

1 Introduction to sequence organization

One of the most fundamental organizations of practice for talk-in-interaction is the organization of turn-taking. For there to be the possibility of responsiveness – of one participant being able to show that what they are saying and doing is responsive to what another has said and done – one party needs to talk after the other, and, it turns out, they have to talk singly. It is the organization of the practices of turn-taking that is the resource relied upon by parties to talk-in-interaction to achieve these outcomes routinely: they talk singly – that is, one at a time; and each participant's talk is inspectable, and is inspected, by co-participants to see how it stands to the one that preceded, what sort of response it has accorded the preceding turn. The organization of turn-taking requires a book of its own; all we can give it here is a capsule review, which will appear below. Suffice it to say that the turn-taking organization for conversation works extremely effectively, and produces long stretches of turns-at-talk that follow one another with minimized gap and overlap between them.

A moment's observation and reflection should suggest, however, that turns do not follow one another like identical beads on a string. They have some organization and "shape" to them, aside from their organization as single turns and as series-of-turns (that is, as turns starting with a back-connection and ending with a forward one). One might say that they seem to be grouped in batches or clumps, one bunch seeming to "hang together" or cohere, and then another, and another, etc.

The most common tendency is to think of these clumps as topical, the turns hanging together because they are somehow "about" the same thing. It turns out that such a claim is more complicated than it initially seems to be, although we must leave for treatment elsewhere what these complications are (Schegloff, 1990:51–53). Whatever may be the case about topics and topicality, it is important to register that a great deal of talk-in-interaction – perhaps most of it – is better examined with respect to *action* than with respect to *topicality*, more for what it is *doing* than for what it is *about*. An utterance like "Would somebody like some more ice tea" – as in Extract (1.01) – is better understood as "doing an offer" than as "about ice tea," as can be seen in the response to it, which does not do further talk about iced tea, but accepts an alternative to what has been offered. (Digitized audio or video files of the data are available at the

following website: <http://www.cambridge.org/9780521532792>; transcription symbols are explained in Appendix 1.)

(1.01) Virginia, 11:16-19

- 1 Mom: = ' hhh Whooh! It is so hot tuhnight. *Would somebody like
 2 some more ice tea. ((* = voice fades throughout TCU))
 3 (0.8)
 4 Wes: Uh(b)- (0.4) I('ll) take some more ice.

When we think of clumps of turns in “action” terms, we are dealing with courses of action – with sequences of actions that have some shape or trajectory to them, that is, with what we will call “sequence organization” or “the organization of sequences.” Because much of what Conversation Analysis is concerned with is “*sequential* organization,” we would do well to take a moment to get our terms sorted out, and be clear on the difference between “sequential organization” and “sequence organization” as they are used here.

“Sequential organization” is the more general term. We use it to refer to any kind of organization which concerns the relative positioning of utterances or actions. So turn-taking is a type of sequential organization because it concerns the relative ordering of speakers, of turn-constructive units, and of different types of utterance. Overall structural organization is a type of sequential organization; by reference to its shape, some types of actions/utterances are positioned early in a conversation (e.g., greetings) and others late in conversations (e.g., arrangement-making, farewells).

“Sequence organization” is another type of sequential organization. Its scope is the organization of courses of action enacted through turns-at-talk – coherent, orderly, meaningful successions or “sequences” of actions or “moves.” Sequences are the vehicle for getting some activity accomplished.

Just as parties to talk-in-interaction monitor the talk-in-a-turn in the course of its production for such key features as where it might be possibly complete and whether someone is being selected as next speaker (and, if so, who), so they monitor and analyze it for what action or actions its speaker might be doing with it. One basic and omnirelevant issue for the participants for any bit of talk-in-interaction is “why that now” (Schegloff and Sacks, 1973:299), and the key issue in that regard is what is being done by that (whatever the “that” is). And the parties monitor for action for the same reason they monitor for the other features we investigate; namely, because the action that a speaker might be doing in or with an utterance may have implications for what action should or might be done in the next turn as a response to it. If it is doing a request, it may make a granting or a declining relevant next; if it is doing an assessment, it may make an agreement or a disagreement relevant next; if it is doing a complaint, it may make

an apology relevant next, or an account, or a denial, or a counter-complaint, or a remedy, etc.

So each turn – actually, each turn-constructive unit – can be inspected by co-participants to see what action(s) may be being done through it. And all *series* of turns can be inspected or tracked (by the parties and by us) to see what course(s) of action may be being progressively enacted through them, what possible responses may be being made relevant, what outcomes are being pursued, what “sequences” are being constructed or enacted or projected. That is, sequences of turns are not haphazard but have a shape or structure, and can be tracked for where they came from, what is being done through them, and where they might be going.

In this book, we will be asking whether there are any general patterns or general practices which can be isolated and described through which sequences – courses of action implemented through talk – get organized. Across all the different kinds of actions which people do through talk, are there any sorts of general patterns or structures *which they use* (and which we can describe) to co-produce and track an orderly stretch of talk and other conduct in which some course of action gets initiated, worked through, and brought to closure? If so, we will call them “sequences,” and we will call their organization “sequence organization.”

Before going much further, we need to be sure we share some basic understandings of what is meant here by terms such as “turns,” “turn-constructive units” (or “TCUs”), and “turn-taking” on the one hand, and by “action(s),” and particular types of action, on the other. To that end, the next few pages are set aside for two “capsule reviews” – brief and highly concentrated reviews of these two domains which figure centrally in the concerns of this book, each of which is meant to be the topic of its own installment in the larger project of which this book is a part.

Capsule review 1: turns

Actions accomplished by talking get done in turns-at-talk. What are the features of this environment for talking/acting-in-interaction? And how are the opportunities for action through talk distributed among parties to interaction? That is, from the point of view of a participant, how does one come to have a turn and, with it, the opportunity and obligation to act?

The building blocks out of which turns are fashioned we call turn-constructive units, or TCUs. Grammar is one key organizational resource in building and recognizing TCUs; for English and many other languages (so far we know of no exceptions), the basic shapes that TCUs take are sentences or clauses more generally, phrases, and lexical items. A second organizational resource shaping TCUs is grounded in the phonetic realization of the

talk, most familiarly, in intonational “packaging.” A third – and criterial – feature of a TCU is that it constitutes a recognizable action in context; that is, at that juncture of that episode of interaction, with those participants, in that place, etc. A speaker beginning to talk in a turn has the right and obligation to produce one TCU, which may realize one or more actions.

As a speaker approaches the possible completion of a first TCU in a turn, transition to a next speaker can become relevant; if acted upon, the transition to a next speaker is accomplished just after the possible completion of the TCU-in-progress. Accordingly, we speak of the span that begins with the imminence of possible completion as the “transition-relevance place.” Note: it is not that speaker transition necessarily occurs there; it is that transition to a next speaker becomes *possibly relevant* there.

Speakers often produce turns composed of more than one TCU. There are various ways this can come to pass which cannot be taken up here. Suffice it to say that if a speaker talks past a possible completion of the first TCU in a turn, whether by extending that TCU past its possible completion or by starting another TCU, whether in the face of beginning of talk by another or clear of such overlapping talk, then at the next occurrence of imminent possible TCU completion transition to a next speaker again becomes relevant.

But how does a party to the interaction come to be in the position of a speaker beginning to talk in a turn in the first place? There are two main ways. First, a just-prior speaker can have selected them as next speaker by addressing them with a turn whose action requires a responsive action next – for example, with a question that makes an answer relevant next, with a complaint which makes relevant next an apology, or excuse, or denial, or remedy, etc. Second, if no one has been so selected by a/the prior speaker, then anyone can self-select to take the next turn and does that by starting to fashion a first TCU in the turn-space they thereby claim; the first one to do so gets the turn. There is a good deal more to be said about this, but this will suffice for our purposes.

There are two features of *turn-taking and turn organization* that are most salient for readers to have a firm grasp of for our purposes. First, the TCU as a unit of conduct – readers should be alert to the TCU composition of a turn, to where a TCU is projectably coming to imminent possible completion, and what action or actions the TCU is recognizably implementing; and, second, that feature of a TCU that serves to select someone as next speaker (that is, that action), and what sort of responses that action makes relevant for that next speaker to do. It is these two features that, taken together, compose the central organizing format for sequences – the adjacency pair.

Here is one exchange to exemplify some of the points just discussed. Vivian and Shane (seated to the left) are hosting Nancy and Michael for a chicken dinner, and are recording it for use in a college course. Vivian has prepared the meal, and her boyfriend Shane has been teasing her by

complaining about this or that claimed inadequacy. In this exchange, he is doing this again.

(1.02) Chicken Dinner, 4:28-5:06

- 1 (1.1)
 2 Sha: Ah can't- Ah can't[get this thing ↓mashed.
 3 Viv: [Aa-ow.
 4 (1.2)
 5 Nan: You[do that too:? tih yer potatoes,
 6 Sha: [This one's hard ezza rock.]
 7 Sha: ↑Ye[ah.
 8 Viv: [It i:s?
 9 Sha: [B't this thing- is ↑ha:rd.
 10 (0.3)
 11 Viv: It's not do:ne? th'potato?
 12 Sha: Ah don't think so,
 13 (2.2)
 14 Nan: → Seems done t'me how 'bout you Mi[chael,]
 15 Sha: [Alri']who
 16 cooked this mea:l.
 17 Mic: → 'hh Little ↓bit'v e-it e-ih-ih of it isn'done.
 18 Sha: Th'ts ri:ght.
 19 (1.2)

The exchange starts with a complaint by Shane at line 2; Nancy tries to divert the exchange into “shared ways of eating potatoes,” but Shane is insistent at lines 6 and 9, and Vivian is taken in by the ruse at lines 8 and 11. After Shane reinforces (at line 12) Vivian’s concern that the potatoes are “not done,” insufficiently cooked (at line 11), Nancy joins in at line 14. Notice here the following exemplars of matters taken up in the preceding paragraphs: a) Nancy’s turn is composed of two TCUs: “seems done t’me,” and “how ’bout you Michael”; b) each of these is a grammatically possibly complete construction, and each does a recognizable action (the intonational contour of the first TCU is not clearly “final” for reasons we cannot take up here, except to note that it anticipates and projects another TCU to come); c) the first of these TCUs is addressed to the question Vivian has asked at line 11 – it answers that question in a fashion designed specifically to disagree with, or contest, the answer previously given by Shane, and reassures Vivian that the potato has been properly cooked; d) the second TCU is addressed to Michael – designed as a question that makes an answer relevant next, it selects its addressee as next speaker and the appropriate action: answering the question. It is also designed to put Michael on the spot – having to side with either his friend Shane or his partner Nancy and their host Vivian, a fix which he tries to finesse with questionable success.

Here is one more exchange to consolidate some of the points just discussed – this one a bit more complicated than the last.

- (1.03) Virginia, 1:6-16
- 1 (3.2)
- 2 Mom: (C'n)we have the blessi-ih-buh-Wesley
- 3 would you ask the blessi[ng] please;
- 4 Wes: [Ahright.
- 5 (0.2)
- 6 Wes: Heavenly fahther give us thankful hearts
- 7 (fuh) these an' all the blessings °ahmen.
- 8 (.)
- 9 Vir: >°Ahmen.<
- 10 (2.0)

This family has just sat down at the dinner table – Mom at its head; to her right, eldest child Wesley, in his mid- to late twenties; to his right his fiancée, Prudence; to Mom's left, youngest child, Virginia, 14; and, to her left off camera, middle child, Beth, 18, a college student videotaping the meal for a course assignment, and therefore minimizing her own active participation.

At line 2, Mom, on her own initiative (that is, self-selecting for next turn) produces a TCU (a sentential one) almost to completion. It initially appears (both on the page and in the video) to be a request for someone to say grace, but closer examination suggests that it was designed and understood as announcing the imminent saying of grace (by Mom) so that others might assume the appropriate posture and demeanor. As she begins her turn, Mom does not look at anyone at the table to whom "Can we have the blessing" might be being addressed as a request; rather she begins lowering her head to assume the appropriate posture for grace, and Wesley, looking at her and seeing this, lowers his own head to assume the same posture. As he does this, and as Mom reaches the fully lowered positioning of her head, on the "i-[ng]" sound of her utterance, she aborts the articulation of its potentially final sound, thereby preventing its reaching possible completion. In its place, she looks up and over to Wesley, and she produces a variant version of the utterance; it is now addressed specifically to Wesley (not only by visual targeting but by addressing him by name), who raises his head and orients it and his eyes toward Mom, showing that he has registered her targeting him as recipient, and displaying his alignment with that move (Goodwin, 1979, 1980, 1981). Her redone version of the TCU is now overtly fashioned as a *request* to him ("would you," "please") to do the actual "asking" of the blessing. So Mom has now produced a possibly complete turn, one addressed to a particular recipient, one which makes relevant a particular kind of response by that targeted recipient.

Wesley's response comes in two parts. The first part, at line 4, is apparently a possibly complete turn in its own right (of the lexical sort). It comes at just the place in the articulation of "blessi-[ng]" at which Mom, in her first version of this TCU, had cut it off, and begun its redoing; as well, it can be noted, the intonation contour at this point in the revised version of her

utterance is hearable as possible completion. Wesley's initial response is a "compliance token." First, we can note that he does not reply to Mom's utterance as a question with a "yes," although her turn had the form of a "yes/no" question. What he does is to display his *understanding of it as a request*, and to betoken his *acceptance* of the request. This betokening is not itself the satisfaction of the request, however; it is only a commitment to provide that satisfaction. The "ahright" is not, then, the possible completion of the turn, for the action it does projects more to come. Then, at lines 6–7, Wesley provides the action requested by Mom; note here that the performance of this action is done in talk, but it is talk very different in character than the "ahright." What he does at lines 6–7 is equivalent to passing the salt, had that been Mom's request. That is, the "ahright" gives an undertaking that he will deliver what has been requested; lines 6–7 is that delivery; it just happens that what had been requested in this instance was something to be articulated, to be performed, and so its delivery is done through talk.

The rest of this volume will be full of such turns: one making some sort of response relevant next, another providing such a response – although not always in the next turn, and not always involving separate commitments to deliver the response on the one hand and actual delivery of the response on the other.

Capsule review 2: actions

When we talk about "actions" getting done through turns-at-talk, what kinds of actions are we talking about? How do we determine what action or actions is/are getting done in/by some TCU? How do we know we are right in so characterizing a TCU's action(s)? Good questions all, which will need separate treatment in a work entirely given over to what we can call "action formation"; that is, what the practices of talk and other conduct are which have as an outcome the production of a recognizable action X; that is, that can be shown to have been recognized by co-participants as that action by virtue of the practices that produced it. Here we can at best provide an orientation to this sort of issue.

What sort of actions are we talking about? Well, in discussing the preceding data extracts we had occasion to refer to asking, answering, disagreeing, offering, contesting, requesting, teasing, finessing, complying, performing, noticing, promising, and so forth. And the pages to follow will feature inviting, announcing, telling, complaining, agreeing, and so forth. Two observations about these terms and what they are meant to name will be useful to register here.

First, not all the actions that demonstrably get done by a TCU can be referred to by common vernacular terms like the ones listed above. Unlike

the other main analytic stance concerned with characterizing actions – speech act theory of the sort primarily associated with the names of John Austin and John Searle (Austin, 1962, 1979; Searle, 1969, 1975, 1976; Searle and Vanderveken, 1985) – we do not begin with classes or categories of action named by terms like the above and deconstruct them analytically into the conceptual components that make some particular act an instance of that class.

Instead of starting out from the outcome action (e.g., What would make something a promise?), we start from an observation about how some bit of talk was done, and ask: What could someone be doing by talking in this way? What does that bit of talk appear designed to do? What is the action that it is a practice for? We try to ground our answer to this sort of question by showing that it is *that* action which *co-participants in the interaction* took to be what was getting done, as revealed in/by the response they make to it. And if, in the data with which we began, co-participants did *not* treat it as the sort of action we (as analysts) made it out to be, then we need to look to other data where that practice is being deployed and see if in that instance – or in those instances – it was understood to be doing the action we took it to be. If we find that, then we have strong grounds for a claim that in the instance we began with, the co-participants failed to understand correctly what the speaker was doing or, at least, that they acted as if they failed to understand it. So the first observation is that we start *not from the names of types of action*, not from *classes* of actions, but from singular bits of data, each in its embedding context, and seek out what – in that instance – the speaker appeared to be doing, and what in the talk and other conduct underwrote or conveyed that that was what was being done. Often proceeding in this way yields analyses of bits of data as “a request” or “an invitation” that are far removed from what we ordinarily think of as an instance of a request or an invitation.

Second, proceeding in this way can lead us to discover actions that have no vernacular name, that speech act theory could not ordinarily undertake to analyze. For example, sometimes one party does an utterance which agrees with another (so there is one way of characterizing it – agreeing); indeed, more than agreeing, this party’s utterance seems to confirm what another has said (so there is another way of characterizing it – confirming), and yet we notice that, instead of using the most common way of doing the “confirming” version of “agreeing” – for example, by “that’s right” – they repeat the thing that they are agreeing with, indeed, that they are confirming. Could they be doing something else by doing it in that way? If one follows this trail of inquiry, one can find new things, new actions, that we did not previously know people did. And, even though there is no separate term for this action (at least not in English), and therefore presumably no special concept of it, the conduct of the parties makes it clear that they understand something different by it than they understand by a conventional

confirmation, “that’s right,” or a conventional agreement, “yes, I think so too.” We cannot continue this search here; the outcome can be found in Schegloff, 1996a.

Because this book is about sequence organization and not about action formation, it will not be possible on each occasion of characterizing the action a TCU is doing, and thereby perhaps what a sequence is doing, to present an analysis that will underwrite that characterization; that will be the task of another volume. But it is important for readers to understand at least this much about our use of the terms that name actions.

One additional point will figure importantly in the undertaking which follows, and that is that a single TCU can embody more than one action, and, indeed, some actions which a TCU implements are the vehicle by which other actions are implemented. In all three of the extracts examined so far, questions figure centrally, but in each of them more is being done than questioning or requesting information. In Extract (1.01), Mom’s question is not (only) asking, it is offering; in (1.03), Mom’s question is requesting, but not information. And in (1.02), Nancy’s question to Michael serves to pose a dilemma which moves him to give other than a straightforward “answer,” and provide instead some support to each “side.”

With these resources made explicit, we can now return to the central pre-occupation of this book – sequence organization. Before taking our brief detour, we had posed the question, Are there any general patterns or general practices which can be isolated and described through which sequences – courses of action implemented through talk – get organized? If so, we will call them “sequences,” and we will call their organization “sequence organization.” We now return to address this question.

One very large set of sequence types seems to be organized around a basic unit of sequence construction, the *adjacency pair*. Most of this book will be concerned with this resource for talk-in-interaction, and its expansions and deployments. There *are* sequence organizations not based on adjacency pairs – for example, some forms of storytelling and other “telling” sequences (pp. 41–44), some forms of topic talk (although adjacency pairs may figure in such talk, even when not supplying its underlying organization, see below, at pp. 169–80), what will be discussed under the rubric “retro-sequences” in Chapter 11 below, and quite possibly other ones not yet described, perhaps because the settings in which they figure have been less studied (or not studied at all). But a very broad range of sequences in talk-in-interaction does appear to be produced by reference to the practices of adjacency pair organization, which therefore appears to serve as a resource for *sequence* construction comparable to the way turn-constructive units serve as a resource for *turn* construction.

In the closing paragraphs of the Preface, our ambition in this work was described as getting at the organization of “courses of action implemented

through turns-at-talk.” Both parts of that phrase are consequential: the turn-at-talk is being examined for the *actions* being implemented in it and the *relationship(s) between those actions*, on the one hand; and, on the other, the focus is on actions that are implemented through *turns-at-talk*. But, of course, not all actions are implemented through talk. How do actions not implemented through talk figure in this undertaking? How do they figure in adjacency pair organization?

Perhaps the most important sequence organization *not* basically organized by the adjacency pairs is that organized by other ongoing courses of actions which take the form, not of talking, but of other physical activity. That is, a very large domain of what we mean by “action(s)” refers to things done with the hands, as in Extracts (1.04) and (1.05), in both of which we see things being passed at the dinner table:

(1.04) Chicken Dinner, 3:15-32

1	Viv:	↑`hu:hh	
2		(0.3)	
3	Sha:	°Goo[d.°	
4	Mic:	→ [Butter please,	
5		(0.2)	
6	Sha:	Good.	
7	Viv:	Sha:ne,	
8	Mic:	↑ (Oh ey adda way)	
9	Sha:	eh hu[h huh hih hih hih-]hee-yee hee-ee]	[aah=
10	Nan:	[eh-heh-hih-hih-hnh-hnh]h n h-h_n_h hnh]-hn[h	
12	Sha:	=aah aah	
13		(0.5)	
14	Sh?:	°`hhh°] Shane passes butter to Michael
14		(.)	
15	Sha:	(Hih) .	
16	Mic:	ha-ha.	
17	Sha:	(Hih) .	
18		(2.3)	

(1.05) Housemates

video only; no talk in this extract except a bit of laughter

Another large domain refers to things done with the feet, as in Extract (1.06), where what is at stake is who is going to move closer to where the other one is; and yet another large domain involves things done with the head and torso, as in Extract (1.07), where a new sequence start is launched with a summons (“Hey”), which attracts first the eyes of the targeted recipient (which it does as the word “like” is said) and then a stable postural commitment (at “telephone”), and so forth.

(1.06) US, 3:10-23

1 Mik: Jim wasn' home, [° (when y'wen over there)]

- 2 Vic: [I didn' go by theh.]=
 3 Vic: =I [left my garbage pail in iz [hallway.=
 4 Car: [Vi:c, |
 5 Car: | [Vic(tuh),
 6 Vic: =Yeh?
 7 Car: → C'mmere fer a minnit.
 8 (0.7)
 9 Vic: → Y'come [he:re.
 10 Car: [You c'co[me ba:ck,
 11 Car: [please?
 12 Vic: I haftuh go t'the bathroom.=
 13 Car: =Oh.
 14 (3.5)

(1.07) Chinese Dinner, 11:11-17

- 1 John: Well I'd like to (wring his throat).
 2 (0.8)
 3 Don: → Hey would you like a Trent'n::, a Trent'n
 4 telephone directory.
 5 (0.2)
 6 Don: We-wuh- we got fo' . . .

Some "sequences of action" may not involve any talk at all (indeed, do not require another person at all). Some may have talk going on but not concerning ongoing other courses of action. Some may involve talk organized to be complementary to courses of action being otherwise implemented, and thereby be organized by the structure of the physical activity they are complementary to. Sometimes the course of action being realized in talk is "functionally" quite distinct from that being realized in other ways, and yet each has some consequences for the other. Sometimes an action done in talk gets as its response one not done in talk, as in Extract (1.04), where the request for the butter is spoken, but its delivery is not accompanied by talk; or, conversely, sometimes an action not done in talk gets as its response something done by talk.

There is, of course, a by-now substantial literature describing the organization of bodily action, a great deal of it focused on work settings, but there is not yet a broad framework for capturing in the participants' terms the sequential organization that orders the courses of action of single participants, let alone the coordinated conduct of several. There is, therefore, no reliable empirical basis for treating physically realized actions as being in principle organized in adjacency pair terms, and this matter will, therefore, not have a place on our agenda. On the other hand, there are exchanges which at least initially appear to map onto adjacency pair organization: either an initial utterance being done in talk and a responsive action being physically embodied, as in Extract (1.04), or an initial move being made non-vocally, and being responded to with talk. These we shall take as at

least potentially relevant to our central preoccupation, although we will not give them any special attention.

Our examination of adjacency pair-based sequences will be organized as follows. First, we will spell out the main features of the basic minimal form of the adjacency pair, and the minimal sequence which it can constitute (pp. 13–27). Second, we will explicate some of the ways in which sequences can expand well beyond the minimal, two-turn sequence which the adjacency pair itself constitutes – pre-expansions (pp. 28–57), insert expansions (pp. 97–114), and post-expansions (pp. 115–68), yielding extensive stretches of talk which nonetheless must be understood as built on the armature of a single adjacency pair, and therefore needing to be understood as expansions of it. In the course of describing these expansions, we will examine a key feature of adjacency pairs – their “preference” structure (pp. 58–96). Third, we will take up larger sequence structures to which adjacency pairs can give rise and of which they may be building-blocks – such as topic-proffering sequences (pp. 169–80), sequence-closing sequences (pp. 181–94), and sequences of sequences (pp. 195–216). Fourth, we will touch on some respects in which sequences and the practices which give rise to them can vary in particular contexts (pp. 220–30), and can be flexibly deployed in ways that give rise to non-canonical forms (pp. 231–250). At the end (pp. 251–64), we will take up some suggestions for using the materials that have been presented so that they can become part of the reader’s analytic resources, ready to be activated by the data you, the reader, have occasion to examine.

2 The adjacency pair as the unit for sequence construction

We begin with the most elementary features of adjacency pairs and their basic mode of operation.

In its minimal, basic unexpanded form an adjacency pair is characterized by certain features.¹ It is:

- (a) composed of two turns
- (b) by different speakers
- (c) adjacently placed; that is, one after the other
- (d) these two turns are relatively ordered; that is, they are differentiated into "first pair parts" (FPPs, or Fs for short) and "second pair parts" (SPPs, or Ss for short). First pair parts are utterance types such as question, request, offer, invitation, announcement, etc. – types which *initiate* some exchange. Second pair parts are utterance types such as answer, grant, reject, accept, decline, agree/disagree, acknowledge, etc. – types which are *responsive* to the action of a prior turn (though not everything which is responsive to something else is an S). Besides being differentiated into Fs and Ss, the components of an adjacency pair are
- (e) pair-type related; that is, not every second pair part can properly follow any first pair part. Adjacency pairs compose pair *types*; types are exchanges such as greeting–greeting, question–answer, offer–accept/decline, and the like. To compose an adjacency pair, the FPP and SPP come from the same pair type. Consider such FPPs as "Hello," or "Do you know what time it is?," or "Would you like a cup of coffee?" and such SPPs as "Hi," or "Four o'clock," or "No, thanks." Parties to talk-in-interaction do not just pick some SPP to respond to an FPP; that would yield such absurdities as "Hello," "No, thanks," or "Would you like a cup of coffee?," "Hi." The components of adjacency pairs

¹ Schegloff and Sacks (1973:295–96). A major resource on the adjacency pair may be found in the Sacks lectures for spring 1972 (Sacks, 1992b: 521–69); another early treatment is Schegloff (1968). Jefferson and Schenkein (1978) take a different view of what the minimal unexpanded unit of sequence organization is and what should be treated as expanded. What they treat as "unexpanded" is what will be later treated here as "minimally post-expanded," and involves the addition of a third turn. The Jefferson and Schenkein analysis is compelling for the data which they examine, but those data represent but one configuration of sequence organization, through which a particular kind of interactional dynamic is pursued. The account offered here is designed for different goals and, in particular, for more extended and general scope. It should be compatible with the Jefferson and Schenkein account for sequences of the type they address.

are “typologized” not only into first and second pair parts, but into the *pair types* which they can partially compose: greeting–greeting (“Hello,” “Hi”), question–answer (“Do you know what time it is?”, “Four o’clock”), offer–accept/decline (“Would you like a cup of coffee?”, “No, thanks,” if it is declined).

The basic practice or rule of operation, then, by which the minimal form of the adjacency pair is produced is: given the recognizable production of a first pair part, on its first possible completion its speaker should stop, a next speaker should start (often someone selected as next speaker by the FPP), and should produce a second pair part of the same pair type. The product of this practice and these features may be represented schematically in a very simple transcript diagram:

- A First Pair Part
B Second Pair Part

None of these features – (a)–(e) above and the basic rule of operation – is rigid or invariant, and they all require some elaboration. As part of their exploitation as a resource for sequence construction, adjacency pair-based sequences can come to have more than two turns (though still two basic parts), they can be separated by intervening talk (what will be discussed later as insert expansions), they can on occasion be articulated by the same speaker as a way of conveying two “voices” (though this use relies on the basic property that Fs and Ss are produced by different speakers), some utterance types can be used as both Fs and Ss (for example, complaint can be used to initiate a sequence but also in response to an inquiry; an offer can be an FPP but also a response to a complaint) and, under specified circumstances, as both Fs and Ss at the same time (as when someone asks you to repeat your question, and you do – thereby doing both an S in granting their request and an F, since in doing so you re-ask your question), etc. In the next several pages, we take up a number of observations about the minimal, basic unit, the adjacency pair, which elaborate its features and explore some of its flexibility.

Adjacency, nextness, contiguity, progressivity

Among the most pervasively relevant features in the organization of talk-and-other-conduct-in-interaction is the relationship of adjacency or “nextness.” The default relationship between the components of most kinds of organization is that each should come next after the prior. In articulating a turn-constructive unit, each element – each word, for example – should come next after the one before; in fact, at a smaller level of granularity, each syllable – indeed, each sound – should come next after the one before it.

So also with the several turn-constructive units that compose a multi-unit turn; so also with the consecutive turns that compose a spate of talk; so also with the turns that compose a sequence, etc. Moving from some element to a hearably-next-one with nothing intervening is the embodiment of, and the measure of, progressivity. Should something intervene between some element and what is hearable as a/the next one due – should something violate or interfere with their contiguity, whether next sound, next word, or next turn – it will be heard as qualifying the progressivity of the talk, and will be examined for its import, for what understanding should be accorded it. Each next element of such a progression can be inspected to find how it reaffirms the understanding-so-far of what has preceded, or favors one or more of the several such understandings that are being entertained, or how it requires reconfiguration of that understanding. For our purposes in this book, what will matter most is the relationship between successive turns; and what matters most immediately is the difference between the adjacent turns relationship on the one hand and adjacency pairs on the other.

The relationship of adjacency or “nextness” between turns is central to the ways in which talk-in-interaction is organized and understood. Next turns are understood by co-participants to display their speaker’s understanding of the just-prior turn and to embody an action responsive to the just-prior turn so understood (unless the turn has been marked as addressing something other than just-prior turn). This is in large measure because of the way turn-taking for conversation works; namely, one turn at a time – and, specifically, exclusively *next turn* allocation.² That is, as each turn comes to possible completion and transition to another speaker becomes possibly relevant, it is transition to a *next* speaker that is at issue. If the turn is to be allocated by the current speaker selecting someone, it is *next* speaker that is being selected; and if no selection by just-ending speaker is done and another participant self-selects, it is for the *next turn* that they are self-selecting. However this contingency is handled, each participant has to have been attending to the just-ongoing-about-to-be-possibly-complete turn to determine (a) if he or she has been selected as next speaker, or (b) if *anyone* has been selected as next speaker in order to determine whether they can properly self-select as next speaker, and (c) what action(s) are implicated by the just-ending turn, relative to which any next turn will be understood. Each next turn, then, is examined for the understanding of the prior turn which it displays, and the kind of response which it embodies, and this is endemic to the organization of conversation without respect to adjacency pairs. The

² Note that this discussion is focused on conversation in particular. Because different organizations of turn-taking can characterize different speech-exchange systems (Sacks et al., 1974:701 n. 11, 729–31), anything that is grounded in turn-taking organization may vary with differences in the turn-taking organization. It is a matter for empirical inquiry, therefore, how the matters taken up in the text are appropriately described in non-conversational settings of talk-in-interaction, for example, in courtrooms-in-session, in traditional classrooms, etc.

adjacency relationship taken up in this paragraph operates most powerfully *backwards*, each turn displaying its speaker's understanding of the prior.

The *adjacency pair* relationship is a further organization of turns, over and above the effects which sequential organization invests in adjacency per se. Adjacency pair organization has (in addition to the backwards import just described) a powerful *prospective* operation. A first pair part projects a prospective relevance, and not only a retrospective understanding. It makes relevant a limited set of possible second pair parts, and thereby sets some of the terms by which a next turn will be understood – as, for example, being responsive to the constraints of the first pair part or not. And, as we shall see, the adjacency pair relationship invests a specially indicative import in the relationship of contiguity between first and second pair parts. Even if they are in adjacent turns – that is, no turn intervenes between them – other sorts of elements may be counted as obstructing or violating their contiguity, with considerable interactional import being attached to such a positioning.

Alternative second pair parts

Most adjacency pair types have alternative types of second pair part, a matter to be discussed in Chapter 5 under the rubric “preference organization.” But some sequence types (a very few) seem to have only one type of second pair part. The prototypes here are greetings and farewells or terminal exchanges (“bye byes”). Although there may be a variety of greeting forms with which to respond (“Hello,” “Hi,” “Hiya,” “Howyadoin,” etc.), and a responder may have a favorite or signature, or aim to return the same as was received (or different), these are not alternative *types* of response; they all reciprocate the greeting. And the same is the case for terminal exchanges (“Bye,” “Seeya,” “Ciao,” “Cheers,” “Later,” etc.). Actually, with great regularity greetings and their responses are done with the same form (“Hi,” “Hi”), as are farewells (“Bye,” “Bye”), and we may note that, where there are not alternative *types* of SPP, the actual SPP utterance frequently is not different from the FPP (at least in its lexical composition). But, with very few exceptions, there *are* alternative types of SPP with which to respond to an FPP.

Counters

There are alternatives to doing an appropriate SPP next after an FPP, and they will be taken up as part of our discussion of sequence expansion (and in particular, insert expansion, in Chapter 6). Virtually all such alternatives to an SPP in next turn are understood as deferring the doing of an SPP until a bit later, and are done in the service of a later SPP. But

there is one alternative to an SPP in next turn whose effect is quite different, and it requires mention at this point. That next turn is the “counter”; that is, before (or without) responding with an SPP to the just completed FPP, the same FPP (or a closely related modification of it) is redirected to the one who just did it.

A familiar experience may exemplify this tack anecdotally, before a display of more determinate empirical instances. Readers may recall emerging with a companion from some entertainment or cultural event – a movie, performance, exhibit, etc. – especially one testing the boundaries of familiarity, and asking, “Well, what did you think?” or “How did you like it?” and getting back not an answer, but instead, “How did *you* like it?” or “What did *you* think?” or just “How about *you*?” These are counters; they do not serve to *defer* the answering of the question (though the one doing the counter may end up answering later nonetheless); they *replace* it with a question of their own. They thus reverse the direction of the sequence and its flow; they reverse the direction of constraint.

Here are several empirical instances. In the first, a mother and her child of just over a year and a half are looking at a children’s picture book together:

(2.01) Tarplee, 1991:1

- 1 Chi: F → What’s this
 2 Mom: F_{cnt} → er::m (.) yo[u t]ell me: what is it
 3 Chi: [°() °]
 4 (1.0)
 5 Chi: S → z:e:bra
 6 Mom: zebra:: ye:s

In line 1, the child has asked a question (an FPP), but in the next turn the mother does neither an answer nor a form of turn which projects later answering of the question. Rather, she redirects the same question back to its asker, for its asker to answer. Nor does she herself answer the question later.

The second instance is taken from a psychotherapeutic session:

(2.02) Scheflen, 1961:114, as adapted in Peyrot, 1994:17

- 1 Pat: F → Do you think I’m insane now.
 2 Doc: F_{cnt} → Do you think so?
 3 Pat: S → No, of course not.
 4 Doc: But I think you are.

In this exchange, the doctor does end up answering (at line 4) the question which the patient asked, and so his redirecting it to the patient and getting an answer (at lines 2–3) ends up having only deferred the answer, and inserted one question–answer exchange inside another. But, following the sequence, as the participants did, in real time, when the doctor’s question was asked at line 2, it did not project a later answer. It redirected the question, and could easily have been used to launch a line of inquiry by the doctor (e.g., at line

4, “Why not,” etc., or “Why did you ask me then?,” etc.). Again, then, the counter reverses the direction of the sequence.

In the third instance, Vic is a janitor/custodian, socializing with buddies in a local used-furniture store. His wife Carol comes to the door and “calls him” (lines 4–5).

- (2.03) US, 3:10-23 (previously appeared as [1.06])
- 1 Mik: Jim wasn' home, [°(when y'wen over there)]
- 2 Vic: [I didn' go by theh.]=
- 3 Vic: =I [left my garbage pail in iz [hallway.=
- 4 Car: [Vi:c, [
- 5 Car: [Vic(tuh),
- 6 Vic: =Yeh?
- 7 Car: F → C'mmere fer a minnit.
- 8 (0.7)
- 9 Vic: F_{cnt}→ Y'come [he:re. [please?
- 10 Car: [You c'co[me ba:ck,
- 11 Vic: I haftuh go t'the bathroom.=
- 12 Car: =Oh.
- 13 (3.5)

When Vic responds from a distance (line 6), Carol asks him to detach himself from his friends and come closer (line 7); this is a first pair part – a request. What it requests is a physically realized action, not one implemented by an utterance (though it is not uncommon that, when such a requested action is done next by the recipient of the request, it is accompanied by some utterance – for example, a compliance token such as “sure”). Such requested physically enacted actions are under the same constraints as talk-embodied ones would be: the first pair part makes relevant the occurrence of an appropriate second pair part, which should come “next.” In this episode, however, what comes next is not Vic’s compliance with the request, not the projected second pair part, but rather a counter; he reverses the sequence (line 9), and makes Carol the recipient of the same request she had directed to him.

In the fourth instance, Tony has called his ex-wife Marsha about the return of their teenage son Joey, who ordinarily lives with him, after the son’s holiday visit to his mother in a city some four hundred miles away.

- (2.04) MDE-MTRAC: 60-1/2, 1
- 1 ring
- 2 Mar: Hello:?
- 3 Ton: Hi: Marsha?
- 4 Mar: Ye:ah.
- 5 Ton: How are you.
- 6 Mar: Fi::ne.
- 7 (0.2)
- 8 Mar: F → Did Joey get home yet?
- 9 Ton: F_{cnt}→ Well I wz wondering when 'e left.

10 (0.2)
 11 Mar: 'hhh Uh:(d) did Oh:.h Yer not in on what
 12 ha:ppen'. (hh) (d)
 13 Ton: No(h)o=
 14 Mar: S → =He's flying.
 15 (0.2)
 16 ((continues))

In this exchange, Marsha's question to Tony at line 8 is not followed by an answer, even though an answer may be understood to be conveyed by implication in the following turn. Instead of answering, Tony asks his own question, a version of the same question but as seen from the point of view of the destination of a trip rather than from its point of origin. In effect, then, this is a counter to Marsha's question, and it is Marsha who ends up answering, not Tony (nor does Tony answer later). Here again, the counter reverses the direction of the sequence, and it reverses the direction of constraint.

What does that mean, "reverses the direction of constraint"? In order to make clear what is meant by "reversing the direction of constraint," we need to take up what we call "relevance rules," because the adjacency pair is one main locus of relevance rules, one place in talk-in-interaction where they have a specially notable bearing. Because this is an important topic in its own right, we will linger on it a bit, but the discussion will come back to the sense of "reversing the direction of constraint."

Relevance rules and negative observations

The organization of turn-taking provides a way (for co-participants and for us as external observers) to say non-trivially that someone in particular is not speaking, when in fact *no one at all* is speaking. It is by virtue of a "rule" or "practice" having been invoked or activated which makes it relevant for that particular "someone" to be talking. Even though no one is talking, it is the relevance introduced by a prior speaker having selected someone as next speaker that makes *that* person be specifically singled out as not talking, even when there is general silence.

But this is just a special case of a much more general issue, one concerning what we will call "negative observations." There is an indefinitely large and extendable number of things that have not been said, of events that have not happened, of persons who are not speaking, of actions that are not being performed by someone who *is* speaking. This paragraph has not so far reported who won the American Presidential election in 1992, or 1988, or . . ., etc. Any asserted observation of an absence is at risk of being but one of a virtual infinity of absent occurrences or activities, and in that sense a *trivial* observation or assertion (however true). For the noting of an absence to be *non-trivial*, we need a "relevance rule" that makes it relevant for something to happen or be done or be mentioned, etc. Then, if it does not

happen (or is not done or is not mentioned, etc.), it is “missing” in a different sense than the sense in which everything that does not happen is missing, and with a different import. We can then speak of it as a “noticeable absence” or an “official absence” or a “relevant absence.” Negative observations imply relevant absences, and relevant absences imply relevance rules. Noticing that someone in particular is not speaking constitutes a claim of sorts that this is a relevant absence (as set against the non-speaking of everyone else), and turns on some relevance rule that makes it so – such as a prior speaker having selected the noticed one as next speaker. The turn-taking organization, then, constitutes (among other things) a set of relevance rules.

Adjacency pair organization is also a major locus of relevance rules. What relates first and second pair parts can be termed a relationship of “conditional relevance.” “First” and “second” do not refer merely to the order in which these turns *happen to occur*; they refer to design features of these turn types and sequential positions. The very feature of “first-ness” sets up the relevance of something else to follow; it projects the relevance of a “second.” It is the occurrence of a first pair part that makes some types of second pair part relevant next; that relevance is conditioned by the FPP. If such a second pair part is produced next, it is heard as *responsive to* the first pair part which preceded. If such a second pair part is not produced next, its non-occurrence is as much an event as its occurrence would have been. It is, so to speak, noticeably, officially, consequentially, absent. The relevance of some turn type which can be a second pair part is conditional on the occurrence of a first pair part from the same pair type. Often enough, the person who can be observed (relevantly) to be “not talking” (by reference to the turn-taking rules) can be heard as well to be “not answering” when their “non-talking” follows a prior utterance which was a question. Thus, the silence in a room can nonetheless often be characterized (and, in the first instance, *heard*) specifically for *who is not talking*, and *what kind of talk they are not doing*. The first of these is furnished by turn-taking organization, the second by adjacency pair organization, and specifically by hearing to be missing the kind of second pair part (or *some* kind of second pair part) made relevant by a just-preceding first pair part.

But relevance rules contribute not only to how silences get heard, but also to how the talk itself gets heard. Just as not talking after a question can thus be “not answering,” so a great variety of talk after a question invites hearing as, and does get heard as, “answering” (even if, on occasion, “answering indirectly”). Academic inquiry is sometimes puzzled by how some apparently semantically unrelated talk gets heard as an answer, especially when trying to build the “artificial intelligence” for computers to answer questions “naturally” or to recognize answers. (For example, how can “It’s raining” – or even “Isn’t it raining?” – be a recognizable answer to “Are we going to the game?”) What is critical here is that the action which some talk is doing can be grounded in its *position*, not just its *composition* – not just

the words that compose it, but its placement after a question. Talk after a question invites hearing for how it could be answering, and invites it from those who can bring all the particulars of the setting to bear, rather than by some general rules of interpretation. Just as the questioner presents a puzzle of sorts to its recipient, so does the one who responds; that challenge is, “how is this an answer?” and “what answer is it?” At the same time, doing something which is analyzable/recognizable as a relevant second pair part is its speaker’s way of showing an understanding that the prior turn was the sort of first pair part for which this is a relevant second. Doing something which can be an answer displays an understanding of the prior turn as a possible question.

Adjacency pairs organize with special potency these relevance rules, which can imbue the talk following a first pair part with its sense or meaning, and can imbue the *absence* of talk with sense or meaning or import as well. Given, via the turn-taking organization, that the absence of talk can be an event in its own right, the adjacency pair’s relevance rules infuse it with a specifiable action import. The first pair part thus sets powerful constraints of action (what the recipient should do) and of interpretation (how what the recipient does should be understood) on the moments just following it. Relevance rules are a key part of the glue that binds actions together into coherent sequences.

The earlier observation that counters following first pair parts “reverse the direction of constraint” should now be more readily accessible. The recipient of some first pair part is put under certain constraints by it – either to do a relevant second pair part, or be heard as “not doing” such a relevant second pair part. We will see in Chapter 6 that recipients of first pair parts are not without resources for dealing with these constraints. But for now we should notice that “counters” take the very constraints that were just cast on the *recipient* of the first pair part and shift them back onto its *speaker*; they “reverse the direction of constraint.”

Upshot

What relevance rules do, then, is to set the initial terms for conduct and interpretation in the next moments following their invocation. They do not *define* those next moments and what occurs in them; virtually nothing in interaction is that unilateral. But it is by reference to a first pair part that what follows gets selected, done, and understood. The first pair part casts a web of meaning and interpretation which informs the surrounding talk. But “surrounding talk” can include more than just second pair parts. As we bring under examination more of the sequences which can grow out of adjacency pairs, we will see how much more, and where.

3 Minimal, two-turn adjacency pair sequences

Although adjacency pair organization provides a resource for the construction of sequences of various sizes, an adjacency pair in its basic, minimal two-turn form can itself constitute the whole of a sequence.¹

Minimal adjacency pair sequences are common, and virtually formulaic, in the opening and closing sections of conversations and other types of episodes of talk-in-interaction.²

In openings, for example, greetings and “how-are-you” sequences may run off as minimal adjacency pairs, as in Extracts (3.01) and (3.02) (previously Extract [2.04]) respectively:

(3.01) TG, 1:01–04

- 1 ring
2 Ava: H'ullo:?
3 Bee: F → hHi:.,
4 Ava: S → Hi:?
5 Bee: hHowuh you:?

(3.02) MDE-MTRAC 60-1/2,1 (previously 2.04)

- 1 ring
2 Mar: Hello:?
3 Ton: Hi: Marsha?
4 Mar: Ye:ah.
5 Ton: F → How are you.
6 Mar: S → Fi::ne.
7 (0.2)
8 Mar: Did Joey get home yet?
9 Ton: Well I wz wondering when 'e left.

¹ Some students of talk-in-interaction take the basic minimal size of a sequence to be *three* turns (Coulthard, 1977; Sinclair and Coulthard, 1975; among others). From this point of view, two-turn sequences are elliptical; they are missing something, ordinarily their third turn – a view which may reflect its origin in the study of classroom interaction. The discussion in the text which follows, and the numerous exemplars which are displayed there, are meant to ground the claim that the basic, minimal form of a sequence is *two* turns, and that sequences composed of more are expansions. On the former view, it is the absence of a third turn in a two-turn sequence which requires explanation. On the latter view, it is the presence of additional turns in sequences longer than two turns which requires analytic accounting.

² In what follows, single instances of such sequences stand proxy for vast numbers of virtually identical recurrences which it would be redundant to reproduce – although some of these sequence types may, of course, also occur in more-than-two-turn versions.

In Extract (3.01), the “Hello” at line 2 does not serve as a greeting but as a response to the summons embodied in the ring of the phone. Bee’s greeting at line 3 is what initiates the greeting exchange, the return greeting at line 4 is its second pair part, and the following turn initiates a new adjacency pair. And in Extract (3.02), Tony’s “How are you” initiates a sequence with a first pair part at line 5, Marsha responds with a second pair part at line 6, and a new adjacency pair begins at line 8.

In closing sections of interactional occasions, as well, various component sequences may be formed up as two-turn sequences, composed only of the first and second pair parts of an adjacency pair. Extract (3.03) is the closing of a telephone conversation in which Charlie has called Ilene to tell her that a car trip on which she had planned to get a ride has had to be canceled.

(3.03) Trip to Syracuse, 2

1 Ile: =Thanks inneh- e- than:ks: anyway Charlie,
 2 Cha: Ri:ght.
 3 Ile: Oka:y?
 4 Cha: Oka{y,
 5 Ile: F → [Ta:ke keyuh
 6 Cha: S → Speak tih you [()
 7 Ile: F → [Bye: bye
 8 Cha: S → Bye,

Here the terminal exchange at lines 7–8 is accomplished in a minimal adjacency pair-based sequence, as is the pre-terminal exchange at lines 5–6 by which the parties mutually converge on closing.³ These sequence types are generally accomplished through two turns. The exchange of “okay”s at lines 3–4 (which commonly form the pre-terminal exchange) here may represent the tail end of the preceding, extended “business” sequence of the conversation, and would then not exemplify the free-standing, maximally pared-down form of sequence which we are examining.

It is not only telephone conversations whose closings may be worked through with such minimal sequences. In Extract (3.04), Carol is leaving after a brief drop-in to an ongoing interaction in a college dormitory.

(3.04) SN-4, 5:32–6:04

1 Car: I don't want them tih see me when I l(h)ook
 2 t(h)his good.
 3 (0.2)
 4 Ru?: ((cough)) (H) (H)UH hhhh=
 5 Car: =N(h)o one des(h)erves it. ((hoarse voice))
 6 (0.2)

³ If the phrase “take keyuh” appears strange, it is because the transcript is designed to convey how the utterance was actually delivered, rather than how it is properly spelled. Ilene speaks with a marked New York City accent, and so her “take care” comes out as “take keyuh.” Readers who find some utterance in a transcript initially inaccessible might try saying it as printed to see if that helps grasp what was being said by its speaker.

7 (?) : Tch `hh=
 8 Car: F → I'll see you all later,
 9 Rut: S → Awri:ght,
 10 (1.4) ((door opening, Carol leaves))
 11 Mar: F → Where were we.
 12 (0.5)
 13 She: S → I dunno.= 've you been studying lately?
 14 Mar: No, °not et aw-° not et a:ll:. I hafta study
 15 this whole week.

Here Carol is finishing an account for not having brought an ice-cream sandwich which the others had expected, and then leaves with the start of a closing exchange (line 8) initiated with a common formula in closings, an invocation of future interaction (see line 6 in Extract [3.03] above), whose answering second pair part (at line 9) ends the sequence and the interaction (with Carol).

But Extract (3.04) also offers a display of a minimal two-turn adjacency pair which is *not* being used as part of the opening or closing (and is therefore not simply "ritual," as might otherwise be suspected). Carol's arrival had prompted a cessation of the interaction then in progress, and, following her departure, one tack (out of several alternatives) which the remaining parties can take is to return to what had been in progress, but was interrupted. This Mark seeks to do at line 11 (not surprisingly, perhaps, for it was he who was in the process of telling about a supposed "orgy"), but seeks to do with what might be called a "resumption search," a common occurrence after interruptions have run their course. Sherry at least prefers to steer the talk in a different direction, and, at line 13, first responds to Mark's resumption search, and then launches a new sequence of her own with a question (a new first pair part). The resumption search sequence ends up being a minimal two-turn sequence.

Even more remote from openings and closing are the final two instances to be offered here of two-turn sequences.

(3.05) Chicken Dinner, 3

1 Sha: eh hu[h huh hih hih hih-]hee-yee hee-ee] [aah=
 2 Nan: [eh-heh-hih-hih-hnh-hnh]h n h-h_n_h hnh]-hn[h
 3 Sha: =aah aah
 4 (0.5)
 5 Sh?: °`hh°
 6 (.)
 7 Sha: (Hih).
 8 Mic: ha-ha.
 9 Sha: (Hih).
 10 (2.3)
 11 Mic: F → Nance kin you- kin you cut my chicken.
 12 (0.3)

- 13 Nan: S → Do yer own c[ut(h)'n(h)n(h)n]
- 14 Sha: [Are those peas]any good?
- 15 (0.7)
- 16 Nan: [Ther good ^for you,]
- 17 Mic: [I don' know I I 'av]en' looked at['e m .] I]haven'
- 18 Sha: [Theh g]lood]faw you?
- 19 Who knowss:. Wuh wuh u-who aa-oodih you en authority?

(3.06) SN-4, 13:28–14:02

- 1 Mar: Hev en English takehome I 'aftuh do over the weekend, 'n-
- 2 (0.7)
- 3 Mar: study on Sunday 'n Monday,
- 4 (')
- 5 Rut: (°Oh: I'm s[:-(0.2) ((sn]eeze))
- 6 Mar: ['r that e:con test.]
- 7 (2.0)
- 8 She: F → Howijuh like t'do our dishes.
- 9 (0.6)
- 10 Rut: eh huh-huh
- 11 Mar: S → Can't wai:t.
- 12 Ma?: hhh hhhh 'hh
- 13 (2.2)
- 14 Kar: One a'these nights we gotta go swim la:ps.
- 15 Mar: (°Too narrow.) / (°Dinero.)

Each of the exchanges marked by the arrows involves a sort of request, but in both instances these appear to be done and understood as mock requests. In Extract (3.05), two couples are having dinner at the apartment of one of them, seated somewhat awkwardly on the floor around a coffee table, and one of the guests asks his companion to cut up the portion of chicken on his plate. Her rejection of his request is gradually infiltrated by laughter, progressively displaying an understanding that the request was not serious, or could be treated as non-serious. Still, serious or not, the request sequence runs off in two turns.

In Extract (3.06), a hiatus has momentarily settled over this interaction in a dormitory suite, whose occupants Sherry, Ruth, and Karen have been dropped in on by Mark. The silence is broken by Sherry's request (or "invitation") to Mark that he wash their dishes. The laughter of Ruth registers the non-seriousness of this proposal, which is very likely to be understood as on her behalf as well, for the request comes from the residents as a "party"; this laughter colors the turn to which it is affiliated (rather than responding to it), much as the laughter in Nancy's turn in Extract (3.05) colors her turn, and displays an understanding of, and a stance toward, the talk which it targets. It is, then, not a separate "part" or position in the sequence. The sequence closes with Mark's rejection of the proposal at line 11, which returns the state of talk to the hiatus from which Sherry had with

this sequence undertaken to extract it. Here again, then, a minimal two-turn sequence.⁴

It is clear that conversation does not lack for sequences fully composed by the minimal two-turn form of the adjacency pair, sequences which give no evidence in their execution or in the context surrounding them of being reduced, or elided, or missing some part. Indeed, unsystematic observation of interaction in real time (that is, not recorded data available for repeated examination) suggests that interactional settings which are badly under-represented in the data bases gathered until now may be even more common environments for two-turn sequences. I have in mind those interactions elsewhere called "continuing states of incipient talk" (Schegloff and Sacks, 1973:325), in which the participants are committed to co-presence by an event structure not shaped by the interaction itself. Sometimes this involves familiars, and even intimates, as with families in their home environment, co-workers in their work environment, etc., but it can include strangers as well, whose juxtaposition is wholly incidental, as with seat-mates on an airplane. In such settings, talk may proceed sporadically, in fits and starts, separated by long silences. Although there is at present no hard evidence, casual observation suggests that many such fits and starts may be realized in two-turn sequences.

Once having registered the robust presence in talk-in-interaction of sequences fully constituted by a single, basic, minimal adjacency pair, we need next to go on to note that a great many sequences involve expansion of this basic unit. Such expansions involve additional participation by the parties through additional turns (in contrast with expansion of the turns themselves), over and above the two which compose the minimal version of the sequence. These expansions occur in the three possible places which a two-turn unit permits: before the first pair part, in what we will call pre-expansions; between the first and the projected second pair part, in what we will call insert expansions; and after the second pair part, in what we will call post-expansions.

- ← Pre-expansion
- A First pair part
- ← Insert expansion
- B Second pair part
- ← Post-expansion

As we will see, various forms of expansion can occur in each of these sequential positions, by which the parties accomplish (or seek to accomplish) a variety of interactional outcomes. Expansion in each of these positions can

⁴ As will become clear later (in the discussion of "post-expansion"), these two-turn sequences are especially striking because of the rejections in them, a type of response which ordinarily leads to sequence expansion.

be substantial, and (with a few exceptions) expansion can occur in all of them for any given sequence. As a result, then, very long stretches of talk can be understood as elaborate structures built around a single underlying adjacency pair. In the chapters which follow, we will refer to this underlying adjacency pair as "the base pair," in contrast with its expansions.⁵

Indeed, the view underlying the orientation of this volume is not that they "can be understood" in this way, but that they *should* be understood this way, or even *must* be; and that many long stretches of talk cannot otherwise be understood for the coherent events which they were for their participants. If we take a unit like the adjacency pair to be the basic unit for sequence construction, then it is the *participants* whose unit it is, for it is *they* who do the constructing. And if talk is built around and between the parts of the basic adjacency pair in expanding it, it is the *parties* who do that talk, and design it for those places, as expansions and elaborations of that basic adjacency pair structure. If that is how the parties go about producing and understanding the talk and building sequences of talk-implemented courses of action, then that is what we must describe in understanding that construction of the interactional world, and giving a proper account of it. It is not, then, a metaphor only to say that very long stretches of talk may be supported by the armature of a single adjacency pair; it is a claim about how such stretches of talk were produced and understood by the participants, in their course, in real and experiential time.

⁵ And in the annotation of the data extracts, the base pair will be marked by the subscript "b" (F_b and S_b), and pre-expansions, insert expansions, and post-expansions will be marked by the subscripts "pre," "ins," and "post" respectively. The reader has already encountered this usage in the data included in the discussion of counters in the preceding pages.