

Contingency and units in interaction



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ABSTRACT Starting with Houtkoop and Mazeland's (1985) study of discourse units, and touching upon recent studies aimed at detailing unit projection in interaction, this article argues that the drive toward abstract and discrete models for units and unit projection is potentially misleading. While it has been established that to engage in talk-in-interaction, as it unfolds in real time, participants rely on projectable units (Sacks et al., 1974, 1978), research aimed at defining units unintentionally backgrounds the contingency inherent in interaction. A central function of language for collaborative action is the management of *simultaneously unfolding* facets of action, sound production, gesture, and grammar – *produced by multiple participants*. This article draws upon classic and current data analyses foregrounding linguistic/interactional practices designed to manage local contingencies. It is argued that attention to participants' regular methods for managing and exploiting contingencies be incorporated from the outset in our descriptions of language and the nature of unit building in interaction.

KEY WORDS: *conversation analysis, discourse unit, projectability, transition-relevance places, turn-constructive unit*

There is virtually nothing in talk-in-interaction which can get done unilaterally, and virtually nothing which is thoroughly pre-scripted.

(Schegloff, 1991: 22)

One of the most widely influential early publications in conversation analysis (CA) was the account for turn taking as a process of participant-managed social order (Sacks et al., 1974, 1978). A key feature of turn taking that Sacks et al. (SSJ) addressed is the 'precision timing' of turn beginnings (Jefferson, 1973): whether a next speaker begins in overlap with a current speaker, starts up just at the end of a turn, or makes strategic use of silence by allowing a gap to form between turns, the timing of turn initiation is an essential semiotic resource for

human interaction. The artful articulation of turn transitions depends critically on 'projectability' – the ability for a current moment of unfolding talk to provide for anticipation of possible and even likely aspects of talk yet to come. SSJ's account of how precision timing is jointly achieved in spontaneous interaction hinges on the existence of projectable units as shared resources for participants in talk. Because the projection of possible unit trajectories and points of possible unit completion is central to the understanding of turn taking, SSJ were explicit in calling upon linguists to contribute to an understanding of the ways that language resources functioned in turn projection (1974: 703). Indeed, their sketch of turn constructional units leaves wide open spaces for exploration, and a number of researchers working at the intersection of CA and linguistics have followed this line of inquiry. Hanneke Houtkoop and Harrie Mazeland (H&M) (1985) were among the first scholars to respond to SSJ by taking up the challenge of accounting for longer turn units or multi-unit turns. In their examination of the emergence of the extended turns, H&M engaged in what we might call a CA-motivated linguistics, or a linguistically-motivated CA; their research would indeed fit into the emerging field of 'interactional linguistics' (Selting and Couper-Kuhlen, 2001).

In a 1982 presentation at the Xth World Congress of Sociology, in Mexico City, H&M presented a paper entitled, 'Turns as practical and analytic units: Linguistic analysis of turn-taking and turn-construction' (also see Houtkoop-Steenstra and Mazeland, 1982). This research began with reference to SSJ's (1974) turn-constructional units (TCUs), which can constitute turns in themselves or be the building blocks of turns. H&M's study (published in the *Journal of Pragmatics* in 1985) is one of the first contributions to an emerging research tradition interweaving discourse linguistics and the analysis of conversational practices (see, for example, Duranti, 1984; Goodwin, 1979; Keenan et al., 1976; Local and Kelly, 1986, among others). The 'interactional linguistics' research agenda (Selting and Couper-Kuhlen, 2001) has taken a cross-linguistic direction, with new insights regarding language in interaction coming from scholarship that combines CA and linguistics to examine interaction in such typologically diverse languages as Danish, Dutch, Finnish, German, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Mandarin, and Turkish among others (see, for example, Tanaka, 1999; Tao, 2001; and contributions to Couper-Kuhlen and Selting, 1996; Ochs et al., 1996; Selting and Couper-Kuhlen, 2001; and Ford et al., 2002).

Connecting CA and linguistics, H&M focused on turn construction and, in particular, the construction of 'larger projects', for which H&M borrowed the term 'discourse unit' (DU) from Benji Wald's study of the segmentation of spoken discourse (1976, 1978). The field that H&M were involved in initiating also caught my interest as a graduate student in the mid-1980s, just when the DU paper was reaching print. New to both functional linguistics and to the study of conversation, I had the good fortune to work with broad-minded scholars representing both linguistics and sociology. Taking a discourse-functional view, I was convinced that linguistic structures are best examined by reference to the

recurrent functions for which they are employed: ‘grammars code best what speakers do most’ (Du Bois, 1987: 851). Reading SSJ’s account of turn taking convinced me that understanding linguistic forms in real-time *interactional* language use requires serious attention to the coordination of speaking roles and the construction of joint activities. It seemed as much a linguist’s task as a conversation analyst’s task to ask questions about turn construction and turn taking. Some of the interrelated questions for both fields include the following:

1. How do interactants produce and monitor simultaneously unfolding lexico-grammatical, prosodic, and gestural forms in order to coordinate social action in interaction?
2. How do interactants use prosodic, lexico-grammatical, gestural and action trajectories as resources for managing opportunities for next speaker turn beginnings?
3. How do speakers use different facets of projection – grammatical, prosodic, pragmatic, and bodily comportment – in ways that regularly converge but may also, and consequentially, be made to diverge or play off one another?
4. And through what collaborative practices do speakers produce extended spans of single speaker talk?

The latter is the question addressed in H&M’s collaboration, and the appearance of H&M’s (1985) article assured me that I had companions on an intellectual path traversing the borders of CA and linguistics.¹

H&M’s study offered me an initial model for how discourse linguistics and conversation analysis could be combined to account for the projection of interactional units. As a linguist, I affiliated with their quest to define units. Furthermore, H&M’s study, along with SSJ’s capacious description of turn-constructive units (TCU) and multi-unit turns, urged me on in my search for ways to use my linguistic skills to help define such units. In the present article, I reflect on the quest for understanding units in interaction, and I argue that such a quest, while fruitful, may also present an obstacle to understanding units in talk as always and centrally contingent, that is, answerable to the contingencies of interaction.

Problems in searching for units

While sophistication and care have been put into studies that seek to ground and detail turn production and monitoring mechanisms, these efforts seem to have an inevitable and unintended side-effect stemming from the constraints of imagination that traditions in linguistic thinking have placed on those of us raised on those traditions. There are problems inherent in conceiving of units of turn construction as projectable (thus recurrent and predictable) but at the same time deeply contingent and entirely dependent on the exigencies of collaborative activities between real people in specific moments of interaction. While working toward a precise account for units, interactionally oriented linguists run the risk

of foregrounding the discreteness of units and backgrounding their constant and functionally crucial malleability. We can never fully plan spontaneous interaction, not our own articulations nor the contributions of others; this, along with the multiple signalling systems we employ, constitutes the contingency of talk-in-interaction.

Let me offer a brief initial example of the emergence and management of contingency. In extract (1), from a backyard picnic,² Curt produces a turn substantially occupied with addressing contingencies (lines 7–9). Curt asks Mike about a race car driver, 'Al':

(1)

- 1 Curt: Does he go out there pretty regular?
 2 (1.5)
 3 Mike: Generally every Saturday.
 4 (1.2)
 5 Phyllis: He wins just about every Saturday too.
 6 Ryan: Bo[: Bo
 7 → Curt: [He- he's about the only regular<he's
 8 → about the only good regular out
 9 → there.'z Keegan still go out?=
 10 Mike: Keegan's (0.2) out there,
 11 (.)
 12 He's, He run.

I can only briefly point here toward Curt's management of three contingencies; I refer the reader to Schegloff's (1987) analysis for a fuller explication. (1) At line 7, Curt initiates his utterance in overlap with Ryan's call to the dog ('Bo Bo'), a contingency which Curt deals with by restarting his turn; (2) Curt's repair of 'regular' to 'good regular' manages the insertion of a belated acknowledgement of Phyllis' prior turn (line 5), in which she reported that Al wins on an almost weekly basis; and (3) just after Curt's 'out' in line 8, Mike initiates a lateral head movement, which in this context is interpretable as a precursor to a verbal disagreement. Curt manages this contingency by rushing the delivery of a question following his assertion. He produces the end of the assertion about Al, with the word 'there'. But the completion of the word 'there' is blended with the beginning of the next clause, ''z Keegan still go out' without a break in phonation and without any sound stretch on 'there', which would otherwise be hearable as a possible point of turn completion. Schegloff characterizes Curt's rushed articulation of this question as a 'preemptive response to Mike's projected disagreement' (1987: 107). Like all interactants, Curt's skill in the production of this turn unit lies not in an ability to unilaterally plan and execute it, without a hitch, but rather in his artful production of a unit on the fly. His skill is in producing a coherent unit through resources and practices that are systematically adapted for the management of contingencies.

At its very foundation, interaction is collaborative action, and in order to serve as a shared matrix for participation, language (however conceived) must

support the management of emergent and contingent contributions. Furthermore, the fact that different facets of turn projection may be deployed to be precisely non-convergent at their possible end points turns out to be fundamental to such practices as agreement, disagreement, or politeness: the potential for inconclusiveness in one or more of the trajectories offers an avenue for adding increments to a turn. And the fact that a speaker may begin speaking at a point where none of the facets (intonation, gesture, grammar, action) are possibly complete is also a key contingency in human interaction. Indeed, a language which afforded only discrete units, whose boundaries were rigid and fixed, would constitute a problem rather than a solution to the recurrent challenges of real-time interaction.

Thus, however we conceptualize unit production, to reflect the practices in natural interactions, our accounts must encompass contingency in relation to at least two core features inherent in interaction: (1) the dynamic and unfolding co-construction, co-authorship, or collaborative production of talk (Duranti and Brenneis, 1986; Goodwin, 2002; Jacoby and Ochs, 1995); and (2) the simultaneous production of multiple trajectories, including sound, bodily gesture, lexico-grammar, and recurrent structures of collaborative action (Ford et al., 1996; Goodwin, 2002).

The challenge of accounting for projectable but contingent units exists for conversation analysts and for discourse linguists alike. In CA, many analysts base their research on notions of turns and turn taking, but the account for such units is regularly taken for granted. CA researchers often gesture toward linguistic structures as a basis for turns and their projection. But while one may point to linguistics as the place to look for descriptions of projectable structures usable for and adapted to interaction, mainstream linguistics does not address grammar in interaction. It follows that accounts of linguistic units in mainstream linguistics do not address the real-time unfolding of such units. Thus, when conversation analysts gesture toward linguistic structures usable for interaction, they gesture toward research yet to be done, research that must be based on CA methods rather than apart from them.

Embracing contingency is perhaps most challenging, however, for those of us with backgrounds and homes in linguistics. While the analytic detail of linguistics can fruitfully be drawn upon for an understanding of talk-in-interaction, linguists who double as conversation analysts need to invent more innovative and much less rigid notions of the practices of unit construction if we are to adequately and realistically approach language as an interactional phenomenon. The challenge of contingency for linguists can be compared to the challenge of situated actions for cognitive scientists as elucidated by Lucy Suchman (1987). Suchman argues that a tradition of accounting for action in terms of pre-determined plans presents obstacles to an adequate understanding of human action by cognitive scientists. In the present article, I call the attention of discourse scholars back again to the challenge of understanding units as contingent. In particular, I look to the hybrid brand of scholar representing both linguistics and CA, to take the lead from such researchers as Lucy Suchman, in

her CA-influenced cognitive science, and Hanneke Houtkoop, in her conversation analytic studies of scripted interaction in survey interviews. These scholars offer models for opening up our academic traditions to more realistic conceptions of language in/as interaction.

In what follows, I first revisit H&M's (1985) research on discourse units, as well as a small selection of more recent research aimed at tightening up the definition of interactional units and their projection. I discuss a fundamental problem in looking for bounded and discrete criteria to identify turn-constructive units (TCUs) and transition relevance places (TRPs), and I provide a selected review of research (classic and current) that illustrates the value of embracing contingency as we posit provisional categories and rules for turn production. I also return to H&M's study, noting that in their final analytic section they looked specifically at contingencies in discourse unit production.

Defining interactional units

'CLOSED' AND 'OPEN' DISCOURSE UNITS

Any open-minded linguist reading SSJ's (1974) *Language* article cannot help but be struck by the authors' assumption that 'aspects of language structure are designed for conversational use'; SSJ call on linguists to help define the basic units of turn building, 'turn constructive units' (p. 702). It is also difficult for any discourse-oriented linguist who takes the turn taking account seriously to pass the opportunity to explore how it is that speakers produce multi-unit turns, given that talk past an initial turn constructive unit is considered an interactional accomplishment. As linguists and conversation analysts, H&M were captured by these claims when they undertook the study of larger units of talk in Dutch conversations. They focused on longer actions that were also being investigated by other conversation analysts as expanded sequences and projected longer tellings. Analyzing such longer projects and in line with the work of Sacks (1974), Jefferson (1978), and Schegloff (1980), H&M offered elaborations to the turn taking account in order to accommodate longer units of discourse.

DUs, extended single party turns, are most neatly exemplified by stories, and H&M insightfully refer to Labov's (1972) story template as a model for the internal structure of narratives. This story template is a larger form of predictable structure, in some ways comparable to the shorter internal grammatical structures of a phrase, clause, or sentence, upon which turn projection is highly dependent (SSJ, 1974: 702–9, 720). Both in lexico-grammatical resources and in larger structured units of discourse, one finds recognizable trajectories: units with beginnings, middles and ends; units with internal ordering and projectable points of possible completion; in short, just the sort of unfolding units that interactants must rely upon as they coordinate turn transfer. H&M suggest that for larger units such as stories 'the knowledge of such story features [as described by Labov] is used in the devices for the interactional construction and projection of turn completion' (p. 598).³

As detailed in Sacks (1974) and Jefferson (1978), a story entry device initiates a longer hold on the floor (with the verbal or non-verbal assent of the recipient) and such devices also regularly project how the longer unit's completion will be recognizable, beyond grammatical completion. After beginning with a phrase such as, 'Once I saw . . .' (H&M, 1985: 597–8), a primary speaker embarks upon the larger unit and 'the completion points of further turn-constructional units are blocked from being treated by the recipients as normal transition-relevance places' (a transition relevance place (TRP) is a recognizable place in which a next speaker may possibly start) (p. 599). For H&M, then, internal boundaries and components of these bounded longer units are recognizable as non-completion points. During the course of a story or other DU, cooperative recipients contribute in constrained ways, maintaining their recipient roles, until the primary speaker has produced the 'first unit which can be heard as completing the projected larger turn' (p. 600). Extended turns which are clearly projectable and recognizably bounded by entry devices and TCUs that display completion are 'Closed Discourse Units', a designation that underscores the clarity of their borders as units and their relatively unilateral production by a single speaker. H&M offer the following from the beginning of a story about a visit from a mouse:

(2)

ik zag nog 'n keer, een keer liep tie zo hier langs, heel schattig.
'I once saw, once it walked along here, so sweet.'

This, a 'story entry device' (Jefferson, 1978), functions to project a closed DU, whose end will be recognizable not based on grammar but rather on the typical components of the DU type projected (pp. 597–8). For the mouse story, the 'completion' is realized with, 'e(h)n toe(h)s tie we(h)g.' ('and then it was gone.') (p. 599).

In describing closed DUs, H&M's study fits with the traditional linguistic approach of looking for structures and units. H&M look for units exhibiting internal order akin to the projectable lexico-grammatical order SSJ suggest is the basis for TCUs. H&M explore such order in cases of larger discourse projects, and they arrive at an account for the projection of longer units whose internal unit boundaries are exempt from next speaker starts. True to the data of longer turns they analyze, H&M also account for recipient turns within developing closed DUs. These they consider part of the normal collaborative work maintaining a longer DU, though the data they look at does not represent the ways that interactants might resist their recipient roles by producing turn types other than continuers or help with word searches – i.e., perhaps by beginning their own tellings or doing some form of 'heckling', or by initiating their turns at non-completion points in the current turn.

Following SSJ's formulation of the turn taking system in a set of rules, H&M propose a modification of the turn taking model in the form of added rules and restrictions for the production of longer units, DUs. After entry into a projectable

Remarkably, in this engaging study of the architecture of turns that face 'actual or potential rejection', Davidson makes no reference to the contribution of sound production features to a speaker's turn trajectory as nearing a point of possible completion. Note the absence of marking of intonation contours at after 'store' and 'anything' in extract (3).

Interactionally oriented linguists have used their particular skills to address sound production and the projection of turn trajectories; among the contributors to this line of research are Peter Auer (e.g. 1996), Elizabeth Couper-Kuhlen (e.g. 1993), Barbara Fox (e.g. 2001), John Local (e.g. Local et al., 1986), Margret Selting (e.g. 1996), and Bill Wells (e.g. Wells and Peppé, 1996). One recent and comprehensive study of the nature of turn projection and the identification of turn completion is Margret Selting's 'The construction of units in conversational talk' (2000). Selting is very explicit in noting the expandability and contingency of what she terms 'far-reaching' projection, a phenomenon related the DU. Nevertheless, a readership with primarily a linguistics background might find the discrete nature of longer projected units reinforced by Selting's presentation. Selting's article is important in enriching our understanding of turn projection, and it also exemplifies some of the challenges of accounting for 'far-reaching' projection.

Like Houtkoop and Mazeland, Selting works at the intersection of linguistics and CA, building masterfully on SSJ's and H&M's work by detailing the contribution of prosody to the production and recognition of points of possible turn completion in German conversations. Selting's is a sophisticated and comprehensive treatment of the prosodic features of turn projection and turn holding in her German corpus, but I will consider here Selting's abstract representation of the production of larger spans of single speaker talk. I focus on the continuing need to incorporate contingency more fully into such treatments.

Selting addresses the lack of precision in distinguishing TCUs and TRPs, especially with respect to longer projects such as stories. Such extended units contain multiple points of grammatical and prosodic completion, even when they have not yet arrived at their projected ends. Within longer projected units, the ends of TCUs are not taken as full opportunities for speaker change, TRPs. Selting seeks a discrete answer to the question: 'What is a TCU here: every syntactic clause, or every component part of the story, or the entire projected story?' (2000: 485). H&M treat the whole projected longer package as a DU ending in a TRP, but they also carefully recognize points internal to a DU which make limited recipient contributions relevant. Selting proposes a slightly different account to represent the intonationally and interactionally real internal boundaries within such extended turns. In order to maintain the useful interactional and linguistic notion of a TCU, but to allow for the suspension of their ending in TRPs, Selting proposes a revised definition of a TCU as the 'smallest linguistically possible unit in A GIVEN CONTEXT' (p. 488). It is then 'the interplay of syntax and prosody that constitutes and delimits TCUs in general' (p. 489). Larger projects contain linguistically complete units (still termed TCUs), but such units are not points of relevance for

full transition to a next speaker the way they are when a longer package has not been projected. And, of course, even the first possible TRP of a larger project can be extended, yielding renewed points of transition relevance. Selting distinguishes between the single-unit turn and multi-unit turn, with the latter produced through projection and/or local prosodic turn holding devices such that speaker change is not relevant at the end of each TCU. Her proposal is as follows:

In single-unit turns, a TCU always ends in a TRP. In multi-unit turns, however, there are both non-final and final TCUs within a turn . . . [As] long as a possible turn-final TCU is not complete, the turn is not complete and there is no TRP. If a possible turn-final TCU is complete, there is a TRP. This means that the turn may end here, but as we will see, it need not end here: all kinds of units are flexible and expandable.

As a condensation of her theory of turn production, Selting (2000: 490) offers an ‘abstract model of the turn’, incorporating unfolding TCUs and opportunities for possible completion, TRPs, as shown in Figure 1.

This formula makes symbolically salient the discreteness of units of turn construction. As with H&M’s notion of the closed DU, Selting treats the ‘point’ of a story or the ‘tellable point’ of other longer projected units as identifiable (Possible turn-final TCU = TRP 1). While Selting’s abstract model is intended to represent ‘the very fundamental flexibility, expandability, adaptability of units, contingent on local exigencies, local negotiation between participants’ (Selting, personal communication), the model – particularly as presented in its symbolic condensation – risks misinterpretation by linguists less steeped in interaction analysis than Selting. Such an abstract model may be too discrete a representation of the structure of conversational discourse, and thus may conveniently support the illusion of unambiguous units. Indeed, it is clear from her discussion that Selting views the schematization of her approach as an analytic heuristic rather than a model of real-time processes or practices of interactional production, interpretation and monitoring: after presenting the model, she notes that it is directed toward the exigencies of analysis: ‘Following [the abstract model], we can always begin by analyzing TCUs, and then further analyze how interlocutors distinguish and recognize operative TRPs – i.e. how they distinguish non-final TCUs from final

Single-unit turn:

$$\begin{array}{ccccccc} [\text{TCU }] & (&] & \dots &) & & \\ & \text{TRP1} & (\text{TRP2} & & \text{TRP3} & & \dots) \end{array}$$

Multi-unit turn:

$$\begin{array}{ccccccc} [\text{TCU } 1] & & ([\text{TCU } 2] & \dots) & & [\text{TCU } n] & (&] & \dots) \\ & & & & & \text{TRP1} & (\text{TRP2} & & \text{TRP3} \dots) \end{array}$$

Parentheses denote optional components of the model.

Brackets denote possible TCUs; further, right-hand brackets denote possible further TRPs.

FIGURE 1. *Abstract model of the turn*

TCUs in a turn' (2000: 491). Elsewhere in the article and in other research (e.g. Selting, 1996, 2003), Selting emphasizes the interplay of projection systems and the non-discrete nature of units and their possible end points.

Thus, while Selting would be the first to acknowledge the contingency of units of talk-in-interaction, like H&M's account for closed discourse units, her symbolic formula for the multi-unit turn may support an understanding of larger projectable units as unilaterally produced, with their first point of possible completion (TRP 1) identifiable and discrete. In fact, spans of single-speaker talk may be affected by recipient contributions throughout their production, and, as is amply evident in Selting's own research, the systems of projecting turn trajectories – pragmatic, prosodic, and lexico-grammatical – are in constant interplay (2000: 511–12).

Taking a different approach, but also searching for discrete units usable for turn taking, studies by Ford and Thompson (F&T) (1996) and Ford, Fox and Thompson (FFT, 1996) aim at 'understanding the basic units used by speakers' in interaction (FFT, 1996). Again, these studies go into considerable detail, and the analysis includes attention to different kinds of unit completion as well as points of possible and actual speaker change. My review and critique will necessarily be selective, as it was for Selting's study.

In F&T (1996) we set out to test the centrality of grammar for the projection of turn completion, an assumption conversation analysts regularly treat as a given. In an effort to attend to the relevance of action as well as intonation in delimiting interactional units and their completion, we consider what we term 'pragmatic' or 'action' completion. Operationalizing different facets of possible turn completion and points of speaker change, we ask whether grammatical completion is most associated with speaker change, as compared with intonational and action completion. In relation to the challenge of contingency, it is evident to me now that in the process of exploring and reporting our findings, we further support the enterprise of searching for discrete units. Like H&M and Selting, but in our case based on quantifying points of possible completion, we propose a revision of the turn taking system, offering the label 'complex turn-constructural place' (CTRP) to encompass grammar, intonation, and action trajectories in the construction and interpretation of turns.

In our data, speaker change more closely clusters at moments where grammar, prosody and action-in-context converged to form points of possible completion; a pattern that calls into question the centrality of grammatical projection to turn taking. Notably, however, with respect to the theme of the present article, a large portion of the F&T study was spent addressing deviations from these convergences; the convergence of grammatical, prosodic, and action completion accounted for slightly less than half of the speaker changes (198 out of 417). Speakers took turns in a manner not entirely discrete and predictable, using interactional skill to manage the local contingencies inherent in the situated construction of turns. I refer the reader to F&T (1996) for a discussion of the patterns and deviations, none of them surprising to those with CA backgrounds.

What is important for my present purposes is that, while providing evidence that grammar alone does not account for the projection of speaker change, that study in no way eliminates the need for a case-by-case consideration of the contingent practices of turn transition for a majority of speaker changes in the corpus. Though the operationalization and quantification in that study could be interpreted as supporting an understanding of interactional units as discrete and clear, this is by no means the entire story told by our data, nor its full explication.

Ford, Fox and Thompson (1996), a subsequent study, begins where the previous study ends, focusing on a very limited set of cases to explore what Selting aptly describes as the 'interplay of syntax and prosody in their semantic, pragmatic, and sequential context' (2000: 512). We also attend to gesture and gaze. We conclude that a quest for defining units may be leading us astray, distracting us from the practices of the interactants, and we suggest that 'both analysts and participants must be accountable for all these contributions [grammatical, prosodic, gestural, and action sequential] (and probably others as well) at all times for constructing and interpreting, thus doing coparticipation in talk-in-interaction' (p. 450).

Contingency: problems for analysts: solutions for participants

As represented in this sampling of interactional linguistic research, what has the enterprise of working out tighter definitions of and models for projectable units in interaction gained us? On the one hand, we have provisional terms for and taxonomies of larger projects, we have operationalized and quantified support for the relevance of multiple modalities in the delimiting of possible turn completion, we have models for the interplay of prosody, syntax, and action in turn delimitation, and we have an abstract turn construction and interpretation formula to use as a reference as we explore further. On the other hand, we may be tempted to treat the models, terms, and findings from these studies as more than the provisional leverage they represent. These are terms and models in progress, to be revised and even discarded after they draw our attention to phenomena that they themselves cannot elucidate. In trying to discretely delimit projectable units, we may unintentionally camouflage the challenge of contingency, especially when presenting our findings to a linguistically oriented readership with a taste for the clear boundaries. The drive to define units may cause us to miss systematic practices that make conversation work for participants in real contexts of use. In such contexts, a truly 'closed' unit, one with no systematic options for on-line shaping as recipients display their moment-by-moment emergent stances, would indeed present an interactional problem. Our abstract models and operationalizations run the risk of encouraging linguists to follow the well-trodden path of abstraction, maintaining an idealized notion of the linguistic or discourse unit. Our accounts and models need to foreground the fact that trajectories and possible completion points of sound, action, grammar, and bodily movement are not invariably uniform.⁴ The openness of interactional units and

the systematic practices by which speakers reshape their developing utterances are participants' solutions to ever emerging contingencies and need to be explicitly included in theories of unit production.

In making interactional linguistics accessible to a broader discourse linguistic research community, it is essential that contingency be incorporated from the outset in our descriptions of language as interaction, with participants' practices for managing and exploiting contingencies figuring central in accounts of unit production. In the next section, I briefly review one classic study of interactional contingency in turn construction, I then touch upon recent studies following this line of inquiry, and I return to H&M's observation of how 'closed' discourse units may go awry.

Contingency and turn construction

The research reviewed above explicitly acknowledges the non-predetermined nature of turn construction, but at the same time, in the search for 'precise specification' (Ford and Thompson, 1996: 172) or 'watertight' criteria for TCUs and TRPs (Selting, 2000: 480), contingency may be treated as a concession rather than a central concern. In this section I point to research on turn construction that places contingency at center stage. I begin with research looking *within* the turn constructional unit as it develops. If single-unit turns are affected by these contingencies, then their operation will be even more evident in the far-reaching projection of DUs, which involve on-going recipient responses and which require interactional work toward the recognition TCUs that might initiate exit from a DU and return to single-unit turn taking.

Among fine-grained analyses of turn construction, Charles Goodwin's classic paper 'The interactive construction of a sentence in natural conversation' (1979) stands out in demonstrating the nuanced manner in which the real-time construction and content of a single 'sentence' emerges in response to local contingencies.⁵ These matters consist of such phenomena as the pursuit of uptake, the gaze of potential recipients as a speaker approaches possible turn completion, and the speaker's sense of what each recipient may already know about the content of the turn.

The speaker in Goodwin's main example pursues returned gaze and uptake from successive recipients as he constructs a single sentence, a report. This multi-party interaction takes place at a meal, and securing a recipient's gaze is a particular issue given the number of participants and the other activities going on. In the real-time unfolding of the turn, the report is incrementally reshaped so that it will indeed constitute news for successive possible recipients:

(4)⁶

John: I gave, I gave up smoking cigarettes::.=
 Don: =Yeah,
 John: L-uh: one-one week ago today.
 actually,

As John extends his turn in order to secure a responsive recipient, he also designs the content of each increment precisely for the particular recipient to whom he newly directs his gaze. For example, by adding the anniversary of ‘one week’, he designs his second increment as news for his wife, Beth. Close inspection of the videotape of this interaction is essential to Goodwin’s analysis; he masterfully demonstrates how turn building practices are adaptable to the contingencies in their dynamic, multi-lateral interactional context. Resources of grammar, prosody, and gaze support the reshaping of a developing turn’s action in response to recipient behavior which is *simultaneous with* the production of the turn.⁷

Schegloff (1979: 266) notes another practice revealing the local interactional determination of turn structure, what he terms ‘discourse within a sentence’. In these cases, what is traditionally viewed as a sentence is opened up to include a verbal exchange between the sentence producer and a recipient. The exchange is then closed by a return to the sentence-in-progress. Hayashi (in press) examines such contingent expansion of a single TCU in Japanese interaction. Hayashi offers the following example (Figure 2).

Masaki begins a conditional clause with *moshi* (‘if’) but cuts off that grammatical construction in order to check with his recipient about the exact time involved. At the beginning of line 4, to accomplish a return to the original sentence after the exchange at lines 2–3, Masaki uses the postpositional particle *ni*, a grammatical form which recurrently follows ‘a nominal element’ in an ongoing sentence (line 3). Masaki’s sentence includes direct interaction between himself and his recipient in the midst of the production of a single sentence, with the expansion constituting a classic adjacency pair – a sequence type which normatively takes at least *two* turns (Schegloff and Sacks, 1973). In this and other examples from Hayashi’s study, interactants use the grammatical resources of Japanese to embed interactional exchanges into the middles of single sentences, producing sequences within turns.

Goodwin’s and Hayashi’s approaches and findings reveal mechanisms and

1	Masaki:	<i>s(o)yakara:</i> so	<i>a:no::u:</i> uhm	<i>moshi-</i> (.) if	“So, uh-h-h-hm, if-,”
2		<i>rokuji han</i> 6.o'clock half	<i>yatta yan NA:</i> CP TAG FP		“((It) was six-thirty , wasn't ((it))?”
3	Hiromu:	<i>u.n.</i> yeah			“Yeah”
4 →	Masaki:	<i>ni:</i> at	<i>tadoritsuite nakattaRA:</i> arrive not:if		“((if I) haven't arrived ((there)) at .”

FIGURE 2. *Contingent expansion*

practices for unit production as inherently responsive to and reflective of contingencies. Contingency in turn production has also been the focus of much of Schegloff's scholarship, in which he has detailed the interactional practices through which what H&M term open DUs are produced. H&M's open DUs are also prime examples of contingency in the construction of what *retrospectively* turn out to be multi-unit turns, and H&M's DU paper was among the earliest to consider the internal relations between the units and actions making up extended turns.

H&M observe that DUs may be built in recurrent and predictable ways. Thus, although open DUs result from speaker–recipient interaction, the relations between the units within such extended turns have particular orders. H&M suggest that the action done by one TCU, may, as a consequence of that action, point ahead to the potential for further same-speaker talk of specific kinds (also see Selting, 2000: 505–8). Citing Pomerantz (1984), H&M note that specific action types project at least the opportunity space for accounts. The actions they cite include 'requests, invitations, proposals, suggestions, as well as . . . rejections and disagreements' (1985: 604). In examining the internal structuring of DUs and their interactional emergence, H&M point to a rich area for potential collaboration between discourse linguists and conversation analysts.

Following the insights of H&M, I have also explored action connections between parts of multi-unit turns, where a turn has reached possible completion but is then extended. Studying the use of adverbial conjunctions (Ford, 1993), for example, I note that *because* is frequently used in the context of dispreferred actions, both to elaborate first pair parts in pursuit of uptake and to introduce the account portions of disagreeing responses. In extract (5), a telephone call between two young men, *because* introduces an account, extending a first pair part after a delay in recipient response (line 2) projects possible disagreement:

(5) The extension of a problematic suggestion as a pause emerges.

1 A: .hhh Well do ya think it's: umm (.) stress?
 2 (.)
 3 → A: 'Cause a lot of back- I know back pain, (.) comes
 4 with stress.
 5 R: .hhh We:ll I'm thinking it might be uhh (.) I um
 6 (0.5) haven't ever had- ahh directly related
 7 physical symptoms of stress before.

But accounts are not only the result of the interactional working out of emerging troubles with reciprocity, the introduction of an account after a potentially problematic action may also be built into the initial production of a turn, before a point of possible transition relevance is reached. In extract (6), Ava uses *'cause* to connect an account to her offer, without a break in unit production:

(6) A final *'cause* clause after an offer/invitation.

Ava: If you wanna leave about eleven, I'll walk down with you
 → 'cause I have to go to school.

Thus, while the relations between units in open DUs may result from interactional contingencies, similar relations can be intonationally formulated so as to manage possible interactional trouble before it emerges.

H&M's suggestions regarding the relevance of accounts after specific actions are also echoed in Ford et al. (1996). We note that disagreement, even when embodied in a complete grammatical and prosodic unit, may nevertheless project an 'account space' (1996: 441). Accounts recurrently follow particular action types, whether the accounts are prompted through local interaction or 'pre-packaged' through single continuous intonation contours; this creates the potential for an intermediate projection type (FFT, 1996: 448). Thus, the study of contingencies and the interactional negotiation of units can provide insights into more planned or pre-packaged presentations of the same unit relations (see also Ford, 1994).

Contingency also manifests itself through the withholding of projectable actions. Disagreeing actions are regularly followed by accounts, but while accounts in such contexts are recurrent and normative, they are not predetermined. The recurrence and potential projection of accounts after disaffiliative negation (Ford, 2000, 2001; see also Pomerantz, 1984, 1988) make such action environments usable for other purposes. Speakers can and do exploit the anticipation of accounts by withholding them, and what follows such a withholding is a contingent outcome.

Extract (7) illustrates the strategic withholding of an account after disaffiliative negation, and the recipient responses treat an account as relevant (see especially lines 6 and 8):

(7) Abbie has reported that her father is going to Norway to visit his mother.

- 1 Rachel: So you're a Nor-Norveegian girl.
 2 Abbie: No.
 3 (.)
 4 Abbie: [No, Absolutely not a drop.
 5 Rachel: [No-
 6 Rachel: No?
 7 Abbie: °Nope.°
 8 Rachel: How's that possible.
 9 Rachel: He's not your father,
 10 Abbie: He is my father.
 11 (0.4)
 12 Abbie: But they're not Norwegian.
 13 (0.7)
 14 Terry: They just live-
 15 Abbie: They just live [(in Oslo).
 16 Rachel: [Oooohh.
 17 Terry: Isn't that different.
 18 Abbie: It's a complica[ted stor[y.
 19 Terry: [Totally. [
 20 Rachel: [R(h)eally.

Abbie's rejection of Rachel's suggestion and Abbie's withholding of the projectable account are accompanied by facial expressions that are playful, as Abbie looks from Terry to Rachel and back, lines 4–14. The contingency in this case depends on shared norms but involves a participant playing off of a norm rather than rigidly following it (see Ford, 2001, for further discussion of this example). The non-delivery of a relevant turn component is a systematic contingency in the unfolding of talk.

Close analysis reveals that both single and multi-unit turns are highly contingent productions; their internal structures and possible points of completion are skillfully managed in response to recipient verbal and non-verbal actions. Contingency is also manifested in the strategic withholding of normative turn expansions. If management of contingency is built into the production of single TCUs and their extensions into open DUs, the same is true of what might seem to be closed discourse units. If speakers monitor recipient behavior during and at the possible ends of single TCUs, then such monitoring and interactional coordination are just as much a task for managing the completion of extended tellings (Jefferson, 1978; Sacks, 1974), even closed DUs, i.e., ones with more clearly projectable internal structures and points of potential completion.

Contingency and closed DUs

The contingencies of closed discourse units are precisely what H&M turn to in the final analytic section of their study. They analyze a case in which a relatively clear entry into a closed DU and the projection of its potential end are accomplished, but the teller weakens the projection and the 'internal coherence' of the DU through digressions in her telling. The digressions not only affect the recognizability of the DUs internal trajectory, but they also invite responses from the recipients that further open up the digression. H&M convincingly argue that by introducing expanded slots for recipient interaction and by elaborating the section of the story which shows its relevance to prior talk ('external coherence'), the teller 'gives rise to doubts about what the DU is about', thus weakening the identifiability of its potential end. While the hallmark of a closed DU is that it has a 'last unit . . . marked as such' (p. 608), H&M demonstrate that 'the completion of a Closed DU is not always recognizable for the recipients, and can be subject to negotiation' (p. 608).

H&M's treatment of the contingencies related to weakening of projection within an extended unit is right on the mark, but it leaves the impression that such contingencies are characteristic of only a sub-set of closed DUs. In fact, the non-unilateral nature of DUs is pervasive. Put another way, DUs rarely exhibit clear boundedness but rather appear to be highly contingent and negotiated productions. This is precisely why part of the work that primary speakers must engage in for storytelling, as outlined by Jefferson (1978), is forming a story so that it reaches a point where other speakers may produce responsive actions which collaboratively achieve the transition from the story to other activities.

Contingencies for storytellers involve not just the projection of possible completion, but also producing the telling in such a way that when recipient responses arrive, they align and affiliate in a manner that the teller will accept as satisfactory (Goodwin, 1986, 2002).

To illustrate the contingencies in arriving at an ending for a closed DU, I present small segments of a longer telling from a phone call between two acquaintances, Patrick and John. At the point where extract (8) begins, the main business of the call (John called to talk with Patrick's roommate, Euclid, but Euclid is not home) has engendered a related topic. Patrick has just named his favorite roommate, and John reports that his own roommate is angry with him that evening, a report which also functions as a story entry device. I do not have the space to treat the full story, but we can note that John does project a closed DU, the end of which should be identifiable when what prompted the roommate's anger has been told:

(8) Story beginning

- 1 J: Yeah my roommate hates me toni:ght,
 2 but.that's okay:
 3 → P: Hates you tonight?
 4 J: Oh: yeah, he's ma:::d uh(h).
 5 → P: What's his pro:blem.
 6 J: hh.hh He had a- He: was all excited,
 7 'cause he's having this
 8 girl Do:nna over for dinner.
 9 P: Mh hum.

Through his responses at the two arrows, Patrick displays his alignment as a recipient of the longer telling. In asking, 'What's his pro:blem', Patrick also takes the stance that the roommate, rather than John, is the one to blame. Following H&M, after the initial negotiation of roles in this telling, the story should be recognizable as on-going based on identifiable story components. Indeed, the very report of the roommate's present state of hating John provides Patrick with an explicit indication of what the story must arrive at to be complete: some event must lead to the roommate's anger. As a closed DU, until the roommate's anger (or its cause) is arrived at, John's story will be treated as incomplete.⁸ Extracts (9) through (11) are parts of John's extended telling, and they contain points of possible completion of John's DU, points where the reason for the roommate's anger have been revealed:

(9)

- 19 J: an' so we started picking on him and
 20 his foo:d,.hhh (0.2) and it just
 21 went on from the:re, it just snowballed
 22 into Donna an' I just had the best ti:me,
 23 picking on him an' ..hh (0.2)(h)having fu:n,
 24 >so finally< [he said
 25 P: [=Now< Joh:n, you know that's not ni:ce.=
 26 J: =I know it (h)wasn't ni(h)ce, >b(h)ut< it sure was funny.

Patrick's '>Now< Joh:n, you know that's not ni:ce' comes at a point where John has just reported a series of events that could have made his roommate angry, but Patrick's stance toward the story and John is problematic. The sound stretches on 'ti:me' (line 22) and 'fu:n' (line 23), along with their intonation contours, are compatible with turn completion. Note as well that the generality of these descriptions, and the assessing actions contained in them, support their being taken as points where John is initiating a move out of the specifics of the story, making a collaborative exit from the story relevant. But Patrick does not respond immediately after 'ti:me' or 'fu:n', a delay which in itself projects potential disaffiliation with John's positive stance. When Patrick does respond, he does so with a negative assessment, a reprimand, '>Now< Joh:n, you know that's not ni:ce.'

With respect to the timing of Patrick's turn, if he can hear that John is producing more talk at line 24, then Patrick's initiation in overlap at line 25 may have an even stronger disaffiliative tone. In either case, John does not treat Patrick's response as the beginning of a story exit. Instead, John quickly concedes (see Couper-Kuhlen and Thompson, 2001) but then insists that what he did was 'funny', an insistence which he underscores with laughter tokens and by recycling 'fun', now in the word 'funny'.⁹ To bolster his stance on the humor of his actions, John lists his additional pranks. At line 44, he arrives at another point of possible completion:

(10)

- 4 P: an' he came ba:ck,
 44 → >an' he was< re:ally pissed o:ff.
 45 (0.3)
 46 J: .hhhh
 47 P: John, now you know that's not ni:ce.
 48 J: I know it wasn't n[i:ce].
 49 P: [(You(b)-You
 50 apologize to that bo:y.=
 51 J: =Oh: I wi:ll.>but-< (0.4) Donna
 52 was having a goo(h)d t(h)ime, to(h)o.

After a potentially problematic delay (line 45), Patrick reproduces his earlier reprimand (switching the order of 'John' and 'now'). At lines 51–2, John again concedes and again insists that the events were laughable. Note that Patrick does not reciprocate John's laughter tokens.¹⁰ Although it is not particularly problematic for Patrick to recognize points where collaborating in exiting the story might be relevant (except for his delays), Patrick's stance display continues to be a problem, and that leads into expansion of the story.

After much retroactive elaboration establishing the blame with the roommate, John arrives again at the outcome: his roommate's anger (line 134):

(11)

- 127 J: .hhh She picked up her boo:ks, put away
 128 her stu:ff.hh an' started to walk out the

- 129 do:r with me, >but< then she said,
 130 No:, I'm only teasing, and went
 131 ba:ck.
 132 (0.2)
 133 J: .hhh But uh:;, yeah, from
 134 that point o:n, he was RE:ally upset.
 135 (0.3)
 136 J: .hhh
 137 P: Jo:hn, I'd be >pissed at you< too.
 138 J: Yea:h, I know you [wou:ld be.
 139 P: [()
 140 P: I would be.
 141 J: I: know you would be.
 142 P: And you- (.) make sure you apol:ogize.=
 143 J: =Oh, I told- I:, (0.4) I said I'd better
 144 leave no:w, so you guys can stu:dy, an'(.)
 145 .hh I'll talk to you, when I get
 146 h(hh)o[:me. hm eheh
 147 P: [So where are you no:w. >ak-< school?
 148 J: No, I'm over af- uh:m Pat and James, a friend
 149 of mine, aw!:: actually Pat's apartment.

Again, there is a delay before Patrick's response (lines 135–7), and Patrick continues to display identification with the roommate's perspective. At this point, however, John no longer concedes nor insists on the humor of his actions. The story activity is ended decisively by Patrick's initiation of a new topic and sequence at line 147.

In the DU excerpted from in extracts (8)–(11), John finds himself getting responses at *points adequately fitted to the DU he projected*, but the stance he gets in response to the DU is what he treats as problematic. Patrick treats John as unequivocally to blame rather than as a harmless prankster whose roommate has overreacted. John resists Patrick's evaluation through his concessively formatted turns, and he expands his story, elaborating his depiction of the roommate as the one to blame.

John's full storytelling has multiple expansions and reshapings, which I have not done justice to here. The contingency I hope to have highlighted involves not necessarily the identification of points where exiting the telling is initiated, but rather the stance taken by the recipient at those points. In response to his recipient's stance displays, John repeatedly treats the story as incomplete, elaborating to convince the recipient that the events were humorous or to demonstrate that the roommate was to blame. Each expansion is responsive to Patrick's stance displays, and each expansion treats an earlier possible completion point as inadequate. Thus, while the notion of a closed DU with a recognizable first TRP (initiating story exiting activities) works for this story, it does not account for the contingent arrival at potential story completion nor for the systematic contingency of story completion in relation to recipient stance.

Though emerging in myriad ways, contingency is not merely characteristic of

a subset of closed DUs; it is imminent during the production of any unit of talk, long or short. It is not the primary speaker alone who creates even a closed DU, nor is it the case that recipients fall neatly in line in terms of the sorts of actions they do, both within and at the potential ends of these longer projects. The mechanisms through which interactants maneuver both the *arrival* at possible unit closing and the *manner and terms* of that transition are affected by contingencies. The interactional practices and resources that John uses are available to manage the unfolding of all sorts of talk, as contingencies cannot be effectively predicted but must be dealt with on the fly.

Conclusion

In her book (1987) *Plans and Situated Actions*, Suchman critiques the tradition of conceiving of action as the implementation of pre-packaged plans. She argues for an understanding of action as related to plans but practically driven by local interactional strategies as contingencies arise. Suchman's experience in studying the implementation of plans in human-machine interactions reveals the shortcomings of pre-determined plans as bases for such interaction – an indirect test of rigid models of human discourse itself. Suchman concludes that 'the function of abstract representations is not to serve as specifications for the local interactions, but rather to orient or position us in a way that will allow us, through local interactions, to exploit some contingencies of our environment, and to avoid others' (1987: 188).

Borrowing from Suchman's critique of cognitive science, I suggest that linguists also tend to rely on traditional structural categories and rules that require discrete instantiations rather than practices designed to respond to local contingencies. Remarkably, Houtkoop and Mazeland, in their discourse unit article in fact embrace the contingency of discourse units when they conclude their study with an examination of such larger projected units that seem to lack 'internal coherence'. In these cases, they find that the unitary nature of the unit is compromised and the arrival at possible completion is 'open to negotiation'. Instead of considering these cases as exceptions, I would argue that a search for discrete and uniformly recognizable units, whether they are lexico-grammatical or discourse organizational, may itself be a problem, in that all units are in one way or another 'open'.

One motivation for the present article has been to celebrate Hanneke Houtkoop's manifold contributions to our understanding of language and interaction. I have revisited her collaboration with Harrie Mazeland in the study of discourse units, and, in so doing, I have also approached some of the theoretical and empirical ground that Houtkoop continued to investigate in her work after the DU study. In her research on survey interview interactions, Houtkoop examined the tension between scripted talk and the contingent practices of ordinary interaction. The tensions she elucidated in the context of scripted talk might be taken as a metaphor for the tension between the rigidity of linguistic questioning

behavior and the contingent practices that we are trying to account for at the intersection of linguistics and conversation analysis.

I believe that both sides of this tension demand our continued examination: the importance of accounting for the construction of units – both long and short – in interaction, and the difficulty of reconciling more rigid linguistic approaches to units with the fundamental contingency of interaction. Even two decades after Houtkoop and Mazeland's Mexico City presentation, the challenge of contingency and the openness of discourse units is still present for those of us continuing the enterprise of understanding unit construction in interaction (e.g. Ford et al., 1996, Schegloff, 1996; Selting, 2000); new research places contingency at the very center of a rethinking of what grammar is and does (see especially, Hayashi, in press). There is no doubt that interactants use shared (though certainly not homogeneous) systems and that we share an orientation to unit completion. But it is also the case that our units are always open to riffs and spins, reshaping units as they unfold. Attention to how one does a riff or a spin is what we need, along with a taxonomy of units. As Schegloff reminds us:

Contingency – interactional contingency – is not a blemish on the smooth surface of discourse, or of talk-in-interaction more generally. It is endemic to it. It is its glory. It is what allows talk-in-interaction the flexibility and robustness to serve as the enabling mechanism for the institutions of social life.

(1991: 22)¹¹

The work of Hanneke Houtkoop and her colleagues who study scripted interaction offers us leverage as we research the contingent but highly structured practices of doing units of action in interaction. Just as survey research depends on structures that can be shared from encounter to encounter, and can be counted on to be similar *enough* across encounters that we can rely on them for understanding our social worlds, so the structures of natural language are reasonably reliable, identifiable, and shareable. They could not work otherwise. But, as interactants, using these structures in their natural habitat, we hold them loosely and use them with systematic local adaptations. If, as interactants, we stuck to the rules yielded by traditional linguistic description, we would 'present [our]selves as incompetent conversationalists' (Houtkoop-Steenstra, 1995: 104). Likewise, discourse linguists, in our research practices at the borders of conversation analytic and linguistic traditions, need to hold loosely our conceptions of structure, rule, and unit.

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NOTES

1. I am fortunate to have gained the friendship of both Hanneke Houtkoop and Harrie Mazeland as our geographic paths later crossed.
2. I thank Charles and Marjorie Goodwin for making this videotape and transcript available to me and many others.
3. Although see Schegloff (1997) for some problems with Labov's account.
4. For an illuminating recent discussion, including the role of the visual field, see Goodwin (2002).
5. Also see Goodwin's recent elegant treatment of the collaborative and multi-modal nature of human interaction (2002).
6. Goodwin also deals with projection and the effects of breaks in progressivity in his discussion of this case.
7. Also see Schegloff (1987) for a close analysis of contingency and the interactive production of a single turn.
8. Likewise, in Selting's model, the recipient will be able to distinguish non-final from final TCUs 'as long as this far-reaching projection is under way' (2000: 508). Of course, Selting's study details the prosodic manipulation of possible turn completion, and she also demonstrates that a recipient may not choose to respond after a TCU ending in a TRP.
9. As one reviewer pointed out, Patrick's disaffiliative actions are delivered in an exaggerated manner and sound like 'mock rebukes'. John could have responded to the joking rebuke with joking contrition on his own part, but instead he defends his positive stance toward his actions in the story.
10. Patrick's evaluation/reprimands and his directive that John apologize are both produced in a humorous way, which I would need more space to detail. However, even that element of humor, though it softens the negative evaluation, does not necessarily display alignment with John's behavior being funny.
11. I thank Barbara Fox for reminding me of this celebration of contingency in interaction.

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