Chapter 6: Discovering a Candidate Phenomenon

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'We need people with golden shovels who can dig in just the right place…'
(Erving Goffman, letter to Dell Hymes, 9 February 1977, in Hymes, 1984, p. 625)

1.0 Introduction[1]

While Goffman's observation to Hymes may sound unnecessarily mysterious, in many ways it captures the challenge of making accessible a discovering science. How do we discover candidate phenomena in data? What could constitute a candidate phenomenon? How do we know when we've found 'just the right place,' in Goffman's phrase? How do we acquire golden shovels?

We should start by explaining what we mean when we refer to a 'candidate phenomenon.' In the early days of Conversation Analysis (CA), Harvey Sacks asked his PhD student, Anita Pomerantz, to 'find an instance of a something' (Lerner, 2004, p. 2). And Pomerantz did indeed find an instance of a something: a compliment, which would lead to her seminal work on preference organization (1978, 1984). And it is this 'something' that we're referring to when we talk about a 'candidate phenomenon:' that 'something' may be an action (e.g. a compliment), a practice for implementing an action (e.g. positive assessments as a way of implementing compliments), an organization of practices (e.g. ways of doing self-repair), or part of the procedural infrastructure of interaction (e.g. repair organization as a whole; Kendrick, 2024/this volume). These can all constitute candidate phenomena to be discovered in interactional data. This chapter is devoted to setting out some of the methods used by conversation analysts in the process of discovery.

The paradox of this chapter is that the very notion of a set of directives for finding candidate phenomena is anathema to its radically inductive origins: a project that started with 'unmotivated looking' at the data (Sacks, 1984), so that the data themselves furnished the phenomena to pursue. Gene Lerner has captured this perspective in a social media post:

> If you want students to learn to appreciate art, then first show them a beautiful painting, not a 'how-to-paint' manual. If you want to share the beauty of CA, then first offer them some beautiful CA – I'd choose Drew and Holt (1998) on Figures of Speech. (Twitter, February 6th, 2020).

And you may well be reading this volume because you have indeed seen 'some beautiful CA.' In this sense, learning to do CA is like being an apprentice: learning through the practice.

[1] We are immensely grateful to Galina Bolden, Paul Drew, John Heritage, Kobin Kendrick, Gene Lerner, Anita Pomerantz, Chase Raymond, Geoff Raymond, and Jeff Robinson for sharing with us their experiences of working with data and agreeing to be quoted here. All quotations are, unless otherwise credited, from personal communication with these colleagues.

A particular challenge in discovering phenomena for CA is that an essential feature of the mechanisms and phenomena designed to produce the social world of which we are a part, and that we are trying to discover, are designed precisely to be obscured from view in the sense that they are 'seen-but-unnoticed' (Garfinkel, 1967). In this chapter we propose a variety of approaches to identifying these phenomena.

2.0 Acquiring Golden Shovels: Being an Apprentice

To his students, Geoff Raymond invokes the musician Frank Zappa, who spurned music lessons as an affront to his creativity. Initially incapable of playing chords, Zappa studied music by copying, by hand, the scores of his idols, including Stravinsky and Schoenberg. If you copy the practitioners you most admire, working out what they did and how they did it, you will still bring your own distinctive voice to the exercise, and develop your own sensibilities. Raymond remembers seeing the musician Snake Davis teaching children to play the saxophone this way; by having them join him in playing a riff, and only then playing solos: the important thing was to love the music first and to emulate its producers. The same goes for CA: you have *first* to love looking at interaction. In the ideal situation, you will have access to data sessions (Betz, 2024/this volume) with more experienced conversation analysts and have immediate access to their ways of working (see the chapter by Betz on data sessions, this volume). Chase Raymond remembers data sessions at UCLA where he was a graduate student, where he would, as he puts it, 'see people scratching at a piece of data,' and learn from watching more experienced researchers (section 5, below, provides some starting points for data sessions).

There is no question that an actual or virtual community of fellow conversation analysts is essential – or at least, inordinately helpful. For some, graduate school provides the initial building block for this community. Anita Pomerantz points out that a key ingredient in graduate school was the community of fellow graduate students, each looking out for cases of the other's phenomenon to help with building collections. While it is not always easy to achieve, being able to talk through one's possible discoveries with others is a crucial way of developing them into full-blown analyses. Pomerantz notes the importance, however, of starting with what you yourself see, rather than playing off the observations of others.

In recent years, video-teleconferencing software has greatly facilitated the possibilities of remote data sessions if face-to-face sessions are not feasible, and there are a number of short courses and workshops in CA even if institutional supervision is not available close to you. But, in the absence of immediate colleagues with whom to work, what might you want to bear in mind as you approach data? What we shall see is that, although the process of CA is radically different from the standard social science model of hypotheses and research questions, and in many ways is different from other qualitative approaches as it usually starts with observations rather than being motivated by questions (although see Section 6), it remains the case that what we observe is always initially guided by intuition: the 'golden shovels' that Goffman describes. How to develop that intuition from your own perspective but within the canon of CA is the subject of what follows. It is a collection of reflections on working methods that might prove useful when embarking on a study of your own. We start by distinguishing *observations* about data from *discoveries*

based on those observations. We then look at possible routes into the data themselves. While the core of CA is the practice of investigating audio- (for non-co-present interaction) or video-recordings of interaction, interactional phenomena have also been discovered by examining other sources of data; we end with a reminder that, once you are equipped with a golden shovel, you start to know where to look to find the right place to dig. In the spirit of apprenticeship rather than the kind of 'how-to-paint' manual eschewed by Lerner, our chapter is deliberately and unapologetically anecdotal. It is the product of the cumulative experience of some of those who have been working in CA over many years. As you will see, there are a variety of voices and a variety of perspectives – and they are not all compatible. We are aiming for a methodological pluralism that nevertheless has CA's radically inductive approach to data at its core. Our hope is that you, too, will start by copying some of the practices described in the following pages. But your starting point is unique and, as you progress, you will develop your own working style, your own distinct voice, or what Schegloff calls your own 'idiom' (Schegloff, personal communication).

3.0 Starting with Observations

Gene Lerner points out an important distinction between an *observation* and a *discovery*. We see massively in data, that when someone asks a question, it gets answered. When Sacks et al. (1974) started examining conversation, they observed that overlapping talk, in general, was relatively rare, and that there were comparatively few silences between turns. So those *observations* are not *discoveries*. The work that remains to be done is explicating the mechanism that underpins what you have observed. Aspects of that explication might be one kind of discovery; the adjacency pair and conditional relevance (Schegloff, 2007), and preference organization (Sacks, 1987, Heritage & Pomerantz, 2013) are, after all, discoveries that emerged from the observation that questions make relevant answers next (see Schegloff & Sacks, 1973).

To that end, many conversation analysts advocate starting with observations about publicly available features of the interaction that are demonstrably oriented to by participants. As Sacks & Schegloff (1973, p. 299) note, interactants examine every next part of every next utterance with the question: 'Why that, now?' Analysts can, and should, do the same. The 'Why' captures the *action* that a bit of conduct is designed to accomplish. The 'that' deals with the action's *composition*, and the 'now' focuses on the *position* of the action. Any analysis worth its salt will need to be able to account for *action*, *position*, and *composition*. The advantage of starting with an observation is that this guarantees that you have something tangible. It is from the observation that one can go on to make a discovery.

A *discovery* is something that we did not know before, or the observation of something that we did not hitherto know could be possible. As Sacks (1984) notes, in studying everyday interaction, conversation analysts are not limited to examining what they conceive to be possible. Take Schegloff's account of 'Confirming an allusion' (1996a), which identifies an action that we all do, but did not – until Schegloff identified it – know existed. The discovery of a phenomenon that is completely non-intuitive began with the very simple observation that someone was agreeing with an interlocutor by repeating what they said, as seen in Excerpt (6.1):

Excerpt (6.1) (Schegloff, 1996a, p. 183)

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Interview with Susan Shreve on U.S. National Public Radio concerning her
recent novel. E=Bob Edwards, interviewer; S=Susan Shreve)

01      E:  Why do you write juvenile books.
02          (0.5)
03      E:  [’s that- b-  (0.?)  [hav]ing [children?   ]
04      S:  [Because I love child[ren].   [I really do:]=
05          =.hh I enjoy children:, .hh I started writing: (.)
06          juvenile books fer entirely pra:ctical reasons, .hh
07          (.)
08      S:  [u- u-
09      E:  [Making money::.
10 --> S:  Making [money
11      E:        [yes ((+laughter))
12      S:  that- that practical reason hhh
13          (.)
14      S:  I’ve been writing juvenile books for a lo:ng…
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Answering the question ‘Why that, now?’ of a turn such as line 10 above draws on all three elements of position, composition, and action (Raymond et al., 2024/this volume). In this case, the action is identified by means of examining both its composition as a repeat and its position immediately after what is repeated. Schegloff notes across a number of similar cases that what is repeated (in (1) above, ‘Making money’) is a candidate formulation of a prior characterization made by the recipient. That candidate formulation can be seen to have its origins in what the recipient has herself said (in (1) lines 5-6, Shreve’s ‘I started writing juvenile books fer entirely practical reasons’) – an allusion to circumstances that are explicitly articulated in that formulation. As Schegloff observes, the recipient, by repeating the utterance in next turn, confirms this candidate formulation offered by the other and in so doing *confirms the allusion*. Schegloff’s discovery of this action was thus grounded initially in a simple observation of a particular practice: a repeat of what was just said, rather than a simple acknowledgment (such as ‘yes’, for example). Making simple observations – in this case, that the agreement was accomplished by a repeat – is a key first step in discovering phenomena.

4.0 How to Develop Observations Into Discoveries

In this section, we provide some general guidelines to bear in mind as you approach your data which will assist you in developing your observations into discoveries.

4.1 Ask: ‘Have I Seen That Before?’

It is possible that you’ll find, in data, a ‘something’ that you have never seen before. However, in developing an account of a phenomenon, you will need to analyse additional cases of that ‘something’ and develop an understanding of what that ‘something’ is (re. building CA collections, see Clayman, 2024/this volume; Depperman & Gubina, 2024/this

volume; Drew, 2024/this volume; Drew, Osterman, & Raymond, 2024/this volume; Walker, 2024/this volume). Gene Lerner says that his most frequent reaction when he examines data is *I've seen that before*. In this respect, the conversation analyst examining data is somewhat like the doctor in general practice examining a patient who walks into the surgery. The doctor has to establish the patient's condition: is it a blood condition, or a heart condition, or something else entirely? Determining this condition is an exercise in recognition. The doctor is confronted with the single instance of something, but has to find out what this is an instance of. The same goes for data; recall Harvey Sacks's definition of culture as 'an apparatus for generating recognisable actions' (1992a, p. 226). Given that, as Schegloff says, 'social life is lived in single occurrences' (1988, p. 442), the analyst is in the same position of having to identify the generic features of any individual instance. Lerner uses a pithy question in approaching what looks like an interactional practice in data: 'What is this creature and where does it live?' In other words, what are its (compositional) features and where, sequentially (or otherwise in terms of position), does it occur? How does what came before prepare a place for this action?

A study on the practice of visible deflation (Clift, 2014) had its origins in Clift spotting a speaker's hand, holding a pen, drop to the table just after her daughter gives her an insolent response (see also subsequently Lerner & Raymond, 2017, on 'conspicuous abandonment'). The hand drop looked recognisably like something, but Clift did not initially know what. She resolved to keep a look-out in data for practices that looked similar, whatever that might be: she didn't even know at that point what looking 'similar' might involve. But sometime later, she saw in her corpus, the same speaker on a couple of other occasions holding her arm out while asking a question, then dropping it upon her daughter's response. The configuration of the arm was different in each case, so each instance was compositionally distinct in various ways, but there was in each case a component that turned out to be central: that of a sudden drop. Moreover, in each case it was produced upon the daughter's response: a response that, on each occasion, was characterizable as blocking the action being proposed by the initial speaker. In other words, both the composition of the practice – a bodily 'let down' from a position in tension – and its sequential position were stable, and amounted to a visible display of exasperation. Once Clift had a small collection of these practices, she had a sense of in which data sources to look further – in Lerner's terms, she had a sense of where the creature might live. She knew that the recording named 'Virginia' might prove to be a promising source. In this, the teenage Virginia, dining with her mother, brother, and brother's partner, embarks on a number of futile appeals to each, only to be frustrated on each occasion. So it proved to be, furnishing a number of other instances. This goes to show that Clift had indeed, without at the time being conscious of it, 'seen that before': in 'Virginia'.

Of course, *I've seen that before* is not just a response to reserve for data, but also for daily observation. Gene Lerner tells us of the occasion on which he saw an instance of what he and Geoff Raymond were later to call an 'action pivot' (Lerner & Raymond, 2017): an occasion when a participant pivots from an originally begun recognizable action into another, so that the ensuing action appears to be what they were doing all along. Sometime in the 1970's, sitting on the second floor of a university library looking down at the slope which went down to the library's entrance, Lerner saw someone at the top of the slope start to wave to someone at the bottom, at the entrance to the library. But what started as a wave was transformed into a hair groom. Lerner says:

> The wave recipient couldn't see them, but someone else could, because of the slope. When I saw that, I thought, *that happens all the time* – but it took me probably 10, 15, 20 years to get a collection because you don't find it in the data all the time… I didn't work on it….when I was doing other things, I'd see one, and I would grab it. (Lerner, p.c.).

The collection that Lerner amassed had a central component in each case: the transformation of what was recognisably starting to be one action into another. So a request point would become a nose rub, or a hand raise would be transformed into an arm fold, for example (op.cit.).

Like Drew's discovery of hendiadys (section 5.1) or Schegloff's practice of 'body torque' (section 4.5), it took decades – in Lerner's case, around forty years – for the embryonic observation of an action pivot to develop into a collection, analysis, and thence into print. Of course, many of us do not have the luxury of this span of time, but it underscores the importance of generating seed collections (see also section 5.1.2). Some phenomena are ubiquitous and so easy to identify, so, for example, Schegloff (1997) is based on a collection of 1350 instances of other-initiated repair (1997, p. 502). Whether or not these phenomena are pervasive, an important feature of these discoveries is the discoverer's alertness to things they have seen before across a wide variety of domains in everyday life. In this way, everything the conversation analyst sees is potentially grist for the analytic mill.

4.2 Recall Other Data, and Question the Literature

Remember to keep in mind that the critical thing in examining data is to recall similar instances from *other data*. As Gene Lerner puts it: 'What you want to have in your head is bunches of things that have happened. That's what you want to have in your head to be able to connect.' Recognizing something that he's seen before – not just as it happens, as we saw in the previous section, with his identification of action pivots – but also in other data, is here key. There is always the temptation to use the literature as a buttress for our discoveries, to attempt to match what one is seeing to what one has read about a particular practice, but our job as analysts is not to only to confirm or endorse the literature. Looking backwards to what has already been written does not necessarily feed discovery.[2] Of course, some conversation-analytic work explicitly seeks to re-examine and, if relevant, specify, clarify, or event contest claims made by others (see, e.g. Kendrick & Drew, 2014), but this work is itself grounded in the examination of data that illuminate prior work. By keeping in mind other data rather than the literature – at least as an initial step – we are more likely to be alert to the possibility that the practice or phenomenon we are looking at is something we have seen before, and so discover a recurrent practice. This is one instantiation of Pasteur's (1854) dictum that 'in the fields of observation, fortune favours the prepared mind,' as the key here is recognizing something as a recurrent phenomenon: something that you have seen before elsewhere. Lerner suggests compiling seed

[2] This is not, of course, to dismiss the literature, which in writing up your phenomenon provides the critical context for your study. But at the point at which you are making observations, the aim is to be thinking about data *per se*, rather than using what has been written about it to shape your observations.

collections – starter assemblages of instances that belong together – and adding to them while working with data. Once a collection has achieved critical mass, then one can began to explore the phenomenon.

Collections may also grow while working in a focused way on a particular phenomenon. That is, discoveries may come about when they intrude on or emerge out of other ongoing work, because something that initially looked like an additional feature of a phenomenon turns out to be a phenomenon in its own right. For instance, while working recently on offers produced at different points in the course of a self-service at the family dinner table, Mandelbaum and Lerner (2023) noticed that self-servers sometimes adjusted the self-service as it was under way. These remedial actions appeared to be implemented for different reasons with different consequences. This revealed a set of practices that is related to, but different from, the precise positioning of offers across the Manual Action Pathway of self-service, and thus generated a second paper (Mandelbaum & Lerner, unpublished ms.). Here we see another way in which a phenomenon can come into view whilst working on another: a new phenomenon emerges from an initial one (see Clayman, 2024/this volume).

4.3 Use Simple Non-technical Language in the First Instance

When we are setting out do CA, it may be reassuring to know that we can identify, say, an adjacency pair in data, or a dispreferred second pair part (we discuss this in section 5). But initially for the purposes of discovery, it's important to stay close to the data excerpt, seeing it in its local context, on its own terms, using simple, straightforward, non-theoretical language, and in this way avoid premature theorising. Schegloff's discovery of confirming an allusion, discussed earlier, is an example of something completely new being discovered from an observation that needs no technical knowledge whatsoever. And that initial avoidance of technical knowledge can, and some argue, even *should* be seen as a strength. Gene Lerner advises: 'For discovery, it's important to stay close to the data… Initially, talk in plain vernacular terms about the phenomenon; don't theorize it prematurely….terminology limits the boundaries of what the thing is'. The danger of using terminology is that it may prevent us from seeing the data clearly on its own terms. Lerner makes the point that using CA terminology can be a hindrance to seeing the data clearly and may give you conceptual blinkers:

> Students think knowing the terminology and literature, to 'speak like a conversation analyst' is how you become competent. But all of that gets in the way. It's not to say you can't take some concepts and use those concepts, use terminology to open up new things. But you can only go so far with that. The point is that it is really vulnerable to producing a lens through which you see, and you never see what's going on.

Wittgenstein's observation regarding 'the bewitchment of our intelligence by means of language' (1953, section 109) is here a salient warning. In battling against this bewitchment, it is important to distinguish the vernacular terms we use (e.g. 'request', 'offer') from the practices we are studying. That is, identifying something as a request, for

example, does not explain how it works. There is a whole organisation of words such as these that we use to refer to actions, but these should be kept distinct from studying action itself. Distinguishing the two liberates us to identify the actions, and enables us either to see vernacularly familiar actions in a new light, or alternatively to discover and name new classes of action. Sacks's observation that the utterance 'we were in an automobile discussion' is 'possibly to be seen as an *invitation*' (1992a, p. 300; emphasis original) is a compelling instance of the former; Schegloff's discovery of confirming an allusion an instance of the latter. Indeed, Schegloff's original observation was that a speaker was confirming by repeating what the other had just said – a perfectly plain, vernacular characterization of the practice before the technical formulation ('confirming an allusion') was produced. Another product of just such a perspective is Kendrick and Drew's (2016) paper on 'recruitments' in interaction. Kobin Kendrick tells of the process by which he first identified this class of actions. Researchers working at the same research institute were bringing to data sessions interactional data from a range of languages. Kendrick recalls:

> The things that people were bringing in and everybody was calling 'requests' were all sorts of different things, and it was really problematic to say they were all 'one thing', whatever you want to call it – whether you want to call it 'requests' or the same practice or whatever – it didn't matter. They weren't the same thing…there was no empirical basis for seeing them as the same: the sequence wasn't organised in the same way, they weren't responded to in the same way, they didn't occur in the same sequential environment. Every kind of CA test you could use to differentiate them to be either 'same thing' or 'different thing': they all pointed to 'different things'. They were all 'getting someone to do something' - but that does not make it the same, and calling them all 'requests' was problematic. I said, "they're not all requests…" and then I said "well, maybe they're recruitments[3] – if there's something that brings them all together, it's that people are being recruited." [4]

Kendrick's experience is a warning to be constantly alert to the language we use to identify the interactional practices we study. The labels we give things may shape how we see them, so precision – and openness to adjusting our language – is key.

4.4 Work at the Centre of the Phenomenon

There is a temptation, in looking at data, to look first at complex cases. However, in developing an analysis, one should ideally start working with the simplest instances. Gene Lerner reports advice Harvey Sacks shared with him to work 'at the center of the phenomenon, not at the periphery'. This is a corollary of the key adage for CA work, that

[3] Although Kendrick's use of the term 'recruitments' to refer to this class of actions was novel, it was not, in fact, the first time that the term was used in a CA context; Drew and Backhouse use the term in the context of speakers recruiting others into interaction or a task in the open plan office of an architectural design practice (1992, p. 579).

[4] See also Heritage and Pomerantz (2013) for a discussion along similar lines.

one must work first with the 'low hanging fruit': that is, always start with the simplest, clearest cases, as it is hard enough to produce a coherent account of these. Once one has firm analytic traction on the these cases, one may then be in a position to tackle (or at least, to assess) less clear-cut or anomalous cases. Lerner notes that deviant or anomalous cases can indicate the boundaries of a phenomenon (Schegloff, 1997). They may sometimes yield new insights, or even a complete revision of a current analysis. This was Schegloff's experience, where one case of a telephone call opening out of 500 worked differently from the other 499, and the revised analysis yielded the discovery of the adjacency pair (Schegloff, 1968; Schegloff & Sacks, 1973) (For more on deviant case analysis, see the chapter by Clayman on working with collections, this volume).

4.5 Remember: Anything and Everything Can Be a Source of Discovery

'One sometimes finds what one is not looking for'
(Alexander Fleming, in Haven, 1994, p. 182)

Gene Lerner suggests that one way to pursue a radically inductive enterprise is to commit ourselves to 'stumbling upon things'. In perhaps the most famous example of scientific serendipity, Alexander Fleming discovered penicillin because a petri dish became contaminated. But while the role of serendipity is what here draws the attention, it is also necessary to remember Pasteur's dictum of fortune favouring the prepared mind. Fleming's mind was in the right place for serendipity to strike; he knew the implications of what he was seeing in the petri dish. In Goffman's analogy, he already had the golden shovel. Once equipped, one is in the position to make observations in other domains beyond the primary data of audio- and videoed recordings of naturally-occurring interaction. Indeed, in the early days of CA, it's striking that a number of data sources in published articles are given as 'FN': in other words, field notes, or observations of actual interactions. These can be invaluable in supporting your primary analysis, without of course having the same evidentiary value as recorded instances – Gene Lerner's observation of an action pivot, mentioned in section 4.1, is one such a case. To this end, Schegloff would tell his students to immerse themselves in good-quality work, whether music, literature, films, or any creative arts, for inspiration (one only has to read Sacks's lectures to see how widely-read he was). Schegloff's paper on a postural configuration he calls 'body torque' – 'roughly, divergent orientations of the body sectors above and below the neck and waist, respectively' (1998, p. 536) – has its origins, not in a direct observation of interaction, but by the description of a painting by Titian, 'Venus with the Organ Player', in a book review by the art critic Francis Haskell, in which he describes the painting as follows:

> …a young man turns away from the organ on which his hands still rest and gazes, with grave and dignified satisfaction, at the sexual parts of a naked Venus who reclines on a couch behind him. (1977, p. 6, cited in Schegloff, 1998, p. 539).

Schegloff goes on to note that this passage raised a number of questions for him, the most pertinent of which for our analytic purposes is: 'What is someone doing in *sitting* in this way?' He then proceeds to examine this class of postures in the data of a variety of contexts in quotidian life: a tutoring session, an airport operations room, and a sorority house. And ultimately the analysis of the practice of body torque supplies an analytic resource for understanding the iconographic import of the picture. Note that the prompting observation was published in 1977 and 'Body Torque' over twenty years later; as in the case of Lerner's action pivots, capturing a number of instances of this practice in naturally-occurring interaction to make an analytically warranted case may take some time!

An example such as the Titian painting can furnish evidence of a particular practice being salient interactionally and culturally across the ages and across contexts. So Clift has found relevant instances of the phenomenon she is writing about on the football field (Clift, 2020, p. 191, Figure 1), in the Bible (Clift, 2016a, p. 73) and other literature (e.g. Clift, 2012, pp, 72-3; 2016b, p. 119, footnote 15; Raymond, 2017, p. 29, footnote 12). Television and YouTube (Clift, 2021, p. 266; Whitehead et. al, 2018) can also yield illustrative instances (re. CA data collection, see Hoey & Webb, 2024/this volume). These alternative sources of secondary data can underscore your analysis of your primary resource – but, of course, should never be a substitute for the data of actual interaction. The important thing is that one's analytic antennae are always out. John Heritage tells us a striking story about Max Atkinson that embodies this precept. Atkinson phoned him one night in the late 1970's, while both were separately watching the British Academy of Film and Television Arts (BAFTA) awards ceremony on television, and asked: 'Have you noticed that when a winner is announced, the audience applauds for around 8 seconds?' He added: 'That's why they play music as winners make their way to the podium…if that walk takes 20 seconds, they're going to arrive after 12 seconds of total silence. And that's not a happy experience for a winner…'. The next day, Atkinson phoned again to say that he'd noticed that some award-winners got loud and sustained bursts of applause, and some didn't. It was all to do with where the winner's name was in the announcement. If the announcer said, 'The winner of the best movie award is Max Atkinson for "Our Master's Voices"', the applause tended to be weak and scattered. But if the announcer said 'And the winner of the best movie award for his film 'Our Master's Voices' is Max Atkinson' the applause started immediately and was louder and more sustained. In the first version, Atkinson's name is buried in the middle, and it's difficult for people to decide when to clap. In the second version, the name is right at the end – exactly the logical spot to applaud his achievement. Atkinson's insights that night, watching the BAFTA awards, formed the foundation of his subsequent pioneering research into applause and political rhetoric (Atkinson, 1984, 2004). The '+/- 8 second rule' for the duration of applause and the 'clap on the name rule' for its timing, were, incidentally, borne out by subsequent empirical research to be entirely accurate (Heritage and Greatbatch, 1986). That his research should originate in those initial observations on real-life interaction, while watching television, testifies to the fruitfulness of having one's antennae permanently on alert. And, of course, it's key to note down these inspirations immediately: Schegloff always carried paper in his pocket; Chuck Goodwin was renowned for carrying an audiorecorder, paper and pencil at all times; and Galina Bolden suggests a notebook by the bed!

5.0 Unlocking the Data: Identifying Action

In this section we examine a number of possible ways you can get traction on your data. The action a turn is designed to implement, and the course of action of which it is a part, are the central concerns for the interactant (Schegloff, 1995). And so this must be the case for the analyst, too: action is the essential starting point for analysis. As Schegloff observes, 'Talk is constructed and is attended by its recipients for the action or actions it may be doing' (1996, p. 5; see also, on action ascription, Deppermann & Haugh, 2022). Paul Drew tells of doing his PhD research on the period of violence and political disturbance in the Northern Irish 'Troubles' in the early 1970s. Initially interested in how newspapers with contrasting political affiliations constructed their reports so as to blame the opposition, Drew acquired the courtroom transcripts of the 1969 Scarman Tribunal, a judicial investigation of the Troubles (analysis of which was to inform Atkinson and Drew, 1979). As he examined a transcript of a witness – a police officer – under cross-examination by a tribunal lawyer, it became clear to Drew that the lawyer was *accusing* the police officer of not protecting the Catholic community, to which the police officer responded by *justifying* his conduct. In other words, what was crucial was the *action* being done. And then the issue was how it became recognisable as such. Once Drew saw the action at the heart of what was being said, rather than what was being said *per se*, things fell analytically into place for him. So his – and our – advice to anyone starting to examine data is: *look for the action*. As Gail Jefferson used to put it, rather more informally, when examining data: 'what are the participants up to?'. In the case of institutional talk, as in the transcripts Drew was examining, it may be easier initially to identify the actions, because interaction in those settings is built around them. The participants are there *in order* to complain, request, accuse, and so on. However, as we see later, capturing the actions participants are doing is not as straightforward as it might initially appear. But the focus on action leads inextricably to the resources used to build that action.

5.1 The Procedural Infrastructure of Interaction: Schegloff's Six Problems

We insisted in section 4.3 (above) that, in the first instance, you should use simple, straightforward, non-theoretical language in examining data to avoid as much as possible blocking one's view of the interaction itself. We recommend this starting point. However – and consistent with our earlier alert that there are multiple, potentially conflicting starting points – if data prove intractable, elements of the procedural infrastructure of interaction may provide a broad avenue into your data. Schegloff (2007, p. xiv) outlines these elements as a series of analytic problems that participants have to solve.

i. The turn-taking problem

ii. The action-formation problem

iii. The sequence-organizational problem

iv. The 'trouble' problem

v. The word-selection problem

vi. The structural-organization problem

It is important to bear in mind that this is a somewhat mechanical approach, and runs the risk of foregrounding structure. It can be a productive entrée into the data, yielding unexpected insights into action that penetrate one's peripheral vision while focusing on that structural element. Below, we offer a necessarily brief sampling of these aspects of structure that might provide a schema for analysis and generate discoveries about action in addition to discoveries about that element (or other elements) of structure.

5.1.1 The Turn-taking Problem

Apparent variations of, or anomalies in, the basic rules of turn-taking – who talks next and why – can be fruitful areas of investigation. Kobin Kendrick says that in data sessions, he will often say 'This is the type of thing that a conversation analyst would be interested in' and it has sparked multiple projects. He gives as an example of such an observation the phenomenon whereby a speaker finishes their turn by coming to a prosodic, syntactic and pragmatic completion. They then receive a response from their recipient, and, instead of producing a hearably new turn, opt to 'recomplete' the turn by producing what is hearably a grammatical continuation of their prior turn. A classic case from the literature (although not used to illustrate this actual point) is Excerpt (6.2):

Excerpt (6.2) (Goodwin, 1979, p. 98)

```
01      John:  I gave, I gave up smoking cigarettes::.=
02       Don:  =Yea:h,
03             (0.4)
04 --> John:  l-uh: one-one week ago t'da:y.acshilly,
```

Kendrick says to students: 'Look….! Why would you continue your turn after someone else has responded? That's puzzling. It must be doing something special…' The phenomenon, being at the intersection of turn-taking and sequence organization, immediately brings both domains into play. A systematic study of such phenomena – technically known as third position increments – is detailed in Schegloff (2016[2000]).

5.1.2 The Action-formation Problem

Establishing how systematic practices are recognisable as particular actions is, as we have seen, the heart and soul of CA. Its collections-based methods make it possible to identify actions by means of examining the recurrent practices used to implement them. For example, the research reported in Clift (2012), describing the actions implemented when reported speech is infiltrated with laughter when a complaint is produced, had its origins in Clift's interest in two distinct practices: reported speech and laughter. Seed collections she had of each of these practices gave rise to another collection, which contained extracts in which both co-occurred. She thus found that she had a collection of

instances such as the following, which showed speakers using first-person reported speech infiltrated with laughter (line 24):

Excerpt (6.3) (Clift, 2012:1305)

```
((Jane (Jan) is telling Jeremy about the local estate agents ('there', line
20) with whom both are in dispute))

16     JAN:  Oh I kno:w ah mean ah I c-[I:
17     JER:                           [Wiyl
18           (.)
19     JAN:  con[t e s t e d  that]
20     JER:     [You were the:re y]es[I know.]
21     JAN:                        [Yez I c]ontested tha(h)at very
22           str(h)ongly. .hh[hhh
23     JER:                  [I kno:w.
24 --> JAN:  Ah said your syst'n breaks[do-own ve(h)ry frequentl(h)y
25    (JE):                           [(mhh!)
26     JER:  Oh ah'm ah'm sho' it doe:s,
27           (0.2)
```

Across a collection of cases, it was evident that each instance of first-person laughter-infiltrated reported speech displayed similar features to that in line 24 above. In compositional terms, they constituted negative assessments; and, in terms of sequential position, they followed agreements that were epistemically competitive (Heritage and Raymond, 2005), with the reported speech displaying a bid for primacy in rights to assess (Clift, 2006). These laughter-infiltrated turns did not receive laughter in response – another indication that they were not hearable as affiliative but rather competitive. The collection of two dovetailing practices – reported speech and laughter – alongside their recurrent sequential position in competitive assessment sequences, made it possible to identify this recurrent action. Clift was therefore able to establish that the turns in reported speech were reporting *complaints*; the laughter infiltrating these turns was doing work to mitigate their complainable quality, claiming that their producer was not a habitual complainer, in the same manner that speakers reporting troubles may use infiltrated laughter to show troubles-resistance (Jefferson, 1984). In this way, Clift was able to arrive at a characterisation of action through an interest in two distinct practices: one linguistic, and one embodied. These practices are deployed to produce a recognisable action in a particular way.

5.1.3 The Sequence-organizational Problem

To examine how one turn coheres with another to create a recognizable course of action is to address an element of the problem of sequence organization. Starting with observations about how agreement is accomplished in assessment sequences, Heritage & Raymond (2005) opened up a whole new domain of inquiry into how participants manage relative rights to knowledge. This drew on two initially independent streams of inquiry – that, twenty years previously, on 'oh' (Heritage, 1984, 1998, 2002), and subsequent work on 'yes'-'no' interrogatives (Raymond, 2003), also informed by Schegloff (1996a) on repetition. An understanding of sequence organization is the basis of all of this research –

research that itself has extensive reach. One significant outcome of this work into epistemic rights has been a discovery about how the marking of differential rights to knowledge is implicated in the management of identity. In documenting orientations to identity (in this particular case, 'grandparent'), across sequences where it is demonstrably relevant (although nowhere mentioned) and procedurally consequential, Raymond and Heritage (2006) provide a compelling demonstration of how a focus on a technical problem – sequence organization – has levered open a new domain. This focus on how sequences are organized, rather than on referenced identity categories (e.g. 'woman', 'grandparent') in the talk, has furnished research into identity in interaction with its most distinctive and nuanced methodology. As with Kitzinger and Mandelbaum (2013), one might suppose that approaching the data with an interest in identity might have led in a quite different direction.

Let's take, as an example of the kind of data you might want to examine, the following sequence in Excerpt (6.4).[5] Mary meets Adam's request to sit down (line 1) with an apology (line 2):

Excerpt (6.4) (Clift: 22:20)

```
01  ADA: -->  Can I sit ↑do(hh)wn: is it al(h)right if I ↑sit, is it
02  MAR: -->  Oh pleas:e do I'm [↓sorry
03  ADA:                        [My legs: we:re:->no its o[kay<
04  MAR:                                                   [I'm sorry,
05         [you were standing there and I wasn't=
06  ADA:  [(It's the) legs were gone because of (0.5)
07  MAR:  =thinking ab[out it
08  ADA:              [cycling. S Uhh!=
09  MAR:  =That was dreadful of me I'm sorry.
```

An initial question of line 1, keeping action at the forefront of our inquiry, might be: why would anyone ask to sit down? After all, we sit down several times a day without asking anyone's permission. In which contexts, then, might we ask permission? Perhaps if we were visiting someone. And then, of line 2, examining Mary's response, we see that, as well as a turn-initial 'oh' (Heritage, 1984), there is a vigorous assent, plus an apology – an apology that, moreover, is reiterated at line 4 and line 9. So the general question becomes: in what circumstances might an apology be relevant? Perhaps remembering Sacks's famous observation about hosts apologizing to guests for earthquakes (Sacks, 1992b, p. 296), we might observe that a host, displaying responsibility for a guest, might apologize, particularly in the case when, as here, the guest does an action that exposes a shortcoming in the host's attentiveness to them. So the above extract shows Mary and Adam's orientations to the categories of guest and host respectively in their talk. Of course, you'd need to collect a number of parallel cases of requests to do something, and assents plus apologies in response, to make an empirically valid case of host-guest interaction (see Clayman, this volume, on working with collections), but the exchange above shows the kind of approach you might take. So actions across sequences reveal participant orientations making particular identity categories relevant.

[5] Note that the original is face-to-face data, but the embodiments have been removed so as to concentrate on the talk.

5.1.4 The 'Trouble' Problem

Looking for instances of trouble in the form of repair is always immensely suggestive, because it is evidence for what matters to participants (see the chapter, 2024/this volume, by Raymond and Robinson on endogenous evidence). As Drew et al remark:

> Self-repair affords us the most direct access to the alternative versions or selections considered by speakers, whatever was initially selected being rejected by the speaker in favour of the subsequent version, the repair. In self-repair we can see the work of designing a turn brought to the surface of the talk. Hence we can discern in self-repair speakers' orientations as to how best to construct turns for their sequential environment, to do the interactional work they are designed to perform. (2013, p. 92).

Self-repair can be a particularly fruitful avenue for opening up other domains. For example, Kitzinger and Mandelbaum (2013) begins with the observation that doctors often correct specialist terms in their own utterances, replacing them with vernacular terms. This leads to the discovery that in selecting a particular reference term over another, participants in social interaction implement or evoke particular territories of knowledge and expertise, and thereby orient to or construct their identities. In the Excerpt (6.5) from a call to a Home Birth Hotline in the UK, the caller, Millie (MIL) is a retired midwife. The call-taker (CLT) is a childbirth expert. In line 29, the call-taker uses the technical term "cephalic presentation", thus embodying the presumption that Millie, as a retired midwife, has the category-bound expertise to understand the term. Millie initiates repair in line 30 with "Sorry¿". This open class repair initiator (Drew, 1997) doesn't indicate what Millie takes to be the problem. It could indicate a hearing problem or an understanding problem. In line 31, the call-taker translates the technical term with a vernacular gloss, indicating with this repair solution that she takes it that Millie does not understand the technical term, "cephalic presentation", thereby treating her as a non-expert. In her confirming response in line 32, Millie uses the technical term "cephalic", thereby reasserting her specialist expertise, resisting the call-taker's apparent inference that understanding was the problem here, and the associated inference that she may not be a fully competent childbirth expert. The call-taker's alertness to the identity-relevant issue here is indicated in her next turn, built as a continuation of her previous one, when in line 34 she uses the technical term "posterior", and despite a (0.9) second gap in line 35, does not translate the technical term into the vernacular, thereby (remedially) treating Millie as a knowledgeable childbirth expert.

Excerpt (6.5) (Kitzinger and Mandelbaum, 2013, p. 10)

```
28     CLT:                      [.hhh But- but-  ] i-
29 -->       it's a cephalic presentation i:sn't i:t.
30     MIL:  Sorry¿
31 --> CLT:  .hh uh the baby's head down¿
32 --> MIL:  Yes he's cephalic, y[es he's (.) cephalic]
33     CLT:                       [·hh  Yes,    ·hhh   ]
```

```
34 -->       a::nd u::m not posterior.
35           (0.9)
36     MIL:  No:t that I'm aware of.=
37     CLT:  =No
```

That is, observations about conversational repair here led to the discovery of particular way in which word selection (and more broadly, recipient design) is intimately tied to identity, and provided a route to document interactants' orientations to, and interactive construction of, discernible identities.

5.1.5 The Word Selection Problem

The word selection problem is essentially the problem of turn design. If actions are prosecuted over turns within sequences, then analyzing the construction of turns, or word selection, is part of understanding how actions are formed up. Paul Drew tells us that his co-authored paper on hendiadys, or double verb constructions, in four languages (Drew et al., 2021) had its origins in Excerpt (6.6) from courtroom transcripts he was examining back in 1980, for a paper he was writing on contested evidence in court:

Excerpt (6.6) (Drew, 1992:511; A=Defence attorney; W=Witness)

```
01 --> A:  And the defendant (.) took (.) the ca:r (1.0)
02 -->     an' backed it (1.0) into some trees did'n'e
03         (0.5)
04     W:  Mm[hm
05     A:    [Underneath some trees
```

Here, the attorney's construction 'took the car and backed it…' rather than, say, 'backed the car' intrigued Drew, and over the years he continued to collect these types of constructions, which he only discovered subsequently were the grammatical phenomena of hendiadys. It is worth noting at this point that the excerpt above is not actually included in the hendiadys paper; for various reasons it was not considered an optimal exemplar to make the case. But it shows the power of an initial instance to pose an initial puzzle.

5.1.6 The Structural Organizational Problem

This problem relates to how an interactional encounter gets structured overall, and how the placement of actions within the encounter inform the construction and understanding of talk and other conduct as turns or as sequences of action. Some actions such as greetings and farewells are positioned by reference to the overall structure of the interaction (e.g. Robinson, 2013)– at the beginning and end of encounters, respectively. Some types of action are standardly observed to occur early on in an encounter; one might think, for instance, of types of congratulations (e.g. on passing a driving test, or birthday wishes) as being offered as early as possible in an encounter in a display of other-attentiveness. Like 'noticings', which Schegloff cites as meant to be produced 'as soon as possible after the "noticeable" is detectable' (1996, pp. 82-83), withholding can be taken as the opposite of other-attentiveness, and in the case of 'noticings', 'treating the noticeable as negatively valenced' (1996, p. 83). You might come across a 'How are you?' which we are

familiar with as part of a greetings sequence, but which is produced some way into the conversation, and examine what kind of work this is doing – and how it gets responded to – in this particular position. Other actions may be variably positioned. There has long been an argument in the conversation-analytic literature that offers are standardly preferred over requests (see, for example, Levinson, 1983, p. 355; Lerner, 1996; Schegloff, 2007a, pp. 83-84) and that requests are therefore produced late relative to the encounter as a whole. It is evident that in certain contexts, such as introductions, that offering one's name is preferred over waiting for a request to produce it (Pillet-Shore, 2011). And that a request might be produced in the form of an 'afterthought' just as a conversation is coming to a close ('Oh, by the way, do you think you could lend me your notes on last week's lecture…?'). However, the work of Kendrick and Drew (2014), finds a rather more complex relationship between offers and requests, showing the risks of generalization across action categories.

5.2 Schegloff's Analytic 'Keys'

While the five elements of the infrastructure of interaction provide a broad avenue into your data, you could also bring to it a set of analytic 'keys:' some more focused technical questions that intersect with the elements discussed above. These were developed by Manny Schegloff for the series of CA Advanced Summer Institutes held from 2001-2006 as access points into data. These are discussed further in the chapter by Betz (2024/this volume) and included in Appendix X. We are grateful to him, and to Gene Lerner and John Heritage, for allowing us to include them in this volume. For each data session during the Institute, participants would examine data through the lens of one of these keys per session, using the key as a technical way into explicating the action across the fragment, rather than starting by working out a 'plot line' ('what's going on?'). So, for example, all instances of same-turn self-repair in the fragment would be examined. The keys constitute six different starting points with respect to examining data: the TCU or turn in its environment; the sequence; transition-relevance places; repair; referrings and mentionings. Each key provides ample material for data sessions.

Whether by seeking to address analytic problems or by navigating with the analytic keys, using the procedural infrastructure of interaction as a way into identifying action may be a productive means of getting traction on your data.

6.0 Alternative Starting Points

As we have seen, the classic, radically inductive, way of approaching CA data is to dive straight into the interactional details of a recording to see what it will yield. But as the 'Avenues into Action' section of this volume amply testifies – and you will yourself know – we have all arrived at CA via different routes, and there are other ways of approaching data. We address some of these below.

[6] The inaugural Institute in 2001 was led by Manny Schegloff, John Heritage, Gene Lerner, and Don Zimmerman.

6.1 A Puzzle About the Data

Some studies start, not by spotting a phenomenon or feature of the data extract itself but with a puzzle that emerges out of it – a logical paradox that appears to be at odds with everyday reasoning. Paul Drew tells of a conundrum he was confronted with in a data session in 1980. The data extract he was examining captures the visit of an elderly Jewish couple from Germany to younger relatives. As they arrive, the elderly gentleman says to the young woman greeting him, 'Kennst du mich noch?' (Do you still recognise me?) to which the young woman responds 'No!'. The paradox here is of course that the young woman was expecting him: so how is it possible that she answers in this way, when the logical response is 'Yes!'… ? Drew's solution to this became his paper on 'Recalling Someone from the Past' (1989).

6.2 An Institutional Puzzle

If you are working with particular institutional data (e.g., medicine; see Toerien, 2024/this volume), one possibility is to investigate some of the structural problems associated with that institution and to try to identify the interactional infrastructure for those problems. Jeff Robinson gives, as an example of an issue that motivated his PhD dissertation, a generic problem in medicine: how can we ensure that a visit to the doctor runs smoothly? For this to occur, all of the usual stages of the doctor-patient encounter need to proceed efficiently: there needs to be an uncomplicated opening to the visit (Heritage & Robinson, 2006a), a straightforward problem solicitation (Heritage & Robinson, 2006b), history-taking (Boyd & Heritage, 2006, Sorjonen et al., 2006) and diagnosis (Peräkylä, 2006) and the closing of the encounter needs also to be unproblematic (West, 2006). John Heritage tells of discovering how a tiny distinction in the format of a doctor's question – asking whether the patient has 'some' questions or 'any' questions near the close of a medical encounter – makes an extraordinary difference in terms of whether the patient leaves their doctor with all of their concerns having been addressed (Heritage et al., 2007). Fully three-quarters of patients leave with their concerns having been met if they receive the 'some' rather than 'any' format of the question. The projection of what might appear to be an inconsequential distinction in terms of costs both at the human level (with a patient leaving the doctor with a worry which could so easily have been laid to rest) and the financial is incalculable. While this issue is clearly one that a conversation analyst rather than a doctor has identified, there are other issues associated with particular institutions that the professionals themselves can identify as problems. For example, with respect to medical interaction, it would be possible to ask clinicians for recurrent problems they face that you could identify as having an interactional basis.

6.3 Comparative Work Across Languages and Disciplines

The fact that the vast majority of work has been on the interactional data of English clearly raises the question of the extent to which the same practices are used in other languages and cultures. Another route to discovery has been bringing the perspective of another language to bear on data (see Hayashi & Kim, 2024/this volume). Galina Bolden, a

native speaker of Russian, brings to English-language data sessions a comparative mindset that can be illuminating for L1 speakers of English. Chase Raymond, bilingual in English and Spanish, also brings this comparative lens to bear as he examines data in English: so 'how is this done in Spanish?' is a constant question for him (see, for example, Raymond, 2015 on questions and responses in Spanish monolingual and Spanish-English bilingual conversations).

So, issues of concern to linguists, such as the morphology of tense, mood and aspect, are interesting to Chase Raymond, because in the data of interaction they are turn- and sequence-level phenomena (see, e.g. the chapter by Depperman and Gubina, 2024/this volume, which describes working with a collection starting from a linguist's question). Clift's (2001) study of the particle *actually* is a case of a semasiological approach to data, that is, starting from a linguistic form and discovering the actions it is implicated in. This contrasts with an onomasiological approach, which starts from the actions and works backwards to establish the range of linguistic forms through which the action is accomplished. Such semasiological approaches have yielded some rich rewards, such as Heritage's work on *oh* (1984, 1998, 2002) and work on particles (e.g. Bolden, 2006; Heritage and Sorjonen, 2018; see also Bolden's chapter on analyzing particles, 2024/this volume). However, one should be wary of extrapolating from such cases and assuming that a linguistic form *per se* will yield analytic results: there is, of course, no necessarily straightforward one-to-one mapping of form and function. Conversation analysts must be careful to preserve the focus on *action,* as this is interactants' central concern. Key to such an endeavor is ensuring that the context is tightly defined. Take Heritage and Sorjonen's (1994) paper on *and*-prefacing of questions: analytic insights of a ubiquitous linguistic object emerge here from the tight focus with respect to action and position. Another subdomain within linguistics – prosody and phonetics – is an additional prism through which to examine data (see Ogden's chapter on phonetics, 2024/this volume).

Bringing one's own disciplinary perspective to examining data has been an invaluable starting point for many (see the chapter by Clift et al., this volume, for more on how CA speaks to different disciplines). As we saw in section 6(b), analysts working from a medical perspective can bring their own distinct concerns to the analysis. And those trained in social psychology can use CA to lever open some of the abiding concerns of that domain. So, for example, Kitzinger (2005) brings to bear a feminist perspective on CA, revealing the otherwise hidden heteronormative structures of everyday interaction, and Whitehead (2019) uses CA to examine some of the ways in which the social organization of race is produced and reproduced through the everyday practices of people in interaction.

6.4 Existing Analyses are Unsatisfactory

John Heritage's pioneering work on 'oh' (1984, 1998, 2002) in fact had its origins, when examining data, in a remark by a colleague, that 'oh' was 'a signal of prior trouble now resolved' (Heritage, 2024/this volume). For Heritage, this seemed intuitively unsatisfactory, because it was not generic enough. So he set out specifically to collect instances of 'oh' in a range of environments. Kendrick and Drew's (2014) examination of the assumption that offers are standardly preferred over requests, cited earlier, is another example of a reexamination of a prior argument. Prior work is there to be revisited and developed – and, if necessary, contested. This is part of the reason detailed transcripts have

always been included in CA publications, and today many journals and volumes include links to audio- and video-recordings. For John Heritage, the extraordinary discovery by Schegloff of 'confirming an allusion' (1996a) by repeating the prior turn, was to be but one instance of a more generic practice that Heritage later discovered: of repetition as an agentive practice in interaction (e.g. Heritage & G. Raymond, 2005, C. Raymond, et. Al, 2021). So Heritage's work on 'oh' and on repetition are examples of how prior work in CA can be paradigmatic, and generate further research.

7.0 Conclusion

We hope, in the foregoing pages, to have shown you how, in Goffman's terms, you can equip yourself with a golden shovel and know where to start digging: to have given you some sense of what to look for in data and of how to develop the capacity to make observations. As you'll have seen, there are a number of starting points, not all of which are compatible with one another. But from whichever you ultimately choose, you are in a position to try and explicate the underlying mechanisms: the apparatus through which the interactants jointly construct a meaningful social world. This is the route to discovery. And it is worth remembering that those things that are discoveries for us are commonly received as discoveries also by our readers and audiences. For they are discoveries about our own interactional practices and, as such, can be surprises for both analysts and participants. A final vignette captures that spectacular moment of discovery for someone else after that discovery has been made public. Rebecca Clift tells of a moment when Gail Jefferson, who was highly skeptical of the claims made by Heritage and Raymond (2005) realized that their claims might, after all, be warranted:

> Gail Jefferson was doing a few days' worth of data sessions at Roehampton [University, London]. It was when the epistemics paper had just come out, because I was raving about it, but Gail was skeptical. One evening, we were walking out for dinner in Putney [South London], and we passed a half-timbered house. Gail was walking ahead of me, with Paul Dickerson, and she suddenly turned round to me, and said, in a 'gotcha!' tone of voice, 'Rebecca, we've just passed this house, and I said to Paul, "that's a lovely house" and he said "it is, isn't it?", but this is the first time we've passed this house…how do you square that with what you're saying about epistemics?". At which point Paul said "Ah, but I go past this house every day on my way to work….!".

Moments like this show the *other* side of discovery: if it's a discovery for you, then chances are that it's a discovery for others, too. And it is in our communal discoveries in those everyday moments of our lives that we find the unique value and analytic reach of CA.

APPENDIX

Some Practices for Unmotivated Examination of Conversational Data

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Unless the transcript is shorter, start with three pages of the transcript (and of course, the associated audio/video) and focus on the second of these pages.

A. Starting with a turn's TCU(s):

1. If it has more than one TCU,

   (i) what are the TCUs?
   (ii) what is each of the TCUs doing?
   (iii) how does each TCU relate to its prior? To its follower?
   (iv) how does the first TCU relate to prior turns?
   (v) how do next turns relate to any of the TCUs?
   (vi) for each TCU, address the themes in A-1 above

2. If it has one TCU,

   (i) are there pre-beginnings? If so, how do they relate to prior turns?
   (ii) are there post completions - tag Qs, address terms, increments? where are they? what are they doing?
   (iii) is the TCU that was finished the one that was started?

B. Starting with a turn in its environment:

   (i) what is its relation to its prior?
   (ii) what is the relation of its adjacent next to it?
   (iii) does it tie back to any prior, adjacent or otherwise? how?
   (iv) does any subsequent tie to it? how? with what consequence?

C. Starting with a sequence:

1. Is there a chunk of the talk that lends itself to analysis of a single sequence with expansions, or in a series of related sequences? If so,

   (i) sketch the structure
   (ii) detail what each component sequence is doing, and

(iii) what each component turn of that sequence is doing

2. Is there a chunk of the talk that lends itself to analysis of a single sequence with expansions, or as a series of related sequence? If not,

   (i) starting with any turns or TCU,

      a) does it tie back to any prior turn or TCU?
      b) how is that tie accomplished/displayed?
      c) what is the later turn's back-tieing doing?
      d) does any subsequent turn or TCU tie back to it?
      e) how is that tie accomplished/displayed?
      f) what is the later turn's back-tieing doing?

D. Starting with a transition-relevance place (TRP):

1. Where is the earliest possible start of the TRP? What makes it so? What happens after that possible start? What does that accomplish?

2. If the turn's talk is extended past a possible start of a TRP (or more than one), how is the extension managed, and what gets done in the extension - both by current speaker and by potential next speaker?

3. What can be said about the conduct of possible next speaker(s) as current turn is analysably coming to possible completion?

E. Starting with repair:

1. For any turn with evidence of same-turn repair or transition-place repair,

   (i) decompose it into the parts of the repair segment:
   (ii) what repair operation(s) is it doing, and how is it (or how are they) implemented?
   (iii) what is the repair doing interactionally?

2. If there is any next-turn other-initiated repair,

   (i) what type is it?
   (ii) is it just repair (simpliciter), or is it doing something else as well? What else?

3. Third or fourth position repair?

F. Starting with referrings/mentionings:

1. Locate referrings to persons, places, actions, times, objects, etc.

2. Are there relationships between the several referrings in a stretch of talk?

3. What are the alternatives to which a referring/mentioning was preferred? What can be said about the usages actually selected?

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