

4 Pre-expansion

The first place at which a two-part unit can be expanded is before its first part – hence the term “pre-expansion.” But that immediately confronts us with a question. How can we analyze and understand something like an utterance by reference to something else which has not yet occurred (and, indeed, which may end up *never* occurring, as we shall shortly see)? What justification might there be for such a procedure if we mean our analysis to be empirically grounded? The answer is that we proceed in that way because that is how the parties to conversation seem to use these exchanges in producing them and in understanding them. The parties to pre-expansion exchanges display an orientation in them to a base adjacency pair which may subsequently develop.

Note that we have already referred to “exchanges” in referring to pre-expansion. Virtually all pre-expansions are themselves constructed of adjacency pairs, and we will therefore regularly refer to them as “pre-sequences” (Sacks, 1992a:685–92 et passim). Both senses of this ambiguous term are relevant and important. They are themselves *sequences*, and they come *before* sequences – they are recognizably “*pre-*,” that is, preliminary to something else. Often the “something else” they are preliminary to is quite specific: it is a first pair part of a particular pair type – an invitation, an offer, a request, an announcement.¹ Preliminaries that

¹ Although the text here is setting up the contrast between type-specific pre-sequences and the later-discussed generic pre-sequence, a more general point needs to be made as well. And that is that “pre-ness” is a property of utterances which speakers and recipients can orient to in sequential contexts other than first parts of adjacency pairs, let alone base adjacency pairs. There will be later occasion to discuss pre’s which are positioned relative to second pair parts (such as “pre-rejection” or “pre-disagreement”), but “pre-ness” as a property may need to be treated as a property more general than that, and as not restricted in its positioning to adjacency pair organization, however much it is specially exploited in the organizational design of adjacency pair-based sequences. In this respect it would be like another sequential or relational property – adjacency – which has wide-ranging import for the relationship of units (turns, turn-constructive units, sequences, topics, etc.) in talk-in-interaction, but has a specially concentrated organizational application in the organization of adjacency pairs with respect to the relationship between first and second pair parts. The free-floating relevance of the feature “pre-ness” to the construction and understanding of utterances can be understood because of its import for an omnipresent concern for parties to talk-in-interaction about anything recognizable as a contribution to it or move in it – namely, “why that now.” With respect to this omni-relevant concern, “pre-ness” is a widely possible analysis: something was done not as an action/move in its own right and analyzable in its own terms alone, but for its relevance to and bearing on some action/utterance projected to occur. And this issue and possible solution is relevant more generally than adjacency pair organization. See also the discussion below at pp. 244–46.

project such specific imminent FPPs we will call *type-specific pre-sequences* – for example, pre-invitations, pre-offers, pre-requests, pre-announcements. These then are *pre-sequences*, and what they commonly project, what they are regularly preliminary to, what they are pre-expansions of, is the specified *base sequence* – the base adjacency pair, with its base FPP and base SPP.

These two aspects of the pre-sequence combine to give pre-sequences their distinctive interactional import. The initial turn of a pre-sequence (like a pre-invitation) does two things: it projects the contingent possibility that a base FPP (e.g., an invitation) will be produced; and it makes relevant next the production of a second pair part, namely a response to the pre-invitation. And it is on this response that the projected occurrence of the base first pair part (e.g., the invitation) is made contingent. Some responses to the pre-sequence FPP (e.g., the pre-invitation) lead to the production of a base FPP (e.g., an invitation) and some do not. We turn to an examination of several type-specific pre-sequences.

Pre-invitation

The pre-invitation may be among the most readily recognizable pre-sequences in sheerly common-sense terms, so we will begin with an account couched in common-sense terms. When a caller follows the opening of a telephone call with the query “Are you doing anything?” or “What are you doing?”, the recipient does not ordinarily understand that as asking for a factual description.² Rather it is ordinarily understood as a preliminary, and very commonly as a preliminary to a possible invitation (though it may sometimes not be discernible *what* sort of action is being led up to). What is wanted in response is, then, not a truthful, descriptively accurate response, and responses of that sort are treated as teasing, and as reflecting an intentional misunderstanding (as in “What are you doing?”, “Talking to you”, or “Breathing”, etc.). Rather the response to such a question is meant to display the stance the responder is taking up toward the action to which the question was preliminary. If the invitation will be welcomed, then the answers should be “no” (to “Are you doing anything?”) or “nothing” (to “What are you doing?”), or the like. If the prospective invitation is to be discouraged, if (for example) it is likely to be declined, then the answer to the preliminary – to the pre-sequence – should

² Although placement in the overall structure of the conversation can be important in constituting such a question as a recognizable pre-invitation, just-post-opening is not the only relevant position in this regard. A place otherwise suitable for launching a closing section may also enhance the potential recognizability of pre-invitations (Extract [4.03] below is a case in point, being initiated some ten to twelve minutes into the conversation), in large measure because closing is a relevant environment for arrangement-making, and invitations are a sequence type which can figure in arrangement-making.

Much of our daily life is spent talking to one another, in both ordinary conversation and more specialized settings such as meetings, interviews, classrooms, and courtrooms. It is largely through conversation that the major institutions of our society – economy, religion, politics, family, and law – are implemented. This is the first in a new series of books by Emanuel Schegloff introducing the findings and theories of conversation analysis. Together, the volumes in the series, when published, will constitute a complete and authoritative “primer” in the subject. The topic of this first volume is “sequence organization” – the ways in which turns-at-talk are ordered and combined to make actions take place in conversation, such as requests, offers, complaints, and announcements. Containing many examples from real-life conversations, it will be invaluable to anyone interested in human interaction and the workings of conversation.

“A magisterial and profoundly illuminating account of talk-in-interaction. ‘Invaluable’ has become something of a cliché; about this landmark book, it is the literal truth.”

PAUL DREW, *Professor of Sociology, University of York*

“In this book, Schegloff provides a fully elaborated analysis of this central domain of social interaction. This is essential reading for anyone interested in the organization of human conduct.”

JACK SIDNELL, *Professor of Anthropology, University of Toronto*

“Accessible, integrative, and essential for all who study conversation. No-one interested in human interaction can afford to ignore this book.”

ROBERT B. ARUNDALE, *Professor of Communication, University of Alaska, Fairbanks*

Emanuel A. Schegloff is Distinguished Professor of Sociology and Applied Linguistics at the University of California, Los Angeles. He has previously published *Interaction and Grammar* (co-edited with Elinor Ochs and Sandra Thompson, Cambridge University Press, 1996).

A selection of video and audio recordings to accompany this book can be found at
<http://www.cambridge.org/9780521532792>

CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS
www.cambridge.org

ISBN 0-521-53279-5



9 780521 532792

SCHEGLOFF
Sequence Organization in Interaction

Sequence Organization in Interaction

A Primer in
Conversation Analysis | Volume 1

EMANUEL A. SCHEGLOFF

CAMBRIDGE

be selected accordingly; for example, "yes, I have a term paper to finish." Perhaps the most telling evidence of the true status of the pre-invitation question can be seen when the response to the question is made contingent on what invitation in particular the caller has in mind; thus, "Are you doing anything?", "Why?" Of course, the answer to the question taken as a factual inquiry is unrelated to the reason for asking it; the "why?" response displays the understanding that the question is preliminary to something, and makes the answer contingent on what that "something" is.

We can characterize these different response types – these different types of second pair part to the pre-invitation – somewhat less informally along the following lines.

One class or type of response is the "go-ahead"; it promotes progress of the sequence by encouraging its recipient to go ahead with the base FPP which the "pre" was projecting. Extract (4.01) displays a case in point.

(4.01) JG 3:1 (Nelson is the caller; Clara is called to the phone)

- 1 Cla: Hello
 2 Nel: Hi.
 3 Cla: Hi.
 4 Nel: F_{pre} → Whatcha doin'.
 5 Cla: S_{pre} → Not much.
 6 Nel: F_b → Y'wanna drink?
 7 Cla: S_b → Yeah.
 8 Nel: Okay.

Nelson's question at line 4 is one form which pre-invitations commonly take, and in this position – that is, after the (here minimal) opening section of the conversation. Clara's response exemplifies a go-ahead response to a pre-invitation, and Nelson does indeed go ahead (at line 6) to issue the invitation which his pre-sequence had foreshadowed, and Clara does the acceptance (line 7) which her response to the pre-invitation had foreshadowed.

A second class or type of response is the "blocking" response; that is, it raises the possibility that the invitation, if tendered, will be declined or rejected, and thereby discourages or blocks the invitation from being tendered at all. Extract (4.02) offers a case in point.

(4.02) SB,1 (Allen/Judy are married; John is Judy's fellow student)

- 1 ring
 2 All: Hello?
 3 Joh: Yeah, is Judy there?
 4 All: Yeah, just a second.
 5 ((silence))
 6 Jud: Hello,
 7 Joh: Judy?
 8 Jud: Yeah,
 9 Joh: John Smith.

- 10 Jud: Hi John.
 11 Joh: F_{pre} → Ha you doin-<say what 'r you doing.
 12 Jud: S_{pre} → Well, we're going out.

Here, as in Extract (4.01), the caller asks just at the possible end of the opening (after the greeting exchange) what the recipient is doing, and this is a way of doing a pre-invitation, but in this case the response is different; it puts a blockage in the way of the issuing of the invitation.

Actually, it is not the *response* which first raises the possibility of trouble with the invitation. The pre-sequence FPP itself raises that possibility. One key thing which pre-sequences are designed to do is to help prospective speakers of base first pair parts avoid rejection, or, to put it more interactionally, to help the interaction avoid a sequence with a rejected base FPP. In effect, then, such pre-invitations provide an opportunity for the prospective invitation-recipient to indicate in advance whether there are obstacles to the invitation's acceptance. This allows the invitation to be issued if there are not, and to be withheld if there are, thus forestalling the need for, or possibility of, rejection.

A third sort of response can be termed "hedging," which can make a full response contingent on what the invitation is going to be. One form this can take is "why," either as the whole of the response, or in combination with another response type, for example, as a possible mitigation of a blocking response. Extract (4.02a) continues along these lines:

(4.02a) SB,1 (continued)

- 1 Jud: Hi John.
 2 Joh: F_{pre} → Ha you doin-<say what 'r you doing.
 3 Jud: S_{pre} → Well, we're going out. Why.
 4 Joh: → Oh, I was just gonna say come out and come over
 5 → here and talk this evening, [but if you're going=
 6 Jud: ["Talk," you mean get
 7 [drunk, don't you?]
 8 Joh: =[out you can't very] well do that.

Here we see that Judy, after having given grounds for not proceeding to the invitation, inquires after what it was *going to be*,³ with a possible hint that the answer might contribute to some modification of her response. That prospect, which is sometimes realized, is that an otherwise non-viable possibility (a "foregone first pair part," as it were) can be revived once it

³ It may be worth making explicit something that is hopefully already clear. Judy's "why" (line 3) is evidence that she has heard John's question as projecting a further contingent action; it is evidence (to her co-participant, and to us as well) that she recognizes his question as a pre. His answer confirms that she was correct in so understanding it; an answer is at hand for delivery. Quite often the response "why" is a "post-pre"; that is, it indicates that its speaker has understood something another has said as preliminary to something else. For an instance in which the status of the talk as a pre-sequence has been lost sight of, with a consequent loss of understanding, see Excerpt (4.27) below.

has been articulated. Here, however, John concludes his report of what the invitation was going to be with an assertion of its impossibility (although that is overlapped by Judy's somewhat facetious correction or reformulation of the problematic invitation).

Hedging responses to pre-invitations can take forms other than "why." In Extract (4.03), the hedge is first expressed in a "Uhm (0.3) possibly" (at line 2) and is then substantially elaborated, returning to a summary note of indeterminacy at its end (line 38).

- (4.03) TG, 15:15-16:23
- 1 Bee: F_{pre}→ °hmhhh 'hh So yih gonna be arou:n this weeken'z
 2 Ava: S_{pre}→ Uh::m. (0.3) Possibly.
 3 Bee: Uh it's a four day weeken-I have so much work t'do it
 4 isn' ffunny.
 5 Ava: S_{pre} [Well, tomorrow I haftuh go in.
 6 (0.2)
 7 Bee: Y'have cla:ss [tomorrow?
 8 Ava: [hhhh
 9 Ava: S_{pre} ((breathily)) One cla:ss I have.=
 10 Bee: =You mean:: Pace isn't clo:s[ed?
 11 Ava: [No we have off
 12 Monday [°(b't not) 'hhh
 13 Bee: [Mm I have off ts- Monday too. hmfff
 14 Ava: S_{pre} A:nd uh:m 'hh I haftuh help- getting some schedules
 15 S_{pre} t'gether fuh- m-t! [my o:ld Mistuh Ba:rt.
 16 Bee: ['hhhh
 17 Bee: °Hmmm.
 18 Ava: S_{pre} A:nd I haftuh get the group tihgethuh fuh him.hh
 19 (0.5)
 20 Ava: t! tch!
 21 Bee: BOY YUH BUSY KID! hh 'hhh
 22 Ava: S_{pre} Yeh I know.He gay me [tickets t'the ballet in d=
 23 Bee: [hhh 'hhh
 24 Ava: S_{pre} =exchange fuh that, so it['s not too] bad.
 25 Bee: [O h :] hh
 26 Bee: Busy busy [busy.]
 27 Ava: [°hhhhh]
 28 Ava: A::nd,
 29 Ava: hhh[hh
 30 Bee: [Oh I've been [getting,]
 31 Ava: S_{pre} [S a t]liday I n- I've-g-I haftuh go-
 32 S_{pre} I think Sunday I'm going ice skating.
 33 (1.2)
 34 Ava: S_{pre} I wz sposetuh go tuh A:l'bany. But we'd haftuh leave
 35 S_{pre} t'morrow morning, so that wen ou:t. the window,
 36 Bee: °Mm,
 37 (1.0)

- 38 Ava: S_{pre}→ En I don't know exagly what's going o:n.re[ally.
 39 Bee: F_b?→ [Well if yer
 40 arou:nd I'll probably see y(hh)ou hn[hh! 'hh
 41 Ava: [Why, whut's (Bob
 42 doing)
 43 Bee: Uh-u-uh:: goin o:ff::
 44 Ava: Where's he goin.
 45 Bee: To Wa:shin'ton,
 46 Ava: Oh.
 47 (0.7)
 48 Bee: He asn' been there sih-since Christmas [so:: HHe's going.
 49 Ava: [Mm.
 50 (0.5)
 51 Ava: S_b?→ Yeh w'l I'll give you a call then tomorrow.when I get in
 52 'r summ.

Here, after the long hedging response to the pre-sequence FPP, the problematic base FPP is articulated in something less than full "invitation" form (lines 39-40), but in fact appears to be revived as a real possibility with the response at lines 51-52.

We see from these instances that projected invitations which have been rendered problematic by blocking or hedging responses to the pre-invitation may be articulated nonetheless, sometimes in a diluted form linked more or less overtly to the discouragement of the pre-sequence (note that the base FPP in Extract [4.03] begins with "if yer around," which quite overtly links back to the pre-invitation at line 1, "So yuh gonna be around this weekend?"). Once articulated, they are there for response, and may get a more "favorable" response than was adumbrated by the pre-sequence. Indeed, doing the base FPP "nonetheless," after a blocking or hedging response to the pre-sequence, may be understood as a bid to effect its action in the face of hinted resistance, and the second part of John's response in Extract (4.02a) (at lines 4-5) appears aimed to neutralize such an understanding.

But blocking and hedged responses to pre-sequences do not always elicit versions of the discouraged or rebuffed base FPP. The response to the pre-sequence may in fact block the initiator of the sequence from proceeding. This is the case in Extract (4.04), which, however, turns out to be understood (correctly) as having been not a pre-invitation but a pre-request.

- (4.04) NB IV:9, 01:01-17
- 1 Mar: . . .lq:, °hhuh°
 2 Emm: How'r you:.=
 3 Mar: F_{pre}→ =Well wuhdiyuh doin. 'hh hnh
 4 (0.5)
 5 Emm: .hhh (hhOh:) Margy?=
 6 Mar: =eeYeehuh. [a-
 7 Emm: S_{pre}→ [Oh: I'm jis sittin here with Bill'n Gladys'n

- 8 → haa:eh fixin'm a drink they're goin out tih dinner:.
 9 (.)
 10 Emm: H[e's-
 11 Mar: [Oh:::: Oh.
 12 Emm: → Why: whiddiyih waant.
 13 (1.0)
 14 Mar: F_b → hhuhh Well?h I wunnid um come down en I wannidju
 15 tuh call some numbers back to me <b't it's
 16 no[t im[port'n
 17 Emm: [.hhh[Oh:::: honey I:ll do it a:fterwards uh::
 18 (.) Yeah ther- ther gonna(r)

After Emma's apparently blocking response (at lines 7–8) to Margie's pre-sequence (at line 3), Margie simply registers the information (line 11), but does not go on to say what prompted her inquiry. But Emma's ensuing utterance (line 12) shows that she understood Margie's line 3 not as a simple inquiry, but as preliminary to something which has been foregone, and she now goes in search of what that something is. In sequential contexts like this, "why" may be termed the prototype "post-pre"; that is, an utterance form employed to follow what is recognized to have been a pre-sequence, but a pre-sequence whose precise projected import remains unclear. Post-pre's may be deployed as responses to the FPP of a pre-sequence, but they may also follow responses to the pre-sequence FPP that are blocking or discouraging, as the potential recipient of the base FPP affirmatively seeks out what it would have been.

It is important to note that the result of a pre-invitation sequence can be that no base invitation sequence is done, whether or not there is a report of what it *would* have been. The fact that no invitation ends up being issued does *not* change the status of the pre-invitation as a pre-invitation. It was done as a pre-invitation, in order to accomplish that action; it was heard that way and responded to that way, as accomplishing that action. The prefix "pre-" is meant to capture the action being done, and not "occurrence prior to something else." Given the action that a pre-invitation is doing in circumventing rejection, the absence (i.e., the withholding or foregoing) of an invitation is one "natural product" of a pre-invitation pre-sequence, not something which qualifies or undercuts its standing as that type of conversational event.

Pre-offer

Although the forms of the utterances and the placement of the sequence type in its social occasion may differ, pre-offers work quite similarly to pre-invitations. Indeed, requests, offers, and invitations form a set

of action types (with associated sequence types) which can be difficult to distinguish from one another. Invitations, in this regard, often appear to be a particular sub-class of offers, and their similarity in various respects is then not surprising.

Just as prospective inviters may seek evidence that their invitations will be accepted if tendered, so may those with something to offer try to assess whether their offer will be welcomed or not, and the actual offer may be made contingent on the outcome of that assessment. The instrument for the assessment is the pre-offer sequence.

In Extract (4.05), employees in a university bookstore are in a "continuing state of incipient talk" (see p. 26), talk which in this setting does not always pertain to their work. Here the matter at hand is the illness of Cathy's daughter.

- (4.05) Bookstore, 2,1:107
 1 Cat: I'm gonna buy a thermometer though [because I=
 2 Les: [But-
 3 Cat: =think she's [(got a temperature).
 4 Gar: F_{pre} → [We have a thermometer.
 5 Cat: S_{pre} → (Yih do?)
 6 Gar: F_b → Wanta use it?
 7 Cat: S_b → Yeah.
 8 (3.0)

What is to be noted here is that Gary does *not* simply offer the thermometer after Cathy has articulated the need for one. The offer itself is preceded by a pre-offer, which here takes the form of a mention of its availability (line 4). Note that Gary's ownership of a thermometer is not itself grounds for mentioning it, or for mentioning it *here* in particular. The mentioning of it here, in this environment, after Cathy's declaration of intent to purchase one, invites understanding for what *other* action it might be implementing.⁴ When Cathy registers this as news (line 5), she can be heard to be expressing interest in what might be being done through this telling (as compared to dismissing it as irrelevant, for example, which would be a blocking response to the same utterance understood as a pre-offer). In effect, this serves as a

⁴ An important point deserves underscoring here. Whereas utterance forms such as "Are you doing anything?" have a surface character strongly indicative of their use as pre-invitation, and some utterance formats are virtually dedicated to such jobs (as with "guess what," to be discussed below as a virtually formulaic pre-announcement), some pre's do not appear on the scene virtually labeled as such. That "We have a thermometer" is a possible pre-offer must be analyzed out of an utterance which appears on the face of it to be a simple declaration of ownership. It is part of competent membership in the society/culture and being a competent interactant to analyze assertions of this sort for what (else) they may be doing at this moment, at this juncture of the interaction, in this specific sequential context. It follows that it is part of competent observational practice to achieve such analysis as well, however different the motivation for the analysis, and however different the consequences of its success or lack thereof.

go-ahead response to the pre-sequence, and when Gary then makes the offer (line 6), Cathy accepts it (line 7).

In Extract (4.06), the opposite outcome is arrived at. Peter and Marcus have been confirming arrangements about a meeting they are both to go to. The extract is taken from the closing of their conversation.

- (4.06) JG
- 1 Pet: I'll see ya Tuesday.
 2 Mar: Right.
 3 Pet: O[k a y Marcus]
 4 Mar: F_{pre}→ [You- you're all]right [you can get there.
 5 Pet: [Ye-
 6 Pet: S_{pre}→ Yeah
 7 Mar: Okay
 8 Pet: Okay

The issue appears to be whether Peter needs a ride or whether he already has a way of getting to this meeting. As in the previous extract, Marcus "leads" not with an offer, but with a pre-offer. When he establishes that Peter has resources for "getting there," he does not make the offer, an offer which would then have been at risk for rejection.

However, the transition from pre-sequence to base sequence is not always unproblematic. In Extract (4.07), Debbie has called to find out when her boyfriend is returning from out of town, and then undertakes to convey some possibly useful information to his roommate, Nick.

- (4.07) Debbie and Nick, 1:34-2:59
- 1 Deb: 'hhh Um:: u- guess what I've-(u-)wuz lookin' in
 2 F_{pre}→ the paper:--have you got your waterbed yet?
 3 Nic: S_{pre}→ Uh huh, it's really nice °too, I set it up
 4 Deb: Oh rea:lly? ^Already?
 5 Nic: Mm hmm
 6 (0.5)
 7 Deb: Are you kidding?
 8 Nic: No, well I ordered it last (week)/(spring)
 9 (0.5)
 10 Deb: Oh- no but you h- you've got it already?
 11 Nic: Yeah h! hh= ((laughing))
 12 Deb: =hhh [hh 'hh] ((laughing))
 13 Nic: [I just] said that
 14 Deb: O::hh: hu[h, I couldn't be]believe you c-
 15 Nic: [Oh ('it's just) [It'll sink in 'n two
 16 day[s fr'm now (then)((laugh))]]
 17 Deb: → [((l a u g h))] Oh no cuz I just
 18 → got- I saw an ad in the paper for a real discount
 19 → waterbed s' I w'z gonna tell you 'bout it=
 20 Nic: =No this is really, you (haven't seen) mine, you'll
 21 really like it.

- 22 Deb: Ya:h. It's on a frame and everythi[ng?
 23 Nic: [Yeah
 24 Deb: 'hh Uh (is) a raised frame?
 25 Nic: °mm hmm
 26 Deb: How: ni:::ce,

As we will see in the next section, the usage "guess what" is a common harbinger of some imminent telling of news, and Debbie's use of that form at the start of the turn at line 1 serves as such an advance notice. It is followed by an indication of the source of the information (the newspaper), but further progress of the telling is interrupted by Debbie's question to Nick, "Have you got your waterbed yet?"

As may be apparent to readers after examination of Extracts (4.05) and (4.06), this is not an idle question, but serves here as a pre-offer. What is on offer is information, but the information which Debbie has to pass on is relevant to someone still in the market for a waterbed, and so the offer of her information is made contingent on whether Nick would still be an interested party. Nick's response, repeated several times in the face of recurrent efforts by Debbie to effect its modification, is in effect a *blocking* response: he has his waterbed (and so is not an appropriate recipient of information on attractive ones to buy). Note that, although Debbie is poised to tell her information, in the absence of a go-ahead response to the pre-offer (or simply a post-pre, such as "why?") she cannot – or does not – do so. What she does do (at lines 17–19) is the stillborn version of the action – what it would have been had it come to pass, perhaps in the hope that its articulation would lead to its reanimation. But, as was pre-indicated in the aftermath of the pre-offer, this would-have-been offer is rejected as well.⁵

Although this sequence runs off much less compactly and smoothly (interactionally speaking) than the ones in Extracts (4.05) and (4.06), it displays the same sequence-organizational logic and dynamics.

Pre-announcement and other pre-telling

Announcement sequences are ones which tellers launch to convey "news" on their own initiative (that is, in contrast to tellings which are solicited by a question, for example). Commonly, two sorts of SPP are relevant response types for announcements, reflecting two sorts of interactional issue posed in announcement sequences: ones which register whether what has been told is in fact "news," i.e., was previously not known by the recipient; and ones which take up a *stance* toward the news, or assess it, whether in the terms in which it was presented (e.g., as good or bad news) or otherwise – see Terasaki (2004 [1976]) for early work in this area, and

⁵ This episode is analyzed in greater detail in Schegloff (1995).

Maynard (2003) for recent work. Although both may be implicated, it is to the former of these aspects of announcements that *pre*-announcements appear most regularly to be directed.

One important constraint on “telling” – a constraint specific to each particular recipient of the telling and thus a feature of the “recipient design” of the talk – is that, ordinarily, speakers should not tell recipients what they suppose (or *ought* to suppose) the recipient already knows.⁶ Although they accomplish other outcomes as well, *pre*-announcements are aimed in substantial measure to avoid rejection of what is to be told *as news*.

A great many *pre*-announcements are presented in one of a few recurrent turn formats. The basic elements of these formats can be represented schematically as follows:

Guess	what	}	+	more or less detail
	who			
Y'know	+ when			
	where			
Remember				

A minimal, yet canonical, *pre*-announcement is formed from the virtually dedicated phrase “guess what.” But more extended *pre*-announcements get fashioned as well, often deploying the common elements in variant forms, as in Extract (4.08) below, in which “guess” is employed in a “puzzle” or “challenge” version (“You’ll never guess . . .”), or Extract (4.09), in which “y’know” is cast into the form of an offer (“y’wanna know . . .”).

(4.08) Schenkein II, 131

- 1 Ben: F_{pre} → Hey you’ll never guess whatcha Dad is lookin-
- 2 is lookin’ at.
- 3 (1.5)
- 4 Eth: He’s coocoo.
- 5 Bil: S_{pre} → Why what’re you looking at.
- 6 Ben: F_b → A radar range.

(4.09) Terasaki, 2004:195

- 1 Jim: F_{pre} → Y’wanna know who I got stoned with a few(hh) weeks
- 2 ago? hh!
- 3 Gin: S_{pre} → Who.
- 4 Jim: F_b → Mary Carter ’n her boy(hh) frie(hh)nd. hh.

In these instances, and in others as well, aspects of the projected telling and its topic are *pre*-mentioned and thereby previewed in the *pre*-expansion,

⁶ “Ordinarily” because some activities are virtually defined by their being exceptions to this constraint, such as reminiscing, which involves talking about precisely what one figures the recipient to know as well. This kind of contingency might be provided for by the rather awkward phrasing, “speakers should not tell recipients *as news* what they suppose (or *ought* to suppose) the recipient already knows.”

enhancing the resources from which to establish that the “news” is not *pre*-known. There are other recurrent formats for *pre*-announcements as well – for example, the form “I’ve/we’ve got + [characterization],” where the characterization is either of something that has been acquired (its acquisition being the news), as in Extract (4.10), or the characterization being of the sort of news about to be delivered, as in Extract (4.11):

(4.10) Schenkein II, 38

- 1 Ben: F_{pre} → Hey I got sump’n thet’s wild
- 2 Bil: S_{pre} → What.
- 3 Ben: F_b → Y’know one a’ these great big red fire alarm
- 4 boxes thet’r on the corner? I got one.

(4.11) KC-4, 2:01-03

- 1 Rub: F_{pre} → Hey we got good news
- 2 Kat: S_{pre} → [I k n o w]
- 3 Dav: S_{pre} → [Whats the good new]s?

Such *pre*-announcements may do one or more of the following: (a) they serve as an alert to recipients that what is to follow is built to be an informing or a telling of news; (b) they may offer a characterization or assessment of the news (good/bad news) or a *pre*-mention of the topic or topical domain of the news, thereby setting parameters for the recipient’s parsing and recognition; (c) they may give evidence of the recency of what is to be reported, as evidence of its newsworthiness; (d) they make the actual telling a contingent next step, whether by formulating it as an offer or request to tell (“Y’wanna know who . . .”) or by making the recipient-design constraint actionable (cf. Terasaki, 2004 [1976]).

Note that in virtually all circumstances, the “news” could in principle be told straight out, without any *pre*-sequence expansion, but each of the uses which *pre*-sequences have can be consequential if not addressed in a *pre*-sequence. Leaving aside the issue of “*pre*-knowness,” there is the issue of the on-delivery recognizability of the news. Thus, the announcement at line 7 in Extract (4.12), analyzably touched off by the mention of “birthday cards” in line 3, is otherwise topically discontinuous with the preceding talk, in which a long sequence of arrangement-making is petering out in an unsuccessful conclusion.

(4.12) TG, 18:34-19:08

- 1 Bee: =I wanniduh look aroun fuh some cards,
- 2 Ava: (Oh:.) / (Right.)
- 3 Bee: Tch! I’ll get some advance birthday cards, hhm hmh!
- 4 (0.6)
- 5 Bee: ’hhh A:n:d uh, (0.5) Me:h,
- 6 (0.2)
- 7 Bee: F_b → Oh sibbie’s gistuh hadda ba:by bo:way.
- 8 Ava: Who?

- 9 Bee: Sibbie's sister.
 10 Ava: Oh really?
 11 Bee: Myeah,
 12 Ava: S_b → [° (That's nice.)/[° (Sibbie's sistuh.)
 13 Bee: [She had it yestihday. Ten:: pou:nds.
 14 Ava: ° Je:sus Christ.

The reference to "Sibbie's sister" marks the topic as someone whom Ava knows (cf. Sacks and Schegloff [1987]; Schegloff [1996c] on recognitional reference to persons), and Ava is eventually able to recognize who is being talked about with no further identifying information, just a repeat (lines 8–12). But such momentary failures to hear/understand are not unusual in otherwise unprepared announcements, and show by contrast the work that can be getting accomplished by pre-expansion (such as "guess what," or "guess who had a baby," etc.).

As with other pre-sequences discussed above, one central type of SPP is the go-ahead response. These response turns are, of course, fitted to the FPPs to which they are responsive. One particularly common exchange has the SPP repeat the question word which was used in the pre-announcement turn. Thus, we find exchanges such as "guess what," "what"; "guess who," "who," etc. Or, if the "y'know who/what, etc." format has been employed, a "no" may serve as (part of) a go-ahead response.⁷

(4.13) Terasaki, 2004:184

- 1 Del: F_{pre} → Didju hear the terrible news?
 2 Rec: S_{pre} → No. What.

(4.14) IPD, 16

- 1 Pol: F_{pre} → D'you know what's happening at the Fairgrounds then?
 2 Cal: S_{pre} → No

Two types of response to pre-announcements, however, provide for a different trajectory for the projected sequence. Both can short-circuit the path to a base first pair part, ordinarily by claiming or showing that the recipient-design constraint of "newsworthiness" is not met. In the "blocking" response the prospective recipient claims already to know the news, e.g., "I know," as in Extract (4.11) above (at line 2) or Extract (4.15):

(4.15) Schenkein II, 216

- 1 Fay: F_{pre} → Didju hear about thee, pottery and lead poisoning
 2 [()
 3 Lor: S_{pre} → [Yeah Ethie wz just telling us [()
 4 Fay: [I read an article
 5 en I ca- in a the- I 'nno whether it was Newsweek
 6 'r Time 'r what . . .

⁷ See note 9 below.

In the "pre-empting" response, the prospective recipient not only claims already to know, but displays this knowledge by pre-emptively undertaking the telling which the pre-announcement was taken to project.

(4.16) Schenkein II, 217

- 1 Bil: F_{pre} → Didju hear about that guy who got-tho-tho-that
 2 family in New Mex[ico ()
 3 Eth: S_{pre} → [.hhh Oh:::=
 4 S_{pre} → =[Oh::: that [(mercury) poisoning?
 5 Lor: =[That wz so [()
 6 Bil: [() [)]
 7 Fay: S_{pre} → [Oh thee] you
 8 S_{pre} → mean [in thee wheat? [in thee grain?
 9 Eth: [(gasp) [)
 10 Jac: S_{pre} → [The mercury poison[ing?

The telling is thereby curtailed as "announcement," though it may continue under the guise of reminiscence, "discussion," etc. (as in Extract [4.15] at line 4).

Pre-announcements, then, like pre-invitations, pre-offers, and many other pre-sequences (but not all),⁸ seem directed largely to pre-assessing the likely fate of a FPP of a particular type were it to be introduced by the speaker, and responses serve (and are designed to serve) either to encourage or to discourage the subsequent production of the base sequence. Note again that it is this interactional job and the parties' orientation to it which underwrites our characterization of these as *pre-invitation*, *pre-offer*, *pre-announcement*, etc. and not the placement of these exchanges before invitations, offers, or announcements. For, of course, these pre-sequences may turn out *not to occur before invitations, offers, announcements, etc.*; and far from this discrediting their status as pre's of those sorts, such outcomes can testify to their effectiveness at the job they were introduced to accomplish.

Announcement sequences are, of course, just one way of organizing the activity of "telling" in talk-in-interaction, and are employed to convey certain forms of telling in certain formats for telling. Among the other modes of telling, a particularly common one is story-telling, in which the "telling" part can have a distinctive character and shape. But the recipient-design constraint on telling to the already-knowing pertains to a broad range of forms of telling. The pre-expansion described above for announcement sequences under the rubric "pre-announcements" has a counterpart form of pre-sequence for story-telling; namely, the "story preface" (Sacks, 1974).

Not all story-tellings begin with story prefaces or story-preface sequences; some stories are told in response to (or *as* a response to) questions; some stories are presented as disjunctive tellings, interruptive

⁸ See the later discussion of pre-sequences for dispreferred sequence types, such as pre-requests, in Chapter 5.

of the otherwise ongoing talk, and touched off by something just said, just noticed in the environment, just recalled, etc. (Jefferson, 1978a). But some story-tellings do begin with a pre-sequence, and such story prefaces are commonly designed to address a range of issues aside from "already-known-ness," issues to be taken up more extensively in a treatment of story-telling elsewhere.

In the present context, we need mainly to note that story-telling and other tellings such as announcements appear on the one hand to be treated as same sorts of activities, posing in common such issues as "already-known-ness" vs. "news-ness," as witnessed by the use of similar pre-expansions at the start of these activities. On the other hand, these are treated as different *kinds* of telling which are differently organized; witness the fact that there appear to be distinct forms of pre-sequence for different types of prospective telling – pre-announcement turns and story-preface turns are differently designed and differently used.

Still, different types of telling sequences can be closely linked and may blend virtually imperceptibly into one another. What we can call more generically "pre-telling sequences" may remain indeterminate in what sort of telling will follow, leaving that to be collaboratively crafted by the parties. The pre-telling may be followed by an initial pass at telling in canonical "announcement" format, i.e., a telling packaged in a single, grammatically simple, turn-constructural unit. Following uptake of that initial telling, the sequence may be quickly brought to closure as an announcement sequence, or may get further elaborated as a story-telling or by other forms of subsequent elaborated telling.

For example, in Extract (4.17), Marsha's telling about how son "Joey" is traveling back to his father's house is prompted by a question (line 9), but is format-organized as an independent, speaker-initiated telling.

(4.17) MDE-MTRAC 60-1/2, 1 Stolen, 1:01-34 (previously appeared as [2.04])

1 ring
 2 Mar: Hello:?
 3 Ton: Hi: Marsha?
 4 Mar: Ye:ah.
 5 Ton: How are you.
 6 Mar: Pi:ine.
 7 (0.2)
 8 Mar: Did Joey get home yet?
 9 Ton: Well I wz wondering when'e left.
 10 (0.2)
 11 Mar: → 'hhh Uh: (d) did Oh:.h Yer not in on what
 12 ha:ppen'. (hh) (d)
 13 Ton: → No (h) o=
 14 Mar: → =He's flying.
 15 (0.2)
 16 Mar: → En Ilene is going to meet im: .Becuz the to:p wz

17 ripped off'v iz car which is tih gay someb'ddy
 18 helped th'mselves.
 19 Ton: Stolen.
 20 (0.4)
 21 Mar: Stolen.=Right out in front of my house.
 22 Ton: Oh: f'r crying out loud,=en eez not g'nna eez not
 23 g'nna bring it ba:ck?
 24 Mar: 'hh No so it's parked in the g'rage cz it wz so damn
 25 co:ld. An' ez a matter fact snowing on the Ridge Route.
 26 (0.3)
 27 Mar: 'hhh So I took him to the airport he couldn' buy a
 28 ticket.
 29 (')
 30 Mar: 'hhhh Bee- he c'd only get on standby.
 31 (0.3)
 32 Ton: Uh hu:[h,
 33 Mar: [En I left him there et about noo:n.
 34 (0.3)
 35 Ton: Ah ha:h.
 36 (0.2)
 37 Mar: Ayund uh,h
 38 (0.2)

Note here that the pre-telling (at lines 11–12) is overtly directed to the non-informedness of the prospective recipient, i.e., that the recipient-design constraint on telling warrants (perhaps even mandates) the telling being launched. The non-informedness is confirmed at line 13 – in effect, a go-ahead response to the pre-telling. The telling is then initially delivered as a single, compact assertion of news, "He's flying" (at line 14). When no receipt is forthcoming, addressing either the newsworthiness of what has been told or the recipient's stance toward it, the teller Marsha resumes the telling (line 16) and elaborates it on several fronts, some addressing the practical consequences of the news (line 16), some in story-telling form (lines 16–18, lines 24–33), some delivering additional "information."

"Telling," then, is a generic type of activity in talk-in-interaction, but it can take various organizational forms, both with respect to the turn-organization in which the telling is done and the sequence organization in which the telling is embedded. These distinct formats can be envisioned and projected at the outset, with the form of the launching of the telling – for example, the form of pre-sequence employed – beginning the constitution of a determinate shape to the telling. Or the telling can be built from the outset in a less determinate manner, with the turn-organizational and sequence-organizational format being constituted step-by-step as the telling develops. Or the telling can be projected to take a determinate trajectory, but undergo modification and re-organization in the course of its progressive realization. The forms are not locked in and frozen. Yet there *are* forms, forms oriented

to as distinct formats for telling by the participants, and these affect the shape that the telling – and the being told – comes to have. And both the distinctive shapeliness and the flexibility are represented in the pre-expansions which telling can be given.

A different kind of type-specific pre-sequence: the pre-pre

There is a kind of pre-sequence which is distinctive in a number of respects. Although it is type-specific, the projected base sequence type for which it serves as a pre-expansion can vary. Pre-pre's take the form "Can I X?" or "Let me X", where "X" is the name of a projected future action (an "action projection"). Thus, "Can I ask you a question?", "Can I tell you something?", "Can I make a suggestion?", or "Can I ask a favor?" each project a different base FPP and the sequence which it would engender. These pre-expansions are thus type-specific. Indeed, it might well be thought that such utterances would exemplify, respectively, a pre-asking, a pre-telling, a pre-offer, and a pre-request.

However, examination of sequences in which such utterances figure shows that they are not used as pre-sequences of this sort, and are not understood this way (Schegloff, 1980). They do not appear designed to anticipate and avoid rejection, declining, already-known-ness, etc., and rarely get blocking SPPs in response (except as transient teases or jokes, as in the common retort to "Can I ask you a question?": "You already did"). And, although they are regularly followed by "go-ahead" SPPs, those are not themselves followed by the base FPP which was projected in the initial turn. That is, "Can I ask you a question?", "Sure" is not ordinarily followed by a question, which suggests that the work it was doing was not "pre-questioning" along the lines we have so far been discussing.

Rather, these utterances with action projections serve to allow some preliminaries germane to the projected sequence to get accomplished or established before the base sequence itself has its FPP articulated. The action-projection utterance is then preliminary *not* in the first instance to the action which it names, but to a preliminary or some preliminaries to that action. Hence the term we use to refer to them – "preliminaries to preliminaries," or "pre-pre's." Pre-pre's seem to exempt what directly follows them from being understood as the base FPP, and allows them to be attended to as preliminaries to the base FPP, while providing recognition criteria for the base FPP when it "arrives" – i.e., it will be a question/telling/offer/request, etc.⁹

⁹ Having noted earlier that "pre-ness" can be a readily recognizable feature of some turns-in-position, and that recipients may have, as an interpretive resource for the question "why that now?", that an utterance is to be understood for its service as preface to something else, we note here that speakers may not rely on these resources and may take measures to pre-mark some immediately ensuing talk as intentionally preliminary.

There are two main sorts of preliminaries which are pursued or secured in the space opened up by pre-pre's: pre-mentions and pre-conditions.

The prospective doer of an FPP may face the contingency that it will involve a reference or mention which its recipient cannot be presumed to know or be able to recognize, and therefore some preliminary work is in order, either to establish that the mention/reference will be recognizable or to do the work that will make it so. Once that preliminary is accomplished, the sequence can proceed to the base FPP. For example, in Extract (4.18), Laurie has called Fred to inquire about the well-being of a mutual friend who has just given birth.

(4.18) ST (Schegloff, 1980:112)

- 1 Fre: F_{pre} → Oh by the way((sniff)) I have a bi:g favor to ask ya.
 2 Lau: S_{pre} → Sure, go'head.
 3 Fre: F_{pre} → 'Member the blouse you made a couple weeks ago?
 4 Lau: S_{pre} → Ya.
 5 Fre: F_b → Well I want to wear it this weekend to Vegas but my mom's
 6 buttonholer is broken.
 7 Lau: S_b → Fred I told ya when I made the blouse I'd do the buttonholes.
 8 Fre: ((sniff)) but I hate ta impose.
 9 Lau: No problem. We can do them on Monday after work.

Upon completion of that sequence, Fred's utterance at line 1 does project a request, but is not properly analyzed as a pre-request. In the space – the turn and sequence space – which the pre-pre engenders, Fred establishes the recognizability of the object to which his request pertains (lines 3–4), and only then (line 5) conveys the request which had been projected in the action projection.

And, in the following extract, a caller to a radio talk show conveys to the host the background to which her question will unavoidably make reference, thereby arming him to understand it and respond.

(4.19) BC, Red Book:190 (Schegloff, 1980:107)

- 1 Cal: I've listen' to all the things that ch'uve said, an' I
 2 agree with you so much.
 3 F_{pre} → Now, I wanna ask you something,
 4 F_{pre} → I wrote a letter.
 5 (0.3)
 6 Bra: Mh hm,
 7 Cal: F_{pre} → T'the governor.
 8 Bra: Mh hm::,
 9 Cal: F_{pre} → telling 'im what I thought about i(hh)m!
 10 Bra: S_{pre} → (Sh::!!)
 11 Cal: F_b → Will I get an answer d'you think,
 12 Bra: S_b → Ye:sj . . .

The space to introduce the “background” is reserved by the pre-pre at line 3, the background is provided at lines 4, 7, and 9, and this background supports the formulation of the question (at line 11) as an inquiry about “getting an answer,” understandable only by reference to the preliminary with which it is symbiotic.

It is worth noting that “backgrounds” and “preliminaries” need to be fashioned as such; specific practices of talking may be involved in rendering some spate of talk as “preliminary.” Until the “foreground” move or action is produced, the same talk can be understood – as it is being articulated in its course – as what the speaker means to be saying/doing in its own right, often with untoward results.¹⁰ What is conveyed in the talk is not “naturally” foreground or background, preliminary, or the “main event.” It needs to be worked up to be the activity the speaker is constructing, and pre-pre’s are a resource in crafting a spate of talk as auxiliary to some other, yet-to-be-delivered talk.

For other prospective base FPPs the contingency needing to be addressed first, before the base FPP, involves not something to be mentioned or referred to but some pre-condition on which the viability or propriety of the projected sequence is contingent, and establishing or securing this is a second matter addressed in the space set aside by pre-pre’s. In Extract (4.20), such a use of a pre-pre figures in the story which Jack is telling Mark, turning on his status as a “born again Christian.”¹¹

(4.20) Sugihara, 1977:32–36 (Schegloff, 1980:121)

- 1 Jac: I was readin: the word one time an’ this guy sittin’
 2 F_{pre} → next tuh me I y’know () an’ he said “Hey Can
 3 F_{pre} → I ask you something? ‘re you a Christian?” I said
 4 F_b → “Oh yeah,” “Why don’t we:: (0.5)
 5 [()
 6 Mar: [He was readin’ the work next to [you?
 7 Jac: [No I was readin’
 8 the word, and ‘asked me if I wuz a Christian y’know
 9 Mar: Uh huh=
 10 Jac: =I said “oh yeah” an’ we started sha:ring and . . .

In recounting his story, Jack incorporates in the approach by the stranger which he is reporting his pre-pre, “Can I ask you something.” Of course, the following question, “Are you a Christian?” has thus been marked as *not*

¹⁰ As in Extract (4.28), below, where what is presented as a good deed entitled to appreciation (at lines 46–47) is misunderstood as an apology to be accepted (at lines 49–52); when examined closely, it turns out that the report of the good deed was not marked as a preliminary. When it is subsequently so marked at lines 53–54, the sequence runs off quite differently.

¹¹ In this extract, “the word” (at lines 1 and 8) refers to the Bible.

the question he has projected, but as a preliminary to it.¹² And what that preliminary is doing is establishing that the pre-conditions for the projected action are met, i.e., the pre-condition for inviting him to “share” – namely that he is born again. And (he reports) when that preliminary had been satisfactorily addressed, he directly proceeded to the base FPP (at line 4), “Why don’t we . . .”

Although most preliminaries pursued after a pre-pre involve pre-mentions or pre-conditions, there can be other sorts as well. For example, in Extract (4.21), Bonnie has called Jim (they are about 14 or 15 years old, intermittent boyfriend/girlfriend), and after talk about attendance at a scheduled meeting of a youth group to which both belong Bonnie launches a new sequence:

(4.21) BB Gun, 2:04–12

- 1 Bon: F_{pre} → But- (1.0) Wouldju do me a favor? heheh
 2 Jim: S_{pre} → e(hh) depends on the favor::, go ahead,
 3 Bon: Didjer mom tell you I called the other day?
 4 Jim: No she didn’t.
 5 (0.5)
 6 Bon: Well I called. (.) [hhh]
 7 Jim: [Uhuh]
 8 (0.5)
 9 Bon: F_b → .hhh ‘n I was wondering if you’d let me borrow
 10 your gun.

Here Bonnie’s utterance at line 1 may initially appear to be a pre-request, but what follows is not the request. As with a similar earlier exemplar, this appears to be a pre-pre, and what Bonnie introduces into the preliminary space is evidence of the seriousness of her request; namely, that this is not the first time she has tried to make it. This preliminary is, then, neither pre-mention nor pre-condition. The full range of preliminaries which prospective FPP speakers may seek to make room for remains to be determined.¹³

¹² Indeed, in view of the narrative practice here of not assigning the successive utterances to their speaker by name, the teller relies on his interlocutor to use an analysis of pre-pre’s and how they work in order to parse the narrated events properly in the first instance. For example, in reporting two-person conversations, it is not uncommon to use a rule of alternation, in which each next turn-constructive unit is assigned to the “other speaker.” Here, that would result in assigning “Hey can I ask you a question?” and “Are you a Christian?” to different speakers, as if permission to ask a question were contingent on being a Christian. Of course, this is incorrect, but that turns on being able to hear that “Can I ask you . . .” is a pre-pre, “Are you . . .” is a preliminary, “Oh yeah” is a response to the preliminary, and “Why don’t we . . .” is the contingently projected base FPP, with speakership assigned by tracking the parts of the sequence as they play out. The import of this is that the practices and structures which we are describing inform not only the co-construction of the talk in its course, but also the construction and interpretive uptake of narrative accounts of such exchanges in subsequent interaction.

¹³ As it happens, not all action projections are doing the work of “pre-pre’s. They also are used as “pre-delicates”; that is, they alert the recipient that what their speaker is going to do in the base first pair part is delicate or problematic. In some cases, such as the one

Generic pre-sequence: the summons-answer sequence

The pre-expansions discussed to this point have all been type-specific – that is, in some fashion designed to be suited to, and specific to, some particular type of base sequence which they therefore contingently project. But there is one type of pre-sequence which is not directed to any sequence type in particular, but rather is aimed at a feature generically relevant to the efficacy of talk-in-interaction – the attention, or mobilized reciprocity, of an interlocutor. The default modality for displaying such attention in co-present interaction is gaze direction, and recipients (in the absence of accountable grounds for doing otherwise, such as engagement in other simultaneous activities) properly direct their gaze to speakers (Goodwin, 1981). But speakers, or incipient speakers, unassured of the attention of prospective addressees or of their availability to interact (or given affirmative reasons for questioning such availability or attention, such as observable

presented below, this is displayed in other ways as well. Here Pam had called Vicky earlier, and Vicky is now returning the call. Pam has been called to the phone:

- (4.22) Erhardt, 8:1 (in Schegloff, 1980:131-32)
- 1 Pam: H'ello:.
- 2 Vic: Hi:.. Vicky.
- 3 (0.4)
- 4 Vic: You ra:ng?
- 5 Pam: Oh hello there yes I di::d.
- 6 → .hh um I nee:d tuh ask you a questio:n?
- 7 (0.4)
- 8 Pam: → en you musn't (0.7) uh take it personally
- 9 → or kill me.
- 10 (0.7)
- 11 Pam: → I wan to kno:w, (0.7) whether you: will(b)
- 12 → would be free:, (.) to work o:n um tomorrow night.
- 13 (0.4)

Clearly Pam's request is being treated as problematic, and the action projection at line 6 is hardly the only indication of that. But in other cases, it is not otherwise apparent that the matter being broached is delicate, and the recipient might otherwise take the question as a simple request for information. In Extract (4.23), for example, 19-year-old Joey has called his mother, Marsha, long distance, and is asking about an investment which she either advised him to make, or made on his behalf, and which has declined substantially in value. After an upbeat and joking opening, Joey comes to the reason for his call:

- (4.23) MDE, Stock (in Schegloff, 1980:133)
- 1 Joe: → Uhm (0.3) Can I ask you something?
- 2 Mar: Yeah.
- 3 Joe: What has happened to Standard Prudential.

Here it is the action projection at line 1 that marks the question which it projects as not the simple request for information that it might ordinarily be heard as. He is "rubbing it in" that his interests were not well served by his mother's conduct of his affairs. For a fuller account of how these two uses of action projection are distinguished by parties to ordinary conversation, see Schegloff (1980). For a discussion of why pre-pre's are not needed when interviewers "lead up to a question" in broadcast news interviews, see Schegloff (1988/89, 1992b).

involvement in another activity or non-response to already produced talk or other action), may undertake to secure the attention of their co-participant. In particular, they may seek to secure that attention *before* the beginning of their talk-in-the-base-sequence lays claim to the attention of the recipient, which leaves the beginning itself vulnerable to impaired uptake, hearing, or understanding. The generic sequence-embodied practice for doing so is the summons-answer sequence.

Some structurally specifiable locations in talk-in-interaction are specially common environments for the use of this sequence, the most obvious being openings. Not uncommonly, the summons-answer sequence is the first sequence in an episode of interaction, preceding even greetings, for it is by way of the summons-answer sequence that an interlocutor is recruited for participation in the interaction (including its greetings), the instrument of recruitment turning on securing the attention of the prospective participant (Schegloff, 1968, 2002a [1970]).

But even within already ongoing interactions, the issue of the availability and attention of an intended recipient may be (claimably) at issue, whatever base sequence may be awaiting launching. Then the generic pre-sequence may be invoked to mobilize that attention which is taken to be prerequisite to the efficacy of any interaction, and be understood as preparatory to some incipient, but as-yet-unspecified, project. When employed, the summons-answer sequence is understood to be invoked "for cause" – that is, it embodies the claim that the reciprocity of its target for what is to come is in some respect problematic (Schegloff, 2002 [1970]).

Various forms are used to implement the summons – most commonly the name (or title) of its target, a courtesy term (such as "excuse me"), or physical contact. As with other pre-sequences, there are both go-ahead and blocking second pair parts. The go-ahead response is generally articulated with "yeah" or "what," but may also be displayed by redirection of gaze to, or re-orientation of posture at, the summoner, or some other indication that the summoned is aligning as recipient to the summoner.¹⁴ In Extract (4.24), Don is examining a video camera which has been set up in the dining room of John and Beth's apartment to record the dinner which is about to begin.

¹⁴ The fact that responses to a summons like "yeah" or a re-orientation of eyes or body towards the summoner are taken as "go-ahead" responses and are followed by talk by the summoner that gets understood as "what the summoner was summoning them for" shows that when the response to the summons is "what" (as it often is), the ensuing talk by the summoner is not to be understood as "answering the question articulated by 'what'," but rather as following a response to the pre-expansion FPP that is a go-ahead response. The same is true of other pre-expansions which can take "what" or some other "question word" as their SPP – most notably pre-announcements such as "guess what I did," "what," "guess who," "who," etc. The ensuing talk is the base FPP of the sequence which was projected by the pre-sequence, and not the SPP response to the question word that served as the go-ahead response in the pre-sequence.

(4.24) Chinese Dinner, 2:10-28

- 1 Don: Izzit ai:med right;
 2 (0.7)
 3 Bet: Ah, John wz determining tha:t a minute ago.=
 4 Bet: =[I'm not sure,
 5 Ter: =[Mm lemme pour[it!]
 6 Don: F_{pre} → ((Calling)) [(Say)John
 7 ???: ([,]
 8 Joh: → ((Calling from kitchen)) [J's[leave it o:n!]
 9 Ter: [(Lemme- le::h-)
 10 Don: F_b → I:s this ai:med accurate enou:gh?
 11 (0.5)
 12 Joh: S_b → Yes it's aimed et the table.
 13 Don: Grea:t.
 14 (1.0)

When Beth in effect redirects the inquiry to John, who is in the other room (lines 3-4), Don employs a summons (line 6) to mobilize John's attention and participation, and, upon receiving evidence that John is attending (line 8), re-asks his question to John (line 10).

Later, at the table, before launching a request sequence to have something passed to him, Don uses a summons (line 5) to secure the attention of a young child, and, when in response Jerry looks to him, he proceeds with the request (line 8).

(4.25) Chinese Dinner, 25:20-27 (simplified)

- 1 Bet: =(um)in[i z life [y'know,
 2 Ann: [Mm-hm? [
 3 Joh: [((cough))
 4 Ann: [Mm-hm?
 5 Don: F_{pre} → Hey Jerry?
 6 Jer: [((looks to Don))
 7 Bet: [An' it-[he- he- i t-]
 8 Don: F_b → [Will you pass] that uh,
 9 Jer: Uh this?
 10 Don: This one here,
 11 (0.5)

A few minutes later Don has gone to the kitchen to get some supplementary cutlery, and is distributing them at the table, and only his wife has yet to get a knife.

(4.26) Chinese Dinner, 29:11-18

- 1 Don: Mm. Here'r the knives,
 2 Bet: °Okay gimme two[maybe three[()].
 3 Ann: [Mm hm [()].

- 4 Jer: Guess what I have a[loo:se tooth.
 5 Don: F_{pre} → [Hey Ann?
 6 Ann: ((looks to Don))
 7 Don: F_b → Dju wa[nt a knife?
 8 Bet: [Oh yea:h.=
 9 Ann: S_b → =[Nyeh,

Before initiating an offer (or pre-offer) sequence to his wife (line 7), he "prepares the field" with a summons-answer sequence (line 5), the "answer" again being furnished by gaze direction.

Blocking responses can be effected by a withholding of any such go-ahead response, though such an effect may be achieved without design. That is, as the doing of the summons is warranted in the first instance by the possible non-attention of the target, failure of the summons to attract target's attention is more a default than an action of the target's - though it can be that as well, when the target has observably registered the summons and is analyzably withholding a response.

As with other pre-sequences, there is an intermediate or mixed type of response as well, here involving registering of the summons but with a response aiming to block or forestall progression to the further talk which the summons projects, either temporarily or substantially - responses such as "I'm busy," "Just a moment," "Be right there," "I'm in the bathroom," or "Leave me alone!"

In Extract (4.27), Vic is a janitor/custodian, socializing with his buddies in a local used-furniture store. His wife Carol comes to the door and "calls him," i.e., summons him (lines 4-5).

(4.27) US, 3:10-6:07 (lines 1-14 appeared previously as Extract [1.06])

- 1 Mik: Jim wasn' home, [°(when y'wen over there)]
 2 Vic: [I didn' go by theh.]=
 3 Vic: =I [left my garbage pail in iz [hallway.=
 4 Car: F_{pre} → [Vi:c, [
 5 Car: F_{pre} → [Vic(tuh),
 6 Vic: S_{pre} → =Yeh?
 7 Car: F_b → C'mmere fer a minnit.
 8 (0.7)
 9 Vic: Y'come[he:re.
 10 Car: [You c'co[me ba:ck,
 11 Vic: [please?
 12 Vic: I haftuh go t'the ba:throom.=
 13 Car: =Oh.
 14 (3.5)
 15 Vic: (((From a distance))I cleaned'n=I left
 16 my garbage pail in the ha:llway yihknow'm I nope-I
 17 hope he don't c(h)laim it yuh kno(h)w,
 18

- 19 .
 20 . ((70 lines of transcript omitted; about 3 minutes))
 21 .
 22 Ric: That's I betcha it's the same ((ULULATING HORN)) kid
 23 who set fire to the, couch outside of the=
 24 Vic: =The blond headed kidjeh ((END HORN)) d'same kid.
 25 Becawss I caught him light'n on dih couch. Yeh. Dih kah-
 26 the same- the, duh, couch. Fronna dih stow. Yes. Sa:me
 27 kid.
 28 (0.7)
 29 Mik: He a firebug?
 30 Vic: Yes. He['s intuh dat.
 31 Mik: [Mfhhh!
 32 (1.0)
 33 Vic: But now he's slowed down a li'l bit becawss he n- he
 34 kno:ws thet, other people know.
 35 (1.0)
 36 Vic: Bud if he gets intuh dat he can't, eh- h-help what 'e
 37 feels he still does it.
 38 ???: ((in background))(Sta:nding, y'know, went tuh see,)
 39 (3.0)
 40 Vic: S_{pre} → °Yeh honey?
 41 Car: → What,
 42 Vic: You said fer me tih come tih you?=Wu:djuh want ho[ney?
 43 Car: [Yeuh.
 44 (0.5)
 45 Vic: Wha[t.
 46 Car: [I ash you t'take a walk across th'street with me
 47 fer a minnit=
 48 Vic: =Okay (honey. Okay.)/(I'll be back.)
 49 (1.0)
 50 Vic: I'll be (right witchu.)/(back inna minnit.)
 51 (1.5)
 52 Vi?: ().
 53 Jo?: (Yeh have fun.)
 54 (3.5)

Note, then, that when Vic does not respond promptly to Carol's summons (line 4) she repeats the summons (in "upgraded" form, here by full rather than shortened first name, at line 5) and this gets a go-ahead response.

The base sequence which Carol then initiates is almost certainly not the one on whose behalf the summoning was done. Vic's response across a considerable distance projects on his part an orientation to a brief exchange, and one which can be conducted "publicly." Carol's request for his approach appears designed to allow a longer and more private exchange. That this is the understanding of the parties can be seen in Carol's understanding of

Vic's resistance (his counter at line 9) as grounded in his suspicion that she is trying to extract him from his current interaction altogether, and her reassurance (line 10) that this is not the case. In effect, this request sequence is a magnified recapitulation of the summons-answer sequence, and to this Vic responds with something less than an accession, the cognate of a go-ahead to this larger-scale bid for his interactional availability (line 12).

Several minutes later, Vic in effect redoes the second pair part to this magnified summons (line 40), but, now that it is no longer adjacent to the FPP to which it is meant to be a response, it escapes recognition for what it is – witness Carol's puzzled response at line 41. Eventually Carol extracts Vic from his setting (although, true to her word, he returns shortly). It later appears that what is involved here is a complaint sequence which Carol voices to Vic about some objects which he has given away to the others in the shop without consulting her. The summons-answer sequence and the request which is its follow-up are, then, serving here as generic pre-sequences to establish the conditions for efficacious pursuit of the base sequence which Carol means to initiate, a sequence whose character is not overtly pre-indicated in the pre-expansion.

Multiple pre-expansions

We have briefly discussed several varieties of pre-expansion: type-specific pre-sequences of various sorts, pre-pre's, and a generic pre-sequence. There are no restrictions, however, on pre-sequences (although there are positional affinities; for example, summons-answer sequences are more likely to come first). Several pre-expansions may be introduced before the FPP of the base adjacency pair (although, of course, one consequence of the pre-sequences may be that the base adjacency pair is derailed). Here we can examine only briefly one instance of such a multiple pre-expansion to convey some sense (however conservative) of the extensiveness of the stretch of talk that can precede the base FPP.

In the case of Extract (4.28) below, the base FPP does occur; it is Vic's request at lines 76–79. One of Vic's colleagues in the used-furniture store group is James, a janitor/custodian in a neighboring building. Earlier in the day, someone had broken a window in James's building in his absence, and Vic had "cleaned up the mess" on his behalf. Upon James's arrival at the store which is their hangout, Vic goes on at some length about the favor he has done James, while James goes on at some length in anger about the breaking of the window and his determination to find out who did it. Before James's arrival Vic had speculated with the others whether he would be able to retrieve from James the barrel in which he had put the broken glass, and in the episode reported in Extract (4.28) Vic is launching a sequence designed

to request return of his barrel (also referred to in the extract as a "pail" or "can"). That is the FPP at lines 76-79 at which he eventually arrives.

(4.28) US, 52:09-54:05

1 Jam: I'm-I'm reti:rin anyway an' uh somebody ehss kin have
2 that damn fuckin job.
3 ???: hhh[hh!
4 Jam: [They c'n take it en stick it up theh damn ass.
5 (0.5)
6 Jam: E(hh)h! Yeh that's [right I'm=
7 Vic: [I unduh[stand.
8 Jam: =[I'm worreh [but-but-but I=
9 Vic: a→ [Ja:mes
10 Jam: =[must say dat.[Yihknow what I mean,
11 Vic: a→ [Ja:mes. [
12 Vic: a→ [Ja:mes.
13 Vic: a→ Ja[mes.
14 Jam: b→ [Yeh right.=
15 Vic: =[I left it theh-]
16 Jam: =[I'm gettin sick] a' dis shi[t.
17 Vic: [Have a beeh,
18 Jam: [Yeh.
19 Vic: [Have a beeh.
20 Vic: I left [it-
21 Jam: [e(hh)h!
22 Vic: I left- Have a beeh.
23 Jam: Eh-hey let's gi(h)tta- let's ge(h)tta bo(h)ttle
24 wai(h)ta sekkin=
25 Mik: =E wantsa boddle. [uh huh-huh-huh!
26 Jam: [(Down with beer!)/(Damn the beer!)]
27 Agghh! [Shit
28 Mik: [(Yeh [get)
29 Ric: [ha hah hah hah [hah
30 Vic: [I'm not intuh [the boddle.
31 Jam: [Hu:h?
32 Jam: Huh?
33 Vic: I'm not intuh [liquor.
34 Mik: [(Look)-/(Ehyeh?)
35 Jam: [(Looka dis.)
36 Mik: [Soon ez Sonny gets back frm the stoh.=Sonny's up et
37 the stoh.
38 Jam: [Uh h u [h?
39 Mik: [Wait'll he [gets back.=
40 Vic: c→ [Ja:mes,
41 Jam: d→ =Uh right.=
42 Jam: d→ =[(Uh hah?)
43 Vic: =[The pail is in yuh hallway,

44 Vic: [(Uh,)
45 Jam: [I know it hu(hh)[h!
46 Vic: e→ [The-the- I didn' have a broom wit'
47 e→ me, if I adduh hadda [broom I'd uh swept [up.
48 Jam: [e(hh)h! [
49 Jam: f→ [That's
50 alright.
51 Vic: So [(dat's, right on.)
52 Jam: f→ [That's a'ri'- somebody- [got it up, I don'know who.
53 Vic: g→ [(Look). But do me a favr-
54 Vic: g→ Do, me, one fa:vuh, I [cleaned it up!
55 Jam: [Yeh hh
56 Jam: Yeh right. Ih-deh ca:n, (I- brought de) can
57 (I'll) set it dehr own the sidewalk.
58 Vic: [No.
59 Jam: [Izzat ehkay=
60 Jam: =[No.
61 Vic: =[Didjeh [sweep up duh rest a' duh me[ss.
62 Mi?: [() [
63 Jam: [NO I didn' sweep
64 up nothin!
65 Vic: Well o[kay well that's why I left the can=
66 Jam: [Leave ih deh.
67 Vic: =[innuh hallwa:y
68 Jam: [I'll do it (early) [in nuh maw:ning.
69 Vic: [so if you hadda br[oo:m then you=
70 Jam: [Yeh right.
71 Vic: =c'd sweep up duh dust=
72 Vic: =[() -
73 Jam: [Very, uh- very good I [appreesh-'hhh
74 Vic: [the glass,
75 Jam: I apprecia[te that Victuh,
76 Vic: h→ [Tomorruh I-
77 Vic: No.=
78 Jam: =[E(hh)h yeh.
79 Vic: h→ =[Tomorruh I want my pail back. Dass a[ll.
80 Jam: [Ye(hh)h!
81 Jam: i→ I don''now I may keep [dat pail.

The sequence is too long and complicated to explicate here in any detail. For present purposes we need mainly to note that the base sequence appears at lines 79 and 81 at arrows "h" and "i": a request and its (almost certainly mock-) rejection. But the pre-expansions begin at line 9 with the summonses at the "a" arrows and the eventual go-ahead response at arrow "b", line 14.

Note that what Vic begins saying thereafter (at line 15), "I left it theh-," is the theme present at the end, lines 65-67, "that's why I left the can innuh hallwa:y," suggesting that it was on behalf of this sequence that the

summoning at lines 9–13 was initiated. That summons–answer sequence, then, was a pre-expansion of the eventually realized request sequence at line 81, all the intervening talk – and apparently unrelated sequences – notwithstanding.

Note further that after the “side sequence” (Jefferson, 1972) concerning beer/liquor, Vic begins again, again with a summons–answer sequence (lines 40–42). What he produces thereafter is meant to be preliminary, but is not marked as such – there is no pre-pre, for example, and it is quickly clear that James does not understand it as preliminary. For example, he treats the statement about the pail being left in the hallway as misplaced telling of something already known (lines 43–45), as if it were meant as an informing. And, even more problematically, he treats the comment about Vic not having swept up as an apology to be accepted, rather than as an account for the pail still needing to be returned (lines 46–52). Vic then does a pre-pre (lines 53–54), and although James continues to try to anticipate and pre-empt the projected action (a request) at lines 56–57 and 73–75, the status of Vic’s talk as preliminary is now secure.¹⁵ James’s efforts at pre-emption are rejected (at lines 58 and 77, respectively), and Vic eventually articulates the base FPP at line 79.

The point here is the substantial spate of talk which is properly understood by reference to what is being worked up to – by reference, that is, to its status as pre-expansion. In this instance, as it happens, not all of it is smoothly understood, but this is not intrinsic. Substantial pre-expansions can run off unproblematically, with summons–answer sequences followed by type-specific pre-sequences or pre-pre’s, and the pre-pre’s being themselves substantially expanded. Pre-expansion is one ample locus for substantial sequence expansion.¹⁶

¹⁵ It may be mentioned that James’s efforts to pre-empt are sequentially appropriate. We will discuss later on (in Chapter 5) relatively dispreferred FPPs like requests, and what is commonly treated as the appropriate response to their pre-expansions, namely, preemption.

¹⁶ It is worth mentioning that some utterance forms which serve as common pre-expansion first pair parts can also be deployed instead as initial parts of the first pair part turn of a base adjacency pair. For example, the name of the targeted recipient may be said and no opening left for a response, as in “Alvin,=can you come a bit closer to the table maybe even there?”; in this case, Alvin looks to the speaker directly after his name has been said, but the name has been deployed here as a turn-initial address term, not as the first pair part of a summons–answer sequence, as is the case in Extracts (4.25) and (4.26) (discussed at greater length in Schegloff [2003]). Other possible pre-sequence first pair parts which may instead be deployed as turn-initial “action-type markers” are pre-announcements (“guess what + [telling]”), story prefaces (“The funniest thing + [telling]”), and probably others. Line 1 in Extract (4.07) above displays such a use of “Guess what.”

An important issue is involved here, which can only be mentioned in this context, and that is the possible trade-offs between turn organization and sequence organization in getting various interactional jobs done. In this note we have mentioned that some jobs can either have a sequence dedicated to them or can be done as part of a turn’s construction. Elsewhere we will see that some activities get done alternatively by expanding a turn or by expanding a sequence. There are varied resources not only *within* a domain of sequential organization but *between* domains of sequential organization which parties can mobilize for the implementation of their interactional projects.

One recurrent theme in many of the pre-expansions discussed here (and in others not discussed here) is their orientation to avoidance of problematic responses to a base FPP – most notably rejection (as with invitations, offers, requests, tellings-as-news, etc.), but also non-uptakes (as in troubled hearing or understanding). The mobilization of such sequence-structural resources leads us to focus more closely than we have so far on the relationship between alternative second pair parts of adjacency pairs.

At the outset of our discussion of adjacency pairs, we noted that, with very few exceptions, there are alternative SPPs which will satisfy the constraints of adjacency pair organization and its relevance rules – in particular, the conditional relevance of a second pair part on a first. However, the set of alternative possible SPPs for a given sequence type is itself structured; the alternatives are not homogeneous or symmetrical, as the orientation of much pre-expansion to the avoidance of certain types indicates. Because the import of these asymmetries extends well beyond expansion, we will temporarily set aside our discussion of other sequence expansions, and turn to a discussion of the differential treatment of SPP alternatives under the rubric of “the organization of preference/dispreference.”