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Interaction, language practice, and the construction of the social universe

ABSTRACT – As a linguistic anthropologist my concern is to describe rigorously, systematically, and empirically the array of resources utilized by participants to build their ongoing social organization as the situated product of interactive practices. In the first part of this report I discuss how we can integrate talk, intonation, the body, and the built environment into our analysis of language usage. An approach that combines analysis of talk in interaction with ethnography provides a more informed picture of girls' lives than exists in either social science or popular literature. With this introduction to basic concepts of embodied action and situated activity system, in the second part of the paper I examine how the lived local social order is brought into being by investigating children interacting with parents in the midst of directive/response sequences (sequences in which parents are attempting to get their children to do something). The repetitive ways in which children and parents collaborate in the building of argumentative sequences I believe has consequences for how children, across a range of situations, develop negotiational skills. By looking closely at the type of order that is achieved, analysts can examine how moment-to-moment interaction is consequential for larger social processes.

Key words: interaction, language practice, social processes.

Introduction

My concern as a linguistic anthropologist is with documenting how talk is used to build social organization within face-to-face interaction. I have principally been interested in looking at how human activity and forms of basic human sociality are co-constructed through talk-in-interaction. I have investigated forms of language-in-interaction within the peer group, the work group, and in the family. Critical to this work is examining the embodied practices through which participants in interaction build their local activities. I consider it crucial to document how talk, intonation, and the body (as well as artifacts and features of the local setting) mutually elaborate one another in the construction of action among the people I am studying, and to that end make use of video recordings in my work. This is because I wish to describe rigorously, systematically, and empirically the array of resources utilized by participants to build their ongoing social organization as the situated product of interactive

practices. By using video recordings I make available to other researchers the data my descriptions of interactive practices are based upon.

This paper will be divided in two parts. The first part will discuss how we can integrate talk, intonation, the body, and the built environment in our analysis. I want to discuss two basic concepts: embodied action and situated activity systems. In the second part of the paper I turn to a different consideration and examine how the lived local social order is co-constructed, by investigating children interacting with parents in the midst of a form of situated activity, directive/response sequences (sequences in which parents are attempting to get their children to do something.)

As a feminist researcher I am also concerned with making use of a methodology that combines analysis of talk in interaction with ethnography to provide a more informed picture of girls' lives than exists in either social science or popular literature. Carol Gilligan, author of best-selling book *In a Different Voice*, whose work has

influenced a great number of researchers, argues that males are oriented towards a “justice orientation” (concern with equality, reciprocity, and fairness) while females are oriented towards a “care orientation” – the idea of attachment, loving, and being loved, listening and being listened to, responding and being responded to (Brown *et al.*, 1995, p. 314). Stereotypes of girls as having little concern with an ethic of justice or as all-embracing of an ethic of care fall apart when we examine through extensive ethnography in conjunction with talk-in-interaction how girls actually orchestrate their lived social worlds.

Multi-modal action within girls’ games

My unit of analysis is what Goffman (1961) has called a “situated activity system”: “somewhat self-compensating, self terminating circuit of interdependent actions” involving a joint focus of attention. This concept bears a family resemblance to Wittgenstein’s notion of “language games.” (As Wittgenstein [1958, p. 23] argues, “the term language-game” is meant to bring into prominence the fact that speaking of language is part of an activity, or of a form of life’.) Children’s games provide one very perspicuous example of a form of situated activity system. Central to the activity is the achievement of collaborative action, the meshing of actions of separate participants into a joint social project.

The game of Hopscotch as a situated activity system

Hopscotch (*amarelinha* in Brazilian Portuguese) provides a prototypical example of a girls’ game. Generally its rules are described in terms of a simple pattern of rotation, as one girl after another tries to move her token and her body through a grid without hitting a line. According to sociologist Janet Lever (1978, p. 479), who observed but never actually recorded children’s games, hopscotch and jump rope are examples of eventless turn-taking games that “progress in identical order from one situation to the next”. She argues, “given the structure of these games, disputes are not likely to occur”. Such a perspective echoes Piaget (1965[1932], p. 77), who argued that “the legal sense is far less developed in little girls than in boys”.

This view of hopscotch is seriously flawed. First, in this model, rules are viewed as mechanical instructions. The girls I observed treated rules as resources to be probed and played with and actively competed for first place in a round of hopscotch, as they did in other games and activities as well. Second, by focusing only on the actions of the jumper, the model ignores the active work of other parties who act as judges, checking to see if any fouls have been committed.

Hopscotch entails the coordinated activity of

movement of a player through the playing field and commentary on that player’s performance during her turn. Hopscotch is played in many different countries (including Brazil, Aruba, Bolivia, Czechoslovakia, el Salvador, France, Germany, Great Britain, Honduras, India, Italy, Nigeria, China, Poland, Trinidad, Russia, and Korea). While in the U.S. it is usually played by girls, in many countries both boys and girls enjoy the game. In the U.S. game of hopscotch a player systematically moves through a grid of squares drawn in chalk or painted on the sidewalk, street, or playground. (In other countries lines are drawn in the earth with a stick.) The marks on the grid construct a visible field of action, which orients those who know how to read it to the sequence of moves through space that must be traversed while playing the game. In neighborhoods where it is safe to play outside children draw the grid with chalk on city streets. However, in more dangerous neighborhoods of the city where children’s movements and activities are more restricted, children play on school playgrounds, where the grid is often painted. In downtown Los Angeles play on the playground was possible only because of a negotiated truce with local gangs.

The grid painted on a cement schoolyard in Pico Union in downtown Los Angeles looked like that in Figure 1.

One person jumps at a time through the grid. The order is decided by calling out. The jumper is expected to move from square to square, in the pattern displayed by the numbers in the diagram. (Frequently the numbers are not actually written in the squares.) The object of the game of hopscotch is to be the first player to advance her token, commonly a stone, a stick, or a beanbag, from the lowest to the highest square and back again. From behind the start line (below square one), a player tosses her beanbag into a square and jumps from one end of the grid and back again on one foot, without changing feet and without jumping

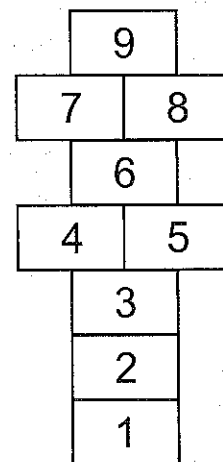


Figure 1. Hopscotch grid.

on squares where beanbags lie. Violations to the game can be argued to occur when someone steps on a line, steps in squares which are occupied by tokens, advances through the grid in the wrong sequential order, or moves inappropriately through space – changing feet, or walking or running rather than jumping – or hopping the wrong number of times or with the wrong number of feet (for example, hopping on one foot in the game cycle of “Two Feet”). Where there are two unoccupied squares next to each other, the jumper’s feet should land in the two adjacent blocks. If a person falls down, steps on a line, or steps outside the appropriate square, she must forfeit her turn.

Onlookers do not passively watch as someone takes her turn. Rather, hoping to detect mistakes, to call “outs,” girls intensely scrutinize a jumper’s body as she moves through socially inscribed space. The body, as well as the words spoken, are important in the performance of the *Out*-cry. A participant assuming the role of judge can color her critique of the jumper’s move in various ways. In the next example, as Marisol, age 8, steps on two lines while jumping, Carla, age 9, cries “*OUT! OUT!*” This is followed by an account or justification for her foul call “*PISTATE LA DE AQUÍ, Y LA DE ACÁ.*” Carla justifies her *Out*-cry by running to the grid and using her own body to replay the activity just seen. In much the way that a speaker can report another’s speech, the feet of the judge, Carla, both replay, and comment upon, the errors made by Marisol’s feet.

Example 1. Embodied accounts in an “Out” Call.

Marisol:	<i>((jumps and lands on some lines))</i>	Problematic Move
Carla:	OUT! OUT!	Out! ((finger point))
	<i>((replays Marisol’s move on grid))</i>	
	PISASTE LA DE AQUÍ	Explanation
	<i>You stepped on this one</i>	
	<i>((steps on square))</i>	Demonstration
	Y LA DE ACÁ.	
	<i>and this one.</i>	
	<i>((steps on square))</i>	

Judges not only state verbally their objections to a player’s moves in the game. In addition, in conjunction with their talk, they may provide nonvocal accounts which consist of replaying past moves, to add further grounding for their positions. In challenging the player’s (Marisol’s) move, Carla animatedly provides a rendition of Marisol’s past mistake. As she states that Marisol had stepped on “this one” (*la de aquí*) and “this one” (*la de acá*), Carla re-enacts Marisol’s movement through space, challenging the player’s prior move. The demonstration – involving a

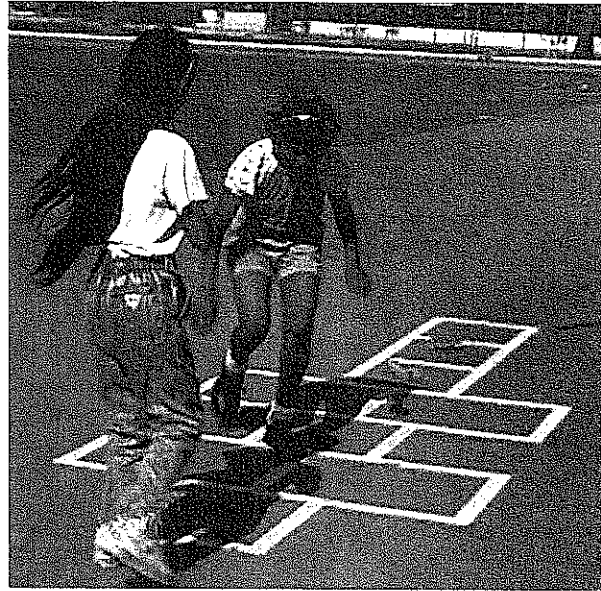


Figure 2. Carla: PISASTE LA DE AQUÍ, [...].

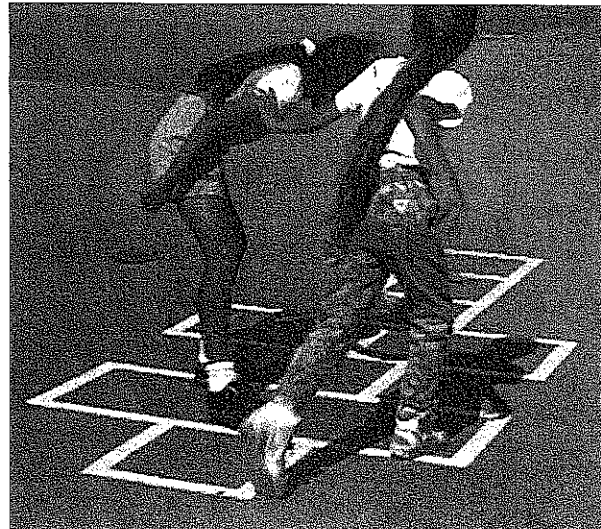


Figure 3. Carla: Y LA DE ACÁ.

fully embodied gestural performance in an inscribed space – could not have been done without the grid, as it provides the relevant background – the necessary tool – for locating violations. Here “this one”, the indexical terms in the stream of the speech, the gesture and the grid, as a semiotic field in its own right, mutually elaborate each other (C. Goodwin, 2000).

By examining a range of actions across several groups one finds that an orientation towards highlighting rather than mitigating opposition is clearly evident in each of the examples. Multiple semiotic fields (C. Goodwin, 2000) are entailed in the expression of children’s adversarial talk during spontaneous play. These include oppositional markers (expressed through a range of different intonation

contours), accounts or explanations, address terms, demonstrations, and body positions. In order to show how these are integrated in the construction of action, we will now examine the *Out*-cry in Carla's turn in more detail.

Displaying stance in opposition turns

In constructing an out-move the body as well as the words spoken are important in the performance of the *Out*-cry. A participant acting as judge can take up different types of footing, defined by Goffman (1981, p. 128) as one's "stance, or posture or projected self". Intonation, body positioning and turn shape are each important to the construction of alternative types of stance. In Example 1 the word "OUT!" is accompanied by a quite vivid embodied affective alignment as the finger of the judge points accusingly at the offender (while the player laughs as her own attempt to pull something over on the girl acting as judge). Figure 4 illustrates the accusatory point of the judge and the humorous stance of the player. The accusation can be found not only in her talk, but also visibly in the gesture she uses. In short, affect is lodged within embodied sequences of action. Moreover, the phenomena that provide organization for both affect and action are distributed through multiple media within a larger field of action.

Carla uses not only verbal means, but also posture and gesture, to accuse another girl, Marisol (at the left of the frame grab), of having landed on a line while making a jump in hopscotch. The way in which an *Out* is defined by embodied action occurring at a particular location in space provides organization for the body of the judge prior to the call. In order to assess the success or failure of the player's move she positions herself so that she can clearly see the player's feet landing on the grid. By virtue of such positioning Carla's talk is heard as an evaluation of Marisol's performance. A moment before the jump Carla has moved to just such a position. Indeed, the reason she is pointing with her accusing finger from a crouch is that

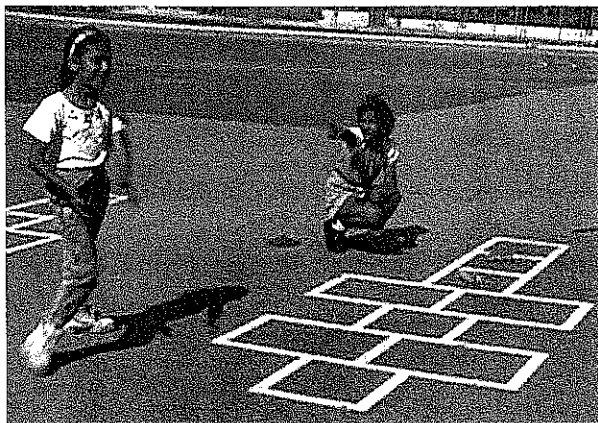


Figure 4. Carla: OUT! OUT!

she has bent down to look carefully at the place where the jumper will land.

Carla vividly displays heightened affect as she accuses her opponent of being *out*. Some of the organizational frameworks that make such emotion visible and relevant will be briefly described. First, Carla's action occurs in a particular sequential position: immediately after Marisol's jump, the precise place where an assessment of the success or failure of that jump is due. Second, Carla's evaluation is produced immediately, without any delay after the jump. Through such quick uptake, and the lack of doubt or mitigation in the call, there is an unambiguous assertion that a clear violation did in fact occur. Third, the two *Out!*-calls are spoken with markedly raised pitch (Figure 5).

While the normal pitch of the girls is between 250 and 350 hz, here Carla's voice leaps dramatically from 465 hz to 678 hz to 525 hz over the first 'Out!' and from 630 hz to 684 hz to 585 hz on the second 'Out!'. While 200 milliseconds is considered extended vowel length for adult speakers, the duration of the first vowel of 'OUT' is 412 milliseconds, while the duration of the second is 296 milliseconds. The talk is produced with a LHL (low high low or rising-falling) contour. According to Sosa (1991, p. 153), the LHL contour is common in "dialecto mexicano." Examining comparable 26-minute periods of games of hopscotch for working class Latina and African American girls (Goodwin *et al.*, 2002), this contour was found to be distinctive to the Latina group, and different from that of a comparable group of working class African American girls, who produced much shallower contours.

By examining what girls actually do in the midst of games, rather than relying on reports of their activities, or observing them from a distance, we can not only carefully document the range of linguistic and other semiotic resources which are used to produce action, but we can also help revise some of the stereotypic notions about girls that pervade developmental textbooks and the popular media regarding females. Here we find girls employing multiple modalities simultaneously, and actively pursuing

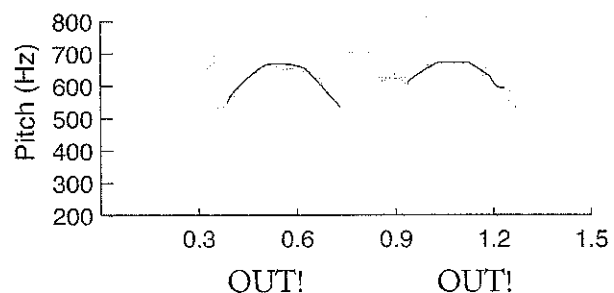


Figure 5. The pitch of "OUT! OUT!".

rather than mitigating conflict in the midst of their games, and able to articulate quite precisely and persuasively their oppositional stances.

The achievement of family sociality

In this second part of the paper I will focus on negotiation in directive/response sequences within the family. Directives are speech actions that ask another party to do something. Parents and children constitute the sociality of the family through the way they sequence their talk in the midst of directive/response sequences. By looking closely at the type of order that is achieved, we, as analysts, can examine how moment-to-moment interaction is consequential for establishing frameworks for participation – ones that may have enormous consequences for how children learn to act as members of society.

The work I am reporting on is part of a larger research project directed by Elinor Ochs at the UCLA Sloan Research Center on Working Families. The mandate of the center is to document how families navigate the work of being a family with their jobs. A large interdisciplinary team of researchers from Applied Linguistics, Anthropology, Education, and Psychology have contributed to collection and processing of data. The project involves not only videotaping families for between 20-25 hours during a week's time, but also interviewing with adults about family networks, education, health, and talking with children about their activities. Most of the examples in my paper result from my own filming and fieldwork.

In previous work (Goodwin, 1980; 1990; 2001) I demonstrated that in comparable task activities the precise linguistic resources used to build directives of a particular shape could constitute very different kinds of social organization in children's peer groups (for example, hierarchical or egalitarian social structures). The accounts that accompany directives vary in critical ways as well. They may either specify the requirements of the current activity or display no obvious reason for why the action should be undertaken, aside from the speaker's personal desires (Goodwin, 1990, p. 113). The social force of a directive, as well as its emotional valence, is also heavily shaped through the deployment of resources such as prosody and embodiment (Goodwin & Goodwin, 2001).

A range of ways of constructing arguments is possible. One way in which arguments developing from a directive/response sequence can be built is through a series of moves that are disagreements, challenges, denials, accusations, threats, and moves which ignore/discount the position of the addressee (Goodwin, 1990). Such moves can lead to extended sequences of conflict, as co-

participants oppose another speaker's utterances with their own opposition. Several examples will provide illustrations.

Recycled directive/response sequences

In the following sequence (Example 2), the initiation of a longer argument, Mom in Family A asks eight-year old Jason to clean up his room. Mother accompanies her directive with a threat: she tells Jason if he does not clean his room he will not be able to play with one of his friends later on.

Example 2. Directive accompanied by a threat.

- Mom: Uhm, can you clean your room please?
 Jason: *((continues playing ball, not answering Mom))*
 Mom: Okay. Big and I-
 We're going to be doing some errands
 And I was gonna let you play at Tommy's
 But not if your room's not clean.
 I'm gonna take these pants back
 to Old Navy today.

Several minutes later Mother returns to check up on Jason and his progress with cleaning the room (Example 3). On seeing his room (not at all messy from the perspective of three anthropologists) she accuses him of not having complied with her request: "Um, that's not cleaning your room." In response to his disagreement position – "I cleaned it!" (line 5) – Mother provides another threat: "You want a Grandma Thorton.=don't you." (line 7) We learn from the developing sequence that a "Grandma Thorton" refers to what Mother's own mother would do when her room was messy – throw things on the floor (lines 18-21). The sequence develops into a conflict characterized by recycled positions (Goodwin, 1990, p. 158-163). When Jason recycles his position ("It's cleaned.") (line 10) and insists that the room is clean, she rebuts his response ("Are you kidding me Jason?") (line 11) and begins throwing things from his shelves and dresser onto the floor (line 12). She continues her complaints by telling him that he has not properly put objects in their carrying cases (line 16, 23) and quizzing him on where certain objects belong (line 26). She critiques him for leaving things on his dresser too long, leaving his dirty clothes in a corner behind the door (line 46), and "candy trash" to attract ants (line 49). To emphasize the seriousness of her position, she threatens to take away privileges of playing with friends (grounding him) as happened to him in the past (lines 42-45).

As the sequence draws to a close Mother asks Jason to confirm her position about "the deal". "Kay.=What was the deal. Clean room. Correct?" (lines 52-53) which he answers with a low-pitched "Yes" (line 54).

When the baby appears at the door of Jason's room, she characterizes her own activities as "helping brother clean his room." As Jason shuts the door Mother takes the baby's hand and comments, "Brother's embarrassed" (line 57).

Example 3. The trajectory of a directive sequence with minimal negotiation.

- 1 Mom: How ya doing Jason, ((from living room where vacuuming))
 2 ((goes to look at Jason's room))
 3 Jason: ((sitting on floor bouncing a ball))
 4 Mom: Um, **that's** not cleaning your **room**.
 5 Jason: **I cleaned it!**
 6 Mom: ((puts away sheets in hall cupboard))
 7 Mom: You **want** a Grandma **Thorton**.= don't you.
 8 Jason: What?
 9 Mom: You want a Grandma Thorton.= don't you.
 10 Jason: It's **cleaned**.
 11 Mom: Are you **kidding** me Jason?
 12 ((Mom throws things from shelves on floor))
 13 Jason: (I'll take care of it.)
 14 Mom: This!// This is- this-
 15 Jason: That's -that's not **mine!**
 16 Mom: Kay. You have cases for this stu::ff.
 17 This is Grandma Thorton.
 18 This is what Grandma Thorton used to do.
 19 To me all the **time**.
 20 She'd come in my room and go "Pshh!!!"
 21 ((grand sweep of arms dramatizing throwing things))
 22 Jason: Mom. That's not mine.
 23 Mom: Kay. Do you not have carrying // cases for this stuff.
 24 ((throwing toy down))
 25 Jason: **I do::**
 26 Mom: Do you know where that goes?
 27 Jason: **No::**
 28 Mom: It goes upstairs. In a **box**.
 29 This- ((holding toy)) You have a desk upstairs.
 30 You have- a baseball bag that fits all your baseball
 31 equipment in,
 32 This is from Doctor Joe from two weeks ago
 33 that has still been on you dresser,
 34 Baby ((baby comes and look at Mom throwing things))
 35 Mom: Hi Lady. Mama's helping **brother** clean his **room**.
 36 ((throwing things on floor))
 37 This- ((throwing clothing))
 38 Jason! For- come here and look at all these dirty clothes
 39 I found **stashed** in that corner.
 40 Is that clean?
 41 You know what? I'm- I'm serious. You know that?
 42 You were grounded for **two** weeks.

- 43 You wanna be grounded again?
 44 Because that's what's gonna happen.
 45 You remember the deal?
 46 Dirty socks behind the door.
 47 What was the deal.
 48 Look at this.
 49 Why is there candy trash (.) in here.
 50 Do you want ants in the bedroom?
 51 Jason: **No::**
 52 Mom: Kay.= What was the deal.
 53 Clean room. Correct?
 54 Jason: °Yes
 55 Mom: Kay. It's not happening.
 56 Jason: ((closes door))
 57 Mom: Come on. Brother's embarrassed. ((helping baby to walk))

In this sequence in response to her son's defense that his room is clean (and actually was by observations of three anthropologists on the scene), Mother counters her son with a challenge: "Are you kidding me Jason?" (line 11) and begins a series of threats, complaints and initiates ritually defiling acts, throwing objects into the center of the room. Little space is permitted for Jason to elaborate his position or to enter into a rational discussion. In this sequence Mother makes use of a type of "social negotiation strategy" (Stone e Selman, 1982, p. 169-172) consisting of "unilateral, one-way understanding" (Stone e Selman, 1982, p. 172). According to the scheme of Stone e Selman (Stone e Selman, 1982, p. 172) such forms do not refer to or inquire about the other's needs or wishes, but instead deal with "justification on the basis of the self's perspective".

The use of threats in Directive sequences

Threats, such as taking away privileges (such as being able to play sports with friends, as seen in Example 3, lines 41-45), can be used to enforce the seriousness of carrying through with a directive, acting as forms of upgrades of directives. Threats in other directives entail loss of the privilege of having a story read at bedtime, or not getting to eat dessert at the end of a meal, as occurs in the following examples. Example 4 takes place during a visit at Grandma's home for Family C. Seven-year old Becky has taken a lemon from her grandmother's tree when Dad has told her not to. When Dad asks a second time not to take a lemon (line 2), saying "No more!" she defiantly responds, saying that she's taking one more (line 3). Subsequently, Dad begins to relate the penalty for being defiant: "We're gonna have to take away a privilege" (lines 6-10). As an escalation to her own action, when Dad tells Becky to give grandma the lemon (lines 11, 13), she stomps as she reasserts her desire for some juice (line 14).

Example 4. Invoking the denial of privileges in a directive sequence.

- 1 Becky: ((skips up Grandma's steps while holding lemon from tree))
 2 Dad: No **more!**
 3 Becky: **One** more.=
 4 Dad: Okay. I think we're gonna be-
 5 skipping uh-
 6 We're gonna have to take away a privilege
 7 Because you- you're just not listening.
 8 Becky: **No:://:**
 9 Dad: We're gonna skip your book tonight.
 10 Enough is enough.
 11 Give that to Mom.
 12 Gma: Why did you pick it up.
 13 Dad: Give it [to Bubba.
 14 Becky: [I wanted to make [some juice. ((stomps)
 15 Dad: [Give it to Bubba.

As the sequence continues (Example 5), a minute later, Becky defiantly picks up a lemon once again and talks about how she is going to eat some lemon when she gets home (lines 1-5). Dad responds with a statement reminding her about having lost her book privilege (line 8) and argues that soon she will lose yet another privilege, a dessert privilege (line 11).

Example 5. Asserting the denial of privileges in a directive sequence.

- 1 Becky: Well when I get home-
 2 I'm gonna [eat-
 3 Dad: [Leave it. ((pointing))
 4 Dad: [((shakes head))
 5 Becky: [some lemon. ((does cutting motion))
 6 Gma: Okay Becky.=
 7 Becky: **Some** lemon. ((as if cutting it in half))=
 8 Dad: Okay. You have lost your book privilege
 tonight,
 9 ((counting on fingers))
 10 Gma: Ah oh.
 11 Dad: We're gonna start losing dessert privilege
 tomorrow.
 12 What else is it gonna be.
 13 Becky: No dessert [privilege.
 14 Dad: [Put it back.
 15 Gma: [Be nice.
 16 Becky: [No fair. I just wanted-
 17 Dad: Put it **back!**
 18 Becky: And have- and have I lost my desert
 privilege?
 19 Dad: You keep acting you will.
 20 **Which** is it gonna be.
 21 Get your bag, and let's get going.
 22 Gma: Yeah you have to behave and listen your
 mo-parents.

By invoking the notion of privileges this family puts in place a system that articulates quite explicitly what the penalties are for not obeying a parent's directives. In

Example 6 the Mother in Family A discusses the seriousness of not doing one's homework well (lines 1-6). She makes Jason himself describe the consequences of not getting good grades. Losing what is most valued by Jason, after school sports activities, will occur (see lines 10-13). Mom asserts that her position is not subject to negotiation with: "I will not change my mind on that." (line 18). Although Mom allows slots for Jason to talk, what he says (lines 9, 12-13, 26) ratifies his mother's position.

Example 6. Nonnegotiable demands in a directive sequence.

((Jason is doing his homework))

- 1 Mom: Honey it's really important
 2 That you read the problems
 3 Cause you know what?
 4 You'll be getting marked wrong on your
 test.
 5 You need to read and you need to make
sure
 6 That you're listening to yourself read it.
 7 Jason: ^mmmm.
 8 Mom: Do you understand?
 9 Jason: Mmmhm.
 10 Mom: What's gonna happen Jason
 11 If you don't do good on your tests.
 12 Jason: It affects my grade and I get-
 13 End up with no sports.
 14 Mom: That's right. You don't.
 15 You know what?=- Your first report card
 comes in December.
 16 Do you know when baseball starts?
 17 Jason: In January.
 18 Mom: And I will not change my mind on that.
 19 'Cause it's not gonna happen.
 20 'Cause baseball it's- it's-
 21 Too intense in this city.
 22 I'm not gonna have that pressure on you
 23 If you can't keep up your grades.
 24 (0.8)
 25 Got it?
 26 Jason: Okay.
 27 Mom: Kay.

By looking at the topics of threats used in directive sequences, examining what parents threaten to take away from their children if they do not comply with directives, we can learn much about the culture of local sanctioning systems within families. We can determine what types of noncompliance are deemed serious enough so as to receive threats and what activities are especially valued, for children of various ages and genders, so as to be mentionable and noteworthy as privileges to be taken away. By looking at the sequencing within directive response interactions we can learn about relations within the family, whether parents permit their children to articulate their own reasons for noncompliance, or whether

children are left mute, unable to articulate responses to their parents' powerful directives.

Negotiation and frame change in a Directive/ Response sequence

I now examine a contrastive approach to communicating directives to children with an example from Family B. Example 7 provides another situation in which a child is (from the parent's perspective) making a mess and the Mother wants the child to stop his current line of action and clean up. (Mom had, in fact, spent the entire week of her vacation cleaning the house and yard prior to our fieldwork.) In Example 7, Mom, seeing her five-year old son Wes digging in the flower garden and piling dirt from the hole onto the cement walkway to their house, begins to interrogate her child:

Example 7. Negotiation and frame change during a directive sequence.

- Wes (age 5) is digging in dirt in the flower garden, putting dirt from the garden onto the sidewalk.
- 1 Mom: **Ho:ney.** (0.8) What are you *doing* over there.
- 2 Wes: ((*briefly glances at Mom*)) (3.8)
- 3 Mom: No I was talking to Wes. ((*addressing Aurora*)) (2.8)
- 4 Wes: ((*glances towards Mom*))
- 5 Mom: [Wessy?] (0.8)
- 6 Mom: Are you gonna put all that mud back? (1.6)
- 7 Wes: I'm gonna clean it up ((*nodding*)). (1.2)
- 8 Wes: To//**morrow.**
- 9 Mom: You are?
- 10 Wes: I'm gonna clean it up tomorrow.
- 11 Mom: Why tomorrow.
- 12 Wes: Because- uhm, (3.2)
- 13 Because I'm **making** it right **now.**
- 14 And, I'm a- I'm a be working on it=
- 15 Mom: Remember when me and Heather cleaned up that-
16 thing? And we wanted to keep it nice? (1.2)
- 17 Wes: Yeah, (0.8)
- 18 Mom: **Now** what. (1.0)
- 19 Wes: "I'll clean it up. ((*tired, perplexed look*))
- 20 Wes: I'll clean it **up.** (3.8) ((*strokes cat*))
- 21 Wes: I'm just gonna- make a **pipe** in there:.
- 22 Mom: **Pipe,**
- 23 Wes: What? (0.6)

- 24 Wes: **A pipe.**
- 25 Mom: You're making a sewer system in there?
- 26 Wes: Yeah.
- 27 Aurora: ((*Aurora runs out of the house with music which had been lost earlier in the day*)) Mom!
- 28 Wes: ((*continues with digging project*))
- 29 Mom: You found it?

Mom in this sequence initiates talk about cleaning up a mess with a directive consisting of a question and an address term: "Honey, what are you doing over there." (line 1). In structure her move resembles Example 2 ("How ya doing Jason"), in that it is a request for information and is accompanied by an address term, "Honey." In response to the lack of verbal reply from Wes, Mom then makes more explicit the meaning of her prior utterance, which is now constituted as the initiation of a request for a cleaning up of the space occupied by the child: "Are you gonna put all that mud back?" (line 6). In the next response Wes states "I'm gonna clean it up ((*nodding*)) (1.2) tomorrow." (lines 7-8). Wes agrees with the request, but puts off immediate compliance with the request by dealing with the timing of the request.

Different next moves occur in Examples 2 and 7. In response to the move that Jason gives ("I *cleaned* it!") in Example 2, Mom threatens her son with "You want a Grandma Thorton.=don't you." When Jason recycles his position yet another time Mom challenges her child with "Are you kidding me Jason?" and begins throwing objects from the dresser and shelves on the floor.

When Mom in Family B queries her son "You are?" (line 9) he treats this as a possible initiation of a repair sequence and he states his position in a very low, matter of fact voice: "I'm gonna clean it up tomorrow." (line 10). Mother's next move consists of further questioning about his position on the matter at hand, rather than a move that develops her own position. Her question "Why tomorrow." (line 11) displays interest in his position and permits him to develop his account that he is working on making something at the moment: "Because I'm making it right now:."

Mom B treats her children as participants who have rights to express their own reasons for actions that are undertaken. Rather than using a series of threats, she instead provides reasons; she requests that Wes remember with her a similar occasion in the past when she and her friend cleaned up in order to "keep it nice." Indeed the event invokes the considerable time that Mom B and her friend has devoted (an entire week) to cleaning up. When Mom asks "Now what." Wes explains that he'll clean it up and then comments that he's making a pipe. The interaction shifts its framing as Mom enters into her son's world of play with "You're making a sewer system in there?". The way in which this dispute ends contrasts radically with the way in which the dispute is

closed down in Example 2, where the son closes the door on his Mom and Mother comments to the baby about her sibling's embarrassment.

Negotiation in the midst of a Task Activity

In the course of interacting with children, families create different forms of participation (Goodwin e Goodwin, 2004). Distinctive forms of negotiation develop. In Examples 2-3 we saw that a child's presentation of a position in the midst of an argument was largely treated as inappropriate and dismissed. By way of contrast, negotiation among family members was successful in Example 7; in fact, the positions that a child put forward led to changes in the trajectory of the sequence. As an anthropologist concerned with issues of human development I am interested in what significance children's engagement in particular frameworks of participation in one context have for the development of social skills for interacting across various encounters.

In Family B parents treat their children as capable of carrying out complex tasks, and even invite their co-participation in matters of concern to the economics of the household. For example, after school Mom gives her eight-year old daughter Aurora the task of ordering books. She asks Aurora to make up a list of the books she would like to order and their prices: "First let's write down everything that you **think** you might want and then we'll decide from there. Eliminate some of them." As we learn from Aurora's comment to me, the videographer, from the onset of the task Aurora is attuned to the significance of cost in her planning:

Example 8. A child's attention to household economics.

- Aurora: I'm only getting cheap things.
And these are- these are under a dollar.
- MHG: The books?
- Aurora: Whenever you see this sign ((points to sign on paper))
then um, then um either the amount is going to be low-
The amount of money's going to be lowered.
Or they're going to be the best books that are-
That are getting endangered.

When Aurora tells her mom that she's written down the books she wants and their cost, her mom tells her to add up the row of numbers. Aurora designs her own system for accomplishing this task (Figure 6). She initially begins a list underneath the first column of books names and costs on the left hand page of the notebook. She quickly (after having written down one book and price) abandons this strategy and decides to use the right hand page of the

notebook for her addition. As she begins her addition she anticipates that the total cost is going to be more than what she had anticipated: "It's already ten dollars." Though Mom never mentions prices as a factor in the task, Aurora tells her mom, "I bet it's gonna be more than twenty dollars – for all these books." "I don't think we can get them all, only a few."

When Aurora announces that the total was twenty-six dollars and forty-five cents, her mom responds. "Okay. Now um rate these from-" As her utterance trails off, Aurora completes her mother's utterance with "First to last in which I want them." Aurora is so attuned to anticipate what her mom is going to say that she can complete her utterances. Aurora then proposes that she is going to have nicknames for all of the books (as a short-hand way of rating them.) She proceeds to write down the short-hand codes for the books she ranks orders with their prices on a the right hand page (Figure 7). Clearly the act of writing down the two columns of items is part of the way in which learning is mediated by the tools and artifacts (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 49) she has at hand.

Mother and daughter disagree whether or not she should get *The Guinness book of World Records* (Example 9). While Mom remembers it fondly as something she liked as a young girl, Aurora is less sure that she really wants to

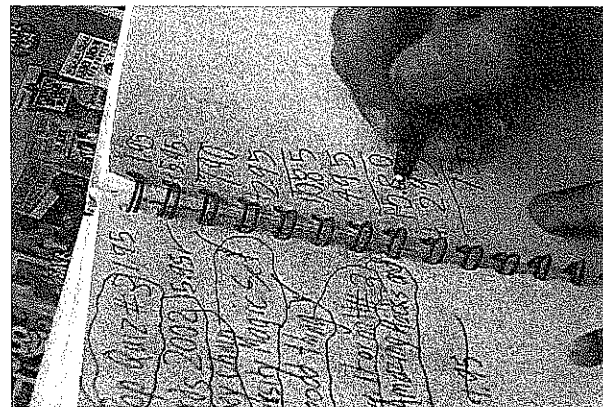


Figure 6. A child's design of a system for calculating costs.

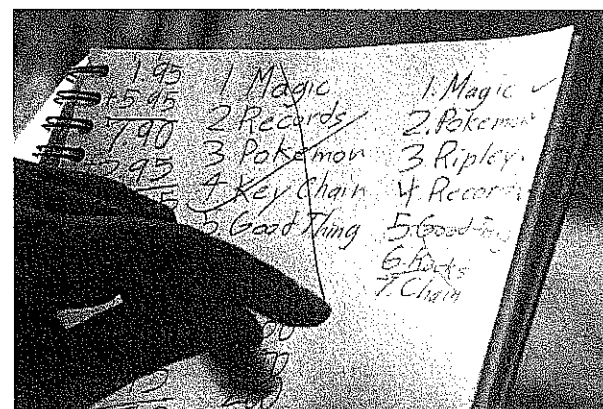


Figure 7. Creating a prioritized list of purchases.

get it. Rather than countering her Mom directly, she instead poses a question to Mom: she asks whether or not she really wants to get the book and then goes inside to look for an earlier edition of the book.

Example 9. Negotiation of purchases.

- ((discussing buying Guinness Book of World Records))*
- Mom: Kay. So that's six bucks, round it up.
 Aurora: Do you really want me to get that?
 Mom: Yea::::h. It's **fun** to know statistics like that.
 Aurora: But you know what? Wait. Wait. Wait. Let me see something. I'll come back in a second. *((goes inside to look for old editions of Guinness Book of World Records))*

While Mom is inside Aurora explicitly tells me that she does not want to buy the book because it is not something she really wants (Example 10). Aside from believing that they already own a version of the book, she feels that it will not be that interesting and is not worth the money.

Example 10. Child's exposition of prioritized list.

- Weston gets some dirt in his eye and asks Mom to help him. While Mom is with Weston, Aurora discusses with the videotaper/ethnographer her feelings*
- Aurora: I think it will be too much. I don't think she should get that for me 'cau'se it's way too much money. Sixteen dollars.
 MHG: For the *Guinness Book of World Records*?
 Aurora: It has a lot of features yeah, but Not that interesting and, And I think we have one already. Nineteen ninety something? And uhm, and, Yeah! I don't want it that much either. It was four on my- It was four on my chart,

In the presence of her mom she provides a more guarded rendering of her position. She initially provides the justification that the book will cost too much, rather than contradicting her mother's view that the book is worthwhile and "fun". Aurora softens the force of her position that disagrees with her mom through the use of modal verbs rather than imperatives: "You can take that off." (line 5) When her mother does not gear into her talk, but instead talks about another book on her list, *The Good Thing*, (Example 11, line 6), she becomes more direct: "You see, you can cross out Records." (line 9). Only then does she mention the reasons for why it should be excluded: it

wouldn't take long to read and it would be boring.

Example 11. A child's mitigated strategies of negotiation.

- 1 Aurora: Look. *Guinness World Records* is six.
 2 So nine plus six i:s s- sixteen.
 (4.6)
 3 And I don't want you to spend sixteen
 dollars.
 4 on books.
 (2.8)
 5 **You** can take that off.
 6 Mom: And *The Good Thing*?
 7 Aurora: What's *The Good Thing*?
 8 Mom: Are you interested in reading that?
 9 Aurora: You see, you can cross out *Records*
 10 Because (.) I don't really want it.
 11 And, and it's not gonna take that long
 12 for me to finish it. And it might be a little
 boring
 (2.6)
 13 Mom: *Guinness World Records*. Okay. Uhm,
 14 Aurora: **You** can take it off.
 (4.0)

We thus see how a child of eight years can design her talk so that it is appropriate to the task at hand, changing the explanations she gives depending on her addressed recipient.

As the sequence continues (Example 12) Mother herself uses mitigated ways of disagreeing. She frames her counter with a hedge: "I think you should get it." (line 1). When Aurora challenges her with "You: really do?" (line 2) mother provides a justification for her position which counters that of Aurora: Mom argues that it will provide her with a lot of reading material.

Example 12. Further negotiation with explanations.

- 1 Mom: I think you should **get it**.
 (0.8)
 2 Aurora: **You: really // do?**
 3 Mom: Because it's five hundred and sixty pages,
 4 **That's** pretty big.
 5 That'll take you a while to read that!
 6 And, it's five ninety five,
 (1.6)
 7 So that's, uhm,

In attempting to bring down the total price on the list, Mom (Example 13) maintains that another book can be eliminated from the list. Mom's position is that *The Good Thing* could be taken out of the library. In response Aurora counters, after a considerable pause. She uses the word "Actually," (line 6) but does not elaborate further. "Actually" is treated by Mom as a preface to a fuller exposition as to why Mom's planned course of action is objectionable. She attends to Aurora's position of hesitancy about Mom's plan with

“What.” (line 7). This question allows Aurora to explicate her notion that they should not be purchasing a book they already own. This leads to the successful conclusion of the dispute with Mother giving in to Aurora’s position.

Example 13. Successful negotiation of child’s prioritized list.

- | | | |
|----|---------|--|
| 1 | Aurora: | [But- but if you |
| 2 | Mom: | [We’re not- |
| 3 | | We won’t get <i>The Good Thing</i> . |
| 4 | | ‘Cause you could get that from the library. |
| 5 | | One, two, three, four, ((<i>counting books on list</i>)) |
| | | (2.6) |
| 6 | Aurora: | Actually, |
| | | (3.6) |
| 7 | Mom: | What. |
| 8 | Aurora: | Do you know where the uhm, |
| 9 | | Nineteen ninety seven rec- |
| 10 | | <i>World Records</i> are? |
| | | (0.8) |
| 11 | Aurora: | Because we <i>have</i> something like that. |
| 12 | Mom | <i>Gui:ness- Book of World Records?</i> |
| 13 | Aurora: | Yeah. We <i>do</i> . I <i>saw</i> it before. In our house. |
| 14 | Aurora: | I saw one. |
| 15 | Mom: | Uhm, |
| 16 | Aurora: | It was nine- it was nineteen ninety // something. |
| 17 | Mom: | Okay. If you don’t wanna get that |
| 18 | | this time that’s fine. |
| 19 | Aurora: | Yeah. You can get <i>The Chain</i> instead. |
| 20 | | ‘Cause- it’s really cheap. |

Aurora clearly demonstrates the ability to alternate between more direct and indirect styles in her talk, depending on her addressee (direct with videographer and indirect with her mother). Throughout the dispute Aurora displays deference to her mother’s position. Sacks (1995) and Pomerantz (1984) have argued that delays and disagreement prefaces provide evidence for how an orientation towards disagreement is being displayed as a dispreferred activity. Rather than directly opposing her mother, Aurora instead uses pauses and disagreement prefaces (“Actually,”) and questions posed to her mom (“Do you really want me to get that?” and “You really do?”). Rather than countering that the family already has a copy of the book, Aurora asks if her mom knows where an earlier version of the book is in the house. Mom eventually comes around to Aurora’s position with, “Okay, if you don’t want to get it this time that’s fine.” (lines 17-18). Aurora has successfully negotiated the sequence so that she is able to get what she feels is appropriate in a highly mitigated way, using indirect strategies which are characteristic of adult speech.

Conclusion

In his work on classroom success and failure McDermott (1976, p. 33) has argued that “people in interaction form environments for each other.” Within another domain, the family, the sequences of interaction we have examined demonstrate children’s agency in negotiating important issues of family life. In sequences 7 and 9-13, emotion is kept on an even keel as negotiations proceed. The forms of negotiation are based on consideration of the others’ position, rather than recyclings of positions (as in Example 3), or forms of “primitive argument” (Piaget, 1959). Accounts deal with legitimate demands of the activity in progress, rather than status claims of participants.

In some respects, although the interaction in Example 7 is between parent and child, it resembles what Piaget characterizes as argument among peers; Piaget (1965, p. 397) states that argument among peers or those constructing among themselves a more symmetrical relationships of power permits the elaboration of “mutual understanding”: comparison, contrast, and confrontation which “obliges individuals to ‘place’ themselves in reciprocal relationship with each other without letting the laws of perspective destroy their individual points of view”. This is what Youniss (1980, p. 7-8) calls “children’s understanding of “the cooperative production of meaning”.

By examining the sequences within conversational interaction we can understand how family members work together to jointly produce the meaningful events of their lives, or constitute their social universe. By examining how family members allocate speaking rights, develop structures of control and manage conflict we can observe the emergence of local social organization. Differing forms of social organization may be linked in important ways to both cognitive and social development; linguistic anthropologists and applied linguists can join in articulating the conversational trajectories through which different forms of social order is built.

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