University of Groningen

The interactional accomplishment of action

Seuren, Lucas

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Document Version
Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

Publication date:
2018

Link to publication in University of Groningen/UMCG research database

Citation for published version (APA):
Seuren, L. (2018). The interactional accomplishment of action. Utrecht: LOT/Netherlands Graduate School of Linguistics.

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CHAPTER 7

Conclusion

7.1 Main findings

This dissertation started out with the observation that speakers can use two sentence types to ask questions, declaratives and interrogatives, only one of which is generally understood to be the prototypical format for this action. But as was made clear in the discussion in chapter 1, this is not a useful way to investigate how language is used by speakers to design social actions in talk-in-interaction, that is, what role language plays in the action-formation problem (see Schegloff, 2007, p. xiv). Not only does it assume an almost causal relationship between linguistic form and pragmatic function where no such relationship exists (Curl, 2006; Curl & Drew, 2008; Huddleston, 1994; Levinson, 1983; T. Walker, 2014; G. Walker, 2017a), but the entire concept of *question* is so vague as to be analytically useless (Schegloff, 1984).

We could consider the prototypical question as an action by which speakers request information and only information. But few actions we might want to call questions are actually used in this way. And even when speakers request information, they generally do so in service of other projects, such as repair (e.g., Englert, 2010; Schegloff et al., 1977; Stivers, 2010). If language is a system of family resemblances (Wittgenstein, 1958), then *question* is a pater familias: it rules over so many different types of actions, actions that need not have any direct relation to each other, that attempting to provide a coherent

and exhaustive analysis of how participants distinguish between two types of questions based only on their syntactic format is a wild goose chase.

The aim in this dissertation was therefore far more modest. In chapters 2 to 5 it focused on specific types of question-like actions in specific sequential environments, in order to show how syntax shapes and is shaped by the interaction (see Couper-Kuhlen, 2001b). The analyses in these chapters treat linguistic structures not as a priori given, but as enacted in interaction for certain interactional goals. These structures thus have no invariant meaning or function, but are positionally sensitive: interactants design their actions by considering the local sequential environment. In other words, forms are produced and understood not only to support a specific action, but for a specific context. Finally in chapter 6 the procedural nature of the action-formation problem was further demonstrated by showing that in third position, that is, after an adjacency pair has come to potential completion, participants can not only reconfirm or repair the action done in the first pair part (Heritage, 2018; Houtkoop-Steenstra, 1985; Jefferson & Schenkein, 1977; Kevoe-Feldman & Robinson, 2012; Kevoe-Feldman, 2015; Koole, 2015; Mehan, 1979; Schegloff, 1992, 2000; Tsui, 1989), but also ascribe a specific action to the second pair part and by extension recast the entire sequence.

In the rest of this chapter I first discuss the specific findings of each chapter as they pertain to our sequential understanding of action, the import of turn design, and the procedural nature of action. In closing I discuss the implications these findings have for future research, both for our understanding of social action and the organization of talk-in-interaction, and for our understanding of linguistic structure.

7.1.1 Sequential understanding of action

Conversational data are as Schegloff (2007/2017, p. 352) puts it "distinctively and densely interactive." Every turn at talk is understood and designed to be understood in relation to the prior talk (Heritage, 1984b; Sacks et al., 1974; Schegloff, 1988a). This, as was also discussed in section 1.3.1, is one of the fundamental observations that make Conversation Analysis a fruitful endeavor. This means that actions are designed with the local exigencies of the interaction in mind (Mazeland, 2013), and it means that participants reveal through each turn at talk their understanding of the state of talk they find themselves in. In this dissertation this has proven to be crucial indeed for our understanding of declarative yes/no-type initiating actions (G. Raymond, 2010a).

With epistemics taking a more central role in CA analyses, various analyses

have focused on the sequential implications of YNDs as being mandated by their epistemic stance. A declarative is used to take a relatively knowing stance (G. Raymond, 2010a), indexing a flat epistemic gradient, and therefore projects merely confirmation as a next action (Heritage, 2012a; Lee, 2015; Park, 2012). But the analysis of YNDs showed that they can be used to elicit elaboration as well as confirmation (chapters 2 and 3). The epistemic analysis thus does not account for all the data, precisely because it ignores the sequential environment in which these YNDs are produced.

Chapters 2 and 3 investigated YNDs in various positions in the structural organization of the interaction, primarily following closure of some other activity or YNDs that were themselves part of a sequence-closing sequence (Schegloff, 2007, chapter 9). These analyses demonstrated that speakers can use YNDs to make relevant not just confirmation, but also various forms of elaboration, and that this is largely dependent on the sequential context of the YND. Indeed, in cases where this elaboration is not provided, it can be pursued, meaning that it is treated as noticeably absent (Schegloff, 1968). One way in which we can distinguish between these two categories of actions is in whether or not the understanding or state of affairs formulated in the YND is either old—that is, it formulates prior talk from the same conversation (Heritage & Watson, 1979)—or new—that is, it formulates a prior belief of the speaker that has not been addressed in the interaction. This is in line with Heritage's proposal on epistemics as the engine of sequence (Heritage, 2012b). But we get a far more refined picture if we take the sequential environment more fully into consideration: it's not just about whether the information is new or not, but also how it relates to the immediate prior talk.

The YNDs that were studied in chapters 2 and 3 were produced in two sequential environments. First, speakers can produce a YND after some other activity has been brought to possible closure. In such environments participants can either launch a new activity, re-open an old activity, or move into conversational closure. When speakers formulate a previously established agreement, it is understood as re-opening an activity and preliminary to some other action—although not necessarily as a pre in a technical sense (cf. Terasaki, 1976/2004; Schegloff, 2007). In these cases a YND makes relevant only confirmation. By formulating a prior recipient-oriented belief on the other hand, speakers are understood to be launching a new activity, as requesting of the recipient that they bring them up to date on the addressed state of affairs. In other words, these YNDs are understood as topic proffers (Schegloff, 2007; see also Button & Casey, 1985).

Second, speakers were shown to produce YNDs in response to an informing

turn—that is, a turn that has as its main job to convey information, for example an answer to a request for information or a response to a topic proffer. It was shown that in such environments participants can use a YND to move towards sequence closure or to address a discrepancy between their prior beliefs and the information conveyed in the prior turn. By formulating the information conveyed, speakers will be understood to be displaying their understanding and thus requesting only confirmation (Heritage & Watson, 1979). Such moves are particularly closure-implicative if they are designed to recycle the turn with which the information had been requested (Schegloff, 2011). By formulating a prior belief on the other hand, speakers will be understood to be addressing a discrepancy between what they previously thought and the information that has just been conveyed. These "unrelated clausal responses" (Thompson et al., 2015) or "knowledge-discrepancy questions" (Steensig & Heinemann, 2013) generally make relevant not just confirmation, but also some form of account or explanation for the discrepancy (see also Robinson, 2009).

While these analyses already adequately demonstrate the importance of sequential context for the action formation problem, this was further supported in chapters 3 and 5 where yes/no-type interrogatives (G. Raymond, 2003) were analyzed. The focus was on YNIs that were produced in similar sequential environments to the YNDs discussed in chapters 2 and 3. Chapter 3 analyzed YNIs that were produced following activity closure, and chapter 5 analyzed YNIs that were produced in response to informing turns. The types of actions these YNIs implemented were very similar to the YNDs that were produced in similar environments. Following the possible closure of an activity, speakers used YNIs as topic proffers to establish a new activity. These were understood as requests to bring the speaker up to date on the addressed state of affairs. In response to informing turns, on the other hand, YNIs were understood as a type of knowledge-discrepancy question, and they were responded to with some form of account or explanation for the discrepancy between the speakers' prior beliefs and the information conveyed in the prior turn.[1]

The comparison between these syntactic forms shows that where and when a turn is produced is possibly more consequential for the action it implements than the grammatical design of that turn. Grammar does of course support action formation and ascription and speakers cannot use grammar willy-nilly if they want to be understood, but grammar is not the heart of action formation. This is obviously true after a first pair part as it makes conditionally relevant

[1]In some cases, the explanation had already been provided, and in those cases only confirmation was provided (see C. W. Raymond & Stivers, 2016).

a type-fitting second (Schegloff & Sacks, 1973), but in fact at every point in the interaction some actions will be more coherent and more salient than others. As students of social interaction we are interested in and concerned with action first and foremost, and while actions are implemented through language, they are not of language. This is precisely what Schegloff means when he proposes that instead of a stable, cognitive grammar, we have positionally sensitive grammars: "One has a range of grammatical resources, grammars if you will, whose relevance is positionally sensitive to organizational features and contingencies of the sequential and interactional moment in which the conduct is situated" (Schegloff, 1996c, p. 110). While this does not mean that grammar is inconsequential for action, as indeed it is not, it does mean that grammar should be understood not as directly encoding certain actions, but as dealing with the exigencies of the sequence as they pertain to the action that is being implemented.

7.1.2 Sequential understanding of grammar

The previous section discussed the importance of sequence for action formation and ascription. But that is not to say of course that grammar, or turn design more generally (Drew, 2013), has no part to play in making turns recognizable as certain actions. Indeed, if grammar were inconsequential for action formation, we would not expect there to be such rich and varied grammars. But quite the opposite is obviously true. And as Heritage (1984b, p. 242) so elegantly phrased it: "no order of detail can be dismissed *a priori* as insignificant." That participants distinguish between various syntactic formats, such as declaratives and polar interrogatives, should thus be treated as consequential for the interaction. Their import is just not on a broad level for which we would assume a direct form-function relationship, such as with the Literal Force Hypothesis, but form definitely has a function (T. Walker, 2014).

The comparison between YNDs and YNIs in chapter 3 showed that while they are used in similar sequential environments to implement similar actions, they are not used to implement the same actions. While both YNDs and YNIs are used to launch a new activity in an environment where another has been closed, they convey different presumptions about the relation between the participants and thus make relevant slightly different types of responses (see also G. Raymond, 2010a). It was shown that YNDs are primarily used to implement what were called Other's-News Announcements: topic proffers with which speakers claim to know that the recipient has news to tell and what that news is. The projected response is for the recipient to confirm and elaborate on what the

speaker already claims to know. In other words, speakers provide a headline of the news thereby inviting the recipient to provide the details (Button & Casey, 1985).

YNIs were used for two slightly different actions: what were called News Requests and Agnostic News Inquiries. News Requests are generally implemented with YNIs and share with Other's-News Announcements that speakers convey through them a belief that the recipient has news to tell. But with News Requests speakers do not claim to already know the news; by providing a candidate assessment speakers leave open whether the news is good or bad. They are optimized though, meaning that they are designed for good news outcomes (see also Boyd & Heritage, 2006). Recipients are thus requested to not only (dis)confirm the candidate assessment, but also elaborate on what made the news good or bad respectively.

Agnostic News Inquiries are also generally implemented with YNIs but as their name already suggests, they do not convey a belief that the recipient has news to tell. Of course by doing a topic proffer a speaker will inherently be seen to convey an expectation that there could be news, but with Agnostic News Inquiries speakers inquire whether there is news. Recipients should thus respond first by saying whether there is something to tell, and if so, by actually telling the news.

This association between form and function is easily accounted for by way of epistemic stance. Declaratives index a shallow epistemic gradient, and they are thus particularly suited for Other's-News Announcements. Polar interrogatives on the other hand index a steeper gradient and are thus suited for implementing News Requests and Agnostic News Inquiries. The syntactic design of a proffer thus contributes to making it recognizable as a specific type of proffer.

Note, however, that the association is not absolute; we are not dealing with an invariant form-function relationship. It was shown that Other's-News Announcements are occasionally implemented with interrogatives, while News Requests can be implemented with declaratives. While the design of a turn facilitates its recognizability as a specific action, the exigencies that the design deals with can only be properly appreciated in relation to the action itself. In other words, when speakers use interrogative word order to implement a News Request, they take a relatively unknowing stance in relation to whether the news will be good or bad, whereas if they use a declarative, they convey an expectation that the news will be good or bad respectively. Form always has to be understood by considering the action it carries.

In chapters 4–5 it was subsequently shown that when they are *oh*-prefaced both YNDs and YNIs address problems with intersubjectivity and launch a

sequence to remedy that problem. In these cases as well, the grammatical format was not used to convey different types of actions, but to deal with the local exigencies. Although *oh*-prefaced YNDs make relevant only confirmation, whereas *oh*-prefaced YNIs make relevant some form of reconciliatory information, the format does not project this response, at least not directly.

YNDs are used by speakers to claim that they now-understand something they previously did not understand. They address problems of understanding that have already surfaced in the interaction, that is, the understanding that is corrected had already been expressed or at least implied in the interaction. YNIs on the other hand are used to deal with prior assumptions of the speakers. They are produced in response to informing turns and treat those turns as unexpected in relation to the speaker's private beliefs, or background assumptions. Because they do not claim a now-understanding, they also invite reconciliatory information on top of the confirmation: the recipient should account for the discrepancy between what the speaker previously believed and has now come to understand.

This shows that grammar does matter for action formation, but it has no fixed function or meaning (i.a., Curl, 2006; Curl & Drew, 2008; Fox et al., 2013; Huddleston, 1994; Thompson et al., 2015; T. Walker, 2014; G. Walker, 2017b). A declarative is not a statement or assertion that becomes a request for information in the right sequential or epistemic context (see Levinson, 1983). In other words, recipients of a declarative utterance do not go through a process of first recognizing that the declarative cannot be asserting information, and subsequently applying some Searlean reasoning to figure out that the speaker is requesting information. And the same applies to interrogatives; they do not start out as requests for information only to become other actions, such as invitations, in cases where it is clear that the speaker cannot be merely requesting information. Speakers use turns to implement actions, and the manner in which actions are implemented depends on when and where they are implemented. Language is not action itself, it is a vehicle for action, and can be molded to suit the local sequential constraints of the interaction (Schegloff, 1996c). In and of itself, it does not project responses or set up contingencies, it does so only in relation to the action that it supports.

7.1.3 Procedural nature of action

What makes CA a radical method for investigating interaction is primarily its reliance on the participants' displayed understandings. Linguistics and Language Philosophy have for their understanding of social actions relied on constructed

evidence and the intuitions of native speakers of what constitutes an adequate, appropriate, and felicitous action. CA took a wholly different perspective, relying on conversational data not only as objects to be studied, but also as the evidence on which analyses of these objects were to be based (Sacks, 1972; Schegloff, 1988a). Because participants continuously display to each other how they understand "the current state of play" (Schegloff, 2007/2017, p. 325), researchers can ground their analysis of whatever some turn is doing in the understanding that is displayed in the subsequent adjacent turn (Sacks et al., 1974). To quote Schegloff quoting Garfinkel: "It is as if this world were designed to allow a science of it to be done" (Schegloff, 2007/2017, p. 325).

The basic structure by which much of conversation is organized is the adjacency pair; two actions, one after another, the first making conditionally relevant a type-fitting second (Schegloff & Sacks, 1973). But is has long been recognized that it can optionally be expanded with one additional action, what Schegloff (2007) later defined as a sequence-closing third. Indeed, the frequency of this third position led some scholars to argue that the basic sequential structure consist of three parts, not two (e.g., Houtkoop-Steenstra, 1985; Jefferson & Schenkein, 1977; Tsui, 1989). At the very least the third turn is generally treated as confirming as adequate the understanding displayed in the second pair part, thereby also reconfirming the action done with the first pair part (Heritage, 1984a, 2012b, 2018; Koole, 2015; G. Raymond, 2018; but see Macbeth & Wong, 2016).

In chapter 6 the role of the third position for the action-formation problem was further investigated by comparing two types of assessments that speakers produce in responses to answers to inquiries. These assessments articulated a different type of stance towards the second pair part, and thereby revealed different understandings of the response.

With the first type of assessment speaker adopts an evaluative stance, thereby treating it as a telling of news or a story. These were called *evaluative assessments* and they have been well documented in the CA literature (Goodwin & Goodwin, 1987, 1992; Jefferson, 1978; Lindström & Mondada, 2009; Maynard, 1997; Pomerantz, 1975, 1978, 1984; Sacks, 1974; Stivers, 2008). The second type of assessment was, however, previously not documented. It was shown that speakers can adopt a deontic stance towards the response, evaluating it for its implications for the speaker's right and authority to determine his or her own actions (see Stevanovic & Peräkylä, 2012). These were called *deontic assessments*.

Because these assessments articulate a different stance towards the second pair part, they display a different understanding of the action that second pair

part implements. But not only that, by using the deontic assessment *is goed* ("∅ is fine") speakers treated the second pair part as a proposal, even if it was not designed as a proposal and a proposal had not been requested with the first pair part (cf. Kevoe-Feldman & Robinson, 2012). In other words, in third position speakers can ascribe an action to a responsive turn. So whereas sequence-closing thirds are typically thought of as optional additions to the sequence that are primarily sequential in nature—they propose sequence closure—they can have an important role for action formation. Indeed, the use of *is goed* shows that actions are not implemented by turns in isolation, but that they are a collaborative accomplishment of the participants. A turn implements an action by getting treated as that action (Sidnell, 2014).

7.2 Implications for future research

While social actions have been part of parcel of CA research since its inception, it is only recently that the action-formation problem has gained traction as a central tenet for researchers working in the field. This is partly to the credit of Interactional Linguistics as its focus on how language shapes interaction generally surfaces as studies of how linguistic structures are used in a systematic way to bring about certain actions. But action as an *generic order of organization* (Schegloff, 2007, p. xiv) has also gotten more traction; the question is not just how action is implemented in a systematic way, but what action is; which aspects of the interaction are used by the participants and how; and what participants are concerned with when they implement action. This also means that the role of language in action has to be reconsidered; if language is not used directly to bring about action, then what is the role of language and how does it shape social interaction?

In the following two sections I briefly discuss how the analyses presented in this dissertation give direction for future research on the action-formation problem, and subsequently how the results of this dissertation influence the study of language in social interaction and linguistics more generally.

7.2.1 Accountability, Epistemics, and Action

This dissertation was centrally concerned with one aspect of action formation: how certain linguistic forms come to have certain functions. But in doing so it has touched upon a range of issues that are pertinent to our understanding of the action-formation problem, and social interaction in general. Here I discuss

three ways in which the studies in this dissertation can serve further research on the action-formation problem.

The first issue deals with accountability. Considering CA's roots in ethnomethodology it is no surprise that accountability takes a central role in CA and particularly in the study of action formation. Participants design their actions so as to be accountable for having implemented those particular actions; they make them observable-and-reportable (Garfinkel, 1967, p. 1). But participants at times implement actions in such a way they are not accountable for them. Specifically, speakers may design a topic proffer in such a way that they are not accountable for having done a topic proffer, but for example a request for confirmation, as was shown in chapter 2. The proffer can be responded to as a proffer and is thus observable, but it is designed so as to not be reportable as such. In other words, participants attempt to reach an interactional goal though alternate means (Sidnell, 2017b).

But this raises a few questions. For one chapter 2 showed that participants can avoid accountability, which leads us to wonder why do speakers sometimes design their actions so as to avoid accountability? Additionally we could ask why one way of designing an action avoids accountability; specifically in the case of topic proffers, why does declarative syntax seem to be a way of eliciting a telling without requesting one? Part of the answer may be that some actions are delicate, that is, it is a form of doing face work (Goffman, 1955). But as was also shown, that cannot be the entire story. In fact, the analysis of topic proffers showed that many are implemented with declarative word order, and these often do not address delicate topics, showing that it is not just about the type of topic being addressed (chapter 3). It is simply because speakers should design a topic proffer in line with what they already know and what the recipient can hold them accountable for knowing (Heritage, 2012a; Sacks et al., 1974; Stivers et al., 2011). Since accountability is so central to social interaction, its import of action formation clearly mandates further investigation.

The second issue, which is strongly related to the first, is what it means for participants to do actions. Chapter 6 showed that turns can come to be a particular action by being responded to in a certain way. This was taken to show that action is a collaborative accomplishment. But it could also be taken to mean that action does not exist in the way it is typically conceived of. Recipients do not attempt to categorize a turn in process as a certain type based on a closed set of possible actions before producing a response. Instead they infer from the displayed behavior what they should do next. By responding participants thus come to treat a prior turn as a certain action (Sidnell & Enfield, 2014).

Further research could investigate how procedural the notion of action really

is. Was the speaker in example (8) of chapter 2 really flying under the radar of accountability, designing an action to be observable-but-not-reportable, or is accountability also a procedural phenomenon. Meaning that the speaker implemented a topic proffer, but pursues in a less normative way in light of the strong resistance? In other words, the topic proffer is a topic proffer, but the recipient is the one who is in fact avoiding accountability by dealing with what could be considered the vehicle of the action (Schegloff, 2007; Sidnell, 2017a). The question then is how do speakers give themselves a way out and how do they give recipients a way out?

The third and final issue deals with the relation between recipient design and epistemics. In his seminal paper on Epistemic Status and Stance, Heritage (2012a) argues that people have a sort of "epistemic ticker", keeping track of what they know about other people and what other people know about them. This has clear implications for recipient design. Not only should speakers not design their turns to convey information that the recipient already knows (Sacks et al., 1974), but any turn-at-talk should be designed in such a way that fits the participants' respective epistemic rights and responsibilities (see Stivers et al., 2011).

The analysis of topic proffers showed that speakers design their proffers to fit what they know and expect and what they have a right to know and expect (chapter 3). It suggested that because speakers can use evidentials to treat their knowledge as hearsay or Type II Knowledge (Pomerantz, 1984), not using an evidential is a means of implicitly claiming that their knowledge was licensed by the recipient at some earlier point. Because the recipient has primary rights, the speaker has to show how he or she knows. If the speaker does not explicitly formulate how he or she knows, the recipient is tacitly treated as the source of the speaker's knowledge.

But there are many practices by which speakers seem to modify their claimed rights with respect to the addressed epistemic domain, and many of them are turn-final. Dutch has turn-final *of* ("or", Drake, 2015), *hè* and *toch* (Enfield et al., 2012; Foolen, 1994), as well as other particles such as *offeh* ("or eh"), *of niet* ("or not"), etc. How these various turn-final tokens contribute to recipient design has only been scantily investigated. So we are led to ask what role do these turn-final particles have for recipient design? Are they merely a way to mitigate the speaker's knowledge claim or do they address different dimensions of knowledge (Stivers et al., 2011, p. 9)? And how do these particles and their function inform us about the role of knowledge for interaction in general? Considering the importance of epistemics in contemporary CA

research on action formation, this clearly needs further investigation.[2]

7.2.2 Rethinking Linguistics

The analyses of the different positions in which YNDs and YNIs are used and the import of that position for the action these YNDs and YNIs implement (chapters 2–5) has shown that the design of a turn can only be adequately appreciated if we know what action the turn implements. Simply put: a recipient needs to know what a turn is doing to understand why it is designed in a certain way. From the view of linguistics and language philosophy this is the world turned upside down, but it is a logical result if we consider that conversation is about action, not about language. That is not to say that speakers do not use language to make their actions recognizable and in turn grasp the function of some utterance based on its linguistic design, but instead of seeing language as an adequate and necessary tool for implementing action, we should see it as a vehicle (Goodwin & Heritage, 1990; G. Raymond, 2003; Sacks, 1995; Schegloff, 1995; Schegloff, Ochs, & Thompson, 1996) one that may only be used for those actions that cannot easily and readily be done in a certain environment without language (see Rossi, 2014). Participants use it to solve various interactional problems, of which action is only one. A no less important function of linguistic structure is to make smooth turn taking possible: it allows projection of possible completion points (Sacks et al., 1974).

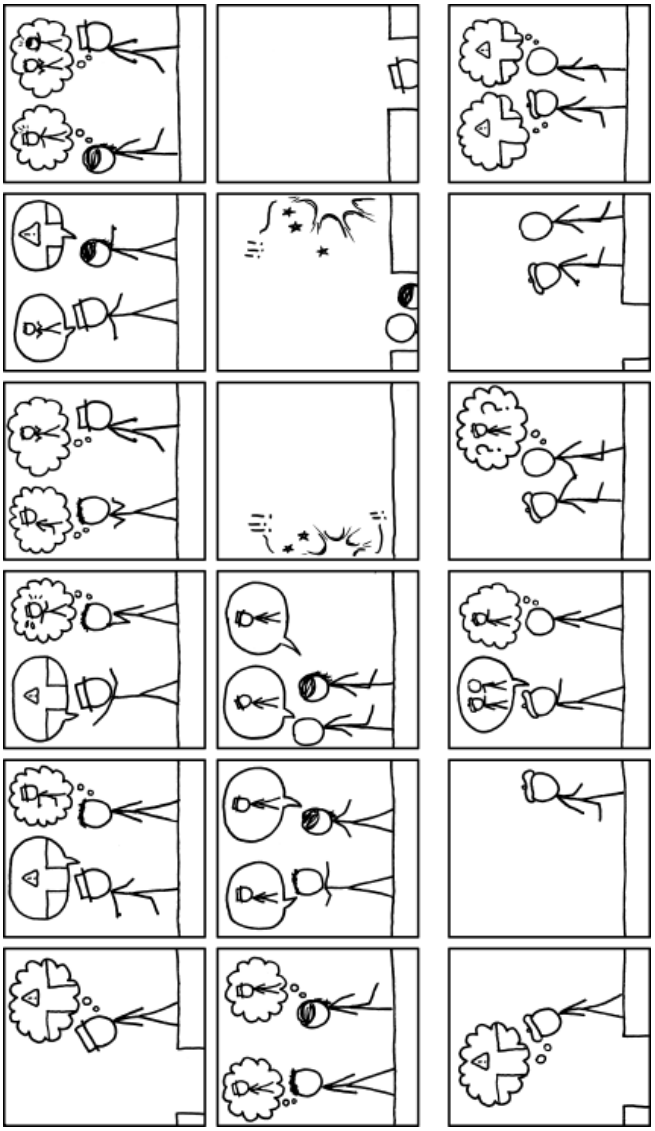
The obvious problem is how can we adequately grasp what language does for talk-in-interaction. If we need language to produce action, or at least a subset of all possible actions, but we can only fully understand language by first grasping the actions, we are in a vicious circle. Instead of simplifying, we complicate the action-formation problem.

One way of investigating the issue may be from the notion of projection. Participants are continuously trying to project when a turn comes to completion, and grammar makes this possible, because participants have knowledge of the conventionalized linguistic structures of the language that they use (de Ruiter, Mitterer, & Enfield, 2006; Ford & Thompson, 1996; Fox, 2001; Huiskes, 2010; Schegloff, 1996c; Selting, 2000; Steensig, 2001; Tanaka, 1999). Similarly, a competent conversationalists will have knowledge of the possible actions that

[2]Such an investigation has clear import for linguistics as well. It suggests that the right edge of the clause, possibly including its boundary pitch, has a specific function or set of functions in Dutch, and maybe in other Germanic languages as well. This should not be taken to mean though that there is a form-function relationship with function encoded into form. Quite the opposite: the form is molded to suit the functional demands of the interaction.

can be produced at any point in the interaction, and use that knowledge to project what action or type of action a speaker is implementing (e.g. Clark, 1996; Levinson, 2013). The construed understanding is subsequently displayed in the recipient's uptake and can then be confirmed or disconfirmed, and thereby *grounded* (Clark, 1996), by the speaker (Heritage, 1984a, 2018; Sacks et al., 1974; Schegloff & Sacks, 1973; Schegloff, 2007). So just as there is a linguistic grammar—or set of grammars—that a competent speaker of a language has mastered, so too there may be a conversational grammar. By that I do not mean a linguistic grammar for conversation, but an conventionalized system of norms and rules that facilitate projection and understandings of action in social interaction. The adjacency pair where a first pair part makes conditionally relevant a type-fitting second pair part is but one part of this grammar.

To study linguistics in interaction we must consider how the grammar of language is related to the grammar of conversation (e.g., Couper-Kuhlen & Ford, 2004; Couper-Kuhlen, 2012, 2014; Deppermann, 2011b; Fox & Heinemann, 2016; Persson, 2013; Selting, 2000; Selting & Couper-Kuhlen, 2001; Steensig & Heinemann, 2013; T. Walker, 2014, among many others). This seems to me what Schegloff (1996c) envisioned with his positionally sensitive grammars. At each point in the interaction, there is a range of contingencies that participants must deal with, some of them related to the action constraints: what came before and what can come next. The design of a turn, the linguistic structure, is produced and understood in relation to those constraints. Language and action exist not independent of each other, but are part of a symbiotic relationship. If this indeed is how language and action are related, it requires a radical rethinking of linguistic theorizing.



Anyone who says that they're great at communicating but 'people are bad at listening' is confused about how communication works.

Image courtesy of xkcd.com