" similarly required communications licensees to achieve 'balance' and to present 'contrasting viewpoints on controversial issues of public importance'. Notwithstanding the new climate of deregulation in US broadcasting, there is little sign that this new context has resulted in major changes in news practice. In the context of the news interview — in which professional journalists are treated as representatives of their employing news organisations, these obligations effectively translate into the primary requirement, noted above, that IRs should (1) avoid the assertion of opinions on their own behalf and (2) refrain from direct or overt affiliation with (or disaffiliation from) the expressed statements of IEs. Again as noted above, we refer to this as the requirement that IRs maintain a neutralistic stance towards the assertions of IEs.

There are a number of ways in which the news interview turn taking system contributes to this neutralistic stance. First, the constraint that IRs are restricted to asking questions is one which limits the assertion of opinions. In the news interview data that we have studied, IR questions are not treated as expressing IR opinions. Rather questions are uniformly treated as designed to solicit the IE's viewpoint on the matters which the question raises. This stance is massively preserved regardless of the extent to which the questions may be understood as 'hostile' or as presuppositionally weighted against the position of the IE. Let us return, for example, to the following exchange between Sir Robin Day and Arthur Scargill who was, at the time of the interview, a rival with the Scottish mineworkers' leader Michael McGahey for the presidency of the National Union of Mineworkers:
The question rests on two claims about the individuals involved: (1) that Mr. McGahey is a communist and (2) that Mr. Scargill is a marxist. Within the format of the IR's turn neither of these claims is overtly asserted as either a fact or as an opinion. Rather the claims are embedded within the question as factual presuppositions about the individuals involved (cf. Harris 1986). In his response to the question, the IE (Scargill) rejects one of its presuppositions — that he is a Marxist. But it is noticeable that this rejection (which is framed as an 'answer' to the question — note the answer preface "the difference is") is managed as the rejection of an error of fact (ascribed to 'the press') and not as the rejection of an opinion expressed by the IR. In this, and innumerable other cases, IEs treat IR questions — no matter how hostile or in other ways prejudicial to their viewpoints — as activities which are not accountable as the 'expression of opinion'. Further complex issues arise in relation to 'question delivery structures' that contain preliminary assertions and these will be dealt with later in this section.

Second, the restriction of IRs to the production of questions also excludes other forms of affiliative conduct which are otherwise commonplace in conversational contexts. Such IR activities as news receipts and newsmarks (which accept, or project acceptance, of the factual status of the statements to which they respond (Heritage 1984b, 1985a; Jefferson 1981a)) and assessments which overtly affiliate or disaffiliate with stated positions (Pomerantz 1984a) are not provided for within the turn taking system for news interviews and are generally absent from the data corpus we have worked with. Moreover, as we have seen, the turn taking system for news interviews does not even provide for the production of 'continuers' which, if they were produced, would not only undermine the footing of the interview (as discussed above) but in addition could potentially be treated as exerting an inappropriate influence on the shape and trajectory of IR responses.

In general then, the provisions of the news interview turn-taking system are strongly associated with the maintenance of the IR's neutralistic stance. In what follows, we explore this issue by discussing a range of departures from this stance that have emerged from our data base.
(a) IR Initiated Departures from the Neutralistic Stance

Professional IRs very rarely depart from their questioning stance to produce turns that are fully occupied with assertions or assessments that involve overt agreement or disagreement with IEs. Such departures, however, can occasionally be found in non-professional interviews. For example, in the "Williams in Conversation" data described above Williams briefly affiliates with an assertion from her ex-Cabinet colleague:

(17) (Williams in Conversation 1980:240)

Callaghan: There is at the moment a gap in our thinking. I think that's got to be filled. Because a number of the things for example that uhm .h Tony Benn says have got a lot to be- er- er- er- have got a lot in them. =I mean some of his analysis has got a .hh great deal in it.

Williams: --> Oh yes. He he's got a great deal of thinking. There's no doubt about it his are new ideas.

Callaghan: he's a- he's--he's a very fertile-

well uh he he he expounds these new and fertile ideas.

hh uhm And I think that we shouldn't neglect them wherever they come from.

Williams: The crucial question in a way is- I accept that and you yourself said in Wales after the election .hh you said our policies were not radical enough to attract the _hearts and

Here Williams departs briefly from the standard neutralistic stance of an IR with a turn that agrees with Callaghan's assessment of a fellow member of the Labour Party.

And in the following case which is from a consumer affairs programme and not from a bona fide news interview, a famous professional interviewer (David Frost) directly attacks the position of his interviewee. This notorious interview was conducted with a businessman, Emil Savundra, who had sold his auto insurance company — effectively liquidating it — leaving many claims outstanding. Savundra was subsequently tried and convicted for fraud.

The interview took place before his trial and was conducted in front of a studio audience composed of individuals who had claims outstanding against the company. Savundra sat facing the audience which was highly animated, while Frost addressed him from a standing position — frequently standing over him. It is noticeable that, under the pressure of audience reaction and the abrasive questioning techniques employed, Savundra intermittently comes to abandon the interview footing. For example, the video-recording shows that his remark at line 10 is directed to the audience
rather than David Frost, and he acknowledges Frost's question prefaces on several occasions (lines 13, 28 and 30) in ways that align Frost as a co-interactant rather than an elicitor of talk for overhearers.

In this extract, we particularly note Frost's direct accusatory disagreement with Savundra (arrow 1) and his subsequent direct alignment with the interests of the studio audience (arrow 2).

This interview was widely regarded as a form of 'trial by television' and indeed was cited by Savundra, in his appeal against his subsequent conviction for fraud, as having prejudiced a fair trial. In a summing up which strongly influenced the subsequent outlooks of UK news and current affairs producers (Tracey 1978), the appeal judge — commenting on this
interview — concluded that 'trial by television is not to be tolerated in a civilized society'.

Parallel cases to these rarely, if ever, occur in news interviews. Moreover, when news interviewers do depart from their role as questioners to produce turns that are wholly occupied with assertions or assessments, they are normally careful to employ alternative ancillary procedures to maintain a neutralistic stance. The most common of these involves a shift in footing such that the assertion or assessment is managed as an object that is issued on behalf of others. The following sequence illustrates this procedure:

(19)  (DP:27.9.81)
IR: .h How can it be otherwise if the result js .hhhh=
IE: =Because of the;[because of-
IR: almost a ]dead heat.
IE: Because of the seriousness of the position. .hhh
The fate of the people of this country,=and the fact that we're the only alternative government.=And they've gotta let that transcend hh any contest that they have among themselves,=
IR: --> =There will be quite a lot of Social Democrats watching
        --> who will say that the: .hh you are not the only
        --> alternative government.
IE: Well I heh huh you don't expect me to say anything good about the Social Democrats.=There's nothing good to say about them. (.) I mean they're not an alternative government ((continues))

Here, although the IR produces an assertion which runs counter to an aspect of the IE's prior claim, it is not asserted on his own behalf. Rather it is issued as a formulation of the standpoint of a segment of the news audience. In this way, the IR avoids making factual claims on his own behalf about the counter-assertion and hence avoids direct disagreement with the IE (cf. Clayman 1988, forthcoming a; Greatbatch 1986b; Pomerantz 1984b).

(b) IE-Engendered Departures from the Neutralistic Stance

(i) Inducing the IR to take a position:

As noted above, IR-initiated departures from the neutralistic stance are rare. More common, however, are departures that are engendered by IEs. There are several ways in which this may be done. First, and comparatively rarely, IEs may demand that IRS do something other than questioning by initiating questions directed at IRS. Such questions, once produced, may oblige IRS to abandon the 'safety' of the questioning stance. Their production is normally strenuously resisted — as in (10) — where, as we have
already seen, the IR is finally brought to a response to the IE's question (arrow) only after a lengthy struggle.

(O;21.4.81)

1 JG: ...despite the fact there were four major factories that
2 you knew about, despite the fact there was a two hundred
3 and thirty million capital investment programme that you
4 knew about, .hhh that we dealt in companies you stated
5 and restated today, .hhh despite the fact that ninety
6 one per cent of our companies are still there, .=.and only
7 the marginal ones which you knew were sold, .hhh and you
8 even mislead people by suggesting for instance that we
9 owned the Parisian publishing house Brooke. Why =
10 IR: =s- s- s- Sir James I'm so sorry ( ) I'm so s-
11 JG: =No, I'm asking a question now. =
12 IR: =It's more conventional in these programmes for =
13 JG: don't mind about convention, =I'm asking you why
14 IR: =me to ask questions, =
15 JG: (.)
16 IR: you distorted those facts.
17 (0.2)
18 JG: Well we didn't distort them. [ I mean er
19 IR: -->Well we didn't distort them. [ Well w- then did you

Here, it may be noted that once the IE's question has been produced, the IR is obliged to abandon his neutralistic stance in order to defend the substantive objectivity of the television programme team of which he is a member.

A related context in which IEs may induce IRs to take an overt position emerges from direct IE attacks on questions — as in the following case:
...Isn't the overall impact of this whole procedure we've seen. hh to: remind the country that the Labour Party is very largely in the grip of trade unions whose procedures are both ramshackle and undemocratic. hh and to call what's just happened hh an election of a deputy leader. hh is actually a farce. - And has just demonstrated hh to the country at large how the Labour Party's affairs are conducted. Yeah. that. that. that's good trade union bashing stuff but it's absolutely irrelevant. It's not trade union bashing at all, it's just describing the way things are. (I'll tell you.) I know. But let me. let me tell you why...((continues))

Here the IR responds to the claim (arrowed 1) that his prior question is biased against unions ('that's good trade union bashing stuff'), by flatly disagreeing and asserting that his question described 'the way things are' (arrowed 2). This counter-assertion, on this occasion, is allowed to pass uncontested (arrow 3).

In each of these cases, the IR is induced to take an overt position in order to defend the substantive objectivity of a prior broadcast (in (10)) and of a prior question (in (20)). In each case, the defence requires the IR to temporarily abandon his neutralistic stance as a questioner.23

(ii) Attacks on IR Question Prefaces:

A second form of IE-engineered threat to IR neutralism is more common. We have already seen that IEs usually collaborate in the IR's production of a question delivery structure by withholding response to the prefatory components of IR questions. For example, in (3) below, as we have seen, the IE withholds response to a challenging statement that prefaces a hostile question and only responds to that preface after he has dealt with the question itself.
...it's the press that constantly call me a Marxist when I do not. (.) and never have (.) er er given that description of myself. [hhh I-]

But I've heard you- I've heard

1--> you'd be very happy to: to: er .hhhh er describe yourself as a Marxist.
Could it be that with an election in the

2--> giving you're anxious to play down that you're a Marxist.

Not at all Mister Day.=And I'm (.) sorry to say I must disagree with you,=you have never heard me describe myself .hhh er as a Marxist.=I have o:nlly

In withholding response at the first possible completion of the IR's turn, the IE collaborates in the maintenance of the IR's neutralistic stance of one who is merely asking questions (cf. Clayman 1988).

This collaboration is not inevitable, however. The following cases involve IEs initiating disagreements with IR prefaces at or near their first possible completion points and thereby formulating those prefaces as contentious statements of opinion rather than merely 'background information'. In the first of these cases, the initial intersecting IE disagreement (arrow 1) amounts to little more than a well-prefaced 'underscoring' of an element in the IR's previous prefatory statement. The IE's second intervention (arrow 2) is also begun with a standard pre-disagreement object ('well') (Pomerantz 1984a), but the about to be produced disagreement component is immediately abandoned as the IR proceeds directly to the question component of his utterance.

([NAO:9.3.79]

((GR is one of 90 Tory MPs who have put their names to a motion of no confidence in a newly appointed national body for settling pay disputes.))

GR: .hhh er It's also very noticeable looking at the list of appointments and we've spoken about the appointments as a whole: .hhh that there's been a bias toward people who've been associated with the trade union movement itself, .hh or with er rather academic aspects of industrial relations, .hh and there's an apparent absence of er employers who might be called upon to (.) pay .hh monies .h er that are recommended.

IR: Well there's er mis- sir- sir- sir William Byland:u- formerly chairman of the Post Of[fice, there's mister

GR: 1--> [well- formerly chairman ] =

IR: =Gibson of of BP, are- the ~se people unfitted to sit in= GR: 2--> [Well-]
IR: =judgement on these matters. 

GR: [Well I- I- I- I- I-] the word unfitted is is is is perhaps a strong word to use, but after all Sir William Ryland is a former chairman of the Post Office,=he's= he's not responsible any longer for the payments of the money . . . hhh And Mister Gibson is the personnel manager.=I would have liked to have seen .hh er some people o- on that .h body: who er had some experience of the need to make the profits or to create the wealth necessary to finance the settlement.

(Continues)

This case exhibits what appears to be the standard IR procedure for dealing with pre-emptive IE responses to IR prefaces: namely, to proceed to the question component of the turn as directly as possible, in overlap with IE remarks if necessary, and in disregard of the content of those remarks. This procedure, which avoids overt acknowledgement of intersecting IE statements, thereby avoids acknowledging that the IR has been placed in a position of direct disagreement with the IE.25

In the case below, the IR's question is abandoned in the face of a determined attack on the question preface. Here it can be noticed that the IR attempts to proceed with the question preface across the IE's first two 'interjective' disagreements (lines 4 and 6), only subsequently acknowledging them at the end of line 7:

(22) (AP:7.3.79)

1 IR: .hhhh Lord Longford erm (0.5) we- we we do take a lot
2 of trouble (0.8) rehabilitating (0.5) criminals. .hhh
3 er: and long
4 LL: --> Well I don't- I don't ( ).
5 IR: [long term ] scheme for the criminals.
6 LL: --> No I don't agree with that at all (sir). 
7 IR: But we don't seem to-Sorry. ]
8 LL: [{} .]
9 LL: -Sorry ( ) I don't agree with that statement not at all-
10 IR: [I see. Well- ]
11 LL: I-I seem to spend a lot of money on it even if we do little.
12 IR: Well-
13 LL: Very little.
14 IR: =erm ((coughs)) What are your recommendations to giving the victim a better deal.

Here the IR's preface (lines 1-3, 5 and 7) is moving towards a contrast between the (allegedly substantial) efforts that are made to rehabilitate criminals and an assertion (initiated at line 7 but left incomplete) about efforts made to help the victims of crime. This contrast is interdicted by Lord Longford at lines 4 and 6, and the disagreement is reasserted at lines 9
and 11. In his revised question preface (lines 12 and 13), the IR abandons the projected contrast. His new contrast (between the resources devoted to the rehabilitation of criminals and the actual achievements of the program) both accommodates Longford's disagreement (by modifying his prior assertion) and supplies information which can be heard to warrant the earlier, disagreed with assertion from which he has retreated. It is only after this revised question preface, and after Longford has upgraded the IR's backdown by his uncontested intensification of the IR's contrast (line 14), that the IR is able to proceed to his question without further contest (line 15).

In each of these cases, the IRs compete in overlap with the IE's early response with the objective of getting to the subsequent question. In (21) the IR is successful in this objective, in (22) the IR is unsuccessful. Regardless of the success, or otherwise, of this procedure, the IRs' efforts are geared to avoid being drawn into a direct response to the IE, while simultaneously establishing — by the production of a question — a neutralistic object to which the IE should properly respond.

Finally, in the following case, the IE interjectively challenges (arrow 2) a lengthy question preface in overlap with the initiation of the questioning component of the IR's turn (arrow 1). In this case, the IR responds by abandoning the projected question in favour of one that counter-challenges the IE (arrow 3).

(23)  (NN:14.10.81)

IR:  ...I couldn't help noticing when uh .hhh Sir Geoffrey Howe was speaking this afternoon how while all your other ministerial colleagues were clapping uh .hh during his speech in between many of the things he was saying .hh you hardly clapped at all.=You hardly applauded at all. =Sitting as you were beside Mister Heath.

IE:  2--> [Come off it.

IR:  3--> d- () Well is it not true.=

IE:  =cu- Come off it.=() I clapped...((continues))

Here the IR maintains a neutralistic stance by a 'retreat' to a revised question that addresses the contested facts. He thus overtly offers the IE a chance to rebut an assertion which he had presented as 'background information' in his previous turn.
In concluding this discussion, it is instructive to compare two types of statement that may preface IR questions: third party referred statements such as that in (3) above (henceforth 'Type A' prefaces) and statements — for example, in (21)-(23) which are not so referred (henceforth 'Type B' prefaces). While type A prefaces are routinely treated as neutralistic in character (Clayman 1988, forthcoming (a)), type B prefaces are distinctive in that, considered in isolation, they are often vulnerable to a hearing that treats them as expressing a position attributable to the IR. They must, therefore, be supplemented by a question if the neutralistic character of the IR's turn is to be sustained overall. While an IE's response that is interjected between a type A preface and a subsequent question will not threaten the IR's neutralism, a similar interjective response to a type B preface may readily do so — especially in cases such as (21)-(23) in which the interjective response is one that constitutes the IR as in disagreement with the IE. IRs may thus be strongly motivated to compete with interjective responses to type B prefaces not only to proceed to a neutralising question and to offer something to which the IE should properly respond, but also to avoid being drawn into dealing with an overtly formulated disagreement with the IE. This motivation is absent in the case of type A prefaces and indeed it has become relatively common for IRs to package challenges to IEs' stated positions using type A prefaces without proceeding to a subsequent question — as in (19) above.26

**Excursus: A Note on the Hostile Use of Continuers by IEs**

In this section, we comment on the incidence of IE continuers as an incipient 'first step' that is adumbrative of attacks on IR question prefaces or other hostile conduct in response to IR questions. Within the turn taking system for conversation in which each current speaker is treated as initially entitled only to a single turn constructional unit (Sacks et al. (1974), the role of 'continuers' (such as 'mm hm', 'uh huh' and, to a lesser extent, agreement tokens such as 'yes') is relatively straightforward. Essentially it is one of 'passing' on an opportunity to speak and returning the floor to the prior speaker who is thereby entitled to a further turn constructional unit (Schegloff 1982; Jefferson 1984). By this means, a recipient can exhibit attentiveness to, and ongoing analysis and understanding of what a speaker is saying. This conversational role of continuers is predicated on the restricted access to multiple turn constructional units that obtains in ordinary conversation.
As we have seen, in the news interview, by contrast, each participant has rights to an indefinite number of turn constructional units. Because IEs are conventionally restricted to answering questions, IRs have opportunities to construct substantial question prefaces free of the risk of 'early' response.27 Similarly IEs, as we have seen, are expected to produce lengthy responses to IR questions. In the news interview turn-taking environment, therefore, the primary contingency that is addressed through continuers in ordinary conversation — access to more than one turn constructional unit — is dealt with by other means and the production of continuers is, in this sense, redundant.

Yet the production of continuers in the news interview context is by no means a redundant or insignificant activity. Their role, however, is quite distinctive in the news interview turn-taking environment. For whereas the conversational use of continuers is to entitle others to extend a turn at talk, their use in news interviews implicates that the user is actively 'entitling' a co-participant to an extended turn at talk and hence that the user is asserting the right to interdict (or not) the progress of the co-participants' turn. Such an assertion is, of course, sharply at odds with the turn-taking procedures of the news interview and their associated rights and obligations.

This use of continuers by IRs would constitute a significant departure from professional standards and is exceptionally rare. Thus the main environment in which this use manifests itself is, predictably, incipient IE hostility to an IR's line of questioning. Thus, in the following case from the controversial Bush/Rather interview on CBS, Bush responds to the opening of Rather's question preface with 'continuative' acknowledgement tokens (arrows 1 and 2) roughly positioned at the clausal boundaries of Rather's first turn constructional unit.

(24) (Bush/Rather:3.00)

Rather: You have said that y- if you had known: you said th't'f hed known: this was an arms for hostages swap, hh that you would have opposed it.=

Bush: 1--> Yes

Rather: =hhh You've also said that- that you did not =

Bush: 2--> Exactly. (M a n y-) May I-

Rather: =-know: that you:

Bush: 3--> May I May I answer that.

Rather: 4--> Th't wasn't a question. It was a statement.-

Bush: 5--> Yes it was a statement.=an I'll answer it. = The President=

Rather: Let me ask the question if I may first.

Bush: =created this program, hh has testified- er: stated publicly, hh he did not think it was arms for hostages.
Here Bush's acknowledgments take the form of agreement tokens (the second being an upgrade on the first). Such tokens, by comparison with passive continuers (such as 'mm hm'), are adumbrative of incipient speakership in conversation (Jefferson 1981b). For the reasons discussed above, they are markedly adumbrative of incipient speakership in the news interview context. Bush follows them with an overt request to 'answer' the question preface (arrow 3) which he then proceeds to do (at arrow 5) after his request has been rejected by Rather (arrow 4).

Es' use of continuers in news interviews is thus associated with (1) the abandonment of news interview turn taking procedures; (2) the abandonment of the 'footing' of the news interview that is associated with those procedures and (3) incipient escalation into either disagreement with a co-participant or attempted interdiction of the continuation of a co-participant's turn at talk. This tendency for the abandonment of the turn taking procedures for the news interview (and their associated footings) to be associated with conflict is also found in disagreements between IEs (see (16) above and, more generally, Greatbatch, forthcoming).

**Summary**

In this section, we have argued that IE compliance with the turn taking provisions of news interview interaction involves IE collaboration in the maintenance of the IR's neutralistic stance that is managed through the production of questions. Our proposal is that an IE who (1) responds to a question without challenging its presuppositions or character, having (2) permitted the IR question delivery structure to go to completion, thereby — at least temporarily — ratifies its status as an appropriate and valid question. Conversely, (1) IE challenges to IR questions — whether in the form of questions or of assertions about the character or presuppositions of IR questions — threaten that neutralistic stance. Additionally (2) interjective interdictions of type B question prefaces similarly result in such threats by constituting these kinds of prefaces as statements of IR viewpoints. In a majority of such cases, IRs seek to sustain their neutralistic stance by renewing a questioning stance as soon as it is possible to do so and by avoiding, as far as possible, defences that involve the assertion of positions on their own recognisance.

**Conclusion: The News Interview as a Social Institution: Turn Taking and Its Tasks**

In this paper, we have considered the news interview as a social institution, _sui generis_, that is constituted as such by a configuration of normative
conventions that is distinctive both from ordinary conversation and from other institutional forms of interaction. We have attempted to outline its turn taking system and to show the distinctive character of that system in relation to ordinary conversation. We have also sought to draw out some of the institutional significance of turn taking procedures in the news interview by pointing to certain of the specific tasks and constraints of journalistic that adherence to these procedures automatically handles.

Although complex in its ramifications, this turn taking system can be simply stated as the rule that one party (the IR) will ask questions, while the other (the IE) will answer them. This turn taking system is normative in character and, on occasion, may be overtly thematised within the interview as an object in its own right. A tacit orientation to it runs — like a spine — throughout the situated management of ordinary news interview interaction. Through their detailed respect for its provisions, the parties display their pervasive orientation to the institutional character of their talk and the relevancies of their local social and discourse identities as IR and IE. They thereby locally instanciate the character of their talk as 'news interview talk' on a recursive, turn-by-turn basis and, more broadly, reproduce 'news interview talk' as an institutionalised form of social interaction.

We have further argued that this turn taking system is pervasively associated with a central task and a core exogenous constraint of the news interview — the elicitation of talk that is expressly produced for an overhearing audience by an interviewer who should properly maintain a formally neutral or 'neutralistic' posture. Observance of the provisions of this turn taking system is associated with the appropriate management of these central tasks and constraints while departures from these provisions often render their management observably problematic. Thus compliance with news interview turn taking provisions is not the fetishistic maintenance of an empty form. Rather it is the most economical means by which the parties manage the quintessential business of the interview.

As we have seen, departures from these provisions are systematically associated with the employment of specific ancilliary procedures through which (a) appropriate IR/IE footings in relation to the overhearing audience and (b) an appropriate measure of IR neutralism may be sustained. But although observance of the turn taking provisions is therefore not the only means by which the business of the news interview may be properly conducted, it is nonetheless the 'default' means. News interview turn taking procedures form the centrepiece of an array of associated practices through which this outcome is achieved. In this context, it is instructive of the relationship between the turn taking provisions and the 'interview contract' that they instantiate that it is those departures which are unaccompanied by the use of alternative, ancilliary procedures that
threaten the underlying proprieties of the news interview. And it is these, in particular, that attract overt references to its turn taking provisions and engender strenuous efforts to restore a status quo ante that is managed in and through those provisions.

We conclude by stressing that the news interview conventions we have described and the proprieties they sustain bear all the hallmarks of a social institution as traditionally conceived within the discipline of sociology. They are culturally variable; they are somewhat subject to legal constraints; they are subject to processes of social change and they are the object of debate and discursive justification. The comparative and historical study of these practices has yet to be developed. The impact of technological change, political processes and pressures, economic competition between, and institutional dynamics within, broadcasting organisations has yet to receive an assessment. Similarly, the impact of these changing practices on the shifting political cultures of contemporary societies awaits investigation. It is here that the study of news interview talk as a social institution will intersect with the study of social structure. Prior to all of this, however, is the investigation of the practices themselves. Without an understanding of their dynamics and of the ways in which their historically variable configurations interlock to define the 'parameters of the permissible', social structural analysis will fail to reach the core framework through which the participants contingently, yet collaboratively, 'make the news' on a daily basis.

NOTES

1. Although this paper is based on UK news interview data, earlier work on news interview turn taking in the US (Clayman 1987) and the UK (Greatbatch 1985, 1988) has found overwhelming similarities between the ways in which turn taking is managed in the two countries. No information is currently available about non-anglophone news interview interaction.

2. We here follow Schegloff (1987) in referring to the object of conversation analytic work as 'talk-in-interaction' rather than 'conversation' because the interaction now studied using conversation analytic techniques embraces a much broader range of material than ordinary conversation per se.

3. For summary outlines of the CA perspective, see Atkinson and Drew (1979: 34-81); Goodwin and Heritage (forthcoming); Heritage (1984a: 233-92); Levinson (1983:284-370); Zimmerman (1988). Collections of

4. Early work by Sacks (e.g., Sacks 1972, 1973, 1974) and Schegloff (1968) made extensive use of data from institutional contexts such as group therapy sessions, and telephone calls to suicide prevention centers and emergency hotlines. However the published work on these materials did not involve an extended focus on their distinctively 'institutional' character.

5. Several recent papers deal with dramatic breakdowns in the normal or routine ways that 'institutional' interaction generally proceeds. In relation to the news interview, Schegloff (forthcoming a) and Clayman and Whalen (forthcoming) discuss aspects of the breakdown of an encounter between CBS anchor Dan Rather and (then) Republican Vice-President George Bush from a 'news interview' to a 'confrontation'. Similarly Whalen, Zimmerman and Whalen (1988) discuss a disastrous telephone call to an emergency hotline in Dallas, Texas in which, as a result of an interactional breakdown, an ambulance was not sent to a dying patient. These studies illustrate the generic methodological point that a 'context' of interaction — whether conversational or institutional — is something that is co-constructed by the participants to an encounter and that 'routine' exchanges — whether conversational (Schegloff 1986) or institutional (Whalen and Zimmerman 1987) — must always be treated as the contingent outcomes of a collaborative achievement between the participants.

6. A fine ethnographic study of encounters between social workers and clients (Baldock and Prior 1981) evokes a wide ranging permeability between a 'conversation' and a task-oriented encounter as a general feature of social worker-client interaction and notes a consequence of this permeability — a corresponding uncertainty, among many clients at least, about the purpose of the encounter.

7. IRs may, additionally, engage in non-questioning actions that open and close news interviews (Greatbatch 1985, 1988; Clayman 1987, forthcoming a, b).

8. Exceptions to this ordering may occur (1) in a multi-IR interview context when an IR may use a turn to allocate the next turn to another IR and (2) in a multi-IE interview context when an un-directed question may be answered by the IEs in succession without the intervention of the IR (Greatbatch 1988).

9. See Greatbatch (1988) for further details on this point and the other assertions of this paragraph.

11. For further considerations of turn taking in relation to the issue of the minimisation of turn size, see Goodwin 1981; Sacks 1974; Schegloff 1979.

12. In addition to the examples of IE with—holdings of response in the context of 'hostile' IR question prefaces that are discussed in the present paper and in Clayman (1988) and Greatbatch (1988), see also Schegloff's (forthcoming a) discussion of the opening question-answer sequence in the Bush—Rather encounter.

13. The data base used for the present paper was collected using audio tape. However video-taped data can show that participants exhibit still more fine grained orientation to the turn taking procedures for news interview interaction. For example, in the following case, the IE visibly restrains himself from responding to segments of the IR's question preface (at arrows 1 and 2):

(Nightline 7/22/85:4-5) ((The IE is the South African Ambassador to the United States))

IR: As Peter Sharp said in that piece it is a lot easier to impose a state of emergency than it is to lift it. .hhh You still have the root cause when you lift it. And black leaders in that country have made it very clear .hhhh that this kind of situation there's no way of stopping this kind of situation unless there is an end to apartheid. It seems to me .hh that by doing this by imposing I guess this kind of repression you-. .hh you really set up uh system where you can do nothing it seems to me

1--> #.hh when you lift it# except to change the system that exists there (. ) the basic system.

2--> #.hhh# Is that unfair? er

IE: Uh I- I would think it's unfair what is being said...

At each the arrowed moments, the IR has come to what, in a conversational context, could be a possible turn transition point (Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson 1974). At each of these points, the IE visibly gets geared up and ready to speak. Within the '#' marks at arrow 1, the IE licks his lip, opens his mouth (with a possible inbreath) and then closes his mouth again. Within the '#' marks at arrow 2, he opens his mouth (with a possible inbreath) butwithholds speech until the IR
produces the subsequent question. The initiation of these IE actions is organised by the turn taking system for conversation while their subsequent inhibition is organised by the more restricted turn taking system for news interviews. The IE visibly inhibits 'conversational' responses in light of the fact that he is in a news interview context and should act appropriately. Cases of this type thus exhibit both the priority of conversational turn taking procedures in the organisation of respondents' conduct and the normativity of their inhibition in the news interview context. We are grateful to Steve Clayman for permission to use this example from his data base in order to illustrate this point.

14. The fact that IE turns are conventionally 'long', together with the fact that the IR is deprived of response token resources (Jefferson 1981b, 1984) with which turn completion may be the object of negotiation, creates additional difficulties for the management of IE turn completion. The latter may be notably more difficult for IRs to project, creating turn taking dysfluencies — e.g., gaps and overlaps. For some discussion of how IEs project the overall shape and size of their turns, see Greatbatch (1985:154-8).

15. Thus in the following example, the IR indicates that this question is his last and should be answered briefly.

(WAO:15.2.79)
IR: Finally gentlemen and in a word,=do you regard this new deal between the government and the TUC as .hhh better than nothing=A constructive achievement, (0.2) or a non-event. .hhh (0.5)
IE: It (0.2) could be....((continues))

See Clayman (forthcoming b) for an extensive discussion of the management of news interview closings.

16. The following case, another aspect of which is discussed in more detail in the text of this paper, exhibits a related conflict over whether an IE has rights to undertake a response prior to the point at which a question has been asked. In this case, the IR attempts to resist the IE's response by asserting that his prior utterance was a 'statement' rather than a 'question'. As the data shows, however, this attempt is unavailing.
(Bush/Rather: 3.00)

Rather: You have said that if you had known:
you said that if you had known: this was an arms for
hostages swap, you would have opposed it.

Bush: Yes

Rather: Yes. You've also said that if you did not

Bush: Yes. I may have.

Rather: I know that you:

Bush: -> May I May I answer that.

Rather: Tha- wasn't a question. It was a statement.

Bush: Yes it was a statement. I'll answer it. The President

Rather: Let me ask the question if I may: first

Bush: Created this program, he has testified stated
to have publicly, he did not think it was arms for
hostages.

17. The extent to which IRs may challenge, probe or cross-question the
expressed views of IEs is historically and culturally variable. In the UK
context, for example, such challenges were generally absent until the
mid-1950s. See Greatbatch (1985:26-47) and Greatbatch and Heritage
(in prep.) for some discussion of this issue.

18. We here follow a usage developed by Robinson and Sheehan (1983:34)
when they distinguished between 'objective' and 'objectivistic' news
reporting. As they distinguished the terms, 'objectivistic' describes a
manner or style of reporting, while the term 'objective' is treated in the
conventional sense of a judgement about balance, truthfulness and the
absence of bias in the news. We use the term 'neutralistic' to refer to a
pattern of IR conduct which can escape formal charges of 'bias' —
whether in the interview context itself or beyond — while refraining
from any conclusions about the substantive neutrality or bias which
may be held in inhere in particular questions or lines of questioning.
For a subtle general discussion of a range of other aspects of what we
are terming IR 'neutralistic' conduct, see Clayman 1988, forthcoming a.

It has been suggested (Harris 1986:54-5) that previous publications by
both the present authors (Heritage 1985a; Greatbatch [1986] 1988) have
embodied claims that the restriction of IRs to questioning activities of
itself guarantees their 'neutrality'. If this claim were about the
'substantive' neutrality of IR conduct and had, in fact, been made, it
would be false. As Harris's paper shows, questions routinely embody
presuppositional elements which may be more or less supportive of IE
positions. Moreover other writers (e.g., Hall 1973; Schlesinger et al.
1983; Jucker 1986) have reported that different types of IE tend to
receive supportive or hostile questioning on a systematic basis.
However our earlier papers have specifically referred to the
maintenance of 'formal neutrality' and have specifically not made
claims about the avoidance of substantive bias, hostile questioning or,
more generally, the neutrality or balance of news interviewer conduct. It appears, therefore, that our use of the term 'formal neutrality' may have been misunderstood. We hope that our use of the distinctive term 'neutralistic' may serve to avoid any future misunderstanding on this point.

19. Clayman (pers comm.) notes of his US data that, by contrast with our data from the UK, IR continuation receipts do routinely occur as third components of IR-initiated repair sequences:

   IR: Repair Initiation
   IE: Repair
   IR: Repair receipt/continuer (e.g., 'mm hm')

The greater incidence of these receipts in US data, relative to comparable data from the UK, may be an indicator that the trend towards an informal 'conversational' style of interviewing is more advanced in the US than in the UK.

20. The following item from the Los Angeles Times (October 15, 1988, V/2) complains of 'on air' conduct among members of the broadcasting community that is conspicuously absent from the news interview form:

   "Why do TV reporter in the field talk directly to the anchor people when they give their reports?
   And why do sports announcers talk only to each other, as if they're alone at a game?
   And why are reports of "news only" radio stations directed at one of the staff members?
   The airwaves are supposed to be public. We, the audience, have been reduced to eavesdroppers and voyeurs."

The complaint of this letter is a minor index of an increasing tendency for news personnel to engage in informal interaction among themselves. It is a further facet of the general trend towards informality in broadcasting, briefly discussed in Heritage, Clayman and Zimmerman 1988.

We are grateful to Manny Schegloff for drawing this letter to our attention.

21. The main exceptions to this generalisation arise when the IE contests an IR statement in such a way as to undermine his neutralistic stance. See the discussion of (10) and (20) below.

22. The television program from which this extract is taken was an early example of an interview-discussion program focused on consumer issues. Current UK examples of this genre include 'Watchdog', 'Checkpoint' and 'The Cook Report'. In this genre, live or filmed interviews with aggrieved consumers precede an interview with the alleged wrong-doer. In this case, the interview subject had already been
portrayed as 'beyond the pale' before being subjected to aggressive cross-questioning.

23. Counter-assertion is, of course, not the only course of action open to an IR who is retroactively formulated as in disagreement with an IE. Other alternatives can involve (a) IR topicalisation of the contested matter via a question (a simple instance is (23) below), (b) IR retraction of the contested assertion, or (c) conflict elision. For some preliminary consideration of this issue, see Greatbatch (1985:231-8).

24. Note that the "well" that prefaces this 'underscoring' makes it clearly disagreement implicative (Pomerantz 1984a).

25. The following case shows the IR in a similar effort to proceed to the questioning component of a turn in the face of an IE's pre-emptive response to the question preface. In this case, the IE's early response anticipates a question that would (and did) imply a challenge to the impartiality of his sympathy for the dead and injured in Northern Ireland and the IR's effort to proceed with the question is designed to forestall that pre-emption.

(WAO:21.8.84)

IE: The death of Sean (Giles) was tragic. I've expressed my sympathy to his family, but it is the British who decided to use violence, to use murder, to use terrorism. If I could not have foreseen that, it was the British who decided to use murder that day. And it is they: (.) Margaret Thatcher who are entirely responsible for that murder, they are entirely responsible for the conflict in Ireland, and I think the British people having seen what is being done with their tax monies in their name: to Irish men, women and children. They must say to themselves that this is wrong: that we must consider this issue, that we must withdraw from Ireland. And allow the basis for peace in Ireland.

IR: You say you have sympathy for the widow and the child of Sean Downes. What do you have sympathy for everybody who has died in the past fifteen years?

IE: I have sympathy for everybody who has died in the past fifteen years.

IR: What did you have for the widows and the children of RUC men and British Army soldiers?

IE: I have sympathy for everybody who has died in the past fifteen years.

(continues)

26. We stress that this use of 'free-standing' third party referred statements as a legitimate IE activity is a practice of recent origin in the news interview and one that appears to be restricted to the packaging of IR challenges to IE positions (see also the data in Clayman (forthcoming a). Together with second party referred statements — or 'formulations' (Heritage 1985a), it appears to be the only type of statement formatted
turn that is currently permissible in UK and US news interviews. It should be noted that both types of statement involve a footing in which the IR avoids speaking on his own behalf — as the 'principal' of the utterance (Goffman 1981). The more general topic of the vulnerability of question prefaces to pre-emptive IE responses is a large and complex one. It is currently the object of investigation by both Clayman and Greatbatch.

27. The following case exhibits a lengthy (and 'hostile') question preface that proceeds uninterrupted to completion:

(WW:84)
PJ: ...has been happening.
Int: I tell you what I would like to press you on, and it's this, and I think you know that at least the preamble to this question is true. hh We'll see what you think of the question in general. hh Your admission you see (0.8) that there is a trade off here between the need to reduce this expenditure (0.2) and formally use democratic rights. hh will upset some Tories. hh Not all Tories agree: with the government's policy in trying to reduce expenditure like that. hh There might even be some Tories. hh who unlike even me me: don't think that public expenditure is an important issue anyway. hh But what they do think is hellish important (0.2) is local democracy (0.2) and running their own shit:res in their own way. hh Aren't you afraid that by what you have said to me: hh you may have made a rod for your own back and simply strengthened the arguments of those people. hh especially in the Lords. hh who think that local democracy is much more important than cutting expenditure.

PJ: =tch Well. hh e:r anybody who... (continues)

28. For a start on these topics, see Scannell (1988; in prep.) and Greatbatch and Heritage (in prep.).

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