The story of 'Oh': Part 1
Indexing structure, animating transcript

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Abstract

The expression 'Oh' in natural conversation is a signal topic in the development of the Epistemic Program (EP). This paper attempts to bring into view a sense of place for this simple expression in the early literature, beginning with 'Oh' as a "change–of–state token" and through its subsequent treatments in the production of assessments. It reviews them with an interest in two allied developments. One is the rendering of 'Oh' as an expression that "indexes" Epistemic structure. The other, pursued in the detail of transcript in Part 2, is how, *as of* this rendering, the literature manages its tasks of "animating transcript", or how we portray ordinary talk as social action. We think these two moves are closely connected within the EP. And we think they yield a very different "vocabulary of motives", different from the natural language studies of conversation analysis (CA). Our discussions address in turn the central phrases of our title.

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Introduction

Our interests in this special issue and the symposium that preceded it (see Lynch and Macbeth 2016) have been to examine what are in so many evident ways the deep conceptual ties between ethnomethodology and conversation analysis [henceforth EMCA], and the emerging literature in the Epistemics of conversation, on the one hand. And how a close reading of this emerging literature can suggest some striking departures from those common foundations, on the other.

Standing where we are now, it is difficult to imagine the shock that received Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson as they began explicating the sequential organizations of natural conversation as sociological organizations essentially. They were proposing, among other things, a deep disruption of settled disciplinary lines and authorizations. In our view, the reverberations of those disruptions are still with us. And standing where we are now, where transcripts recognizable in their debt to Jefferson's extraordinary first work are commonplace, it is easy to miss the enormous conceptual innovations that were attached. Central to those innovations was the idea of a locally managed syntax of sequential order in real time, and the local orders of social action that were produced in the constitutive detail of vernacular practices of talking and listening together. The recitation is of course both familiar and incomplete. We offer it as context for taking up what is perhaps the single greatest innovation in CA's conceptual orbit ever since.

In their commentaries to the 2012 "featured debate" on "Epistemics in Action" in the journal *Research on Language and Social Interaction*, Drew (2012) and Clift (2012) both cite Heritage and Raymond (2005) as the first presentation of a

programmatic identity for the Epistemic Program. For Clift (2012:69), it is "ground breaking" work, and as Drew observes of Heritage and Raymond (2005) and then Raymond and Heritage (2006) in the first paragraph of his commentary, "If you haven't read those papers before, then consider breaking off reading this to read those, before continuing" (Drew, 2012:61).

It is of course a fraught task to say just *when* an analytic or conceptual innovation arrives on the scene, but we can take interest when close readers of those developments do so for us. And it is a nice question to ask just what, in 2005 and 2006, marks the innovation. There is, for example, in 2005, a striking title: "The Terms of Agreement: Indexing Epistemic Authority and Subordination in Talk-in-Interaction", and then a first page given over to Goffman's formulations of "face work" and "relations in public", and also how Brown and Levinson (1987) "operationalized face-work into a set of specifically linguistic strategies that embody connections between language use, social distance, power, and related variables" (Heritage and Raymond, 2005:15).[1] The title alone could be novel for students of conversation analysis. Notwithstanding their deep familiarity in social science, 'authority and subordination' are neither common terms nor topics for sequential analysis. Ordinary conversation can well become such an occasion, but in sighting conversation as the primordial site of natural language use, it does not seem that Sacks et al. had contested relations in mind.

The pride of place given to Goffman then segues to attachments to conversation analysis:

Goffman's theoretical conception of face as situated within "the flow of events in the encounter" (1967:7) invited an empirical focus on sequences of talk-in-interaction; these, as Schegloff (1992) observes, are a primordial site of human sociality. (Heritage and Raymond, 2005:15)

There is a tendentious history attached, and the suture is achieved, here as elsewhere, with no discussion of Schegloff's (1988) devastating critique of Goffman's program. Indeed, and the claim requires the re–inspection of a 30 year corpus, we don't believe we have found a single citation to or discussion of Schegloff's remarks on Goffman's enterprise in the Epistemic literature. Instead, we routinely find Goffman's place in setting the conceptual table, and indeed this is so from its earliest expression (Heritage 1984a).

If the recognizability of an epistemic *program* usefully first shows itself in 2005, our interests lie in the work that "roughed up the ground" for it (Jefferson, 2003: 221, quoted by Clift, 2012: 69), in the particulars of Heritage (1984a), (1998) and (2002). These early publications hold our interest. In their day, they were received with virtually no critical commentary that we can find.

Programs that have not been challenged in their formative works, as EM and CA were indeed challenged, relentlessly and to his day, inherit the risk of unexamined, and thus uncertain, foundations. We think this may be so in the conceptual history of the EP. And in pursuit of a formative history, this paper examines these early publications and the conceptual moves that emerge from them.

The paper—and this special issue—is thus returning to the tasks and expectations of a critical reading that every conceptual innovation deserves.[2] It does so in appreciation of how, in the particulars of the Epistemic Program, the EMCA community simply has not seen such a "radical" innovation in our common literatures (as *per* Drew, 2012). For just this reason, and in the embrace of the promise of innovation, these early publications deserve close consideration.

'Oh'

In 1984, John Heritage introduced what would prove to be a sustained interest in the production of 'Oh' as a particle in the service of "indexing" speaker "changes of state". The states and their changes were variously characterized as cognitive, psychological and informational, and were quickly developed for the play of the particle and its work as a "*response* to a variety of conversational actions" (Heritage, 1984a: 300).

Developed on the understanding that this work had not been fully considered in studies of natural conversation, 'Oh' was proposed to mark speaker states and changes as they were formative *for* conversational order, action and structure, although not quite *of* it.[3] By this we mean that from these beginnings 'Oh' was recommended as a particle that in some way provides a portal through which states and changes—cognitive and informational—find their way *to* conversational structures. 'Oh' is understood as an expression that "injects an extraconversational contingency, adumbrated by the particle and subsequently elaborated upon [in] the

talk" (Heritage, 1984a: 300). The passage occurs early on, and also provides a faithful account of a program not yet in evidence.

When the EP fully comes into view some 30 years hence, we do indeed find the play of extraconversational contingencies', including contingencies of speech acts, morphosyntactic structures, information transfer mechanisms and, centrally, contingencies of status, stance and their agonistic relations, 'injected' into CA's syntax of interaction (Schegloff, 1979). They are what the EP brings to CA, what renders it (the EP) a remarkable innovation. This extraordinarily modest "particle" will indeed do extraordinary service on behalf of what will become the formal structures of epistemic status, action formation, sequence production, and the engines that drive them (Drew, 2012; Heritage, 2012a,b). (See the companion articles of this special issue for careful treatments of the mature program.)

The aim of this paper is to track the emergence of "Oh" through the early work, and how it was assigned the (reflexive) tasks of indexing epistemic structure, and animating transcripts of ordinary conversational interaction to show it. It has been revealing to see how much of the EP's conceptual fabric was in play early on, and we follow its development across three principal treatments of 'Oh' in natural conversation: 1) as a "change of state token" (Heritage, 1984a); 2) as a preface to "replies to inquiries" (Heritage, 1998); and 3) as a preface to "responses to assessments" (Heritage, 2002). One could fairly say that these projects were the EP's first projects, though no such program was yet in hand. And if there is a golden thread to what was to become the EP, it is surely the ubiquitous expression 'Oh'.

'Changes of state' and their forms of expression

'Oh' appears in the opening of the 1984a publication:

> This chapter reports some preliminary findings on the work accomplished by
> the particle "oh" in natural conversation. Evidence from the placement of the
> particle in a range of conversational sequences shows that the particle is used to
> propose that its producer has undergone some kind of change in his or her
> locally current state of knowledge, information, orientation or awareness… .
> (Heritage, 1984a: 299)

There is a footnote attached that turns to Deborah James (1972) for a distinction
between 'ohs' in "turn initial position and in free-standing form ('oh$_2$')", and how
both convey "definite sematic information" (James, 1972:162). The note concludes
that the chapter "takes James's view of the matter" (Heritage, 1984a: 337), and her
'oh$_2$' pair structure (James, 1972:163) then figures centrally in the treatment of 'Oh'
as a change of state token.[4]

The discussion begins with two brief exhibits, the first of which is a "field
note":

(1)   (From Heritage, 1984a:300, exhibit 1)

[GJ: FN]

((three people are walking together: someone passes them wearing a
photograph teeshirt))

–> N: Oh that teeshirt reminded me [STORY]

About this and the other exhibit (not shown here), Heritage then observes (1984a: 300, citations in original):

> The "oh's" produced in these fragments thus provide a fugitive commentary on the speaker's state of mind. Produced within ratified states of talk and as component elements of larger turns at talk, they are nonetheless fully fledged response cries: "signs meant to be taken to index directly the state of the transmitter" (Goffman 1981:116), through which evidence of an alignment taken to events is displayed, "the display taking the condensed, truncated form of a . . . non-lexicalised expression" (ibid: 100).

Ties to James are thus followed by what will prove to be more enduring ties to Goffman. And though there are some not entirely congruent formulations to be found in the above passage, from a "fugitive commentary on the speaker's state of mind", to signs that "*index directly* the state of the transmitter" (emphasis added), and from "fully fledged response cries" to "truncated forms" of "non-lexicalised expression", we want to catch the uptake of the pair of forms borrowed from James, and how they lend order to these expressions. At least for a time, they bear substantial weight on behalf of 'Oh's' tasks and appointments.

In these early discussions, Oh's every description as a "change of state" token registers an informational or cognitive state, variously described as a change of state of "knowledge or information, orientation or awareness" (Heritage, 1984a: 299), or an expression that "confirms the presupposition, relevance and upshot of the prior

act of informing as an action that has involved the transmission of information from an informed to an uninformed party" (1984a: 304), or is deployed in interactional events that "involve the embodiment of cognitive events such as noticing, remembering and understanding" (Heritage, 2005: 188). To them all, a change in information states proves central, but we must read forward to see its emergence.

Yet when we collect the diverse exhibits that display them across the EP corpus, we might think that we have in 'Oh' an "indexical expression" (Garfinkel, 1967, pp. 4ff.), and a common, even exemplary one, that, as with all expressions, finds its definite sense and meaning on the occasion of its production and use. And indeed, we think "Oh" is just such a thing. Produced and heard as an occasioned expression, it can be a touch off, an expression of surprise, recognition, appreciation, playfulness, disappointment, delight, discovery, or disputation, and no list will account for all of its services. As Schegloff (1991: 157) reminds us, "*Oh* can claim a change in the speaker's state, but its utterance enacts an interactional stance and does not necessarily reflect a cognitive event." Each expression finds its sense within the course of a turn's production as a turn within a sequence of turns.

And when we understand Oh's profuse expressions as indexical expressions, the "change of state" account can seem somewhat constrained. "Change of state" says little of Oh's play interactionally as other than a "response cry", and it says nothing of an 'Oh' that invites a telling, or announces one, or an 'Oh' that has the full register of ways of speaking, as in humorously, sarcastically, with interest, disbelief, and the like. "Oh" can do a great many things, and finding it as an "indexical expression" may be a surer and more direct path towards accounting for what is so

serviceable about it, although doing so gives no particular pride of place to "indexing", or "information transfer", or "extraconversational contingency".[5]

"Change of state", however, does these things, and does so through the alternate expressions borrowed from James (1972): the work of 'Oh' in "free–standing" form, and in "turn–initial position". The development of 'changes of states' proceeds from these alternate forms, and that it does leads us to ask: how shall we recognize and understand the difference between them?

On the one hand, the second phrase is completely familiar. 'Turn initial' is just that: a turn is begun that way, and continues, as in, e.g., 'Oh you're kidding'. But the other production format—"free-standing"—may pose a puzzle. Different forms of expression would seem to identify different *turn* productions. (James, however, was treating sentences.) And if we are to have them, we can expect to find them in the examination of turns–in–their–produced–detail. In this fashion, we hope to answer the question of how a "free–standing" expression is produced.

Before turning to materials, however, a kindred pair structure is found later in the 1984a publication, and both pairs are preserved in subsequent publications (Heritage, 1998; 2010; Raymond and Heritage, 2006**)**. The pair 'free-standing' and 'turn-initial' is joined by a second pair, organized by the difference between 'Oh' as a "generic proposal", on the one hand, and as a "particularized" expression, on the other.

The aim of this chapter thus far has been to demonstrate that the production of "oh" generically proposes that its producer has undergone some kind of change

of state… [I]t has been argued that this generic proposal is particularized by reference to the sequence types in which "oh" occurs and by the details of its placement in such sequences. Finally, some attempt has been made to characterize the formal or official sequence-specific tasks accomplished by the production of the particle … (Heritage, 1984a: 324)

This too is a challenging passage to parse. The central move seems to summarize the play of 'Oh' as a generic proposal that is [then] particularized in actual "sequence types", and how *in* the particularization we would find the "formal or official" tasks accomplished "by the production of the particle". (See Lindwall et al. [2016], on the play of "action formation" as a categorical heuristic of signals and their particularizations.) The account thus seems to describe a sequence of a kind: a generic first production whose particularized actual expression is in the service of formal–official tasks that have been, it seems, set in play by the "production of the particle" in the first instance.

We needn't fully understand these alternations or the tasks they serve to recognize the weight of the work promised for these remarkably modest expressions.[6] Still, the weight of the account would be substantially relieved if it were understood that 'particularized expressions' are all that we ever hear, particularized within sequential production contexts and the like. Understood that way, however, we are left with the puzzling space of a first "generic proposal", and the knot of conceptual relationship between the two.

'Free–standing' Ohs, and withholding

We now have two pairs of expressive forms for the work of the particle 'Oh': the free-standing and the turn initial, on the one hand, and generic and particularized proposals, on the other. We find each in response to "informings", and we can expect to find at least the first pair—the free standing and the turn initial—in actual materials. We therefore turn to a brief sequence that exhibits an informing followed by a "free–standing Oh".

By the reckoning of CA, the phrase "free–standing" might suggest an expression that is itself a turn, or a turn constructional unit (TCU), standing 'free' of other turns, though this is a compromised formulation: every turn is a turn *within* a sequence of turns. Nor do we find TCUs in these discussions; examples of 'free–standing ohs' do not, for example, engage the work of next turn allocation, and, as the description develops, *that* they do not is part of what identifies them as 'free–standing'. So perhaps what is meant by 'free–standing' is a state of dis-engagement from the work that turns do, though how the intelligibility of an expression stands apart from the sequential context it joins may only extend the puzzle.

But as a review of materials suggests, free–standing Ohs do not seem to stand apart at all. They are contingent on what they get: they are evidenced by a recipient's "withholding" of a next remark. As we will see in the exhibit below, what marks their production is how, on its receipt, the informing party—now recipient— "withholds," and waits for a solicitation from the party who produced the 'Oh', before saying anything next. It is the *withholding* that gives evidence of a free-standing particle, and next–heard remarks are routinely by the party who produced it, after a delay (thus, both parties are engaged in a withholding). Only then would

we retrospectively see–hear that a "free–standing Oh" has been produced. In this fashion what is standing free, is *also* contingently evidenced.

'Withholding' is thus central to the conceptualization of "free–standing", and to anticipate a slightly different hearing of it, it's fair to point out that 'withholding' is what a recipient routinely does in the presence of a turn underway. Every turn underway instructs a withholding. So perhaps the question is: are there different *kinds* of 'withholdings'? And there are of course many kinds, as in the course of a story telling, or on receipt of a compliment, across the repair opportunity space, or the production of a dis–preferred reply. So what withholding have we here, how does the transcript dispose us to hear it, and centrally, how does it inform our understanding of 'Oh' as a 'free standing' particle?

Our reading of the sequence below is complicated by the question mark in first turn, "Derek's ho:me?" But punctuations in CA transcripts mark production features, not kinds of turns, and indeed the text tells us this first turn is an announcement.[7] The discussion begins:

 [A]lthough the production of a free-standing "oh" is commonly used to establish or confirm current speaker alignments, the particle does not, of itself, request, invite, or promote any continuation of an informing. Thus in (38), the "oh" receipt of the repair on an initial news announcement *("*Derek's ho:me?")… is not treated by the announcer (J) as requesting further elaboration.

(2) (Heritage, 1984a: 324, exhibit 38, [Rah: II:7]; line numbers have been added)

1.   J: <u>Derek</u>'s ho<u>:</u>me?

2.   (0.5)

3.   I: <u>Yo</u>:ur De[rek.

4.   J: [Ye:s [mm

5.   I   [O<u>h</u>:.

6. **1 –>**   (.)

7. **2 –>** I: An'– is he a'ri:ght?=

8. **3 –>** J: =Oh <u>he</u>'s fi<u>:</u>ne…

The discussion continues: "Instead J. withholds continuation or elaboration of the initial news announcement (arrow 1) until specifically invited to do so (arrow 2), whereupon she responds promptly with a latched utterance (arrow 3)" (Heritage, 1984a: 324).

     As can be seen, the "free standing" 'Oh' has its own line and a terminal punctuation (though the footnoted iteration produces a comma there, which "indicates a continuing intonation, not necessarily between clauses of sentences" [Jefferson, 1984: xi]). And the micro-pause of line 6, placed on *its* own line, is the evidence of a withholding by J., and thus anchors the finding that the 'Oh' of line 5 is "free standing". In this way, a great deal is made to turn on a micro-pause, and whose it is.

     To this picture, we want to offer an alternative rendering of Ivy's second turn of line 5:

5.   I: [Oh:. (.) An'– is he a'ri:ght? =

Rendered this way, her turn looks like a turn underway, with 'Oh' in turn–initial position. Ivy is registering news, taking its measure and continuing on with a possible upshot. On the face of it, it seems that she has found something surprising—a change of state to be sure, and of a particular kind—and is speaking to her surprise *within* the turn, as it continues. And of course recipients see and hear such things, and barring other purposes, 'withhold' to permit the turn's completion. In this light, we have something more familiar than "confirming current speaker alignments", whatever they may be. The same can be said for other exhibits offered on behalf of 'free-standing Ohs'. That is, when we look for a "withholding" in these contexts, we seem to find the unremarkable withholding of a recipient to a turn that is underway. On the other hand, we may find in the EP's treatment of 'withholding' the beginnings of a re–specification of the kinds of competent hearings that members bring to conversations, in the difference between attending to turns in their course, and to expressions that are 'generic' and 'free–standing'. As the discussion develops, however, these very distinctions seem to lose their purchase.

'Opacity' and implicativeness

There are subsequent formulations in Heritage (1984a) that develop free-standing "Ohs" for their lack of sequential implicativeness. It is this that accounts for recipient withholdings. The sense of the phrase is familiar enough: first pair parts such as greetings, questions, insults, repair initiations and the like are highly

implicative. Other kinds of remarks and turns are not, and free–standing "Ohs" and
"generic proposals of a change of state" are of the second kind. Thus, as the
discussion develops, we have the argument that the expression 'Oh' is largely, if not
completely "opaque" and furthermore, that it is "backward looking", and thus
relieved of implicativeness:

> ... whereas 'oh' is routinely used to receipt information, its sequential role is
> essentially backward looking. Specifically, the particle does not invite or request
> further information. (Heritage, 1984a: 311)

> ... whereas 'oh' may propose a change of state in response to an informing, it is
> entirely opaque as to the quality or character of the change of state proposedly
> undergone by its producer....   (Heritage, 1984a: 325)

In taking their measure, we want to note how the first passage ties
implicativeness to information transfer, as though sequence progression were an
informational register essentially, or that in the absence of informational exchanges
(inviting and requesting further information), sequences—and interaction itself—
would idle. This 'informationalism' becomes a very large constituent of the EP's
conceptual fabric. (See Lynch and Wong, 2016.) The opacity of the second passage
is also taken up with 'contents', as in the "quality or character" of the change, and
also with sequence organization: the opaque, perhaps generic, expression in second
position (a response to an informing), *as of* its opacity, offers no traction for a third.

The two passages are thus concerned with sequence progressivity: if we
cannot see the work of an expression for what (or who) it calls for next, it cannot be

a resource for next turn productions. This is what "Oh's" backward–looking opacity delivers, and why next turns are withheld. And it may well be that on any given occasion an 'Oh' reveals little or any of it. In our last sequence, however, that's not so: Ivy's "Oh" seems to reveal surprise that Derek is home, a surprise that continues to be dealt with throughout the sequence. Indeed, her surprise seems to drive the sequence. *That* she is surprised isn't opaque at all. Note further that even without indexing internal states "Oh" can be productive in other ways relevant to turns, sequences and actions in their course.[8]

Further still, elsewhere in Heritage's discussion, the "backward–looking" orientation, and the "free–standing Oh" *itself* seem to be set aside:

> As noted in Section 2, free-standing 'oh' receipts to informings are rare in the data to hand. Instead, the particle most regularly occurs in conjunction with additional turn components... Thus, an informant/'oh' recipient may withhold further talk on the assumption that the 'oh' already produced is prefatory to further turn components. (Heritage, 1984a: 325; see also p. 302)

In this fashion, the free–standing 'Oh'—a central turn–production organization of the Jamesian 'oh$_2$' pair—becomes a rarely found one. The passage re–writes the treatment of the Derek sequence, for example, and of "withholding" itself. "Withholding" has become the withholding observed on any next turn's turn–initial production, and the prior discussion of opacity and backward–looking yields to a discussion of projectability.

In fairness, one could imagine other uses for the description 'free-standing', as in Schegloff's (2007: 117) larger discussion of "sequence closing thirds." For Schegloff, "Oh" is an utterance doing sequential work, and is heard that way.   For the EP, however, it seems to have been a link within a conceptual chain that treats—at least initially—this utterly commonplace expression as both and all generic, opaque, backward looking and free–standing, and, in the very first move, an index of both "changes of state" and "extraconversational contingencies." Perhaps it is *these* tasks that require effaced expressions. But once in hand, they are difficult if not impossible expressions to deliver as natural language descriptions, or to leverage from actual materials.

Replies to inquiries and assessments

As the literature develops, the "change of state" formulation is joined by additional tasks and appointments. We could say Oh's portfolio grows substantially, not only with new tasks, but different tasks, and centrally the task of "indexing" the epistemic structures and regularities that lend order to talk-in-interaction.

We see this in the 1998 publication "Oh-prefaced responses to inquiries", and again in 2002 in "Oh-prefaced responses to assessments." We want to take them up through our second title phrase, "Animating Transcripts", and also through the phrase "vocabularies of motive", used without attribution in the abstract. By "animating transcript" we mean, and will develop further in Part 2, how we leverage analyses and findings from our Jeffersonian transcripts as findings that are 'in

evidence'. And also how we render talk–in–interaction sociologically, as courses of action, and how, in every case, we find vernacular action, that is, evidence of what the parties are doing and demonstrably orienting to as actual tasks, practices, aims, outcomes and identities. And how *as* vernacular expressions and actions, we find at once motivated action, insofar as sensible action owns purpose, and thus evidences 'motives' on its surfaces, as it were. EMCA does not take its leave of natural language use, and this of course is at some distance from more familiar 'studies of motivation', and language.

C. Wright Mills (1940) wrote an early and suggestive discussion of what was deeply mistaken about familiar talk of "motivation" in his "Situated actions and vocabularies of motive." He spoke of "vocabularies of motive" as aspects of a setting's features, although for Mills the settings were ideal-typical settings, such as business and labor meetings, and the vocabularies were the 'typical vocabularies' that affiliated to them. Still, it was an early and penetrating critique of the notion of motives as 'wellsprings' of action. He goes on to set aside,

> … the quest for *real* motives… the view held by many sociologists that language
> is an external manifestation or concomitant of something prior, more genuine,
> and 'deep' in the individual… [But] the only social items that can 'lie deeper' are
> other lingual forms. (Mills, 1940: 909)

Taking up his view of different vocabularies of motive, we want to briefly examine how sequential analysis writes its 'vocabulary' as it builds its descriptions of conversational regularity, and especially its descriptions of single cases in their

actionable detail, and how so for the Epistemic Program. We have already said

something about EMCA and their studies of natural language. They are pursuing

studies of vernacular grammars of action, with no thought that the vernacular holds

debts elsewhere.[9] The sufficiency of vernacular grammars to the order and

meanings they achieve, without benefit of formal–analytic underwritings, has been

signal to EM's and CA's programs. As Schegloff reminds us "[I]t is misleading to start

to account for such categories of action as questions, promises, and so on as the

analytic objects of interest. They are commonsense, not technical, categories and

should be treated accordingly" (Schegloff, 1984: 30). As of their intelligibility these

categories of action are *already* in possession of motives, and to the list we could

include things like inquiries and assessments.

The EP, however, seems to write its accounts of 'what the parties are doing'

in a key that delivers a different vocabulary, one that speaks on behalf of a

professional–analytic architecture of motive, as different from the natural language

reckonings of the parties to the scene. We want to suggest how this is so with the

brief discussion of Repair in Heritage (1984a), and then with a discussion of the EP's

treatments of "inquiries" and "assessments", and later still, in Part 2, with a

discussion of how the EP leverages motivated accounts from transcribed materials.

The 1984a discussion of Repair is on behalf of the play of 'Oh' in repair

sequences. The centerpiece is the four–turn sequence of other–initiated repair, and

the place of a typical 'Oh receipt' in fourth turn, as in:

1. A: Repairable

2. B: Repair Initiation

3. A: Repair

4. B: 'Oh' receipt

(Heritage, 1984a: 319)[10]

The 'Oh' here is of course a stand–in for all sorts of fourth–turn remarks, like, 'thanks', 'uh huh, 'that's what I thought you said', etc. In the discussion we are advised that "… in proposing a change of state of knowledge or information, the 'oh' receipt is well fitted to the sequence of repair initiation."   And further:

> Given this organization [of other–initiated repair], the initiator of a repair may
>
> be committed by the provision of a repair, to have undergone a change in his or
>
> her state of information and may be required to propose just that. The particle
>
> 'oh' is a major resource for the achievement of this proposal which, in turn,
>
> permits a mutually ratified exit from repair sequences. (1984a: 318)

Generally, we have known other–initiated repair as the repair of problems of hearing and/or common understanding and their relevance for the on-going work of sustaining sequence progression, and also how virtually no expression is exempt from a found need to repair it (Schegloff, Sacks & Jefferson, 1977). But here we find an interesting revision of our understanding of repair, *en passant*.

Repair is rendered a "change of state of knowledge or information", not only as what the repair delivers, but presumably what its initiation is oriented to. But neither knowledge nor information seems equivalent to 'problems of hearing or understanding' on multiple grounds. Like sequences themselves, 'problems' are

contingent courses of action, not end states; "states" won't take the measure of actions. For this reason, the 'change of state' formulation would seem to write a reduced account of every course of other–initiated repair, *including* the work of the speaker of the trouble–source turn in locating the likely trouble, as troubles of, e.g., person reference, allusion, ambiguity, upshot, story sequence, etc. Though much of the EP's development seems to turn on an equivalence of understanding, knowledge, and information, CA's corpus studies of the achievements of common understanding and inter–subjectivity (Schegloff et al., 1977; Schegloff, 1992, *passim)* would seem to quickly exhaust an 'informationalist' account of them.

Turning to the work of an 'Oh' receipt in 4th position, we think it is especially useful for getting at the EP's distinctive 'vocabulary of motives'. The motives invoked here are 'out of view' of conversation's organizations; they are *sub rosa*, and then revealed and resolved by the particle in 4th turn. So, one who initiates repair may be "committed by the repair to have undergone a change of state," and "may [then] be required to propose just that". It's a curious locution, as though a repair initiation were a 'pre–commitment' to a change of state, whose actual commitment–proposal is due upon the repair. It creates the sense of tension between alternatives—perhaps you're 'committed/required', perhaps not—and entails the insertion of unseen processes in the repair sequence. Having thus established the 'problem'—the tension of these possible motivated courses–of–action—'Oh' then resolves them by 'achieving the proposal', and this "in turn", "permits a mutually ratified exit from repair sequences".

The narrative thus writes a motivated account of repair sequences fitted to securing the work of 'Oh' in 4th turn. That is, there are inserted processes producing dynamic tensions, and 'Oh' is the solution to the problems the narrative delivers. Yet if repair is organized—and animated—to achieve common understanding, we should expect to find that work as of the parties' demonstrable orientations in actual cases. Here again, however, it is unclear that cases will yield evidence for the vocabulary of motives that the EP's account of repair sends forward.

Inapposite inquiries

The sense of an alternative vocabulary of motives animating the treatments of cases becomes more vivid in Heritage 1988 and 2002. "Oh-prefaced responses to Inquiries" (Heritage, 1998) develops a single theme, on how inquiries—questions— can be apposite, i.e., appropriate, fitting, due, or not, and how 'Oh-prefaced replies' "index" their inappositeness. The 'Oh-prefacing' is the marked case; we don't hear it if there is nothing awry:

> In responses to English questions, prefacing with the particle 'oh' indicates that, from the viewpoint of the answerer, a question is problematic in terms of its relevance, presuppositions, or context. (Heritage, 1998: Abstract)

The possibilities for inapposite inquiries seem, at first, to be quite broad, from relevance, to presuppositions, to the indefiniteness of context.[11] But they are soon pared to an inappositeness having to do with the sufficiency of information at hand

to render the inquiry in some way unnecessary. Following the presentation of some exhibits Heritage remarks:

> In all these cases, the matter that is questioned is already available—either directly stated, or by inference—from the respondent's prior talk. When such already available matters are questioned, regardless of their seriousness or triviality, they are recurrently met with oh–prefaced responses. (Heritage, 1998: 301)

And then:

> In sum, these oh-prefaced responses uniformly treat the inquiries to which they respond as inapposite by virtue of relevant information about the physical, social, cultural or personal context of the interaction—information that the questioner could or should have taken into account… (1998: 304)

We have two brief remarks about these formulations of the 'inapposite' before turning to "Oh-Prefaced Responses to Assessments" (Heritage, 2002).

By these arguments, what is inapposite about inapposite questions is a matter of information redundancy. The question need not have been asked; its answer was already available, as matters of information variously insinuated in the exchange so far. This is what the 'Oh' prefaced reply marks or indexes, and thus we see further evidence of the central place of information and its transfer as the background operation that lends order to interaction. Yet the alignment of 'information already in evidence' with inappositeness disciplines interaction to a

peculiar economy of expression. Unexamined in the proposal is the play of

redundancy in interaction as formative of what's being said and done.

Second, and unavoidably, to speak of information redundancy is to take the

measure of its ample or scarce distribution in an encounter. And as was observed, it

needn't be information in the most local sequential environment, but information

seeded broadly, in the "...physical, social, cultural or personal context of the

interaction—information that the questioner could or should have taken into

account" (Heritage, 1998: 304).

There are clearly reckonings attached, and in the traditions of EM and CA, it

is member reckonings, or "members' measures" (Sacks, 1988; 1992 *passim*) that

hold our interests and attention. But it is unclear whether this conceptual legacy

continues in the EP. It seems instead that the relevant measures are taken by the

analyst, or that for hearing an 'Oh-prefaced response to an inquiry', the analyst is

authorized to take them. If there is a member's measure in play here, it is a

summary judgment: the particle "indexes" an inappositeness, but *only* indexes it. It

is, in this respect, actually quite opaque, showing us nothing more of the

orientations or findings of the recipient beyond the expression. It is thus an

indexing that requires an interpretation, and it falls to the analyst to write it. We

will return to the larger question of whose reckonings become determinative, below.

'Oh-prefaced responses to assessments'

With respect to "Oh-prefaced responses to assessments," (Heritage, 2002; Heritage

and Raymond, 2005; Raymond and Heritage, 2006), and reading the literature

ahead, we can note two significant programmatic developments. The work of

'indexing' underlying structure digs more deeply in assessment sequences. Here we

find 'Oh-prefaced second assessments', and what the preface indexes has migrated

from changeable states and inapposite inquiries to matters of epistemic

independence—or not—between the speaking parties. The play of an epistemic

contest first appears here, and though the notational scheme of K+ and K– will not

be fully developed for another decade (see Heritage, 2012a), the affairs that will be

spoken of that way are in hand in 2002.[12]

We also find significant innovations in our understandings of the production

of both second *and* first turn assessments, and these are no less significant in taking

the measure of the EP's continuities and departures from sequential analysis.

Briefly, the central conceptual departures from sequential–analytic treatments of

assessment sequences appear to be these:

In CA, the distinction between first and next turn remarks shows a

constitutive, sequential relationship. The second owes its conditional relevance to

the first, and in the particulars of assessment sequences, we speak of 'upgrades or

downgrades' as characterizations of second–position remarks. A second is

upgraded or downgraded with respect to its prior. The measure is local, sequential,

and underwritten in our orientations to agreement and disagreement, and to

preference structure in the temporal production of next turns.

In "Oh-prefaced responses to assessments," however, we find a very different

arrangement and a very different deployment of this familiar pair structure. Here, first turn assessments are *also* measured as 'upgraded' or 'downgraded'. Conceptually, an upgraded *first* assessment would seem to be disengaged from the local sequential environment—upgraded *from what*?—though one could expect its measure would still be a vernacular measure. Unavailable as a *sequential* production, the task of measuring an upgraded or downgraded *first* assessment would seem to turn on other, non-sequential resources.[13]

Centrally, however, though we know of the pair "upgrade–downgrade" through treatments of assessment *sequences* (cf. Pomerantz, 1978; 1984), here they attach to very different objects and registers. Though assessment sequences furnish the materials in Heritage (2002), Heritage and Raymond (2005) and Raymond and Heritage (2006), the upgrading and downgrading they take up are not about the *objects* of assessment. That is, they are not about 'gorgeous days' or 'beautiful babies'. They are rather about the epistemic rights, claims, and authorities, or lack of same, to speak of them. And in this transfer of the *object* of the upgradings and downgradings we find a substantial departure from the conceptual orbit of sequential analysis. Perhaps a first departure has to do with the rendering of "position". It becomes in these new treatments an ordinal object relieved of a sequential production history.

We first see the ordinal rendering of position in discussions of first–turn assessments that address what is consequential about 'being first'. First assessments, that is, *doing being first*,

can index or embody a first speaker's claim to what might be termed 'epistemic authority' about an issue relative to a second or to 'know better about it... [and] where a state of affairs is separately experienced or known by the parties, going first can have a greater impact in implicitly establishing superior access, expertise, authority and rights to assess the matter in question... (Heritage, 2002: 200; also see Heritage and Raymond, 2005: 200; Raymond and Heritage, 2006: 684–685)

Thus, first–said assessments are, *as of their firstness*, "upgraded assessments", whose 'upgrade' is in hand before any next is produced. In this fashion, the sense of 'position' is re-written, as the *object* of the assessment is re-written first. What is being graded in these discussions—up or down—are social–capital attachments, matters of standing, authority, expertise and rights to *produce* whatever the assessment may be. And these gradings have no particular need for a sequential understanding of position because they do not owe to sequential productions or production accounts. In this fashion we see a pivot from temporal, sequential order to measures of what seem to be first and next claims of social–structural status. It is the *statuses* and claims thereto that stand as up or downgraded, as of their ordinal placements, at least initially. We are unaware of any comparable discussion in the received literature of ethnomethodology and CA.

As the argument about first–turn assessments develops, an allied task and problematic is assigned for any *next*–said assessment. Given the presumptive advantages of 'going first', if a person producing a second assessment "wishes to convey that he/she has *previously and independently* formed the same view or

opinion as the first speaker" (original emphasis), then there needs to be a way to do that. Oh-prefacing the second assessment is the way: "Oh-prefaced second assessments, in short, embody a declaration of epistemic independence" (Heritage, 2002: 201), and there are ample exhibits offered on behalf of the claim.

What we then see, from the assignment of 'gradings' to first assessments and the advantages of "going first", to the problematic for second speakers that follows, and the solutions that are then offered, is that assessment sequences in their entirety—across both turns—become sites for the play of epistemic independence and/or subordination. Each turn of the sequence offers evidence of an epistemic contest, and 'Oh–prefaced' second assessments are not the only resource for pursuing them. *Both* turns have regular devices for upgrading and downgrading their claims of authority via morphosyntactic features of the turn.

Heritage and Raymond (2005) cite the "negative interrogative" as the primary resource for upgrading *first* assessments (beyond the prerogatives of 'going first'), produced both in turn–initial *and* in last–turn position, as in "Isn't she a cute little thing?", or "That Pat, isn't she a doll?" (Heritage and Raymond, 2005: exhibits 13 and 14). They conclude from them:

> [B]y projecting a yes/no (or type–conforming) response, it asserts command of the terms to be used by the recipient in the assessment of the referent. Finally, the negative interrogative strongly invites agreement. It therefore invokes an established or settled position and, through that, a more extensive acquaintance with the referent and/or stronger right to assess it. (2005: 22)

It should be noted that by these framings, 'invitations to agreement' are more than invitations, and call for more than agreement. And 'asserting command' is quite a different action. We can also note that in the first exhibit, at least, about the 'cute little thing', the parties have *already* established that "Missis Kelley" is not well known to the recipient, and that the speaker has "a more extensive acquaintance" *before* we hear the interrogative device.

(3) (Heritage and Raymond, 2005:21, exhibit 13 [SBL:2-1-8:5])

1.   —> Bea: Wz las'night th'firs'time you met Missis Kelly?

2.   (1.0)

3.   Nor: Me:t who:m?

4.   Bea: Missiz Kelly?

5.   —> Nor: Ye:s hh [Yih kno] :w what<]

6.   —> Bea: [Isn't]   she a cu]te little thi:ng?

"Who knows Missis Kelley" is pursued in the very first turn, and the speaker's "extensive acquaintance" is established *first*, not *post,* the interrogative. In this light we can ask: what other work has the "negative interrogative" to do?[14]

There are also downgrading devices. In the case of first assessments [or first–*said* assessments], downgrades may also arrive at the end of the turn, and thus remark on the turn–so–far. Repeatedly, we find examples of "tag questions" such as 'aren't they?' or 'don't you think?', and in their presumed equivocation they are treated as downgrades of whatever the advantaged claims they are tagged to.

However, and absent the audio records we have only impressions, but they are that such cases of first–turn assessments produced with the re-completion of tag questions are found in materials collected in Great Britain. And on this point there is a noteworthy footnote citing Schegloff's observation of the same:

> The data used in this paper comprise several hundred items of ordinary conversation drawn from Britain and the United States. Most, but not all, of our cases involving symmetry between [assessment + tag question] and [partial repeat + agreement] forms are drawn from British data. What Schegloff (personal communication) calls "the British tag" as a means to downgrade epistemic claims may be much more prominent among speakers of British English than among their U.S. counterparts. For another case of British/US divergence in basic interactional usage, see Jefferson (2002). (Heritage and Raymond, 2005: 25, n. 8)

Holding aside whether Schegloff's observation of the "British tag" includes the conclusion that they are a "means to downgrade epistemic claims", we have by this account a central corpus of the EP's treatment of first–turn [epistemic] assessments tied to what seem to be ways of speaking not found elsewhere in the collection. (Compare with the assurances provided with respect to Oh-prefaced second assessments that "There are no discernable differences in the deployment of this practice between British and American English" [Heritage, 2002: 201].)

Yet another departure from treatments of assessments in sequential analysis is something of a negative observation. There are two organizational domains

central in the sequential analysis of adjacently paired turns and turn constructions of every type, and perhaps most familiar in assessment sequences—that is, recipient design, and preference organization—that have little or no place in the EP's account of assessments. We don't hear of them, although one could say that recipient design has been re-purposed, and now stands on behalf of a prevailing orientation to epistemic standing.[15]

Our observation is not that these things are impermissible. It is rather that we need to see these differences clearly. Assessments, by the EP's account, are now played out on a very different field whose contingencies are about status claims of access and authority, and whose upgrades and downgrades are not entirely, or even primarily, articulated through sequential organizations. It should not then surprise that familiar domains of sequential organization do not have a place in the Epistemic analyses.

Discussion

In sketching the trajectory of 'Oh' through this early literature, we find in "Oh–prefaced responses to assessments" (Heritage, 2002) the first appearance of invidious or "agonistic" social relations as the central driver of sequences of talk–in–interaction. It is a major innovation in our received literatures. A contest about 'who knows what', and entitlements to say it, first emerges there, and soon becomes an identifying feature of the Epistemic conceptual landscape, played out in our most ordinary daily encounters. It is deeply indebted to Goffman's corpus, and becomes in subsequent publications an "epistemics of social relations," wherein "epistemic

rights, authority and subordination" are played out in the "patrol and defense of information preserves" (Heritage and Raymond, 2005: 34), and contests of epistemic claims, struggle and "supremacy" between persons who, "at least at first appearance, have greater [and lesser] socio–epistemic rights…" (Raymond and Heritage, 2006: 685). An "epistemic order" of "positions, rights, and obligations… indexed and policed in practices of turn design and sequence organization" (Heritage, 2008: 310) emerges, expressed in measures of "epistemic stance" along a K–/K+ gradient (Heritage and Clayman, 2010: 140). (See Lindwall et al., 2016.)

Later still these contested relations assume the full expressions of "epistemic status", indexing an "engine" and indexed itself by Oh's various key turn productions as the "ticker" (though not the only one) of the underlying systematics driving interactional order and production (Heritage, 2012a,b; 2013b). Epistemic status goes on to become a "controlling influence on how [we] will be understood," and "monitoring epistemic status in relation to each and every turn at talk [becomes] an unavoidable feature of the construction of talk as action… [and] a nearly omnirelevant background in action formation" (Heritage, 2013a: 564, 565, 573). As Drew (2012) remarks in his commentary in the *Research on Language and Social Interaction* special issue, "I don't think any of us suspected that participants' monitoring and expression of epistemic status, and imbalances in relative status, are as constant, omnipresent, and omnirelevant as is proposed in these articles" (2012: 64). We certainly didn't suspect this.

Though these articulations of a fundamental contest animating interaction and its parties have not yet appeared as of 2002, it is just as clear that the

conceptual landscape has been readied for them. In the early "change of state" treatments of "Oh", the informationalist register is clearly in hand; information becomes the traffic, the *raison d'etre,* of interaction. So too for the play of "extraconversational contingencies" as drivers of talk–in–interaction, and the central proposal that the simple, occasioned expression "Oh" *indexes*—though not always—those very extraconversational things. No less evident 30 years ago is the pride of place given to Goffman, both within the Epistemic conceptual compass, and also in telling the formative history of sequential analysis. And although the modified Jamesian formulation of 'free-standing' "Oh" productions, opaque in their backward looking, seems to recede from view, the play and utility of the "generic Oh" does not, for reasons discussed below.

To these developments, "Oh–prefaced responses to inquiries" (Heritage, 1998) seems less formative.   It adds little to the conceptual landscape, beyond the notion of "inapposite inquiries". But to make the formulation work, two allied moves are set in play that prove quite durable for the subsequent program. Each turns on a play of "interpretation". It is said that an 'Oh–prefaced' response to an inquiry indexes an inapposite question. Yet the "Oh" here is remarkably inarticulate: *what* could be inapposite or redundant is left unsaid. The notion of 'indexing' is itself an un-filled interpretive claim; by itself, "Oh" delivers nothing more. These indexing tickers seem to be opaque 'alerts' that require an interpretive intervention to make sense of them, and it falls to the analyst to provide it.

Thus, a first alert begs its interpretation, and delivers an interpretative authorization to the analyst. And it is *this* move that recurs in the subsequent

development of the Epistemic Program: the prerogative of the over–hearing analyst to interpret the matters "indexed". As but an example of the burdens that follow, and the efforts to redress them, a BBC interview with Sir Harold Acton, who had been teaching modern poetry at Beijing University for some years, is presented (Heritage, 1998: 294). The interviewer asks "Did you learn to speak Chinese", and Sir Acton replies, "Oh yes (0.7) you can't live in the country without speaking the language … ." Thus an inapposite question is registered by an Oh–prefaced reply. Yet it is clearly a sensible interview question. A sensible listener could well ask it. So, if 'inappositeness' is to be found from "Oh yes…", it will fall to the analyst to find it. Heritage speaks of how Sir Acton's turn is said "with real finality," thus treating it as "obvious that he would have learned the language, and thereby implies that the inquiry questions something that might have been presupposed in virtue of the prior talk." But, apparently, the account–so–far is insufficient to secure what is inapposite about the question, and the interpretation continues: "Such a person as Sir Harold Acton could not have conceivably done this work without learning Chinese" (Heritage, 1998: 294).   But invocations of 'such persons', and what is "conceivable" about them are of course notoriously fugitive things. And we needn't take them up to note how the interpretative resources we find here stand at some distance from the inquiries of Sacks and Schegloff and the kinds of evidences they produce.

Returning to assessments and "Oh-prefaced responses to assessments" (Heritage, 2002), we find what may be a central innovation on the CA corpus, and perhaps a source of confusion for readers. In conversation analysis the work of

assessments is well known and well plied (Pomerantz, 1978, 1984; Sacks, Schegloff

and Jefferson, 1974, *passim*). It is known within its analytic community for familiar

programmatic distinctions, about first and second assessments, their productions,

upgradings and downgradings. They appear in Epistemic treatments of

assessments too, but bear little in common, familiar, on the one hand, but quite

differently tasked. Our discussion is recent enough that we won't return to it in

detail. It is rather the 'move' that we want to flag: familiar structures, relations and

analytic objects are invoked, but then animated in remarkably different fashion. The

objects of assessments in the hands of Epistemics are not things in the world. They

are rather the rights, authority and status, to *speak* of things in the world. Similarly,

the play of upgradings and downgradings are not now remarks on the objects of

assessment, but rather on the strength of rights and authorizations to *do* them.

Thus, a familiar analytic architecture, hard won as part of the analysis of the

praxeology of natural conversation, yields to a displacement: a very different

conceptual genealogy—one of epistemic status endowments—is nestled in the

familiar ground of sequential organization. One could miss the substitution. It is

this move that we wish to bring into view, and also the observation that it is here, in

the treatment of assessments, that we find the decisive installation of a Goffmanian

world of strategic interactions.

In the measure that we are dealing with talk and transcript, we can expect to

find this alternative conceptual landscape in the exhibits offered on its behalf. How

transcript is treated in the Epistemic Program is perhaps the most instructive field

for understanding the conceptual innovations it proposes. There, in its exhibits, the

conceptual and the technical intersect, as Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson, and their colleagues and students, showed us first. In transcript we return to the identifying and striking conceptual innovations of CA, on behalf of constitutive detail, demonstrable orientations, the temporality of sequential order, and also the promise of a parity of access when readers are presented with transcripts and their analyses. Part Two of our treatment takes up the second phrase of our title, "Animating transcripts", and turns to a review of exhibits, their analyses, and how else they may be understood by close attention to the sequential production of talk–in–interaction.

Notes

[1] And also how "the desire for approval, appreciation, or ratification," (Heritage and Raymond, 2005:15) "have a long lineage in Western political and social thought ..." (2005:15, n. 1).

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[2] There was of course the cited debate of 2012 in the journal *Research on Language and Social Interaction* that focused on the program's latest and most contemporary expressions. Here, we are looking at its early and formative expressions.

[3] Jefferson's early discussions of 'oh' as a "disjunct marker" (1978: 221–222), and "newsmarks" (1981) are mentioned.

[4] For James there is also an 'oh$_1$' usage, which "always occurs inside a sentence …". Heritage takes no interest there. Instead, the 'oh$_2$' designation is taken up, standing on behalf of the two forms "sentence initially, or by itself" (James, 1972: 163). Note that James is parsing sentences, not turns, and that her larger discussion is about the differences between 'oh' and 'ah'. Note finally that "free-standing" is not her formulation.

[5] Indeed, when we regard Oh's diverse productions as indexical expressions we recover grounds for taking interest whenever we hear it. A recurrent feature of the EP's treatments is that "Oh" only occasionally holds interest. We regularly find sequences where the expression is used multiple times, yet it is only here and there that it is taken up for analysis. For example:

   (Heritage, 1998: 317-318, exhibit 43, [NB:IV:14:l-2:SO])

   –> 1   Emm: <u>Oh</u>: I- We:ll we just got d<u>o</u>:wn .h

   –> 2   Lot: Oh you di:[d?

```
          3       Emm:              [Yea:uh.

  -> 4       Lot:    Oh how co:me.

  -> 5 ->   Emm:  .hhhh Oh we had to go to something last night at

          6              Buena Vista Country Club I won a bottle of liquor

          7             ehh::huh agai:n ehh hh[uh]

          8       Lot:                        [Go]:d y[ou:'re     lu:cky:.]

          9       Emm:                               [huh huh huh huh] huh

  -> 10     Lot:    [[Oh:::::::::::::[:::::,

          11      Emm:  [[.hh.hh.hh]   [Almost everybody won something but,

          12      Lot:    Uhh! [huh-hu:h hy]:h,

          13      Emm:       [.hhhhhhhh]

          14            (.)

          15 ->  Emm:  Ah::: I been to the do:ctor, hhhhhh
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The arrows in the far–left margin [ours] flag five expressions. The arrows to the right of the line numbers are original, and flag the single 'Oh' of line 5. The commentary remarks, "… though afforded every opportunity to elaborate on this news [of her good luck at the Country Club], she shifts topic at line 15 - a shift adumbrated by her initial oh-prefaced response to the initial inquiry… Here the upcoming shift is indexed by Emma's oh-prefaced response (at line 5)…"

How Emma's "Oh" of line 5 indexes the topic shift of line 15 is not entirely clear to us. But we might also take interest in the work of the other "Oh" productions, including Lottie's. And the reader might observe that Emma's "initial oh-prefaced response"

appears to be line 1, not line 5. Because the transcript begins with a second–

position remark, we do not hear the initial inquiry.

⁶ Measured to the section headings, those tasks include receipts of other–initiated

repair (Heritage, 1984a: 315), understanding checks and "sequence exiting

device[s]" (p. 318), and prefacing turns "within which understanding… is displayed"

(p. 321). The passage continues: "These tasks, however, are far from being the only

ones that the production of 'oh' may be used to accomplish; indeed they constitute

the absolute minimum that may be claimed about the uses of the particle and its

placement" (p. 324).

⁷ The sequence is produced again in Heritage (1984a: 329) with prior turns. They

show the work of 'opening up' the closing of the prior topic talk and perhaps the

conversation (note the "Oh" in J's first turn). In this sequential context, our turn of

interest—"Derek's home"—is produced as a new topic announcement.

    [Heritage 1984b:329, Ex. (38), Rah:II:7 (extended)]

        J: Oh (well) let's hope something comes o:f i[:t

        I: [Yes:.

        J: Mn: ['h

        I: [Ye[s

  –> J: [Derek's home?

            (0.5)

        I: Yo:ur De[rek.

J: [Ye:s [mm

I: [Oh:,...

8   Presented consecutively, exhibits (20) and (23) show the delicacy of the claim of a

backward–looking opacity. In both cases, their projectability is evidenced by the

overlaps they occasion. For example,

    [Heritage 1984b: 327, Ex. (23), Rah:B:2:JV(14):l]

      J: Oh:::. Have they'av yih visitiz g[one then,

      V: [They've go]:ne. Yes,

      J: Oh [:ah.

   –> V: [A::n:' they've gone to...

The discussion observes:

    In these cases, the informant/"oh" recipient's production of overlapping talk

    appears designed to stifle, or otherwise sequentially delete, the production of

    additional turn components projected by the production of "oh." (Heritage,

    1984a: 327)

Apparently, 'Oh' prefaces are heard for more than changes of state.

9   That the vernacular does indeed hold such debts, and is only an imperfect

expression of an unseen order, is the sub-text of what Garfinkel (2002, *passim*)

characterized as "formal analysis" (see Lynch and Wong, 2016**).**

[10] The section heading "5. Other-initiated repair" is found on p. 315. The discussion is also part of the discussion of section "6. Understanding checks", "a closely related environment in which 'oh' is used as a sequence exit device…" (Heritage 1984a: 318).

[11] Schegloff and Lerner (2009: 101) note in their remarks on the same passage, "Heritage's (1998) account of *oh*-prefaced responses to inquiry states that *oh*-prefacing serves to mark the preceding question as problematic or inapposite in terms of its relevance, presuppositions, or context. These are very broad categories indeed, and there is reason to believe that they may not be exhaustive."

[12] The first use of the K+/K– designation is found in Heritage and Raymond (2005). The focus, as it was in Heritage (2002), is assessment sequences. In their "Discussion and Conclusion", Heritage and Raymond begin with a paean to Goffman's "Territories of the Self" (1971) and how "rights to evaluate states of affairs are indeed 'ordinarily patrolled and defended' by individuals in routine conversational practices through which these rights are ranked by speakers relative to one another" (2005: 34). Those rankings are signed as K+ and K–. However, there also is a noteworthy footnote attached to this discussion. The note begins by mentioning that the analyses is "based on the examination of several hundred recorded conversations," but adds that a "robustly founded quantitative analysis is hampered … by what Schegloff (1993) calls the 'denominator problem'." This is followed by an interesting admission:

... without clear evidence of the parties' relative rights to knowledge *independent* of the talk, we cannot evaluate the extent to which the parties assert these rights *in* the talk. Thus we are obliged to focus on those cases in which the assertion of these rights emerges as a matter that the parties are addressing by talking. These methodological issues, of course, bracket the question of whether, or how, these relative rights exist independent of their assertion in the situation itself. (Heritage and Raymond, 2005:34, emphasis in original)

The upshot seems to be that there is no access to K+/K− states *beyond* their occasioned productions. These rankings cannot then be a resource for the analysis *of* their occasioned productions; they are only evidenced *in* those productions. The insight thus does indeed "bracket the question of whether ... these relative rights exist independent of their assertion in the situation itself." The puzzle is how the EP then proceeds to treat K+/K− gradients as extraconversational resources for the analysis of any next occasioned production (see, for example, Heritage, 2012a).

[13] The question of the production history of an upgraded [or downgraded] *first*–turn assessment is addressed in Heritage and Raymond (2005:16, footnote 3):

First position assessments commonly emerge in environments that have been made 'ripe' for them in various ways. For example, another speaker has made observations which clearly imply a particular evaluative stance toward the entity under discussion and which may trigger the production of an assessment.

First positioned assessments do not 'agree' or 'disagree' with the previous comments that lead up to them, though they may be aligned or disaligned with the tenor of those comments.

But this is only a characterization about 'triggers' and the rest. We are left to wonder about the difference between "'agree' and 'disagree'," and "aligned and disaligned." No evidence or exhibits are offered to show such relations, or ways of speaking that "clearly imply... [an] evaluative stance," but do not *perform* those relations. Instead, we have a narrative on behalf of "first positioned assessments" made "ripe" by their sequential environments. This would seem to be a weakened version of both production accounts and sequential environments. As it develops, these upgrades and downgrades are measured to syntactic turn constructions, instead.

[14]   The passage clearly suggests other work, as in "asserting command of the terms" of the recipient's reply, or in "strongly inviting agreement." But these are remarkably competitive formulations. They read as tasks of open *subject* subordination, a downgrading of a very different kind. The impression accentuates the sense of distance from the interests of sequential analysis in the achievements of common understanding for which 'authority and subordination' have no systematic play (see, for example, Moerman and Sacks, 1988).

[15] There is a brief discussion of "preference organization" in Raymond and Heritage (2006: 684). It treats preference not as a production account of next turns, but as a

functionalist account of a disposition to "maximize… affiliative, socially solidary actions…," and agreement in particular. "Preference" is thus rendered a substantive matter, rather than a grammatical regularity whereby "preferred" and "dispreferred" next turns reveal themselves *in* their temporal production. (See Raymond and Heritage, 2006: 688, 691 for brief mentions of the "preference for contiguity". See also Heritage (1984b) for a prior treatment of "preference" as on behalf of "social solidary actions." Levinson (1983) is a central resource for the reading.)

Funding

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