

**UNDERSTANDING ‘STUCKNESS’:
DESCRIPTIONS AND INTERPRETATIONS OF
HOW EFL SPEAKERS AND A NATIVE SPEAKER
CO-MANAGE TALK-IN-INTERACTION**

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**This thesis is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

December 2006

Lancaster University

DECLARATION

This thesis is my own work, and has not been submitted in substantially the same form for the award of a higher degree elsewhere.

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December 2006

Acknowledgments

It is impossible to give due credit to all the people who have helped me in one or another along the way to the completion of this thesis. The people who encouraged me to move forward after completion of my MA include Donald Freeman, Nancy Clair, Julian Edge, Karen Johnson, and Kathleen Graves. Whenever I saw them at conferences, they simply assumed that I would someday join a doctoral program. Their belief in me strengthened my own belief in myself.

I would like to give special thanks to Jane Sunderland who introduced me to the ‘Thesis and Coursework’ Program which was just starting at Lancaster and who never failed to give me much needed support and advice. Dick Allwright has been a special friend who has graciously shared his ideas with me as well as listened to mine. Elaine Heron has been a steady source of information and support who always answered my questions both on campus and abroad. Then there are the three student-participants who made time in their busy lives to regularly meet to talk. Here is a precious example of students helping out their teacher.

I would like to thank Keith Richards and Martin Bygate for agreeing to read my thesis. I feel deeply honored to have their attention and comments. Then I must give special recognition to Eiko Nakamura and Scott Gardner who patiently read through *all* my chapter drafts and pointed out some of the mistakes that I had overlooked.

Then I could not imagine a more suitable supervisor than Greg Myers. This thesis was completed due to his insightful comments at every stage of its development. He always seemed to know what kind of feedback I needed to keep moving in the right

direction. Personally and professionally, he is the model supervisor that I aspire to be for others someday.

Most importantly, much of whatever I have been able to accomplish has been due to the help and presence of my wife, Eiko, every step of the way. Without her support the completion of this project would have remained some distant dream, not the reality it is today.

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ABSTRACT

Taking turns in keeping the talk going is a co-managed accomplishment. When the talk does not flow, the moment is noticeable and accountable. I am proposing the use of a new term, ‘stuckness’, as an organizational concept which describes certain moments in NS-NNS talk when participants temporarily lose a shared orientation as to who will take the next turn and what to say. Two related concepts are also introduced: *Flow* is the sequential moment where the talk proceeds smoothly to the next turn. Getting *unstuck* demonstrates the interactional work done by participants to address any uncertainties.

The talk examined belongs to a hybrid genre which has elements of both ordinary conversation and institutional talk. The data come from a series of talks between three Japanese EFL students and me over a span of ten years. The collection of recorded talks includes over 30 sessions of dyadic talk ranging in length from 20 to 60 minutes per session. Three rules were followed: (1) English is the language of use. (2) Each session would last for a certain length of time. (3) The NNS would tell the NS about daily activities and special events.

By tracing how one turn leads into another, three basic questions emerged: (1) When does talk flow in dyadic talk? (2) When do participants get stuck? (3) How do participants get unstuck? The findings highlight participants' resourcefulness in using topic shift, storytelling, repair, and formulation to maintain the flow of talk. The contribution of this thesis may ultimately rest in encouraging people (e.g., researchers, teachers, students, and in fact anyone who is engaged in extended talk in any situation) to take a closer look at what participants are able to do (regardless of being a NS or a NNS) to keep the conversation going despite occasional mistiming.

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Transcription Conventions

Introduction to transcription used

I generally follow the conventions used by Gail Jefferson. In Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson (1974), she explains the ‘conventions used in transcripts’ for overlap, latching, stress, prolongation. (See the appendix of their paper.) Then in Schegloff, Jefferson, and Sacks (1997), Jefferson provides additional explanation of ‘colons’ to show the stretching of preceding sounds and the use of ‘parentheses and numbers in tenths of a second’ to indicate silence, and ‘arrows’ to locate the particular line of phenomenon under discussion. (See footnote 7.) We see her consistent concern for transcript as an integral part of the analysis over the years particularly for overlap, laughter, and silence (e.g., 1983, 1985, 1986, 1989, and 2004a, b). Other guides to CA transcription which give credit to Jefferson are found in Atkinson and Heritage (1984) and ten Have (1999). Virtually all CA based papers follow her basic conventions.

Transcript conventions used in this thesis

I have tried to keep the original transcription found in published examples. For excerpts from my own data, I follow the descriptions found in ten Have (1999, Appendix A) which have been adapted particularly from Jefferson (1989, pp. 193-196). I have simplified some of the conventions to fit my purposes.

A Yeah [and

B [So you indicate overlap.

A I went home=

B= Me, too. indicate latching of turns.

→ the arrow locates the phenomenon under discussion.

Underline indicates stress on a word or part of a word.

(.) is an approximate pause of less than one second.

(2) silence of approximately two seconds.

(In some transcripts I timed with a stopwatch to the nearest tenth of a second.)

(()) is a description or explanation.

ah:::h indicates the ending of the preceding sound is stretched.

HHhhh indicates length of laughter with the upper case being louder.

↑ ↓ indicate shift to higher or lower intonation nearing the end of an utterance.

<That's really wonderful. > >I see.< indicate slower or quicker than surrounding uttered words.

Juku Japanese words appear in italics.

° Oh ° shows the word is spoken relatively quieter than surrounding words.

Chapter 1 Introduction: In search of my story

Introduction

1.1 Overview of this project

1.1.1 The data

1.1.2 The method

1.1.3 The genre

1.1.4 'Applied' CA

1.2 How my research has evolved

1.2.1 Teacher re-search

1.2.2 Data to analysis

1.2.3 Silence

1.2.4 Getting unstuck

1.3 Research questions and my concept of 'stuckness'

1.4 Conclusion: Looking ahead

1.5 Outline of the thesis

There are always two to a talk, giving and taking, comparing experience and according conclusions. Talk is fluid, tentative, continually 'in further search and progress'.

(Robert Louis Stevenson, 'Talk and talkers', 1910, p. 6)

Don't worry about how fast they are thinking. First of all, don't worry about whether they're 'thinking'. Just try to come to terms with how it is that the thing comes off. Because you'll find that they can do these things. ... Look to see how it is that persons go about producing what they do produce.

(Harvey Sacks, lecture of 1964 in 'Lectures on conversation', 1992, vol. 1, p. 11)

Introduction

‘Talk’ covers a variety of types, situations, purposes, and speakers. My interest starts with what happens when two people engage in the ‘giving and taking’ mentioned above.

Robert Louis Stevenson describes this exchange as ‘comparing experience’ and trying to make new sense of it in the process. There is a dynamic and rhythmic quality to the progress of talk as it is ‘fluid’ and ‘tentative’, but always goes on. The second quote by Harvey Sacks provides the idea of seeking understanding of talk not through what they are ‘thinking’, but the actions which are taken to accomplish it. In this thesis, I draw attention to how interactional talk can change from fluid to tentative and back again to fluid within a single social encounter.

Talk is usually orderly and continuous in terms of turn-taking. This is one of the observations made in the landmark paper in the field of Conversation Analysis (CA) by Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson in 1974. I will use this simple, yet complex statement as the foundation of this project as well as a springboard for delving into the depths of how particular moments in NS-NNS talk are co-constructed.

1.1 Overview of this project

I see the inquiry of my research as being one that is personally and professionally historical and evolutionary in nature. The two quotes portray talk as social interaction. This view represents both what has evolved in my own thinking and understanding about my own local context and what has remained constant in my interest and work as both teacher and researcher: How does conversation work when I talk to a student? What do

the two of us do with some sense of cooperation and interactional sensitivity to keep the talk going? What is this ‘giving and taking’ between two people in talk that Robert Louis Stevenson mentions? I want to describe and understand this aspect of talk. I will attempt to follow Sacks’s advice to see how people ‘can do these things’.

1.1.1 The data

This thesis as an ongoing project started with a collection of recordings of one to one conversations between students and me. In order to give readers an idea of the data, I will introduce the data in terms of the particular type of talk from which it was gathered. The dyadic talks in this project are between one student (at a time) and me. We share opportunities through turn-taking for *getting to know each other* better through speaking in English over a period of time both in the sense of each meeting and an ongoing series of meetings. The times we met varied from once a week to once a year depending on the student-participants’ schedule and situation (e.g., exams, job hunting).

The original purpose of these social encounters was simply to talk about whatever came up. In Japan this is popularly called ‘free talk’. The sessions were recorded with no specific purpose in mind beyond marking moments in time like in a family video. It was only later that a research focus developed. After joining the Lancaster program, I became interested in systematically exploring how the students and I manage to carry on a conversation. Then I began to wonder: What would I find by analyzing the patterns of talk without the primacy of instructing or learning language in such a situation? The series of recorded conversations with students are treated here as naturally occurring samples of NS-NNS talk. I came to this project with some data at hand and an intuitive

sense that there is something in the data waiting to be discovered about how participants display their efforts to communicate.

There is no specific measurement to mark or judge performance, progress, and accomplishment in our talks beyond simply keeping the talk going for a certain amount of time. Tangible benefits for each participant include: language practice for the student, collaborative practice for both of us (i.e., learning how to adjust our talk to each other), and professional development for me (e.g., how to get my meaning across, read feedback, and facilitate responses). The underlying feature connecting all of these benefits is the practical use of language to improve communicative ability as well as the experience gained in handling social encounters.

I believe that this body of recorded and transcribed spoken social interactions contains valuable information of how participants (despite one of them using his or her second language) are able to accomplish personally meaningful extended talks. Most importantly, these talks show a NS and a NNS engaged in a type of co-management that rarely if ever occurs in the language classroom. Possibly the fact that there was no transactional goal (e.g., paying tuition) or high stakes outcome (e.g., passing tests), unlike in many pedagogic circumstances, aided in the continuity of this project.

1.1.2 The method

I hope to demonstrate and persuade fellow teacher-researchers in particular that CA is a useful analytical method for examining spoken data and understanding how participants organize and structure their conversations (e.g., McCarthy 1991, 1998, 2003). However,

as McCarthy (1998) points out, very few teachers make use of CA. “Much of this sort of work ... remains little known to many practicing language teachers” (p. 20). Ironically, though we claim in our profession to prepare students to go out and talk in the real world, ‘suspicions ... abound’ about what is to be gained by studying the details of ordinary talk with all its apparent messiness of stops and starts and so on. This suggests that CA has not been presented in an accessible or convincing manner to non-practitioners. This thesis is intended to contribute toward encouraging more teachers to try it.

1.1.3 The genre

Gradually, I began to realize that what I had was a kind of naturally occurring talk data (not specially designed and collected for research). This hybrid form of talk appeared to be an ‘odd small’ genre consisting of a blend of teacher-student talk, classroom discourse, and NS-NNS talk. As for specific studies which have helped to identify the landscape, there is Wong (2000b, 2004) who looks at features of talk such as tokens, delay, and repair, Kasper and Ross (2003) and Kasper (2004a,b) whose examination of transcripts of oral proficiency interviews reveal how interviewers repeat questions, counseling talk including doctor-patient talk in ten Have (1991, 1999), and ‘small talk’ as seen in Coupland’s (2000) collection of papers which revolve around talk (e.g., chatting) without any transactional goal.

While the talks in my project do not seem to easily fit into any one particular genre of spoken interaction, they share features with several genres. For example, these talks have an institutional character in terms of a teacher and student talking, but without any of the clear transactional functions found in language instruction or evaluated performance. My

talks also share some of the asymmetric arrangements of institutional talk as seen in the roles played in professional-client or expert-novice discourse. However, there are attempts to make the talk more like ordinary conversation by toning down aspects of asymmetry and doing away with high stakes consequences.

Institutional talk (e.g., doctor-patient and broadcast news interviews) has become an increasingly popular area for CA research. (See Drew and Heritage, 1992, for an important collection of papers.) Relatively speaking little has been done with NS-NNS talk as ordinary conversation or small talk without the main concern being the NNS's performance for language learning concerns (with some exceptions like Egbert, Kurhila, Kasper, and Wong who also examine what the NS does to help or hinder what the NNS does). There is growing interest in seeing second language conversations (in which at least one speaker is using L2) as a shared discourse practice within a hybrid culture that is neither totally native-like nor nonnative-like.

1.1.4 'Applied' CA

The main approach used in this project is an applied form of conversation analysis (CA). I say 'applied' because the interest of 'pure' CA (of Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson, 1974) originated with naturally occurring data from ordinary daily conversation between native speakers. The analysts' goal is to uncover the organization of talk which allows for its accomplishment with a minimum of gaps and overlaps. The early data consisted of recordings of phone calls (e.g., call-in help lines). However, it would be misleading to give the impression that the main difference between pure and applied CA is in the type of data or the way of analysis. Differences between pure and applied CA are much more

subtle. The aim of the pure form of CA is to reveal the moment to moment social ordering as a practical cooperative accomplishment whereas for applied CA, the aim is to apply what we learn about this achieved social order to address questions raised in various social sciences.

Ten Have (1999) makes a distinction by pointing out that ‘pure’ CA concentrates on the features of localized practices as the study itself, while ‘applied’ CA considers how these features are structured through institutional constraints in the form of rules, rights, and obligations. Richards (2005) rightfully cautions us against reading too much into the ‘pure’ versus ‘applied’ issue in terms of a conventional theory-practice hierarchy where ‘pure’ is a superior form of research. He goes on to update the distinction not in terms of methodology or rigor, but by linking ‘applied’ CA with “the relevance of the research to training and professional development” (Richards, 2005, p. 3). Thus, the expansion of CA to include applied forms has allowed new areas to benefit from the CA way of analysis such as NS-NNS talk. Wong (2000a,b, 2004, 2005) provides relevant examples of data and analysis while Firth and Wagner (1997, 1998) and Wagner (2004) provide the argument and rationale for studying the interactive nature of NS-NNS talk as a co-constructed event. The type of analysis done by Wong, Pomerantz (1984a,b), and Kasper (2004a,b) in particular along with Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson, collectively and individually have informed, guided, and enlightened work in this area.

1.2 How my research has evolved

My continuous professional development concerns are ones shared by those teachers who also believe that research is an integral part of their overall work. Richards (2003) sees himself as a teacher who does research, not as someone in university who only does research. Freeman (2006) vividly describes the tension in teacher-researchers' lives as we constantly face a struggle to strike some kind of balance between being 'settled' as experts of our craft of teaching and being 'unsettled' in our pursuit through research of new understandings.

1.2.1 Teacher re-search

What happens when talk becomes disorderly and discontinuous? Once there is a recognizable problem for participants, how do they deal with it? These questions are the stepping stones into this exploratory endeavor to understand how talk is co-managed by participants as it unfolds turn by turn. Throughout my 25 plus years of EFL teaching and researching, this has also been my central concern. What I was searching for was an analytical method to make sense of the data that I had. I have tried to follow such conventional qualitative teacher research advice as looking for reoccurring patterns and tendencies (Bailey, 1992) without really knowing what I am looking for or what to do if I found them.

Collecting data is one thing, knowing how to analyze it is another. It has been my experience with qualitative forms of research which I have tried (diary studies, action research, teacher narrative inquiry, reflective practice, and exploratory practice) that the

teacher is the center of inquiry. My thoughts and perceptions, not the actual actions which took place between a student and me are the objects of study. I came to two conclusions: (1) I wanted to connect what I do more closely to what learners do. Surely we must influence each other. (2) I wanted to have analytical research skills in the sense of the skills a craftsman possesses. What was missing in my research was a commitment to a specific method of data analysis. I wanted to concentrate systematically on what the data could actually show me. (See Richards, 2003, for a similar view of what CA can bring to data analysis.)

As for collecting data of spoken discourse, obtaining a recording of an adequate quality cannot be taken for granted. I used to make video and audio recordings of classes of 40 students, but found the quality of the sound reproduction in particular was problematic (not to mention the accuracy of the transcription). Furthermore, not only was it time consuming to set up everything, but it proved to be disruptive to the usual teaching routine. The researched class invariably ended up being about my research concerns more than those related to students' learning.

I also tried looking at students' questionnaires and diaries, but felt I learned about their feelings as an observer without really getting to know them as 'real' people in face-to-face real time interactions. Here is a key difference between the mediums. Unlike with written work, to have a conversation, both of us have to be there at the same time to produce the talk. Thus, mine is an interactional interest of co-managing the shared moment.

With CA's commitment to understanding through description and interpretation, practical application might best be viewed through two questions which will be relevant throughout this thesis: (1) How can my research improve our understanding of what students are capable of contributing to the talk? (2) How can this understanding be used to take informed actions in concrete terms such as developing classroom activities, assessing oral proficiency, and training teachers how to talk to students?

The account of my teacher-as-researcher experience above identifies two important challenges faced by any researcher of spoken discourse: to be able to collect data of reasonable recorded sound quality and to find an analytical method to fit the data. By recording dyadic talk, we have some assurances of good sound quality of recordings over recording large classes or even a small group. Collecting 'small scale' data has the added advantages of relative ease in arranging sessions and flexibility of what to talk about. Without such a circumstance, I would probably not have been able to continue collecting data over an extended period of time. Having the right method for the data was a main concern. My project only began to take off when I decided to use applied CA.

1.2.2 Data to analysis

For ten years, I have collected audio and video recordings of conversations with some of my students. I started presenting excerpts of the video recordings at conferences (e.g., JALT 1995, Thai TESOL 1996, and TESOL 1996) to get some ideas from the professional community of teacher-researchers on what I could potentially do with the data. What struck some teachers was the potential richness of the data. However, they

also felt I needed a more systematic approach ‘to do justice to the data’ as they put it. I had barely begun to skim the surface by looking at students’ silence in terms of describing some of their nonverbal actions with speculative matching of meaning and action. (See Nakamura, 1996a,b,c.) CA offers me a systematic way to get deeper into the data by taking into account the interactional nature of the talk. Thus, attention to transcribing, describing, and interpreting the data became my analytical approach.

1.2.3 Silence

Certain moments of EFL classroom talk exhibit something of the phenomenon, spirit and curiosity in which this research project is undertaken. A familiar classroom interactional practice between teacher and students is for the teacher to go around the room and ask different students the same question. Based on their answers, the teacher decides what to do next: ask another question, make a comment, make a correction, move on to the next student, or produce a combination of two or more of these options. What I am interested in is when the teacher’s question and the student’s response do not appear to connect clearly: *Both* participants are waiting for something to happen when in fact one of them has to take the next turn.

In the sample below from a high school lesson, the teacher (T) in line 64 brings to an end her talk with the group 5 student and begins talking to the next student (S6) in group 6.

(1) Nakamura (2004b, p. 81-82)

64 T: You have a good sense of humor. Okay? Number six group, please.

65 Number six group. Have your parents ever told you to learn something
Japanese?
66 S6: ((stands up)) (3 seconds) ((looking down))
67 T: Yes or no?
68 S6: (2 seconds)
69 T: Yes or no? In your case.
70 S6: Yes.
71 T: Yes. Okay. What did they (.) tell you?
72 S6: (6 seconds) ((looking at friends and talking to them))

What I noticed in this sequence is that the teacher keeps talking to this one student despite his silence. While S6 never says more than a single word ('yes' in line 70), this exchange is revealing when looking at the silence and the turn-taking structure. Silence helps the analyst to enter the interaction and form an idea of how the participants are projecting their turns. For example, T responds to the silences in lines 66 and 68 as if S is taking his turns. The turn-taking remains intact: silence, question, silence, and question. T's reduced and simplified questions (in lines 67 and 69) seem to make it easier to answer.

Interestingly, what we discover after S6 finally answers ('Yes') is that T's initial question is more than a yes/no question. It is an invitation to talk about his childhood. In terms of teacher's expectation: Answer the question with 'yes' and then explain. However, S projects the question as to be literally answered. (See Nakamura, 2004b, for more background information and a detailed discussion of this interaction.)

This thesis is not primarily an examination of silence, but rather it is a type of exploratory research in search of a definition of stuckness which includes silence. Silence is one of various candidate indications which arise when participants appear to be stuck. When

there is silence, it could be related to some kind of confusion over who will take the next turn and what to say.

1.2.4 Getting unstuck

Returning to the classroom example, we saw S6 saying ‘yes’ in line 70. This response is followed by another question. However, the student does not elaborate despite further reformulated questions by T (not included in the extract). Eventually, S6 changes his mind and says, ‘no’. Then the teacher brings the exchange to a close by shifting attention to another student. Even when participants appear stuck for a long time, they can manage to get unstuck and complete the interaction. This implies that a conversational problem may turn out to be a temporary moment of readjustment. In fact, participants have other ways to get unstuck besides the teacher calling on a different student.

The following example introduces readers to the kinds of things that I am looking at in conversation. Participants are seen to get into trouble and then to get out of it. It also shows how the work to get out of it is shared in the sense of contributing linguistically in the orderly taking of turns.

Excerpt 1: Masako no. 2, swimming

82 I: ...Were many people swimming today?

83 (3)

84 M: Yes.

85 I: Really?

86 (6)

87 I: Do you (.) um (.) so this um this month how many times have you been to the
88 public pool?

89 M: Oh. Many.

Within this example are several of the elements which I will develop in this project. The silence in line 83 is immediately noticeable. This is followed by a minimal response.

After the receipt in line 85, there is a second gap (i.e., silence between turns). Line 87 shows a false start in asking a question, a hesitation token, repetition, and then a different question. Masako responds to the query with an acknowledgment token and answer. Her utterance in line 89 opens up the topic of swimming. In the ensuing turns, the topic gets developed.

Besides silence between turns, this example has a minimal response ('yes'), a continuer receipt ('really'), delay tokens ('um') along with repetition, and shifting question forms. These are the types of features of talk which I will explore in this project. Although Ian (the NS participant) talks more than Masako (NNS), this excerpt nevertheless reveals that both participants contribute interactionally to keep the talk going despite a few moments of uncertainty. (See Appendix A for the complete transcript.)

While extended periods of silence might have been the most noticeable characteristic of the previous two examples, the participants were still able to move the talk forward through regular turn-taking. This seems to support Carroll's (2000) assertion that even novice EFL learners display the ability to keep precise timing of their turns. As will be shown in the literature review discussion in the next chapter (2), talk involving NNS

participants with limited language does not necessarily mean they cannot be actively involved in conversation. It must be more than sheer knowledge of the language which allows NNSs to participate in talk with NSs as a daily accomplishment. In sum, through my initial interest in silence, I began to see there could be related resources which help participants. Precise timing of turn-taking seems to be a key method for participants' use of available resources.

1.3 Research questions and my concept of 'stuckness'

I will argue in this study that instead of focusing exclusively on individual actions, we need to also look at how both parties *interact* during a conversation. Once we consider the possibility that detailed features of 'talk-in-interaction' (Schegloff, 1987a,b) could be used by participants as resources for communication and accommodation, building descriptive accounts of how this process occurs can become the object of study. In order to facilitate the study of how talk is co-constructed, I have divided the interactions into three categories: when talk flows, when participants get stuck, and when they get unstuck.

The principle research questions which guide my project are:

- (1) What is the regularity of timing in dyadic NS-NNS talk?
- (2) How do participants get stuck?
- (3) How do participants get unstuck?

A related question is: When are silences and overlaps which are commonly seen as a problem *not* a problem for participants? These questions are designed to sharpen the focus on noticing, describing, and interpreting the details. Just as participants have ways of making talk flow and getting stuck, they also have ways of getting unstuck. Flow, stuck, and unstuck sequences are the sites which display how participants co-orient and co-project their turns. In real time and actual usage, the categories are not so clear cut as they may seem here, but I have organized them conceptually in this way for clarity of discussion. Describing how this is done leads us on the path toward deeper understanding.

One of the important goals of this project is to develop a robust definition of what I mean by ‘stuckness’ and how participants have ways to address it. Four basic ideas can help get the process started:

(1) Stuckness describes a temporary loss of co-orientation of *when* and *how* to take the next turn. This implies that stuckness is co-constructed within the sequence of turns as an interactional problem of coordinating turn-taking. Responsibility is shared as actions are conceptually placed in relationship to other actions.

(2) A NS is just as capable of getting stuck in talk within the sequential exchange of turns as a NNS though the indication of stuckness could be different (e.g., how to respond to questions or silence).

(3) As is seen in the first description, stuckness is about losing a kind of navigational sense of the turn-taking organization being used by the participants to steer the talk.

Stuckness presents a structural challenge to the participants who are interested in keeping the talk flowing turn by turn. Once we talk about structure and taking turns instead of lack of vocabulary or grammatical knowledge of the target language, we can begin to see the NNS as potentially possessing a degree of conversational competence (apart from second language knowledge).

(4) While the apparent focus is on stuckness, another point which is crucial in two respects needs to be introduced. First, stuckness is confirmed by the noticeable ways participants work together to get unstuck. Second, displayed ways of getting unstuck demonstrate that the participants are orienting to a certain problem.

‘Conversation’ for Sacks, colleagues, and followers is about co-participants working with each other to open, develop, and close a spoken interaction. However, there are times when the talk does not proceed as smoothly as expected. When people are stuck during a conversation, we see various things happen: silence, overlaps, repairs, and even change of topic. These displayed actions are available for the participants to use and researchers to analyze. (See ten Have, 1999, for clear samples of data analysis.) The resources are not controlling people, but rather people are deciding which resources to make use of at any given time. (See Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson, 1974.) I think this is an important distinction to make as I try to emulate CA’s disciplined insistence on studying the details *in situ* and resisting any urge to categorize the details *a priori*.

1.4 Conclusion: Looking ahead

As Heritage (1999) notes in his look at the end of the century and ahead at the next one, there is an inevitable movement within CA from its descriptive roots to social application. Though Heritage does not foresee an easy transition, he believes the worth of a research method is in its application. Seedhouse (2004) and Richards (2005) look beyond application to the more specific and thus difficult challenge facing applied CA studies, that of professional intervention. What would a CA informed classroom look like? Areas of consideration would include seeing learners as resourceful users of language; revising dialogues in textbooks to include more naturally occurring features of talk, and greater accountability of how the actions of NS teacher-interviewer-examiner shape talk with a NNS, particularly in high stakes circumstances. This will lead on to the kinds of applications that readers might more easily recognize and pursue themselves.

In Japan and most likely in other EFL countries as well, learning, teaching, and researching of the language has been traditionally centered on the complex structure of the rules which govern it. Grammar is a kind of DNA mapping of the language. What is happening in the field of chemistry (as explained by Roger Kornberg, the 2006 Nobel Prize winner in Chemistry) is that more than the structure of DNA itself, curiosity is increasingly focused on how DNA looks *in action*. I hope in a related way that the curiosity of teacher-researchers is moving beyond the grammar of the language to how language looks in action. Examining the details of how participants co-manage talk

through the mapping of talk in transcript form is one way to see talk in action. (See Nakamura, 2004c, for a review of CA as an analytical tool.)

1.5 Outline of the thesis

The central idea holding all the chapters together is that the participants in this project have various ways of moving the talk forward despite the holes, bumps, and cracks in the road. The details are there. It is a matter of uncovering them. In another sense, each chapter could stand on its own as a focused study of a certain issue, perspective, or feature of the talk-in-interaction. This chapter finishes with a brief look at each chapter in this thesis.

Chapter 1 has introduced the general features of this thesis along with a narrative of how I got started in this research. Next, a couple of sample excerpts illustrated the type of data analysis which was done. Then, I introduced the research questions and my concept of ‘stuckness’.

Chapter 2 reviews some of the key ideas which have evolved over the last 30 years or more both in and outside of CA with some connections. This leads to an explanation of how my project fits into the recent directions of studying NS-NNS talk. I start with summaries of non-CA studies which have been informative and end with showing how CA is increasingly recognized as a powerful interdisciplinary analytical tool for seeing details in the data. CA is not the only option or even a superior one, but by reviewing

relevant studies and positioning my study within the literature, CA seems the logical choice for examining the structure of spoken interaction.

Chapter 3 narrates details of the procedures used along with information about the participants. They were former students from classes which I taught. All the sessions took place outside the classroom as extended and non-instructional conversations of the type which would be impossible to have in the usual class lesson. The recorded collection of these naturally occurring talks was transcribed following the basic transcription conventions developed by Gail Jefferson. The transcript is the object of analysis.

Chapter 4 is the first of six chapters which make up the data analysis. While my main interest is in knowing what stuckness is, it is not the only characteristic of talk-in-interaction. Sometimes participants find that the talk flows. This is the theme of this chapter, to describe sequentially how the talk moves smoothly through turn-taking. Describing how talk flows suggests some ways of examining when participants get stuck through the contrast.

In **Chapter 5**, the attention is on what happens when participants get stuck. In some respects, this chapter is the most important one in establishing a definition of 'stuckness'. Whereas the term is mentioned in a general sense in earlier chapters, here excerpts will be used to illustrate the moments in the conversation which I argue are moments of participants getting stuck. Stuckness could be easier to see in comparison with when participants are not stuck.

Chapter 6, which is on ‘topic’, will introduce the organizational concept of ‘junctures’ where options for how to continue the talk present themselves. Topic shift is not only the wholesale change of a topic, but also includes slight changes to different aspects of the same general topic. This chapter marks the start of a four chapter (6-9) series on ways participants display getting unstuck. Participants will be shown in these chapters as being capable of re-orientating to getting unstuck. NS-NNS talk does not rely solely on proficiency of language, but rather on a range of conversational resources.

Chapter 7 shows how storytelling depends not only on the teller, but also on the responses by the recipient. Here the interest is not on the contents of the ‘story’ as much as on the structure of turn-taking and the contributions made to get the ‘story’ told by both participants. One way participants have of getting unstuck is through one person being the teller who elaborates and the other person giving timely responses to guide the development of the topic.

Chapter 8, on repair organization as a way to get unstuck, may seem to cover much familiar territory related to error correction. However, through an interactional perspective, I hope to show that repair, a general technical procedure encompassing any and all problems which participants take initiative to deal with, and stuckness, a narrowly focused sequential matter, are at times describing the same phenomenon from a different lens. In both cases, participants orient to the problem of taking the next turn by projecting how to solve it.

Chapter 9 is about how formulations can be used to get the talk back on track. Using formulations is an effective and convenient way of displaying to the other person what is being understood. Here is a resource which is at once both indirect and direct in providing valuable feedback. It can be indirect in a relatively non-threatening way of showing what is understood by the recipient without judging the speaker of the original utterance. It is direct as attention is drawn to the content (more so than the other three co-management devices above) in order to check linguistically what is being understood.

Chapter 10, the final part of the thesis, brings this project towards closure by revisiting the research questions and reviewing the features of talk which played pivotal roles in the ways participants orient to each other. Then there is mention of a few key issues and questions which readers of earlier versions of this thesis have raised as well as limitations. Current readers might have similar questions. These comments could help to develop the research further. The chapter then points to the contributions this project makes in how we understand NS-NNS talk. The contributions range from the introduction of the concept of 'stuckness' to what we learn about NS-NNS talk outside the classroom. Finally, bringing fresh ideas back into the classroom based on understanding of how talk naturally occurs should help students and teachers alike to carry on their conversations with greater ease, confidence, and appreciation.

Chapter 2 Literature review of analyzing spoken interaction

Introduction

2.1 Approaches to analyzing spoken interaction

2.1.1 Cross-cultural communication

2.1.2 Spoken discourse analysis in ‘mixed’ social, culture and gender contexts

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2.4 Conclusion

Introduction

In the first part of this review, I take note of various works outside of CA which have contributed to my evolving understanding of spoken discourse analysis. In the next part, I will review basic concepts, sites, and issues related to CA. I conclude that CA offers me an appropriate way to match method and research interest.

2.1 Approaches to analyzing spoken interaction

How spoken data in dyadic discourse has been analyzed is organized in the following review into three areas: culture, context, and learning. Gumperz (1982) on cross-cultural miscommunication and Tannen (1985) on framing of the conversation into sections provide helpful ideas for analyzing talk. For English language teaching and learning, we have well-known SLA studies such as Varonis and Gass (1985) that show how classroom interactions were analyzed.

2.1.1 Cross-cultural communication

At its most literal, cross-cultural communication could mean the comparison of cultural constraints found in one culture with another culture. Scollon and Scollon (1995) explain this view as communication between individuals not cultures as a 'large, superordinate category'. "Cultures do not talk to each other; individuals do. In that sense, all communication is interpersonal communication" (p. 125). The underlying assumption of this approach is that participants are likely to get into trouble and have misunderstandings particularly when they belong to 'different discourse systems'. So the lack of experience with speakers of different cultures is shown by not sharing enough understandable signs across cultures. How language is used in interaction, not language in or of itself might be the main problem. People need to convey and comprehend contextual inference and intended meaning through language in order to successfully communicate. The linguistic signaling and links to cultural and social knowledge is the site of investigation.

Through studies of detailed transcripts of service talks, Gumperz (1982) demonstrates how features of talk such as intonation could contribute to miscommunication when

there is a difference of interpretation between speaker and recipient. His studies have been important in calling attention to misunderstanding in NS-NNS talk through often overlooked details. Gumperz is interested in what he calls ‘conversational inference’. This is the process which participants use to assess and respond to each other. Through his detailed analysis of naturally occurring talk between participants of different ethnic background (e.g., ‘British’, West Indian, and Pakistani), he demonstrates how prosodic features of talk such as accent, rhythm, and intonation could contribute to miscommunication.

One of his contributions is to highlight how ‘social presuppositions and attitudes’ shape interpretation and expectation and how these contextual processes might not be shared by speaker and recipient. He argues individuals often learn another language at the grammatical clause level while still relying on their L1 customs and habits. Thus, we need to be aware of multiple factors present in the interpretation beyond grammatical and lexical knowledge. The ways participants interpret each other’s intentions draw attention to potential features of misunderstanding in NS-NNS talk. What is of special interest is his call for alternative approaches to account for how participants interpret “dynamic pattern of moves and countermoves as they follow one another in ongoing conversation” (p. 153). It is not necessarily the linguistic details which have been overlooked, but possibly the extra-linguistic contextual features of the exchange. This is illustrated in a seemingly innocent service talk between a bus driver/conductor and passengers.

(1) Gumperz (1982, p. 168)

Exact change please //

(When a few passengers did not have the money ready, the driver repeats:)

Exact change, please //

First one and then other passengers appeared bothered by the second utterance. One annoying feature according to Gumperz centers on the contrast of the first and second deliveries. The first time was relatively flat in a single tone group whereas the second time shows extra loudness on *please* with a pause before saying it (as two tone groups). In addition, *please* was said in a high pitch with falling intonation. Gumperz argues, “Tone grouping by itself ... is not an issue here. However, accent placement and tune do create problems” (p. 168) as the passengers interpret the driver’s delivery as rude and even threatening. The difference of expected accent placement as well as intonation can be seen in the driver’s stress on *change*. It would have been seen as more appropriate when accompanied by a rising tone rather than the finality of a falling tone. Gumperz points out how “prosody and paralinguistic cues function in signaling frames of interpretation” (p. 168).

The language could be the same, but how to use verbal skills to create the appropriate and shared context is another matter. His contribution is not only to shed light on the problem that both sides tend to ‘rely on their native discourse conventions’, but also to advise us that learned adjustments can only be made through sustained face-to-face contact with each other. He has created a forum for us to discuss previously unarticulated miscommunication problems in cross-cultural encounters. These participants are speaking in the same language and even live and work in the same part of the city, but seem to use the language differently.

While Gumperz's attention to situated details in the transcript such as intonation and recipient response in the next turn provides guidance for my own study, ultimately the questions he is interested in answering (e.g., What are the reasons for miscommunication?) are different from mine. In the study above, Gumperz looks for answers by comparing contextual conventions of prosody and paralinguistic signals of 'British' and West Indian normal conversational practices. Assessing the linguistic abilities and styles of the NNS particularly in comparison with the NS participant in terms of differences in L1 discourse styles and how they might clash is an important consideration that surely impacts on the interaction (in an inter-cultural sense). Gumperz's illuminating examples focus on the *asynchrony* of interpretations whereas my interest is in the *synchrony* which participants try to maintain through coordinating the interpretations.

2.1.2 Spoken discourse analysis in 'mixed' social, culture and gender contexts

Tannen provides a fitting transition from a cross-cultural approach to a general spoken discourse analysis as her work spans an impressive range of relevant social interactional areas of interest: cross-cultural work with Gumperz (1979), NS talk as cross-cultural talk (1984), silence as communication with Saville-Torike (1985), doctor-patient talk with Wallat (1987), and her numerous books on gender differences in communication. One of her contributions is to analyze conversations according to 'frames' or what have also been referred to as 'schema' or 'speech activity'. These terms according to Tannen, 'reflect the notion of structures of expectation'. When examining the transcript, what are important to identify are the openings and closings of these frames.

The conversational challenge for participants in her study with Wallat of a doctor talking to both the child patient and her mother is to find common frames of reference. The frames are interactive in the sense that parties need to be in the same frame in order to understand the intention behind what is said. They need to engage in the same activity for meaning to be clear. As Tannen and Wallat explain it, “In order to comprehend any utterance, a listener (and a speaker) must know within which frame it is *intended*” (p. 348) (my emphasis). In addition to these interactive frames which are being negotiated and aligned, there is each person’s ‘knowledge schema’. This refers to “participants’ *expectations* about people, objects, events and settings in the world” (p. 349) (my emphasis).

The analyst’s interpretation of how turns are taken is based on sorting out this mixture of expertise, expectations, and concerns and considering how they are acted upon within the interaction. There are problems which arise and need to be dealt with by the participants such as a gap in medical knowledge, interpretation of what the symptoms may indicate, or even agreement on what they are talking about. For example, the doctor may want to explain what the symptoms mean while the mother may want to know how long they will last. One way observed in their talk to cope with conflict is to change the frames of roles and topics. Framing discourse is helpful in seeing how conversation is co-constructed through its ongoing organization around topics and roles. The activity and knowledge (professional vs. personal) were negotiated for the mother to understand. “Thus frames and schemas interacted in her comprehension of the specific utterance” (p. 350).

Gumperz's (1982) framework of identifying details of discourse to explain miscommunication in cross-cultural encounters has been influential in other areas as well. For example, Maltz and Borker (1982) argue that problems in cross-sex communication could be understood in similar terms as cross-cultural explanations of speaking the same language and living in the same place, but relying on different habits and beliefs about participation in talk. Goodwin (1980) is instrumental in promoting the idea of boys and girls picking up different conversational styles by playing in predominantly same-sex environments.

Jane Sunderland says, 'Gender is everywhere'. After all, two of the three student-participants in my study are females talking to a male teacher-participant. Besides appreciating gender as a prevailing social factor in any talk, methodologically, some gender based studies are of interest in how they analyze spoken discourse. Maltz and Borker (1982) following Gumperz's lead investigate cross-sex differences in talk. They look at men and women's uses of minimal responses such as 'mhm', 'uhuh', and 'yeah'. Women tend to use them more than men. They suggest that women appear to use these particles to say 'I'm listening', while for men 'I agree'. Their work is helpful in drawing attention to how these particles keep the talking going by responding to the prior turn and also how they provide an idea of possible meaning and pattern.

Another relevant feature of talk which I am interested in is 'overlap'. In Tannen's (1984) Thanksgiving dinner conversation among friends, she argues for cross-cultural differences occurring even among people of the same country, in a similar vein as Gumperz's studies. Where Gumperz looks at intonation, Tannen looks at overlapping talk among the guests. Overlap could be interpreted by some as enthusiastic rapport

(as the New Yorkers did) or as interruption by others (the non-New Yorkers).

‘Overlap’ is a description of simultaneous talk whereas ‘interruption’ is a judgment.

Our interpretations could be the source of miscommunication. There is no fixed meaning, so the details in interaction need to be examined.

In contrast to these studies, my interest is on how communication continues despite differences in culture, gender, and discourse style. Thus they ask different questions from mine. They ask what causes miscommunication whereas I ask what allows two people to continue talking to each other. These previous studies inform my analytical method rather than beliefs. Looking at details of the talk (e.g., intonation, particles, and overlap) gives insights into some of the devices which participants are using to keep connected on a turn by turn basis.

I conclude this part with a view which helps put the review thus far into perspective.

Uchida (1992) challenges the basic assumption of the cross-sex and cross-cultural approaches to look for differences rooted in growing up with different habits and styles. Ideas based on how same-sex or same-culture peers talk to each other do not fully account for how they talk and interact with the other-sex or other-culture people. As Uchida explains, “the issue of female-male communication becomes relevant only if we assume that these differences are static and constant, and will directly be carried over from same-sex conversation” (p. 284). The upshot is that a ‘cross-comparison’ study tends not to consider an individual’s ability and willingness (or potential development of skills) to be sensitive to the other’s point of view and adapt his or her speech to the other person in order to get along.

The questions I ask lead us to look at the most basic structure of spoken interaction: the organization of the taking of turns. There are social orientations in my analysis, but I do not assume the relevance of social categories at the onset. This distinction is noted here as it becomes a key issue of contention in the following discussion.

2.1.3 English language teaching and learning

Second language acquisition (SLA) plays a significant role in building the theory of how students learn language. This in turn influences teacher education programs which supplies teachers with recommendations of how to teach more effectively in the classroom. Research in SLA focuses on what students do to learn and ultimately acquire a second language systematically through classroom instruction. Kasper (1997) succinctly explains the commitment of SLA as ‘A’ stands for acquisition. Error correction of non-native utterances is important as the status and roles of the participants are clear: the expert and the novice learner.

SLA is helpful for understanding NS-NNS talk as a co-constructed and negotiated interaction. Long (1981) points out that the NS tends to modify input and the interactional structure in talks with a NNS by speaking more simply in terms of grammar and vocabulary, and requesting more clarifications (than found in NS-NS talk). Long (1983) further points out in his important study of ‘negotiation of meaning’, NSs employ various strategies to *avoid* conversational troubles and if that fails, use ‘tactics’ for repairing the trouble. These findings are informative for considering possible actions which a NS could take to maintain the continuity of talk. Examples for avoidance of trouble include: giving chances for the NNS to control the

choice of topic, selecting a topic that is easy for the NNS to talk about, changing topics often, and constantly checking if the NNS is following the talk.

As for strategies to deal with breakdowns if they cannot be avoided, Long notes the following actions taken by the NS: asking for clarification, confirming comprehension, and tolerating ambiguity. Being aware of possible strategic ways to keep the talk going (through avoidance or repair) is helpful for looking at my own data. What I see Long providing (though his purpose is different) is a useful look at available moves which participants could make to maintain communication through the flow of turn-taking. Particularly relevant to my own interest is the inference that participants have strategies in reserve in case there is a communication breakdown. However, we should not forget that the questions asked in SLA are different from mine. SLA's questions are about how to improve language learning and acquisition while mine center on finding out what participants are already doing. I am interested in knowing how talk works, not how it should work.

A shift of attention takes place in SLA after Long's work in the early-mid 80's as manipulation of tasks within an interaction between both NS-NNS and NNS-NNS become common. "Subsequent work has focused on the specific strategies interlocutors employ to cope with problems of understanding. In general, more attention has been paid to the strategies used to resolve problems rather than prevent problems" (Ellis, 2003, p. 70). I see a few implications which could be drawn. First, for learners, it is only through actually using the language and making errors that they learn. Second, the actual breakdown with the ensuing repair of a conversation is observable in a way that the avoidance of breakdown or repair is not. This has

possible ramifications for how we see talk flowing. Perhaps flow is so seamless, natural, and taken for granted that the best way to see it may be when it does not flow. Third, there is an assumption (or at least hope) that participants have ways of dealing with problems. So negotiation and exchange of language *and* turns should display the work participants do to get the talk back on track.

A well-known illustration of dealing with misunderstanding or nonunderstanding comes from a series of analyses by Gass and Varonis (1985), Varonis and Gass (1985), and Gass (1998) where they examine an extended talk between two NNSs (one of them is Japanese). Even though the SLA interest in learners' errors particularly of linguistic forms prevails in these studies, I still find their transcript rich in interpretative possibilities. Their interest is in showing that negotiation of meaning is taking place in order to repair a problem. Below is an opening part of the conversation.

(2) Varonis & Gass (1985, p. 74)

- 1 S1: And your what is your mmm father's job?
- 2 S2: My father now is retire.
- 3 S1: retire?
- 4 S2: yes
- 5 S1: oh yeah.

Varonis and Gass (1985) propose a model to account for nonunderstanding in examples like the one above: Line 2 is the 'trigger' which causes the misunderstanding. Line 3 is the 'indicator' of the misunderstanding. Line 4 is the 'response' to the indicator. Line 5 is the 'reaction' to the response. Their model frames

the talk with an opening and a closing. It also shows the relationship of turns: What happens in one turn shapes what happens next. Most importantly for my concerns, it offers a simple and logical entry into analyzing data based on what participants actually said in context.

Researchers see data in light of their assumptions and interests. Gass, Long, and similar minded SLA researchers such as Tarone (1983), Swain (1985), Pica (1988), and later Swain and Larkin (2001), analyze spoken discourse by treating interactions as language learning opportunities based on negotiation of meaning through modification of language. Varonis and Gass (1985) state that various examples show ‘embedded non-understanding routines’ (p. 78). In their model, the NNS speaks, but has problems due to limitations in the second language (e.g. line 2 above). They argue that line 3, ‘retire’, indicates a lack of understanding. These routines are defined as the “exchanges in which there is some overt indication that understanding between participants has not been completed” (p. 73). While I find their work useful, mention should be made of differences in their interest in NNS talk for lack of understanding due to insufficient language and my belief in basic NNS interactional competence to carry on the talk (despite some L2 limitations).

For example, I take a different position on what occurs in the exchange above between S1 and S2. First, S2’s use of the word ‘now’ (line 2) displays an understanding of what is being asked. The question is about the father’s current job or status. While the correct form is ‘retired’, it could be argued ‘retire’ is adequate to convey the information. The question in line 3 could be one of confirming the word (e.g., due to background noise), not an ‘overt indication’ of misunderstanding. So while SLA

research looks toward future development of the learner in terms of correct forms (which are undeniably important), my research examines how present abilities are being displayed and understood.

Finally, mention must be made of Sinclair and Coulthard (1975). Their relevance centers on how T-S talk is examined through transcript analysis. Close attention is paid to how one turn sets up how the next turn is taken. Participants were seen to maintain an orderly exchange of turns. The major pattern observed was a three-turn sequence called, 'Initiation-Response-Feedback' (IRF).

(3) Sinclair & Coulthard (1975, p. 68)

T: What makes a road slippery?

S: You might have rain or snow on it.

T: Yes, snow, ice.

To this day, we can still see this pattern at work in the classroom. The teacher initiates a question, and then the student gives a reply. Finally, the teacher gives some kind of follow up. Here, the answer is accepted with a partial repetition and an additional word as correction. It is helpful to see what happens on a turn-by-turn basis and how the question sets up parameters for the response. The third turn reveals how closely the first two turns have worked. Malcolm Coulthard (in a recent encounter) said though in hindsight IRF seems a simplification, the third turn remains a key indicator of how the talk will proceed.

2.2 CA: Understanding spoken interaction through sequential analysis

While there is no claim that CA is the only method to analyze talk in social interaction, one of the aims of this thesis is to ‘try on’ an applied form of CA and see what it gets me. Atkinson and Heritage (1984) explain what CA sets out to do:

The central goal of conversation analytic research is the description and explication of the competences that ordinary speakers use and rely on in participating in intelligible, socially organized interaction. At its most basic, this objective is one of describing the procedures by which conversationalists produce their own behavior and understand and deal with the behavior of others.
(p. 1)

These authors then point to Garfinkel (1967) to show that the activities people do in talking, understanding and dealing with each other “are accomplished as the accountable products of common sets of procedures” (p. 1). This idea of mutually shared procedures for orderly conversations is mentioned by Sacks and Schegloff. (See Schegloff & Sacks, 1973; Sacks, 1984.) Ten Have (1990) explains, “this orderliness is seen as the product of the systematic deployment of specifiable interaction methods, ‘devices’, ‘systems’, an ‘apparatus’, that are used by members as solutions to specifiable organizational problems in social interaction” (p. 24).

This part of the chapter draws attention to the fundamental concepts underlying the body of research in applying CA in respect to this thesis. A common obstacle facing language teachers who want to do research is the lack of a suitable analytical method. They need a system and a discipline to examine details. This is what I believe CA offers: a powerful analytical tool to explore the details of the data.

2.2.1 Turn-taking organization

The description of the organization of turn-taking for CA studies is generally acknowledged to come from Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson's (1974) landmark paper, 'A simplest systematics for the organization of turn-taking in conversation'. Their model begins with three simple observations.

- (1) Turn-taking occurs.
- (2) One speaker tends to talk at a time.
- (3) Turns are taken with minimal gap or overlap between them.

So we see the basic tendency of participants to act collaboratively. This is not some theoretical ideal, but a social interaction that we can observe happening every day. There are five implications for my own study. First, if participants take turns talking with what Sacks et al. call the 'overwhelming tendency' of one speaker at a time, then we need to analyze a sequence of turns, not just single turns in isolation. Second, when the turn-taking is not 'one speaker at a time', a closer look is required to account for this. Third, we can start looking at any gaps (e.g., no one takes the next turn) or overlaps (e.g., both speakers take their turns at the same time) since they are usually kept to a minimum. Here is the foundation for the concept of 'stuckness'. Participants display that they are stuck in their turn-taking situation. Something has happened to their usual orientation. Fourth, just as stuckness could be indicated by a gap or overlap (but not in all cases), minimizing the gap or overlap once again could suggest that participants are regaining their orientation (i.e., getting unstuck). Fifth, the organization of turn-taking is focused on how participants manage to continue the

orderly exchange of turns. This is not in the first instance a linguistic concern, but rather an interactional one of who speaks next.

Sacks et al. describe in great detail various options available for taking the floor. Basically the current speaker can nominate someone else, him/herself, or allow another speaker to self-nominate. My project examines the simpler dyadic choices: either you speak or I do. When we think of the timing of taking turns, the question raised is: Where do participants project the location of changing speakers? This brings up the idea of a ‘transition relevance place’ (TRP), where the potential end of the current conversational unit is approaching. Some of the complexity of two people sharing a similar sense of orientation and projection of turns is revealed.

2.2.2 Adjacency pairs

The next step is to look at how turn-taking follows a general pattern of occurring in pairs. Sacks in his lectures in the 60’s and 70’s gave various common examples of ‘adjacency pairs’ such as greetings and question-answer. Two well-known extracts look incredibly mundane.

(4) Sacks (1992, vol. 1, p. 3)

A: Hello

B: Hello

A: This is Mr. Smith may I help you

B: Yes, this is Mr. Brown

The turns form easily recognizable exchanges that we encounter on a daily basis. Sacks saw a structure emerging: First, the first speaker to some degree gets to control the form of the second speaker's response. Second, whatever the first speaker says sets up some kind of expectation about what the next turn or slot may contain. What this expectation allows both the participants and the analyst to do is to establish a normative framework to check if the first and second parts of the adjacency pair match. When there is an absence of the second part of the pair, the analyst begins to think how to account for it. Thus there is much more to adjacency pair analysis than merely trying to identify the pairs. What the analyst is ultimately interested in is how the pair of turns is used to accomplish something.

The term 'adjacency' could be misleading as the second part of the pair does not necessarily have to occur immediately in the next turn. For example, the question and the related answer could be separated by some kind of explanatory insertion as the excerpt below illustrates.

(5) Sacks (1992, vol. 2, p. 529)

(A teenage son wants to borrow his father's car.)

- 1 A: Can I borrow your car?
- 2 B: When.
- 3 A: This afternoon
- 4 B: For how long?
- 5 A: A couple of hours
- 6 B: Okay.

The question or first part of the pair is in line 1. However, the second part of the pair does not appear until line 6. When an adjacency pair is not readily recognized, a closer

reading of the data is necessary. Typically, even when the parts of the pair are not 'adjacent', the turn-taking can still proceed smoothly (particularly when the second part of the pair is found). The concept of adjacency pairs reveals that participants usually know how to keep the talk going. Finally, we can imagine the possible negative implications for this talk between father and son if there was a gap or an overlap.

2.2.3 Preference organization

Preference organization presents two relevant ideas for viewing how participants co-manage their interaction: (1) When asked a question, there are basic alternative choices such as 'yes' or 'no', which the recipient typically encounters. Heritage (1988) calls these 'second' actions 'routinely accomplished' when a choice is made. (2) The first turn action by the speaker tends to slant the 'second' turn action of the recipient towards a preferred response rather than a 'dispreferred' one.

In Pomerantz (1984a), a comparison of distinguishing characteristics between preferred and dispreferred responses is put forward. For example, with preferred response (typically 'yes' or agreement) there tends to be little if any delay in replying. In addition, the often ensuing understanding between the two participants in such a case appears to make providing a rationale unnecessary. In contrast, a dispreferred response (typically 'no' or disagreement) may only come after some hesitation or delay. Unlike with preferred responses, an explanation of sorts seems to be expected.

If that is all there is to 'preference organization', the choices and ramifications would be pretty straightforward. What makes preference organization such a useful concept

is preference does not simplistically mean 'yes' in all cases, just as a dispreferred response is not always 'no'. Here is an example of self-deprecation and the preferred response.

(6) Pomerantz (1984a, p. 74)

L: ... I'm so dumb I don't even know it hhh! – heh!

W: Y-no, y-you're not du:mb, ...

Here 'no' or a denial of the accuracy or truth of the first turn statement becomes the preferred response. 'Yes' (agreement or confirmation of the low self-assessment) would be the dispreferred one. Interestingly, in such a case, 'yes' would require some noticeable hesitation accompanied with an explanation. A quick 'yes' without rationale could spell disaster for the talk not to mention the relationship. In this same light, 'no' in some form as part of a denial should be uttered without any delay. Even repeating part of this protest could be designed to make this affiliative response clearer.

What I understand about preference organization as it relates to my own study is that participants have ongoing choices which need to be made on the spot in conjunction with the other person's sensitivity and sensibility in mind. This is not about making isolated decisions based solely on one's inner emotions. These choices and actions are at once using Heritage's terms (1988, p. 22) 'context shaped' by the specific situation (and participants) as well as 'context-renewing' as each utterance sets up what is relevant for the next turn context. In sum, preference can be understood as device and structure. It is a device in the sense of being recipient-designed to get the other person

to provide a suitable response. It is within certain structures that participants know whose turn it is and what to say.

2.2.4 The relevance of CA to my research interest

CA continues to this day to serve as an important analytical tool that is being applied to an ever-growing range of contexts. Ten Have (2001) sees two directions for applied CA. One is to build on the CA findings to study institutional contexts while the other is “to apply CA findings and/or specific studies to advise people and organizations how specific practical problems might be handled in order to facilitate smooth and effective practice” (p. 3). Some interesting research has been conducted in the past using CA to examine classroom interactions (See McHoul, 1978, on teacher-directed ‘speakership’ of classroom discourse and van Lier, 1984, on asymmetric roles of teachers and students.), but more studies are needed such as Hughes (2002). She points out an area of concern for language teachers where CA could help: “For many learners of a language, ability to speak is not the factor which isolates them in a conversation. Rather it is the inability to ‘read’ the moments when they might be able to begin to speak” (p. 37).

Carroll (2000, 2004, 2005) stands in contrast to what Varonis and Gass pointed out for the NNS-NNS talk discussed above (in 2.1.3). They were interested in how misunderstanding takes place due to limited language, whereas Carroll (with even lower skilled foreign language users) seeks to account for their ability to keep talking. The excerpt below gives an idea of students’ sensitivity to turn projection.

(7) Carroll (2000, p. 79)

- 01 J: Uuahh::it's::
02 M: mm very (0.8) very (.) hard
03 J: very hard

M comes into the talk projecting or anticipating what J wants to say based on the prior turn. It is also possible J in line 1 is signaling and waiting for M to enter through the stretched sounds. It could be that J has said all he or she can. Line 3 seems to confirm through repetition that J and M are thinking of the same thing. Carroll argues that no-gap transitions occur in 'novice L2 conversation' and thus to some extent demonstrate their ability for "precisely timing their entry into talk" (p. 77). The moment when the talk is flowing is not the exclusive property of proficient speakers. In a modest, but important way, these students show talk can flow through very limited language.

CA has remained stable yet vital over the years as it continues to grow in recognition and use as an important analytical method. A recent paper by Lee (2006) credits CA's ability to interest researchers "across various settings of social studies" to its detailed findings of "the competences that underlie ordinary social activities and interactional routines" (p. 354). The observations of turn-taking organization and repair have remained the cornerstones of CA while the contexts under examination have diversified greatly over the years. What has remained constant is the regularity of what Heritage (1984) calls the 'methods and procedures' used by the participants to engage in interaction. Wagner and Gardner (2004) believe documenting this behavior makes CA both 'robust and cumulative'.

2.3 NNS talk in transition

I would like to discuss two strands of discourse analysis which are helping to re-shape the way we treat NNS talk. As recognition grows for how language is both learned and used in social interactions, so does the view of a second language participant as a user of language to accomplish talk. The two issues of discussion here came to my attention through various studies being carried out in Europe, especially Denmark and Germany. There is widespread non-pedagogic use of *lingua franca* to accomplish talk in various aspects of daily life from business to personal relationships. First I will mention the often cited exchange of opinions on 'CA for SLA'. This review will set the stage for discussing the second issue of how *lingua franca* places the talk and its participants on a very different footing as co-participants. How these two movements impact on my project is the central point of reference.

2.3.1 Applying CA to SLA

One strand started out as a series of opinion pieces which appeared in the *Modern Language Journal* (1997-1998). The forum's theme was whether there is a place in SLA for CA. The lead article by Firth and Wagner (1997) challenges SLA for its alleged lack of social perspective while arguing CA could bring greater attention to interactional aspects of language learning. This idea generated an outpour of opinions from researchers on both sides (e.g., Long, 1997 and Long et al. 1998) and between. While no clear conclusion or general consensus was reached, what came out of these discussions is an important collection of papers edited by Gardner and Wagner (2004) which established a place in CA for the study of NS-NNS and NNS-NNS talks aptly entitled *Second language conversations*. Following closely in its footsteps came a related collection, *Applying conversation analysis*, edited by Richards and Seedhouse

(2005). There is a transition underway toward viewing the NNS not just as a language learner, but as both learner *and* user. This discussion can be summed up through the respective interests of SLA and CA.

Traditionally, second language learning research has approached learner language data from the perspective of interlanguage, seeing occurrences of surface errors as potentially significant indices of learners' developing competence. Such research has focused, however, more on examining occurrences of language form rather than on exploring the interactional behaviors of second language learners. (Gardner & Wagner, 2004, vii)

The thrust of what of Gardner and Wagner are saying in conjunction with the position taken earlier by Firth and Wagner (1997, 1998) is a call for SLA to adopt within its wide field an applied CA approach as part of its endeavor to understand how language is learned. My point here is not to take sides or to join the debate, but to illustrate how some of the lines of distinctions between CA and SLA are blurring. The notion of 'CA for SLA' has gained some broad recognition from Ellis and Barkhuizen (2005) who devote to CA an entire chapter of their book on methods for analyzing learner language. CA to them is located in a methodological continuum between 'interactional' (in the SLA sense) and 'sociocultural' methods of analyses.

2.3.2 English in cross-cultural interactions

The other strand comes from Gramkow (2000), Knapp (2002), and Meierkord (2002) among others who show *lingua franca* to be an ordinary and regular way heterogeneous groups of speakers accomplish talk. House (2002) notes that when English is used as *lingua franca*, it does not belong to any particular native speaker standard. The days of pre-labeling a NNS one dimensionally as a deficient user should

be over. Just as important, attention is also being drawn to what the NS could do to make talk with a NNS work. Meierkord and Knapp (2002) along with Smith (1983) raise the idea that NSs need to be aware that they cannot speak in *lingua franca* situations in exactly the same way they do with other NSs. These points represent a departure from the traditional SLA model and target of native-like language use.

In the early 1980s the term ‘cross-cultural’ was commonly used with interest in cross-comparisons. Then in order to bring attention to the interaction between people from different cultures and languages, ‘intercultural’ was used. According to Meierkord (2002), now for the last decade or so, the creation of a new culture out of the encounters is recognized as it is not so much insights into a single culture, but the process and product ‘negotiated and created’ by the participants from different cultures. Sherzer (1987) describes the co-construction of something new as the work done “creates, recreates, focuses, modifies, and transmits both culture and language” (p. 295). Sarangi (1995) supports this view by emphasizing the power of language to both carry and reshape ‘cultural practices’. Thus what Casmir and Asuncion-Lande (1988), Casmir (1993), and Benke (1995) call a ‘third culture’ emerges as a blend of participants’ accommodations and modifications.

Lingua franca seen in such a light is a ‘hybrid’ genre of discourse. It is not purely based on a single language or culture, but rather on the negotiating and building process of establishing the resources that work. I see the emerging ‘third culture’ in my project as a conversational mixture of institutional talk (e.g., classroom, teacher-student) and ordinary conversation (e.g., small talk) where resources from both sides are used.

2.4 Conclusion

While participants in NS-NNS talk (as well as NNS-NNS talk) have ways to keep the talking going despite the potential range of problems, it is the moment when the talk gets stuck in some shape or form that we may well begin to appreciate how talk usually flows. So examining what can go wrong and cause misunderstandings in cross-cultural, inter-cultural, and even intra-cultural talks is important. However, I also believe that understanding what can go ‘right’ about such conversations despite momentary mistimings, misinterpretations, and misunderstandings is equally important.

The idea put forward ... is that in non-native conversations and mother tongue interaction alike, participants are able to draw upon this general, or generic, interactional competence, to overcome potential problems of ambiguity and misunderstanding, without rendering them interruptive, unusual, or exceptional in any way. (Gramkow, 2000, p. 30)

We do not have to see language in use for communication as depending solely on whether someone is a NS or a NNS. After all, talks among people who do not share the same culture and language are taking place every day and get accomplished to a large degree. So the question is not whether they can talk to each other; we already know that they can and do. The question is how they are able to do it.

The review has come back full circle to the beginning of the literature which started with non-CA discourse analysts to show that finely detailed analysis of sequential turn taking is not the sole property of CA, but that it is a deep concern of many researchers

of various fields, interests, and methods. My research has been informed by the works of analysts both inside and outside of CA.

Chapter 3 Methodology

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Introduction: More about the concept of ‘stuckness’

The ethnomethodological roots of CA should be mentioned at this stage to locate the origins of methodological approach used in this thesis. Garfinkel (1967) points out the primary task of studies in ethnomethodology is “learning how members’ actual, ordinary activities consist of methods to make practical actions, and practical circumstances, common sense knowledge of social structures, and the formal

sociological reasoning analyzable” (vii-viii). Heritage (1984) summarizes Garfinkel’s interest as in “descriptive accounts and accountings as data which are to be examined to see how they organize, and are organized by, the empirical circumstances in which they occur” (p. 141). The various experiments which Garfinkel was involved in illustrate his wide social vision. On one hand, he would study how people stand in a line at a bus stop or how people read a map (Lynch, 1999). On the other, how identities are constructed by outpatients in a psychiatric clinic and jurors’ activities in making decisions while respecting official routines (Garfinkel, 1967). He even gave undergraduate students various assignments (Garfinkel, 1967) to deliberately disrupt the usual assumptions underlying ordinary talk by acting in a different way (e.g., ask your friend to clarify every statement uttered or act like a guest in your house with your family members.) The underlying points highlighted general assumptions (and the underlying ability) that people have to carry out social actions.

We can see that these experiments are ‘not directed to formulating or arguing correctives’ nor are they supplementary. They are seen as distinct from ‘standard’ sociological procedure. Within this broad interest in how mundane social talk is co-managed, there is a branch which focuses on the linguistic aspects. This area which became CA has taken on a life of its own. Such studies were done by a group of analysts which included Sacks and Schegloff among others. Attention is given to what is observable and accountable for what participants do in organizing everyday activities through talk-in-interaction. Distinct features of the phenomena under study include mundane, ongoing, and contingent accomplishments (e.g., telephone calls to help-lines or talk between friends). What links my interest in non-pedagogic driven NS-NNS talk is the ethnomethodological focus on the type of competence that

participants “obstinately depend upon, recognize, use, and take for granted” (Garfinkel, 1967, p. 1). The link between Garfinkel and ethnomethodology and CA is vividly seen by his acknowledgment of Sacks’s contribution: “Harvey Sacks must be mentioned particularly because his extraordinary writings and lectures have served as critical resources” (Garfinkel, 1967, viii). What we have through Garfinkel, Sacks, and others is a body of work (findings and methods) which provide “the formal properties of common sense activities as a practical organizational accomplishment” (Garfinkel, 1967, viii).

One of the biggest challenges to understanding what participants do *in situ* is to find persuasive evidence in what they say and do in relation to each other. This is needed to support interpretative claims of what the participants are doing in the joint enterprise of talk-in-interaction maintenance. ‘Stuckness’ is a way of expressing conversational troubles in terms of turn-taking organization: a possible display of temporary disorganization or lack of orientation to the next turn. When this mistiming or misunderstanding is resolved, the flow of talk resumes.

In this chapter on methodology I will first explain the features of the study in terms of procedure, data, and participants. The second part will examine various issues of analyzing the data with emphasis on making distinctions between what my chosen methodology, applied CA, can and cannot do. This is intended less as a criticism of CA than it is avoid misconceptions of what this research aims to achieve. The third part will examine a few issues which readers may have about social factors.

More about the concept of ‘stuckness’

At this point of the study, 'stuckness' lies in a gray area somewhere between conventional notions of error correction and repair along with other conversational troubles which come up in the course of talking. The concept of participants showing their orientation to getting stuck is still an emerging idea. My motivation to describe 'stuckness' is driven by a need to give ourselves (the analysts) a way to notice moments of uncertainty.

The first assumption should not always be that a problem is attributable to the NNS. A comparative deficiency in the language of use is not the only trouble source possible. However, even the most relevant CA based NS-NNS studies such as those by Wong (2000a,b, 2004, 2005) focus mainly on the lack of language by the NNS. In this scenario, the NNS is the instigator of the conversational trouble and the NS is seen to come to the rescue by guiding the repair sequence, embedding a repair in passing, or even choosing to ignore it. Established CA analysts like Wong, Seedhouse, and Kasper who analyze similar data are ultimately asking questions of how interactions can help NNSs learn the language. What I am interested in is how the language is used here and now as an intermediary medium. What I want to get from the concept of 'stuckness' is a way of articulating and understanding conversational troubles in terms of shared or joint management of the organization of turn-taking.

3.1 Procedure

This opening section explains key aspects of the methods in this thesis. I give an overview of the process step by step from data collection to analysis. Next I review the research questions to examine how 'stuckness' fits in with the inquiry. Finally, I describe the analytical steps I take when looking at some data.

3.1.1 Overview of implementation

One CA analytical plan to seek understanding of how participants interact is summarized by Lazaraton (2003) in the following manner: “CA insists on the analysis of real recorded data, segmented into turns of talk that are carefully transcribed ... the goal is to build a convincing and comprehensive analysis of a single case, and then to search for other similar cases in order to build a collection of cases that represent some interactional phenomenon” (p. 3). I have adapted a similar plan for my research procedure:

- (1) I have ‘real’ recorded data, a kind of ‘natural occurring’ talks which were not specifically arranged and manipulated for the sake of research.
- (2) I recorded all of the talks on audio cassette tapes and the majority of them by video recorder as well.
- (3) I carefully transcribed the talks in segments on a turn by turn basis following many of the conventions commonly used in CA publications based on Jefferson.
- (4) Transcriptions were all done by me alone as this is considered as an essential part of the analytical process. Also, the transcripts are refined on an ongoing basis through repeatedly listening (and viewing) the recordings.
- (5) I depart from the single case approach by initially trying to describe some interactional phenomenon of interest (e.g., stuckness).

(6) I look for candidate sites in the sequences to find where the phenomenon occurs.

(7) Then I use organizational concepts from CA such as turn-taking (continuous and discontinuous), adjacency pairs, and preference to describe and interpret how participants appear to orient to previous turns and project the next ones.

(8) In order to do step 7, I need to collect an array of sample excerpts which display such concepts in action.

(9) The collection of cases shows both similarities and differences, so I categorize specific excerpts according to how participants are shown to co-orient to each other's turns. From the interactional resources established in CA, I use topic, story, repair, and formulation to explain how participants co-manage the talk.

Markee (2000) has a similar list, but adds that CA can identify 'both successful and unsuccessful learning behaviors'. The omission of this aspect from my list has nothing to do with any disagreement or oversight and everything to do with making a choice of where to give attention. My research focuses on how participants 'do talk', not on how one participant (NNS) learns the native forms of the target language.

3.1.2 Review of the research questions

This section provides a brief review of my research questions. Sacks et al. (1974) describe continuous talk as happening with minimal pauses, minimal overlaps, and an overall sense of orderliness as participants take turns speaking. My set of three focus

questions asks for a comparison between characteristics of when talk is continuous and discontinuous. What holds the questions together is interest in how participants display their interactional work. The first question guides attention to describing what could go wrong.

When do co-participants get stuck?

As introduced in the opening chapter, my interest is in what participants do when the talk does not move smoothly or flow. Even when the talk does not flow in this sense, participants have been observed to make use of features of talk as resources to get unstuck and regain the flow of turn-taking. Participants orient to each other in terms of what actions are taken. The organization and structure of the talk are thus revealed through the sequence of turns. Even when talk does flow, participants are still faced with interactional challenges to keep it going.

When does talk flow in dyadic talk?

When do participants get unstuck?

These two questions are intended to address moments in the conversation when participants are not stuck. By showing what is done in such times could help inform what happens when participants do get stuck. When the turns flow, all is assumed to be as it should be. Another purpose of examining ‘trouble free’ talk is that it is not ‘effort free’. In fact, apparently smooth talk does not necessarily mean there are not any lurking problems. The answers to these questions represent the building blocks of

the overall goal of this project: Documenting an evolving understanding of stuckness as an important organizational concept.

3.1.3 Selection of passages to analyze

A key part of methodology is identifying what to look for in the data. This section elaborates on what I do at the candidate sites of exploration. As previously mentioned, the typical and general advice given to research-practitioners in qualitative methods books is to look for reoccurring patterns and emerging themes in the collected data. I will unpack this idea by specifying what I look for in the form of a working check list. Such a guide helps me get into the data by having specific things to look for.

- (1) Scan the transcript for any turn-taking breaks.

- (2) If there are, determine whether they can be described as silence, overlaps, question-answer mismatches, or an ineffective discourse marker (e.g., receipt token).

- (3) Choose a few moments to look at in detail how participants respond to each other. Then go into further detail about the timing of the turns during these moments. (e.g., Is the silence a gap or a pause? Does the overlap start simultaneously or was one speaker already speaking? Do the first and second parts of the adjacency pair seem to make sense to them?)

- (4) Describe the actions taken in terms of an interaction including the relevant prior or subsequent turns. Then interpret what the participants are doing in order to accomplish talk based on the descriptions.
- (5) Once general cases are built up then bring in a deviant case (if one can be found) to strengthen the sequential analysis by having to account for it within the emerging pattern or rule.

The selection of moments in my data set to initially investigate is based on the Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson (1974) observation of talk as being generally continuous. When it is discontinuous, it is accountable. So when the turn-taking is shown not to be orderly (e.g., gaps and overlaps), attention is given not only to such turns, but also to how these turns relate sequentially. Looking at how the interaction is oriented and projected through such organizational concepts as adjacency pairs and transition relevance places help me get into the data. Below are brief data samples with the preliminary sites which I have identified for exploration and discussion.

Excerpt 1: Satoko no. 1, America

31 I: that was before going to America?

32 (4)

33 S: Um (.) After after (4) after come back to Japan.

There is a break in line 32 which is identified as a gap. Since silence in itself does not mean participants are stuck, more work will have to be done with the finer details. In the next example, we see a different type of break from the orderly ‘one person at a time’ turn-taking.

Excerpt 2: Satoko no. 1, America

23 I: ...Why did youu (.) pick him (.) out of all the char[acters in the movie?

24 S: [Hhhh

25 I: Is there ah [some personal ah reason or ...?

26 S: [Ah:::h

Actually this is a quite complicated sequence with two types of overlaps in terms of timing with non-lexical receipts. My point here is that the overlaps (lines 23-24 and 25-26) would be sites of exploration.

3.2 Data

An important part of managing how to address the research questions is having some suitable data. In keeping with CA's insistence in working with 'naturally occurring' data as opposed to data from laboratory type controlled speaking, I turned to some data that I could get a hold of. (According to Silverman, 1998, Sacks used transcripts from help line telephone calls to the hospital where he worked as data for his doctoral thesis and later for his lectures from the fall of 1964.) I had a collection of audio (and video) recordings of conversations with former students. This collection became the core of the data used in this project.

3.2.1 What data and why

Each session of the data in this project consists of 'free topic' conversations between two participants; one is a former student of mine (NNS) and me (NS). I decided to use data from dyadic talk instead of classroom talk or focus group discussions in order to

capture the data on tape (as well as in the transcript) as many details as possible without such complications as identifying multiple speakers and getting adequate sound reproduction in a large room with many people. Social factors such as peer pressure or deciding who speaks next also need to be considered. Such issues involving more than two participants complicate the recording, the transcription, and the analysis of data. As for recording and transcribing, placement of the microphone and video camera is very selective with far reaching ramifications for what gets recorded and thus analyzed. (See Sunderland, 1993, for a technological account of this difficulty in distinguishing voices in transcribing classroom interactions.) The dynamics of the talk itself are more complicated when more people are involved in the talk. Sacks et al. (1974) describe in much detail the range of choices for the next speaker. Myers (2000, 2004), in a similar light, portrays some of the complex social dynamics involved in focus groups between moderator and participants as well as among participants. So potential benefits of having dyadic conversations include the greater ease in arranging to meet, finding a suitable size room, choosing appropriate recording equipment, not to mention agreeing what to talk about, and ensuring all parties have ample chances to speak.

At first, the talk in my study seemed like an interview as I would ask questions and they would give answers and not much else. (See Nakamura, 2004b, for an account of my troubles when students gave single word responses when I was anticipating more.) Although the talks continued to focus on me predominately asking questions and them answering my questions, over time, the student-participants would say more.

3.2.2 Data collection method and why

Data was collected by placing a small tape recorder with an extension microphone on a desk off to the side of the seated student-participant. This was done when there was no table separating the two participants. We would sit facing each other about a meter apart (aware of not being too close, but not too far away from each other). A variation of the arrangement was to sit on either side of a (meter wide) table and have the tape recorder and microphone on the table off to the side closer to the student. In addition, in virtually all of the conversations, there was also a video camera placed off to the side on a tripod with an extension microphone. Built-in microphones in the camera and tape recorder do not possess the directional power of extension microphones. Getting high quality of voice recordings could be a problem despite digital cameras and other technological advances.

There were two basic placements of the video camera; the first in the early period of these sessions was to place the camera so both participants were included in profile. This positioning was mainly for the early footage of Takao and me talking. When Masako joined this project, I felt focusing only on the student straight on (slightly off to one side and not directly in her line of sight) would capture more details of gaze (See Kurhila, 2001, 2004, for the importance of seeing the NNS's direction of gaze.), facial expressions, and gestures. However, recently I backed up the video camera and widened the scope to include both participants. (See recent examples in Carroll, 2005, and Olsher, 2004.) This is increasingly becoming standard practice in CA studies. After all, we are foremost interested in the interaction, not only what one person is doing.

As for the actual collection of data, there were times when student-participants had time to meet quite regularly. In Masako's case for several months we met once a week when she was in high school before serious study in the third year for the university entrance exams. For Takao, we could meet four times during the academic year when he was a high school student. For Satoko, we could meet four times over a two year period when she was a first and second year student in university. She became increasingly busy from her third year with her laboratory project and also looking for a job.

I recorded the data when we could find time to meet. Meeting them to talk and see how things were going was always the first priority and would have happened anyway (even without this project). Collecting data for my research was always secondary. I already had most of my data before I began this project in January 2003.

3.2.3 Hybrid genre of discourse practice: Interview, classroom talk, and conversation

The first issue is the nature of the talks used as data. What kind of data is it? What is the genre? It is not an interview per se like an oral proficiency test nor is it an interview like the type structured to get specific information. It is not an ordinary conversation as there are elements of an interview such as making arrangements in advance, one participant deciding when to start and finish the talk, and the type of topics (e.g., 'Tell me about yourself'). However, these talks were not classroom discourses not only because we talked outside of class rather than during class with other students, but also because talk was not explicitly done as instructed lessons in learning English. Johnson (2001) uses CA to identify distinct characteristics of these

three genres: ordinary conversation, interview test, and classroom talk. Her interest is challenging a commonly held assumption that the oral proficiency interview (OPI) tests ordinary conversational ability. The descriptions of key features of each genre are instructive in characterizing aspects of genre in my own study.

Briefly, *ordinary conversation* typically has a sense of unpredictability in terms of topics, responses, and floor taking. *Interview tests* are structured in order to obtain as much language production as possible from the examinee. As with most types of interviews (e.g., broadcast news), the interviewer has certain restrictions on what he or she can say as the job is to elicit responses from the other person. (See Heritage, 1985; Clayman and Heritage, 2002; Greatbach, 1988, for details of these restrictions and how interviewers can sometimes get around them.) Equally relevant if not more is to compare them with research interviews: structured, semi-structured, and unstructured. Examples include Suchman and Jordan (1990), Widdicombe and Wooffitt (1995), and Wooffitt, (1992), respectively.

Classroom talk was one of the early institutional genres examined by CA along with broadcast news interviews, doctor-patient consultations, and courtroom testimonies. Mehan (1979, 1985) and McHoul (1978) looked at the asymmetry of turn-taking between teacher and student. The teacher (unlike participants in ordinary conversation) held virtually all power to nominate the next speaker as well as virtually all of the rights to take the floor at anytime to ask questions or make comments. Students were basically limited in response by what teacher asked.

There are features of all three genres as described by Johnson (2001) in my data. I would propose that such kind of data be seen as a hybrid form of NS-NNS discourse. Institutional elements of classroom talk and interviews as well as elements of ordinary talk help both participants ask questions, introduce topics, and most importantly take turns more freely than in the classroom or in other institutional settings. Even the location of the talks is a hybrid as they occurred in a private school room, my office, my living room, and even once in a coffee shop in the train station.

3.3 Participants and their participation

My original plan was to do a single case study, but to be on the safe side, I added two more participants. This ensured a continuity of participation over time. We never met altogether as a group so in this sense this project turned out to be the consolidation of data from three case studies. The only preparation was my request to the student-participants to come to the sessions with an opening topic and a couple of questions (to ask me as a backup if we needed them). We would take it from there and keep talking until we found an appropriate time to stop.

3.3.1 Participants

In most CA based studies, the participants are not described in much detail. Typically, the brief explanation introducing the transcribed excerpt is more about plot and purpose than characters. Here is an example: “In this excerpt, Erma has called Marsh to find out whether Marsh’s son Joe has safely arrived at his father’s house after having to fly standby” (Raymond, 2004, p. 187).

This is all we know about the characters as real people. What we get instead is an in-depth description and interpretation of the structure of their talk and how they relate their actions to each other. Normally, in CA studies, profiles of the participants are not given out of principle. However, I would like to give the readers some idea of who the participants are to help them create their own reference points.

Takao is a male and Masako and Satoko are female. In terms of age, Takao is about 26 years old now, Masako is about 21, and Satoko is about 25. While Masako has never been to a foreign country, Takao did a one month home stay in England as a high school student, volunteered to help with foreign exchange student events, and did a year internship in the US between his third and fourth year of university. Satoko went on a one year study abroad to the US between her first and second year of university.

As for their general level of English, they ranged from low intermediate to high intermediate (in terms of EFL in countries like Japan, Korea, and Thailand). They had a good balance of outstanding academic achievement (top of their class in grades and proficiency test scores) and confidence to express their opinions in English. All three were able to enter highly respected universities in Japan. Their contribution to this project is not only a credit to their level of English, but also their maturity in seeing value in taking part in this program with a personal commitment. Their participation was strictly on a voluntary basis.

3.3.2 Participation

In relationship to this project, the longest continuing participant is Takao. I have recordings of our ongoing talks from 1994 to 2003. This covers the end of junior high school till the start of his employment in a company after graduating from university. There were over 15 sessions recorded. The second longest is Masako, with the first talk in 2000, when she was in junior high school and the latest one in 2004, when she entered university. There were over 10 sessions recorded during that period. Both Masako and Takao were my students at a private conversation school in elementary school and junior high school. The shortest time is Satoko who was my student in university. Our talks in this study were from 2003 to 2004, during which we had four one hour sessions. What we lacked in number of meetings was more than made up in the relative complexity of the topics, timing of turn-taking, and pace, among other features.

There is quite a range here from the longest to the shortest. As will be seen later in data analysis chapters, the number of years collaborating does not guarantee a greater variety of topics or more fluency of language production compared with the other participants. However, there could be greater diversity of situations such as gift giving and a change of roles once he or she graduated from university.

The audio recordings (the majority are also video recorded) consist of over 30 sessions. Each session is a dyadic talk between a Japanese student and me ranging in length from 20-30 minutes for the earlier ones to 45 minutes to one hour for the latter ones. This means there is over 20 hours or so on tape.

3.4 Transcription

Perakyla (2004) bases his view of CA's reliability on how it relates to ethnographic efforts for reliability of its data through the quality of field notes and transparency of the process of its production. Whereas ethnographers have field notes, CA analysts have recordings and transcripts as their raw material. Perakyla states, "Working with audio and video recordings and transcripts eliminates at one stroke many of the problems that ethnographers have with the unspecified accuracy of field notes and with the limited public access to them" (p. 285). In this light, CA when compared with other forms of qualitative research gives much attention to reliability. The interpretations can change (and usually evolve) through repeated listening and refined transcription, but the recordings themselves do not. In addition, the same recorded experience is available to others. In this sense, recordings and transcripts do give analysts with different interpretations something 'reliable' to refer to and discuss (as we will see below in 3.5).

With reliance on the recordings and the subsequent transcription, at least brief mention should be made of the limitations of this approach. While no transcript fully notes everything from the recordings, no recording of a social interaction fully captures all aspects of it. Both processes are selective and partial. The selection of what (and when) to record, the quality of the recording, and the positioning of the recording equipment all make a difference in the data we get and work with. Having said that, there is still much to be learned from even a simple recording and basic transcription as this project hopes to demonstrate.

3.4.1 Method and conventions used in this project

By adopting a CA approach, most features of transcription were already established. Talk is treated as being structured sequentially in a string of turns usually taken in an orderly manner. The research questions dictate what details are needed in order to produce answers. I want to see the actions participants take to address challenges for taking the next turn and turns. This involves examining silence, overlaps, and non-lexical speech objects as well as language. I generally used Jeffersonian conventions (1989) of marking silence timed to tenths of seconds (e.g., 1.5), but at times rounded them off to the nearest whole second (e.g., 2). The marking of overlaps also follows the style used by Jefferson of using brackets ([]) to mark the beginnings and endings of simultaneous talk. The brackets in turns above and below are aligned in the moment the overlap occurred. The speech objects which are also referred to as tokens, particles or minimal responses, and receipts basically consist of three types: single words (e.g., ‘oh’, ‘yeah’), two words (e.g., ‘Oh, really’), and non-lexical sounds (e.g., ‘uhuh’, ‘um’). (The complete list of transcript conventions used for my data appears after the **Table of Contents**. There will occasionally be slight differences in conventions in a few of the published excerpts.)

3.4.2 Critical considerations taken in transcribing features of talk

One issue which came up during the transcription both in initial and refinement stages was whether ‘silence’ should be marked as a pause or as a gap. According to Sacks et al. (1974), a ‘pause’ is an intra-turn silence within one of the speaker’s turns while a ‘gap’ is inter-turn silence between speakers’ turns which is noted as a separate and independent turn in its own right. The question is raised whether the current speaker will continue or not. If the silence is a ‘gap’ then *both* potential speakers will need to

orient as to whose turn it is. Orientation referencing goes back to the prior turn. The challenge here is the next turn could be up for grabs depending on the orientation. Unless the case is clearly one of the current speaker wanting to keep the floor (e.g., in the middle of a main clause), I transcribe the silence as a gap to avoid making any attributions to whose silence it is. (This practice is commonly followed in CA transcripts.)

The interpretation is dependent on how such decisions in transcribing are made. I try to capture enough relevant details as possible while transcribing from the audio recording. I only use the video recordings (most of these recordings focus on only the student) when visual details (e.g., gaze) could help clear up some uncertainties of sound or timing as well as whether the silence is a gap or pause.

Probably the toughest question to answer is my decision not to include non-verbal behavior. There is no denying that communication takes place both verbally and non-verbally in combination. Increasingly CA studies include documentation of visual action. This issue will remain a prominent one as the relationship between verbal and non-verbal patterns in interaction are further explored. Gestures, facial expressions, posture, gaze, and proxemics make up an integral part of the overall communicative process.

3.5 Data analytical method: Approach in this study

One of the biggest challenges in analyzing NS-NNS talk (as well as NNS-NNS talk) is to know whether the participants themselves orient to something in their conversation as a problem or not. Possibly NNS talk more than NS talk forces the analyst to re-

think conventional ideas of what is a problem or if there is a problem at all. For example, NSs tend to rely on a systematic process while NNSs could use a variety of references including unsystematic ones to shape language use (Firth 1996 and Wong 2004, 2005). According to Gardner (2006), there could also be some differences in turn-taking organization in L1 and L2. However, we must be careful to what extent we make distinctions. Firth (1996) reminds us that “although interactants represent diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds, data analyses show that parties to talk overridingly adopt the (‘default’) position that their talk is understandable and ‘normal’- even in the face of misunderstandings and abnormalities” (p. 256). Participants strive to accomplish talk no matter how imperfect the use of the language is. I follow this same outlook for language usage by the participants in my project unless shown otherwise. In this section, I give a few samples of how I conduct my analysis. This should provide the readers with an idea of my approach of applying CA.

3.5.1 Analyzing NNS data

Firth (1996) calls for some consideration when it comes to analyzing NNS data. He argues that when it comes to *lingua franca*, there could be a need to relax the conventional stance of a pure form of CA that nothing can be dismissed *a priori* as irrelevant as stated by Heritage (1984). This implies when a NNS is involved in what Firth calls the ‘foreign language’ position, data analysis might need to accommodate to such an *a priori* consideration. However, he goes on to point out that CA regardless of NS or NNS talk still methodologically examines the phenomenon in the same systematic way. Below, Firth gives a useful comparison of two variations of CA analysis, ‘conventional’ and ‘applied’ (foreign language position). While both forms focus on a sequential analysis of the details, the point of view is different. I will then

offer a third interpretation as a way to show how I will conduct my data analysis in subsequent chapters. H is a Danish sales representative who is asking and explaining to G an Arab speaking customer about the packaging of cheese by fixed or multiple weight.

(1) Firth (1996, p. 250)

- 1 H → yes .hh eh uh the quotation you have received, is that with fixed weight
2 (0.4)
3 because uh: we can get it with ah: (.) eh: ↓ uh :: different weights
4 on (.) each unit=but an average around four hundred
5 ‘n’ fifty=but (.) they can be from four hundred to five
6 ↓ hundred gra:m. ↓
7 (0.7)
8 but we have decided to=

The opening question of this sequence in line 1 is an inquiry by H of a quoted price and condition received by G from another cheese supplier. What we do not see in the excerpt is that in subsequent turns G will actively negotiate the conditions. Below are summaries of two analyses of the same data made by Firth (1996, pp. 251-252).

Analysis 1: The ‘conventional’ position

The tokens (eh, uh) in the pre-question position and in the explanation of the reason for the question (uh, ah, eh) in line 3 ‘reveal the delicacy of the matter being inquired about’. Lines 1-6 (except line 2, the micro gap) consist of H’s question and reason for the question. According to Firth, the explanation for the question ‘is occasioned by G’s lack of response at line 2’. G also declines a second chance to respond in line 7. It

seems H is expecting G to reply, but he does not. In both cases, the next turn after the gap is a continuation of H's explanation of his company's thinking.

Analysis 2: The 'foreign language' position

The second interpretation also centers on the gaps in lines 2 and 7. However, this time there is an assumption being made that G's lack of response is due to not understanding the question. Thus, H continues talking by explaining the reason for the question. According to Firth, "H orients to the possibility that G has not adequately understood the question" (p. 251). It is concluded that the second gap "is again treated as being indicative of G's failure to understand the question" (p. 252).

Analysis 3: My position

What strikes me about the comparison above is not only how such different interpretations can be accounted for from the same data, but also how the initial assumptions and selected area of focus basically yield what we are looking for. I wonder whether the gaps could be a way of G indicating to H to continue with his explanation (which he does). After all, G is the client and H is the one trying to make a deal. In terms of turn management, Sacks et al. (1974) describes three options the current speaker has at a possible 'turn relevance place' (TRP): nominating next speaker, continuing, or giving the floor to another person who self-nominates. What I see is the response by H as the other side of the co-orientation shared by G. Lines 3-6 show that H is not only explaining what his company can do about the weight, but is also making efforts to be clear (and persuasive) with the numbers through stress, pauses, and intonation. Even if G is the expected nominated speaker, he could be seen to pass up the chance to speak in order to allow the current speaker to continue.

The upshot for me, though not mentioned by Firth, is a weakening of the second analytical position by seeing the gaps as being due to G ‘reduced linguistic competence’. To begin with, we do not know among possible scenarios if it is truly a problem of understanding what H said, not being able to form a response, or even reluctance to disclose his position (as a bargaining technique) at that time. We become aware of the complexity and perhaps more importantly the *unpredictability* in NNS talk. (Anyone who struggles as a NNS, in conversation in a second language, on a regular basis surely appreciates this point.)

3.5.2 Relevance of the NS-NNS model

One problem with seeing interactions as a dichotomy is that we are either NS or NNS, either L1 or L2, living in culture 1 or culture 2. There seems to be a need for a third choice. What about the possibility of interactants adjusting to each other? This could be a hybrid genre when a third culture and discourse practice is formed and used. When two NNSs talk in a *lingua franca*, they are interacting in this vague middle ground. When a NS talks to a NNS of English in Japan, the NS can be seen at times not to use English in the same way as he or she would if the talk took place in their native country regardless if with a NS or NNS. The following example from my data represents how NS talk has been modified to the local context. Ian (NS) is asking Masako (NNS) about what sport she is playing.

Excerpt 3: Masako no. 1, junior high school

118 I: How about you? What's your favorite sport nowadays?
119 (3)

120 M: Of course, archery.

121 I: Of course, archery. Ah. Do you have club ah this month?

122 M: Yes.

First the silence is fairly long, but it is allowed to take its natural course. This fits in with what Wong (2004) notices that there are natural delays in the unfolding of talk with second language users. Second Ian repeats in line 121 Masako's answer as a kind of acknowledgment. Eiko Nakamura, a Japanese EFL teacher-researcher, thinks the NNS can have time to fully understand the topic by her interlocutor repeating her speech. This repetition would probably not be done in NS-NS talk. Third the form of Ian's question in line 121 could look a bit odd and unnatural. The assumption of doing archery, being in the archery club, and having practice this month are all packed into this single utterance. On the other hand, this could simply be mutually accessible knowledge to both participants as the questions do not appear to cause any problems for Masako. Fourth it has been well noted in EFL teaching literature (e.g., Long, 1983) that NSs are observed to modify their L1 when talking to students. The question in line 121 does not seem NS-like in form, though it appears understandable to the participants. 'Club' being used without a preceding or proceeding noun seems awkward (e.g., archery club or club practice). Garfaranga (2001) in a different context makes a technical case in a similar direction for language use somewhere between each participant's L1.

3.5.3 Next turn proof

This is probably the most well-known form of validation associated with CA. As Perakyla (2004) explains, it "remains the primordial criterion of validity that must be used as much as possible in all conversation analytic work" (p. 291). It is primordial

in the sense that next turn proof can be traced back to the sensitivity of participants to the organization of turn-taking as seen in Sacks et al. (1974). The upshot here is that CA methodologically has an important resource within the data to show validation. I see it as well in my own data analysis procedures. The strength of next turn proof is in the positioning of an utterance within a series of utterances. In this way, locally situated and recipient designed actions are not only studied with the context intact, but also used as evidence of how prior turns and next turns are connected as understood by the participants.

The excerpt below (which appeared in Chapter 1) is used here to show how the next turns show the previous turn orientation. No claims can strongly be made of things left unsaid (or even said) on the basis of a single turn. The teacher asks a question, but the student says nothing. She reformulates the question to make it easier for the student to reply, but to no noticeable effect. (This is a simplified version of the example which introduced silence in Chapter 1. Here the interest is on turns after the silence.)

(2) Nakamura (2004b, p. 81-82)

- 1 T: Have your parents ever told you to learn something Japanese?
- 2 S: (3 seconds)
- 3 T: Yes or no?
- 4 S: (2 seconds)

It is difficult to know what is going on only from this part of the interaction. What we need are the next turns.

- 5 T: Yes or no? In your case.

6 S: Yes.

7 T: Yes. Okay. What did they (.) tell you?

The teacher (in line 5) repeats the immediately preceding question with a tag to personalize the question. We see by looking at the sequence of turns that the teacher needs at least a 'yes' or 'no' from the student to move on to her next question. Possibly the student missed the precise timing of responding in lines 2 and 4, but finally succeeded in line 6 when he had more time. One point here is the precaution of not cutting off the excerpt for analysis too soon. We need the next turns to help us generate descriptions and interpretations. A second point is we know that this is exactly what they said and that is all we can really say with confidence.

Summary

The three sub-sections above have exemplified my general approach of data analysis. The common underlying considerations have been:

- (1) **Turn-taking organization** around a gap.
- (2) **Structural organization** of the interaction by framing sequences of turns into chunks by topic.
- (3) **Sequence organization** within a chunk of related turns identify the beginning, middle, and ending of talk on a topic.
- (4) **Turn design** by (initially) looking at adjacency pairing.
- (5) **Identification of the problem** for participants (if there is one) or an account of what is taking place (if not).

Heritage (2004) has a similar, but longer and more detailed list of what he calls ‘basic places to probe’ the interaction for ‘institutionality’. In this section, I have tried to give the readers an idea of how I do the analysis. Since CA does not consist of a precise set of steps which will lead to a correct answer, explaining the ways in which the data is handled in this thesis is best demonstrated by doing it. I leave it to later chapters to illustrate in detail how the analysis is carried out. In a sense, trying to define a set of prescriptive steps to follow would go against the spirit of inquiry which Sacks (1992) had in mind. It does not have to be difficult as we are basically reminding ourselves of things we already know how to do. When faced with an interactional problem or challenge, people find a way to solve it.

3.6 Conclusion

When I started collecting recordings of informal talk, what Justine Coupland (2000, 2003) calls, ‘small talk’, I did not have a specific research project in mind. Both students and I shared a vague notion that it would be interesting to continue our talks over time. We continued to meet on an ongoing basis simply to catch up with what we were doing and renew our contact. While the expressed purpose of our sessions was to simply talk, we all had our own purposes. They told me one of theirs was to practice English in a ‘natural’ setting in which they could actually use language for communication (not for tests, not for grades, not to get into university, nor to get a job). For me, I wanted to create more opportunities to get to know students in their daily lives beyond classroom language learners as well as get more practice in having extended conversations with them (which would be impossible in regular classes).

I selected CA as a way to study my data since CA is known to deal with naturally occurring data (not designed for research). However, my data seemed far removed from the early classic CA studies of ‘help line’ telephone conversations (e.g., Sacks, Schegloff) and talks among NS friends (e.g., Pomerantz). Then I discovered applied forms of CA. My talks seemed like a mixture of classroom talk, interviews, and doctor-patient talk. In the late 90’s as mentioned in the last chapter and this one, CA expanded into the study of talk including one or more NNSs.

Part of my overall argument in this project is that we may be underestimating NNSs’ conversational abilities by only focusing on correct language use. By looking at Firth’s (1996) data and other data of NNS talk taking place throughout Europe such as Wagner (1996), Kurhila (2004, 2005), and Brouwer (2004), we come to notice the desire people have to communicate beyond concern for correct linguistic forms. Firth (1996) sees NNS talk as demonstrating “remarkable flexibility and robustness of natural language, and offers compelling evidence of people’s often extraordinary ability to *make sense in situ* as part and parcel of the local demands of talking to one another” (p. 256) (original emphasis).

I have built on the recent work of noted CA analysts and have shown how my own method fits. CA remains a comparatively unfamiliar analytical method to TESOL teacher-researchers (who are more familiar with qualitative methods based on ethnography and action research or quantitative methods). I believe the ideas and discussion in this chapter could have important implications for CA’s future credibility and use among non-CA practitioners and the larger research community.

Finally, I hope this chapter has set the scene for the next series of chapters (4-9) which will deal with the actual analysis of the data.

Chapter 4 Talk Flows

Introduction: How talk flows

4.1 Resources available to participants

4.1.1 Receipt tokens for acknowledging and continuing

4.1.2 Formulation as an understanding response

4.1.3 Preferred assessments

4.1.4 Co-completed assessments

4.2 Topic as a resource

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4.5 Flow and the subsequent chapters

Introduction: How talk flows

Interaction is seen here as a series of collaborative decisions and actions projected turn by turn. When the talk flows, each speaker is expressing him or herself while paying attention to how the recipient is responding. Likewise, each recipient pays attention to what the current speaker is saying while also expressing his or her understanding and interest in the topic. In order to manage this environment, the speaker has to know how to package the ideas into a series of turns while the recipient has to know which type of

receipt to use and when to start his or her turn as a relevant and appropriate response. For example, the recipient anticipates an elaboration and responds accordingly while the speaker expects feedback from the recipient.

In my data, talk typically ‘flows’ when questions lead to multiple turn answers which supply additional self-disclosed information (i.e., elaboration). This can provide ideas for the next question or questions (as a way to probe and expand the topic rather than fish for a topic). This also implies that among the various options available participants choose the same one. It should be remembered that the goal of these talks is first and foremost to keep the talk going. The organization of discourse would appear to consist of an ongoing series of question-answer-next question turns. Along with this basic pairing, there are comments about comments which further push the talk forward. We will see that an essential link in either case is a receipt. It creates opportunities to show acknowledgment and affiliation. So whether a basic question-answer pair needs a third turn response or a comment needs a second turn response, a receipt helps to guide the next turn. Building on previous turns while looking ahead to the next turns is how participants co-manage flow. (See Csikszentmihalyi, 1990, for a different focus on ‘flow’ as a theory of individual performance or a state between challenge and skills already possessed and feelings between anxiety and boredom. Notable researchers among those who look to apply his ideas to classroom learning are van Lier, 1996, and Egbert, 2003.)

4.1 Resources available to participants

The next step in analyzing the flow of talk is to ask: What resources are available to participants beyond the basic adjacency pair or two-turn structures typically seen in question-answer and statement-receipt exchanges? The following discussion will describe several resources which participants have been observed to use during flow.

4.1.1 Receipt tokens for acknowledging and continuing

What could be initially surprising is that talk could flow when one participant, the recipient, limits what he or she says to minimal receipts (e.g., uhuh, um, oh). When timed precisely, such receipts may provide the elaborator with a series of understandable signs from the recipient of not only expressing comprehension, but also encouragement to continue speaking. I see these receipt tokens as signs of acknowledgment and continuation. Furthermore, in a spatial sense, by minimizing what is said and the time spent taking the floor, the recipient could maximize opportunities for the current teller to talk on topic. In the following excerpt, we see samples of how Masako makes minimal contributions of language to the talk. Yet, what she says seems both well-timed and adequate in alternating with the turns taken by Ian, the elaborator. (An earlier section of this talk appeared in Chapter 1, Excerpt 1 as a sample of my analysis. Here we look at the use of tokens as receipts.)

Excerpt 1: Masako no. 2, swimming

105 I: Oh. (1) Well. Not really a sport, but ah I like walking.
→106 M: °Oh°.

- 107 I: So nowadays I am trying to go for a walk everyday or every night after dinner,
108 for ah my health.
- 109 M: Oh.
- 110 I: Maybe it's not a sport.
- 111 M: Hhh.
- 112 I: Um. (2) Probably I like ah swimming in the sea or ocean the best.
- 113 M: Oh. Uh.
- 114 I: When I was in ah high school and university, I used to go surfing.
- 115 M: Oh.

Several points are illustrated in Excerpt 1. Flow is not measurable in terms of word count or how many words are uttered. It is in the timing of turn-taking. Knowing *when* to take action even uttering a non- or quasi-lexical utterance appears pivotal in setting up the next slots for use by the next speaker. Flow is not about balanced linguistic production or increased production, but rather how the contributions of two people work together to keep talk flowing. Knowing the right amount of contribution to make at any time in relation to the other person's is the key. Thus, flow shows us the moments when participants are able to smoothly co-orient and co-project turn-taking.

4.1.2 Formulation as an understanding response

There are cases where the recipient demonstrates his or her understanding of what the elaborator is trying to say. In the next example, Ian in line 53 gives a receipt to the information as being new and then produces the gist of what Masako has said in lines 50 and 52.

Excerpt 2: Masako no. 9, university life

50 M: Yea. I used to listen to music rock music

51 I: Yeah.

52 M: I now I try to listen to jazz music.

→53 I: Oh. It's a change. Um.

54 M: Yeah. Hhhh. Um. ((softly)) Also I began part-time job.

55 I: Oh. (1.2) What's your job?

Instead of a close rephrasing of lines 50 and 52 separately, Ian succinctly combines the two utterances by identifying the implicit message which Masako confirms at the beginning of line 54. We can notice how 'yeah' (line 51) works as a continuer receipt to get the elaboration (line 52). In a sense, this receipt is able to solicit an extra bit of information to produce the formulation about change in line 53. The formulation extends the talk on music (in lines 53-54) by first inferring her message and then setting up the next turn for agreement or confirmation. The formulation also seems to set up a chance for Masako to nominate another topic related to her new life in university.

4.1.3 Preferred assessments

Another way which participants in my data are seen to co-orient to turn-taking is through back-to-back or consecutive evaluative remarks. Here the first turn utterance sets up expectations of the kind of things which can be said in the next turn. This could be particularly important when the talk is built to continue over a period of time. Instead of a question shaping an answer, here we have a statement or an assessment shaping an appropriate next statement. So depending on the first turn statement, comment, or opinion, the recipient (or the speaker of the second turn) has to design an appropriate response. In

CA, projection of a response in such a way is related to the organizational concept of preference. Basically, a ‘preferred’ response needs little explanation beyond the expression of affiliation whereas a ‘dispreferred’ response requires additional explanation to justify it. Thus, the second turn becomes an important moment for determining how subsequent turns are taken.

Pomerantz’s (1984a) work on the preference organization of second assessments through agreement or disagreement helps us see how preferred second assessments could contribute to flow. Organizationally, a second assessment is the second of two back-to-back evaluative statements made by different speakers.

As seen below, when the second turn is taken in such a way as to express similar understanding and agreement with the first turn utterance, the talk can move quickly and simply onto the next turn and turns without doubts of affiliation (e.g., sharing the same opinion). In the example below, Ian gives an evaluative statement as a first turn assessment of Satoko’s manuals. In the next turn, Satoko provides an evaluation statement of agreement which is the second (turn) assessment.

Excerpt 3: Satoko no. 4, e-mail

Ian is trying to explain to Satoko how to set up an e-mail account at her home after graduation. She is struggling to understand what to do and mentions that she has a manual.

50 S: What do you call that that kind of book?

- 51 I: A manual.↑
52 S: Yes, that's [right. Man[ual
53 I: [Hm. [Hm.
54 I: Manuals are hard to use.
→55 S: Hm. I cannot understand.
56 I: Me, too. Even [in English it's hard.
57 S: [Hh:.....h.
58 I: But there is a way you can check it...

The first assessment of manuals for computers comes in line 54 by Ian. He generalizes them as 'hard to use'. The next turn starts with Satoko's token to get the floor. She then provides a second assessment that she 'cannot understand' them. Again, we see how Satoko gives a preferred second assessment which displays their shared opinion. We find further actions which reinforce their affiliation (as people who find computer-related manuals not very helpful) in the subsequent turns (lines 56-57). Thus, through the display of assessments in consecutive turns by both participants, they find out clearly where each of them stands on the issue. In addition, getting the preferred second assessment allows them to move ahead without needing further explanation. Preferred second turn assessment is fertile ground for further study. Organization of preference is a dynamic moment by moment interactional challenge to anticipate what the other participant understands. How the participants are able to orient to the type of assessment has important consequences for whether the talk continues to flow or not. Thus, even dispreferred responses could help talk flow, but in a different way from preferred ones.

4.1.4 Co-completed assessments

The next example shows how there could be a co-constructed assessment. Instead of having a series of assessments to propel the talk forward, one person initiates the evaluative statement and the other person comes in (as if on cue) and completes the utterance. What appears to be happening in lines 81-83 of the example is a single assessment co-constructed in three turns.

Excerpt 4: Satoko no. 3, choosing her university

Satoko has just revealed that her father did not recommend for her to attend the university nearby because he was teaching there in the very department she wanted to enter.

- 77 S: ... so HHhh he didn't recommend me.
78 (2.7)
79 I: A little embarrass[sing
80 S: [HHhh.
→81 I: or=
→82 S: =maybe
→83 I: too clos[e
84 S: [I think so.
85 I: Now ah two famous people at two different universities.
86 S: Hhh.
87 I: Actually the reason in one sense is very simple, but in another sense it's very
88 complicated.
89 S: Yes. Hhh. Yes. Yes.

The silence in line 78 is most likely a sign that something very personal and sensitive has been shared. This is not a moment of stuckness, but rather a necessary moment of acknowledgment. Ian then offers an assessment which Satoko confirms with laughter. The slight overlap (lines 79-80) as well is not an indication of stuckness, but rather of affiliation. The slight overlap actually appears to enhance the agreement. So the silence and laughter which could have been ambiguous in meaning in other situations seem to convey a sense of shared orientation here.

All the features of talk here suggest that the participants know what to do: Ian formulates and Satoko agrees in lines 79-80. A second assessment is co-constructed in lines 81-83 which again gets immediate agreement. Line 81 is the first part of the assessment. The second part follows immediately in line 82. Finally, in line 83, there is a third part which completes this single assessment (i.e., 'or maybe too close').

The co-completed assessment appears to work as a launch pad for the production of other formulations as Ian continues with two more elaborative evaluative statements (i.e., formulations) with Satoko's agreement each time. Every assessment is followed in the next turn by confirmation from the other person that the orientation and projection are shared. This sequence shows participants taking every opportunity to articulate understanding, confirm affiliation, and further elaborate. The talk flows in a collaborative and supportive response to the disclosure of highly personal information in part due to the use of the co-completed assessment.

4.2 Topic as a resource

A short explanation is in order to differentiate between how I will discuss the organization of topic here and later in Chapter 6. In this present chapter, topic is treated as a feature of when talk is flowing while in Chapter 6 I will examine topic shift as one of four ways participants have to resolve stuckness. There I view topic shift as a device and a location to get unstuck. Topic shift and juncture will be examined for their usefulness to re-orient participants to the next turn. In contrast, in this section, topic will be explained in terms of its various features which at once both indicate and support the flow-in-progress.

4.2.1 Aspects of topics

The following discussion is a departure from the mainstream discussion in this thesis.

Usually I am more interested in *how* a topic is assembled than what the content is.

However, when I look at types of topics which are talked about, I am considering how the content could possibly help the timing or orientation to the taking of the next turn. I include this discussion in order to acknowledge the apparent relevance of the 'right' type of topic for extended flowing talk.

In the data that I collected, the topics selected and talked about primarily center on personal knowledge which one person has and the other person is interested in knowing.

In other words, the type of topic on display is one that only the elaborator would have full access. The recipient is assumed to be uninformed initially. This is to be expected as the

stated purpose of these conversations is to get to know each other better by the genuine sharing of personal experiences and thoughts. Topics of shared knowledge, on the other hand, while not as common in this data, seem to serve as important reminders of participants' affiliation.

Shared knowledge

Shared knowledge could help the recipient grasp the elaboration quicker and more fully by having some common background knowledge. Related to this, shared knowledge makes it easier for the elaborator to explain. He or she does not have to start from the beginning each time a new topic is introduced. Interestingly, shared knowledge can be acknowledged without words. Laughter as well as silence could indicate that an extended spoken explanation is not always necessary as the meaning could already be understood. We can see this in the following example. (A later section of this session appeared in Excerpt 1 to illustrate receipt tokens. The focus here is on what they have in common, the same opinion.)

Excerpt 5: Masako no. 2, swimming

- 73 M: I like swimming.
74 I: Any place okay?
75 M: But I don't like river.
76 I: River, oh. Why not?
→77 M: Well, (5) dirty. Hhh.
78 I: Ah. (3) yeah. Sometimes lake is also dirty. We can't see.
79 M: Yeah.

Masako's reason (line 77) for not wanting to swim in a river seems to be expressed in multiple ways with language being only one of them. The opening marker shows her giving the question some thought. 'Well' along with the somewhat long pause sets up the timing for delivering her anticipated answer. The reply is a single word, 'dirty' which is followed by laughter. The laughter not only marks the end of her turn, but suggests a kind of unspoken 'you know what I mean' message. Both participants live in the same city and know that local rivers were once clean, but are questionable now. The subsequent turns (lines 78-79) confirm that this is shared knowledge with the 'yeah' markers.

Rich topics

These are the types of topics which Sacks mentioned in his lectures (e.g., 1992, vol. 1, p. 178) as being easy to talk about. Participants have a common interest and investment in them. Rich topics are different from shared knowledge topics in that the former focuses on an ongoing hobby-like interest which could also be seen as a sign of membership (like the hot rodders in Sacks's lectures who had their own topics: horsepower, body design, and so on) whereas the latter is more simply background information. For these talks the richness does not necessarily come from co-elaboration, but rather from their reoccurrence from time to time during different sessions and furthermore by the initiation of the topic by the student-participant (e.g., sports, classes, traveling). A 'rich topic' with Masako is music as both participants play the guitar and like the same kind of music. One time she announced that she bought a new guitar.

Excerpt 6: Masako no. 3, new guitar

I: What's today's ah opening topic?

M: I bought a guitar today.

I: Okay. Tell me more.

M: Beautiful. Its shape is (spore) shape.

(The recording of the rest of this talk is unavailable.)

Talk here and other times continued on its body design (e.g., hollow body, sunburst, pickups, and tone) with Ian also talking about the guitars he has had. Another time she would talk about practicing during the weekends and then Ian would talk about how he would do the same (when he was a student). On other occasions, they would share information about concerts and CDs. They were familiar and interested in each other's instruments, amplifiers, and favorite groups. Such topics have a sense of being inexhaustible to its members. For these talks, a 'rich' topic is not necessarily elaborated as a one off event, but rather as a dependable source of renewing affiliation. (Unfortunately, the regularity of talk on this topic occurred most frequently when the recording equipment was already turned off. The interview-like discourse practice followed by the participants along with the recording appeared to restrict spontaneous sharing. Thus my finding in this area is limited by the data at hand.)

Appropriate topics

These topics fit the time of the talk as being particular current and relevant. In one sense, 'appropriate' would be associated with the roles being played (e.g., teacher-student, interviewers-interviewee) and membership category (gender, nationality, age, etc.). In another sense, appropriateness could be determined by the time of the year or a stage of their lives (e.g., during the vacation, before final exams, or starting the first job). This talk with Takao was arranged by him as he wanted to tell Ian about his new job.

Excerpt 7: Takao no. 10 part 1, looking ahead

47 I: You you have a a new future.

48 T: hhh

49 I: Yeah. So tell me a little bit about your job.

50 T: Yes. Ah. I'm going to work as a systems engineer

Participants knew in advance what the central topic of this particular meeting would be. The talk flowed through preliminary stages of customary pleasantries and inquires and even gift giving before the main topic of the day began in earnest. Having a clear purpose and topic helps in the co-orientation and projection of turns of the focus topic, but also other parts of the conversation. One benefit of experiencing the flow of talk could be that success here could build confidence to face future challenges.

4.2.2 Co-management of topics

In this section, the organization of topic in regards to smooth turn-taking is explained according to three aspects noticed in the data: agreement, elaboration, and change. While these features will be discussed as distinct actions within the sequence of turns, they are interwoven interactional sensitivities. They show how participants constantly check with each other about topic. This shared concern allows talk to flow as they adjust and accommodate to each other.

Apparent agreement about topic

One possible way participants in my data try to ensure flow is when one of the participants explicitly nominates a topic. Then if the other participant agrees, a common co-orientation base has been established. In this way, participants could be reassured of two things: (1) The speaker has shown that he or she has some topic to talk about. (2) The recipient has expressed approval and is ready to listen and respond to the proposed topic. The stage has been prepared for talk to flow. The attention here is on getting agreement on topic as an opening move. Not only is it an opening move to the main talk, but it occurs regularly in the opening moments of the talk.

Excerpt 8: Masako no. 5, school annual editor

- 1 I: Okay, let's start in our usual way. What's today's date?
- 2 M: January the twenty fifth.
- 3 I: Uh. And what year?
- 4 M: Twenty oh three.
- 5 I: Twenty oh three. Okay. When was the last time ah we had a conversation?
- 6 M: Well in December?
- 7 I: Yeah. I looked today December seventh.
- 8 M: Oh.
- 9 I: So it's yeah um over one month ago. Um. What's today's opening topic?
- 10 M: My school life.
- 11 I: Okay. Go ahead.
- 12 M: Now I'm making a book. The book is called the book is called my book is called
- 13 my school's all students. I belong to school council.
- 14 I: Uhuh.
- 15 M: Yeah. So now I am very busy.
- 16 I: Oh.

We see (in line 9) how Ian closes the preliminary small talk with a summarizing statement and marks a new opening with a token ('um') before asking Masako for the first topic. She offers a candidate topic and Ian accepts it in lines 10 and 11, respectively. This pre-answer ritual of getting approval of a topic is seen throughout the data as a tool to clarify what will be talked about, who will talk about it, and even how turns will be allotted (e.g., one person will elaborate and the other responds with receipts). Making sure that both participants approve of the topic before getting into it helps to ensure flow. In another sense, the pre-elaboration process in itself sets up a clear exchange of turns between parties which also helps to establish the flow.

Increasing chances of shared interest in the topic could go some way towards promoting the flow of turns. The potential elaborator, the one who nominates the topic, is given extended turns or time on the floor in order to introduce the topic and provide details. The recipient agrees to limit his or her turns and time on the floor to allow the current speaker opportunities to say more. This is what happens in the subsequent flowing turns (lines 12-16 and beyond).

Elaboration of a single topic

In flow sequences, the recipient, though typically limited to minimal receipts, must make sure these tokens are understandable to the elaborator as signs of not only comprehension, but also of encouragement to continue. Such encouragement could include displays of genuine interest, approval, and affiliation. Too much ambiguity in the type of token and the timing of its delivery (particularly if delayed) could make the elaborator confused (whether to continue or stop). It could even bring the turn-taking to a standstill. So the

current speaker in addition to building the extended answer has to constantly read the feedback from the recipient as guideposts while the recipient has to be sure to put up guideposts at regular intervals.

This reliance on co-orientation between participants suggests that confidence (and even trust) in the understood organization of clear actions is important. Actions cannot be taken without it. Talk flows within a frame where such interactional actions occur as the topic gets developed. While confidence itself cannot be directly seen, the smooth timing of turns with sensitively shared language displays a sense of confidence. This exemplifies the type of work co-participants successfully engage in when talk flows.

Question and answer pair sequence

The common co-orientation approach found in my data is the use of questions and answers. This allows for a close turn by turn check as in an adjacency pair. The observation from a CA perspective is that participants treat it as odd when a question does not get an answer. Adjacency pair matching of the question with its answer in the two following examples allows participants to maintain the flow of talk through a smoothly and orderly taken string of questions and responses. (A much later section of this talk appeared in Chapter 3, Excerpt 3 for language adjustments made by the NS. Here we see organization of turn-taking in pairs.)

Excerpt 9: Masako no.1, junior high school

9 I: And ah what school do you go to now?

- 10 M: I go to Tokudo Junior High School.
- 11 I: What ah year student are you?
- 12 M: I am in the second grad.
- 13 I: Ah, second grade. Huh. (.) Um. Where is your school?
- 14 M: (.) In Tokudo.
- 15 I: Oh in Tokudo. How do you::: go to school?
- 16 M: I go there by train.

The excerpt consists of questions and answers coming in consecutive turns. The turn after the answer is another question (Q-A/Q-A). The series of questions fills in general background information about Masako's daily schedule. The recipient (Ian) directs what the speaker (Masako) should talk about through a series of questions. While this sequence is highly controlled by Ian and questions could limit what is said, they could also help Masako know what to say. In addition, breaking up the telling of the information into small and understandable chunks of questions and answers helps keep the turns moving and thus the talk flowing. In this way, participants are able to consistently check the co-orientation on a turn by turn basis with a minimal amount of ambiguity and open-endedness.

Statement and receipt pair sequence

Another characteristic of flow appears to be the sequence of statement and receipt adjacency pairs. In the example below, the elaborator and recipient neatly take turns. The extended talk of a topic is basically distributed over a few turns one sentence per turn while the accompanying receipts are overwhelmingly minimal tokens. (Here the focus is

on adjacency pairing while the attention in an earlier portion of the same talk in Excerpt 5 was on shared knowledge.)

Excerpt 10: Masako no. 2, swimming

105 I: Oh. (1) Well. Not really a sport, but ah I like walking.

106 M: °Oh°.

107 I: So nowadays I am trying to go for a walk everyday or every night after dinner,

108 for ah my health.

109 M: Oh.

110 I: Maybe it's not a sport.

111 M: Hhh.

When the talk flows, the elaboration is co-constructed. It is a sequence of turns composed of an extended turn of a reported experience divided into parts interspersed with periodically well timed receipts. Though these receipts tend to be minimal and sometimes even non-linguistic, they do not seem to be ambiguous in intent to the elaborator. This person apparently seems to have no trouble in interpreting these markers as encouragement to continue with the story (or extended talk on the current topic).

4.3 Features of flow

Flow of talk between participants looks smooth, orderly, and almost effortless at times and the turns come and go fluidly without any disturbance. Below the surface, there are questions and issues which need to be mentioned in order to deepen understanding of this phenomenon. The first section raises questions about the interactive nature of flow and

the second one offers a vivid metaphor to get deeper at some of the complex issues we must face when analyzing flow. The common point running through both sections is to see flow as an interaction between two individuals and what implications arise.

4.3.1 It looks like ‘flow’, but is it?

Before leaving the discussion on the co-management of topic as talk flowing, I should briefly mention two issues which present challenges to how topic organization indicates talk as flowing.

When talk is extensive, but the receipts are not

Below we see a situation where the elaborator (Ian) takes extensive turns while also providing slots (in the form of pauses) for any possible receipts by Masako. The potential problem comes when the slots are not used by the recipient. The absence of receipts in these slots could be viewed as a possible display of inattention, disinterest, or incomprehension. (This is later in the same talk seen in Excerpt 10 where the focus was on statements and receipts in pairs.)

Excerpt 11: Masako no. 2, swimming

- 152 I: Yeah, I forget.
→153 M: Hhh.
154 I: I forget the words. (2) Um. (1) OK. So, I think you can learn a well you can
155 practice pronunciation (1) if your speaking is understandable to me.
→156 M: Uhm.
157 I: Also, um, I think ah of course ah new words is important, vocabulary is
158 important, but vocabulary plus ah putting words into a sentence are important.

159 Anyway, make a good sentence for speaking, so you can practice ah by our ah
160 interviews. And ah also I said um (2) when you have a conversation, you have
161 ah no time to wait.

→162 M: Hh.

Masako has been trying to explain to Ian what she has learned through these talks. As we join the talk, Ian (in lines 152 and 154) is translating into English what she has said in Japanese. There are subsequently a few chances for Masako to respond during his pauses. In these cases, the pause could be a possible TRP. One opportunity could be in line 154, between ‘I forget the words’ and ‘Um’. Another one could be in line 155, after ‘practice pronunciation’ and before ‘if your speaking’. Here unlike in the environment of the other pauses in lines 154 and 160, there are no markers before or after to indicate Ian is keeping the floor. One implication could be that uninterrupted talk by the current speaker without any input from the recipient could be a sign of trouble rather than flow. Despite the appearance that the talk is moving forward smoothly on a topic, on closer inspection, Ian seems to be rambling.

In talk between native speakers, such a situation where the recipient does not display any sign of engagement, could be interpreted to mean lack of attention, interest, or understanding. It is difficult for the speaker to continue without orienting to some sign no matter how small it may be. I went back to the video recording of the Excerpt 11 above to check. Masako is seen to give very slight nods and brief gazes at Ian while giving non-lexical receipt tokens in lines 153, 156, and 162. Possibly her minimal non-verbal and verbal action serve adequately as continuers to allow Ian to talk extensively.

The overall point being made here is simply that the recipient's display of engagement in the process of talking a topic into being could be a necessary ingredient for flow. Without the receipts to guide the talk, the speaker could drift as in the case above. Another problem comes to light when we notice that there is no preliminary elicitation of topic agreement and confirmation before the elaborator launches into extended turns. The absence of confirmation of mutual orientation before the actual elaboration suggests some preliminary exchange of turns for apparent agreement of topic is important to ensure proper co-projection of turns not to mention interest and familiarity. Thus, a simple, but important statement is exemplified: It takes two people to make a talk-in-interaction flow.

When the receipts are extensive, but the talk is not

Sometimes as in the case below, we notice the potential elaborator is provided with a prompt (line 51) followed by opportunities (i.e., given the floor) to say what she remembers. However, there is a long gap immediately after the prompt. We notice that the recipient (Ian) in line 54 overlaps briefly with tokens to encourage Masako to continue. Around the series of gaps (lines 52, 55, 58, and 60), there are prompts (lines 51 and 59) and receipts as continuers (lines 54 and 57).

Excerpt 12: Masako no. 6, *Eiken*

- 51 I: O:kay and then in the s:econd picture (.) do you remember
52 (8.6)
→53 M: Maybe we ca[n (.) the bo[y
54 I: [Um [Um]
55 (2.9)

→56 M: was planning to (.) make his dog's house.

57 I: Um.

58 (2.0)

59 I: Anything else?

60 (2.0)

61 M: No.

These actions display the extensive work done by the recipient (Ian) to get responses from Masako. It is somewhat reminiscent of the efforts of the high school teacher who faced a similar situation back in Chapter 1. However, unlike in the high school example, there appears to be a topic being developed in Masako's turns (line 53 and 56). If we follow these two lines, they could be seen as a continuation of her attempt to describe the picture. Possibly co-participants accept such a string of silences as long as there is a chance of pushing the talk forward. In one sense, Ian's lack of intervention during the silences in line 52 and 55 could be seen as 'transforming' the gaps (or inter-sentential silences) into pauses (or intra-sentential silences) during a single turn by Masako which starts with line 52 and continues until line 56. (See Czyzewski, 1995, for a discussion of how similar 'transformations' of gaps into pauses occur when a therapist decides to be a 'passive recipient' to encourage the patient to continue.) When participants correctly co-project what to do and when to do it in coordination with each other, we can see the fluid movement of the turn-taking between participants as elaboration with encouragement.

These cases reveal that one speaker does not constitute 'flow' in an interactional sense. It takes two. The next section takes a look at how flow is an interaction that consists of two individuals in a meeting of language and thoughts. Once we think of joint construction of

a discourse, we need to admit it cannot be perfect or complete in terms of full or even adequate expression verbally of what is thought.

4.3.2 Flow as a process of navigation

According to Chafe (2001), 'discourse flow' can be seen as 'navigation' guided by such directional forces as topic, schema, and interaction. Navigating a body of water and flowing with the current is the image which comes to my mind. Chafe reminds analysts that we study language, even spoken discourse, in written form and we may begin to think that language is static because of it. Yes, the transcripts which I am so dependent on for my analysis is a record frozen in time. Language in interaction is action and Chafe uses the metaphor of a flowing stream as a reminder. However, what is exactly flowing in this case? In my thesis, I deal with sounds which are transcribed because they can be publicly observed (and discussed as Sacks hoped they would). We need to think what the transcript represents. Chafe would say this is only part of the picture of flow. There is the flow of sounds, but there is also the flow of thoughts in any interaction. Sounds are put in the service of thoughts as they drive language forward.

There are what he calls 'forces' that shape and steer the direction of the flow as participants navigate by reference to them. 'Topic' which I discussed in this chapter and which will be discussed in a different aspect later in Chapter 6 is one of the ways by which an interactional spoken discourse is navigated. Once a topic is introduced participants need a way to deal with it. The second area is the navigation by 'schema'. Speakers need a familiar path to travel along in talking about the topic (e.g., narrative development). Verbalization can never be fully expressed just as we cannot know

perfectly what's on the other's mind, yet we continue to engage in conversation. Finally, participants come to a possible ending to the development of the current topic. They need to navigate by 'interaction'. What signals do they pick up to guide them in closing the topic or continuing it? Maybe there are prosodic or paralinguistic signs. Chafe, keeping with the metaphor, describes the forward movement of flow.

The stream of language is propelled forward by the opening of a topic and the creation of a drive for the topic's development until close is judged appropriate. ... Once open, a topic may be kept moving along a path provided by a schema, or by the interaction of separate minds engaged in the conversation, or by some combination of both. (Chafe, 2001, p. 683)

The import of what Chafe discusses is twofold: (1) Flow is not so simple and easy a state where participants are doing nothing. They need to navigate around obstacles whether they are rocks (even partially submerged ones) or differences in language and culture. However, there are devices to help navigation such as familiar schema and routines. Flow is ultimately about regularly checking with each other that we know what part of the journey we are on. (2) Finally, what we learn about analyzing 'discourse flow' from Chafe is that even though conversation is co-constructed, we are dealing with two individuals with separate minds. Even though the communication will always be imperfect in some way, they are influenced by each other as well as influencing each other. They 'bridge the gap' between them through 'a constant interplay of constantly changing ideas'. Flow can feel so easy to the participants and look so simple to the analyst, but it requires much work. We engage in it though it is not perfect and keep

trying to connect in those special moments when participants seem to ride on the wave of conversation.

4.4 Summary: Organization of flow

In this section, I take a step back in order to provide readers with a chance to see what has been noticed about flow in a general overview sense. I will comment on the features mentioned within two broad areas: linguistic resources and collaborative work.

4.4.1 Resources available to participants

Some common features of talk have been noted to serve as interactional tools which help participants maintain their turn-taking orientation to each other. The flow of talk is seen as alive and well through co-projection of the next turn in terms of whose turn it is and what can be said that is relevant.

Receipt tokens including continuers are commonly used to simultaneously acknowledge what the speaker of the prior turn has said and encourage him or her to continue. The often minimal form of receipts shows that the recipient will say enough to acknowledge without competing for the floor. In doing so, the next turn speaker becomes clear. However, receipt tokens can be rather ambiguous since they can be brief and quasi-lexical. **Formulations** though more challenging to produce can go a step further in terms of articulating exactly what is understood by the recipient. There are times when some other kind of interactional work needs to be done to establish that participants share an explicit common understanding.

There is a pragmatically based resource **preferred (response) assessments** which can be used by participants to show how the first turn sets up a certain expectation (or hope) for how the second turn will be taken. We saw how the reaction (i.e., second assessment) in the next turn following a first turn evaluative statement has consequences for how the subsequent turns will be used. Giving a preferred response requires little if any rationale. It allows the turns to change smoothly and quickly. In contrast, a dispreferred one could require an insertion to adequately explain it before moving on to the topic-in-progress.

While the resources mentioned above and in fact throughout this thesis are primarily structures of turn-taking, **type of topic** is a matter of content. Content is relevant and useful to participants to recognize how the talk is moving and what they should do. For example, when the topic-in-progress is based on *shared* knowledge, the turns are taken quickly with the assumption that even silence and laughter express understanding. Shared knowledge does not have to be fully articulated linguistically to be understood. Topics which are *rich* and appropriate to particular participants also help the flow of talk. The reporting of personal knowledge and experiences requires distinct roles to be played as elaborator and recipient. This relationship links types of topics to the uses of receipts, continuers, formulations, and preferred responses as the talk continues.

4.4.2 Collaborative work through topic

Using a strategic first turn utterance (e.g., question, request, or comment) to get the other person to initiate not only a response, but an extended one which can establish participants as elaborator and recipient, requires projecting what the other person is

expecting to happen in ensuing turns. Three candidate indications of the co-management of topic have been introduced in this chapter. While I have discussed them separately, they can also be viewed as steps in a process.

(1) **Apparent agreement of topic** provides a necessary preliminary step: Something needs to be talked about to get the main body of talk moving after the preliminary small talk. An exchange between participants not only helps select a topic, but also gives them a broad sense of how the talk will unfold.

(2) **Elaboration of the topic** is likely to be the next step once participants have appeared to work out what to talk about. It was mentioned earlier that elaboration on its own is not enough to ensure flow though it is essential for potential extended talk of a single topic. The type of receipts and the timing seem important as guideposts for moving the topic forward.

(3) **Timely shift of topic** appears to be another indication that talk flows (though it will be discussed at length in Chapter 6 as a way to get unstuck). When the current topic seems to be drawing to a close, participants have been shown to have ways to move on to other aspects of the same topic or introduce a new one.

4.5 Flow and the subsequent chapters

In the following chapters, the examination of the co-management of talks will consider two main conditions: When the participants appear stuck and what devices are available

to them to get unstuck. While the flow of talk through the orderly taking of turns, one by one, is desirable and sought after, there are inevitably moments when something goes wrong. My central argument is not only that getting stuck is a natural occurrence in any talk, but more importantly that participants have ways to get unstuck.

Stuckness is my concept to describe a kind of interactional problem of taking action in the next turn. While knowing the reasons for stuckness would be interesting, the focus of this study is on how stuckness is indicated and what can be done about it to make the talk flow again.

We will see in the next chapter (5) that certain types of silences and overlaps serve as potential indications of stuckness. Delay and mistiming of starting one's turn are typically observed at such moments. Flow in comparison could be considered the absence of the types of silences and overlaps which cause problems for orienting to the next turn in the interlocutors' relationship to each other. When talk flows some silences which express sympathy and some overlaps which convey affiliation might not give participants problems with orientation of turn-taking.

The positive tone which I hope to establish throughout this thesis is that getting stuck is not an insurmountable problem. Even when participants seem stuck we will see in subsequent chapters that there are conversational devices such as topic organization at junctures, starting to tell a story (then continuing and ending it), other-initiated repair, and formulations which help participants clarify how the turns will be taken.

What makes the organizational concept of flow essential for this thesis is not only the list of resources we observe being employed by participants, but also how flow fits into the bigger picture with getting stuck. The structure and organization of talk is basically the same in both cases. The overall goal remains to keep the talk going for a certain amount of time. The difference is the match (in the case of flow) and the mismatch (in the case of getting stuck) of how participants oriented to previous turns and projected the next turn. Flow can be difficult to articulate as it is the coming together of many factors within the orderly taking of turns. I would venture that participants would most likely notice getting stuck much more readily than when their talk flows. So much is the tendency to take it for granted. However, the devices (which help participants' talk flow) may at times be temporarily out of order. What has felt so natural may suddenly require extra interactional work to get it back.

Flow is at once both a condition aimed for where the turn-taking goes smoothly as well as part of the process of maintenance and good upkeep. Knowing what flow is allows us to know what we seek to keep (or to regain). Whatever situation participants find themselves in, the key to maintaining the flow of talk-in-interaction is how participants collaborate.

Who will take the next turn and how?

Chapter 5 Getting stuck

Introduction: How we get stuck

5.1 Some ‘symptoms’ of getting stuck: A pre-analytic view

5.2 Indications of stuckness

5.2.1 Silence

5.2.2 Code switching

5.2.3 Overlap

5.2.4 Change of topic

5.3 Exceptions to the rule: When indications do not mean stuckness

5.3.1 Silence as ritual communicative device

5.3.2 Code switching as supplementary information

5.3.3 Repetition as receipt

5.3.4 Overlap as enhancement of affiliation

5.4 Conclusion: Further thoughts on ‘stuckness’

Introduction: How we get stuck

The orderly taking of turns by speakers typically one at a time provides participants with opportunities for talk-in-interaction to occur smoothly. Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson (1974) make a distinction between talk when it is continuous and discontinuous. While discontinuity of talk is not necessarily a problem in every instance, it is generally seen as a problem in this particular collection of social encounters. For these participants, conversational continuity is an imperative since the agreed goal is to continue talking for a certain period of time. With this in mind, both the participants and the analyst become

sensitive to those moments when continuous talk suddenly becomes discontinuous. There are times when the turn-taking gets stuck.

Stuckness is a *shared* situation which requires two participants. Just as flow is co-constructed, so is getting stuck (and later as we will see, getting unstuck). What this implies is a view of stuckness as a momentary lapse of the continuity of turn-taking. My interest is in the co-management of a problem within the structural maintenance of the talk. Seen in this way, extended talk is a shared achievement. Two participants despite differences and problems co-manage the accomplishment of talk.

In section 5.1, I will explore some ‘symptoms’ of stuckness. These features represent intuitive thoughts about stuckness. In section 5.2, I will then attempt to show stuckness in greater clarity. Specific sequences of talk found in my data will be analyzed through a list of candidate indications of stuckness. In section 5.3, a few examples will be examined to illustrate that the proposed indicators do not necessarily display stuckness in every case. Finally, in section 5.4, I will come back to the original list of indicators again (introduced in 5.2) to clarify my idea of stuckness.

5.1 Some ‘symptoms’ of getting stuck: A pre-analytic view

The following list of descriptions provides a preliminary look at the kinds of features noticed during stuckness. The purpose of this ‘brainstormed’ list is to set the stage for a shorter and more concise list of indicators in the next section (5.2).

- (1) Mis-timing of turn-taking is an organizational issue between two people.
- (2) There is a temporary loss of turn-taking sense and sensibility.
- (3) A sense of perplexity prevails in the form of hesitation.
- (4) The current speaker gives a mixture of signals or an ambiguous signal of selection of the next speaker. This in turn presents the recipient with multiple choices for what to do next.
- (5) Both participants feel unsure what to say, when to say it, and how to say it.
- (6) The current recipient passes up opportunities to speak at the next 'transition relevance place' (TRP) even though the current speaker has prepared a slot for him or her to speak.
- (7) There is a momentary lack of smooth timing of turns.
- (8) All of the above could lead to a momentary breakdown of the turn-taking sequence.
- (9) A momentary organizational check is needed to sort out the turns if no one takes the floor for the next turn or if both speakers take the floor at the same time.

The range of statements above demonstrates the complexity of pinpointing exactly what 'stuckness' is. What all statements seem to have in common is a feeling that something is wrong, lacking, or confusing. Stuckness as well as flow appears to originate in actions which are designed to stay in tune with what the other person does. Stuckness may not be readily apparent in the data. Perhaps it is only through interpretations that we notice it.

The commitment of my analytical approach is to use descriptive accounts of the sequential details in the transcript to form interpretations.

One way to proceed is to unpack this collection of statements about stuckness. One broad difference among the various statements is the mixture of perspectives from which

stuckness is viewed. Statements 4 and 6 specify the actions participants are doing or could do in relation to each other. Statements 7, 8, and 9 are broad overviews of what stuckness looks like with such words as ‘lack’, ‘discontinuous’, and ‘breakdown’. Statements 7 and 9 share the word ‘momentary’. This implies hope of recovery. Statement 5 by not specifying which participant should act, but rather the actions which participants are unsure of implies hesitation and delay in taking the next turn. This list of actions could be related to the particular dilemma described in statement 4 in which the speaker and recipient find it difficult to decide which action to take. Lack of orientation to the next turn is the problem suggested here. Statement 1 interprets the mis-timing of turns as an organizational problem and thus implies it is a matter of participants getting in tune with each other. Finally, there are statements 2 and 3 which seem to suggest that stuckness is intuitively noticed. There is a sense of losing touch or being out of sync with the other person. While this introductory discussion raises various points in a broad manner, the aim of this chapter is to pin down stuckness to several concrete features which can be analyzed sequentially.

5.2 Indications of stuckness

‘Stuckness’ as I am defining it is a momentary breakdown of smooth (uneventful) turn-taking. There is evidence of the participants looking to each other as to who will speak next. The smoothly anticipated taking of turns in continuous talk becomes ambiguous and discontinuous. I begin with the presentation of a collection of examples which focus on single features (e.g., silence). This is done for the sake of providing illustrations of specific indicators and thus a clearer list of indications.

5.2.1 Silence

One place to start looking is where potential indications such as gaps and pauses occur. In particular, they can be found at the potential end of a turn. This suggests a possible relationship between indicators and location. Indicators can and do occur at various places within a turn, between turns, and during a sequence of turns. Location, on the other hand, is a structurally determined spot. The location of potential turn-taking could be unpacked further by the type of phenomenon. Where silence, repetition, code switching, overlap, and change of topic are located could be important when considering stuckness. Since stuckness is an issue of disorientation to the next turn, any unexpected irregularities, for example when silence occurs, could suggest stuckness.

Silences in the form of pauses (silence within a turn) and gaps (silence between turns) are often found in my data. I am interested in particular silences which appear to display participants co-orienting to these moments as getting stuck. Below is an example of silence appearing to indicate participants' momentary lack of smooth timing of turns or discontinuous talk. There are opportunities for either participant to start speaking. The question is: Who will speak next in order to keep the talk going?

Excerpt 1: Masako no. 4, scientist

- 1 I: Alright. What's today's date?
- 2 M: September thir fourteenth.
- 3 I: Huh. Year?
- 4 M: Two thousand two.

- 5 I: Uh. Um, so I think ah we haven't done an interview for (.) a long time.
→6 (2.3)
- 7 I: Do you remember ah (.) the last time we had an interview?
→8 (4.5)
- 9 M: Um I'm sorry I don't.
- 10 I: Hum cause I think um at the end of ah last school year we were meeting ah
11 maybe that was Friday?
- 12 M: Friday?
- 13 I: We used to meet on Friday, the two of us.
- 14 M: Hm.
- 15 I: Just like thirty minutes. Huh?
- 16 M: Yes.

In line 5, Ian seems to be struggling with the phrasing of his utterance. Is it a question, a statement, or the start of an elaboration? Furthermore, how should it be responded to if at all? The silence (in line 6) could indicate that since participants are not sure of the intention of line 5, they are not sure what to do next. The problem is probably not the lack of options, but rather which option among several to take. For example, Masako could simply agree with Ian's assessment that it has indeed been a long time, make a correction and explain that it has not been so long, say what she has been doing, or wait and see if he will continue. In other words, there is some ambiguity over whose turn it is. Thus, the gap in line 6 is an example of the participants getting stuck because the question never gets an answer from Masako. In contrast, the gap in line 8 appears to be a straightforward case of an attributable silence. Masako knows that the next turn is hers. The evidence comes in the next line as she addresses the question. Possibly she just needed time to recall.

According to Sacks et al. (1974), the current speaker has options as to who will speak next: Nominate him/herself, nominate the other person, or open the floor to any takers. When getting stuck, it appears that the current speaker gives either a mixture of signals or an ambiguous signal as to the selection of who will speak next. When no clear choice is apparent, all three options for taking the floor are available. They are also open to different interpretations by both the current speaker and the recipient. Perhaps, this type of open-endedness presents a problem of having to make a coordinated choice. Too many choices could contribute to participants' moment of stuckness. If co-orientation through two speakers making the same choice is the usual way talk flows, then suddenly having multiple choices of how to co-orient could overtax the instinctive and cooperative nature of turn-taking. Here hesitation to take action is expressed as silence. Silence is not the source of stuckness, but rather the indication of it.

5.2.2 Code switching

I have tried to list the potential indications of stuckness in some kind of working order. Silence thus far in my data analysis has been the most promising indication of getting stuck because it is clearly noticeable. Along with silence, code switching is generally thought to be a very common strategy and alternative in second language communication especially in EFL classrooms. However, in my data, it was rare. One reason is the agreement between participants to have these conversations entirely in English. There are instances in my data where the only odd thing about the code switching is that it occurs when it does not seem particularly necessary to clarify meaning.

Auer (1998) gives what he considers a ‘usual definition’ of code switching: “the alternating use of two or more ‘codes’ within one conversational episode” (p. 1). He stresses the need to see the context as an unfolding ‘conversational event’. Three patterns of how the social context of the interaction is connected to the conversational structure through code switching are given: (1) *Discourse-related code-switching* (terminology from Auer, 1984) to help make a particular utterance clear. (2) *Discourse-related insertions* are used to clarify “knowledge of interaction histories and cultural contexts” (Auer, 1984, p. 6). (3) *Preference-related switching* is done as an interactional process to fit the particular interaction. The three functions are located within the organization of turn-taking especially when extra resources are needed to keep the talk going.

Unlike in situations where code switching is used frequently and extensively, in my data, it is employed for just a single turn. After the initiated switch of language, the recipient of the code switch does not follow suit. This shows the use of Japanese as a strategic one off action. The recipient stays in English and does not switch into Japanese. My interest here in code switching is in how it could indicate to participants that they are getting stuck. Though its use is so rare (two or three times in the entire data collected), when it occurs it should to be accounted for.

The following example illustrates how code switching into Japanese occurs in my data. As we join the talk, Masako is struggling to get Ian to understand what she wants to say. (In Chapter 4, Excerpt 11, the next part of this talk was looked at for Ian’s extensive talk.)

Excerpt 2: Masako no. 2, swimming

145 M: *Feis fi feis::s fi*

((Transcribed phonetically since intended words are unrecognizable.))

146 I: I don't understand. Can you explain?

147 (3.5)

148 M: In Japanese okay?

149 I: Oh, okay. Go ahead.

→150 M: *Kotoba wa dete konai.* ((Translation: I can't think how to say it.))

In line 146, stuckness is confirmed and an initiative to get unstuck follows in the form of a request. Though the effort initially seems to fail with the subsequent silence (line 147), the next line appears to address the request. In this view, the question in line 146 is the first part of an adjacency pair with second part coming in line 148. Thus matching adjacency pairs (i.e., finding the first and second parts) could be one way to see attempts to get unstuck. On the other hand, the lack of an adjacency pair could indicate stuckness due to lack of displayed co-orientation. A relatively formal marking is used to switch languages. Masako asks for permission to switch to Japanese in line 148. Ian gives a change of state marker, 'oh', and then gives permission twice in different forms ('okay', 'Go ahead'). At a glance, the timing of the turns looks unaffected by the preparation to code switch. It looks fluent and does not seem a likely example of someone who is stuck. There is no problem with the turn-taking, but we still need to ask: Why code switch now?

Code switching seems to offer a way out of lack of L2 vocabulary especially when the gap in line 147 suggests no other help is forthcoming. Using Japanese could be a strategic solution to avoid getting further stuck than they already appear to be (in lines 145, 146, and 147). So code switching could at once be an indication of getting stuck, an attempt to

prevent getting stuck further, or even an attempt to deal with stuckness. How participants manage to get unstuck will be discussed through examples in the following chapters (6-9).

5.2.3 Overlap

Overlap or ‘simultaneous talk’ is a complex phenomenon and a matter in this project of co-orienting to the next turn. Overlap here is not treated as an interruption, but simply as the structure of turns when two people speak at the same time. Overlap is viewed here through the details of how the participants finely time the start and finish of turns in relationship to the other person. As a way of introducing a few of the functions of overlap talk, I refer to Schegloff (2000b) who identifies four types: (1) ‘Terminal overlaps’ when one speaker enters while the other speaker is finishing his or her turn. (2) ‘Continuers’ are tokens used by the recipient of extended talk in recognition that the current speaker’s turn is not yet completed. (3) ‘Conditional access to the turn’ when the other speaker is invited to join in though the other’s turn continues (e.g., word searches). (4) ‘Choral’ overlaps are designed to be done in concert, not serially, such as laughter. These overlaps exemplify turns being co-managed. On one hand, Schegloff says the management of these generic types of overlaps is unproblematic. On the other hand, he says they can be a problem if the participants see them as so.

While both participants have projected that it is their turn, details of the actual overlaps show much more depth than simply simultaneous speaking. Overlaps could provide evidence of uncertainty about who speaks next and about what. It should also be mentioned that in some situations, overlap actually enhances the interaction as the

descriptions above suggest. There are situations when recipients express enthusiasm for aspects of shared affiliation such as agreement and sympathy. So, not all overlaps indicate stuckness. The challenge of interpreting all the candidate indications is that the analyst needs ways to distinguish when they indicate stuckness and when they do not.

In my data, overlaps tend to be avoided. We cannot escape from implications of our institutional setting and usual roles as teacher and student, not to mention other identity related factors such as gender, age, NS-NNS, and nationality. Turns are typically taken one at a time with the teacher possessing virtually all of the options for who can take the floor (McHoul, 1978; Mehan, 1979, 1985; Seedhouse, 2004). This to some extent contributes to the clear turn-taking sequences found in my data. When overlaps appear, they provide insights into how participants' smooth and clear sense of turn-taking could be temporarily thrown off balance.

The following is a series of three excerpts taken from a talk with Takao. The first example shows how the overlap occurs after Takao (in line 44) answers the question affirmatively. We see the 'choral' type of overlap in need of resolution as the shared laughter ends.

Excerpt 3: Takao no. 10 part 1, looking ahead

- 43 I: Important match?
→44 T: Yeah. [Hhh
45 I: [Hhh] (.) Ah and tell me a little bit about um (1) what you're going to do
46 from (.) April↑?

If we look sequentially at lines 43-45 above, Takao in addition to giving an answer could be using ‘yeah’ as a filler and a marker to keep the floor. Meanwhile, Ian seems to be interpreting ‘yeah’ as occurring at a TRP which seems to complete Takao’s turn. An overlap of laughter occurs after the ‘yeah’ marker. Laughter like silence by its very nature of being non-linguistic can be ambiguous. How participants orient to it can be a difficult choice. In line 45, after the overlap, Ian uses two markers (‘ah’, ‘and’) to delay his start possibly in case Takao wants to continue talking about the match. The markers could be confusing: Ian takes the floor, yet he is open to possible entry by Takao. However, if he does not speak, Ian will speak and change the topic.

In a continuation of the same talk, Takao is giving some information about his new job in response to the question above in line 45. Below, Ian (line 59) marks the start of his turn with a stretched ‘Ah’ before uttering a second stretched marker (‘Um’) which overlaps with Takao’s ‘Yeah’ in line 60. We see how the ‘yeah’ marker appears again, but this time as part of the overlap. Here is a problem of resolving whether a terminal or continuer overlap is in order.

58 T: I’m I’m not still sure what which industry or (1.7) who who is my client or=
→59 I:=A::h. [U::m
60 T: [Yeah.
61 (1.7)
→62 T: [First first
63 I: [So it means
64 Um.

65 T: first we are going on ah training session

66 I: Uhuh.

67 T: yeah fo:r about half a year

The first overlap above (lines 59-60) is followed by silence. The second overlap (lines 62-63) is followed by a somewhat ambiguous token ('um'). The participants are projecting their turns differently (i.e., both of them thought it was their turn) not only whose turn it is, but also what is being talked about. Is the turn after the gap (line 61) the start of an elaboration or formulation as seen in lines 62 and 63, respectively? Takao is elaborating on the current topic whereas Ian is trying to clarify what Takao has just said. My point is that overlap is a potentially rich indication of stuckness as it allows us to see the mis-timing and even mis-match of direction of the topic besides possible post-overlap uncertainty over the nomination of the next speaker and development of the topic.

On closer examination of both sequences, not only the markers appearing after the overlap (line 45), but those before the overlaps (lines 44 and 59) seem increasingly as part of the overlap pattern as indications of getting stuck. In addition, these discourse markers are open to being interpreted differently by the participants. The overlap serves as evidence of stuckness through the mis-match of what participants say. Therefore, markers before the overlap signal whether there will be a continuation of the current topic or transition to a new topic. The markers after the overlap allow one participant to take the floor first.

The next example from later in the same talk is similar in respects to a marker appearing before the overlap. However, there are three differences from the previous two cases. Here, Ian is the current speaker when the overlap occurs. Second, the overlap takes place not at the completion of the marker like the other two cases (lines 44 and 59), but during the marker ('oh'). Ian's uncharacteristically stretched out 'oh' could help account for Takao starting to speak before he finishes. Third, the person who continues to take the floor after the overlap (in this case Takao), moves ahead in developing the current topic. The overlap shows a slight mistiming between the continuer receipt and the actual continuation.

73 T: The training session is rather long.
→74 I: O::[:h
75 T: [Much longer than other usual com[other [company.

While some may argue that lines 74 and 75 are taken precisely without a gap, in the data set, a stretched 'Oh' is unique for this particular speaker. Since this is rare, it should be accounted for. The elongated sound could emphasize that the next slot is for continuation. This action raises such questions as why this stretched receipt now and why Takao projects his turn so closely to a possible TRP.

In all three instances, there appear to be momentary confusions over whose turn is next and what is talked about. What these cases show us is that besides being possible indications of stuckness, the overlap itself can be the trouble source of stuckness. What participants do next is a display of trying to get unstuck. Ways of doing so include

initiating a request for a clarification, changing of the topic, or starting a formulation with a ‘so’ marker (back in lines 45 and 63). What is important in studying stuckness is seeing how turns get disconnected, not assigning whose fault it is. Success and failure is a shared experience.

5.2.4 Change of topic

Changing the topic could be seen as a potential preventive measure to deal with foreseeable trouble when participants anticipate getting stuck on the current topic.

Participants want to avoid at all cost the situation where the talk falls into an increasingly awkward and potentially talk-ending silence (before the time allotted for the session is up). So knowing whose turn is next as well as what to say is important for continuing the smooth, orderly, and timely taking of turns.

Not all changes of topic are indications of stuckness. Sometimes participants feel there is nothing more to say on the current topic so participants naturally move on to another topic. (See the examples from Masako no. 2 and 8 on timely shift of topic.) Here, I look at when change of topic seems to display that there is momentary confusion through lack of co-orientation or coordination: Whose turn is it? Which topic are the participants referring to (e.g., a former one, the current one, or a new one)? Such questions are manifested in the uncertainty by which participants try to co-manage their turn-taking and are exemplified by next turn considerations.

Once participants reach a dead end on a current topic, participants are ‘stuck’ as to what to say next. Possibly one motivation for changing the topic before it dies is to preserve the

clear organization of turn-taking. In the example below, participants are trying to coordinate two things: Closing the current topic and then opening the new topic. Between the closing and the opening there are some transitional markers (e.g., laughter, a token, and a pause) which seem to signal the change. I return to an earlier example (from Excerpt 3 on overlap) to show how the topic changes after the overlap.

Excerpt 4: Takao no. 10 part 1, looking ahead

43 I: Important match?

44 T: Yeah. [Hhh

45 I: [Hhhh] (.) Ah and tell me a little bit about um (1) what you're going to do

46 from (.) April↑?

Coming out of a micro pause (in line 45), Ian gives a token ('ah') quickly followed by a continuation marker ('and') to signal taking the floor. Did Takao's laughter (in the prior turn) mark the end of the topic (soccer)? Ian projects in this way as he introduces a new topic. There is a pause in the middle of the turn followed by a reformulation which could express slight hesitation possibly in case Takao has an elaboration or to give Takao a chance to see the shift of topic. The initiation of a new topic (which could have come after Takao said, 'yeah') appears to be delayed by overlapping laughter, a micro pause, two tokens, a pause, and a start-restart. It might not have been clear to them whose turn it is or what the topic is (e.g., the soccer match, new topic). Thus, there is a delay which could signal caution and care to get the next turn right.

A change of topic could signal a moment of waiting for both parties to realize the talk is moving on. Sometimes a moment of adjustment is needed. For example, the recipient encourages the current speaker to continue while the speaker seems to be closing the current topic. Stuckness as indicated by change of topic thus shows participants trying to catch up to each other and get re-tuned. More details will be provided in the next chapter on how participants co-manage and recover their co-orientation and thus get unstuck through topic shift.

5.3 Exceptions to the rule: When these indications do not mean stuckness

The collection of examples thus far has focused on identifying indications of some confusion or uncertainty about the timing of turns. There have been glimpses into when the usual cooperative work of co-orientating to each other through the precise timing of turns temporarily breaks down. In this section, I take a closer look at when the indicators are present, but they do not seem to indicate stuckness.

5.3.1 Silence as ritual communicative device

When the silence appears to be used as a communicative device, silence is not an indication of stuckness. Making this distinction is important for two reasons: (1) Silence can be found in some shape or form in virtually all kinds of talk and situations. (2) Not all silences are the same: There are situations when silence plays such an integral role in interactions. Its presence is treated normatively as a communicative turn. (See Nakamura 2004a,b and 2005, for examples.) In these cases, silence moves the talk forward and even

enhances communicative qualities such as affiliation by creating extra space, time, and opportunity to respond. Silence might not indicate confusion, but rather mutual understanding.

Excerpt 5: Takao no. 10 part 1, looking ahead

The participants are talking in the train station coffee shop (at Takao's request). He is graduating from university next month and is starting a full-time job from April. Takao gives Ian a present. (Below we see how the talk began whereas Excerpt 4 shows how the same talk later progressed through a change of topic.)

- 1 T: Just a cake. Ah. Please have it.
- 2 I: Really↓? Oh thank you very much.
- 3 T: Yeah.
- 4 I: It's very nice of you.
- 5 T: Yeah yeah.
- 6 (1.7)
- 7 I: Can I::?
- 8 T: Um.

This excerpt is a typical receiving-a-present sequence. It is formulaic in the sense that there are specific things said in a clear cut and deliberate turn-taking style: giving a gift followed by appreciation and receipt of the appreciation, and finally, the actual handling. After the opening, there are two adjacency pairs (lines 2-3 and 4-5) where the participants are basically saying 'thank you' and 'you're welcome'. The gap could express appreciation on the part of both participants that does not need to be expressed in words. After an appropriate length of silence (in line 6), the next adjacency pair begins (line 7)

with Ian asking for explicit permission to take or open the gift. This silence might not be stuckness, but rather a ceremonial moment of mutual appreciation. Here silence is used as a communicative device to allow for a shared moment in time.

5.3.2 Code switching as supplementary information

Below is an example of code switching occurring not because participants are getting stuck, but rather to provide additional relevant information. Ian asks if the researcher who visited her school is from the national center. In line 38, Masako confirms his guess, then downgrades it slightly ('I think so'), and finally says the official name, in Japanese, of the place where the researcher is from.

Excerpt 6: Masako no. 8, DNA

- 37 I: Do you think ah national research center?
→38 M: Yeah, I think so. *Ikagaku Kenkyu Jo*
((Literal translation: Medical Science Research Institute)).
39 I: Oh. Maybe people in science know it very well.

Ian is faced with a code switch which he must react to. In this case, the code switch is used to confirm information in two languages. By looking at what comes before and after the code switch, we see there is no confusion or hesitation in taking turns by either person. Code switching resourcefully confirms joint understanding of the name in English and Japanese.

5.3.3 Repetition as receipt

When repetition does not seem necessary for fixing incorrect language, it could be used for some other purpose such as an understanding response, a receipt of acknowledgment, a continuer receipt, a question clarifier, or even a repetitive tying device to link turns to the same topic.

Excerpt 7: Takao no. 1, Asian soccer

3 I: Um. (1.2) How often do you play soccer?

4 T: Ah. Everyday.

→5 I: Everyday. (1.8) Why do you play soccer everyday?

In line 5, Ian repeats Takao's answer ('everyday') twice, at the beginning and end of his turn. The first repetition is a receipt of understanding and encouragement for Takao to go on. The second repetition helps make the question clear. Both repetitions ('do you play soccer', 'everyday') make use of language Takao has chosen. All the work done by repetitions in line 5 appears to be done to help him speak in the next turn (to answer the question). The repetition of 'everyday' at the end of the question could display a recipient designed move to make the question more accessible to Takao in terms of forming a response, specifying how to reply.

5.3.4 Overlap as enhancement of affiliation

In previous examples of overlap, the mistiming of taking the floor was observed.

Participants become momentarily unsure who will take the next turn. However, there are other cases where overlap enhances affiliation between participants as an expression of

understanding. Non-lexical markers such as laughter and minimal receipts offer us a promising site of exploration. In the following sequence with Satoko, the first overlap happens during the asking of the initial question. The second overlap occurs while the second question is being asked. (Parts of this talk were introduced in Chapter 3, Excerpts 1 and 2 as potential sites for investigation. Here we look at the details of the overlaps.)

Excerpt 8: Satoko no. 1, America

- 22 S: He could build himself.
23 I: Yeah right. (2) Why did youu (.) pick him (.) out of all the
→24 char[acters in the movie?
25 S: [Hhhh
→26 I: Is there ah [some personal ah reason or ...?
27 S: [Ah:::h
28 Yes personal reason. Maybe little bit similar to me.

The two overlaps (lines 24-25 and 26-27) do not appear to cause participants any particular problem as to who will speak next or what to say. There is no silence. In fact, Satoko's laughter in line 25 seems to display her anticipation of what Ian is asking. She does not wait until the question is finished before reacting. Her laughter comes in the midst of his utterance of 'character'. Ian appears to take the laughter as a kind of confirmation as he reformulates his initial question to be more specific (in line 26). Next, Satoko's stretched out receipt token in line 27 overlaps with Ian's second question. Her token comes simultaneously with Ian's continuation after his filled ('ah') pause. Again, it appears Satoko has quickly understood what is being asked and lets it be known spontaneously. So the language and its function appear well-timed even when both

participants speak at the same moment. In addition, we see how Satoko manages to keep track of what she says in conjunction with the questions. Her response in line 28 addresses both of Ian's questions (lines 23-24 and 26). In line 28, her first answer addresses the question in line 26 while her second answer addresses the initial question back in lines 23-24. This well-designed set of responses suggests that she is very clear about what is going on. Here, overlap is not stuckness, but actually a kind of precise timing which uses overlap to convey understanding (e.g., affiliation or being on the same wavelength).

5.4 Conclusion: Further thoughts on 'stuckness'

I started the chapter with a broad list of intuitive descriptions of what stuckness would look like. This preliminary list of features was then more sharply focused into a shorter and clearer list by identifying several common features of talk-in-interaction which could serve as indications of stuckness. I described, interpreted, and analyzed examples from my data to illustrate how the phenomenon of stuckness could be seen through these indicators.

The proposed list of candidate indicators (silence, code switching, overlap, and change of topic) seems to account to some extent for how participants use these common features of talk to signal and confirm to each other that they are stuck. What became increasingly apparent to me during the process of identifying potential moments of stuckness was that participants never wait until they are completely stuck before taking some kind of remedial action. A literal reading of 'stuckness' could be the conversation coming to a

full stop. Probably for a variety of reasons (e.g., loss of face, confirmation that speaking in a foreign language is too difficult, and discouragement to try again), these participants never allow this to happen. There would be dire consequences for the rest of the talk not to mention the chances for future ones. This need to prevent a total meltdown has ramifications for any attempts to robustly define ‘stuckness’. What appears to be the conversational co-management solution for these participants is to combine the acts of indicating some kind of problem and working towards its resolution.

In a broad sense, any of the candidate indicators of stuckness could be at once the signal as well as the strategic device to get re-tuned to each other. For example, silence could show there is a problem as no one is taking the next turn, but it also allows participants time to take the following turn. Code switching could indicate a problem, but also helps address it. Overlap may indicate the mistiming of taking the floor, but it could also clear the air so either person could take the next turn. Finally, changing a topic is useful when in trouble as a way out of that trouble.

In respect for the CA practice of bringing in deviant cases (with the Schegloff 1968 study of one exception in 500 calls being the classic example) in order to strengthen any tentative rule building efforts, I looked at some exceptions to my rule that certain features of talk were indications of stuckness. As previously mentioned, there are cases when the indications do some other kind of work besides displaying a breakdown in the timing of turns. This raises the question: If silences, code switching, overlaps, and changes of topic are capable of functioning in various ways, then how can we know when they are related

to stuckness? The question implies that some kind of deeper analysis is required to further refine the meaning of stuckness.

Chapter 6 Topic

Introduction: Getting unstuck

6.1 Topic organization

6.1.1 Whose turn is next?

6.1.2 What will the next speaker talk about?

6.1.3 Is there confirmation of getting unstuck?

6.2 Patterns around topic shift

6.2.1 After overlap

6.2.2 After silence

6.2.3 After an overlap and silence

6.3 Constraints on topic in these talk sessions

6.3.1 A certain routine with certain steps

6.3.2 A certain topic with certain roles

6.3.3 Other constraints

6.4 Issues

6.4.1 When a change of topic does not work to get unstuck

6.4.2 Does the topic really change?

6.4.3 Topic and turn-taking as different perspectives

6.5 Summary

Introduction: Getting unstuck

As we saw in the last chapter, stuckness is based on what the participants display in the ways they appear to have troubles taking their turns. One particular feature of talk as it could relate to the analysis of unstuckness will be covered in each of the following four chapters (6-9). The focus will be on how participants solve three basic co-orientation problems: who talks next, about what, and knowing that they have in fact become

unstuck. How participants co-manage to get unstuck can be unpacked in several ways: in terms of topic organization, story telling structure, repair organization, and formulation. While being stuck appears to be a matter of not knowing who will speak next about what, becoming unstuck seems to be about participants re-establishing what they co-understand and co-agree to talk about within a turn-taking structure. For the sake of discussion stuck and unstuck are treated separately, but in actuality, they could occur in an intertwined manner that cannot be neatly separated.

One underlying issue is to what extent do the cases being examined display responses specifically aimed to resolve stuckness. While the overall strategy of this thesis is to gather data examples which clearly show interactional work to deal with stuckness, the ongoing interpretative nature of this exploratory practice makes it difficult to definitively distinguish responses to stuckness clearly from other work such responses may do. So at first glance, some cases may seem clearer in the link between responses and moments of stuckness. Other cases are included as displays of interactional work oriented to collaborative turn-taking from which further analysis could tease out new discoveries.

6.1 Topic organization

Unstuckness is explored in this chapter as a display by participants of re-establishing some kind of mutual understanding of what they are talking about after moments of hesitancy or uncertainty in how to proceed. Thus the indication of getting unstuck takes the form of attempting to get a confirmation or more particularly some signal of agreement from the recipient that they are orienting to the same topic. When this happens

the turn-taking should become smooth with both participants ready to contribute to the topic. How to contribute includes continuing the current topic, starting a new one, or establishing a middle ground by making a transition to a related topic within the same general topic.

6.1.1 Whose turn is next?

As we saw in the previous chapter (5), knowing whose turn it is could become an interactional problem when participants momentarily lose their orientation of who will speak next. As we will see in this chapter (6), just as participants have ways of getting stuck, they also have ways of getting unstuck. ‘Unstuck’ is basically a matter of re-clarification of who will take the next turn. In order to observe the initiation of getting unstuck we have to back up a bit and first look for where participants were stuck. Then we can proceed to see how they try to get unstuck. Sites of exploration such as silence, overlap, laughter, and a missed chance to elaborate are not the exclusive property of stuckness or unstuckness. It depends on how the participants themselves orient to the other person’s actions and project their turns. These sites could also be used for other purposes (e.g., expressions of sympathy, rapport, or even disagreement).

6.1.2 What will the next speaker talk about?

One indication of the resumption of smooth turn-taking is that participants display some form of recovery of co-orientation to the same topic. While I am discussing next turn and topic as two separate issues, in actual interaction, it is difficult to distinguish the part of getting unstuck which is due to next turn coordination and the other part which is due to agreeing to a topic. A topic which is clear to both participants (in some cases) could

provide the next speaker with an idea of what to say and the next recipient with an idea of how to respond. For example, when there are consecutive comments on a specific topic. (See Pomerantz, 1984a, for her seminal study on second turn preferred assessments where the first turn sets up certain expectations for the second turn.) A clear choice of topic could also provide the recipient with schema for how the topic will develop and when to give feedback (e.g., continuer receipts, formulations) and evaluative remarks.

6.1.3 Is there confirmation of getting unstuck?

In order to talk about getting unstuck, a case must first be made that participants are stuck. Using the potential locations of stuckness mentioned in Chapter 5. I described the kinds of signs of stuckness which could be displayed in the next turn: (1) A delay in turn-taking could be followed by an overlap which indicates the talk has moved into two different directions (e.g., Excerpt 3, lines 61-63). (2) An overlap could be followed by silence (e.g., Excerpt 3, lines 59-61). (3) A prior turn is followed by a delayed response (e.g., Excerpt 1, lines 7-9).

When getting unstuck, participants not only manage to find a way to decide the next turn speaker and what to say, but also somehow manage to signal this understanding to each other. There is a sensitive network of reciprocal actions being signaled back and forth, largely unfolding one turn at a time. 'Being in the flow' is such a moment while getting unstuck is a moment of transition. Thus, we need to see stuckness in order to see possibilities for unstuckness.

6.2 Patterns around topic shift

The basic concern in this section is to come to an understanding of how topics move. For example, does the topic actually change or does the new topic simply emerge from the previous one? Put in CA terms: Is there a ‘stepwise’ transition of topics, what Sacks (1992) calls ‘the way a topic ... is used to make a jump’ (vol. 2, p. 300) or is it a situation as Button and Casey (1984) report of using topic elicitors to close one topic and open another? In fact, it may turn out that topics usually do not shift abruptly or dramatically.

Possibly the usual case is that there are traceable ties between previous and new topics. This implies that when an exception to the rule occurs (i.e., topic shift without any connection between topics), it is rare and held accountable. So part of the complexity and thus the challenge of discussing change of topic is due to the almost seamless transition which could occur for a multitude of topics during a single conversation. Sacks (1992) notes that participants may find themselves faraway from where they began in terms of what they were talking about (February 19, 1971 lecture). While understanding the organization of topic has been considered a complex undertaking (Heritage & Atkinson, 1984, Heritage, 1989), in this chapter, I look at how topic shift is used as a resource.

‘Juncture’, a term used by Button (1991) and Button and Casey (1984) refers to particular moments in the sequence of turns where participants are able to direct the future course of topic organization. Their particular interest is how a topic gets closed. I have adapted their idea of ‘juncture’ to my own purpose of looking at how topic shift can help keep the talk going. Juncture locates within the turns where options become apparent. This implies

there could be critical moments when actions are taken or not taken (with consequences either way).

6.2.1 After overlap

This subsection and the following two look at the location of topic shift in connection with overlap and silence. What participants do after an overlap promises to be an informative site to see interaction at work. Overlap presents an orientation challenge because talk at this specific moment is not moving in an orderly ‘one person speaks at a time’ fashion. When laughter is involved in the overlap, this could present a complication. Who will speak after the laughter? We are reminded of Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson (1974) that talk is generally continuous with few gaps. This observation could imply that discontinuous talk with gaps, a characteristic of stuckness, is avoided if at all possible.

A topic shift after an overlap could be seen as a move to get unstuck from the overlap and regain the flow through nominating a promising new topic. So this could be a strategic move to clarify how to proceed. In the example below, the talk has been flowing about soccer, but in line 44, Takao does not continue to elaborate. Instead there is an overlap of laughter. (The opening part of this conversation appeared in Chapter 5, Excerpt 5 for ritualistic silence. Here, I am examining a longer stretch to see how they get out of one of the overlaps.)

Excerpt 1: Takao no. 10 part 1, looking ahead

32 T: Yeah. I still play soccer

33 I: Oh.

- 34 T: once a week
- 35 I: Umhuh.
- 36 T: twice a week yeah.
- 37 I: Umhuh
- 38 T: So tomorrow I have a (.) soccer match
- 39 I: Oh oh.
- 40 T: Yeah with my friends
- 41 I: Um um um.
- 42 T: Yeah.
- 43 I: Important match?
- 44 T: Yeah. [Hhh
- 45 I: [Hhh] Um and tell me a little bit what you're going to do from April↑?
- 46 T: Um.
- 47 I: You you have a a new future.
- 48 T: hhh
- 49 I: Yeah. So tell me a little bit about your job.
- 50 T: Yes. Ah. I'm going to work as a systems engineer
- 51 I: Um.
- 52 T: for San Santo Japan and ah (1.5) uh I'm I will worked in Kawasaki city
- 53 I: Oh.
- 54 T: just near Tokyo. Just 20 minutes::s south from Tokyo by train.

In line 45 after the overlap of laughter and two markers ('um', 'and') to take the floor, Ian introduces a clear change of topic. This action serves to make it clear whose turn is next (Takao's) and how subsequent turns are organized. Since the nominated topic is about Takao's new job, he is expected to elaborate (something he did not do in line 44 for the previous topic on the soccer match). Thus, the change of topic seems to provide a prompt to get the talk flowing again. We see how Ian uses lines 47 and 49 to set up Takao to elaborate from line 50. While the culmination of the series of questions by Ian leads to

the elaboration of Takao's job, a closer look at lines 45-48, raises the possibility that stuckness might have a trajectory extending over a series of turns. First, the response in line 46 is not really a response to the question. Ian reformulates the question line 47 in pursuit of a response. Takao's reply in line 48 still does not directly address the question or request. Ian tries a third time with another reformulation, this time in clear question form. Takao in line 49 addresses line 47 and then lines 45 and 49. Here we see getting unstuck being pursued by trying to get the second part of an adjacency pair.

The overlapping laughter (back in lines 44-45) could be ambiguous in terms of the next turn. This moment of uncertainty seems to be stuckness. Evidence is the delay in projecting the direction of the talk (the beginning of line 45). Will the talk continue on soccer? We see that in fact this topic has been closed and a new one is about to begin. The overlap itself is not as much a problem as how to get out of it.

The juncture in the example above is brought about by the overlap. A decision needs to be made on how to carry on. The overlap and the laughter do not inherently present problems. They only become problems when participants are uncertain of what to do next. While overlapping laughter could create a sense of affiliation (i.e., 'I know what you mean'), this one seems to display some uncertainty over how to coordinate the projection of the next turn.

The stuckness here appears to be a matter of what to do after the laughter dies down. The conversational challenge is how to continue talking after reaching agreement that the match is important to Takao. Stuckness is seen in the delay (after 'yeah' in line 44) in

establishing the relevant topic by either closing the current topic or nominating a new one. So, one aspect of getting unstuck seems to depend on co-orienting to the topic of the next turn. Sometimes, something as simple and seemingly insignificant as a non-lexical token (e.g., ‘um’) could be a sign of hesitation. Participants might not be sure how the following turn(s) will be taken.

6.2.2 After silence

Below, the topic seems to shift somewhat drastically after the silence (in line 47). The question here is whether this is a clear change of topics or something else is going on.

Excerpt 2: Satoko no. 2, Japanese men

- 42 I: Yeah. Ah. So you think that ah this is one of the big social problems in Japan
43 S: Um.
44 I: is about ah what is woman’s role what is man’s role what are rights
45 S: Um.
46 I: of each.
→47 (1.5)
→48 I: Um. You ah your hometown is not a city place.
49 S: Not city. Hhh.
50 I: To to be respectful.
51 S: ((laughter)) Yeah.
52 I: The scenery clean air and kind people
53 S: Um hum
54 I: But do you see some difference between Okayama city or your hometown in
55 attitude of people
56 S: (.) Umm (4) I It’s in relation related to weather.

Silence appears to mark a shift from the previous topic (social problem) to a new topic (her hometown). If we look closer at how the topic prior to the silence develops we notice (in lines 42, 44, and 46) that Ian formulates what Satoko has been explaining. Line 48 looks like a sudden shift of topic. The inquiry made by Ian about her hometown in the form of an assessment for her to react to with a second (turn) assessment could serve as a way to come out of the gap. As Pomerantz (1984a) talks about the first assessment, it sets up expectations for a preferred second assessment to match it. This is in fact what happens in the next turn. Satoko in line 49 confirms Ian's statement about her hometown. The talk then starts to flow again.

If we look for a sign of stuckness, the silence (in line 47) could indicate a problem as the prior turn (line 46) was not immediately acted upon. A couple of questions could be asked of the prior turn: Where is Satoko's receipt? Or where is the continuation of Ian's formulation? Possibly both participants are not sure how to take this turn. Ian could be waiting for a receipt from Satoko so he can continue his formulation. On the other hand, Satoko could be waiting for Ian to continue talking. Delay of action as displayed through silence could wipe the slate clean and thus open the floor in the next turn to any takers. Ian takes the initiative (in line 48) and Satoko joins in the movement by responding to the statement based on a new topic.

Getting back to the organization of topic and the display of co-orientation at a certain point, juncture could be created by participants in line 47 in order to review various options such as starting to close this topic, continuing the current topic, or nominating a

new one. Closing a topic could require that participants present some kind of tying mechanism such as an evaluative or rationalizing remark in order to link the closing of the current topic with opening of a new topic. In this respect, simply starting a new topic could be much easier. Sacks (1992) in his published lectures (e.g., vol. 2, p. 566) points out, there are usually transitions or what he calls 'stepwise' movements that link topics together when we open new topics. We just have to look for them. Continuing the topic could be the most difficult of the three options. Neither participant takes action to continue the topic in progress.

The silence in line 47 comes between the potential closure of one topic (gender specific roles in Japan) and the opening of a new one (the size of her hometown). The gap could display a moment of uncertainty of how to proceed. Ian ends the previous topic and introduces the new one (line 48). He moves past the gap. His token marker ('um') to get the floor and false start token ('ah') suggest that he is not certain whether it is his turn or not. In what looks like a related action, Satoko projects her turn in line 49 smoothly showing she is following his lead. So what we see is that after the gap, some kind of initiative related to topic and confirmation would be anticipated to bridge the silence. The next example displays a topic shift after silence which is more subtle.

There are instances in my data where there are slight shifts of topic rather than a complete change of topic after gaps. In line 28 below, the topic for the following turns is nominated by Satoko. She is relating her self-image with the character in a movie and makes a statement. After a supportive receipt and an overlap of affiliation (lines 29-30), some kind of elaboration would be anticipated. No explanation is forthcoming. Then Ian gives her a

prompt in question form (line 31). He tries to set up an opportunity for her to compare how she was before and after she went to the America. (This example was used in Chapter 5, Excerpt 8 for overlaps of affiliation. Here we look at a longer sequence for how the topic shifts.)

Excerpt 3: Satoko no. 1, America

- 23 I: Why did youu (.) pick him (.) out of all the char[acters in the movie?
24 S: [HHhh.
25 I: Is there ah [some personal ah reason or ...?
26 S: [Ah:::h]
Yes personal reason. Maybe little bit similar to me.
27 I: Oh:::::h real:::::ly.
28 S: Um. I'm also not good at express myself.
29 I: >Oh really.< [Ahh.
30 S: [HHhh.
→31 I: That was before going to America?
32 (4)
→33 S: Um. (.) After after (4) after come back to Japan
34 I: Un huh.
35 S: little bit (.) better.
36 I: Ahh.
37 (2)
→38 S: Before I went to United States
39 I: Uh huh
40 S: Um (2) in Japan (.) especially girls
41 I: Yeah.
42 S: we we always make (.) some group in the class.
43 I: Oh:h.
44 S: If we don't have if if I don't be in any group I feel very nervous.

What is interesting is how the topic moves from Ian's inquiry into how Satoko was *before* she went to America to her explanation of how she was *after* coming back. The shift within the topic of her being a poor communicator comes after a gap of four seconds. Satoko takes two turns (lines 33 and 35) to explain while Ian gives continuer receipts in lines 34 and 36. Despite Satoko not answering the question asked, Ian goes along with the direction in which she has reshaped the topic. Instead of the anticipated continuation of her self-initiated story in line 37, there is a two second gap.

After the silence, there is an acknowledged shift back (line 38) to the question which Ian asked in line 31. Her response becomes another extended talk with attention drawn to how Japanese girls grow up with pressure to belong to a group. Her response still does not address the original inquiry about *her* experience. The topic has moved from how she has changed to a generalized explanation of the environment in which she grew up in before going to America.

While there is an earlier juncture after the overlap in lines 29-30 after Satoko's self-evaluative statement about not being good at expressing herself, the juncture of interest for discussion here is the one in line 32. Through his question, Ian shifts (the topic within the general topic of Satoko's self-perceived ability to express herself) to a confirmation of her ability (or lack of it) before going to America. It seems that within a broad topic participants need to be flexible and able to make on-the-spot adjustments. The topic of current talk could be pushed and pursued in various directions. The topic has moved from her self-confession to reflecting on what she was like a few years ago. Ian's question in

line 31 (besides possibly catching her off guard) could be difficult to remember let alone answer.

What Satoko ends up doing is providing responses (lines 33, 35, 38, and 40) which fill the slots with new information between Ian's receipts without directly addressing the original question (line 31). However, the primary concern of how to keep the talk moving gets addressed. A few turns later, after another gap, she shifts the topic (line 38) back to the question asked back in line 31. So in a roundabout manner, Satoko shifted topic within a topic after each silence in order to take her turns and eventually to address the question asked. The participants through Satoko's initiatives avoided prolonged periods of stuckness through the shifts within the topic whenever there was a gap. Even with a long pause in line 33, Satoko has resources to work through the silence and Ian lets her do so without intervening. Here she uses repetition to keep the floor and mark that she is moving the topic and the talk forward. So one way to get around the silence is talk about various aspects of the same general topic.

6.2.3 After an overlap and silence

The next example draws attention to three points. First, something has gone wrong with the turn-taking in lines 37-39. Second, the next turn after the silence is the initiation of a topic which leads to a smoothly taken sequence of turns. Third, a comparison of the topics in line 36 (where she lives) and line 40 (new friends) raises the issue of whether these are different topics or different facets of some broader encompassing topic (e.g.,

university life). (A later sequence in the same talk was discussed for formulation in Chapter 4, Excerpt 2. Here we see movement of the topic.)

Excerpt 4: Masako no. 9, university life

- 36 M: very near in front of the university.
37 I: Oh, really, hu[h].
38 M: [Hm]
39 (3.9)
→40 M: Um yeah made new friends.
41 I: Uhuh.
42 M: They come from many place.
43 I: Yeah.
44 M: Yeah um very far away.

Silence is not a clear cut analytical matter. Participants could be stuck during part of the time and getting unstuck in another part. This excerpt could show the overlap in lines 37-38 as an indication of stuckness and the silence in line 39 as the confirmation. Here I look at the subsequent turns. The delayed start of utterance (line 40) appears to offer a way to pass over the mis-timing of the turns (i.e., the overlap) and get over the gap. In order to initiate a move to get unstuck (in line 40), she gives two markers ('um', 'yeah') not only to establish her turn, but also to signal that a new topic or a new aspect of a broad topic will begin. At first glance, this could look like a change of topic from where she lives to who her new friends are. However, another look suggests that Masako could just as well be exploring choices of topics within the general topic of her university experience. Regardless whether the shift here is to a completely different topic or a related subtopic,

such a difference is one of degree. I think my point holds in either case that some kind of topical work was done to deal with the overlap and silence.

Then the elaboration about her friends continues in her next two turns (lines 42 and 44). The shift of topic and extended talk initiated by Masako apparently provides a way of getting unstuck. Ian follows her lead in lines 41 and 43 where he gives minimal receipts to encourage her to continue. This action demonstrates that he is closely projecting his turns to Masako's turns.

The challenge of getting unstuck here seems to be how to make it clear to each other who will speak next after overcoming the overlap and accompanying gap. Masako initiates the effort to get unstuck in line 40 by first giving a marker ('um') that she will speak. Her second marker ('yeah') could tie her current utterance back to Ian's receipt in line 37 through acknowledgment of it. She then introduces what she will talk about: new friends. Ian supplies a continuer receipt in line 41. She does not tell a story in the sense of recounting events. (See Eggins & Slade, 1997, for a discussion of characteristics of various forms of storytelling as well as the next chapter in this thesis.) Instead, she elaborates through extended turns about her friends in general. So the juncture after the overlap and during the gap shows us where decisions are made for how to continue. Since no one gives an elicitation of any kind in line 39, the next turn could continue the topic or start a new one. In the subsequent turns, Ian quickly moves into the role of giving minimal receipts and Masako continues reporting on aspects of her new life in university. We have seen that one strategy for getting unstuck is figuring out whose turn is next. One

participant introduces a topic, gets a receipt, and then elaborates. In such a way, the turn-taking frame once again becomes clear. Lines 40-44 follow this pattern.

The juncture of interest here is after the overlap and during the silence. After it has been established that she lives near the university, someone has to initiate a move: continue the topic, close it, or start a new one. Since the overall topic is Masako's account of her new life as a university student, there is an expectation that the topic or topics should revolve around this theme. The question now is who will take the next turn. The juncture is the place where apparent options for taking the next turn become apparent. Masako finally makes a tentative start (line 40) out of the silence by using a marker to take the floor and another marker to get started. Then new information of another aspect of university life comes out. The turns flow back and forth between a series of bits of new information and continuer receipts. Projecting the next speaker was the hurdle to overcome in order to get unstuck.

6.3 Constraints on topic in these talk sessions

In this section, I will mention a few factors which to some degree help define the boundaries and actions of these participants in respect to topic organization and its use as a resource to re-establish turn-taking. Within this hybrid genre of talk which has features of institutional talk as well as ordinary conversation, the following constraints should be acknowledged for their influence.

6.3.1 A certain routine with certain steps

How topics get introduced could influence the choice, delivery, and development of topics. For example, these talks always begin with the same introduction of saying the date (to mark the recording) and a bit of small talk before Ian inquires about the opening topic which is introduced by the student-participant. The talks basically follow an interview format where one person asks most of the questions and the other person answers them. Additional characteristics of the routine observed include: the talk continues for a certain length of time, it always occurs between two persons, one person is always the same NS and the other is always a NNS (one of three student-participants collaborating in this project), the participants by mutual agreement talk in English, participants meet from time to time on an ongoing basis, and the talks are always recorded.

These constraints shape not only how turns are taken to talk about topics, but also how and when participants can change topics. The NS sets the conditions of how the encounter will proceed in order to give the NNS center stage to talk about him or herself. Thus the predictability of the routine is designed to bring out topics of familiarity and within his or her linguistic ability. The talk through the routine is divided up into a series of questions and answers which makes it easier for the NNS to talk about a variety of topics under the guidance of the NS.

6.3.2 A certain topic with certain roles

We see in places in almost all of the examples where the talking is mundane and more importantly, predictable in terms of the types of topics which are most likely come up.

Topics like school tests, social activities, and personal experiences possess both a predictable body of questions to draw upon as well as a predictable range of answers. (See Chapter 4 on types of topics which seem to be easy to talk about.) Having a repertoire of topics is important. A shift of topic means we have another one ready to be talked about. Without the next topic, these talks could be in trouble.

We notice at times how participants introduce not only topics which have potential for elaboration, but also those that have a limited life or could be easily exhausted. Limited life topics do not last very long, but they tend to be easy to answer. How someone usually goes to school does not usually promise extended talk. Another type of topic could even be entirely one sided as when Satoko talks about her hometown (Satoko no. 2), Ian gives a lecture about pronunciation (Masako no. 2), or Masako makes a science report on DNA (Masako no. 8). The person who knows the topic is expected to take the role of informer while the other person in turn is the recipient. In these cases, the role comes with the topic. Finally, we notice that these exchanges (despite the underlying aspects of asymmetry) overwhelmingly involve the NNS talking about his or her life experiences with very little reciprocal attention. (Only on rare occasions does Ian get to talk about himself.) Thus we see how constraints determine not only the type of topics, but also how they are talked about and by whom (e.g., Ian asks questions and Masako explains). The topics and roles are limited, but this kind of limitation could help to clarify how to act as well as possibly empowering the NNS to some extent.

6.3.3 Other constraints

The constraints of the genre affect to some extent which topics get nominated and how they are talked about. For example, the 'English only' agreement immediately limits the scope and depth of topics. The NNS cannot be expected to express him/herself as fluently on the same range of topics and in the same depth in the L2 as in their L1. The NS, in turn, cannot talk exactly the same way about the same topics as he would with a fellow NS.

Adjustments should be made on both sides. (See Gumperz, 1982, for some of the adjustments which could be made such as greater flexibility of intention and expectation.)

Some of these adjustments or more specifically, co-accommodations, are displayed by the selection of topics (personal ones of familiarity to the NNS), the general style of turn-taking of clear 'one person at a time' speaking (with relatively few overlaps), and sensitivity to when and how to close topics and start new ones. Stretches of silence are prevalent in this genre of talk and appear to be more tolerated than in other discourse practices such as classroom talk, talk shows, and courtroom talk. Having an overhearing audience, very limited time, and high-stakes consequences are typical characteristics of those contexts. In contrast, in this project, participants co-manage the structure and organization of turn-taking to talk about a particular type of topic projected to be conducive to extended talk. An ongoing consideration with topic (and changing to another one) is choosing topics which these participants can co-construct. Topics are not limited to only those which the NNS has proficiency in as an individual learner.

6.4 Issues

During the process of understanding how topic shift is used by participants, the following three concerns came to my attention. The common question they ask is: What gloss assumptions need further examination in order to strengthen my accounts of how change of topic is helpful?

6.4.1 When a change of topic does not work to get unstuck

Problematic cases could arise when the initiation of getting unstuck or the first part of an adjacency pair does not have a clear second part. When confirmation is not found after the initiation, participants could continue to be stuck. At least a two-turn attempt is needed to get unstuck. In order to investigate how a first slot initiative needs a suitable second slot response, I identify the first part of the unstuck pair and follow what happens next. When the attempt to get unstuck fails, the problem could be a lack of clear confirmation in the second part of the pair. Participants should orient to the same topic. An indication by one participant of trying to get unstuck is not adequate on its own to show getting unstuck since these talks are treated as being co-constructed. A signal from the other participant is necessary to let the initiator know that they can move forward on the topic introduced in the first turn.

In the following sequence with Masako, there are signs (e.g., multiple gaps and pauses) of this talk being in trouble in lines 20-22. Can the shift of topic (lines 23-24) clear up the awkward moments? (A much later sequence in this encounter was seen in Chapter 3,

Excerpt 3 for NS language modification. Here attention is on whether the topic shift helps.)

Excerpt 5: Masako no. 1, junior high school

- 20 I: Ah. And (.) from the station (.) how do you (.) go by school?
21 (2)
22 M: Um? (.) I go to school (2) by bicycle.
→23 I: Oh. Ah. (.) Ah um. (.) Let's see. (3) Do you remember um when you
24 started (.) taking my English conversation class?
25 (2)
26 I: You were in elementary school, right?
27 (2)
28 I: Was that (.) were you third year fourth year student? Do you remember?
29 (2)
30 M: Yes.
31 I: Ah. Third? Fourth?
32 M: Fourth=
33 I: = Fourth. Ah.
34 (3)
35 I: Okay. So. And then ah you took ah vacation, right? ...
((Fifth and sixth grades were spent studying intensively for the junior high school entrance exam.))

At first glance, we see (in line 23) the markers ('oh', 'ah', 'um') and pauses signaling that a new topic will begin. At another glance, these signals reveal that the shift is not an easy one. The markers and micro pauses along with 'Let's see' and a long pause before the actual question which changes the topic suggest the speaker is searching for a topic (which will not result in silence). Recall of a past event is an abrupt choice of topic with

no preface or tie with the previous one. In addition, the proposed topic comes in the form of a rather lengthy yes/no type question. When that does not work in getting a verbal response let alone an elaboration, Ian reformulates the question in line 26 (e.g., shortens the length and adds a tag) and designs it to be simpler to answer. The ‘new’ topic never really gets off the ground as the gaps continue to appear where extensive talk should be.

The turn after each question is silence before and after the topic shift (lines 21, 25, 27, and 29). This example illustrates that sometimes change of topic alone is not enough to ensure getting unstuck. In fact, the change of topic could actually deepen the stuckness when participants have not taken the time to sufficiently co-orient to the upcoming change. The focus here is on whether the topic shift started in line 23 works to get participants unstuck. Based on the gaps in lines 25 and 27, apparently the shift to recalling when she started Ian’s class did not help.

Another view of how the change of topic does not always work is to see line 23 as a juncture where a decision needs to be made about the topic. Will the current topic on mode of transportation to school continue? We see that Ian changes the topic after much hesitation is displayed by the series of tokens and pauses. Such a string of actions could show that the participants are stuck (i.e., not sure how to proceed). Something must have happened *before* participants reached the juncture. Looking at the prior turns (lines 20-22), we find his ungrammatical question in line 20, the gap, Masako’s token of puzzlement (‘um?’), and the possible repair of Ian’s original question. All these signs could have contributed to the decision to nominate a new topic: Asking her to recall when she took Ian’s class.

The point is that the new topic does not appear to help them get unstuck as subsequent questions continue to go unanswered. What this example suggests is that a change of topic does not always work as a way out of stuckness. At the juncture, the decision of how to proceed in the next turn should be taken carefully with considerable attention paid to advantages as well as disadvantages of changing the topic. What goes on before the juncture could give us an idea of the state of co-orientation the participants are in.

I note here just briefly that some of the awkwardness displayed by *both* participants is partially due to unfamiliarity with how to act within the specific discourse practice. This talk session was the first one, so it was just beginning to be established. We see a similar situation in Kasper (2004a,b) in the oral proficiency interview test (which is a one off encounter) where the interviewer often repeats or reformulates his or her questions to the test candidate in order to find topics to talk about. So unfamiliarity of the type of talk seems to be manifested here as not being able to find a suitable change of topic to get the other person involved. The student-participant may need time to realize that the priority in these kinds of encounters is on elaborating one's answers into an extended personal report not simply to answer each question one by one.

6.4.2 Does the topic really change?

The analyst interprets the data and hopes to uncover how participants view certain actions. For example, is there a move to continue the topic or to change it? The speaker could cover a different aspect of the same topic while the recipient might think there was a shift

of topic. If we look at the questions in lines 43 and 47 below, is there a shift of topic or an effort to elicit more talk on the same topic?

Excerpt 6: Satoko no. 3, choosing university

→43 I: Oh. So is Tottori University um famous for agriculture?

44 S: Oh yes. Um especially for dessert

45 I: Oh.

46 S: desert?

→47 I: Desert. But you prefer Okayama?

48 S: HHhh. Do I tell you why I choose Okayama University?

49 I: If you don't mind. I never asked but it sounds like an interesting story.

50 S: Ah first I wanted to go to Tottori University than Okayama University because

51 they have examination for people working for five years or more but the date ...

Here are three possible readings: (1) The questions (lines 43 and 47) appear closely related in broad content (i.e., choosing between Tottori and Okayama universities).

Grammatically speaking, it could be argued that there is a link between the two questions through 'but'. (Tottori University is famous for agriculture, but you prefer Okayama?)

One school is famous for her field of interest, but she chose the other one. (2) There is a problem with this sequence from as early as line 44, not only for the mispronunciation, but also in terms of irrelevance. What is the connection between the famous sand dune in Tottori (the 'desert') and agriculture? Some action is needed. Ian gives a receipt. 'Oh' here could be questioning the juxtaposition of words ('agriculture' and 'desert' which is actually a sand dune). (3) The first word after the end of the repair sequence in line 47 is

‘But’. Possibly this word marks a fresh sequence of turns (away from problems with the language) by focusing on establishing the topic.

6.4.3 Topic and turn-taking as different perspectives

Briefly I would like to mention an analytical issue. What could make such an exploration of sequences of talk so complex is that topic and turn-taking appear to be two different views: one by the analyst and the other by the participants. Participants are probably not thinking about the details of turn-taking organization in technical terms like timing, overlaps, pauses, and sequences. These terms are the tools of the analyst. When participants notice details of talk, they most likely treat them as practical physical displays to help them navigate through the messiness of trying to connect with each other turn by turn. What participants seem to have is an informal notion of ‘topic’ and ‘floor’. For example, they try to figure out if they can say anything more about the current topic.

6.5 Summary

In this chapter, I have introduced some of the possible resources in the form of devices, a certain perspective for positioning them, and patterns that could display how participants work to get unstuck through turn-by-turn co-orientation. Juncture, the main perspective used to analyze topic organization, was explored in an attempt to locate within the turns where participants need to decide which option to take. Getting unstuck is about taking actions which are coordinated, confirmed, and further acted upon. These perspectives seem promising in deepening awareness and understanding of the local context of these

particular talks and how the participants co-manage talk-in-interaction. Junctures are interactional opportunities for participants to make topical co-adjustments.

In an effort to further unpack some of the ways participants manage to get unstuck or back on track both in terms of turn-taking and agreement of topic, I discussed a few potential ways of getting unstuck which I noticed as being available to participants:

- (1) Topic shift after silence.
- (2) Topic shift after overlap.
- (3) A shift within a topic after an overlap and silence.

After that I raised methodological issues about the difficulties faced by the analyst in knowing where topics actually shift and whether both participants orient to it in the same way. Here the notion of ‘juncture’ with topic organization is helpful to further examine how participants get unstuck. By identifying a site of decision making for topic (e.g., a shift), we are able to see available options as well as trace previous turns and link them with subsequent ones. Then we looked at one problematic case encountered when change of topic was used as a way of getting unstuck. This is a case where the change of topic fails to lead to becoming unstuck. In fact, a change of topic such as in Masako, no. 1, lines 23-27, seems to reinforce that participants are still stuck and possibly more so since the attempts failed.

Finally, other ideas (which could help heighten awareness and deepen understanding of how participants co-manage to get unstuck) were grounded in constraints of this

particular genre of talk. For example, two constraints seem important. The time factor appears to influence the organization of topic in terms of type of topic and the projected length participants could talk about them. Also, two people talking over a period of time brings up considerations for topic and getting unstuck which are unique for dyads. While the choices (for who will get or take the floor) appear much simpler than in situations where three or more participants interact, there are greater pressures and expectations placed on two participants to 'carry their weight' and 'not to drop the ball'.

Getting unstuck through turn-taking is a shared accomplishment. Evidence is in how participants are able to handle topic in the next turn: whether it turns out to be the initiation of a new topic or an exploration of another aspect of the current one. Juncture as a kind of 'fork in the road' is available to participants not only to start a new topic, but also to close down or continue a topic. The notion of 'juncture', when applied to this study, could describe the place and the moment of decision near the end of a delay or mistimed turns and the potential initiation of actions to get unstuck. Who will take the next action to initiate the effort to get unstuck (through topic shift)? Will it be noticed and responded to accordingly? The successful co-orientation and co-projection of how to use their turns will hopefully lead (though it could take several turns, not just two) to re-establishing both turn-taking and topic. As Button (1991) sees it, "the production of on topic talk is a vehicle through which they may stay in conversation with each other" (p. 264).

Chapter 7 Story

Introduction: Storytelling as a way to keep the talk flowing

7.1 Background: What's in a story?

7.2 Three components to getting a story told

7.2.1 Prefaces

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7.3.1 Story preface by the teller

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7.3.3 A story gets started and continues

7.3.4 When Ian tells a story

7.4 Conclusion

Introduction: Storytelling as a way to keep the talk flowing

Storytelling is introduced as a second candidate concept for seeing how participants organize turns to get unstuck. Telling a story would probably make sense to many people as one way to get unstuck as one way to get unstuck, though it is probably not the first thought that comes to mind with a 'story'. While the storytelling process could provide participants with a structurally resourceful response to how to take the next turns particularly when orienting to stuckness, such an organizational move is only one of possible various concerns and accomplishments. As Eggins and Slade (1997) write, "Storytelling is very common in casual conversation. It provides conversationalists with a resource for assessing and confirming affiliations with others" (p. 229). How this is

actually done is often taken for granted or overlooked by the participants themselves as well as by those analysts who focus strictly on content or individual performance.

What I see in a 'story' is how it can be used as a conversational resource to avoid misunderstanding. It is important to point out that my meaning is slightly different from the conventional idea of a story. I am not referring here to either narratives or stories in the usual sense of one person having the floor for an extended telling, the telling following a clear multi-stage development to some culmination, or the case where both participants share knowledge of the story in advance. My use of 'story' is simply grounded in the displayed sequential collaborative work done by the recipient to help the teller produce relevant utterances. 'Story' in my data usually starts and unfolds as an elaboration of a single event.

One key difference is the fact that the primary attention in the talks in this project is on facilitating the NNS to talk about his or her daily experiences as a sharing. Another difference arises from consideration that most of the cases of 'story' here show the NNS as the teller. Limits in L2 are seen to limit the extent that an event or events can be structurally developed and content articulated. Despite limitations and adjusted expectations of what a 'story' told by these NNSs is, my main argument remains the same: 'Story' can provide each participant with a clear role to play within a familiar discourse practice. The problem of the next turn is potentially resolved in this way. While the responsibility on the teller might appear heavy in producing a story, all of the work does not have to be done by one person. The primary force of storytelling for my purpose

is in how the structure of storytelling presents participants with a *collaborative* opportunity to re-establish turn-taking.

My initial understanding of how storytelling helps to get unstuck is based on the opening sequence of turns. After further examination of the data, I realized how closings in storytelling could also have relevance. Thus, earlier sections of this chapter focus on openings. Later in the chapter, closings of stories are examined. The example below introduces us to how initiating a storytelling sequence can supply participants with a roadmap for how to take the next series of turns. (In Chapter 5, Excerpt 2, we saw a sequence well into the same talk where Ian takes extended turns.)

Excerpt 1: Masako no. 2, swimming

- 1 I: So, what's today's date?
- 2 M: August twenty-fourth.
- 3 I: >What year?<
- 4 (4)
- 5 M: I don't know. Hhh.
- 6 I: Two thousand plus one. Um, what day is today?
- 7 (4)
- 8 M: Friday.
- 9 I: OK, so, let's start with your topic first, opening topic. (3) Go ahead.
- 10 M: I went to Bingo Sports Park to swim and I came here on foot.
- 11 I: Oh.
- 12 M: It was a long long way.
- 13 I: Yeah, yeah. Was it hot?
- 14 M: Very.
- 15 I: Was it easy to find your way here or did you get lost?

16 M: Ah. Easy.
17 I: Easy. Oh. How long did it take?
18 M: Forty minutes.
19 I: Oh. How did you go there, to Bingo Park?
20 (3)
21 M: Uh? By taxi.
22 I: Oh. Taxi. Um, how do you feel now?
23 M: I'm very tired.

The opening of this encounter is rather shaky as the questions do not produce the expected responses. In fact, the immediate response to the questions in lines 4 and 7 is silence. Though the talk has just gotten underway, it seems difficult to imagine where the talk will move after line 8. Ian changes tactics from asking logistical type questions to mark the session to asking Masako to nominate the 'opening' topic. She gives a topical statement (line 10) which is followed (in line 11) by an 'oh' news receipt by Ian. She elaborates (in line 12) with an evaluative comment. Then Ian strings together a series of questions (lines 13, 15, 17, 19, and 22) which further develops the topic into a personal telling by Masako of her experience. If we compare the opening sequence (lines 1-8) and the storytelling one (lines 9-23), we see how the initiation of a topic was co-constructed as a transition from the rather artificial asking of 'display' questions to asking 'referential' ones which genuinely lead to the personal account of a recent experience. Participants are clear (from line 9) about how the turns will be taken as well as the direction of the talk. Once the turn-taking is clarified, even the gap in line 20 does not present a problem. Masako knows it is her turn to speak as it is her story that is being told. The same talk is later rejoined.

87 I: Do you ...um .. so this um this month how many times have you
88 been to Bingo Park pool?
89 M: Oh. Many.
90 I: Many times. Oh. Always in the afternoon?
91 M: Yes.
92 I: Oh. Always many people?
93 M: No, not always.
94 I: Oh. Usually ah what kind of people ... are swimming?
95 M: Old person.
96 I: Old person.
97 M: And (2) >little children<.
98 I: Hhh. Old and young.
99 M: Hh. Yeah.
100 I: Oh. (3) Is it ah very crowded or not so crowded? I mean every
101 swimming lane is full?
102 (4)
103 M: Yes.

Further evidence shows how a topic is revisited many lines later and gets elaborated. Ian guides the telling of additional details about when people go there and even what type of people.

This chapter will first build my definition of ‘storytelling’ by reviewing some of the ways that analysts have looked at stories. Then excerpts from my data will be analyzed. Finally, there will be a discussion of concluding thoughts. I would like to make two points in order to place this chapter in the proper perspective. First, analysis of stories reveals how co-participants in the telling “pick out bits of the stream of experience and give them boundaries and significance by labeling them” (Johnstone, 2001, p. 644). As the

experience is selectively inquired about, re-told, and re-shaped, the ‘telling’ takes on a life of its own. Second, storytelling as treated here is socially co-constructed. This is not necessarily an eloquent or polished piece of articulation that only some NSs or fluent NNSs can deliver or be engaged in. Through the telling of the type of story that I am interested in, teller and recipient make sense of various things in their lives. A ‘story’ can bring participants together through trust, sharing, and interaction.

7.1 Background: What’s in a story?

The notion of stories and narratives is widely used in a number of fields, so there could be confusion over what kind of storytelling I am discussing here. It means different things to different people. Some discourse analysts have a very specific type in mind while others use ‘narrative’ and ‘story’ interchangeably. Yet others have a general distinction in mind like Eggins and Slade (1997) who see ‘stories’ as a general term including various types with ‘narrative’ being one of them. Ochs (1997) draws our attention to part of the problem in defining a ‘story’. It ‘encompasses an enormous range of discourse forms’ not only the common written and spoken forms, artistic and popular, but also visual, electronic, and auditory forms. Out of this vastness, she singles out and suggests that ordinary conversation narrative could be ‘the most basic and most universal form’. If narrative can be conversational, then it can be interactional. The integral and collaborative work to form a narrative implies the possibility of ‘co-authorship’.

When we think of oral narratives, probably the stages which were identified by Labov and Waletzky (1967) come to mind: Abstract, orientation, complication, evaluation,

resolution, and coda. The telling is organized into identifiable stages of development. Their categories draw attention to how narratives have a regularly occurring structure. There are few cases of such intricate and elaborate patterns in my data. However, later analysts (e.g., Polanyi and Ochs) come up with more interactional variations which are relevant to my interest in the ‘telling’ of a ‘story’ as a co-constructed interaction rather than the individual teller’s arrangement of content.

According to Polanyi (1989), “There is nothing structurally ‘casual’ about an everyday story. Upon close examination, a story told in a conversation reveals itself to be as formally constructed as any carefully worked out acknowledged piece of literary verbal art” (p. 19). She gives an example of how even a ‘conversational storyteller’ talking to a friend in the checkout line of a supermarket will supply enough “information to locate the story in time and space” (p. 19). By seeing a story as having some kind of familiar structure, we can begin to see its potential importance as a resource. Participants could use a story as a reconfirming organizational device at a time when they are in need of some clarity in how to proceed.

We can look at the structure of an oral story in greater detail through how the turns are taken. Polanyi (1989) states that a story consists of ‘multi-clause turns’. There should be at minimum, ‘two events and a state clause’ (p. 44). She goes on to identify three features of the context from the teller’s perspective. Her definition is helpful in pointing out the kind of planning the teller should follow: (1) A story not only has a point, but also relevance to the present topic. (2) It is also tied in some way to previous talk. (3) It should also have some connection with the recipient. Her list of features provides us with a way

to distinguish a story from simply talking about a topic. Ochs (1997) notes other features: Narratives are commonly and generally found to “depict a temporal transition from one state of affairs to another” (p. 189) and “specify a key event that disrupts the equilibrium of ordinary, expected circumstances” (p. 197). The underlying characteristic running through all of these descriptions is change and how stories unfold while keeping a clear frame of reference. Such a device (that both moves talk forward and checks that it is relevant) offers participants help and guidance when that forward momentum is in apparent danger.

Lerner (1992) explores the ‘possibility’ of collaborative storytelling rather than ‘cataloguing’ of narrative structures or locating the roots of misunderstandings. He provides further distinction between one view of storytelling as giving an extended narrative or what he calls ‘uninterruptable monologues’ and another view which he favors ‘systematic interactional practices involving both storyteller and story recipient’ (p. 247). While Lerner means ‘assisted’ storytelling as the situation where both participants know the story and work collaboratively to tell it, I refer to Lerner in support of viewing ‘story’ for its sharing of turns to accomplish the elaboration of a topic or event. The role of the story recipient is essential in Lerner’s approach for monitoring and maintaining the moment by moment progress of the story. His or her contribution (e.g., demonstration of understanding of the story and recognition of the story’s completion) is part of “an ongoing accomplishment of the participants throughout the course of the storytelling” (p. 248).

What this view opens up is three possibilities for storytelling. One is the traditional idea of the storyteller having a clear idea of what to say to an attentive listener. A second type is storytelling assistance by the recipient. Finally, a third type is a co-telling where the story unfolds turn by turn. In such cases, what Lerner sees is the ongoing participation of ‘story consociates’ which can shape the course of a storytelling. In my data, the three types can be found though the third type is probably the most commonly occurring. The opening example in this chapter (Masako no. 2) illustrates the ‘story’ progressing turn by turn through the establishment of a topic and a line of questioning to develop it. The questioner becomes as important as the teller as co-producers of what gets told. Storytelling to me is a resource available to resolve problems of next turn orientation as conversationally telling a story consists of ‘systematic interactional practices’ (Lerner, 1992) between the teller and recipient.

7.2 Three components to getting a story told

The organization of storytelling is of interest as a way to resolve problems of stuckness. What I have in mind are such situations when silence or overlaps show that the turn-taking understanding is temporarily unclear. In these moments, the participants need a way to get re-oriented. Three basic components of a story (preface, tying devices, and receipts) help to explain its collaborative nature. The preface initiates the introduction of a story with a teller and a recipient clearly identified. The first move could come from either participant. Linking the emerging story to previous and current talk in some shape or form coherently ties past, present, and future turns. Then there are the response receipts which lubricate the apparatus and keep turns moving smoothly. Getting unstuck, as a co-

managed endeavor, requires not only an initiative from one person, but also a related action as confirmation to continue from the other person. How a story starts could help participants clarify the organization of upcoming turns.

7.2.1 Prefaces

A story preface is the initiative taken to express interest in telling a story. These openings are often questions or requests delivered by the person who wants to tell a story. Sacks uses such examples as ‘You know what?’ or ‘Do you know something?’ (1992, vol. 1, p. 256). The receipt (e.g., ‘what’) which should come in the next turn indicates that the potential recipient is willing to minimize his or her turns in order for the other person to have the floor to tell the story. The prefaces are the events that happen before the main event, the preliminaries to ensure the story gets told. Sequentially speaking, the participants confirm and approve that the next series of turns will be used to tell the story.

7.2.2 Tying devices

Often the story about to be told is linked in some way to something talked about in earlier turns. This creates some familiarity of the topic. According to Sacks (1992), the ‘tying’ of the current turn to a previous one can be accomplished very simply. For example, a pronoun linked to persons named in a prior turn. (The example from his lecture is presented below in transcript form.)

(1) Sacks (1992, vol. 1, p. 717)

A: What happened last night?

B: John and Lisa went to the movies.

A: What did they see?"

The second question is tied to the prior adjacency pair through 'they' connected with 'John and Lisa'. Other examples from his lectures of simple 'tying techniques' include 'anyway', 'that', or 'I still think' all refer back to an earlier topic.

As we saw in the last chapter (6), topics can move much during the course of a talk. 'Tying' could also refer to linking the upcoming topic with previous topics mentioned. In this way, the tying of the previous topic or topics with the upcoming one not only maintains a sense of continuity in the conversation as a whole, but also justifies the potential launching of a new story. In contrast, a sudden change would most likely be noted and held as accountable. According to Lerner (1992), when there is a sudden change, an apology is often given to account for it. The tying of topics allows the recipient to make connections in order to get an idea of the background of the story as well as how the story will develop. The ability of the recipient to follow the story is an essential ingredient in the conversational storytelling when it is viewed as an interactional process.

7.2.3 Receipts

The initial challenge for the participants is convey to each other that there is a story to be told. The teller needs to get the floor typically for more than one turn in order to tell the story. The recipient needs to express approval of the initiative in some way. Often, this is done through short and even minimal receipts which encourage the speaker to go on.

Receipts can display that the recipient is receiving new information as well as encouraging the teller to go on. This demonstrates that participants are once again aligned to each other. Sacks (1992) in his lecture says, “One thing we can notice about stories is that we tend to get a sequence of things like ‘Mm hm’ and then something else, like ‘Oh isn’t that awful’” (vol. 2, p. 9). These are commonly occurring tokens which also appear in my data to keep the storytelling going.

The importance of receipts not only at the start, but also during the story in supporting the teller cannot be overestimated. As Polanyi (1989) puts it, “Should the recipients fail to produce sufficient tokens of comprehension, the storyteller may interrupt the forward progress of the story and ask for confirmation that the recipients are, indeed, listening and understanding” (p. 49). We can see the importance of comprehension receipts from another angle. Polanyi divides the story into three basic stages: entrance talk, tokens of comprehension, and exit talk. Without the tokens or receipts to mark progress, the story cannot move from its beginning to its end. Responses by the recipient to the teller provide signals that the story is being listened to and potentially understood. Receipts in the form of continuer tokens are the focus here. A more extended form of receipts, formulations, will be discussed in Chapter 9.

7.3 Storytelling in my data: Ways to get around stuckness

The structure of the talk needs to provide slots for both participants, not just the teller. A common solution is to minimize the length of turns of the recipient while maximizing (extending the length of) the turns for the teller. However, this measure alone does not

ensure flow. Maintaining a mutually expected sense of balance of what needs to be done in the turns taken between teller and recipient appears to push the ‘story’ forward. On the other hand, a receipt response which is interpreted to be insufficient in attention, interest, or comprehension could lead the teller to hesitate and ponder what to do next (e.g., stop or continue). So we see how crucial to the subsequent turn-taking the opening three turns are: The first turn is often a gambit. The second turn is acceptance. Structurally speaking, the problem of whose turn it is gets resolved by the third turn. This is where the ‘story’ begins.

7.3.1 Story preface by the teller

The following excerpt illustrates the storytelling structure as described by Sacks. In lines 47-51, we can see the three components of getting a ‘story’ told: preface, tying device, and receipts. The storytelling sequence is initiated by the teller with a preface as the first slot in line 48. This question is tied to the current topic as well as earlier ones (lines 36 and 43). The preface is followed in the second slot (line 49) with the recipient confirming, approving, and encouraging the teller to continue. In the third slot (line 50), the teller begins her ‘story’.

While the main attention is on what happens from line 43 onward, I have included the prior sequence (lines 36-42) in order to provide a wider context for how the talk evolved before the story preface in line 48. With similar intentions, I extended the lines shown after the preface to illustrate the progress of her ‘story’. (Here an extended sequence illustrates features of story while in Chapter 6, Excerpt 6, a middle portion of the same sequence was used to discuss whether the topic changed.)

Excerpt 2: Satoko no. 3, choosing university

- 36 I: But you prefer to get a job in your hometown?↓
- 37 S: Maybe I cannot because my hometown has not has not enough employees
- 38 because very small town.
- 39 I: Yeah.
- 40 S: Yeah.
- 41 I: In the city or outside?
- 42 S: My address is in the city, but my home Hhh is little bit out of town.
- 43 I: Oh. So is Tottori University um famous for agriculture?
- 44 S: Oh yes. Um especially for dessert
- 45 I: Oh.
- 46 S: desert?
- 47 I: Desert. But you prefer Okayama?
- 48 S: HHhh. Do I tell you why I choose Okayama University?
- 49 I: If you don't mind. I never asked but it sounds like an interesting story.
- 50 S: Ah first I wanted to go to Tottori University than Okayama University because
- 51 they have examination for people working for five years or more but the date um
- 52 of the
- 53 I: Yeah.
- 54 S: Okayama University is December
- 55 I: Yeah.
- 56 S: January and I get to good response?
- 57 I: You mean you took the test and got good results?
- 58 S: Yes yes. I got that before I take Tottori University
- 59 I: Oh.
- 60 S: I wanted to take Tottori University examination
- 61 I: Yeah.
- 62 S: to I have to refuse?
- 63 I: Yeah.

Satoko talks about how she chose Okayama University despite living in Tottori where there is also a good university in her field of interest. Comparing universities ties in with previously discussed topics such as future job prospects (line 37) and the size of her town (lines 37, 38, and 42). These serve as links between former topics and the new 'story' (from line 50). Actually the new 'story' adds information about her decision and the circumstances not mentioned before. The recipient does his part by supplying well-timed minimal receipts which acknowledge what she says and encourage her to continue.

So how does the earlier storytelling organization help participants? 'Yeah' in lines 39-40 is repeated. The token ('yeah') in line 39 may mark agreement while the same token in line 40 could indicate closing the topic. Satoko seems to have already said (lines 37-38) what she wanted to say in response to the question (line 36). She has a chance to elaborate in her next turn (line 40) after Ian's minimal receipt, but she does not. Ian asks another question in line 41 which seems rather loosely related to the current topic as a probe.

Talk appears to move sideways from line 42 until line 47 which does double-duty of supplying confirmation of the repair and reformulation of the original question in line 36. What we could have here is an attempt to initiate a story preface in line 48 as a way to avoid getting bogged down with the current topic. The laughter does not answer the question of the previous turn, but rather sets up her story preface. This appears to be a timely co-oriented move as Ian projects the possibility of a 'story' starting by giving an encouraging reaction in line 49. The preface by Satoko sparks a sequence of turns which provides much background information into what turns out to be more than a simple

matter of where she wants to live. Structurally, we see prefaces, tying devices, and series of receipt tokens at work as a way to continue the talk.

7.3.2 Story preface by the recipient

Thus far, we have seen a clear example of a story preface with Satoko initiating the telling of a ‘story’ by seeking permission to tell it. There are other instances of storytelling being used to get unstuck, but in a modified form that is different from what has been described thus far. This is the situation in which the potential recipient of the ‘story’ makes the request or at least provides the other person with a prompt to start a ‘story’. Here, the story preface is initiated by the recipient, not the teller. This type of storytelling ‘set up’ is not only seen in institutional talk, but also in ordinary conversation. A common example is when one friend lays the groundwork for another person to tell a story. (See Goodwin, 1986, for examples of wives prefacing stories for their husbands to tell and Mandelbaum, 1987, for the idea of storytelling being ‘recipient-driven’ as well as ‘teller-driven’.)

In the example below, the choppiness of Ian’s formulation in line 9 could be due to uncertainty over the direction of the talk. He might have wanted to discuss the historical significance of the date (December 7) as being Pearl Harbor Day (line 7), but chose not to when the implication was not noticed in line 8. Instead in line 9, after some struggle to reformulate his remark in line 7, Ian moves to close the opening sequence. In line 9, he uses the standard prompt for these talks to get the first topic nominated.

I have included earlier lines (1-8) in order to capture how line 9 is preceded by a potentially awkward moment at the very beginning of the talk. There is a sense of wanting to get to the opening topic (line 9) in order to keep the talk going. Some kind of transition is needed between the rather automated greetings to establish the date and year and the topics of the conversation proper. (This is reminiscent of telephone talk where there could be an awkward transition moving from the greetings to the matter of the call.) Once the main topic is stated (line 10), the ‘story’ unfolds turn by turn in coordination with the receipts. (The same sequence appeared in Chapter 4, Excerpt 8 to show agreement of topic. Here it is used to show how a topic elicitation could serve as a story preface.)

Excerpt 3: Masako no. 5, school annual editor

- 1 I: Okay, let’s start in our usual way. What’s today’s date?
- 2 M: January the twenty fifth.
- 3 I: Uh. And what year?
- 4 M: Twenty oh three.
- 5 I: Twenty oh three. Okay. When was the last time ah we had a conversation?
- 6 M: Well in December?
- 7 I: Yeah. I looked today December seventh.
- 8 M: Oh.
- 9 I: So it’s yeah um over one month ago. Um. What’s today’s opening topic?
- 10 M: My school life.
- 11 I: Okay. Go ahead.
- 12 M: Now I’m making a book. The book is called (?) my school’s all students. I
- 13 belong to school council.

14 I: Uhuh.

15 M: Yeah. So now I am very busy.

16 I: Oh.

Ian seems to be stumbling through line 9 with a couple of ‘um’s breaking up the first utterance and marking a transition from the greeting and first topic (line 5) to inquiry of the main topic (line 9): “What’s today’s opening topic?” This question seems to serve as a kind of story preface elicitation attempt (i.e., a prior turn used to set up a preface) in the form of a prompt. Unlike the previous excerpt (2) where the ‘preface’ is initiated by the potential teller, here it is used as a device for topic nomination. While there are instances of the speaker having a fully formed story in mind, in most cases, the recipient of the ‘story’ needs to have a series of questions ready to guide the making of the ‘story’. Here we see how both participants contribute to the storytelling: The teller supplies the topic and the recipient provides questions to shape the topic into the beginning of a ‘story’.

The topic elicitation in line 9 functions both as a way to get a topic familiar to Masako nominated and as the first of three steps to get the telling of the story underway: (1) The topic is nominated (line 10). (2) The topic is approved (line 11). (3) The topic starts to get elaborated (lines 12-13). Once these steps are taken the turns are exchanged smoothly. A final point is to draw attention to the importance of the elicitation in line 9. Without this question asking for a topic, the talk might have stalled around lines 8-9. There is a certain dependency displayed by the student-participant on the teacher-participant to set up the situation for her to talk about herself. This seems related to Lerner’s idea of assisted storytelling.

Some readers might expect there to be a closing move for the story such as Labov's evaluation and coda since I mention above about 'moving through a storytelling sequence'. Eggins and Slade note: The storytelling genres which they analyze (e.g., narratives, anecdotes, and recounts) "all make some kind of evaluative comment which marks the significance of the events described" (1997, p. 262). So having a closing to the 'story' as well as an evaluation helps define the structure of the storytelling.

Closing a story

If we fast forward to the latter part of the 'story' about being the school yearbook editor, we can see how it ends.

- 46 M: I hand in the paper to the company[↑]. So company types the paper.
- 47 I: Oh.
- 48 M: It comes back and I check.
- 49 I: So you're lucky you don't have to input.
- 50 M: Yes, but the company::y makes many mistakes
- 51 I: Oh.
- 52 M: Hh.
- 53 I: Yeah, I don't know too. I hand in something sometimes ah I have to correct
- 54 many things=
- 55 M: =Yes.
- 56 I: Maybe it's natural.
- 57 M: Yes.
- 58 I: So what do you think about this experience? Are you glad (1) you're the editor?
- 59 M: (2) Ah:h. (3) Well. Sometimes bad. But usual::ly ((like singing)) uu not bad. Hh.
- 60 I: So did you volunteer for this?

61 M: (2) Yes.
62 I: Uh.
63 (2)
→64 I: I think that's great ah you volunteered ah usual students [Hhh
65 M: [Ah
66 I: maybe think I don't want to do that.

Two points can be made about storytelling in this example. First, there are evaluations. We see an elicited one in line 59 followed by another one by the recipient in line 64 and 66. These lines serve as a coda that summarizes the respective feelings of each participant as well as brings this story to an end. Second, Ian takes an increasingly active role in the sequence from line 53 while Masako takes on a lesser one. However, with the initiation of questions (line 58) inquiring how Masako evaluates the experience, we see her taking an extended turn (line 59). Ian tries to take the topic further, but it appears Masako does not have anything more to say (e.g., silence in lines 61 and 63). Ian initiates a move (in line 64) which looks like a coda to bring closure to the 'story' with a summarizing statement. Possibly this move helps participants move out to the silences and the overlap by releasing them from the 'story' which has been told.

Thus, we see that they do have closure (sometimes) and that it can help them get ready to move on to the next topic. While clear closings are not always noticeable in the data, when they do happen, it could be that reaching some sort of evaluative agreement associated with a proper ending of the 'story' is helpful. Sacks (1972) says stories can have endings and that "we can inspect the items that occur at their close to see whether

they can be seen to make an ending” (p. 342). Just as participants can orient to the start of a storytelling, they can also orient to the end.

7.3.3 A story gets started and continues

The next section consists of an extended analysis which illustrates how the storytelling process gets started and continues to be used resourcefully at certain stages. The question in line 14 below does not produce the hoped for elaboration. (Possibly Ian designed the question as a prompt whereas Masako took it at face value.) Ian tries again. He gives an ‘ah’ receipt in line 16 to set up a potential elaboration in the next turn, but instead (in line 17) there is only silence. At this point, participants appear stuck with nowhere to go with the topic. There seems to be an understanding between participants which has become part of their discourse practice of how the talk will get developed (i.e., ask for a topic). The standard opening topic elicitor comes conveniently in line 18 when in trouble. (A portion of the same talk in Chapter 5, Excerpt 6 looked at code switching. Here the focus is on getting around the gap.)

Excerpt 4: Masako no. 8, DNA

- 14 I: Oh. (2) Do yo:u (.) have to go to school tomorrow or is it a rest day?
15 M: I have to go to school tomorrow.
16 I: A:h.
17 (2)
→18 I: Okay, so what’s um the opening topic?
19 M: ((cough)) Scho::ol special class.
20 I: Hm.
21 M: Yeah. Last Friday I took part in a special science class at school. Sometimes

22 sometimes my school has special science club.

23 I: Mhm.

After a cough (See Hosoda & Aline, 2006, for a study where ‘coughing’ is oriented to as part of the current turn.) which could be interpreted as the start of her turn, Masako (in line 19) nominates the topic of her ‘story’. In line 20, Ian minimally approves with a non-lexical token and the ‘story’ begins in earnest from line 21. Thus we see that the gap in line 17 has turned out to be an opportune time to ask for the ‘opening topic’. This move could reset or realign the turns along with the nomination of a fresh topic. Another advantage of this device is that it ensures that the next topic will be one of high interest and familiarity to Masako.

If we look ahead in the same talk at how the ‘story’ progresses, we see that Masako summarizes some key points from the lecture that she heard over several turns. The extended turns and increased language product suggest her interest in the topic and her enthusiasm to tell Ian about it.

32 M: He talked about gene, DNA, and genome.

33 I: Ah.

34 M: Gene made DNA up primary object and it has heredity information.

35 I: Mm.

36 M: Gene is our set of our DNA that is necessary for human. Creature to us as

37 creature ((difficult to understand)). I have never thought (3) that (2) three things

38 gene, DNA, and genome are different.

39 I: Yeah.

40 M: I thought they are the same thing.

- 41 I: Uh.
- 42 M: I'm very surprised.
- 43 I: So (.) where is this person from?
- 44 M: He's from Genome Science Research Center.
- 45 I: Uh.
- 46 M: Maybe (4) fa famous
- 47 I: Ah.
- 48 M: research center.
- 49 I: Do you think ah national research center?
- 50 M: Yeah, I think so. *Ikagaku Kenkyu Jo* ((the name in Japanese)).
- 51 I: Oh. Yeah. Maybe people in science know it very well.
- 52 M: Yeah. HHhh.
- 53 I: Yeah. So you're talking about genes and DNA and what's the third one?
- 54 M: Human genome?
- 55 I: Oh. How do you spell that?
- 56 M: G-E-N-O-M-E.

In lines 36, 37, 38, and 40 reveal what she learned. Line 42 is an evaluation of how she feels about this newly acquired knowledge. This turn would seem to be a closing of the 'story' of what she learned. The telling about the lecture could have ended here, but Ian keeps it open by requesting more information (in lines 43, 49, 53, and 55). If we look at the subsequent lines it seems like a good decision to keep the 'story' going about what she learned from the lecture. She has more to say.

- 61 I: Ah. Oh. Okay. Tell me more.
- 62 M: Well studying these things contribute to gene therapy and personalized medicine.
- 63 I: Um.
- 64 M: And also (2) genetically modified food

65 I: Um.
66 (2)
67 I: Um In Japan it's OK? So we say ah GM food
68 M: GM?
69 I: GM food.
70 M: Ah (2) maybe (6) if the food use GM
71 I: Um.
72 M: so company must write 'use GM food'.
73 I: Um::m. I see. Something else?
74 M: Ah. No ((said with slight laughter)).

The extended talk goes on and even the silences (in lines 64 and 66) do not seem to bother the participants. First, Ian breaks the silence with a couple of candidate prompts in line 67. Masako addresses the second one. She asks for confirmation which Ian gives by repetition (not reformulation). Then Masako continues to explain in line 70 by answering Ian's first prompt (the question in line 67). Here again the rather long pauses lead to the next part of her explanation. Ian waits and Masako explains. Then he gives a continuer token (line 71) and she explains further.

When she says 'no' (in line 74) after the token marker and laughter, the 'story' of the lecture contents again could have ended here. However, Ian stumbles through line 75 and asks a self-evaluative question about her comprehension.

→75 I: Ah (2) so um (2) was it difficult to understand?
76 M: Yes. Because at school↑
77 I: Um.
78 M: I I have physics and chemistry class

79 I: Um.

80 M: but I don't have biology class.

81 I: Oh::h. Um so you ever had biology class in high school?

82 M: No.

83 I: Oh. In junior high school?

84 M: Yes, but it is not only biology it's not only biology, but science things *sogo*
((an integration of various fields of sciences into a general course))

The original story of DNA lecture branches off into a string of related smaller topics with their own stories such as what types of science classes are offered in high school. What we have seen in this extended excerpt is the importance of the recipient's prompts to keep the 'story' or 'stories' going.

7.3.4 When Ian tells a story

While attention is primarily paid on how the student-participants tell 'stories' about their experiences, there are a few instances where Ian tells 'stories'. My interest in the next example is to examine the storytelling prompts when roles are switched. The elicitation comes when there is a series of gaps. Ian has been asking Masako to describe the situation at the public pool. The topic seems to have been exhausted by line 107. A new question is elicited, but it takes time. Then the response takes a detour, but eventually the topic and the telling of a 'story' about it come together bit by bit, receipt by receipt, and turn by turn. (An earlier section of the same talk appeared in Chapter 5, Excerpt 2 as an example of code switching. This example displays features of storytelling.)

Excerpt 5: Masako no. 2, swimming

- 102 I: Um. Is it ah very crowded or not so crowded? I mean every swimming lane is
103 full?↑
104 (4)
105 M: Yes.
106 I: Ah:h.
107 (3)
→108 I: Do you have another question?
109 (2.5)
110 M: Well. What sports do you like the best?
111 I: Um. (1) Well. Not really a sport, but ah I like walking.
112 M: Oh. ((faintly))
113 I: So ah nowadays I am trying to go for a walk everyday or every night after
dinner
114 M: Uh.
115 I: for ah my health.
116 M: Oh.
117 I: Maybe it's not a sport.
118 M: Yeah. ((with chuckle))
119 I: Um. (2) Probably I like ah swimming in the sea or ocean the best.
120 M: Uh.
121 I: When I was in ah high school and university, I used to go surfing.
122 M: Oh. ((spoken very faintly))
123 I: Yeah. And my brother still goes surfing. He's a very good surfer. (3) And ah
124 now if I go swimming I like ah to do snorkeling or maybe on a mat go on a
wave
125 (3)
126 I: How about you? What's your favorite sport nowadays?

We can see the importance of the ‘right’ topic to get the teller to open up and develop his or her ‘story’. The launching of the ‘story’ not only get participants out of an awkward situation of the gaps and minimal responses without any elaboration (in lines 104-107), but also sets off a flow of talk. Interestingly, Ian allows himself to go on longer here than in other opportunities to tell his ‘stories’. Masako contributes to the co-construction of Ian’s ‘story’ through her varied minimal receipt responses. What she says as well as when and how she says them seems to help Ian continue. The attention eventually and inevitably returns to Masako as is the custom of this discourse practice. When no receipt continuer is forthcoming from Masako in line 125 (which would have kept Ian talking on topic), he marks the end of his ‘story’ and turns the topic-in-progress over to her. This is one way to break the silence.

7.4 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have given attention to how participants may use ‘storytelling’ as a way to get unstuck. In keeping with my methodological stance, the primary focus has been on how ‘stories’ get told in a co-constructed manner. The sequential function of the turns in the process of storytelling rather than the contents of the stories are the focus. The telling of a ‘story’ appears to be one conversational strategy used by participants in this study for overcoming a particular gap, an overlap, or a stalled topic which could lead to getting unstuck or if not yet stuck, help to avoid becoming stuck.

While ‘storytelling’ generally conveys a sense of formality and development, here we see a more modest display of structure through the efforts in NS-NNS talk to get unstuck by

giving an elaboration. Here we do not see the extended turns moving through various formal stages of development. However, I argue that when these speakers provide additional information beyond what was initially asked for, there is an exploitable potential for extension or elaboration which can become a 'story'. As with getting ready to tell a 'story', the extended answer or elaboration creates clarity for participants as to whose turn it is. One person talks on with the approval and encouragement of the other person. Thus getting unstuck becomes possible.

A few insights have emerged in the process of writing this chapter. First, not only the preface, but also the closing of storytelling promises to be helpful in showing how participants get unstuck. Second, while the emphasis is on clear cases of getting unstuck, we also need to be aware of how participants might prompt stories and sustain them to address what they feel are possible threat of stuckness. There would be no apparent need for parties to get unstuck if there was not at least a sense of a threat of stuckness present, a whiff of trouble over the horizons. Third, what we have seen first with topic shift (in the previous chapter) and now with storytelling are ways to avoid getting stuck by tapping into ways of *setting up* talk. Sacks (1992) mentions in one of his lectures the presence of 'lots of topics for any sets of persons' that are 'intrinsically rich'. Talk can center on 'whatever it is that members of that culture tend to talk about' (vol. 1, p. 178). These 'rich topics' (a term which was introduced earlier in Chapters 1 and 4) are at a premium in my data. Topics which have richness for these participants that are not easily exhaustible are precious conversational resources. They can energize the talk for a long time in some instances like we saw in Masako no. 6. This seems particularly effective when the topic gets developed into a 'story'.

What are displayed by these ‘storytelling’ episodes are not only a hybrid genre of talk and a particular type of NS-NNS talk of English resembling *lingua franca* instead of language learning, but also a hybrid culture being talked into being by this particular community of users. All of the participants (despite their differences) reside in the same city and use the same two languages (Japanese and English) in their daily lives (though to different degrees of fluency). (See Norton, 2006, about breaking binary thinking such NS and NNS thinking towards the formation of a ‘third culture’.) Storytelling which is part of a broad inclusive term that Ochs calls ‘narrative’ represents one way to connect or re-connect ourselves with others through interactional work.

How we think about ourselves and others is influenced by both the message content of jointly told narratives and the experience and working together to construct a coherent narrative. (Ochs, 1997, p. 185)

Surely such a powerful communicatively expressive device is a valuable resource to help participants maintain, strength, or re-vitalize a mutual understanding and coordination of taking turns.

Chapter 8 Repair

Introduction

8.1 Repair as a way out of ‘stuckness’

8.2 Types of other-initiated repair

8.2.1 Error correction

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8.3 Other ways to repair

8.3.1 Extended other-initiated repair

8.3.2 Self-initiated, other-repaired

8.4 Some uses of ‘oh’

8.5 Summary

Introduction

The preceding two chapters (6 and 7) establish the groundwork for a third candidate way for how participants can deal with stuckness. In this chapter (8), I will explore how repair organizational actions taken by the participants in my project appear to help them overcome or get around moments of stuckness. It should be mentioned here that repair is conceptually understood as a tool to point out and deal with any feature of the prior turn that participants orient to as a conversational problem. I argue that such collaboratively sensitive work is a potentially rich site for looking at the strategies used to resolve stuckness. The complexity of this project is that not all cases display such projected actions to the same degree.

The conversational organization of repair has been one of the most fruitful areas of exploration for CA. When participants are in trouble, they demonstrate through the sequential management of their turns that they can deal with it. The source of the trouble is identified by one participant and the actual repair is then made (by either party). While this chapter will review some of the contributions which CA has made to understanding 'repair', the primary interest is in examining some aspects of repair which help resolve uncertainty of taking the next turn. I will argue that repair of language can help participants move the conversation forward. The focus here is not on how the NNS participant's English can be improved by error correction (even though that is undeniably important for language learning), but how participants repair for maintenance of turn-taking.

In this sense, 'repairing' is a slightly different proposition from two of the other ways of getting unstuck discussed in this thesis (topic shifting and storytelling). Those organizational devices depend on looking ahead to new topics and stories to structure how to take the upcoming series of turns. Repair-like formulation (which is the topic of the next chapter) looks at the language and ideas produced in previous turns. Here a cleaning up process is undertaken in order to get ready for taking the following turns with greater clarity of shared orientation. The implications of repair in terms of getting unstuck has to do with addressing any trouble source which participants orient to without losing the flow of talk and turns. Thus, resolving stuckness in some cases is not as much a repair of something which is broken as it is a preventive measure while the turn-taking

machinery is still running. As we have been observing in the data, participants generally do not wait until total breakdown before taking some action. As mentioned earlier, stuckness lurks in the shadows of the actions taken and needs to be teased out through interpretation.

8.1 Repair as a way out of stuckness

The basic rule running through important papers by Sacks et al. (1974) on turn-taking organization and Schegloff et al. (1977) on repair organization is: Repair tends to be started in the earliest possible turn by one of the speakers. This rule is based on their observation (of NS-NS talk) that talk is generally continuous with a minimal amount of either silence or overlaps. Thus any diversion from orderly conduct is noted as being accountable. Repair is one way to address such moments. However, the timing and form of repair can vary according to how participants orient to conversational troubles.

Schegloff et al. (1977) describe the organization of repair from a sequential perspective which consists of the following three steps or turns.

Turn 1 trouble source

Turn 2 initiation of repair

Turn 3 actual repair

By diagramming the repair sequence in this manner, we can see how repair relates to dealing with stuckness as a collaborative endeavor. There is a temporary loss of co-

orientation (as displayed by a trouble source), an initiative to re-establish the turn-taking sequence (by signaling there is a problem), and finally the confirmation from the other participant that the problem needs to be addressed (through a completed repair action). Schegloff et al. further unpack ‘repair’ by showing the possible scenarios of participation (for turns 2 and 3):

1. Self-initiated, self-repaired
2. Self-initiated, other-repaired
3. Other-initiated, self-repaired
4. Other-initiated, other-repaired

The producer of the trouble source can self-initiate the repair process or the other person can. As for the actual repair, the producer of the trouble source could do the actual repair or the other person could. My interest is primarily in the third type of repair, ‘other-initiated and self-repaired’. This exchange requires participants to display (to each other) how they are co-orientating not only to stuckness, but also to the act of getting unstuck. For example, one person initiates an action to set up the next turn for the other person to take. Thus, whose turn is next and even what kind of thing to say gets clarified through the repair process. By establishing the repair sequence, participants are sequentially provided with clear roles.

Schegloff et al. established as a general principle that repair is a co-managed process. Wong (2000b) reexamined this view specifically for NS-NNS talk. (e.g., delayed other-initiated repair). She sees other-repair initiatives as a resource that aims at “averting,

avoiding, or correcting miscommunication and misunderstanding in talk” (p. 244). What this implies is that participants do not necessarily have to wait until there is ‘miscommunication’ or ‘misunderstanding’ to take action. Such moves as ‘averting’ and ‘avoiding’ are designed to protect the flow before it stops. Thus, actions to address issues related to stuckness as well as stuckness itself occur in various forms and degrees.

8.2 Types of other-initiated repair

There are several ways in which repair can be organized particularly in terms of NS-NNS talk. The focus will be on other-initiated repair choices available to mainly the NS, but in some cases, also to the NNS.

8.2.1 Error correction

One of the common forms of repair in the language classroom is error correction. Typically, the learner makes a linguistic error and the teacher (NS) corrects it by supplying the correct form.

(1) Day et al. (1984 in Wong, 2000b, p. 246)

NNS: How do you do on- on weekends. Usually, I mean usually?

NS: What do I do on the weekends?

NNS: Yeah.

Here is a classic example of what Long (1983) and other SLA researchers have reported as the NS modifying linguistic forms uttered by the NNS in their spoken interactions.

Repair is initiated by the NS to correct the form, commonly a grammatical error. Repair can include more than the mechanical correction of language. It can also include any and all efforts to deal with miscommunication. Miscues, confusion over meaning, and loss of co-orientation are all potentially repairable.

While repair and error correction are structurally similar in that one party acts and the other party reacts as a pair of turns, the purpose of the exchange could be different. Error correction is designed to help the NNS learn the correct form of the language. Repair includes this as well as anything else which the participants orient to as causing a problem to the flow of talk. Another potential difference between the two is who does what. With repair as we saw above in the schema by Schegloff, either speaker can initiate and complete the repair. As for the typical error correction, the NS initiates the correction process with either the NS or NNS completing the repair.

Below, Satoko is telling Ian about an exam result. However, line 55 is confusing for him. While there is a grammatical problem (which could be dealt with explicitly), Ian orients instead to her intended meaning. He formulates the gist of the prior turn. (The following is a short segment of the longer sequence that was used for story preface in Chapter 7, Excerpt 2. Here the other-initiated repair is the focus.)

Excerpt 1: Satoko no. 3, choosing university

- 55 S: January and I get to good response?
- 56 I: You mean you took the test and got good results?
- 57 S: Yes, yes. I got that before I take Tottori University
- 58 I: Oh.
- 59 S: I wanted to take Tottori University examination
- 60 I: Yeah.

The trouble source is in line 55 and the recipient (the ‘other’ participant) initiates a move to repair with the lead in: ‘You mean’. Actually in this case, Ian both initiates and completes the repair. Satoko then confirms the repair and the talk moves on.

8.2.2 Delayed uptake

This term describes when the recipient of the prior turn takes the next turn after some delay. What is marked here is that despite the initial silence, the basic exchange of turns has been completed. Whether the delay itself on taking the next turn is seen as a repair related move is not clear at this moment. *How* this turn and the one after that are actually taken need to be looked at.

While most of the early literature in CA focuses on NS-NS talk, Schegloff notes that there is no reason why CA cannot cope with NS-NNS talk (Wong & Olsher, 2000). Schegloff (1991) sees the challenge of relevance as being the same regardless. As Wong (2000b) puts it, “There is the onus of using the details of the talk to demonstrate that context is a relevant feature *for the participants*” (p. 245) (Her emphasis). Understanding the actions of NS and NNS by the details of the interaction for the participants themselves moves us

a long way from judging the NNS by what is ‘native-like’. A contextual perspective broadens our idea of what is acceptable language. ‘Repair’ depends on how the participants themselves orient to the turns and whether there is a problem which needs to be dealt with or not.

How do NSs use language differently when interacting with NNSs? Probably they show more tolerance to variations of linguistic forms as well as adapting to a slower pace of turn-taking. More specifically, Wong (2004) explores the notion of ‘delay’. ‘Delay’ as she refers to it is the “silences which appear after a possible completion of a turn construction unit (TCU)” (p. 114). The key question is: How do participants orient to particular delays? Of interest here is Wong’s (2004) observation of how the NS delays uptake of the next turn after a potential trouble source. In the first example, Tang asks Jim if he has her telephone number.

(2) Wong (2004, p. 120)

6 T: you don’t have my number yet right?

7 J: Um:: no (I guess) I don’t

8 T: Do you want one?

9 (0.4)

10 J: Uh huh.

11 T: -h Okay it’s 534 (0.4) 987 (0.8) ...

The gap could mark some problem in the prior turn. If we think in terms of an adjacency pair, line 9 is arguably Jim’s turn since Tang has just asked him a question. However, Jim’s delay in replying until line 10 could be related to the referential grammatical

problem (line 8): ‘Do you want one?’ This could be taken to mean she has more than one phone line though she probably meant: ‘Do you want it?’

Wong points out that line 9 is an earlier position from which Jim could have answered, but his receipt token occurs in a later or delayed position (line 10). Her interpretation is “Jim delays uptake of the next turn so as to afford Tang an opportunity to continue her talk that might have clarified the referential error” (2004, p. 121). Wong notes a counter view by Rod Gardner (one of the editors) that a pause after a question and before the answer is also common in NS talk. What this implies to me is that we need additional evidence besides silence to more clearly consider the nature of the delay and whether it is linked to repair.

What I see is that Tang does not take up the chance in line 9 for reformulating her question or simply telling him her number. As for Jim, he does not interrupt the flow of the talk-in-progress with a repair sequence to clarify the grammar. He projects that no further talk from Tang is likely as he gives a minimal continuer receipt in line 10. His orientation (that he must speak before she will) seems correct as in the next turn (line 11) Tang gives her number.

The upshot seems to be that there will be delays in any case. That is one feature of NS-NNS talks. However, not all delays will be interpreted by participants as prompts to repair. Another option is that the recipient of the repair marker may choose not to act on it. After all, the expectation of the encounters in my project is to keep the talk going, not to make

repairs every time there is an error. Whatever action serves the goal of continuity of talk will be taken.

In the next example, we see a comparison of how Masako delays answering questions in two different turns. (A longer section of this conversation appeared earlier in Chapter 6, Excerpt 5 for when participants remain stuck despite the change of topic. Here we see how to circumvent an error through a delayed response.)

Excerpt 2: Masako no. 1, junior high school

- 15 I: ... How do you::: go to school?
16 M: I go there by train.
17 I: Ah. How long does it take?
→18 (3)
19 M: About (2) forty minutes.
20 I: Ah. And (.) from the station (.) how do you (.) go by school?
→21 (2)
22 M: Um?↑ (.) I go to school (2) by bicycle.

Ian is asking questions in rapid succession to get Masako to talk about her daily routine of going to school. The basic structure is adjacency pairing of turns: question-answer. The first delay occurs in line 18 which could be seen as Masako's turn. Instead she waits until line 19 to reply. She begins to answer the question, pauses, and then completes the utterance. The stress on the final word clearly marks the end of her turn. While there is some delay in her response, no particular verbal marker of a problem appears. Besides line 19 is grammatical. What this could suggest is that Masako may simply need time for

processing the previous turn as well as forming a response. (In this case, even a NS may need time to respond to a question asking for specific information.)

After the question in line 20, Masako once again does not take the earlier slot to reply in line 21 and opts to delay until a later slot in line 22. What is different here is the receipt token ('um') voiced with rising intonation as a question. This appears to signal some kind of problem with the previous turn. Potential trouble sources (in line 20) which could have prevented full and immediate understanding include the multiple pauses, the length of the utterance, and the ungrammatical end of the question. In line 22, after the receipt marker of a problem, she follows the response pattern of line 19: pause, start the answer, pause, and then complete the utterance stressing the final word. Masako delays her response and Ian could have oriented to the gap, the pause, or the marker (in lines 21 and 22) as an other-initiated repair signal. However, he makes no attempt to self-repair (e.g., reformulate his question). When he does not take the floor; Masako goes ahead and answers the question.

We have seen in Wong's example as well as mine that participants can signal repair and even offer space for the repair without breaking up the flow of the talk. The recipient of the problematic question delays the next turn response possibly in hopes the trouble source will be reformulated by the inquirer or at least noticed. Another interpretation of the delay could be extra time is needed to address a question with some sort of trouble. This extra time in itself is a delay. It could signal the previous turn was not immediately understood. The eventual answer could show that understanding of what is being asked took time. Since the repair initiation is not always acted upon, this suggests that delay in

such cases appears to serve not necessarily as a direct other-initiated repair request, but rather as a kind of ‘*en passant*’ notation with the option to repair or not.

8.2.3 Repair insertions

This is where there is a side sequence. Repairs can be dealt with in a specially designed series of turns. The topic-in-progress gets temporarily detoured as a move is initiated to identify the trouble source and to perform some kind of repair. Then the previous talk can resume once the problem is resolved. Thus the trouble source is treated as soon as possible as Schegloff claims. The following example shows this process. (In Chapter 7, Excerpt 5, there was a later sequence of the same talk. It showed the taking of extended turns to tell a story. Here, the example shows how repair takes place.)

Excerpt 3: Masako no. 2, swimming

- 43 I: What, what happened to other twenty students?
44 M: Maybe they stay home.
45 I: Oh, really. So it's an (1) optional class?
→46 M: (3) What does it mean, *optional*?
47 I: *Optional* means you can choose, to go or not to go.
48 M: Yes.

There was a special summer class, but half the students did not attend. Ian wonders if the reason is that it was an ‘optional’ class. He slightly delays saying ‘optional’ (in line 45). In line 46, Masako initiates a repair sequence to check on the meaning of the word. Ian’s definition (line 47) comes out smoothly and concisely. Once she hears the explanation, she links her response in line 48 back to the question asked in line 45. A slight detour or

insertion (lines 46-47) has been used to deal with the unknown word. Then the talk-on-topic resumes. Here we see how repair is done smoothly.

8.2.4 Embedded repair

Brouwer, Rasmussen, and Wagner (2004) make a distinction between a ‘side sequence’ (i.e., insertion) and what they call ‘embedded corrections’. When embedded, the repair is done implicitly usually in a single turn immediately after the turn with the trouble source. Unlike the insertion where participants temporarily go off-line to repair in a side sequence, the embedded repair allows the ‘other’ person (the second turn participant) to initiate repair as well as move the topic forward within the same turn. This treatment of an error would seem appealing to participants in these talks since their concern is to keep the talk going by preserving the current topic for the next turn.

In the next example, Masako makes a pronunciation error in line 12. Ian initiates and completes the repair in the next line. While the error correction is direct, the surrounding words (e.g., the token, pause, and question) deflect attention away from the error. Masako can use the next turn for the topic, not the error. (In Excerpt 2, the attention was repair and the delayed response. Below, earlier in the same talk, the repair is not the focus, but the following question.)

Excerpt 4: Masako no. 1, junior high school

- 11 I: What ah year student are you?
→12 M: I am in the second grad.
13 I: Ah, second grade. Huh. (.) Um. Where is your school?

In line 13, Ian delays the modeling of the correct pronunciation with a token to acknowledge Masako's answer. This delay also softens the force of the correction. After the correction, there is a delay again, but this time it seems to mark a transition to the next question. All this work done around the correction appears to embed it in the natural flow of talk.

8.2.5 'Sidestepping' errors

In the previous subsections (8.2.1-8.2.4), various approaches to repair were introduced. Direct error correction, repair insertions, embedded repair, and delayed uptake appear to help participants deal with problems quickly and effectively without breaking up the flow. As we saw in Excerpt 2, Masako marks the problem with delay, but continues when it becomes apparent Ian passes up the opportunity to make a self-correction. When no repair is made, Wong (2005) calls it 'sidestepping' the grammatical problem for the sake of moving the talk forward with a priority on meaning over form. What is interesting here is that the NS 'sidesteps' his own error. A more typical case is Excerpt 3 where Masako's mistake in verb tense in line 44 is not treated. Hosoda (2006) found in her analysis of ordinary conversations in Japanese between NSs and between NS and NNS that "participants' disfluencies or linguistic errors were usually not treated as interactional troubles" (p. 43). She notes that while such features are noticeable to the outside observer, the interlocutors did not usually orient to less than perfect language use.

Below, I have organized a series of examples to further demonstrate that repair is a choice. The decision is made not to repair despite knowing there is some kind of linguistic error.

While either party can make the error, typically it is the NS who decides whether to draw attention to it and to what extent.

Word choice

The current topic is Asian Games soccer which is being played in their city. Ian is guiding Takao to talk about it since he knows Takao is a big soccer fan. (An earlier part of the same talk appeared in Chapter 5, Excerpt 7 to show repetition is not always used for repair. In this example, we see a repairable item does not always get repaired.)

Excerpt 5: Takao no.1, Asian soccer

20 I: Ah. What kind of (1.6) player do you like?

21 T: Kind?

22 I: Yeah.

23 T: I like (6.6) *point getter*.

24 I: A::h. For example, who is your favorite player (.) on the Japanese team?

25 T: Um. (2) Takagi.

The example starts with a repair insertion (lines 20-22) with Takao initiating a repair in line 21 by repeating a word from the prior turn question. Ian minimally confirms the word (line 22). This leads to an extended pause which Takao breaks by saying ‘point getter’.

What he comes up with is a Japanese foreign loan word combination which means ‘forward’ or ‘striker’. At the start of line 24, Ian could be marking Takao’s word coinage with the stretched continuer token receipt. However, the actual repair of the answer is ‘sidestepped’ and the talk goes on.

We find various examples in my data where Ian declines to initiate a repair of what the other person says despite being the NS (with some expectation of making corrections) and the other person the NNS. The general rule seems to be to let errors go if the language is understandable.

Singular or plural form

In the next example, there is a misalignment between the plural form ('tests') in the question (line 5) and the singular form ('it') in the answer (line 6). Ian asks about 'tests' and Masako replies about 'it'. (This is the opening section of a talk which also appeared in Chapter 7, Excerpt 4. The interest there was finding a suitable topic. Here we see the sidestepping of a potential repair.)

Excerpt 6: Masako no. 6, DNA

- 1 I: So this is today is September, December ninth. What year?
- 2 M: Twenty oh three.
- 3 I: Twenty oh three. Soon we're going to (.) finish this year.
- 4 M: Yes.
- 5 I: (2) But um by e-mail, you were telling me um you were tak studying or taking
- 6 tests this week?
- 7 M: Yes, (2) but it (1) finished (1) last Friday.
- 8 I: Ah.
- 9 M: Last term is finished.
- 10 I: It means the day before yesterday?
- 11 M: Yes.
- 12 I: Oh. Do you have to go to school tomorrow or is it a rest day?
- 13 M: I have to go to school tomorrow.

Stuckness could be looming in line 7 with the fairly long pauses and the misalignment of plural and singular forms. However, instead of waiting for a potential gap, Ian's formulation (line 10) asks for clarification. He seems more concerned with when the tests finished than the grammar of how to say it. The repetition of 'It' could be an attempt to initiate a repair as well as to set up Masako's next turn (line 11) by asking for confirmation of his formulation.

This example suggests possible indications of stuckness as well as what is exactly being repaired can be subtle. In addition, the actual trouble source may be overlooked at first glance. While there could be a grammatical problem, sometimes a misunderstanding of thought or logic could take priority over the linguistic error especially in these talks where the focus is not on language instruction. In any case, the talk moves on past the repair sequence once Masako confirms clearly in line 11 that tests and the term are over.

8.3 Other ways to repair

Repair is a choice taken *jointly* by the participants. "Through their talk and other interactional conduct, the interlocutors made relevant to each other the complementary roles of relative target language expert and novice" (Hosoda, 2006, p. 44). In this section, I present two ways in which this collaboration is displayed in the organization of repair which have yet to be illustrated: when it takes time and the NNS wants the NS to take on the role of language expert.

8.3.1 Extended other-initiated repair

The following example is a rare case in my data. The repair here is a prolonged process, not the quick and smooth sequence seen in the other examples in this chapter. I include the following example as a reminder: While repair is usually done with a minimal amount of distraction and detour, there are cases where the repair side sequence can be rather long and filled with uncertainties about turn-taking. Below the extended sequence is viewed as a repair insertion.

Excerpt 7: Masako no. 6, proficiency test

- 13 I: Oh. And then after that was *Eiken*? (English proficiency test)
14 (5)
15 I: You had the test before *Eiken*?
16 (6)
17 M: I think before.
18 I: Uh. (2) So when you had *Eiken* ah you already finished all the tests?
19 (4)
20 M: Pardon?
21 I: Soo, when you took *Eiken* you had already finished (.) the school tests?
→22 M: No.

Delays displayed through the extended gaps (in lines 14 and 16) take place before the first uptake by Masako in line 17. There is apparently a mismatch of inquiry and response.

Initially, Ian keeps on trying to find a question form which will produce an answer. Once he gets that (in line 17), he then tries to get an answer that he can understand about which came first- the proficiency test or the school tests. Interestingly, Ian produces a series of rather ambiguous questions and in return receives rather ambiguous answers. The side

sequence inserted between the initial question in line 13 and the answer which brings the sequence to a close in line 22 is somewhat long. Nevertheless, the participants throughout maintain their orientation to resolving the problem of Ian not understanding. Only then will the talk move on.

Ian keeps asking until he understands. This sequence occurs early in the session as part of the ‘small talk’ before getting to the opening solicitation of the first topic of the main part of the talk. Perhaps, Ian sticks with the repair sequence by continuing to reformulate his questions despite the difficulties they are encountering because he still has the ‘trump’ card (‘What’s the opening topic?’). He can play it at any time to push the talk forward. He is willing with Masako’s cooperation to take the risk of the talk coming to an abrupt halt for the sake of understanding.

8.3.2 Self-initiated, other-repaired

A fundamental rule of the organization of repair (for NS-NS talk) is the preference for self-repair over other-initiated repair (Schegloff, et al. 1977, Schegloff, 1992b). As we have seen in this chapter, other-initiated repair has been the more typical case. However, there are a few times in the data where self-initiated, other-repaired (Schegloff, 2000a) occurs with the NNS taking control of the exchange. While I have implied that in NS-NNS talk (unlike in NS-NS talk) other-initiated repair is more common, there are examples in my data of where Satoko (no. 1, 3) and Masako (no. 2) initiate a repair sequence. Interestingly, the corrections here seem more like meta-talk about correct form than actually doing the repair. Even in the process of repair, opportunities for further talk

are exploited. (Earlier in Chapter 6, Excerpt 3, another section from the same talk was used to discuss how topics shifted. Below, a later part exemplifies a repair side sequence.)

Excerpt 8: Satoko no. 1, America

→60 S: =Yes. So but but I felt I'm a (2.5) What what can I say? (6.3) I am I? I am

61 me?

62 I: Yeah [Okay.

→63 S: [Which one? [Hhhh=

64 I: [Either one is OK.

In NS-NNS talk, there inevitably occur moments when one participant (the NS) is expected to act like the language expert and make corrections. The NNS may have to remind him of this expectation. The NS on the other hand as seen here tries to downplay this role (e.g., lines 62 and 64).

8.4 Some uses of 'oh'

In the example below, Satoko (line 44) mistakenly says 'dessert' instead of 'desert'. (Tottori is famous as the location for a film called, *Woman in the Dunes*.) In line 45, Ian does not explicitly address the trouble source. He simply gives an 'oh' token which is commonly used to acknowledge the receipt of new information. (Part of the same talk appeared in Excerpt 1 to show repair by formulation. Here the receipt token leads to self-repair.)

Excerpt 9: Satoko no. 3, choosing university

- 43 I: Oh. So is Tottori University um famous for agriculture?
44 S: Oh yes. Um especially for dessert
45 I: Oh.↑
→46 S: dessert?
47 I: Desert. But you prefer Okayama?

Satoko projects Ian's 'oh' token in this particular turn as being more than an acknowledgment of information. This appears to be taken by Satoko to be an other-initiated repair. In line 46, she makes the repair, a self-correction. Her question with rising intonation displays that she wants to a confirmation. Ian orients to line 46 as such a request. Instead of taking some action which would draw attention to the correction or the trouble source, he simply repeats what was said as confirmation of the repair. He then moves on to the next topic (line 47).

A moment of potential stuckness in this sequence appears to revolve around lines 44-47. Unlike in previous cases where stuckness is indicated by silence, overlaps, or laughter here the possible uncertainty over the next turn seems to arise with the trouble source ('dessert') in line 44. In the next turn, Ian does not display a clear strategy of how to deal with the error. Attention is not drawn to 'dessert'. It is not clear whether he initiates a repair when he says 'oh'. The 'oh' token is the type of receipt which would typically acknowledge new content, not an error correction. However, the clear rising intonation could mark it otherwise. Regardless of whether Ian's 'oh' is a subtle repair initiator or simply a news receipt, the point is that Satoko takes it as a chance to repair.

We have seen a change of roles (Excerpts 8 and 9) as it is the NNS who has initiated and repaired not the NS. Such examples demonstrate the tools of repair can be employed by either participant irrespective of being a NS or NNS. The NNS is doing self-corrections with a request for a NS check. Due to the nature of NS-NNS talks, where one person uses his or her second language while the other person using their first language, there is a tendency to show some sign of deference to the NS as the expert.

In the next example, Satoko is talking about how she felt in junior college after she returned from studying in America. She changed and now has more confidence. In line 74, she makes a mistake and says 'junior high' instead of 'junior college'. (In Excerpt 8, an earlier part of the same talk illustrated a repair insertion. Here the prior turn gets a receipt before a repair.)

Excerpt 10: Satoko no. 1, America

74 S: I feel I don't need to feel any nervous at junior high school=
→75 I: =Oh, in [junior
76 S: [in junior college. Sorry ((softly)).

As in the cases above, Ian starts his turn with an 'oh' marker. As we saw before, his use of 'oh' can be ambiguous or possibly functions in two ways as a marker of new information and also a token to mark a problem which could be repaired (but not necessarily so). Here we see that 'oh' initiates a pair of turns where the intended meaning as well as the slip of tongue is confirmed by both participants before the talk proceeds.

In most of the excerpts in this chapter (1, 2, 5, 6, 7, and 9), the repair initiator is delivered in question form with rising intonation. In line 75, the initial move does not follow this pattern. In fact, the utterance does not get completed. There is a slight overlap, not of mistiming, but of making the repair. We notice that the repair is initiated and completed without interrupting in the flow of turns. The use of the 'oh' marker allows Ian to do two things which maintains the flow: (1) It marks Satoko's revelation (in line 74) as news. (2) It also unobtrusively sets up the immediately following other-initiated repair ('in junior'). By responding to the news quality of her utterance before its availability to be corrected, Ian minimizes his expected role as NS (expert of the language) and maximizes his role as facilitator of flow.

Due to the overlap (lines 75-76) and Ian stopping his turn on the way, we cannot be sure what he was going to say after 'junior': junior high school or junior college. However, 'junior' which is latched immediately to the prior turn is enough to cue the problem. As in Excerpt 9, the 'oh' here might have guided Satoko to orient to the slip as she makes the correction before Ian can finish his turn. This excerpt and the previous one (Satoko no. 3) are similar in initiating repair very minimally within a two turn side exchange. Then the talk progresses without skipping a beat. A slight difference is in Excerpt 10; Satoko self-repairs quickly and apologizes (as a NS might do) while in the previous example, there is a request for confirmation by Satoko after she ventures a repair. The different follow ups imply that the trouble source in the first case is a linguistic consideration (getting a native speaker check) while the second is simply a slip of tongue which anyone including NSs could make.

We have now seen ‘oh’ used as the opening utterance in the next turn immediately after a grammatical error in two different ways in this section:

[1] ‘Oh’ with rising intonation (Satoko no. 3, line 45).

[2] ‘Oh’ followed by other-initiated repair (Satoko no. 1, line 75).

This receipt appears to be used to express more than acknowledgment of new information being received by the recipient. A couple of other cases relevant to this discussion are briefly mentioned below. They add three ways ‘oh’ could be used after a grammatical error.

[3] ‘Oh’ with falling intonation followed by a formulation (line 22). (The opening sequence of the same talk was used in Chapter 7, Excerpt 3 to show how a story started. Here ‘oh’ is commonly used after an error in form.)

Excerpt 11: Masako no. 5, school annual editor

17 M: Making the schedule is behind.

18 I: Oh.

19 M: So teacher is always complaining.

20 I: Uhuh.

21 M: Yeah. (3) And I get many stress. hh

22 I: Oh. ↓ So you are the only one writing (.) this book?

[4] 'Oh' standing alone without any noticeable intonation.

Two examples are line 18 immediately above and below line 58 from Excerpt 1.

56 I: You mean you took the test and got good results?

57 S: Yes, yes. I got that before I take Tottori University

58 I: Oh.

[5] 'Oh' in combination with an intensifier from Satoko no. 1.

30 S: Um. I'm also not good at express myself.

31 I: >Oh really<. [Ahh

32 S: [HHh

These different uses of 'oh' provide participants with a device for co-orienting and co-projecting the next turn. My data shows that it regularly occurs when the prior turn has a grammatical error. Further study could focus on accounting for why [1] and [2] are followed by self-repair of the taker of the trouble source turn while in [3], [4], and [5], no repair is done.

8.5 Summary

The typical sites of stuckness or temporary mis-orientation of the turn-taking examined in the previous chapters have been primarily at gaps, overlaps, and laughter. The occurrence of these phenomena presents participants with the shared challenge of coordinating turns based on the general rule of one speaker at a time. Stuckness could be a threat when there

appears to be a lack of signals for participants to orient to. In the process of repairing some kind of linguistic error, participants are able to gain the signals they need from each other to re-establish a common orientation to the next turn. The following is a list of options related to the organization of repair which were noted in excerpts from my data. While the first way is self-initiated, self-complete repair, it still needs the receipt response from the recipient to complete the repair sequence. The other three ways rely on other-initiated, self-repaired exchanges.

- 1 Direct error correction
- 2 Repair insertion
- 3 Embedded error correction
- 4 Delayed initiation of a repair sequence

These forms of repair are interactional and are thus available for use as conversational resources by either participant to find out what the other person understands. Each of the four ways listed requires at least two turns with one turn taken by each person. In addition, I mentioned the following related aspects of the repair process that highlight the sequential orientation.

- 5 Repair or do not repair.
- 6 Multiple attempts at repair.
- 7 Signaling repair.
- 8 Ambiguous markers of repair ('oh').

To repair or not is an ongoing decision which participants encounter throughout the talks. This led to a discussion about the decision not repair in all cases. Sometimes the repair is not deemed worth doing as fluency not accuracy is the overriding concern. Then there was the case where repair was acted upon through multiple attempts even at the risk of halting the flow of talk. Signaling a repair initiative could be direct as in a side sequence to the talk-in-progress or as indirect as a passing note to be taken up or not. Cases in which the NNS wanted the NS to repair also were seen, despite the NS's display of greater interest in moving the talk along. Repair in this sense was a move to get both participants to orient to the error and treatment of it in the same way. Finally, I noticed how 'oh' markers were located in several examples immediately after a grammatical error. I suggested that they functioned not only as news receipts, but also a strategic move to encourage continuity of the current topic and also to note a grammatical error (which could either be taken up or ignored).

In this chapter, I have looked at repair as an organizational concept to help participants regain a sense of co-orientation. While language was seen to be repaired, the main concern was not teaching the NNS, but improving the communication between two participants. In the NS-NNS talk in my project, the participants focused on keeping the talk going. Repair was one way which helped them accomplish this.

What we can read between the lines is that repair might not be done if participants do not feel the need for it to enhance communication. We have seen examples where Ian is consistently trying to find the best way to mark a trouble source without letting a potential repair jeopardize the fluidity of the turn-taking. An invitation is offered, but the uptake

(i.e., the actual repair) remains an option to be decided. By showing that repair is co-constructed, we have made some progress in seeing how NS-NNS talk displays features of both ordinary conversation and institutional talk. Yes, there is an asymmetry in the participants' relationship to one another, but it does not have to hinder talk. Making use of resources helps to ensure the talk will continue to flow despite limitations and apparent obstacles.

The main challenge for participants as always within the turn-taking system is how to maintain the ongoing co-orientation of whose turn it is. In this chapter, the identities of the co-participants appear to be important to understanding how repair can be used as a way to get around stuckness. The participants' identities as NS and NNS, teacher and learner are available (though they are not the only ones) and can be put into play at any time to keep the talk moving forward. In this sense, the roles of teacher and student can be evoked as a resource to clearly define how the turns will be taken and by whom. This appears to be influenced to some extent by the expectations of the NNS and the actual decisions made by the NS on how repair will be done (if at all).

Wong (2004) and earlier interactional analysts such as Varonis and Gass (1985) have pointed out an important feature which has distinguished what NS and NNS do during talk. For the NNSs, "talking and learning the language simultaneously as the acquisitional processes of knowing and using the target language both come together and are separable" (Wong, 2004, p. 115). While I agree that talking and learning are happening at the same time, I see it as happening for both participants, not just the NNS. They are both learning how to talk to each other as collaborators in the same enterprise. The

commitment of SLA researchers such Varonis and Gass is on what the NNS as language learner does. With such an approach, the NS is then likely to be assumed to be a consistent factor or possibly not one of the variables considered at all. If one participant goes into the interaction assuming that he or she has nothing to learn linguistically or communicatively, it would seem to be a very different encounter from the one where regardless of being the NS or NNS, both participants are making adjustments to each other along the way.

Chapter 9 Formulation

Introduction: Definition

9.1 Formulation in an extended sequence: An introductory example

9.2 Formulation as an organizational concept

9.2.1 Types of formulations found in institutional talk

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9.3 Formulation as a way to deal with stuckness: Some categories

9.3.1 Formulating to check a translation

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9.3.3 Formulating as a confirmation check

9.3.4 Repetition and reformulation

9.4 Summary

Introduction: Definition

I see ‘formulation’ as being an interactional resource for maintenance and recovery of smooth turn-taking. This chapter (and the preceding chapter on repair) more than any other chapters in this thesis comes the closest to resembling familiar concepts and terms used in SLA. For example, Long (1983, 1996), Long et al. (1998), and others use such terms as ‘confirmation checks’ and ‘recasts’. This could be confusing for readers without some preliminary discussion of how I use terminology. I make the following distinctions in order to clarify my position and purpose:

Formulation for my study is a summary or a statement of the ‘gist’ of what the *other* person has said in previous turns. It can also be displayed by the recipient’s timing of ‘uptake’ (the instant of taking up the turn) to formulate as well as the selective and

interpretative articulation of the ‘upshot’ (implication or message) of how the prior turn could be inferred. Formulating has been seen to function in various ways including making previous talk clearer, drawing attention to selective details, stressing the significance of a prior utterance, and revisiting earlier stated opinions.

Formulations are treated in this project as being cooperatively used. However, in the realm of social interactions, this is not the only way that formulations are used. For example, they can be designed to make the other person’s opinion controversial so it can be challenged as in courtrooms or talk shows. (See Hutchby & Wooffitt, 1998, for examples of formulation as an interactive manipulative resource used by some talk radio hosts to negatively reshape callers’ remarks.) They can even be used to model correct linguistic forms in the language classroom without drawing too much attention to them (e.g, embedded repairs). In this chapter, I am interested in the type which seems to promote understanding of each other. The purpose of understanding for the participants in this project is to keep the talk moving forward.

In the literature, ‘formulation’ and ‘reformulation’ are sometimes used interchangeably. I distinguish them in terms of timing and position in the sequence as well as who says it. Formulation is some kind of rephrasing by the recipient of what the other person has said in a prior turn whereas reformulation (for my purpose) is the current speaker’s own rephrasing of what he or she has said during the same turn. Typically, this is a false start followed by a re-start performed as self-correction of an utterance in progress. ‘Reformulation’ is the self-monitoring projection of one’s own utterance whereas ‘formulation’ is a displayed understanding of what the other person said. This inter-turn based action articulates understanding of a prior turn as well as seeks a return response. Reformulation in contrast is an intra-turn maneuver to

produce the best possible utterance to ensure an expected response. What both these concepts have in common is the priority given to producing the best possible recipient-designed utterance in order to keep the talk going. According to Martin Bygate (personal correspondence), there is a third term which should be mentioned: re-formulation. I make a distinction with the other two terms by seeing 're-formulation' as the word by word repetition of the formulation in a previous turn by the same speaker, the initial formulator. Again like with reformulation, re-formulation is about the displayed adjustments made by a single speaker not the interplay of turns between two people as with formulations.

My view of 'formulation' broadly resembles interactive resources such as scaffolding, various types of checks, recasts, and ways of acknowledging and ratifying.

Similarities lie mainly in how these various tools can be 'jointly' used as resources to move the talk forward. 'Scaffolding' seems related to my interactional concerns of how participants accomplish talk, particularly with the movement to link 'scaffolding' with a more recent term, 'collaborative dialogue'. (See Ellis, 2003, for a review of this development.) However, the SLA view of one-to-one interactions remains firmly planted in how the tutor can give effective 'corrective' feedback to the learner. A fundamental difference between SLA and my project is the motivation for the actions. Theirs is for error correction and language learning whereas mine is primarily about moving the talk forward through smooth and orderly turn-taking. Theirs is cumulative in nature to measure improvement while mine is an interpretative rendering of how the talk is unfolding here and now. For them, 'interaction' is a means to acquire language. Here it is the focus of the study.

With formulations, the first concern is demonstrating to the speaker what the recipient has understood. Edge (2002) applies this discourse technique to collaborative professional training of teachers. Edge's idea comes close to my idea of formulation. It resembles counseling-learning (See Curran and community language learning, 1976, 1978, 1982, and earlier Rogers for his therapeutic strategy, 1951.) and what I am calling 'understanding responses'. The underlying belief is: The importance of establishing communication through a relationship built on trust and attentive supportive actions. The proof lies in the displayed articulation. What I hope to show is the power of being understood. This can propel the talk forward and in the process help participants get over conversational bumps, cracks, or holes in the road.

9.1 Formulation in an extended sequence: An introductory example

This chapter will focus on how various types of formulations may offer participants a useful resource for co-managing turn-taking. Turns could be organized in certain ways to deal with possible interactional problems such as silence, overlaps, or lack of elaboration after a continuer receipt.

To begin this look at formulation as a resource for co-orientation, we join the following conversation in progress. Satoko is telling Ian about the group mentality in Japan and how her attitude changed after coming back from the US. (A very short segment of the same session was seen in Chapter 8, Excerpt 10, to discuss repair and overlap. This earlier section shows how formulations help extend the talk.)

Excerpt 1: Satoko no. 1, America

32 S: Um (2.5) in Japan (.) especially girls

- 33 I: Yeah.
- 34 S: we we always make (.) some group in the class.
- 35 I: Ohhh.
- 36 S: If we don't have if if I don't be in any group [I feel very nervous.
- 37 I: [Yeah oh.
- 38 This is in high school or university or both?
- 39 (2.9)
- 40 S: Elementary school, junior high school, high school, college,
- 41 anywhere.
- 42 I: Really. Oh. So that you feel that's a tendency (.) among (2) female students ↓ .
- 43 S: Um
- 44 I: Oh=
- 45 S: =But ah (2.8) hm but I came back to Japan
- 46 I: Yeah.
- 47 S: Um my classmates al already graduated
- 48 I: >Uh<. [>Oh::h<.
- 49 S: [so I'm only one in class.
- 50 I: You mean in high school?
- 51 S: In junior college [in junior college.
- 52 I: [Oh in junior college oh. So the students you entered with
- 53 had already graduated
- 54 S: Yeah.
- 55 I: so when you came back you were with [different students.
- 56 S: [Hhhh.
- 57 Yes.

Two particular turns of interest are lines 42 and 52. While both of them display Ian summarizing prior turns by Satoko, there is a difference in how they are rephrased. In line 42, the formulation is signaled by 'you feel'. Ian is initiating an 'understanding response' (i.e., articulating what he thinks she means). Then 'that's a tendency among

female students' looks back and succinctly summarizes all of Satoko's previous turns (lines 32, 34, 36, 40, and 41). He literally puts the understanding in his own words.

In contrast, the second formulation in line 52, 53, and 55, is much longer. After a check of information in line 50, Ian repeats Satoko's prior utterance enclosed on either side by 'oh' news receipts (line 52). Then he summarizes what she has been saying (in lines 52-53) with very similar wording to what Satoko said in line 47. However, in his next turn, Ian formulates (in line 55) what Satoko could imply, but does not actually say. Formulations can tie previous turns together with brief summaries. Here, Satoko's utterances in lines 45, 47, 49, and 51 are covered in the formulation in lines 52, 53, and 55. Pointing out further differences between the two formulations (lines 42 and 52) helps us to focus on the sequential details. The first formulation, Ian's interpretation, is followed by Masako's minimal receipt ('Um'). Then Ian's 'Oh' receipt is followed closely by Masako's appropriately marked dispreferred response. It starts with a token marker ('But') and is followed by fillers, a pause, and a repetition of the token. There is a suggestion of disagreement. The next formulation sequence (line 52 and beyond) is much simpler structurally. Here, the formulation is basically a repetition of two earlier points made by Satoko (lines 47, 45). It then receives a series of marked, unmarked, and marked minimal preferred responses ('yeah', laughter, and 'yes').

As for the link between these formulations and getting unstuck, we first need to turn our attention to where the participants appear stuck. The exchange of turns from line 36 to line 41 which precedes the first formulation has an overlap and a gap. Before Satoko finishes her turn (line 36), Ian gives a continuer receipt ('yeah') and then a

news receipt ('oh'). It looks like he projected 'in any group' to be the end of her turn. It turns out that she wanted to complete her turn (and possibly her thought) with a personal comment. Then instead of waiting to find out if Satoko has more to say, Ian asks for a clarification (in line 38) about the context. In lines 32 and 34, the level which she is referring to has been left ambiguous. Instead of an answer, there is a gap (line 39). This silence suggests that they are uncertain who will take the next turn. Even though Satoko gives a very clear answer (lines 40-41) to break the silence, we see that the scope of her thoughts since line 32 is on a much larger scale than Ian imagines. This mismatch suggests that part of the stuckness is their struggle to establish a common reference point (e.g., general or specific).

The precise timing of the uptake of the next turn (line 42) can give the formulation center stage (and maximum attention). Such a move may strengthen and clarify the connection between the previous turns with the subsequent ones. When to say it within the structure of turns becomes equally important as what to say. For example, we notice how Ian's formulations are marked by clear separation with both the preceding and proceeding turns. In line 42, Ian places token receipts ('really', 'oh') up front before the actual formulation. Then near the end of his turn, he pauses before uttering the final two words with falling intonation. Both the opening and closing actions with the formulation in the middle clearly mark the start and finish of his turn. In turn, when Satoko can take the floor is clarified.

Even in line 52 where there is an overlap, Ian works through the overlap first and resolves it before starting the first part of his formulation. As part of the timing, Satoko gets a slot to confirm in line 54. Then Ian continues with the second half of the

formulation. In lines 55-56, the final part of the formulation is overlapped with Satoko's laughter, but we see in the next turn (line 57) that the laughter is one of agreement which does not interrupt the flow. The co-participants' uptake of each turn remains precise during the formulating part of the sequence. Thus, the work displayed is not only about rephrasing the content, but also about how turns are marked and slots provided.

9.2 Formulation as an organizational concept

Formulating has been of interest to CA analysts (e.g., Heritage & Watson, 1979; Heritage, 1985; Heritage & Greatbach, 1991) as a strategy to selectively rephrase something which was said. In some situations studied (e.g., courtroom prosecution), the focus has been on potentially controversial aspects of the content. Formulating a prior utterance by someone else can be shaped for various purposes from disagreeing to agreeing, disaffiliation to affiliation. This could stimulate discussion between the two participants. Heritage (1985) sees 'formulation' as a particular aspect of news interview conduct. He defines the conduct of 'formulating' as "summarizing, glossing, or developing the gist of an informant's earlier statement. Although it is relatively rare in conversation, it is common in institutionalized, audience directed interaction" (p. 100).

Heritage sees news interview formulations as being designed primarily for an overhearing audience and that the interviewer needs a way to identify what can be elaborated. "Formulations are understood as alternatives to going on to a next question, and it is in this context that they are routinely understood and treated as elaborations for an audience" (p. 115). Building on this basic idea, I argue that my examples

possess characteristics of both ordinary conversation and institutional talk. Despite the lack of a clear overhearing audience in an institutional setting, formulations are found to provide participants in my project with a resource for getting unstuck and regaining the flow of talk. While Heritage claims formulations are rare in ordinary conversation, this use of formulations to set up of the next turn for the other speaker is common in my data. It becomes clearer and easier to respond in the next turn.

“Formulations tend to be followed by responses in which a recipient either agrees or disagrees with the version being put forward” (Hutchby & Wooffitt, 1998, p. 153).

This is the basic feature of formulation that the attention shifts to the recipient of the first turn speech to demonstrate what he or she picked up. Next the initial speaker (of the first turn) becomes the speaker (of the third turn). This person shows what he or she thinks of the formulation (in the second turn). Simply outlined it looks like this:

Turn 1 A: Initial utterance

Turn 2 B: Formulation of the initial utterance

Turn 3 A: Feedback on the formulation

What makes formulation useful when getting unstuck (i.e., clarifying turn-taking) is the way it provides for immediate feedback to both the initial saying (of the first turn speaker) and the understanding of what has been said (by the second turn speaker). So not only is the speaker for the upcoming third turn clarified, but also the kind of things which could be said. This third slot, feedback, could create an important juncture for deciding how to proceed. If agreement, the topic-in-progress could continue to develop. If disagreement, the current topic could be defended or brought to closure.

9.2.1 Types of formulations found in institutional talk

Formulations can be used for agreement and understanding of what the speaker wants to convey (though this is not the only use). This feature shows the institutional influence which implicitly defines what can be said unlike what is generally viewed as the greater unpredictability and openness of ordinary conversation. Narrowing the types of formulation used to those which display the recipient's understanding and points of agreement could help close gaps in communication. This particular kind of institutionally influenced talk can be seen in doctor-patient, teacher-student, and NS-NNS discourse practices. What follows is a series of brief samples of specialists shaping the talk by formulating the other's utterance in order to clarify the reported information.

Doctor-Patient

Below are two instances where the doctor formulates the prior turn. We see how the doctor builds on the information from the patient in the first case and the parent of the patient in the second.

(1) Ten Have (1991, p. 160)

32 D: and where is that *cramp* exactly?=
33 P: =It's here=
34 D: =Oh *right* there in that calf yes

(2) Maynard (1992, p. 342)

Turn 1 Father: ... the age of about four or four and a half (0.9) you more or less stop maturing right there.

Turn 2 Doctor: ... what we have found in Robert is that (0.4) at (0.4) a certain point his development has stopped.

Turn 3 Father: Right.

In both cases above, the doctor listens first then articulates the problem. Formulating seems important for establishing common language for discussing the symptoms.

Teacher-Student

Below are two examples, where the teacher upon receiving a response from a student formulates it. The purpose is to make the information clearer or more relevant for the overhearing audience, the other students, as well as the particular student.

(3) Runesson & Mok (2004, p. 81)

In a math class in the fourth grade of primary school, students are asked to find patterns of regularity among shapes put on the board.

S: Move the second shape on the second row around, then it becomes the third shape on the second row.

T: Very good. She found that after rotating, these two shapes become the same.

(4) Mercer (2000, p. 54)

The teacher is going around the class asking students questions about a text on dogs. We see that not just any answer will do.

T: What does breed mean- Stephen?

S: Type of dog.

T: What type of dog they are.

T: What else can you find out about dogs from this piece of paper- Joe?

J: Male or female.

T: Whether it's a male or a female.

In the first example, the formulation simplifies the description which most likely makes the activity more comprehensible to the overhearing students. The second example, a drill of target patterns, shows the use of formulation to illustrate the expected form that students should follow.

NS-NNS

There is an expectation in such talk that the NS will help the NNS find the 'right' words to say. The NNS tries to express him or herself with the words that come to mind at the moment. Formulating is not only convenient, but also essential for establishing a common understanding through shared language as the next two examples illustrate.

(5) Kurhila (2004, p. 60)

The university secretary in Finland is helping a foreign student fill out a form for student allowance. The NNS client is divorced and has children in Russia.

(Original transcript is in Finnish with English translation.)

NNS: Yes I pay but it what it it it's not eh there's no papers from there

NS: [Mm]

NNS: because it is hehhh

NS: Okay right you pay unofficially

NNS: Yes.

The NNS is in trouble trying to explain his current financial arrangement. The NS summarizes it as well as provides the correct form. When there is some kind of flawed attempt to explain the situation, the formulation, and confirmation of the formulation (in cases above and below) help participants get the intended message across. In the next example, Satoko is talking about how the weather shapes the character of the people in her hometown. Ian formulates an understanding response (in line 66) which articulates her intended point. Satoko then confirms. (An earlier portion of the same encounter was looked at in Chapter 8, Excerpt 9, in terms of an other-initiated repair through a token. Here the focus is on how a formulation could give the teller an easy turn.)

Excerpt 2: Satoko no. 3, choosing university

- 63 S: But we must
64 I: Uh.
65 S: must worry about it everyday
→66 I: So you have to pay much attention to the weather.
67 S: Yes. HHhh.
68 I: Oh.
69 S: But when it is cold wind weather
70 I: Yeah.

The formulation in line 66 allows Satoko to have an ‘easy’ turn in line 67 where she only needs to agree. Her quick uptake with simple confirmation followed by laughter suggests that the formulation has provided the gist of her intended meaning (lines 63 and 65).

These examples are asymmetrical dyads with one person recognized as the expert and the other who seeks the help of the expert. Formulation as a second position resource places the impetus on the expert to demonstrate what he or she understands of what has been said. The display has to be convincing to the recipient. The non-expert recipient is in the position to evaluate the expert's formulation in the next turn. While all the examples in this section show the expert doing the formulating, there are other situations where the client, patient, or student should formulate what has been discussed especially if the understanding of specialized knowledge (e.g., instructions or advice) is essential for the success of the transaction.

9.2.2 Three uses of formulations

The talks in this project make use of features of both ordinary conversation and institutional talk: receipts as acknowledgment of new information, continuers, and affiliation as in ordinary conversation as well as formulations to check meaning and encourage elaboration. What the presence of a range of organizational devices suggests (besides the hybrid nature of this genre of talk) is that institutional resources like formulation are being used by participants to clarify how turns are taken. Perhaps, the numerous minimal receipts (found in ordinary conversation and my data) may not be sufficient to ensure that the NS-NNS talk can move forward without getting stuck. Tapping resources from both types of discourses could promise a better chance to maintain the flow of talk. Heritage (1985) generalizes some characteristics of news interviews into three 'standard uses' of formulations: prompts, cooperative recycle, and inferentially elaborative probe. This categorization provides us with a slightly different perspective to see the interactional work done by formulations. While his data comes from broadcast news interviews, the same uses can also be found in my

data. Below each 'use' is briefly described as to how it helps to clarify and confirm how subsequent turns will be taken.

1. Prompt

What the prompt does is guide the next turn speaker on what to say: reconfirm the summary and creates a chance to elaborate. How the subsequent turns will be taken is laid out like a script for the participants to follow. Any uncertainties of how to take the subsequent series of turns can be cleared up at least momentarily. According to Heritage, 1985, a prompt in the form of a formulation shapes a previous utterance into an opportunity to elaborate.

By means of the interviewer's prompting formulation, an opinion that was previously and unproblematically expressed in a single turn's talk is stretched out as the focus for a three-turn sequence (statement-reformulation-elaborated confirmation) and, in the process, a question and its answer are collaboratively developed into a short interview. (Heritage, 1985, p. 106)

(Heritage uses 'reformulation' in the way which I have been calling 'formulation' as the rephrased response between the statement and the confirmation.) Formulation has changed what started off as a simple question and answer adjacency pair into a three-turn structure which guides the progress of the co-constructed interview. The formulation appears to work with the questions and answers to develop the current talk.

2. Cooperative recycle

While a formulation is seen here as basically the recipient's interpretation of what the speaker said with connotations of agreement, it can also be used to cooperatively help

the speaker get his or her point across more accurately and persuasively. There are instances where an interviewer may try to 're-present' elements of the interviewee's statement or report in a more favorable light than the speaker intended or is capable of expressing. One reason is to improve the clarity of what was said. Another reason could be to display a sense of understanding and affiliation (i.e., 'I know what you mean'). In a similar way, the cooperative recycle by the NS of what the NNS has said could strategically strengthen both the initial utterance, the opinion being expressed, and ultimately, a clearer arrangement for how to continue the topic.

3. Inferentially elaborative probe

There is yet another use of formulation which seems relevant. It goes a step further in how the initial statement is formulated than cooperative recycle. The formulator besides rephrasing also puts in something of his or her own idea. 'Inferentially elaborative formulation' occurs when the formulator gives a generalization which the prior speaker has not made (or even intended), but could be inferred. If the teller accepts the formulation, it can be used for elaboration.

Below, I employ the three 'uses' listed above as a framework to analyze an example from my data. The example also illustrates how the recipient (i.e., the formulator) elaborates on what Heritage (1985) calls 'a single dramatic point' of a reported experience. This action could be an important category of formulation as we see how a second turn formulating utterance ties the whole sequence of turns together. Understanding is enhanced not only of the immediately prior turn, but also the series of past turns leading up to this moment. What is also becoming increasingly apparent is that a formulation's potential power derives not only from summarizing what was

said in a prior turn, but also in its timing and articulated inferring. These qualities surely shape and drive the talk forward.

Ian formulates (in line 49) the prior turn by Masako. However, if we look at her earlier string of reported experience, we notice the formulation is also acting as a device tying together previous points. If we look ahead, we see that the formulation is also acts a springboard for the Masako to continue her elaboration. (The opening of this conversation appeared in Chapter 8, Excerpt 11 to show how ‘oh’ works as a receipt after an error in the prior turn. Here we see in a later sequence how formulations can be timely devices to uncover more information.)

Excerpt 3: Masako no. 5, school annual editor

- 40 I: ... So they give you the paper handwritten, typed, or floppy? How do you
41 receive the papers?
42 M: Usually handwritten
43 I: Oh.
44 M: and I check the paper.
45 I: Hm.
46 M: I hand in the paper to the company↑ So company types the paper
47 I: Oh.
48 M: It comes back and I check.
→49 I: So you're lucky you don't have to input.
50 M: Yes, but the company makes many mistakes
51 I: Oh.

When looking at this example through the framework of the three ‘uses’, the most striking feature is how the formulation (in line 49) acts as an ‘inferentially elaborative probe’. Line 49 was not a generalization made by Masako and probably not even

implied. However, she accepts it and follows with an articulate relevant comeback (in line 50). This evaluative remark builds on the formulation of the prior turn and contributes naturally to the exchange. Thus, the formulation has also served as a ‘prompt’ to create a chance to elaborate in a manner which might not have been possible before. In addition, the formulation ‘cooperatively recycles’ Masako’s previous pieces of information in a way which helps get across her message.

I will continue to refer to this checklist of uses in the next section when I show how formulating can be linked to clarifying how to take the next turn. This list can help frame an explanation of the potential connection.

9.3 Formulation as a way to deal with stuckness: Some categories

The focus on formulation has been on establishing it as a collaborative process to clarify understanding. In this section, formulation will be examined as a way to deal with moments of stuckness. Indications of stuckness are certain types of silences and overlaps which display some difficulty in projecting the next turn. All the examples in this section start with such a moment.

9.3.1 Formulating to check a translation

The formulation in line 155 appears to address the silence in the prior turn as well as the overlap in lines 152-153. Then reformulation (of line 155) is used (in line 157) to possibly deal with the laughter (of line 156). The silence and laughter here could be seen as indications of stuckness as they present a challenge to participants as to how to co-project the next turn. (A much earlier sequence in the same talk appears in Chapter 8, Excerpt 3 to show a repair sequence coming after a formulation. Here interest is in

how formulations can serve as a check after a code switch as well as a way to get back to English.)

Excerpt 4: Masako no. 2, swimming

- 146 I: I don't understand. Can you explain?
147 (3.5)
148 M: In Japanese okay?
149 I: Oh, okay. Go ahead.
150 M: *Kotoba wa dete konai.* ((Translation: I can't think how to say it.))
151 I: O:h.
152 M: H[hh.
153: I: [hh.
154 (5.1)
→155 I: Yeah. I forget. ((Paraphrase of the translation above.))
156 M: Hhh.
→157 I: I forget the words.

We might imagine that participants would want to address silence and laughter as soon as possible to relieve any uncertainty of the next turn. That they do not in some instances such as line 154 could suggest a conversational problem which requires re-orientation of some sort.

Masako has no follow up for the Japanese in line 150. This sparks the sequence in lines 151-157: Ian gives a receipt of new information (line 151) and a chance for her to continue. She laughs in response instead of elaborating. This suggests that she is waiting for him to give a clearer indication that he understood what she said in Japanese. There is an extended gap in line 154 which could be uncertainty over who will speak next and what to say. Line 155 is a formulation of what Ian understands. He

might have picked up a couple of cues (laughter and silence) that he is expected to show what he has understood. Her laughter in line 156 does not reassure Ian that his 'oh' marker is sufficient. Ian reformulates again (in line 157) through repetition for clarity in order to project to her possible orientation. He adds 'the words' to be more explicit. Now he has given a literal translation whereas the first formulation in line 155 is more natural in its brevity and inference.

We can use Heritage's checklist (prompt, recycle, and probe) to review potential links between formulating and getting unstuck.

155 I: Yeah. I forget. ((Paraphrase of the translation above.))

As a 'prompt', this utterance provides Masako with a clear path for taking the next turn. It encourages her to confirm that the translation is correct. It could also invite further elaboration if needed. As a 'cooperative recycle', this translation is seen as Ian's effort to get Masako's point across more clearly than leaving her prior statement only in Japanese. This line also ties together all the previous turns as well as answering the original question back in line 146. Any 'inferential probing' will most likely occur in subsequent turns.

9.3.2 Formulating to keep the topic alive

One site of interest is where silence occurs with laughter. What comes after could be difficult to orient to and project the next turn. In this example, Ian is formulating (in line 24) his understanding of her situation. This utterance may also serve as a way to bring some stability to the situation. Some shoring up of the shakiness of the prior turn

(line 23) could be called for where there is silence, grammatical error, and laughter.

(The same conversation was discussed in Excerpt 3 as an example of a probe. Here we see how a key formulation early in the talk keeps the topic alive.)

Excerpt 5: Masako no. 5, school annual editor

12 M: Now I'm making (2) a book. The book (.) is (.) how book (2) is called my

13 school's all students.

14 I: Um.

15 M: Uh I belong to school council.

16 I: Uhuh.

17 M: Yeah. (2) So now I am very busy.

18 I: Oh:h.

19 M: Making the schedule is behind.

20 I: Oh.

21 M: So teacher always complaining.

22 I: Uhuh.

23 M: Yeah. (3) And I get many stress. Hh.

→24 I: Oh:h. So you are the (.) only one writing (.) this book?↑

25 M: No. I am the chief.

26 I: Uh.

27 M: Five or six students help me.

Line 24 seems to have multiple purposes with the 'oh' in front to acknowledge new information, 'so' as a marker to keep the floor, and the formulation in question form to check understanding. As I suggested earlier, formulations appear to have clear markings of their beginnings and ends (e.g., Excerpt 1, line 42). The formulation in line 24 is preceded by two markers: stretched 'oh' and 'so'. Near the end of the formulation there is a slight pause before the final two words. The utterance closes with a rising intonation which signals the end of Ian's turn (and thus the start of

Masako's). While 'so' has various functions such as signaling a conclusion, a subsequent action, or a formulation, I would argue it could also be seen here as a conversational link between the current prompt and probe and some aspect of prior information. Seen another way, 'so' could mark the culmination of an understanding process which has progressed over several turns starting from line 12. Ian uses the formulation to check with Masako if he has gotten the gist of her story. Thus, Ian's single utterance summarizes one possible understanding of what Masako has said in her previous turns. All the bits of reporting are consolidated in a form reminiscent of the opening example of the chapter. (See lines 42, 52, and 53 in Excerpt 1.)

When looking at the utterance in line 24 by the framework of three uses, we can get a clearer idea that it is indeed a formulation. This turn does serve as a 'prompt' showing Masako how to elaborate in her next two turns (lines 25 and 27). It also 'cooperatively recycles' all of Masako's previous turns and succinctly packages her pieces of information into a single sentence which helps to get her point across. Finally, line 24 is a statement which ends in question form. It highlights an aspect of her reported experience which she may not have intended as the main point. Her use of this 'inferentially elaborative probe' is displayed by her elaboration in subsequent turns (line 25 and 27).

9.3.3 Formulating as a confirmation check

Later in the same conversation, we see a rare case in my data where there is a NNS formulation (in line 65) to address overlap, laughter, and minimal responses (lines 62-64). (Excerpt 1 was an extended example of how the NS made timely use of

formulations to keep the topic going. Below is the next sequence of the same talk where now the NNS is formulating during a repair.)

Excerpt 6: Satoko no. 1, America

- 60 S: =Yes. So but but I felt I'm a (2.5) What what can I say? (6.3) I am I? I am
61 me?
62 I: Yeah [Okay.
63 S: [Which one? [Hhhh=
64 I: [Either one is OK.
→65 S: =hhh. So it doesn't matter.
66 I: Ah.
67 (1.8)
68 S: Um just I want to learn and I just want to (.) eat (2.0) if I didn't be with
anyone
69 I: Yeah.
70 S: it's OK for me so I could go

Line 65 seems to function in two ways as an inferred probe of Ian's prior turn and a statement which concludes the repair sequence and allows the participants to get back to the topic-in-progress. So we see two aspects of formulation emerging in Satoko's action: narrowing the focus of the talk through rephrasing the prior turn and checking the gist of what was said in order to keep the talk and turns running smoothly.

Another feature should be mentioned in support of viewing line 65 as a closing understanding remark tied to the previous turn. The laughter by Satoko which follows her overlapping question (line 63) could be thought of in at least a couple of ways. It could be a softener to what could appear to be a challenge (or even dissatisfaction) with Ian's response to her question (lines 60-61). The laughter could also be seen as a

way to start closing the repair sequence without requiring a clear answer from Ian. This action could relieve any expectation by glossing over the situation and closing the repair. It seems like a good move as Ian (line 66) has no response beyond a token receipt. The gap (line 67) could imply that Satoko is waiting for some kind of elaboration. When no further response occurs, she resumes where they left off before line 60. The interactional concern of both participants (thanks in part to Satoko's formulation) moves on past the repair sequence of 'I am I or I am me'.

The framework shows us how Satoko's line 65 functions as a 'prompt' to get Ian to be clearer about what he thinks. He has been set up to give a confirmation of her formulation of what he said in line 64. Line 65 also 'cooperatively recycles' all of the prior turns and actually leads to Satoko answering her own question. Here is a clever use of 'inferentially elaborative probe' to improve the articulation of what Ian has said in line 64. He may not have intended to put it exactly in those words, but he accepts it as it does make the point he agrees with: grammatical details take a second seat to keeping the talk going.

Finally, does the formulation help them get unstuck? Indications of stuckness begin in line 60 with the two extended pauses. Satoko is obviously struggling with what she wants to say (or thinks she should say form-wise). At one level, the presence of stuckness can be argued by the silences and overlaps as well as the laughter. At another level, stuckness is displayed by Ian not responding to Satoko's satisfaction. Here is a mismatch of expectations which shows a kind of disorientation of how to proceed. Satoko wants clear feedback on which form is grammatically correct. In fact, she wants to know very much as the four questions (in lines 60, 61, and 63)

demonstrate. Her reformulation of each question shows that she is trying to get her message across with little success. Finally, she takes matters in her own hands and formulates what she thinks the answer is. The formulation is confirmed by Ian and the talk gets back on track.

9.3.4 Repetition and reformulation

While repetition is typically perceived as an important tool for instructed language *learning*, I look at repetition as a means of guiding the organization of turn-taking by *using* language as a kind of compass or orientation marker when there is a sense of some kind of trouble which needs addressing. Repetition at one level makes new language more accessible or as Skehan (1998) says ‘less dense’. At another level, it aids in the co-construction of discourse and affiliation. Duff (2000) notes its varied functions in the classroom from language learning to building group solidarity. Greenfield and Savage-Rumbaugh (1993) draw attention to children’s L1 use of “repetition to stimulate more talk from their conversational partner” (p. 1).

Thus the appearance of some instances of repetition and reformulation could signal a response to some form or degree of stuckness. Wong (2000) reminds us that repetition has been viewed in the past as marking disfluency (i.e., linguistic error on the part of the NSS) even though it is a normal feature of ordinary conversation (i.e., NSs also use repetition in talks with each other). Possibly when disfluency is seen as a shared conversational issue, the use of repetition could indicate both an orientation to a problem and a way to resolve it by re-tuning participants to each other.

In the next example, we see how repetition of the word, ‘Japan’, by both participants seems to anchor their attention on the topic nominated by Takao (line 10).

Excerpt 7: Takao no. 1, Asian soccer

- 7 I: Ah. Ah. Did you watch um Asian Game soccer?=
8 T: =Yes.
9 I: Ah. Which ah team did you like the best?
10 T: Ah. Japan.
11 I: Japan. Ah. Why did you like Japan?
→12 T: Ah. (3) Japan. (3) *Daihyo*. ((Translation: The team consists of selected players.))

His answer sets up the next question (line 11) which encourages elaboration. Takao needs time to respond (line 12) as he repeats ‘Japan’ as a kind of priming device to begin his explanation. Thus, the repetition of the single word appears to be an attempt to link lines 10, 11, 12, and subsequent lines together in terms of topic.

The repetition of ‘Japan’ sandwiched between long pauses possibly signals getting stuck. This word seems like a marker to hold the floor more than the start of his response. His code switch confirms that he was having troubles explaining (in English). However, stuckness is not primarily about one participant getting in trouble, but the lack of coordination of turns between two people. Ian could have reformulated the question or taken some other action to help Takao. Possibly, Takao’s initial marker in line 12 could appear to be the start of his utterance. Ian is waiting while Takao is struggling.

The questioner may rephrase in hopes of asking a ‘better’ question. In the cases of language proficiency interview tests and the talks in this project, ‘better’ means a question which is not only more understandable, but also which prompts and helps the respondent to provide an extended response. In terms of organization, the location of the reformulated question is in the third turn with the first turn being the first question and the second turn being the some kind of feedback. The third turn, the reformulated question should benefit from the feedback.

Below, the key word, *Eiken* (literally meaning English proficiency test) appears at the end of line 13 just before the gap. After the gap, the question is reformulated with *Eiken*, the key word, being repeated.

Excerpt 8: Masako no. 6, proficiency test

- 13 I: Oh. And then after that was *Eiken*?
→14 (5)
15 I: You had the test before *Eiken*?
16 (6)
17 M: I think before.

The topic of the gap for both Masako and Ian centers on *Eiken*. While they are co-orienting to the same topic, the consideration of each participant seems to be different. Masako could be trying to understand the question while Ian appears to be waiting for an answer. When no answer seems to be forthcoming; Ian reformulates the question (in line 15) with repetition of the key reference word in the same position at the end of the question. McCarthy points out how the reformulation uses ‘before’ instead of ‘after’. He goes on to say that according to his corpus, using opposite meaning words

is a common occurrence when reformulating. (I am grateful to Michael McCarthy for these comments.) The examples in this section thus far show repetition of key words. Masako during the gap instead of trying to reply waits for repetition of the question in some form. This interpretation appears to be confirmed as Ian reformulates the question in line 15 and then she answers it.

Similar instances of the interviewer (*I*) reformulating the question within the next available turn can be found in the literature. Below is an example from Kasper (2004a) where reformulation takes place not only in the next turn, but also within turns.

(1) Kasper, 2004a, p. 126

→I: Mm. ↑Can you tell me about -what- you did over Golden Week?

C: Pardon?

→I: >Tell me what you did< for Golden Week, >over Golden Week.<

C: °Yah°, I (.) worked as a ...

In the first turn (after the token marker), the interviewer has a false start, restarts, and completes the question. When the candidate does not understand, the interviewer reformulates the question into a request (while keeping *Golden Week* as the key term). In addition, he or she reformulates from 'for' to 'over' in the same turn. The fourth line shows as in my own example above that the reformulation addresses the stuckness of an initial question which is projected to be difficult to orient to and respond to.

9.4 Summary

Formulating can be a summary of a series of prior turns as well as a rephrasing of a prior turn. Both types still fit the category of displaying understanding of what the other person has said. Thus we see how formulating works as a tying device by referring to previous turns and ‘re-presenting’ the ideas more clearly. This seems particularly helpful when the NS does this and helps clarify what the NNS wants to say. We have also seen a third characteristic of formulating. It also looks ahead by setting up how the next turn is taken. Again, this action could be extremely beneficial to the NNS when the NS designs the next turn so that it can be taken easily. However, as the example in 9.3.3 (Excerpt 6, Satoko no. 1) demonstrates, roles can be reversed, with the NNS formulating to clarify what the NS has said. So what we see overall is how formulating is a powerful recipient-designed tool which aids both participants in their ongoing co-orientation.

Formulations are also valuable in bringing out and stretching out ideas-in-progress which could end prematurely without the springboard which they provide. There is a key line in each of the excerpts from my data discussed in this chapter (Excerpt 1, line 42; Excerpt 2, line 66; Excerpt 3, line 49; Excerpt 4, line 155; Excerpt 5, line 24; Excerpt 6, line 65) where a choice could be made between closing the topic and continuing it. What happens at a particular moment in every excerpt is the decision to formulate what was said in the previous turn or turns. The subsequent turns continue the current topic as it turns out the initial speaker still has more to say.

From another perspective, formulation forms a bridge over confused turn orientation. We see how it strengthens the initial utterance and sets up a clearer idea of how to

continue the talk through acting as a prompt, recycler, and probe all at once. What we see the formulation doing here is bringing greater clarity and accessibility to both the previous turns as well as the upcoming turns. The next turns become more accessible in terms of elaborative possibilities. The effectiveness of formulation to help participants lies in focusing their attention on co-constructed back and forth recipient-designed displays of understanding.

Ultimately, what formulations can do is help participants keep the talk going. This could create greater opportunities for extended talk. In such a way, formulation may clarify the topic-under-discussion. As Button (1991) puts it, “Formulation may also be used to manage the topic ‘as a whole’” (p. 254) by allowing participants to check their understanding. By giving participants a chance to hear what Button calls ‘formulating summaries’, they could become better prepared to take subsequent turns. This could be particularly important when participants are trying to resolve co-orientation difficulties presented by some types of silences and overlaps. Formulating makes the talk flow by getting both participants aligned for taking the next turns with a renewed sense of coherence, understanding, and affiliation. Formulations make overt what is too often left implied.

This chapter concludes the series of four chapters (6-9) which have explored some of the ways participants have shown to be resourceful in using common features of talk to re-establish the flow of talk and turn-taking. Just as they have ways to get stuck, they also have ways to get unstuck. While the examples analyzed in Chapters 6, 7, 8, and 9 were described and interpreted from my interest in the sequential nature of responses in terms of some ambiguity of whose turn it is, there is no claim that

resolving stuckness was either the sole aim or that all cases share the same degree of clarity. Some examples display links between response and moment of stuckness while others seem tied to a lesser degree. There are further examples that do not fit the general pattern. Further studies are needed to build collections of such phenomena in order to fine-tune the analysis of stuckness. Cases could include when there is not a full stuckness, but rather a way to avoid it.

Topic shift, storytelling, repair, and now formulation share a common denominator of participants' willingness and cooperation to take the time to articulate and thus clarify meanings, intentions, and expectations of each other. Without moments of stuckness, the usual flow of talk which we experience and enjoy everyday would probably not be examined in detail. When talk is discontinuous in some way, the co-management of turns by participants emerges for the analyst to see.

Chapter 10 Contributions

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Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to review, bring together, and put in context the features of talk examined in the previous chapters. I will begin with a revisit to the research questions and the concept of stuckness. Then I will point out the key findings of this study which show how getting unstuck is a co-managed act. This will be followed by a discussion to address a few issues which could still remain in the reader's mind about my concept of stuckness and the analytical method used to understand it.

Finally, there are implications of this study for wider contexts: the recognition of NS-NNS talk as an important hybrid genre in its own right and ideas for practical application for EFL teaching.

10.1 Research questions

‘Stuckness’ is shown by comparing sequences when turn-taking flows and when it does not. The participants usually find ways to get unstuck. Two underlying interactional concepts have shaped to a large extent what I have found and what resonates throughout this section: (1) We need getting unstuck in order to see stuckness. This goes some ways in addressing the concern that the sheer presence of such phenomena as silence does not invariably signify that participants are stuck. Displayed efforts to get unstuck offer a kind of ‘next turn proof’ that participants are orienting to stuckness. (2) It takes both participants to get stuck as well as to get unstuck. The upshot here is that we need to account for the spoken actions of both participants to see how the talk is being co-managed.

The overall challenge that I declared in Chapter 1 was to understand through descriptions of sequential actions ‘the ongoing sensitivity and resourcefulness participants display to each other’. Below I will review each of the research questions. I discussed the regularity of timing or flow of talk in Chapter 4, getting stuck in Chapter 5, and ways to get unstuck or avoid stuckness in a series of chapters, 6-9.

(1) What is the regularity of timing in dyadic NS-NNS talk?

A distinct characteristic of the talks in my study was its organization based on participants taking turns one at a time. There were gaps and overlaps, but the talk generally seemed to flow when one person spoke at a time. The length of a turn was generally short varying from a single word to a single sentence. The regularity of timing when the talk flowed was reminiscent of an institutional interview where the NS asks the questions and the NNS answers them one by one often without offering

any additional information or elaboration. When the NNS initiated a question, the NS used it as a preface into an elaborated answer which lasted for several turns.

Regardless of whether it was the NS or NNS who was the main speaker, the coordinated actions by the recipient in the form of well-timed continuer receipts helped to keep the talk flowing. Examples in Chapter 4 illustrated how participants displayed their mutual understanding of whose turn was next and what would be talked about.

(2) How do participants get stuck?

The most readily noticeable potential indication is silence. Almost any silence could be interpreted as either occurring within a turn or between turns. In terms of addressing issues of stuckness, the primary interest is in the displayed uncertainty of taking the next turn. In my data, participants seemed more responsive to silences as gaps between turns rather than to silences which occurred as pauses within their turns. We saw in the transcripts how little use was made of taking the floor during the other speaker's pauses. Basically, the recipient waited for the speaker to continue and finish the turn-in-progress. Possibly TCUs and thus the TRPs could have been difficult to identify at such times due to extended utterances, starts-restarts, unexpected intonation or stress within a turn as well as the sometimes rather deliberate pace of delivery. I also see silence as a problem for the participants when it is extended. Overlap presents another possible indication of stuckness. How participants start or stop their turns within the overlap could show the potential problem of who will take the next turn. In Chapter 5, I gave examples of how participants suddenly became unsure of how to proceed. This implies the former order is no longer in effect and 'all bets are off' for whose turn it is.

Initially, I saw stuckness as an interactional challenge of either knowing who will take the next turn *or* knowing what to say. I was not sure which idea would emerge as the primary concern. While there was a temptation to see them as separate considerations, I now believe keeping them together as a simultaneous concern highlights the shared importance of both of them. Not knowing what to say could be related to not knowing for sure what the topic is. For example, has the topic changed or are we still talking about the same one? If participants are not sure, taking a wait-and-see attitude might be seen as the best action. So who takes the next turn could become problematic. This issue is related to having a shared understanding of what the topic is. The person who has something relevant to add to the development of the current topic should speak next. This needs to be signaled and responded to in some coordinated way. A problem could arise when there is no clear signal to orient to. My current definition suggests that participants could find themselves stuck with more than one problem to solve at the same time though they are interrelated.

(3) How do participants get unstuck?

The resolution of stuckness comes from the initiative to get over any tentativeness and move the talk forward. Someone needs to take the next turn and the other person has to take the subsequent turn in order to show both their orientation to stuckness and their projection of how to get unstuck. Only knowing who will speak may not be sufficient. Knowing the relevant topic will further clarify the turn-taking order. Participants will show that they know they are unstuck when a familiar routine is undertaken such as the orderly exchange of elaborations and receipts.

So perhaps getting unstuck is about participants trying to make a suitable contribution at a suitable time. If so, then unstuckness becomes important in three ways: First, as discussed previously, it provides participants with ways to overcome or get around moments of stuckness (as described in Chapters 6-9). Second, it gives confirmation to participants that they are no longer stuck and that the co-orientation can now focus on maintaining the flow (discussed in Chapter 4). Third, it should give participants (particularly in NS-NNS talk) some reassurance despite having somewhat limited resources (when compared with NS-NS talk) that stuckness can be resolved. I hope this observation encourages more people to engage in NS-NNS talk as users either of their first or second language. The talk may not be error-free and there could be obstacles to overcome along the way, but they can be managed through joint effort.

10.2 Features studied

In this section, I review key features of the talks which were used to describe and interpret getting stuck and also getting unstuck.

10.2.1 Characteristics of stuckness

It has been necessary at times for me to review what stuckness is by considering what it is not. For example, stuckness is not the same thing as error and error correction. In my study, the concern of participants for correct linguistic forms is only on a few occasions displayed as when Satoko asked Ian which phrase was better or the time Masako asked him what a specific word meant. Unlike in many error and correction cases, here the NNS initiated a specific request for clarification along with a candidate correction. Stuckness is a concept of orientation in NS-NNS talk, but it is not limited to pedagogical concerns of correct linguistic forms. We have already seen how the

primary attention in talks involving a NNS outside the classroom and formal language instruction is primarily on meaning, communication, and timing of turns. Correct form is only of immediate concern when 'occasioned' by the participants themselves.

Another characteristic of stuckness which emerged in the data analysis that makes understanding a complex undertaking is that not all occurrences of candidate indications (e.g., silence and overlaps) actually turn out to be stuckness. In Chapter 5, I presented a few examples where silence and overlaps in certain situations like gift giving and receiving and showing enthusiasm are actually part of the understood alignment of turns. Then there are other instances where smooth and clear turn-taking occurs despite the presence of some kind of conversational trouble such as a misunderstanding or a word search. In fact, it is very well possible that the smooth taking of turns helps solve the problem by providing participants with an orderly way to ask questions, get information, and find a solution. On the other hand, there are cases where there seems to be no problem of understanding what the participants have said to each other, but still there appears to be some uncertainty over what will be said next and who will say it. Apparently fluency of talk does not necessarily indicate the co-orientation continues to be shared. In some cases, the turn-taking could be deteriorating behind the façade. This could be displayed not only when no one is taking the next turn or both speakers are taking it, but also when the timed exchange of elaborations and receipts is off. Such events suggest that participants are stuck and are looking to the next turn to get unstuck.

My study suggests that the conversational and interactional challenges for both participants in moments of stuckness can be tricky. Sometimes the most effective

strategy is to wait and see (especially if the other person is ready to make a move) while other times the best strategy could be to initiate action rather than wait. There is always the risk that we will make the wrong choice in relation to the other person. Signs of stuckness emerge when there is a mistiming such as both participants speaking at the same time or no one speaking.

10.2.2 Ways of getting unstuck

When something goes wrong with the organization of turn-taking, resources such as topic shift, storytelling, repair, and formulation provide participants with possible ways to make the necessary adjustments to each other and thus clarify the taking of the next turns along with the topic. Four interactional features (topic shift, storytelling, repair, and formulation) in particular flagged sections in the transcript where I might look at this complex stuck/unstuck process. I will review these features individually.

(1) Topic shift

We saw in Chapter 6 on topic organization that the juncture where decisions about topics are made is an important co-orientational site. The topic could be continued or closed. A new topic could be nominated or started. The entire conversation could even start to wind down to a closing. ‘Juncture’ is a helpful tool to see the array of choices involved at certain moments of a conversation when participants decide the next turn direction of a topic. The two basic choices are continuing the current topic or closing it. If closing, then two more choices present themselves: close the entire conversation or nominate a new topic. What makes juncture relevant to getting unstuck is in identifying the location (an approaching TRP) where choices of direction of topic organization become apparent.

Since the main conversational challenge for the participants was how to use the allotted time, the organization of topics played a central role in keeping the talk going. My initial reading of the data was that changing the topic is one way of getting unstuck. Possibly there is nothing else to be said on the current topic, so starting a new topic (by abandoning the current one) would allow participants to keep talking. However, repeated readings of the data revealed that the more typical choice was not to change to an entirely new topic, but to ask questions and elaborate on other aspects of the same topic. Chapter 6 provided such examples as the talk with Masako where all the topics were related to different aspects of her new life in university or another talk with Masako where she reported on various activities she did within a single day. Changing the topic to *some degree* appears to be an effective strategy for renewing the turn-taking system.

(2) Storytelling depends not only on the content, but also on how the delivery of the story is organized. As I explained in Chapter 7, I am using ‘story’ in a general sense to include elaborated answers and personal reports of daily activities. Storytelling is naturally organized as a collaborative project as the teller is in need of a responsive audience. The first turn is crucial as the intended teller needs to get not only the recipient’s attention, but also permission of sorts to get the turns needed to tell the story. This has consequences for the shape of the turns the recipient can take. So, a possible strategy for getting unstuck could be to start telling a ‘story’. In this way, roles and topic become clear.

In my data, there were three basic ways of prefacing a 'story', with the second case being the most common. First, Satoko asks a simple question ('Should I tell you what happened?') as a hook for her to tell the 'story'. Second, Ian asks Masako for a topic which can be turned into the telling of a 'story' through a series of questions and answers. Third, Ian asks Masako to ask him a question which allows him to nominate a topic for telling. In all cases, what gets established is the relevant topic and who will talk about it. Then the 'story' begins to evolve out of the topic through the series of questions, answers, and receipts which guide its growth. I qualify my use of 'story' as an interactional resource that structures the turn-taking. This idea is slightly different from the conventional sense of a structured extended narrative by a speaker or speakers.

(3) Repair can be made without disrupting the flow of talk. This implies that participants do not have to wait until they are completely stuck before making a move. Within the category of other-initiated repairs, there is a range of possible actions. Repair typically occurs in an insertion which temporarily goes 'off-line' (away from the topic-in-progress) to fix whatever the participants have oriented to as a trouble source. However, other less direct ways to repair that do not use a side sequence are seen as well in the data. Embedding the correct form, word, or pronunciation, modeling in passing, and even overlooking the error represent alternative indirect options. Yet more subtle, delay in the uptake of the next turn and the use of 'oh' as an indirect marker could act as potential repair initiators.

'Repair' is slightly different from the other three candidate ways to address stuckness. First, repair shows whose turn is next, but not necessarily the relevant topic as an

elaborative resource. Second, repair is a tool commonly used as a means to resolve some trouble source in a side sequence before returning to the topic in progress. Third, by repairing the prior turn trouble, other devices such as storytelling and formulation can be employed more effectively. Fourth, repair comes the closest to familiar territory of seeing the NS as language expert and the NNS as novice. 'Repair' is a central concept for understanding NS-NNS talk as certain types of repair have long been used in the language classroom. We have seen there is much more to repair than direct error correction.

(4) Formulation as discussed in this project concentrates on a particular kind of formulation which promotes affiliation through non-threatening feedback. It can serve as an interpretative check rather than an evaluative remark. One key to continuing the talk in the project is to make it a rewarding experience of feeling understood. In this light, formulations are used to give the speaker support. Chapter 9 had various examples where formulations served as articulated displays of understanding what the other person was saying.

If the formulation is designed for the recipient's approval then the next turn can be taken simply and quickly as confirmation. This could help participants maintain the sense of timing of turn-taking as well as making the relevant topic clear. In my data, formulations are employed by either the NS or the NNS. Both of them could periodically formulate what they understand of the other's speech and set up the next turn response. The underlying decision being made is to take the time (a kind of 'time out') to find out linguistically what has been understood (or not). The underlying

assumption which guides formulation is that people seek understanding through talk and that greater signs of understanding can encourage more talk.

10.3 Issues and reflections

In this section, I will make some mention of limitations of this research.

While I have argued throughout that detailed study of the sequential organization allows us to gain new understandings of how talk-in-interaction occurs, such an approach is not all encompassing. There are benefits gained by building descriptive accounts turn by turn. The depth and richness of constant refining of the analysis though fascinating and rewarding in itself, may not address social needs and concerns. A general strategy for turning the limitations of this research into strengths is to identify links to bridge the gaps between descriptions of the social actions taken and of how to improve these actions. One way is to demonstrate to non-CA practitioners how such understanding suggests ideas for change. The first step is awareness.

As this project evolved over the years, I have been fortunate to have colleagues who have raised questions and issues. A sample of their comments is acknowledged in the following discussion. One intention is to anticipate questions which current readers may have and clarify ideas. The other is to allow me a final opportunity to speak to these issues from the perspective of my thesis.

10.3.1 Why do we need ‘stuckness’?

We already have more conventional terms such as ‘silence’ and ‘miscommunication’. Interpretations of silence range from the absence of speech with connotations of the absence of communication to the idea of silence as an integral communicative feature

of ritualistic interaction (e.g., religious ceremonies). Jaworski (1993) provides an informative case for the 'power of silence' for communication through a variety of examples. Nakamura along similar lines with a discussion of features of silence (2004a) and explorations of specific aspects of silence observed in social life such as in the EFL classroom (1998), in interviews (2004b), and as a cinematic device (2005). As for miscommunication, Gumperz (1982) has been instrumental in heightening our awareness of the fine details (e.g., intonation) of cross-cultural talk which could lead to miscommunication. Coupland, Giles, and Wiemann (1991) examine 'problematic talk' and what could go wrong. I see 'stuckness' as an inquiry into what happens when talk is discontinuous. Whenever speakers refrain from saying anything or when they say something simultaneously, there could be much more going on than miscommunication. There are ongoing interactional challenges and consequences for how the next turn and turns are taken. Particularly in NS-NNS talk, there is a tendency to assume the problem lies with the NNS either in terms of insufficient L2 or not adjusting to native customs. While this is certainly part of the picture, stuckness shows us that there is more.

Stuckness starts with talk or even no talk as being co-constructed. Any resolution will also be co-constructed. Individual performance is always placed within a turn-taking sequence in order to maintain this perspective of talk-in-interaction. Furthermore, stuckness is treated as one moment in an ongoing process. It is defined and analyzed through comparisons with when talk is flowing and when participants are able to get unstuck.

By starting with descriptions of the mechanics of the turn-taking ‘machinery’ or ‘apparatus’ (terms used by Sacks in his lectures), we metaphorically open the hood (or bonnet) of the machine and examine how the parts systematically operate. Stuckness is a descriptive and ultimately an interpretative challenge to explain how the interaction works, not how well it works. In keeping with this idea of talk as structured, Seedhouse (2004) entitled his book, the ‘Interactional Architecture’. Pursuing an understanding of stuckness requires discipline of method to stick with the details and let the data speak for itself (before bringing in bigger issues). This last point in itself seems beneficial.

10.3.2 Does CA ignore social context?

Is it ‘disingenuous’ simply to see participants in talk wiped clean of who they are? This is a common argument against CA. Kathleen Graves (for learner identity), Don Maybin (for culture), and Romy Clark (for power) personally brought this issue to my attention. In the literature, there is a well-known exchange of opinions between Schegloff (1997, 1999) and Billig (1999a,b) in *Discourse & Society* as they exchange views about CA and Critical Discourse Analysis. However, I see this debate being based somewhat on a difference of opinion on methodology. CA as I have used it is based on Sacks (1992) and Schegloff’s (1992a) insistence on the analyst not deciding the relevant categories *a priori*. (See Garfinkel, 1967 for an early statement and later Heritage, 1984, and Silverman, 1998, who carry on this idea.) Let the data show how identities are occasioned, not how identities come with the talk. The CA practitioners commit themselves to a self-imposed ongoing challenge of not making pre-determined assumptions about the participants and the roles they play.

One reason for this discipline is to allow us to see the range of potential identities which we could perform at any moment in a social interaction. Identities are changeable and should not be assumed as fixed or limited to a particular one. If anything, CA (rather than denying the identities of the participants) admits that any of a multiple of available ones could be oriented to at any time. Identities are as dynamic as talk itself. Schegloff (1992) explains that conversations are both ‘context-sensitive and context-renewing’. Antaki (1998) states “identity ascription is occasioned by what is happening” (p. 86). Thus identity is in motion along with the talk.

We can imagine how different the research would be if I pre-determined which identities and social factors that I would study. Examples could range from how gender plays a part in the kinds of questions Ian asks to how students’ ease or unease in talking in English is related to the fact that Ian is a middle-aged Japanese-American male who is not fluent in Japanese. My point is that this thesis would turn out very different in terms of purpose and methodology. For the participants in my study, there is a pool of potential identities which could be oriented to and projected (e.g., gender, age, occupation, status, nationality, and race). In these talks, identities change along the way to whatever is called for to maintain co-orientation.

To bring a bit of closure to the issue of addressing social factors as they are undeniably present in any interaction, I suggest that a CA based approach can serve as one way to get into the data regardless of our research orientation. Along this line of thinking, CA could serve as a foundational analysis leading from there to various research interests. Surely, delaying the taking of a specific social, political, cultural, economic, or pedagogic stance until the data has been given an initial ‘non-motivated’

look as CA envisions could have its advantages. Expanding and deepening insights into the data could be one of them. CA is careful with its claims of what it shows. It is limited to what is displayed in the transcript. For those researchers who want something else, social interests and concerns could be added as well as use of other methods. There are no claims of 'best' method here; just the discipline to analyze social interactions in a very particular and what I feel is an absolutely fascinating way. CA does not uncover the entire story, but is one aspect which I feel often gets overlooked: the actual details.

10.3.3 Can CA handle non-verbal communication?

This study through the research questions and the concept of stuckness focused on the features of spoken language as the way to understand talk-in-interaction. Again, we can imagine how different the study would be if I studied the non-verbal actions during silence as well as during overlaps and the use of non-lexical speech objects. While detailed descriptions of the non-verbal actions could enhance the analysis (See Goodwin & Goodwin, 1986; Heath, 1986; Olsher, 2004; Barrow, 2006, for such studies.), attempting to account for them along with the spoken language would raise the level of complexity of transcription and analysis beyond the scope of my current project.

This is not to say that accounting for non-verbal aspects of communication should not be tried. Combining or rather synthesizing studies of both the verbal and nonverbal actions starting with transcribing utterances along with descriptions of nonverbal actions would be a logical future extension of this present study.

10.4 Implications for wider contexts

A list of ‘wider’ contexts could start with the institutional contexts referred to at various times in this thesis. Doctor-patient talk, counseling and therapy talk, media interviews, job interviews, and business negotiations share similar concerns as mine in the flow of turn-taking to accomplish a goal. In this section, I will step back from my analysis and make more general comments on how participants co-manage the talk to keep it going. I see implications of my study as seeds of applications in two areas, future exploration of NS-NNS talk and teaching talk in the classroom as a social interaction. The former topic will begin by showing how tolerance to silence can be a communicative strategy. Then I will attempt to give a fresh perspective on some commonly occurring features of talk in terms of how they could enhance institutional talk. The latter topic will be treated as an opportunity to directly address fellow language teachers as to some possible applications. I identify three areas where my thesis could inform professional intervention.

10.4.1 Implications for NS-NNS talk

The prevalence of NNS talk around the world needs to be acknowledged and then examined. Specific points could include tolerance, accommodation, and a shift in our view of the NNSs from seeing them as language learners to seeing them as users of the second language. Fluency does not have to be defined by an image of what a NS does. McCarthy (2005) demonstrates that there is no general consensus among teachers of what a list of qualities would be. This also draws attention to practical conversational adjustments which should be treated as natural (not deficient) characteristics of talk such as a more deliberate and slower pace of turn-taking.

Tolerance of silence to get things done

Some accommodation or adjustment to the NNS may be needed from time to time particularly when participants are trying to get unstuck. The general motivation for tolerance is to ensure the ongoing involvement of the NNS. One way to do this is to avoid paying too much attention to specific linguistic forms. The flow of language, not acquisition of it, is the primary undertaking. In the high school class data (Chapter 1, example 1), we saw what happened when the student was reduced to simply responding to a series of pre-determined questions: increasingly entrenched silence. There are some moments in my own data where the NS seems to be doing all the interactional work through this same approach of firing off one question after another in hopes of getting a response. The problem with this strategy is that the eventual answer could close the topic (rather than open it) as in the high school case.

Tolerance is one of the accommodating actions which the NS could take to encourage the NNS to take a more active role. Allowing more time by remaining silent is one form of tolerance. We could start by increasing 'wait' time between the question and the answer as Rowe (1974) recommends. Greater tolerance for silence could help the interactional management of turns by opening up more opportunities for the NNS to respond with elaborations, questions, and receipts all which acknowledge a level of understanding.

From the point of view of the professional providing services to patients, clients, and customers, silence could present a problem. Silence could be seen as the absence of the information the expert needs in order to help the other person. The first point of order should be to establish a smooth and clear organization of turn-taking. This is an

asymmetric situation, but having slots to talk at least allows the patient and others a sense of having a voice. It should be noted that the dyadic turn-taking structure is designed for participants to have an equal number of turns. However, what is treated as taking one's turn is determined by the participants, particularly the 'expert'. For example, silence could be perceived as taking one's turn. This happens sometimes in classroom talk when a student does not answer the teacher's question.

Encouraging further talk

While the emphasis here is on institutional talk, there are implications for how we talk in everyday conversations as well. Besides tolerance of silence to give participants a chance to talk, we also need ways to help them keep talking. My analysis has pointed out a few ways.

Overlaps are not necessarily signs of stuckness. In fact, certain types of overlaps which express enthusiastic agreement and affiliation (e.g., 'We are on the same wave length'.) could put the NNS, patient, and others at ease and encourage them to talk more. Timely insertions of back channeling in the form of brief affirmative remarks, laughter, and non-lexical tokens could provide welcomed support. Responding with *receipts* (e.g., ah, oh, yeah, well, uhuh) provides the speaker with some idea of how the recipient is orienting to what is being explained. For example, we saw how 'oh' is a marker of new information. This could be useful to the NS professional when trying to elicit important information. Such a token which gives a brief receipt as well as minimizing what the NS says allows the teller to continue. *Formulations* could be used as 'counseling' responses for the professional to display his or her understanding of what the patient or client is saying. This would seem essential in order to give

proper professional advice (e.g., dosage of medicine or how to fill out a tax form). Signaling understanding is one way to ensure the accuracy of the talk. Getting the patient or client to give an extended report of his or her situation could be essential before consultation can even begin. Applying the concepts of how a *story* gets told structurally with preface questions and continuer receipts could encourage the person to disclose important information. This suggests ‘bedside manners’ are important for professionals in general when talking to clients, not only for doctors talking to their patients.

10.4.2 Implications and applications for EFL teaching

My project deals exclusively with dyadic talk between a NS and a NNS. The NS is always the same person and the NNS is one of three at any time. The focus and scale of my project could be viewed as a limitation to teachers who seek immediate application into their classrooms. However, I would argue that there is a creative tension between the descriptive accounts which I have built into a collection with its implications for how we understand how we talk and the concrete needs of teachers to have something which is ready-to-use in their classroom lessons on Monday morning. The creativity and the connection come in the call to teachers to seek heightened awareness, understanding, and then the personal and professional implementation of these ideas to fit their contexts. Future studies could address such issues of how well my findings coincide with findings in other teachers’ interactions with students both inside and outside the classroom.

The deliberate focus of my project has been on NS-NNS talk of a non-pedagogical nature. Despite this position, there should still be relevance for teachers who are

interested in talking to students inside and outside of the classroom as well as gaining a better idea of how the features of ordinary talk might be integrated into classroom interactions. After all, the talks in my project include elements of both ordinary conversation (e.g., elaborations are encouraged) and institutional discourse (e.g., interview-like strings of questions and answers). The next three subsections address three areas of classroom teaching where my thesis might contribute.

The underlying concept tying the three areas is that pedagogic applications need to be based on what has been done in pedagogic research. Below is a sample of activities and research sources which could form a preliminary collection of implementations and professional intervention. Future studies are needed to more explicitly connect professional applications of teaching in the EFL field with research being carried out in analyzing pedagogic and social interactions. Particularly CA based research in the classroom (e.g., CA for SLA) could be used as materials for teacher training and development workshops. For example, pre-service and in-service teachers could start by examining and discussing certain features of classroom interactions. Transcripts along with the recordings could be strategically selected by coordinators to heighten awareness of turn-taking organization.

Heightening awareness of turn-taking

Seedhouse (2004) notes, “CA methodology can offer a description of the organization of an institutional setting” (p. 226). According to Seedhouse (2005), “professionals and lay clients may talk an institutional context into being through the professional taking control of the turn-taking system” (p. 262). For language teachers, this could mean becoming more aware of particular characteristics (e.g., types of repair and floor

taking options) which are invoked through classroom talk with students and taking the lead in improving extended talk. Such information could be used in training or re-training teachers not only to notice details which usually go unnoticed during the lesson (e.g., Who gets to select the next speaker?), but also to offer ideas for alternative actions (e.g., Make sure the students and teacher are oriented to the same goal in the task). More extensive communication between teachers and students could help improve openness and communication. Seedhouse (2004) sees CA as identifying sequential features that are essential to complete transactions. Both participants (expert and novice or professional and client) would benefit from some training in this area.

The teachers could illustrate both the current state of interactions between teacher and student and ask students to think about what they would change to make such talk more communicative. Gunn (2001) initiates this process by having both the teacher and student transcribe their interview with each other and then compare their transcripts. Along the same lines, Riggensbach (1999) asked students to go out and audiotape a conversation with a NS and bring it back for analysis in class. Her study then goes on to look at the issue of NNS fluency or disfluency (compared with NSs' utterances) through examining specific markers such as types of pause, repetition, and restarts. Here is an illustration of how a CA based analysis would encourage heightened awareness and discussion of what is involved in accomplishing talk. As a supplement project in my own classes, students interview me. They come to my office with a blank tape and we record the talk. Then later, they hand in a transcript of our conversation along with a report of what they learned about how the talk is organized by taking turns.

As for pre-service and in-service teacher-training, presenting an overview of common ways talk is organized on a turn by turn basis in simple dialogue form could provide lecture-workshop participants with useful models of turn-taking (Nakamura, 2006). A collection of model examples could include openings and closings of talks, adjacency pairs, three-turn exchanges with evaluative or confirmative comments as in repair and preference. (See Appendix B for a sample handout.)

Language teaching materials

Seedhouse (2005) points out two facts about how English is conventionally taught around the world: (1) The main course materials commonly feature dialogues in textbooks, tapes, and videos along with some kind of script. (2) Due to various difficulties of teaching aspects of authentic talk, materials often consist of made up or invented dialogues in order to control the language. With the wealth of recorded and transcribed dialogues which is at the heart of CA, the CA practitioner-teacher would seem to be in an ideal position to compare features of naturally occurring conversations with those specially made up for language learners. At one end of a continuum of written talk, we have the traditional learner-designed dialogues which appear in textbooks. The turn-taking is very orderly with one person speaking at a time without any gaps or overlaps. An example of how discourse analysis of materials can be started is a project by Tatsuki (2005) and Tatsuki et al. (2006) which compares the inclusion of pragmatics competence in government approved junior high English textbooks in Japan.

Here is a sample of a ‘conversation’ found in a widely used junior high textbook in Japan.

(1) *New Horizon 3* (2006, p. 51)

Mrs. Davis: Mike! Hang up that phone right now.

Mike: What? I don’t know what you mean.

Mrs. Davis: Use this. Using a cell phone is very expensive.

‘Mrs. Davis’ is Mike’s mother (which in itself is a questionable labeling). We might well imagine that a conversation between family members would have gaps (even if they are NSs) and overlaps particularly where emotion is involved. In the next example, two students (a Japanese boy and a foreign exchange student) are discussing what to do during the weekend.

(2) *New Horizon 3* (2006, p. 41)

1 Shin: What do you want to do this weekend?

2 Ellen: It’s hard to decide. Any ideas?

3 Shin: How about going to *rakugo*? (traditional Japanese comic storytelling)

4 Ellen: Well, it’s difficult for me to understand Japanese.

We might expect some hesitation in turns 2, 3, and 4 since they are not sure what to do. An aspect relevant to my approach is that lines 2 and 4 are dispreferred responses. Shin does not get easy answers from Ellen. It is actually a quite complex sequence. What we have in examples 1 and 2 above are what McCarthy (1991) calls ‘cleaned up’ dialogues that bear little resemblance to authentic data. By comparing these neat and tidy dialogues with a couple of excerpts from authentic data should be enough to

bring attention to the challenge as well as the importance of introducing more naturalistic materials. In contrast to the textbook examples, we have transcriptions of authentic talk which mark some of the features of the actual delivery, not just the words spoken.

(3) McCarthy (1991, pp. 127-128)

A: Well, of course, people who go to the vet's [are

B: [Mm.

A: interested in the cats and d[ogs, ain't they?

B: [Yeah, but the people that first

B does not wait for A to finish his or her turn and A does not stop explaining when B enters the talk during A's turn. Overlaps, a common feature of ordinary conversation, are cleaned up in textbook dialogues. Along the same lines of capturing natural features of talk, we have the next example.

(4) Drew (1984, p. 134)

9 I: How about the following weekend.

10 (0.8)

11 C: hh Dat's the vacation isn't it?

12 I: hhhhh Oh:.'hh ALright so no ha:ssle, ...

Stressed sounds, a gap, laughter (including length), reduced sound, and stretched sound are marked in the script. These are the types of features which are usually missing in a 'made up' conversation. If talk is always perfectly orderly, participants would not need to constantly orient and project turns in alignment with each other. The delays, choppiness, incompleteness, and simultaneous talk get straighten out by

the participants through their attention and orientation to details deeper and smaller than the words themselves.

If we began to introduce more naturalistic dialogues (based on transcripts) as learning materials, the question could be raised about the greater difficulty of reading them. No doubt students and teachers would find reading the last two examples, (3) and (4), much more difficult than the *New Horizon* examples, (1) and (2). Admittedly, it would take some time initially to teach students how to read the transcriptions. They are indeed more complicated and dense both visually and in what is being represented. Students could learn from the notation the various lengths of silence and the exact moments when two lines overlap. These kinds of opportunities to learn ‘living’ language are few and far between with cleaned up dialogues. Finally, there are advantages when students role play the scripts to have all the extra details of how to deliver the talk more naturalistically. After all, our claim as teachers is that our classroom activities are preparing students to engage in ordinary conversations.

Language proficiency assessment

Interviews are the typical form of talk used to assess language proficiency such as IELTS in the UK, OPI in the US, and the STEP test in Japan. Features of interactional competence should be considered as they are variable not fixed factors. For Young and He (1998), this means the interaction between the interviewee and interviewer. The particular relevance to my own findings is that there are other competences and problems besides linguistic knowledge and ability being displayed by *both* participants during these talk-in-interactions. As a useful overview, there is Lazaraton’s (2002) observation based on recent conference presentations and

publications that discourse analysis can move beyond the analysis of discourse as an end in itself to examine how discourse is used in socially mediated contexts like oral language testing. Clarifying ‘the nature of performance that scores are based on’ could be an important contribution which such analysis could make. For example, Kasper (2004a,b) has shown how the NS examiner’s use of repetition can be seen as confusing to the test taker. There are potential sources of miscommunication beyond the examinee’s limitations of language.

This particularly rich area was mentioned earlier in reference to Johnson (2001) who makes distinctions among features of ordinary talk, classroom talk, and oral proficiency interview test talk. Her core argument represents an important challenge to the assumption that oral proficiency interview tests mirror ordinary conversation. It could be argued provocatively as Johnson has done that when we compare the characteristic features of talk (e.g., who can take the floor) in ordinary conversations with classroom discourse and oral proficiency test interviews, there is in fact little of ordinary conversation in either of the latter two. Kasper (2006) also argues the OPI in being task-based is different from either ordinary conversation or (certain kinds of) interviews. Perhaps, a study such as mine which openly declares itself a hybrid of ordinary and institutional talk could help bring these three types of discourse closer together. Thus, we see how Kasper, Johnson, and Lazaraton point out implications for re-examining such tests by considering how talk is locally co-constructed. We have seen in my project how topic organization, elaborated responses, and formulations, features also found in interview tests, are sensitively co-managed by participants.

My findings showed that the NS is sensitive to the turn-taking structure and consequently shapes not only his own turn, but also the next turn for the other participant. By analyzing test data as discourse, Lazaraton (2002) concluded the “oral examiners routinely modify any set of instructions to deal with the turn-by-turn interactional contingencies in the assessment process” (p. 174). Kasper points out that the examiner has the double duty of keeping the talk going as well as creating tasks for the examinee to carry out. Exploring these features of talk found not only in my study and test interviews, but also in interviews and conversations of various types promises to be fertile ground for further study and possible application for training teachers and examiners.

10.5 Final thoughts on the process of researching social interactions

My data is talk that does not occur in the classroom. Yet there is the hope something has been learned which can be taken back into the classroom. First, there is the idea of having ongoing talks with the same students over a period of time. This represents a sense of commitment by participants to use a shared language as a medium to bring NSs and NNSs closer together instead of keeping them apart. A related benefit is acknowledgment through action that English (or any foreign language learned formally) is useful long after the course has finished.

Second, the idea is to see participants first as users of the language and the NS as a user, not an expert. These users are trying to establish a shared discourse practice to accomplish talk, not only once, but on an ongoing basis.

Third, these participants do get stuck on occasions, but it does not necessarily have to be attributed to language deficiency especially since we saw the NS could just as well produce a trouble source. Participants have displayed a resilient collaborative power to find ways to overcome interactional problems. Even the NNS can take the initiative and supply the essential questions or responses which link the turns into a sequence.

Fourth, these talks are quite modest in intention. The immediate goal is not language acquisition (though it could be an indirectly incurred benefit) or the need to fulfill some transaction. There are no high stakes involved here. The agreed goal is to meet and talk whenever the chance arises. What arises from these mundane talks is a simple joy of having an extended talk with someone.

I tried to follow Sacks's advice in the opening chapter to look at how participants co-manage talk. While he envisioned talk between NSs, I have explored possibilities of understanding NS-NNS talk from a similar perspective of the organization and structure of turn-taking. I started my thesis, my journey, with this quote.

There are always two to a talk, giving and taking, comparing experience and according conclusions. Talk is fluid, tentative, continually 'in further search and progress'. (Robert Louis Stevenson, 1910, p. 6)

I would like to bring this thesis to a close by seeing the participants in this project in a similar light of being committed in a like-minded collaborative enterprise. We have accomplished talk-in-interaction together through its various moments of flow, stuckness, and unstuckness. We have experienced the times when talk was 'fluid' as well as those times when it was 'tentative'. Despite the uncertainties, the

misunderstandings, and the delays, we continue to co-manage the taking of turns in 'search and progress' of how to keep the talk going.

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Appendix A

Below is a ‘telling’ example in its entirety to provide the readers with an overview of how these talks occurred. I consider this particular encounter a ‘telling’ case in terms of the range of topics and phases through which this interaction went through. This talk at different moments displays how the turn-taking flows, gets stuck, and gets unstuck. Throughout the talk (only the second time they met to talk), both participants try to collaborate to keep the talk going. (This is an early version of the transcript.)

Masako no. 2, swimming

- 1 I: So, what’s today’s date?
- 2 M: August twenty-fourth.
- 3 I: What year? (said quickly)
- 4 M: I don’t know. (laughing)
- 5 I: Two thousand plus one. Um, what day is today?
- 6 M: Friday.
- 7 I: OK, so, let’s start with your topic first, opening topic. Go ahead.
- 8 M: I went to Bingo Sports Park to swim and I came here on foot.
- 9 I: Oh.
- 10 M: It was a long long way.
- 11 I: Yeah, yeah. Was it hot?
- 12 M: Very.
- 13 I: Was it easy to find your way here or did you get lost?
- 14 M: Ah. Easy.
- 15 I: Easy. Oh. How long did it take?
- 16 M: Forty minutes.
- 17 I: Oh. How did you go there, to Bingo Park?
- 18 M: ... Uh? By taxi.
- 19 I: Oh. Taxi. Um, how do you feel now?
- 20 M: I’m very tired.

21 I: Oh. Are you going to bed early tonight?
22 M: No. I have to study.
23 I: Ah. Is this um for a test or summer homework?
24 M: Summer homework.
25 I: Ah. Have you been doing summer homework? Ah. Sometimes or?
26 M: Ah.
27 I: Are you ... Ah, but ... do you have much to do?
28 M: Yes.
29 I: Um. What else um happened today? What did you do today before swimming?
30 M: I went to school ... for special class.
31 I: Ah. How long was the class?
32 M: Three hours.
33 I: Three hours. Ah, was it um every day this week?
34 M: Yes.
35 I: Ah. Does it um help you to go to these classes?
36 M: Sometimes.
37 I: Ah. Sometimes. But it must be hot in the classroom?
38 M: Yes.
39 I: Many students together?
40 M: No. Twenty.
41 I: Oh. ... Why, er, it's still many, but your school it's only half.
42 M: (Laughing) (Note: Her class consists of 40 students which is relatively large.)
43 I: What, what happened to other twenty students?
44 M: Maybe they stay home.
45 I: Oh, really. So it's an ...optional class?
46 M: ... What does it mean, *optional*?
47 I: *Optional* means you can choose, to go or not to go.
48 M: Yes.
49 I: Oh. ... How many more um special classes do you have?
50 M: (silence)
51 I: Do you have next week?

52 M: No. Today was last.
53 I: Oh. So, you're happy?
54 M: Yes, very.
55 I: Oh. When do you start school?
56 M: September the first.
57 I: Oh. So, it means ah that you have one week free?
58 M: Yes.
59 I: Ah. What are you going to do?
60 M: I'm going to study and practice piano.
61 I: Oh. Did you say you have a ... recital soon?
62 M: Ah. ... But not soon.
63 I: Oh. Did you already decide the music?
64 M: Yes.
65 I: So when you practice, piano, you are going to practice that?
66 M: Yes.
67 I: Only?
68 M: Only.
69 I: Oh. Um. D Do you have some questions for me?
70 M: Do you like swimming?
71 I: Oh. Yes, I like swimming. Ah, but I like ah swimming in the sea or ocean better
72 than a pool. How about you?
73 M: I like swimming.
74 I: Any place OK?
75 M: But I don't like river.
76 I: River, oh. Why not?
77 M: Well, dirty. (laugh)
78 I: Ah. ... yeah. Sometimes lake is also dirty. We can't see.
79 M: Yeah.
80 I: Yeah. How about the sea? Do you go swimming in the sea?
81 M: No, it's too hot.
82 I: Oh, too hot. Yeah, I guess the beach is hot. Were many people swimming

83 today?

84 M: ... Yes. (softly and not confidently)

85 I: Really?

86 M: (silence)

87 I: Do you ... um ... so this um this month how many times have you been to the

88 public pool?

89 M: Oh. Many. (with feeling)

90 I: Many times. Oh. Always in the afternoon?

91 M: Yes.

92 I: Oh. Always many people?

93 M: No, not always.

94 I: Oh. Usually ah what kind of people ... are swimming?

95 M: Old person.

96 I: Old person.

97 M: And () little children. (quickly responds)

98 I: (chuckle) Old and young.

99 M: (chuckle) Yeah.

100 I: Oh. Is it ah very crowded or not so crowded? I mean every swimming lane is

101 full?

102 M: Yes.

103 I: Ah. Do you have another question?

104 M: ... Yes. ... What sports do you like the best?

105 I: Oh. ... Well. Not really a sport, but ah I like walking.

106 M: Oh. (faintly)

107 I: So nowadays I am trying to go for a walk everyday or every night after dinner,

108 for ah my health.

109 M: Oh.

110 I: Maybe it's not a sport.

111 M: (chuckle).

112 I: Um. ... Probably I like ah swimming in the sea or ocean the best.

113 M: Oh. Uh.

114 I: When I was in ah high school and university, I used to go surfing.

115 M: Oh.

116 I: Yeah. And my brother still goes surfing. He's a very good surfer. ... And ah now

117 if I go swimming I like to do snorkeling or maybe on a mat go on a wave. ...

118 How about you? What's your favorite sport, nowadays?

119 M: Of course, archery.

120 I: Of course, archery. Ah. Do you have club ah this month?

121 M: Yes.

122 I: Oh. ... Next week?

123 M: Next week.

124 I: Oh, really.

125 M: ... (silence)

126 I: Well, it's very hot, isn't it?

127 M: ... Yes. (weakly with laugh)

128 I: Why do you like archery?

129 M: I, I don't know why.

130 I: Oh.

131 M: (soft laughter)

132 I: I see. (softly with laughter) OK. ...Um. All right, so, we were talking before

133 in Japanese, but ah what is a good ah learning chance for you when we do these

134 ah interviews? What is a good chance for you for learning?

135 M: I, I can use new words.

136 I: Hhm. OK. Ah, number one is using new words. Number two?

137 M: Ah. *I face new (?)*. (inaudible)

138 I: Oh, so. One more time?

139 M: *I face new (?)*. (still inaudible)

140 I: Words?

141 M: Fa.... Failed me. ... Fa ...? (struggling to say the word(s))

142 I: I don't understand. Can you explain?

143 M: ... In Japanese okay?

144 I: Oh, okay. Go ahead.

145 M: “Kotoba wa dete konai.” (Translation: I can’t think how to say it.)
146 I: Oh.
147 M: (laughter)
148 I: ...Yeah. I forget. (a paraphrase of what she said in Japanese)
149 M: (laughter)
150 I: I forget the words. ...Um ... OK. So, I think you can learn a well you can
151 practice pronunciation ... if your speaking is understandable to me.
152 M: Uhm.
153 I: Also, um, I think ah of course ah new words is important, vocabulary is
154 important, but vocabulary plus ah putting words into a sentence are important.
155 Anyway, make a good sentence for speaking, so you can practice ah by our ah
156 interviews. And ah also I said um when you have a conversation, you have
157 ah no time to wait.
158 M: (brief laughter)
159 I: You have to answer now. So it’s very different than studying from a book or
160 taking a test on paper. ... Hum. And also, um ... in the culture, American culture
161 or British culture, we have a conversation we like to talk about our opinion
162 clearly. So that could be a culture difference. Yeah. Ah, so that is ah what ... you
163 can learn by doing the interview, so it’s a good challenge for you for that. And
164 then for me, my challenge is to help you ah develop to become better and better
165 ... and I’m also a teacher, so it’s good for teacher to practice teaching and it’s
166 good ah one student one teacher because usually at schools and your school forty
167 students one time.
168 M: (laughter)
169 I: Actually it’s ah too big to have ah good practice chances. So maybe yeah having
170 ah having ah many chances to practice is important. So y.. when you practice the
171 piano anytime you can practice, but conversation you cannot practice anytime.
172 So maybe practice time is very short. One more question to me?
173 M: ... (silence)
174 I: Just think of one now.
175 M: Uhm What are you going to do this weekend?

176 I: Ah, maybe same as you, I'm going to do my homework. Ah, yeah, after "Obon"
177 (holiday) I have been taking it easy, but ah probably I should try every morning,
178 every afternoon, every night, one or two hours in the morning, afternoon,
179 evening, so maybe three to six hours I should try to study every day.
180 M: Oh.
181 I: You, too?
182 M: Yeah. (with laughter)
183 I: So, yeah, it's hard to do. ...OK. So, let's stop here for today.
184 M: Thank you.
185 I: You're welcome.

Appendix B

A lecture for junior and senior high school English teachers
July 24, 2006

Exploring Language in Society: The organization of talk

Ian Nakamura, Foreign Language Education Center, Okayama University

1. A basic rule of conversation

People talk one at a time.

1.5 Rules we teach children

-Don't interrupt me while I'm speaking.

-Speak when you're spoken to.

(Pridham, 2001)

2. What does observation no. 1 imply?

If talk is orderly, then taking turns should take place smoothly: one person at a time talking. Therefore, silence and overlaps do not occur very often.

People seem to know when one turn is ending and the other turn is beginning. Talk proceeds smoothly when we know when to start talking and when to stop talking.

3. When talk is disorderly (not in a clear order, not neatly arranged), there could be an explanation for it.

Maybe we are too excited to wait for our turn (e.g., we have something we really want to say.), so there is an overlap.

Perhaps we hesitate to say something (e.g., on a sensitive matter), so we remain silent.

3.5 What may at first appear to be disorderly, might not be so if the turn-taking makes sense to the participants themselves.

For example:

- Overlap could show enthusiasm and affiliation (e.g., shared understanding).
- Silence could express sympathy or transition to the next part of the talk.

.....

4. Opening video scene (Academy Awards 2006)

What do you notice about the turn-taking between these two people?

Is it orderly or disorderly? How do you know?

5. A review of some common turn-taking sequences

(1) How do we open a conversation?

A: How are you?

B: I'm fine.

Ask the first question as a greeting. Once there is a response (It would be rude not to reply.), you have the right to ask another question.

A: How's it going?

B: Not bad.

A: Are you going to the lecture this afternoon?

Task 1: What can you do to keep this conversation going?

A: What's up?

B: Not much. What's up with you?

A: Nothing.

(Schegloff & Sacks, 1973)

B:

A:

B:

.....

Sometimes, opening up a conversation takes time.

Task 2: Try to role play the script to make it sound and feel natural.

There are marks for stress, stretch, quick turn-taking, overlap, and laughter.

(Hyla and Nancy are teenage friends talking on the telephone.)

1 (Ring)

2 N: H'llo?

3 H: Hi;

4 N: Hi::.

5 H: How are yuhh=

6 N: =Fi:ne how er you.

7 H: Oka:[y

8 N: [Goo:d,

9 (0.4)

10H: .mkhhh[hh

11N: [What's doin', (Schegloff, 1986 in Hutchby & Wooffitt, 1998, p. 97)

.....

(2) How do we begin a conversation with someone we don't know?

Ask a question. (It is rude not to answer unless ...)

'Don't I know you from somewhere?'

'Didn't I see you at such-and-such a place?'

A: whatcha doin'?

B: nothin'

A: wanna drink? (Atkinson & Drew, 1979, p. 253)

A: When does the plane arrive?

B: 7:15.

A: Are you going to San Francisco also? (Sacks, 1992 in Silverman, 1998, p. 4)

Task 3: What are some other effective opening lines to start a conversation?

.....

(3) How do we make an invitation, a response, and the next move?

Sometimes, we don't immediately get a positive reply to our question.

Task 4: How will you keep the talk going in order to get a positive reply? Try to stretch the talk *at least* four more turns to improve your chances.

A: Are you busy Friday night?

B: Yes.

A:

B:

A:

B:

A: Do you want to go to a movie?

B: What's playing?

A:

B:

A:

B:

A: My club is having a party, do you want come?

B: When is it?

A:

B:

A:

B:

.....

(4) How do we give a supportive comment to a friend?

A is giving a first turn assessment (opinion). B then gives a second turn assessment. The goal here is to establish mutual understanding.

A: It's really hot today.

B: Yeah, it must be over 30 degrees.

Be careful, sometimes we agree by disagreeing.

A: Today is my birthday. I'm getting old.

B: Naw, you're still young.

A: I got this sweater really cheap at the bargain sale.

B: Really? We can't tell. It looks good on you.

A: I don't think I did well on the test today. I am so stupid.

B: No, you aren't. The test was way too difficult.

Task 5: Can you make up your own examples of disagreeing to show agreement?

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(5) How do we correct someone's English?

Options: Point out the 'trouble source' (i.e., the error, usually of linguistic form), make the correction, embed (i.e., cover) the correction, or ignore the mistake.

S: I go to the cinema yesterday.

T: You what?

S: I go to the cinema yesterday.

T: I **went** to the cinema yesterday.

S: I go to the cinema yesterday.

T: So you went to the cinema. What did you see?

S: I go to the cinema yesterday.

T: Oh, really? What did you see? (Variations on examples from Ellis, 2003)

Task 6: What is the teacher's intention in each case?

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Further discussion topics:

- Can you think of other ways to make error corrections?
 - Which way is most effective? (It depends on ...)
 - What are some differences between talk inside and outside of the classroom?
-

(6) How do we tell a story or a joke?

The teller has to get permission from the other person in order to get the extra turns needed to tell the story or joke. Typically it cannot begin unless permission is given by the person who will be the listener.

- Do you know what?
- Did you hear the story about ...?
- Did I ever tell you about ...?
- You know what happened last night?

Task 7: How does the potential listener of the story or joke give the teller permission?

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(7) How do we close a conversation?

Even a short closing could take at least four turns:

A: OK.

B: OK.

A: Bye Bye.

B: Bye.

(Schegloff & Sacks, 1973)

Sometimes, we need to initiate the closing sequence with a hint:

Well, it's getting late.

I've got a first period class tomorrow morning.

It could take time several turns to close the talk.

Task 8: Can you think of reasons why so many turns are needed to close the following talk?

B: Well, that's why I said, "I'm not gonna say anything, I'm not making any comments// about anybody."

C: Hmh. Ehyeah.

B: Yeah.

C: Yeah.

B: Alrighty. Well I'll give you a call before we decide to come down OK?

C: OK.

B: Alrighty.

C: OK.

B: We'll see you then.

C: OK.

B: Bye bye.

C: Bye.

(Schegloff & Sacks, 1973)

Possible answers: We don't want to end a topic prematurely. Also, we may want to reconfirm our plans for when we meet next time. Ideally, both sides show that they have nothing more to say for now and are ready to stop.

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6. Revisiting the opening video scene

What do you notice now about the turn-taking?

Is it orderly or disorderly? How do you know?

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7. Summary of the basic features of turn-taking

- Generally, one person at a time speaks.
- Possibilities when talk is not occurring one person at a time:
 - Both persons are speaking at the same time (i.e., overlap).
 - No one speaks (i.e., silence).
- Error correction could be direct, indirect, or sidestepped (not done).
- Sometimes we have to disagree to show agreement.
- Overall, talk is seen from a Conversation Analysis perspective as being co-constructed (i.e., Participants work *together* to accomplish talk.).
- In a technical sense, talk could be seen as being 'recipient-designed' (i.e., We tend to adjust the way we talk to the other person.).

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Final thought: Becoming more aware of how we organize the way we talk to each other by turn-taking should help us improve our ability to communicate with people around the world. Perhaps some of our conversational troubles come from not knowing how to take turns in certain types of talks, in certain situations, with certain types of people.