23 Grammar in Conversation

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The roughest message you might pick out of what I shall say is that in dealing analytically with conversations, you must be at least cautious in the use of what you've been taught about grammar.

(Sacks, 1992b: I: 334)

1 Introduction

Fox, Thompson, Ford and Couper-Kuhlen (this volume) discuss the contribution of Conversation Analysis to Linguistics, and vice-versa. This chapter focuses on the place of grammatical description in conversation analytic research. In section 2, I show that in CA, the description of a linguistic form is always combined with an analysis of its use at a position that is understood in terms of a specific domain of interactional organization. Section 3 discusses Schegloff's proposal of positionally sensitive grammars and illustrates this by looking at the 'grammars' of self-repair and of the beginnings of turn-constructional units (TCUs) in multiunit turns. Section 4 gives an impression of research on the relationship between sentence types such as interrogatives and declaratives, and the formation of sequence-initiating actions. Finally, in section 5, I discuss the role of phrasal and single-word TCUs in sequentially responsive actions.

The general idea behind this chapter is that for each interactional activity in all relevant domains of interactional organization (turn-taking, action sequencing, repair, word selection, interactional epistemics, stance-taking, overall structural organization), there is a 'grammar' that specifies a set of positions along with a set of practices for organizing that activity on a moment-by-moment basis.

The Handbook of Conversation Analysis, First Edition. Edited by Jack Sidnell and Tanya Stivers.

Participants shape and understand trajectories of turns and courses of action by means of such grammars: "what we call the 'grammar' of a language is actually a massive set of linguistic practices that have evolved in, and are organized in terms of, the *sequential positions* and actions of utterances in their everyday conversational habitat" (Fox & Thompson, 2010: 154; see also Ford, Fox & Thompson, 2002).

2 Grammatical Forms As Practices for Organizing Talk in Interaction

CA does not study grammatical forms as part of 'the' language system, but as resources which shape the practices used for designing, organizing and making sense of turns-at-talk. Grammatical description is always in the service of the examination of interactional practices. I will illustrate this briefly by considering the pairing of grammatical notions with interactional concepts in research on the organization of turn-taking.

When looking at the ways speakers build turns-at-talk, the starting point is not the grammatical notion 'sentence', but the interactional concept *turn-constructional unit*, a "unit of talk which *can* constitute the whole turn" (Schegloff, 1996d: 88; see Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson, 1974; see also Clayman, this volume). Turn-constructional units (TCUs) are the building blocks of turns. TCUs may be built as a single-word unit, a phrasal unit, a clausal unit or as a 'fragment' that does not fit phrasal or clausal molds (Auer, 2007; Ford, Fox & Thompson, 1996; Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson, 1974; Selting, 2001, 2005). The syntactic design of the unit underway is a major[1] resource for assessing, first, whether the current speaker still has the right to continue talking, and, second, for predicting where the ongoing turn may reach a first *possible completion point* (PCP) at which speaker change becomes an issue that needs interactional attention (Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson, 1974). As long as grammatically projected components of the unit underway are not yet delivered, participants orient to the ongoing TCU, and the action being implemented with it, as not yet complete (cf. Ford & Thompson, 1996; Jefferson, 1986b).

The interactional notions *turn-constructional unit* and *possible completion point* have turned out to be generally relevant concepts for the description of turn-taking across languages (cf. Stivers, et al., 2009). However, depending on the structural features of specific languages, the grammatical practices deployed for projecting PCPs vary (compare, for example, Huiskes, 2010; Ogden, 2004; Selting, 1995, 2000, 2001, 2005; Steensig, 2001; Tanaka, 1999, 2000b). The structure of English, for example, allows for early projectability of the design of TCUs. Its relatively strict Subject-Verb-Object (SVO) word order in full clauses enforces the early positioning of predicates. Function markers such as question words, imperatives, conjunctions or quote attributions occur in clause-initial position, just as the inversion of subject and auxiliary in yes-no-interrogatives enables early recognizability.

A language such as Japanese, on the other hand, has an SOV—with some OSV tendencies—word order, an agglutinative morphology and a preference for post-positioning over prepositioning of markers of syntactic, semantic and pragmatic functions. These properties result in a *predicate-final* design of clausal TCUs (cf. Fox, Hayashi & Jasperson, 1996; Hayashi & Mori, 1998; Tanaka, 1999). Consequently, the display of the projectability of possible completion in Japanese turns may thus be later than in a language such as English. Speakers may underscore the TCU's actual completeness through the use of multiple post-predicate, utterance-final elements such as final verb suffixes, final particles, nominalizers, copulas and request or imperative markers (Tanaka, 1999, 2000a, b), or through the use of marked prosody for signaling transition relevance (Tanaka, 2004).

The differences in language structure lead to partially different sets of grammatical practices that are deployed for turn construction and the interactional organization of turn-taking (cf. Tanaka, 2004; Fox, Hayashi & Jasperson, 1996; Thompson & Couper-Kuhlen, 2005). The general principles of turn construction and completion projection are nonetheless the same. The concepts *turn-constructional unit*, *(first) possible completion point* and *transition-relevance place*—concepts that enable examination of the real-time delivery of turns in interaction-organizational terms—are crucial for being able to make this kind of generalization.

The conceptual inventory for describing interactionally relevant positions in the trajectory of TCUs has been extended by such notions as *preliminary component* and *preliminary component completion* in so-called *compound TCUs* (Lerner, 1991, 1996b; see also Hayashi, this volume). A *compound TCU* is a turn-constructional unit with a design that allows for its interactionally relevant segmentation into a *preliminary component* and a form that *completes* the unit, for example, sentences that begin with a subordinate adverbial clause (Ford, 1993); sentence frames projecting a *that-complement*; quotatives projecting a quote; referent-introductions that precede the clause in which they are used for doing an action (Duranti & Ochs, 1979; Schegloff, 1980), or *wh*-clefts opening up a framed focus space for a topic shift (Günthner & Hopper, 2010; Kim, 1995). In a compound TCU with an *if . . . then* format, for example, the initial adverbial clause is a preliminary TCU component that projects continuation with a specifiable type of second part, namely the *then*-clause. While the TCU as a whole remains incomplete, there is a systematic—though secondary—position of interactional relevance at the possible completion of the preliminary component. The grammatical design of compound TCUs makes them *semi-permeable* for specific types of recipient contributions such as acknowledgments and continuers—consider "ja" / *yes* in line 2 of Extract (1) below—and anticipatory completions (Lerner, 1991, 1996b), and also the insertion of brief parenthetical sequences (Mazeland, 2007) as in lines 3–7 of Extract (1).

(1) Travel agency call (Dutch data)

```
1  Desk: as je  bijvoobeeld naar Italië gaat [en ] je  neemt gewoon
         if you for-example to  Italy  go   and  you take  just
         if  you go for example to Italy and you take just
```

```
2  Mom:                                          [ja,]
                                                  yes,
3  Desk: 'n  e:h 'n pEndelrei:s, (.) hè  dus dat  bet[e : k]ent
         an a     shuttle-trip    PRT so  that means
         an u:h a shuttle trip, you know so this means
4  Mom:                                                [j:ah,]
                                                       yes,
5        .hh e:h 't  vervoer  heen en  trug, (0.3) en  daar e:h
                 the transport to   and fro        and there
         .hh u:h the transportation to and fro  and there u:h
6  Desk: accomodatie  hetzij 'n  appartement of hotel, .h[h
         accommodation either  an apartment   or hotel
         accommodation  either an apartment  or hotel,
7  Mom:                                                    [°jah,°
                                                            yes,
8  Desk: hè  dan  zit  daar  natuulijk ook  veel jongelui    daartusseh.
         PRT then sits there of-course also many young-people there-between
         you know then there're of course also many young people among them
```

The notion *compound TCU* allows us to describe turn-building practices for creating additional positions in a TCU's trajectory. For example, participants exploit the completion of preliminary components for inserting a parenthetical TCU (speaker), or for aligning with a current speaker's project with an acknowledgment token (recipient), while maintaining a mutual orientation on continuation with the projected second part of the compound TCU (Hayashi, 2004a; Lerner, 1996b; Mazeland, 2007; Tanaka, 2000b).

The desk's turn in lines 1, 3, 6, 8 of the extract above also illustrates that the unfolding shape of an ongoing turn-constructional unit is only partially based on the principles that are investigated in traditional grammar. Most work in structuralistic and generative syntax is strongly biased by a model of sentence structure that is holistic, a-temporal, non-interactional and primarily applicable to sentences in written texts (cf. Clift, 2007; C. Goodwin, 1979; Günthner & Hopper, 2010; Linell, 2005). The grammar of talk in interaction is different. The parenthetical clarification in lines 3 and 6 of Extract (1) (from "hè dus . . . " to ". . . of hotel"), for instance, is not fulfilling a grammatical projection established earlier in the turn's trajectory. Something similar holds for the additional preliminary component "en je neemt gewoon 'n eh 'n pEndelrei:s," / *(and) you just take an u:h a shuttle trip'*) in lines 1–2 (simplified). The initial adverbial *if*-clause projects continuation with a *then*-clause, but the speaker instead continues with an *and*-coordinated clause, thus maintaining this projection. In the course of a TCU's delivery, a speaker may expand the ongoing TCU in ways that exploit the openings, underdefined spaces and niches that are to be found in the loose framework of projections created by the grammatical structure of the TCU-so-far (cf. Auer, 2009). They may also retroactively restructure these projections in the course of the TCU's delivery (Betz, 2008; C. Goodwin, 1979; Scheutz, 2005; Tanaka, 1999; Walker, 2007).

Grammar thus figures prominently in the description of the methods participants orient to in taking turns-at-talk. Seen from the perspective of the organization of talk in interaction, one of the most important jobs grammar does is to provide construction guidelines for the projection, realization, anticipation and identification of possible completion points of TCUs and turns (Auer, 2005; Schegloff, 1996d). Grammatical structures are implicated in the ways in which turn-constructional units are built and in the ways next speakers are selected (Lerner, 2003). However, grammatical description is never the end point of analysis in CA. The rules that Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson (1974) propose in their characterization of the systematics of the organization of turn-taking, are formulated in terms of interactionally relevant positions (possible completion points of turn-constructional units) and interactional practices (turn-building practices and speaker-selection practices), not in terms of grammatical units.

3 Positionally Sensitive Grammars of Turn-Constructional Units and Turns

In a programmatic paper on the interplay of grammar and interaction in turn-constructional units and turns, Schegloff proposes thinking about this relationship in terms of *positionally sensitive grammars* (Schegloff, 1996d). The term 'grammar' is perhaps chosen for provocative, polemic reasons, but Schegloff makes plausible that (i) the grammar of sentences is just one level of ordering the elements of a TCU in the course of its production in real time in a turn-at-talk, and (ii) the design and parsing of spates of talk in TCUs is at least partially governed by considerations with respect to both *where* an element is occurring (e.g. within the current turn, sequence and/or more encompassing project) and *what kinds* of interactional contingencies are co-ordinated at that specific position.

In Schegloff's terminology, it makes sense to talk about, for example, the grammar of TCU beginnings or TCU endings, the grammar of same-turn self-repair, the grammar of first or subsequent TCUs in multiunit turns, or the grammar of answers to questions. Compare, for example, the construction of the multiunit turn in lines 13–21 of Extract (2). In this excerpt, Hetty and Ella are talking about the many campers on the road during the Pentecost weekend. Hetty has just explained that many people have a "Pentecost arrangement" for leaving their camper at a holiday trailer park, and Ella has responded to this by stating that Pentecost is a nice long weekend (line 10). Hans is Hetty's husband (line 17).

(2) Call between two middle-aged sisters (Dutch data)

```
10   Ell:    is 'n mooi lang weekend. ^hè:?
             is  a nice long weekend  TAG/PRT
             (it) is a nice long weekend isn't it?
11   Het:    jah:.
             yes.
12           (0.4)
```

```
13   Het:     zie en  dan  hebb'n Ri- Rick en  Anna ook,
              see and then have  Ri- Rick and Anna too,
              (you) see and then Ri- Rick and Anna have this too,
14            dan  hebb'n ze-  >die      zitt'n in Hattem,< ˙hH-
              then have  they- those-ones sit   in Hattem ((tourist area))
              then they have- they stay in Hattem,
15   Ell: ->  [wie.]
              who.
16   Het: ->  [gaa ]n ze  nou heen, nou  An- e:h °e::he:h  de-°
              go    they now to   well An- uh  u::h u:h the-
              they are going there right now, well An- uh u::hu:h the-
17            >hoe heet   't.< Hans zien broer_  Ri^:ck? .h[fsh-
               how called  it. Hans his  brother Rick
              what's it called. Hans's brother. Rick?
18   Ell: ->                                              [o:h ja.
                                                          o:h yes.
19   Het:     en  dan  hebb'n ze  'm  nou: e:h (.)
              and then have  they  it now  uh
              and then they have it ((their camper)) now u:h (.)
20            >zeg maar< dan  laat'n ze  'm  stAan,
               say just  then let   they  it stand
              let's say then they leave it there
21            en  dan  de  Pinksteren weer_  weetje^wEl?
              and then the Pentecost  again, know-you-do
              and then ((the)) Pentecost ((weekend)) again, you know?
22   Ell:     o:h ja.
              oh yes.
```

Across lines 15–18, Hetty's telling is interrupted by a brief repair sequence initiated by the recipient's "wie." / *who* in line 15. Her subsequent repair ("nou An- e:h e::he:h de- hoe heet 't. Hans zien broer Rick?" / *well An- u::hu:h the- what's it called. Hans's brother. Rick?*, lines 16–17, simplified) is only partially organized by reference to sentence grammar. Its main slot structure is organized in terms of the grammar of self-repair (Schegloff, 1979b; see also Schegloff, Jefferson & Sacks, 1977; Kitzinger, this volume). The TCU contains a series of successive attempts to repair the problem the recipient has located as the trouble source: the reference to the couple "Rick" and "Anna" in line 13. The first two attempts—"nou An-" / *well An-* and "e::he:h de-" / *u::hu:h the-* —are almost immediately cut-off, and only the third attempt "hoe heet 't. Hans zien broer" / *what's it called. Hans's brother* (line 17, simplified) is brought to completion. Each next try is restarting the TCU; it is not continuing the talk as projected before, but recognizably replacing the previous try with a new beginning that projects a different TCU design (in line 11, "An-" might have become "Anna," the second name in the couple reference in line 13; "de-" projects the delivery of a full noun phrase beginning with the definite article "de" / *the*; the noun phrase "Hans zien broer" / *Hans's brother* has a different, incompatible composition because of the prenominal genitive construction *Hans-his brother*).

Initiating repair is a systematic alternative to syntactically projected continuation at any point in a turn's trajectory. Practices such as cut-offs, sound stretches, next-slot holders like *uh* and search formulas reflexively mark the point at which they occur as a position for initiating same-turn self-repair. They may also qualify that position with respect to the directionality and the nature of the repair operation they project: back- or forward, replacement, redesign or search (cf. Schegloff, 1979b: 273–9, 1992d, 2010). The devices speakers use for initiating same-turn self-repair alert the recipient that the machinery that is driving the delivery of the TCU-so-far is being halted, and that a different type of organization may become operative at this point. But just as is the case with syntactic projection, projection with respect to the organization of repair is relatively open, revisable, convertible and even cancelable.

Note that the 'grammar' of self-repair not only differs from 'canonical' syntactic rules for constructing TCUs, but is also quite different from how we ordinarily use the term—particularly given the fact that its basic ordering principles (e.g. initiation of repair precedes the repair proper) seem to be basically the same for the languages that have been studied thus far. In a fundamental sense, the grammar of activities is neither arbitrary nor conventional. Whereas the local resources of particular languages and systems may vary,[2] all cultures can be expected to provide solutions for generic interactional problems and activities that are at least partially governed and constrained by the same interactional logic (cf. Levinson, 2006b; Schegloff, 2006a; Sidnell, 2009a).

The syntactic practices speakers use for shaping TCUs—'grammar' as it is traditionally understood—are also positionally sensitive. Compare, for example, the grammar of TCU beginnings.[3] The generic problems speakers deal with at the beginning of turns and TCUs are establishing the relationship of the current unit to what has preceded (the 'tying problem'), and the projection of how the new unit the speaker is beginning will be organized and what will be done in it (the 'projection problem'; cf. Schegloff, 1996d: 77–82; see also Drew, this volume). At the beginning of turns, the tying problem not only involves tasks that are almost always relevant for next speakers—such as showing how a prior turn is understood or indicating whether it is causing trouble for hearing or understanding—but also tasks that attend to the interactional specifics of the preceding talk, like doing a sequentially appropriate next or taking a stance. At the beginning of noninitial, next TCUs in multiunit turns, a speaker typically indicates whether and how the new TCU is continuing the project of the preceding TCU, or whether the speaker is launching a new or different line of talk.

Consider, for example, some of the ways Hetty begins TCUs in her multiunit turn in Extract (2) (lines 11–21). Several TCUs begin with a turn-initial operator ("zie" / *see* in line 13, "en" / *and* in lines 13, 19 and 21, and "nou" / *well* in line 16). In line 13, Hetty launches a new project, a telling figuring Rick and Anne: "zie en dan hebb'n Ri- Rick en Anna ook," / *see and then Ri- Rick and Anne have this too*. The first slots of this TCU are occupied by a brief series of initial operators: "zie" and "en". The conjunction "en" frames the upcoming talk as an extension of earlier talk. What earlier talk this is, is made clear in the content of the TCU

itself. When saying that Rick and Anna "have this too", Hetty is recognizably 'skip-connecting' (Sacks, 1992b: II: 348–55) to something she has said earlier on but which was not pursued because her co-participant took a different track (data not shown). The conjunction links the talk it prefaces to an earlier line of talk. TCU-initial conjunctions such as *and* and *but* usually connect to the immediately preceding unit, but they only do so if the preceding talk qualifies as a suitable first conjunct. In the last TCU of Hetty's telling, for example, the conjunction in "en dan de Pinksteren weer weetjewEl?" / *and then Pentecost again you know?* (line 21, simplified) does temporal tying with the TCU it is positioned next to. But if the speaker is beginning a TCU that is not continuing the project of the preceding TCU(s) (or turn, sequence, etc.), the conjunction can also be deployed for resuming an earlier line of talk (cf. Local, 2004; Mazeland & Huiskes, 2001), as is the case with "zie en dan hebb'n Ri- Rick en Anna ook," / *see and then Ri- Rick and Anna have this too* in line 13, and also with "en dan hebb'n ze 'm . . . " / *and then they have it . . .* in line 19 (which is a redoing of the abandoned telling component in line 14). So depending on the position and the nature of the TCU it is prefacing, the TCU-initial conjunction *and* may tie the current unit to talk prior to the preceding TCU, turn, sequence or topic. The TCU's position contributes substantially to what the speaker is doing with the conjunction.[4]

The particle "zie" / *see*—which opens the TCU beginning in line 13—frames what Hetty is going to say as demonstrating a point made in the preceding talk. The particle not only projects the nature of the upcoming talk (the speaker is going to demonstrate something), it also conveys that the speaker is going to elaborate on something from the preceding talk. It marks the current project as locally occasioned (Kendrick, 2006), as not completely new. Several design features of the TCU "zie" is prefacing, articulate this backward orientation: partial repetition of the lexico-syntax of the product-item utterance (many people *have a Pentecost arrangement*, *Rick and Anna have this too*) and the use of the adverb "ook" / *too*.

Whereas "en" / *and* primarily takes care of the tying problem, "zie" / *see* deals both with the projection problem and the tying problem. Note that the action projector "zie" precedes the connector "en". This order may reflect a generic interactional logic with respect to what takes precedence over what else. The beginning trajectory of some types of TCUs may thus contain different types of beginning positions that are ordered relative to one another; it may have more than one slot for co-ordinating the take-off of the action that is being launched in the TCU.

The projective scope of TCU-initial operators may be vague and extend over more talk than just the TCU it prefaces. "Zie", for example, applies to the whole telling that is starting in the TCU it prefaces, and the conjunction "en" that is following it, ties the whole discourse segment in which the telling is delivered to the line of talk it is resuming. Note, on the other hand, that turn- and TCU-initial operators are liable to an interesting progression constraint that demonstrates how finely they attend to local constraints. TCU-initial operators are often 'dispensable' when a speaker restarts the TCU (cf. Schegloff, 2004a), as is the case in the TCU beginning in line 19, simplified: "*en dan* hebb'n ze 'm nou: e:h (.) zeg maar *dan*

laat'n ze 'm st<u>Aa</u>n" / *and then they have it now u:h (.) let's say then they leave it there*. After having abandoned its delivery, the speaker recycles its first part (*then they*), however without repeating the *and*-preface with which the TCU initially began. A possible explanation for this is that the context of the restarted TCU has changed. The speaker does not have to do the tying work anymore; she is only 'retracting' (cf. Auer, 2009) the slot that was already established. The dispensability of TCU-initial operators is also evidence that the beginnings of TCUs may be shaped as spates of talk that are positionally structured according to the organizational problems that have to be dealt with at that specific moment in the interaction.

I hope this brief discussion of just some of the TCU beginnings in Extract (2) gives an idea of the kind of practices a positionally sensitive grammar of turn and TCU beginnings should describe. The concept of positionally sensitive grammars makes it possible to think about the form of TCUs as incrementally shaped by a bottom-up orientation to the local exigencies that participants orient to from moment to moment in the course of the delivery of TCUs in turns-at-talk. But it also enables examination of the shape of TCUs as the result of a concurrent orientation to the contribution it is making to the encompassing course of action. This is the subject of the next two sections.

4 Action Formation and the Grammar of Clausal TCUs

The relationship between the grammatical form of a turn-constructional unit and the action that is implemented by it in its actual environment of use is central in CA research (see Levinson, this volume). Conversation Analysis sees the function of an utterance not primarily as the result of the combination of an utterance of an isolated speaker with a context type—as is typical of the *speech-act* approach (cf. Searle, 1969)—but studies the form of turn-constructional units as practices for implementing sequences of actions in contextually-structured, activity-defined environments of use (cf. Schegloff, 2007b). Sequences are a form of social organization in which participants develop communicative projects through turns-at-talk. The basic unit for sequence construction is the *adjacency pair*, a linearly ordered pair of complementary social actions such as question/answer or request/granting (see Stivers, this volume). With a turn that is recognizable as the *first-pair part* (FPP) of a specific pair type, a speaker initiates a communicative project that makes a response relevant in which the recipient reacts with a fitting, 'pair-type related' *second-pair part* (SPP). For any given FPP, there is a restricted set of alternative responses that will count as an appropriate SPP. A response that is not from the same pair type as the type activated in the FPP turn does not count as completing the project that is launched with it.

In the sequences preceding the start of Excerpt (3), informant Johnny—a 16-year-old schoolboy—has answered that he has one younger sister.

(3) Non-standardized research interview (face-to-face, audio recording; Dutch data)

```
1     IR: -> gaat die      ook naar schoo^:l?
             goes that-one too to   school
             does she also go to school?

2            (0.4)

3     Jo: -> prima.
             fine.

4            (.)

5          -> ja.
             yes.

6            (.)

7            jha d[us.
             yes so
             yes indeed. ((laughing))

8     IR:         [jah?
                  yes?

9            (.)

10           Hhheh! ((laughs))
```

The recipient of the polar question in line 1 first responds with the positive evaluation token "prima" / *fine* (line 3). This response token could have been a type-fitting answer to a content question such as *How is she doing at school?*, but it does not satisfy the constraints set by the yes-no question (cf. Raymond, 2003; see also Hayano, this volume, on question design; Lee, this volume, on response design). The speaker corrects himself in the transition space by providing an answer which does fit the question asked ("ja" / *yes*, line 5). So grammar not only plays a role in the design of TCUs, the grammar of FPPs may also pre-structure the design space for SPP turns. Whereas the design and interpretation of SPP turns are highly dependent on the FPP framework (see section 5), speakers rely differently on contextual and linguistic resources when designing FPP turns.[5] They use specific grammatical resources for making a turn recognizable as a specific type of sequence-initiating action. Most languages have grammaticized sentence-types that accomplish sequence-initiating actions (cf. Dryer, 2008; König & Siemund, 2007), but there is no one-to-one mapping between action type and grammatical aspects of turn design. Interrogative lexico-morphosyntax[6] is used as a design feature for marking the FPP-status of a variety of action sequences, not only information requests in question/answer sequences (as in lines 1–5 of Extract (3)), but also requests for action, invitations, proposals, and other types of sequence-initiating actions we do not have a vernacular term for, such as topic proffers (see Schegloff, 2007b: 169–80), soliciting approval for a plan or requesting the addressee's availability for talk with a speaker-based reason, as in lines 4–6 of Extract (4) below:

(4) Service call on behalf of the called person's electricity company
Emp: call center employee; Cst: customer

```
1   Emp:    u::h (0.9) spreek ik met  mevrouw u:h ((name))?
            u::h       talk   I  with missus  u:h ((name))
            u::h am I talking with missus u:h ((name))?
2   Cst:    jahh.
            yes.
            (0.5)
3           °|j[a.°
              yes.
4   Emp: ->    [°u:h° (0.3) bel  ik u       gelE:gen    mevr^ou[w?
                 uh        call I  you.FRML conveniently madam?
            uh does my call suit you madam?
5   Cst:                                                      [ja:h,
                                                               yes,
6           zeg 't  maar. jah.
            say  it just. yes.
            just go ahead. yes.
            (0.3)
7   Emp:    °okay.° .h de:h reden  waarom ik u       bel  is uh
            okay.     the  reason why   I  you.FRML call is
            okay. the reason why I am calling you is uh (. . .)
```

Although the arrowed FPP turns in Extracts (3) and (4) both have interrogative syntax—in Dutch yes-no-interrogative sentences, the unmarked order of the subject and finite verb is inverted—the actions conveyed with this sentence type are different. In (3), a yes-no-interrogative (YNI) is used for requesting information, whereas the same sentence type is used in (4) for making an availability request by checking a felicity condition. *Sentence type* (a linguistic form characterization) and *action type* (an interactional characterization) must therefore be distinguished carefully (cf. Huddleston, 1994; Levinson, 1983; Schegloff, 1984b, 1988e; Wunderlich, 1976).

Sentence-type features such as interrogative, declarative and imperative (lexico-/ morpho-) syntax figure prominently in the description of the design features of type-specific first-pair part turns (cf. Stivers, Enfield & Levinson, 2010; Heritage, 2002d, 2011b; Raymond, 2003, 2010; Stivers & Rossano, 2010). Although interrogative and imperative sentence types are privileged means for marking sequence initiation, the third major sentence type—the *declarative* sentence type—is also used in FPPs such as *informings* and *complaints,* but also as *requests for confirmation*. Compare the use of declarative syntax in the first question in Extract (5) below and the interrogative lexico-syntax in the two questions that follow it:

(5) Non-standardized research interview (face-to-face, audio recording; Dutch data)

```
1   IR:    ohkee:h.
           okay.
```

```
2           (.)
3         -> je  hee:t (.) Johnny.
              you have-name Johnny
              your name is Johnny
4           (0.4)
5     Jo:   Johnny ja.
              Johnny yes.
6     IR: ->.hh hoe oud ben je?
              how old are you?
7           (0.3)
8     Jo:   >zeventien.<
              seventeen.
9           (0.4)
10    IR: -> ze:ventien. .hh heb  je  broe:rs  en  zus^(j)e?
              seventeen      have you brothers and sister
              seventeen. do you have any brothers and sisters?
11          (.)
12    Jo:   jah. één zusjeh.
              yes. one sister.DIM
              yes. one little sister.
```

All three questions in this extract are in the recipient's epistemic domain and they presume his primary epistemic rights (see Heritage, this volume). However, at the same time, the speaker makes different knowledgeability claims in the design of her questions. The declarative syntax of the question "je heet Johnny." / *your name is Johnny* (line 3) reveals the speaker's *epistemic stance* that she has good reason to assume the statement's correctness, more so than she does with the interrogative lexico-syntax of the *wh*-question in line 6 and the YNI in line 10. The latter two question matters, the questioner claims to have no knowledge about. Speakers may thus index different *epistemic stances* in the grammatical format of their questions while leaving intact the epistemic primacy of the question recipient.

The grammatical construction of initiating actions displays the speaker's orientation to the social and contextual configuration that the action articulates, mobilizes and constructs (cf. Curl, 2006: 1277). The design of requests, for example, may reflect the speaker's assessment of their *entitlement* to the requested matter and the special circumstances and feasibility conditions—*contingencies*—that account for this assessment. Heinemann (2006), for example, found that elderly receivers of home help in Denmark use negative interrogatives for making requests about routine tasks, but use positive interrogatives for conveying requests about tasks that do not belong to the routine service repertoire. The negative interrogatives mention the assistant's ability to perform a task with ability modals such as *ka'du ikk . . .* (*can you not . . .* + infinitive construction), whereas the positive interrogatives explicitly articulate the caregiver's willingness with utterances that begin with intention modals such as *ve'du . . .* (*will you . . .* + infinitive construction). In the way, they phrase a request, the speakers display how they assess their entitlement to the requested action. Curl & Drew (2008) describe similar tendencies for the selection of request forms in English phone calls, both in everyday

conversations and in after-hours calls to the doctor. Routine requests are formulated with ability modals like *Could you* and *Can you*; requests speakers see themselves less entitled to are more often framed with *I wonder if . . .* , whereas requests that overtly reference the contingencies surrounding a request's granting (*Would it be possible to . . .*) articulate the speaker's uncertainty about the appropriateness of the requested action.

Curl (2006) finds similar patterns between the form of offers, their function and where the offer is made. Reason-for-call offers are cast in an *If you want X, then Y . . .* -format, offers solving problems that were not yet brought to the surface of the interaction are shaped as a *Do you want (me to…)* question, and offers that propose a direct solution to a problem in a prior turn are rather formulated as a speaker commitment or promise, usually declaratively.

The research in this area goes under the heading of *action formation* (Levinson, this volume). It examines the intimate relationship between speakers' analyses of situational and action parameters, the design of the turn implementing the action and the position at which the turn is occurring. Speakers making a request, offer, or constructing a complaint[7] are subtly and systematically sensitive to questions such as which situational contingencies may be mentioned and how they should be cast—with respect to, for example, epistemic status (within or outside the speaker's knowledge domain), agency (reflected in the perspective chosen: speaker, recipient, or neutral), modality (ability, possibility, willingness, stance), relative distribution of rights and obligations (entitlement) and situation-specific assessments (imposition and feasibility). The interplay of grammatical design features of a turn-constructional unit, its content and its positioning eventually conveys the kind of action the recipient should understand it to be.

5 The Contextualizing Function of Nonclausal Turn-Constructional Designs

Whereas first-pair part turns that implement actions in structurally recurrent, routine environments are typically accomplished with items drawn from a delimited set of nonclausal action forms (e.g. *hi/hello/hey* for greetings), FPP turns that initiate new courses of action often have the form of an independent clause (with a subject[8] and a predicate; cf. Thompson & Couper-Kuhlen, 2005). SPP turns, on the other hand, and other kinds of *next* or responsive actions, typically have a nonclausal design signaling the turn's dependency on a prior turn. The nonclausal design of the TCU is a practice for contextualizing the turn's action into a type-specific environment of use (cf. Günthner, 2006; Helasvuo, 2001b; Selting, 2005). Prototypical instances are type-conforming *yes-no* responses to polar questions (Raymond, 2003),[9] and 'sentence fragment' answers to constituent or *wh*-questions (Fox & Thompson, 2010). But answerers do not just accomplish coherence by giving nonclausal answers to *wh*-questions. Fox and Thompson (2010) show for English that phrasal responses to specifying *wh*-questions do simple, unproblematic answering, whereas clausal responses occur when there is

trouble with the question. The 'symbiotic' phrasal response is "the optimal no-trouble response for furthering the project initiated by the question" (Fox & Thompson, 2010: 133).

Contextual dependency is also regularly shown in the nonclausal design of turns in which a speaker initiates subsidiary sequences. The repair initiation with "wie" / *who* in line 15 of Extract (2) is an example, and the phrasal question "wat voor school" / *what kind of school* in Extract (6), below, is another:

(6) Continuation of Extract (3) (lines 1 and 5 repeated)

```
1    IR:   gaat die     ook naar schoo^:l?
           goes that-one too to   school
           does she also go to school?
           ((lines omitted))
5          ja.
           yes.
           ((lines omitted))
12   IR:   wat voor  school.
           what-like school
           what kind of school.
13         (0.4)
14   Jo:   e:h zij zit  e::h (.) >op de  lagere    school zit  ze  nog,<
           u:h she sits u::h     at the elementary school sits she still
           she is still in elementary school she is,
```

The nonclausal design of "wat voor school" / *what kind of school* not only shows that the questioner is building on the prior question/answer sequences and is continuing its topic by re-using a key term from the prior sequence (*school*), but it also marks the question's dependency on the *yes*-answer that has been given to the previous question "gaat die ook naar schoo^:l?" / *does she too go to school?* (lines 1–5). This question was already recognizably heading for the information the interviewer is now inquiring about, just as the question "heb je broe:rs en zus^(j)e?" / *do you have any brothers and sisters?* in Extract (5) was answered with "jah. één zusjeh" / *yes. one sister*.

Traditionally, grammarians tend to treat single-word or single-phrase utterances as reduced, *elliptical* sentences (compare, for example, Hoffmann, 1999; Klein, 1981). From a CA perspective, however, the starting point is not the idea of 'intact', complete sentences (syntactically), full propositions (semantically), or intentions of an isolated speaker (psycholinguistically), but "the state of the interaction which has just been arrived at" (Schegloff, 1996d: 110). Apart from utterances that begin exchanges, any utterance "begins just at the end of what precedes it," that is, "on an actual occasion, in an actual context, at an actual moment" (Schegloff, 1996d.). By shaping the turn after the question "hoe oud ben je?" / *how old are you* in Extract (5) as the single-word utterance "zeventien" / *seventeen*, the speaker is *doing* 'answering' that specific question. Or by asking "wie" / *who* around the first-possible completion point of a TCU at which still more talk of the

same speaker can be expected (Extract (2)), the recipient shows she is initiating repair on a referent whose recognition is relevant for the understanding of the turn-so-far and the telling it recognizably begins. The numeral in the answer TCU or the category-specific question word in the repair-initiation are not reduced forms of complete sentences such as *I am seventeen years old* or *Who are you talking about?* respectively, but they constitute the unmarked, "basic grammatical form" for doing that action in that sequential position (Schegloff, 1996d 109). The design of the TCU provides an organizational form that shows it being shaped by reference to the immediately preceding talk and action. Phrasal and lexical TCUs are practices for using sequential position as a resource, relating the action in current TCU to the action in prior turn and exploiting this relationship for shaping next turns as recognizable types of next actions. Instead of a grammar for sentences, one

> has a range of grammatical resources, grammars if you will, whose relevance is positionally sensitive to organizational features and contingencies of the sequential and interactional moment in which the conduct is situated. (Schegloff, 1996d: 110)

6 Future Directions

CA research shows that it is necessary to thoroughly rethink the assumption that the sentence is the primary basis for organizing the construction of units in turns in talk in interaction (cf. Linell, 2005; Thompson & Couper-Kuhlen, 2005). This is by no means a new insight or an insight that is exclusively the result of CA endeavors. Corpus-based reference grammars nowadays give systematic attention to the grammar of talk in spoken interaction (to mention just a few examples, see Biber, et al., 1999: 1037–1125; Enfield, 2007a; Fiehler, 2005). What is characteristic of CA research, however, is to approach grammatical constructions as practices for doing social actions and organizing interaction in specifiable environments of use, and with consequences that are observably oriented to by the participants. Particularly the advances made in the research of sequence organization (cf. Schegloff, 2007b) make it possible to describe the use of linguistic form in sequentially specified, positionally sensitive terms.[10]

Other major new developments are the systematic incorporation of the role of prosody (Szczepek-Reed, 2010a; see also Walker, this volume) and the study of gaze and gesture as part of the same package (see Enfield, 2009; Heath & Luff, this volume; Rossano, this volume; Streeck, Goodwin & LeBaron, 2011). Comparative studies of the role of grammar in shaping actions (Sidnell, 2009a; Stivers, et al., 2009; Stivers, Enfield & Levinson, 2010) or constructing turns (e.g. Couper-Kuhlen & Ono, 2007) show that comparable actions and procedures may be shaped quite differently in different language communities. We are making progress in what we know about the relationship between grammar and social action, but we are still in the beginning of investigating grammar from the perspective of talk-in-interaction.

NOTES

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1 Syntax is just one of the resources for turn-building. It offers working models for parsing the emergent structure of an ongoing TCU, but it does not determine its structure exclusively or definitively. Syntactic projection of possible completion is provisional and negotiable. It may be confirmed, suppressed, bypassed or revised through a variety of practices for turn-building, most notably practices for adjusting a contribution in the course of its delivery to recipient behavior (Ford, Fox & Thompson, 1996; C. Goodwin, 1979), prosodic packaging (see Walker, this volume) and 'embodied' practices for interactionally managing the participation framework through gaze, gesture and body positioning (cf. C. Goodwin, 1981, 2000a; Rossano, Brown & Levinson, 2009; see also Heath & Luff, this volume; Rossano, this volume).

2 Fox, Hayashi and Jasperson (1996: 206–14) provide evidence that language-specific syntactic practices may constrain the organization of repair. For example, when doing same-turn self repair, speakers regularly repeat a bit of the talk before the repairable. Fox and colleagues show that the scope of this type of recycling differs for Japanese and English. Japanese speakers typically recycle within the local constituent, whereas English speakers recycle either within the constituent under construction, or they recycle the whole clause (with exception of dispensable TCU-initial operators; cf. Schegloff, 2004a). The authors explain this difference by pointing at the rather different projective properties of turn beginnings in these languages (see section 2) (see also Fox, Maschler & Uhmann, 2010).

3 See Auer (1996b) for an inventory of the things that occur and are done in the 'pre-front field' of clauses in German talk-in-interaction. Auer approaches turn- and TCU beginnings primarily in terms of a grammatically defined position at the 'left' margin of sentences (the 'pre-front field'). Such an approach is somewhat different from thinking about these positions in terms of interactionally organized turn- and TCU beginning trajectories.

4 The particle "nou" prefacing the already discussed TCU in line 16 in which Hetty repairs the reference problem (lines 15–18) signals yet another type of tying work. In turn-initial position, the Dutch particle *nou* (literally *now*, but in its current environment of use more or less equivalent to English *well*) typically has a responsive function, for example, as an alert that the speaker is beginning a dispreferred reaction (Mazeland, 2004; Schegloff & Lerner, 2009). Here, in the context of the recipient's "wie." / *who.,* it signals that the speaker is going to respond to the repair initiation. So the speaker uses the initial position of the TCU to tie the TCU to something other than the preceding TCU. The action that the speaker is initiating is lifted out of the ongoing telling by tying it to an interactional origin outside the ongoing turn.

5 This is not to say that sequence-initiating actions occur out of the blue without recurring to context, situation and position in the overall structure of the talk. This is not only evidenced by the work participants do in pre-sequences (Schegloff, 2007b) or other types of pre-expansion (Schegloff, 1980), but also by the subtle ways in which participants work toward the emergence of jointly constructed actions from prior talk (cf. Drew & Walker, 2009; see also Lindström & Sorjonen, this volume).

6 My remarks about the syntax of yes-no interrogatives are heavily biased toward European languages, but the Germanic branch is among a minority of languages that deploy word order for making yes-no-type responses relevant (see Dryer, 2008; König & Siemund, 2007). See the papers in Stivers, Enfield and Levinson (2010) for comparative research on the design of question/response sequences.

7 See the papers in Heinemann & Traverso (2009) for action formation research on complaints.

8 This way of formulating the composition of independent clauses is again heavily biased toward the Germanic languages. It does not pertain to languages with zero anaphora in which reference positions are not obligatorily filled with a morphologically independent reference form. Moreover,

in languages that require expression of the grammatical subject, subject elision may be deployed as a systematic interactional resource (see Oh, 2005).

9 Cross-linguistically, different systems for answering polar questions occur: yes-no systems, agree/disagree systems and (partial) repeat systems (cf. König & Siemund, 2007: 320–2; see also Pope, 1973).

10 For example, after the wave of pragmatic studies of the use of particles and discourse markers in the 1970s and 1980s (see Schiffrin, 1987; Schourup, 1983; Weydt, 1979), CA research of turn- and TCU-initial operators gives new importance to the results of this earlier research by their positionally-sensitive approach (e.g. Benjamin, 2012; Bolden, 2006, 2008b, 2009b, 2010; Clift, 2001; Golato, 2010; Golato & Betz, 2008; Heritage, 2002d; Keevallik, 2010a; Local & Walker, 2004; Raymond, 2004; Schegloff, 2009b, 2010; Schegloff & Lerner, 2009; Sidnell, 2007b; Sorjonen, 2001a).