Finding “Face” in the Preference Structures of Talk-in-Interaction*

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This article connects the concept of “face” to interactionally characterizable locations in conversation and to a specific speaking practice used there. I consider the relevance of the “self/other” distinction for the organization of some action sequences in order to locate face concerns in interactional terms. In conversation, next speakers ordinarily begin speaking at or near a place where the current speaker could be finished. Occasionally, however, participants do not wait for the current speaker to finish, but complete the current turn themselves. One systematic basis for this relaxation of turn-taking practices is found in a preference organization for alternative actions in conversation. The anticipatory completion of a speaking turn by another speaker can be used to preempt an emerging dispreferred action and change it into the alternative preferred action. This preference structure includes a preference for agreement over disagreement, a preference for self-correction over other-correction, and a preference for offers over requests. A recipient’s anticipatory completion of an ongoing speaking turn is one conversational practice that makes possible a preference relationship between asymmetrical (i.e., differently valued) action types, and furnishes a basis for the recognizability of face concerns.

Goffman furnished social psychology with the notion of “face.” And as has usually been the case in Goffman’s work, he has pointed us in a very interesting direction. But, as is also usually the case, he has not given us much of a road map, let alone a topographical rendering of the terrain. In “On Face-Work,” for example, Goffman does not once subject his remarks to the discipline of the particularities of an actual single social encounter. Brown and Levinson (1987) provide a useful road map for speech acts, but as Holtgraves (1992:151) points out, “[T]he sequential nature of face-work is evident. . . . If single turns are the focus of the analysis, much face-work may be missed.” The emergent, contingent, and interactional nature of talk (and other conduct) in interaction provides the underlying terrain here, as elsewhere, for the organization of social life.

In this article I show how converting a structurally dispreferred action into a preferred alternative action furnishes a systematic site for the recognizability of face concerns. Erving Goffman (1967) introduced “face” and “face-work” into social psychology to explain the ritual organization of social encounters. In his view, “face” is something like the assessable public image of self that can be found in, and results from, social intercourse.1 Face is the evaluative dimension of “co-presence” (Goffman 1963) and thus is a matter of mutual concern and maintenance. Because this involves the public evaluation of self, face is connected intimately to the emotions. Often, however, it is not so much one’s identity that is at stake as the ongoing and ever-changeable level of regard that accrues to persons engaged in interaction through everything that happens. “Maintaining face” seems to be less a single describable aspect of sociality than a potential change of circumstances describable only by reference to the specific character of its potential or actual loss or enhancement. To maintain face is to fit in.

Goffman proposed that face considerations

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1 Arndt and Janney (1987) tie Goffman’s concept of face—as the individual’s needs for interpersonal acceptance and personal autonomy—to social psychological theories of interpersonal behavior and the dynamics of interpersonal relationships; see Mao (1994), however, for a recent explication of the traditional Chinese concept(s) of face, and for a critique of the adequacy of the more individualistic Western formulation for examining Chinese and Japanese politeness.
are central to every action in spoken interaction. Thus, for example, he states, “When a person volunteers a statement or message, however trivial or commonplace, he commits himself and those he addresses, and in a sense places everyone present in jeopardy” (1967: 37). This conceptual move constitutes the “social self” as an interactional self. Though face considerations are embedded in every action in the organization of talk-in-interaction, Goffman states as well that face-work dedicated to possible or actual threats to face can also become a matter of direct or exposed concern in the conduct of interaction. Contributing substantial detail to Goffman’s broad conceptual strokes, Brown and Levinson (1987) showed how particular face-threatening acts are realized linguistically and how such realizations are connected to variables of social organization such as power and social distance.

Goffman (1967) stated that a person’s face is “something that is diffusely located in the flow of events in the encounter” (p. 7). The aim of this report is to furnish some technical specificity to this metaphoric assertion. How is the “flow of events” organized as a recognizable course of action that provides the grounds for individual accountability? Where are “self” and “other” lodged in the organization of interaction? Here I am less interested in describing a particular “sequence of acts set in motion by an acknowledged threat to face” (Goffman 1967:19; emphasis added) than in describing a systematic basis for conversational practices that furnishes the very possibility and recognizability of both face threat and remediation (see Schegloff 1988a).

PREFERENCE ORGANIZATION

It has been widely observed (e.g., Brown and Levinson 1987; Heritage 1984; Holtgraves 1992) that matters of face, on the one hand, and preference organization in conversational interaction, on the other, are intimately connected. The term preference organization refers to a collection of methods (e.g., Davidson 1984, 1990; Lerner 1989, 1994; Pomerantz 1978, 1984; Sacks 1987; Sacks and Schegloff 1979; Schegloff 1988b; Schegloff, Jefferson, and Sacks 1977). These methods enable social solidarity and its recognizable absence in talk-in-interaction (Heritage 1984). They are features of the institutionalized social structure of talk-in-interaction, not reflections of individual desire. Also, as Heritage (1984) states, “It is deviance from these institutionalized designs [of preference organization] which is the inferentially rich, morally accountable, face-threatening and sanctionable form of action” (p. 268).

The possibility of a preference organization of actions is based on the possibility of alternative relevant actions. The asymmetrical relationship (Sacks 1992, vol. 2:456) or valuing of these actions can be a systematic, cultural, or even locally occasioned possibility. The privileging of one class of actions over another is not a matter of personal prerogative, but is constituted by structural preferences built into various aspects of the sequential organization of talk-in-interaction. This asymmetry of relevant action alternatives is realized through practices that produce systematic advantages for certain types of (thereby preferred) action over other types of (thereby dispreferred) action. There are both turn-constructional and sequence-organizational practices that enable these preferences.

Turn-Constructional Practices

As demonstrated by Sacks (1987) and Pomerantz (1978, 1984), turns at talk that disagree with the action performed in a prior speaking turn are ordinarily constructed differently from turns that agree with a prior turn. The inclusion, in a disagreeing turn, of elements such as hesitations, weak agreements, and accounts shows that the disagreement is being produced as a dispreferred alternative to agreement. Further, these elements are positioned within a turn so that the actual disagreement is pushed back toward the completion of the turn. On the other hand, agreement turns ordinarily are composed without any special markings; therefore the sole agreement element occurs at the beginning of the turn. Thus a disagreement that has been composed with a dispreferred turn shape shows itself to be an alternative to agreement, whereas an agreement that has been composed with a preferred turn shape does not show itself to be an alternative to anything.

The preferred and dispreferred turn shapes are not always used for agreement and disagreement respectively. Schegloff (1988b) points out that preference/dispreference structures can be built into the sequence type
itself. Thus, as one might expect, and as empirical work by Pomerantz (1984) bears out, interlocutors ordinarily disagree with actions such as self-deprecations using a preferred turn shape, but agree with such actions in a fashion showing that the agreement is dispreferred. In other words, self-deprecations ordinarily prefer a disagreeing response. This point is important because it shows that preference organization is not synonymous with the organization of agreement/disagreement.

These built-in preferences provide an interactionally relevant, normative structure for determining how to properly respond to a prior action/turn. Though speakers ordinarily do compose responding actions with preferred or dispreferred turn shapes in accordance with the preference structure built into the sequence type, they do not always do so. When a speaker produces (for example) an acceptance to an invitation but does so with hesitations, accounts, or the like, or produces a rejection to an invitation straightforwardly without such mitigating elements, they are doing more than merely accepting or declining the invitation. Or when a speaker disagrees straightaway with a prior speaker’s assessment, their disagreement may be treated as argumentative rather than as a difference of opinion. (One common feature of all-out argument seems to be the structuring of disagreement within a preferred turn shape.)

Sequence-Organizational Practices

In addition to the built-in preferences found in various kinds of action sequences, in which the initiating action projects one type of response as its preferred response, other aspects of sequence organization further enable preference/dispreference organization in conversation. I can mention only one here. Preliminary or pre sequences (Sacks, 1992 vol. 1:685; Schegloff 1968, 1980, 1990; Terasaki 1976) provide a way to substitute one action for another, impending action or to avoid an impending action altogether, because a pre can foreshow an action without actually preforming that action. This practice sustains preference organization in two ways. First, if (for example) a “pre-invitation” is issued (such as “Are you doing anything tonight?”), it is possible to avoid a dispreferred response to an actual invitation because the invitation need not be issued if it turns out that the person is busy. In that case, an invitation report may be substituted. Second, if (for example) a “pre-request” is issued (such as “Are you going to town today?”), it is possible for the recipient to make an offer rather than waiting for a request, thus enabling a preference for offers over requests. Similarly, “pre-disagreements” (Schegloff et al. 1977) can be followed by backdowns, which thus prevent actual disagreement. Schegloff (1987) provides an analysis of a pre-disagreement that “allowed the conversion of a sequence whose component turns were about to be in a relationship of disagreement to be done instead as an agreement” (p. 108).

The asymmetry of preference organization at the sequence level has been noted in a preference for some offers over requests (of offerables), self-repair over other-repair, and agreement over disagreement. Moreover, as I will argue, that domain of action which Goffman (1981) calls speaker “footing” may also be preference-organized. For example, speaking for oneself (as animator and as author/owner of an utterance) seems to be preferred over speaking for another participant (as animator but not as author/owner of an utterance), in the sense that voicing a coparticipant’s experiences, actions, or viewpoints is recognizably a second alternative to that coparticipant’s speaking on his or her own behalf, whereas voicing one’s own experiences and the like is not ordinarily an alternative to anything. (Speaking for oneself might be regarded as roughly the default or unmarked alternative.) By reference to the sequential organization of actions such as agreement/disagreement, request/offer, and repair, “self” and “other” are furnished with their relevance for interaction (see Schegloff et al. 1977). Hence grounding the examination of self/other in the sequential organization of conversation provides a specifiable site for matters of public regard or face.

In this report I describe how the anticipatory completion of a turn-in-progress by another speaker can be used to preempt an emerging action and convert it into another action. I show how this practice contributes another method to sustain the preference-organized relationship between such alterna-

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2 See Levinson (1983) for a theoretical comparison of pre-sequences and indirect speech acts, and Schegloff (1988c) for an empirical comparison.
tive action types as agreement/disagreement, self-correction/other-correction, and offer/request. Goffman (1967) asserted that “almost all acts involving others are modified, prescriptively or proscriptively, by considerations of face” (p. 13). This investigation stands as an attempt to discover some of the practices of talk in interaction that supply the resources for such prescriptions and procriptions, and to locate analytically the “ritual requirements” of Goffman in the so-called “system requirements” of conversation analysis.

INTERACTIONAL CONTEXTS

The data used in this investigation consist of recordings of naturally occurring talk-in-interaction, and have been drawn from a large shared corpus of telephone calls and copresent interactions. All of the data presented here were collected in the United States and all of it is in English, though at least some of the phenomena described here have been found in other languages and cultures, including structurally distant languages such as Japanese (see, e.g., Lerner and Takagi 1995). Further, the instances of interaction are drawn from settings that vary on many of the dimensions used by social scientists to characterize contextual variation (including familial, institutional, and therapeutic settings). The phenomena reported here can be found across these variations of context, and to this point, seem insensitive to such variations. What appears to matter as relevant context is the in-progress recognizability of a compound turn-constructional unit, whatever the “larger” setting in which it is being constructed. (Schegloff [1996] discusses the insensitivity of another type of action-in-conversation to vernacularly characterized settings and participants.)

I proceed in the following manner. First I describe conversational turn construction, the structure of compound turn-constructional units, and the small sequence of actions that anticipatory completion of such units can launch. Then I briefly discuss the variety of forms that agreement can take, including anticipatory completion. Next I show how anticipatory completion can be used to preempt an emerging disagreement in a fashion that results in collaboratively achieved agreement. Finally I present other types of preference-organized actions and show that anticipatory completion can be used to convert dispreferred actions into preferred actions across a range of action types. Throughout this analysis I describe the relevance of self/other in sequence-organizational terms as a way to locate, in interactional terms, those moments when matters of public regard or face might be recognized.

TURN CONSTRUCTION

Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson (1974) showed that speaking turns in conversation are ordinarily constructed from units that can project, in their course, roughly what it will take to complete the unit type under way. The concept of “turn-constructional unit” is simple but easily misunderstood. It is simple in that the term turn-constructional unit merely registers the fact that there are units out of which turns are constructed. Some turns are constructed from a single such unit; others, from several or many such units. Some unit types are constructed out of single words (e.g., “No.”); others, from multicausal sentences (e.g., “Ron I told ya when I made the blouse I’d do the buttonholes.”). This concept becomes more complex when one attempts to specify the character of these units. Because the recognizability of a unit type is always a local matter, which occurs at the “point of production” of each turn, all of the resources of turn position (both the thick particulars of its context and its sequential environment) and turn composition (including intonation, structure and content) can be relied upon by a speaker and used by recipients in order to locate what unit type is under way, and thus what roughly will be needed to bring it to a possible completion.4

Turn-constructional units, then, might be viewed as amenable to formal description only up to a point. The concept of the

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3 The transcribed excerpts I present were produced with a set of transcription notations devised by Gail Jefferson to capture the details of actual conversation. Atkinson and Heritage (1984) provide a fairly complete description of the most frequently used conventions.

4 As Sacks et al. (1974) point out, turn taking is coordinated by reference to possible completion, not actual completion. For a recent attempt by linguists to specify the turn-constructional unit in terms of linguistic practices rather than language structure, see Ford, Fox, and Thompson (1996).
turn-constructional unit indicates what must be sought by participants (and professional analysts) from the composition-in-its-position of an utterance, but does not define what specifically will furnish the recognizability of a unit type in a particular case; that is always a local matter. The broad requirement—that units of turn construction have recognizable structures which project completion—is part of the turn-taking system employed by participants to conversation, but the specific features of composition and context that will realize these requirements are left to local determination. Here I emphasize two features of the structure of turn-constructional units: These units are emergent and directional. Thus they are available to participants as they unfold, not only on their completion.

**Compound Turn Construction**

In saying that turn-constructional units (henceforth TCUs) are not amenable to full definition, I do not mean that further differentiation of their structure is impossible. In a further development of these earlier findings, I have described one social-syntactic form that TCUs can take (Lemer 1991, forthcoming). This unit type, the compound TCU, projects completion in a distinct way. During its production, a compound TCU shows that it has a multicomponent structure consisting of at least a preliminary and a final component, as in the following excerpt at lines 5–9 and again at lines 13–16:

1. [SF:1]
   1. Mark: *thhhhh Oka::y now here’s the plan.
   2. Joan: ÖOkay.
   3. Mark: *pk *thhhhh uh::m if I don’t see yuh?
   4. (0.7) *thhh why don’tche call me sometime before noon Saturday.
   5. Joan: Okay.
   6. Mark: Okay?
   7. Joan: Mm-hm.
   8. Mark: *thhhh en then if I do see yuh then we c’n make, hh *hh arrangements.

The beginning of a turn’s talk—as it emerges in real time—can show itself to be a preliminary component (e.g., “if I do see yuh” at lines 13–14). Because of the in-progress recognizability of the “if X + then Y” structure, both the possible completion of that preliminary component itself and the form of the final component (“then Y”) can be roughly foreseen.

Coparticipants must examine a speaker’s utterance to determine where a next speaker can properly begin to speak (Sacks et al. 1974). Because a compound TCU as a whole can reach completion only when the final component is produced, compound TCUs must be inspected for completion in a special way. For compound TCUs—before the final component is begun—recipients must examine the emerging talk in order to determine whether the final component has begun. Only after the final component is launched can recipients monitor the talk for the place where transition to a next speaker will become properly relevant. In other words, not until a speaker has begun the projected final component can the entire TCU come to possible completion and thereby to a transition-relevance place.

Many aspects of turn design can furnish a realization of the features of a compound TCU. For example, in addition to “if X + then Y”- and “when X + then Y”-type compound TCUs, I have identified TCUs that consist of two-part contrasts (not X + Y), TCUs that include parenthetical inserts (X1 + Y + X2), and TCUs that are prefaced by a form of author attribution (“She said +X” or “I thought +X”) as compound turn-constructional types. Compound TCUs furnish the sequential possibility of (and reflexive accountability for) anticipatory completion by another speaker because a compound TCU—in the course of the preliminary component—foreshows both a place where the final component could be due (at the completion of the preliminary component) and the form that the final component will take. This possibility of anticipatory completion is realized in the following excerpt:

2. [GTS]
   1. Dan: When the group reconvenes in two weeks =
   2. Roger: =they’re gunna issue straitjackets
   3. Dan: Hey!-

Here the “when X” preliminary component provides a special opportunity for another
participant to produce a rendition of the “[then] Y” final component, and to produce it at precisely a place where it could be due. That is, it is positioned as a grammatical extension of the initial utterance.

**Anticipatory Completion as Initiation of a Sequence**

The anticipatory completion of a TCU-in-progress can make relevant a next action by the speaker whose TCU was completed, at least when the anticipatory completion is addressed to that speaker. This next action is the sequence-appropriate responding action. For example, this action can be the acceptance or rejection of the completion as a proffered anticipatory understanding in the course of an explanation. Here the anticipatory completion of another speaker’s TCU can initiate a small sequence of action: the interposed completion, followed by acceptance or rejection of that completion as an adequate rendition of the projected but unspoken completion of the explanation.5

This collaborative turn sequence can be seen in Excerpt (3), in which Marty is explaining to Josh the problems of copying from one tape recorder to another:

(3) [CDHQ:II:3]
1 Marty: Now most machines
2 don’t record that
3 slow. So I’d wanna-
4 when I make a tape,
5 Josh: be able tuh speed
6 it up.
7 → Marty: Yeah.

The anticipatory completion by Josh is the first or initiating action of the sequence; the confirmation of the proffered completion is the second or responding action. By co-opting the projected key element of the explanation before it is voiced, Josh can show understanding of what Marty is explaining. Marty’s agreement token then confirms that understanding.

As Excerpt (3) shows, one consequence of completing another speaker’s compound TCU is that it changes the participants’ positions in relation to the ongoing sequence of actions. That is, it changes the character of their opportunities to participate in producing the sequence. This can be compared to the sequential operation of “counters” as responding actions to the first part of an adjacency pair—for example, a counterinvitation in response to an invitation (Sacks 1987: note 3). When a counterinvitation is offered, the parties exchange their opportunities to participate within the sequence. The original inviter is now in a position to accept or decline the (counter)invitation. Anticipatory completions, like counters, interchange the opportunities to produce initiating and responding actions within a sequence.

Though employing anticipatory completion can switch the positions within a sequence, this change must be sustained by the prior speaker because there is a way to “turn the tables” again on a participant who employs anticipatory completion. In Excerpt (4) at lines 2–3, Rich (in response to a request for confirmation by Carol) begins to explain that you can take a cat to the Humane Society without cost (in contrast to having the Society come and pick it up). This remark can be seen to support Carol; she had made a similar assertion (also in an “if + then” format) earlier, but it was rejected by another participant.

(4) [US]
1 Carol: Am I right?
2 Rich: if you bring it
3 intuh them
4 Carol: ih don’t cost
5 yuh [ nothing
6 → Rich: [ doesn’t cost
7 you anything =
8 Carol: = right

By producing an anticipatory completion, Carol, who had been in a position to respond to the supporting explanation (for example, by confirming it), now is in a position to allow Rich to confirm the jointly produced explanation. This interchange of positions, however, does not guarantee that

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5 In this section and throughout the report I speak of anticipatory completion as initiating a sequence. Yet in some or even many cases it may be possible to characterize the speaker of the preliminary component as mildly eliciting or even markedly “inviting” completion from a recipient in various ways (e.g., through prosody). In these cases it might be appropriate to speak of the completion as forwarding the sequence rather than initiating it.
the prior speaker (Rich, in this case) will always respond with an agreement (or disagreement) as Rich shows at lines 6–7. As in this case, a delayed completion (Lerner 1989) is used to reverse for a second time the opportunities to participate within the sequence, so that Carol again is in a position to confirm Rich’s explanation. Of course, Rich need not relinquish his turn at all. Attempting to complete another’s TCU does not automatically cause the original speaker to relinquish his or her turn. The original speaker must collaborate by dropping out, or must ratify the anticipatory completion in some other way.

Anticipatory completion is a device lodged at the intersection of two systems that organize conversational interaction: the structuring and organizing of talk by turn-taking practices, and the organization of actions produced in conversation as sequences of actions. The before-completion onset of talk by another speaker constitutes a relaxation of turn-taking practices designed for one-at-a-time speaking, in favor of speaking out of turn to accomplish an action that cannot wait for possible completion.\(^6\)

Several features of collaborative turn sequences suggest a relaxation rather than a violation of turn taking: (1) Beginning anticipatory completion at completion of the preliminary component maintains an orientation to changing speakers in a fashion that aims to minimize overlap; (2) a transition-relevance place remains where the prior speaker projected that one would be; and (3) the response slot gives the speaker of the preliminary component a systematic position from which to maintain some authorial control over what the TCU will become—that is, to accept or reject the proffered completion.

This last feature is seen most dramatically when the completion misses its mark and is rejected, as in the following excerpt at lines 14–15. (Also note Nancy’s response to the rejection at lines 16–17.)

\(^6\) Other actions can be accomplished by speaking before possible completion; for example, see Jefferson (1973) on “recognition point” entry. In addition, Sacks and Schegloff’s (1979) study of person reference and Pomerantz’s (1978) study of compliment responses show other ways in which competing systems can be managed, and how some features of one system can be relaxed as part of their cooperation.

\(^{(5)}\) [Hyla:simplified]

1. Hyla: I wz deciding
2. if I should write him
3. the thank you
4. [ fer the birthday gift.
5. Nancy: [ Yea:h
6. Hyla: hh ‘hh I decided no:t
7. to [ though
8. Nancy: [ How co:me,
9. Hyla: ‘t hhhhh (.) Becuz I
10. figure, hhh [ hhh
11. Nancy: [ If ‘e hasn’
12. written ye:t, (0.4) then
13. ‘e doesn’t want to.
14. → Hyla: Oh:: don’t say
15. thahhh[a(h)t
16. Nancy: [ NO is tha’
17. whatcher think[ing?
18. Hyla: [No::,

Anticipatory completions rarely seem to miss their mark, as Nancy’s does in the above case. That is, except in characterizable environments—for example, where the completion is marked or composed as intendedly not serious, as in Excerpt (2), and perhaps in “tutorial” exchanges—the anticipatory completions I have seen are rarely rejected. This situation has at least two straightforward structural reasons. First, the compound TCU provides a sequential opportunity for completion but does not require it. Thus a recipient need not provide one if they are not prepared to do so. Also, as Excerpt (4) shows, the anticipatory completion can be supplanted by a delayed completion from the original speaker rather than being either accepted or rejected. Both furnish ways of avoiding disagreement; as Goffman (1967) suggested avoidance is the surest way to prevent threats to one’s face.

COLLABORATIVE ACHIEVEMENT OF AGREEMENT

Agreement, as a practical matter, can be achieved in a variety of ways. When I use the term agreement here I am collecting under a general term sequence-specific actions which range from confirmation to acquiescence. The action that anticipatory completion preempts will govern the character of the agreement, and indeed whether “agreement” is what is being done at all. Also, when I speak of “agreeing” I am not referring to what the speaker “means”,
"intends", or “believes”; rather, I am referring to practices that can amount to “agreeing” for the interaction.

In both of the following excerpts a place is made for agreement, and agreement then is asserted in that place. In Excerpt (6), B asserts agreement with a prior speaker’s proposition:

(6) [GL:DS]
1 A: But if you look at, say, the Ten Commandments,
2 they really are based on race survival.
3 5 - > B: I think so. I really do.

In Excerpt (7), Dad confirms Kerry’s account of a rule that will govern voting in their family investment club:

(7) [HIC]
1 David: But (. ) if you call somebody up and say “no:” you gotta put that in writing,
2 so that its on record.
3 6 Kerry: But you can’t use yer shares unless yer here.
4 9 is what I’m say[ing]
5 10 → Dad: [That’s right, that’s right.
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In Excerpt (6), B concurs with A’s proposition; in Excerpt (7), Dad confirms Kerry’s account. In each of these exchanges the business of the turn is doing agreement. In addition to claiming agreement, however, there are ways to demonstrate it (see Sacks 1992, vol. 2:252).

A speaker can show he or she is in agreement with a prior turn by producing an utterance which is not taken up with claiming agreement per se, but nevertheless demonstrates agreement with the prior speaker, as J does in Excerpt (8):

(8) [Pomerantz (1984)]
1 M: You must admit it was fun the night
2 we we [nt down
3 4 → J: [It was great fun. . .

By producing an upgraded assessment just after M’s prior assessment, J demonstrates accord with M’s assessment (Pomerantz 1984).

When agreeing or disagreeing with a proposition or assessment is a relevant responsive action, anticipatory completion can be used to demonstrate accord by co-opting a key element of that proposition. In Excerpt (9), an “if X+ then Y” compound TCU format affords the sequential possibility of anticipatory completion. In this case, the anticipatory completion at lines 9–10 demonstrates a continuing agreement with A’s propositions:

(9) [GL:DS]
1 A: but if you look at, say, the Ten Commandments,
2 they really are based on race survival.
3 5 B: I think so.
4 6 I really do.
5 7 A: If you don’t obey
8 those Ten Commandments,
9 10 → B: the race is going to go to hell pretty damn fast.

The projected TCU final component is co-opted by Speaker B at lines 9–10. B’s anticipatory completion stands in place of A’s projected (but now co-opted) final component, and as such counts as a rendition of that final component; that is, it can count as a version of what Speaker A was about to say. Moreover, agreement would have been a relevant next action for B, if A had finished the TCU. Speaker B, by producing a version of the completion and thus collaborating with Speaker A in the production of the proposition as a whole, thereby demonstrates—in this agreement-relevant environment—agreement with the proposition as a whole. In this way, agreement is achieved collaboratively in the course of a TCU. (A has collaborated by choosing not to resume speaking.) In summary, by merely voicing what can be treated as a continuation of another’s utterance, B associates himself with the TCU as a whole and with the collaboratively produced proposition it carries.

The use of anticipatory completion to achieve agreement in an agreement-relevant environment seems to rely on (at least) the following conditions. First, anticipatory completions are produced with a “preferred” turn shape (Pomerantz 1984). They are positioned to be contiguous with the preliminary component, and they are composed in an unmarked fashion; that is, they are unprefaced and are designed as assertions rather than with (for
example) the upward intonation of a “try-marker” (Sacks and Schegloff 1979).

Second, anticipatory completions are composed (as the name suggests) to affiliate structurally with the prior utterance. In other words, they are built syntactically off of a turn-in-progress. As such they constitute one type of ellipsis—if one can recast the use of that term with an interactional die, as Goldberg (1978) did when she stated, “A speaker may demonstrate at the level of grammar the affiliation of his present turn-constructional component with that of the just prior speaker by using as his constructional basis some portion of the prior speaker’s utterance” (p. 218). For anticipatory completion, syntactic affiliation takes the form of structural equivalence to the foreshown, but co-opted, final component.

Third, a structurally equivalent utterance is ordinarily treated as a rendition of what would have been said by the co-opted speaker. That is, authorship/ownership is implicated for the original speaker, and this feature makes relevant a response from the original speaker.

Anticipatory completion also can be used so as to exploit its structurally implied authorship/ownership, rather than to achieve it in a serious fashion. Like other practices of talk-in-interaction, this one can be turned to other, markedly alternative uses. That is, it can be used perversely. For example, anticipatory completion can be used to tack an implausible completion onto the prior speaker’s turn, as Roger (a teenagetherapy group member) does to Dan (the group therapist) in the following excerpt:

(10) [GTS]
1 Dan: Now when the group
2 reconvenes when the
3 (.) group reconvenes
4 in two weeks =
5 Roger: =they're gunna issue
6 straitjackets

Agreement and Disagreement

Anticipatory completion can be employed as a method for fashioning agreement. Its deployment can count as agreement; that is, it can be treated as agreement. During an utterance for which agreement (or disagreement) will be relevant in next turn, anticipatory completion can demonstrate agreement before completion is reached. But what if the utterance that implicates agreement or disagreement as a next action already disagrees with its prior turn?

One basis for initiating a collaborative turn sequence can be found in the systematic relationship of agreement to disagreement in conversation. Sacks (1987) proposed that agreement and disagreement constitute a preference-organized system for conversation. A preference for agreement is constituted in part by the differential practices for producing agreement and disagreement that include built-in methods for achieving agreement over disagreement. Further, Pomerantz (1975, 1984) has described the differential turn shapes of agreement and disagreement: “Massively throughout conversational materials, agreements are organized as preferred activities and disagreements as dispreferred activities” (1975:66). Dispreferred turns characteristically incorporate delays, pre-positioned weak agreements, and other sequential markers (e.g., “Well”) that can foreshow an upcoming disagreement and thereby provide the possibility of its preemption (see Davidson 1984; Pomerantz 1984).

As I pointed out above, compound TCUs that have agreement or disagreement as a relevant next action furnish one environment for initiating collaborative turn sequences. Turns that are themselves in disagreement with a prior turn can provide a further basis—a systematic basis—for anticipatory completion. Here it can be used to convert an incipient disagreement into a collaboratively achieved agreement. Because disagreement elements ordinarily are expressed later rather than earlier in a turn, it is possible to project an upcoming disagreement element during an emerging turn and thus co-opt its production. In other words, a prefaced disagreement provides the sequential opportunity for anticipatory completion.

This can be seen in Excerpt (11) at line 17. In this excerpt, Cathy’s father, Ron, asks her (as part of a father-daughter discussion of
“living together” versus “getting married”) why she would not get married if she really found someone who suited her. Cathy, at line 10, cuts in with an initial agreement (“nothing [would be wrong with getting married]”) and then adds a contingency to this agreement (“if you’re sure [about your feelings]”). At line 12, Ron begins a response that prefaces a disagreement with Cathy’s contingency as unrealistic and perhaps juvenile. This canonical turn shape for disagreement furnishes a [preface + disagreement] compound TCU format; at line 17, Cathy preempts the disagreement by producing a rendition of the projected component herself at the place where it is due.

(11) [MOTHER’S DAY]
(( Ron is Cathy’s father))

1 Ron: what would be good is
2 t’ sit down here
3 ‘n tell- you tell me
4 (1.1) ((R chewing food))
5 what is wro::ng
6 () if you f:ind, like yer mother says
7 someone thet you-
8 (0.2) ((chewing))
9 nothing if you’re sgre,
10 Cathy: nothing if you’re sure,
11 (0.3) ((chewing))
12 Ron: well honey
13 (0.5) ((chew & swallow))
14 in dis world,
15 really truly.
16 ()
17 → Cathy: °you can’t be sure.°
18 → Ron: No, you really can’t.
19 () I mean ih ih—
20 that’s that’s just fine,
21 I’d go along with you a
22 hundred percent if there
23 was a formula that you
24 could say, “I guarantee,
25 that’s the person” . . .

What has happened here? Ron is objecting to Cathy’s contingency, but before he can actually voice the objection part of his turn she produces a rendition of it. In this way she acknowledges his (aphoristic) objection before he has a chance to express it.

Moreover, it is possible, especially given the noticeably lowered volume and the strong terminal intonation in the voicing of her anticipatory completion, that Cathy’s contribution may be hearable as more than acknowledging Ron’s objection. In this particular sequence it may be hearable as acquiescing to his invocation of aphoristic wisdom. In his response, at line 18, Ron does seem to treat Cathy’s completion in this way. He produces an agreeing response in the next turn by confirming the anticipatory completion, and then uses that as an agreed-upon point or settled matter as he continues his turn. I am not implying here that Cathy is now agreeing with Ron’s opinion on the matter of “living with a man” versus “getting married” or that he treats her utterance in that way, but only that her anticipatory completion furnishes the basis for achieving agreement in place of the incipient disagreement over the “if you’re sure” contingency.

It is here “self” and “other” become consequential for the action that an utterance accomplishes, because one’s position in the incipient dispute will matter for the action accomplished by the utterance. Cathy co-opts the projected disagreement component and, by voicing that component herself, preempts the disagreement import of the utterance. This is achieved as a collaborative completion, because Ron neither continues nor resumes his unfinished turn. Moreover, the anticipatory completion addressed to Ron by Cathy sets in motion a collaborative turn sequence. Ron produces an agreeing response to the anticipatory completion, as the second part of the sequence. This sequence of actions, then, constitutes the collaborative achievement of agreement.

THE CONVERSION OF DISPREFERRED ACTIONS INTO PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE ACTIONS

The preemption of a disagreement, as it is arising, by a collaboratively achieved agreement is one practical procedure for sustaining a preference for agreement. The deployment of anticipatory completion actually constitutes an interaction of two systems that organize conversational interaction: the preference for agreement in the organization of sequences of action, and the organization of turn taking. In this case, agreement is achieved through a relaxation of an aspect of turn organization, because the next speaker begins “out of turn”—that is, before the current speaker has reached a possible completion. However, anticipatory completion, as a device for converting one conversational feature-in-production into another, is not limited to
converting a disagreement into an agreement. It can be used to convert various types of dispreferred actions into their respective preferred action types.

In this section I examine two preference-organized domains: the organization of repair, and the organization of offers and requests. In these interactional environments, anticipatory completion can be used to co-opt the completion of a dispreferred action-in-progress. This preempts the emerging action because the final component of a compound TCU, produced by a recipient of the emerging turn (“other”) and to the erstwhile speaker of that turn (“self”), can constitute a different action than if it had been produced by the original speaker for its addressed recipient. Thus, anticipatory completion can be used to convert dispreferred action into a collaboratively achieved, preferred action in the same domain of activity. Yet although a recipient can attempt to preempt an action by producing an anticipatory completion, the success of the attempt remains contingent on the current speaker’s actions. The current speaker must withdraw and/or ratify the converted action by producing a response to it. Thus the conversion of one action into another remains a collaborative interactional achievement.

**Repair and Correction**

Correction and (more generally) repair have a preference organization. Schegloff et al. (1977) described a preference for self-correction in the organization of repair. They stated that most of the repair which occurs is both initiated and carried out by the speaker of the turn that is the source of trouble (i.e., “self”). These empirical observations are the result of organizational preferences for self-initiation and self-correction which are constituted by (1) opportunities for self-initiation that precede opportunities for other-initiation (other-initiation tends to be held off) and (2) both self-initiation and other-initiation that are designed to result in self-repair. One facet of this preference consists of the types of turns used by participants other than the speaker of the trouble-source turn to initiate a repair. These turns locate the trouble source but do not assert a correction; instead other-initiation makes self-correction relevant for the next turn.

Further, Schegloff et al. (1977) state, “[M]uch of the other-correction which does occur [is] treated by its recipient on its occurrence, as involving more than correction, i.e. disagreement” (p.380). Given a characterization of repair in which other-correction is dispreferred and is treatable as disagreement, an emerging other-correction can provide a systematic site for anticipatory completion when the TCU carrying that other-correction is formed up as a compound TCU, as in Excerpt (12):

(12) [CDC]

1. Heather: Donna said that that’s what she needs to know
2. eventually
3. (2.3)
4. Donna: I don’t need to know that, I just think thet
5. (.)
6. 8 ➞ Heather: students need to know that
7. Donna: yeah.

At lines 1–3, Heather clarifies something Donna has just said to a third participant. Donna then begins to correct Heather’s assertion at lines 5–6. Donna’s turn is designed as a contrast concerning who needs to know. (Donna’s TCU-in-progress is a variant of the correction format “not X + Y.”) The first part of this contrast is provided by the stress on “I”; this stress supplies the features of a compound TCU preliminary component because a contrasting assertion of who does need to know is projected as a subsequent final component of the TCU. Even though “I don’t need to know that” could be a complete sentence under some circumstances, its placement here after Heather’s assertion of Donna’s position and its composition with a stress on “I” show that it is the preliminary part of a contrast. (This contrast is then extended by a second attribution-type preliminary component: “I just think thet.”) At line 8, Heather then produces the second part of the contrast herself, and thereby preempts the emerging correction. She stresses the word students; this use of prosody ties her utterance to Donna’s as the second part of the contrast. After Heather’s anticipatory completion of the compound TCU, Donna confirms Heather’s rendition of the correction. Here other-correction is converted collaboratively into self-correction.

If it seems difficult to follow who is correcting whom here, it may be because two possible senses of self (and therefore of other)
are relevant in this excerpt. In this analysis I am concerned with the organization of repair: thus I feature the relevancy of self as speaker of the trouble-source turn. In this sense, other-correction-in-progress is converted into self-correction. A second sense of self, however, is also relevant here: It concerns the authorship or “ownership” of the disputed proposition, not who voices it (see Goffman 1981). In this regard, self refers not to Heather but to Donna (as the owner of what is asserted at lines 1–3 by Heather). In this sense, Donna is not producing an other-correction but is speaking for herself and correcting on her own behalf.

In addition to the sites for other-correction enumerated by Schegloff et al. (1977), self-as-author/owner when another is speaker may be another site for other-correction in the organization of repair. Other-correction seems to be highly constrained in its occurrence. Schegloff et al. (1977) state, “[M]ost of the other-correction which does occur is either specially marked or specially positioned: both types exhibit an orientation to its dispreferred status” (p. 379). One environment for other-correction, then, may consist of circumstances in which a speaker in some sense is not self. Here the participant who is being spoken for does what also might be called self-correction (i.e., correcting on behalf of self-as-author/owner), but where that participant was not the speaker of the trouble source turn. This point suggests that “cross-cutting” preference structures (Schegloff 1995) are at work here. Correction by self-as-animator of a turn is preferred over correction by other-than-animator; cross-cutting this is a preference for correction by self-as-author/owner over correction by other-than-author/owner. This latter preference structure also can be sustained by anticipatory completion. Later I will examine in some detail the co-option of other-than-author/owner by author/owner.

OÀers and Requests

Sacks (1992, vol. 1:685) suggested that offers and requests can be related sequentially. He proposed that preference organization can shape offer/request sequences. A preference for offers over requests can be found in the occurrence of prerequisite sequences. The projection of an upcoming request (in a prerequisite) can be the occasion for an offer, thereby making the request unnecessary, as in Excerpt (13):

(13) [JGT:1]

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<td>4</td>
<td>→ M:</td>
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The use of a “preliminaries to preliminaries” or “pre-pre” sequence (Schegloff 1980) can also provide the opportunity for a projected request to be preempted by an offer. A pre-pre can set up or project an upcoming request, as in the case of a prerequisite; it does not, however, set up the request specially for the speaker’s next turn. Rather, the pre-pre is regularly followed by some preliminary matters that are addressed on the way to the request. When a speaker establishes for a recipient that a request is forthcoming, the recipient can inspect the matters that follow the pre-pre for how they will bear on the request. In Excerpt (14), R uses a pre-pre at lines 1–2 in order to give an account that can be heard as a reason for a request:

(14) [ST:10/75]

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<td>R:</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>→ L:</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>R:</td>
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Here, the pre-pre sets up the basis for a request for help. L, however, offers help after the preliminaries have been produced at precisely the point where the request is due, rather than allowing R to produce the projected request (and thus being seen as having allowed the request to go forward). In this case, the resulting target action (making the buttonholes) is the same for a request sequence as for an offer sequence; only the relationship of self and other to the obligating proposal (request or offer) is distributed differently between helper and helpee. The offer constitutes a proposal of self-obligation,
whereas the request constitutes a proposal of other-obligation.

Given the preference/dispreference relationship between offers and requests, it should not be surprising to find that anticipatory completion can be employed to convert an emerging request sequence into a collaboratively achieved offer sequence, when turn construction affords that opportunity. Thus, anticipatory completion can sustain the preference for offers over requests even after the request turn itself has begun, as in Excerpt (15):

(15) [M31]

1 A: If for any reason you
2 uh can’t be there at ten
3 o’clock [ let me know.
4 → B: [ I will call you
5 A: All right

At line 1, Speaker A begins a turn that shows itself to be an “if X+ then Y” type of compound TCU. At the precise place where completion of that TCU’s preliminary component is possible (“If for any reason you can’t be there at ten o’clock”), B issues an utterance that completes the compound TCU. This is produced simultaneously with A’s own final component. A’s “All right” at line 5, however, retrieves B’s utterance from overlap in order to treat it as the turn’s completion. Here again, then, we have a collaborative turn sequence: (1) A compound TCU-in-progress provides the structural opportunity for completion. (2) A final component is rendered by the addressed recipient. This initiates a sequence in which (3) the speaker who began the TCU registers his or her acceptance of the proffered completion by responding to the action it implicates.

This collaborative turn sequence enables the following course of action. Speaker A begins a request. After A sets the conditions for the requested action (“If for any reason you can’t be there at ten o’clock”), Speaker B comes in with an offer to call. This is placed so as to co-opt the final component of A’s TCU and thereby to preempt the projected request. In this case, A continues; thus B’s offer is produced simultaneously with A’s request. When overlap of this sort occurs, establishing which of the simultaneous utterances will become consequential for subsequent talk is regularly taken up in next turn.7 Here, A speaks next and accepts B’s offer, thereby treating (and thus ratifying) B’s contribution as the turn’s completion. Thus an emerging request is converted into a collaboratively achieved offer sequence—a distinction that relies on the position of self and other relative to the proposal. Here, as in (14), an offer constitutes a proposal of self-obligation, whereas the request would have constituted a proposal of other-obligation.

This collaborative turn sequence not only enables a course of action that relies on a distinction of self- versus other-obligation made relevant as a feature of the request/offer sequence; it also realizes the preferred form of an offer over a request. It is as the sequence-organized relevance of self/other participation for this particular course of action, and as the ordering of asymmetrical alternative actions by reference to self/other (where alternative actions make possible a choice between them) that face, threat to face, and face-work gain recognizability and are given social expression.

A compound TCU that projects a request as its final component can also give a recipient the opportunity to respond at the point when the final component is due in a manner other than using anticipatory completion. For example, a response to an emerging request can be taken up with heading off the request and initiating an offer. The attempt, however, can be composed not as an anticipatory completion but as a new turn, as at lines 9–10 of Excerpt (16):

(16) [GL:DS]

1 J: Okay, you c- I just uh
2 thought if you uh-
3 ·hh en I’ll take the book
4 in so we c’n kind’v exchange
5 packages
6 P: ·hhh Oh I have- I have yer
7 book but if you don’t mind
8 I’d [ like tuh keep it awhile,
9 → J: [OH please. No if you’d
10 like to yer perfectly welcome

I present this instance to show that alternative methods are available, and that the deployment of an anticipatory completion then must be viewed as an interactional choice among relevant alternative actions. In Excerpt (16),

7 Elsewhere I have shown that this need not be an “either/or” choice (Lemer 1994).
the particulars of the interaction provide J with a local basis to design her offer as a new turn. She has just issued a proposal to P to exchange packages, which is then found to have embedded within it a request for the return of a book P would like to keep longer. P's emerging request is in response to that proposal—locating a problem in the proposal and therefore a basis on which it might be rejected. This possible upcoming rejection (in the form of a request to keep the book) can warrant remedial action by J (Davidson 1984). J is now in a position (in the course of P's response) where her proposal may be recast as a premature request for the return of the book, or at least as a request made without regard to whether P has finished with it or not. This is certainly an awkward situation to be in—or to come to have found oneself in—as well as to put someone else in.

In a discussion of the onset of overlapping talk, Jefferson (1983) mentioned situations in which “the more ‘awkward’ of two relevant alternative activities is initiated. And it is not uncommon in those cases for the awkward activity to be ‘interrupted’ by the more interactionally apt alternative” (p. 18). Also Heritage (1990) found that “oh”-prefaced responses to inquiries are used to show that the inquiry is unnecessary and unsought. They are used as a way to say, “You don’t even need to ask.” Thus J’s “OH please” may subtly demonstrate that she would never have made her proposal (with its now awkward request for the book) if she had known that P wanted to keep it for awhile. The turn initial “OH please” that prefaches the withdrawal of the proposal by J might be termed a politeness suppression or politeness override device. It is designed to interrupt an emerging action (specifically to show that the intimation of inconvenience or presumptuousness carried by the polite composition of P’s utterance is completely unwarranted), and to show that the proposed (imposing) request by P is actually regarded as perfectly suitable or is even viewed with favor. This makes the original proposal out to have been merely a matter of convenience and not an attempt to gain a desired object (i.e., the book). To use Brown and Levinson’s (1987) terms in an interactional fashion, this device rejects a negative politeness formulation by interjecting a positive politeness formulation.

Positioned after deployment of the politeness override device, J’s “No” does not reject P’s emerging request. Rather, it specifically rejects the request as an imposing request. (P’s request amounts to a dispreferred response to J’s proposal.) J then displaces P’s request (as a sequence-initiating action) by (freely) granting it. Because anticipatory completion can affiliate its speaker with the turn-so-far, its deployment here would not allow J to reject the polite basis (“if you don’t mind”) for a request that was occasioned by her own earlier proposal.

The circumstances that obtain as P issues her turn may amount to a recognized (or discovered) threat to face. However, an actual, impending, or imagined threat of diminished regard that might come (for example) from unknowingly disregarding another’s interests does not itself implicate one type of remedial action over another. The particulars of the circumstances and the composition of a turn’s talk make one type of action, not another, especially relevant. Both the possibility and the terms of the disregard, as well as the resources available to deal with it, are part of the sequential organization of talk-in-interaction.

In summary, anticipatory completion can be used to convert disagreement into agreement, other-correction into self-correction, or a request into an offer on those occasions when an opportunity for completion is furnished. The preference structure of action sequences provides a systematic basis or motivation for co-opting the final component of another’s TCU, while turn-taking organization furnishes the structural possibility. This conjunction locates a sequential environment for anticipatory completion; that is, it specifies technically a local context for an action.

SPEAK FOR YOURSELF: A CONVERSATIONAL MAXIM

Goffman (1981) noted a distinction that can be drawn between the “animator” and the “author/owner” of an utterance. Ordinarily these two positions in relation to a turn’s talk are not distinguished, but they need not be held by a single participant; that is, one party can voice an utterance that is attributable in some fashion to another party. Here I propose an organizational relationship between these possible speaker footings or production roles that Goffman and others have described (Goffman 1981; Levinson 1988). In this regard I examine the relevance of self/other
for a turn at talk when someone other than the recognizable author/owner of an utterance is speaking.

In conversation, participants maintain special rights to speak about certain things, such as their own experiences and opinions. Sacks (1975) pointed out, “One is responsible for knowing some things on one’s own behalf” (p. 72); Pomerantz (1980) described a class of “knowables” that “subject-actors as subject-actors have rights and obligations to know” (p. 187). This distribution of knowledge rights is consequential for the organization of conversation. Labov (1972), for example, pointed out that if a speaker makes a statement about an event that she or he doesn’t really know about, the statement will be taken as a request for confirmation by a knowledgeable recipient. Pomerantz (1980) showed that if a speaker asserts something on the basis of limited knowledge (i.e., as an outsider), it can serve as a “fishing device” that can occasion a fuller account by a recipient with authoritative knowledge. “The final say as to what the event was . . . rests with the subject-actor” (Pomerantz 1980: 190). Moreover, Schegloff (1988d) showed that “[T]opic ‘ownership’ and authoritativeness can be an interactionally delicate matter. There can be prerogatives in this regard, and they can be closely guarded.”

Additional evidence is found in the organization of collaboratively told stories (Lerner 1992). A not-currently-speaking cotellerr may begin speaking at various points in the telling to reanimate what they said, did, or experienced during the events that served as sources for the story. Similar findings have been reported for therapeutic interviews in Germany (Bergmann 1989) and England (Peräkylä and Silverman 1991). Peräkylä and Silverman (1991) show that the owner of an experience will cut in to express their experience even when a counselor has explicitly asked someone else to describe that experience. We also have some indication that “territories of information” may be oriented to and consequential in Japanese conversation (Kamio 1994), though these findings (in the tradition of much linguistic investigation) are based on invented examples.

The voicing of utterances, experiences, viewpoints, and even actions that are recognizably owned by someone other than the speaker make relevant the confirmation or rejection by the author/owner, and regularly engender talk by the author/owner.9 (Moreover, turns that voice another’s words, experiences, or viewpoints can be designed specifically—for example, as a speaker’s check of understanding—to elicit confirmation or rejection of the attributed statement.)

Providing an occasion for others to speak for themselves by referring to them even indirectly (and thus referring indirectly to their interests) operates in a dramatic fashion in the following excerpt, through Mom’s categorical reference to “wives” in a turn addressed to David at lines 10–13:

(17) [HIC]

1 Mom: see this is little
2 peanuts now but if it
3 ever gets be something
4 there would be fighting
5 and that’s the way
6 David: I don’t think so
7 Mom: Oh David
8 Dad: Yeah, this could get
9 this can get rough
10 → Mom: Don’t kid yourself,
11 people could lose
12 their wives an
13 everything else
14 → Stella: O::H WE’RE NOT LOSING
15 WIVES AROUND HERE

Stella has not been participating in the discussion of the investment club that family members are establishing, nor is she seated at the kitchen table, where all of the other participants are located. Yet she strongly disputes Mom’s assertion. What is her entitlement to do this? She is the only “wife” present other than mom (her mother-in-law).10 The author/owner’s entitlement to have the authoritative say about their own experiences, viewpoints, and the like furnishes a warrant for self as author/owner to speak for themselves.

Anticipatory completion can be used as a

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8 Ongoing investigation, however, suggests that this preference structure may be constrained for at least one class of utterance-actions: those which might be termed “delicates” (also see Jefferson 1985).

9 Sacks (1992, vol. 1:91–92) also showed the relevance of object ownership to speaking about the object.

10 Also see Excerpt (12) and the accompanying discussion for an instance of author/owner rejection accomplished as other-correction.
device to convert production of a turn’s talk by other-than-author/owner into production by self-as-author/owner. In other words, when a speaker is voicing a coparticipant’s words, experiences, or viewpoints, anticipatory completion furnishes participants with a method for co-opting what is currently being attributed to them. Thus they can “say first what another was about to say for them,” as in Excerpt (18):

(18) [HIC]
1 Sparky: it sounds like what
2 you’re saying is that
(·) let the:m make
3 the decisions
4 → Kerry: an let us know what
5 it is

In this excerpt, the emerging understanding check by Sparky, in which he is voicing Kerry’s view of a matter under consideration, is converted into Kerry’s speaking for himself. That is, Kerry voices his own view directly—given the opportunity provided by a contrastive compound TCU—rather than responding to Sparky’s proposition after its completion.

Even when the attributed words, experiences, or—as in Excerpt (19)—actions are owned only nominally by a participant, that participant nevertheless seems to be entitled to confirm, deny, or elaborate on the matter linked to them in the referring turn. In (19), one of the participants has introduced a hypothetical example to explain the proposed rules for a family investment club. The explanation (which occurs before the displayed excerpt) was directed to David, but the subject of the example was Kerry. Here, anticipatory completion provides Kerry with a way to voice his own (albeit hypothetical) actions:

(19) [HIC]
1 David: so if one person said
2 he couldn’t invest
3 (·)
4 → Kerry: then I’d have ta
5 wait [ till
6 David: [ he’d have ta wait
7 till January
8 Kerry: Right

At lines 1–2, David is neither voicing Kerry’s words or views nor is even addressing his remarks to Kerry. Kerry, however, is referred to (by “he” at line 2) as the subject or agent of David’s utterance. That utterance describes a hypothetical event (“if one person said he couldn’t invest”), which is attributed to Kerry only nominally as part of an example illustrating how family investment club decisions will be made. Yet even this weak form of ownership can occasion anticipatory completion, given the opportunity provided by a compound TCU.

Delayed completion at lines 6–7 furnishes a method for the participant who originally began to voice the compound TCU to speak for himself, whether or not he is author/owner, even when his TCU has been co-opted by another participant (also see Excerpt (4)). In this case, Kerry is left to provide confirmation in next turn. Here, then, we have the concurrent and cross-cutting organizational relevance of self-as-speaker and self-as-author/owner, each in relation to his own “other,” and each equipped with a method for gaining a turn’s talk.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Talk-in-interaction is organized in a wide range of ways. Part of its orderliness (within various domains of activity) consists of practices that produce systematic advantages for certain types of action over other types of action. The possibility of privileging one class of action over another is not a matter of personal prerogative, but a preference-enabling organization that is built into the sequential organization of talk-in-interaction. It seems to me that preference organization constitutes a necessary feature of practical social conduct. Given the possibility of alternative actions, the asymmetrical valuing of those actions is a possibility that must have systematic/structural resources through which that valuing can be realized. Both turn-constructional and sequence-organizational practices enable this preference/dispreference structure.

In this report I have described one such practice—a practice that occurs at the juncture of turn construction and sequence organization. I have shown that preference/dispreference is enabled in part by the practice of producing a rendition of the final component of another speaker’s compound TCU. Anticipatory completion can be used to co-opt the completion of another’s turn so as to preempt its projected action and concurrently to convert that action—because it is now being voiced by a participant with a
different relationship to the action—into an alternative action. This practice can be deployed across a range of action sequences.

Though the features of compound TCUs are produced in accord with turn-taking operation, that organization does not mandate anticipatory completion. Because anticipatory completion need not be done each time an opportunity arises, but remains a structural possibility, it might be viewed as an open option for recipients of a compound TCU. In this sense, it is a method available to other aspects of conversational organization that can use its services. As such, anticipatory completion is not only a resource for participants, but also a tool whereby professional analysts can identify those aspects of the organization of conversation which call on its services. Preference organization is one such organization; others exist as well (see Lerner 1993).

**Face, Self, and Action**

To properly characterize the feelings, desires, and motives, as well as the actions, of face and face-work, it is necessary to capture them *in the act* on the terrain of talk-in-interaction. I have suggested one way of doing this. Because, as Goffman states (see quotation below), face is recognizable as an expression of self, then one way to capture face in the act is by locating the relevance of self (and other) in the opportunities to participate furnished by various aspects of the organization of talk-in-interaction. Here self is not something that hovers over the interaction, but is realized in its relevance to particular aspects of interaction. The recognizability of practical action and of self/other as a situated feature of courses of action in interaction provides the resources and the very grounds on which matters of public regard or face are made visible and played out. If maintaining face is the result of fitting in, then one can find face only by describing the actual practices into which persons fit, and thereby the terms in which their personhood is realized in practice. Where else could it be?

In this article I have developed this notion empirically by examining in some detail one particular practice—co-optation of turn completion—in various sequential circumstances of its use. By situating self and other as consequential constituent features of the organization of particular types of action sequences, one thereby establishes a site for face, face-threat, and face-work grounded in the particulars of talk (and other conduct) in interaction.

If face-work requires social demonstration to achieve recognition by other, then it is recognizable not by reference to individual desire but by reference to common practices that demonstrate that desire. Moreover, the organization of those common practices is a social organization. One could say that recognized desire (for face maintenance) provides the motivation for face-work, but individual persons are no more the source of its organization than they are the source of grammatical practices. I believe that Goffman came close to this idea when he stated:

One way of mobilizing the individual for this purpose [as a self-regulating participant in social encounters] is through ritual; he is taught to be perceptive, to have feelings attached to self and a self expressed through face. . . . These are some of the elements of behavior which must be built into the person if practical use is to be made of him as an interactant. (1967:44)

I would even go a step further and suggest that recognition of face concerns—that is, individual desire to maintain face—is a feature of the selfsame organization of occasioned and situated action that produces linguistically and interactionally realized face-work. The desire to maintain face does not explain the organization of face-work. Rather, the "feelings attached to self and a self expressed through face" are both acquired and produced as reflexive features or products of recognizable circumstances and courses of action in interaction. Finally, the results of this and other conversation-analytic studies should not be read as a denial of individual psychology; rather, conversation analysis provides research methods for the development of a thoroughly social psychology. In Harvey Sacks's (1987:67) words, "You cannot find what they're trying to do until you find the kinds of things they work with."

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