Modifying Units of Talk to Coordinate Their Production with the Actions of a Recipient

This chapter will investigate the ability of speakers to coordinate their utterances with the actions of their recipients by adding new sections to the units they are producing. Such analysis will both help make explicit some of the resources utilized by participants to achieve the fine coordination of action observed within the turn and provide some demonstration of how social tasks posed in the construction of the turn might be consequential for the talk being produced within it.

Lengthening Units by Adding to Their Ends and Middles

In the following, the speaker stops production of a fragment and begins a new sentence precisely at the point where the gaze of the recipient arrives:

(1) GARY: He's a policeman in Bellview and he, I guess he's, X________
4. Modifying Units of Talk

(2) ANN: I think he: I think he even get it with the fir(h)st

PAT: ....... X

(3) BARBARA: God that’s: : I don’t want that life.

GORDIE: ....... X

As is indicated by the colons in the transcript, the last sound in the fragment in all of these examples is prolonged in its pronunciation. Were these sounds not prolonged the speaker would stop pronunciation of the fragment shortly before the arrival of the recipient’s gaze:

GARY: ... in Bellview and he

MIKE: ....... X

ANN: I think he

PAT: ....... X

BARBARA: God that’s

GORDIE: ....... X

By elongating the terminal sound in a word they are constructing, the speakers in these examples are able to lengthen that word with the effect that the termination of the fragment occurs precisely when the recipient’s gaze reaches the speaker. The ability of a speaker to pronounce certain sounds for variable lengths of time might thus be utilized to coordinate events in his utterance with the actions of a recipient.

In Examples (1)–(3), a unit that had come to a point of possible completion was extended past that completion. However, as is illustrated by Examples (4)–(5), it is also possible to delay an initial completion point by adding new material to the middle of the unit.

1 The ability of speakers to vary the length of the sounds they are producing has received some study. For example, the work of O’Malley, Kloker, and Dara-Abrams (1973), Kloker (1975), and Macdonald (1976) demonstrates that “vowel and sonant lengthening is an acoustic cue to the phonological phrase structure in spontaneous English speech [Kloker 1975:5].” Macdonald’s work (1976) showed that changing the duration of sounds at constituent boundaries could change the perceived meaning of sentences with surface structure ambiguities. The work of Sacks and his colleagues (Sacks et al. 1974:707) has shown that lengthening sounds at the end of a turn-constructional unit provides one systematic basis for the occurrence of overlap.

(4) ESTHER: Wh::a: t (0.2) annoys me is they didn’t (0.3) tell us

AMY: ....... X

(5) CARNEY: You know tha: t (0.4) first road off the bypass.

PHYLLIS: ....... X

Here, by lengthening sounds in the middle of a word, speaker delays its completion until recipient’s gaze arrives. Note that these words end in stops: they therefore could not be lengthened at their termination.

Many different types of phenomena, including silence (note the pauses in Chapter 2), can be added to a unit to increase its length. In the following, a glottal stop marking a phrasal break occurs well before the arrival of the recipient’s gaze:

(6) ETHYL: Yeah. = Wher--

BARBARA: ....... X

However, by adding an “uh” and an outbreath to the original cutoff, speaker manages to place the termination of the phrasal break precisely at the point where recipient’s gaze arrives:

(6) ETHYL: Yeah. = Wher-- uh hh Where do they register.

BARBARA: ....... X

The addition of these phenomena to the turn has the effect of delaying the beginning of a new sentence until the gaze of the recipient has been secured.

The procedures being examined operate on several different levels of organization. For example, coordination with a recipient might be achieved by adding an “uh” to a sentence. However, “uh” is in its own right a unit with a clear phonological structure and might itself be lengthened by the application of procedures appropriate to the phonological level of organization, that is, by a lengthening of its sounds. The following provides an example:

(7) MARSHA: But I: uh, (0.9) Don uh: : Don’s family moved

DIANNE: ....... X
An object such as "uh:;" demonstrates the operation of the processes being examined on two different levels of organization.

In the following, speaker uses laughter (indicated in the transcript by "h:;" in parentheses) to extend the length of a word until the recipient's gaze arrives:

(8) betty: That wasn't any fa(h)(h)yi(h) (h):r.

PAM: .............. X

Note that the addition of a new segment to some particular unit has an effect on the length of some but not all other units as well. The speaker's laughter here increases the length of the word in which the laughter occurs, the utterance containing the word, and the turn in progress, but it does not increase the length of the speaker's sentence; that is, no new elements such as words or phrases are added to the sentence.

Changing the Emerging Structure of the Speaker's Sentence

In the preceding section, the techniques available to the speaker for coordinating his actions with those of his recipient were found to produce a range of characteristic phenomena in the turn. Analysis will now focus on how the use of such techniques might result in the addition of new elements to the speaker's sentence.

In the following, the speaker loses the gaze of his recipient in midutterance. When it has been regained, the speaker repeats the noun phrase that was spoken while his recipient was disattending him, this time adding a new adjective to it:

(9) KARLF: Somebody said looking at my, son m y oldest son,

CHIL: ..................................................

Once again the speaker adds a segment to the unit he is constructing so that precise coordination between his actions and those of his recipient is maintained. By repeating the part of the sentence spoken as his recipient was turning away from him, the speaker succeeds in producing the entire sentence constructed in his turn while his recipient is gaz ing at him. However, the addition of the adjective to the second version of the noun phrase changes the sentence being constructed in the turn: If

this segment had not been added, the word "oldest" would not have been part of the sentence eventually produced by the speaker.

Analysis will now turn to investigation of examples in which a speaker adds a new section to his sentence without recycling an earlier portion of it. In the following, which will be examined in some detail, speaker obtains both gaze and a response from a first recipient but then, while continuing with the same sentence, moves his gaze to a second recipient, Beth:

(10) JOHN: .......... Don  Don

I gave, I gave up smok ing ci garettes:

DON: .......... X

DON: = Yeah,

(0.4)

JOHN: .... Beth

I-uh: one-one week ago today.

BETH:

Beth, however, does not direct her gaze to John. The speaker thus finds himself in the position of gazing at a party who is not gazing at him.

Phrasal breaks occur just before and after John's gaze reaches Beth ("I-uh:" and "one-one"). Though these phrasal breaks do not secure the gaze of Beth, another party, Ann, does begin to attend the turn at his point. During the initial sections of John's sentence, and, indeed, for some time previous to it, Ann has displayed lack of orientation to the conversation, staring to her side with a fixed middle-distance look. However, shortly after the restart, Ann abruptly raises her head and moves her gaze to the recipient of the present utterance, Beth:

JOHN: .... Beth

I-uh: one-one week ago today.

BETH:

ANN: .... Beth

1 Bolinger (1975:19) notes that a speaker might add a new word to his sentence to coordinate the production of the sentence with the speaker's own actions. Goffman (1975:16) provides a similar analysis. For some analysis of how a speaker's reading that his recipient has not adequately understood the talk so far might lead to recycling of already produced material in the form of clarifications, see Erickson (1979).
Ann's abrupt movement of her gaze occurs in the standard position for a next move to a signal that the gaze of a recipient is being requested, that is, shortly after a restart. However, Ann directs her gaze, not to the speaker, but rather to another participant, Beth. John's sentence is projected to come to a possible completion point rather soon after Beth brings her gaze to the turn. "I gave up smoking cigarettes one week ago today" is an adequately complete sentence and such a unit could be projected at the point Ann brings her gaze to the turn. If the floor were to pass to the speaker's addressed recipient at this point, Ann would be positioned to be gazing at the new speaker.  

Two different parties, John and Ann, are now gazing at Beth, who is returning the gaze of neither. If these two parties were gazing at each other instead of Beth, the speaker would be gazing at a gazng recipient. Because of Beth's failure to bring her gaze to him, John might now be prepared to seek the gaze of another party. Ann, who has just displayed her orientation to the turn by bringing her gaze to its field of action, is a possible candidate. However, although the task of securing a gazing recipient might lead John to switch his gaze from Beth to Ann, no comparable motivation exists for Ann to move her gaze to John, especially since she is not his current addressed recipient.  

Less than a syllable after Ann begins to move into orientation, John withdraws his gaze from Beth. He then brings it to Ann, reaching her after she has demonstrated her coparticipation in the field of action constructed through his turn by gazing at Beth, but before the turn has reached its next projected completion. Note that the time required to reach this completion point has been extended through the elongation of a sound within "today:"  

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{John: } \text{Beth} \hspace{1cm} \text{Ann} \\
1\text{-uh: one-one week ago today y.}
\end{array}
\]

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{Beth:} \\
\text{Ann: Beth}
\end{array}
\]

Though John is now gazing at Ann rather than Beth, he is still gazing at a recipient who is not gazng at him. His move has, however, made it relevant for Ann to bring her gaze to him: In that Ann is now being gazed at by the speaker, she should be gazing toward him. But, although John's shift in gaze permits Ann to recognize that she should bring her gaze to him, there is no time left within the turn for Ann to perform this action. As indicated not only by its grammatical structure but also by its falling terminal intonation (indicated in the transcript by a period), John's utterance has come to a recognizable completion.  

If the length of the turn could be extended, Ann might have the time to move her gaze from Beth to John. However, providing the turn with such time for maneuvering requires that the sentence being constructed through it be extended past the completion point presently proposed for it. This is in fact what occurs, as John adds the word "actually" to his sentence:  

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{John: } \text{Beth} \hspace{1cm} \text{Ann} \\
1\text{-uh: one-one week ago today actually y.}
\end{array}
\]

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{Beth:} \\
\text{Ann: Beth John}
\end{array}
\]

Appropriate mutual gaze is thus achieved by the collaborative action of speaker and hearer. While hearer brings her gaze to the speaker, speaker provides time in this turn for her to accomplish this task by adding a new word to his sentence. The turn now reaches completion with the speaker gazing at a gazing hearer. In this example, the sentence being produced by the speaker is modified by the addition of an extra word to it with the effect that a particular interactive task posed in the construction of the turn at talk can be accomplished.  

An event that does not occur at this point is also relevant to the addition of this segment. "Actually" is not overlapped by any talk from Beth, though a turn transition
Further support for the possibility that speaker might adapt to actions of his recipient by adding new segments to an already complete sentence is provided by the following data. Here we will find speaker actively putting aside another activity, eating, so as to be able to produce further talk when recipient makes a relevant move. In this example, recipient does not bring her gaze to the speaker by the time his original sentence reaches a point of recognizable completion, and speaker starts to eat as soon as he finishes talking:

(11)

Speaker starts to place food in his mouth

JOHN: An' how are you feeling? (0.4)

ANN: Recipient is looking down

Up until this point, the actions of both speaker and recipient are consistent with the possibility that the present turn is being treated as unsuccessful. First, it may be observed that the structure of the speaker's talk transfers the floor to its recipient at the end of his sentence. However, recipient does not produce any talk of her own and a gap occurs. The recipient thus shows that she is not treating the speaker’s talk as sequentially implicative for subsequent talk on her part. Second, as soon as his sentence comes to completion, the speaker, rather than displaying that he is waiting for his addressee to start, begins to place an egg roll in his mouth.

At this point, the recipient belatedly begins to move her gaze toward the speaker:

JOHN: An' how are you feeling? (---) 'these days.

ANN: ................ X

As soon as recipient acts, the speaker withdraws the uneaten egg roll from his mouth and produces with falling--raising intonation further talk:

Adding Segments Repetitively

The following provides an example of how a speaker might repetitively add segments to a turn in order to deal with the gaze of her recipients in an appropriate fashion:

(12) ELSE: See first we were gonna have Teema, Carrie, and Clara, (0.2) a::nd myself. The four of us. The four children. But then--uh:: I said how is that gonna look.

In the middle of her utterance the speaker moves her gaze from recipient to recipient. As she does so, she holds the onward development of the sentence she is producing in place by adding new sections to it in the form of appositives. This process will be examined in detail.

The recipient toward whom the speaker is gazing near the beginning of her turn disattends her midway through her utterance. Though the gaze of this recipient is regained, the speaker quickly shifts gaze to a different recipient:
The sentence eventually produced by the speaker in this turn is held in place, but changed by, the appositive she adds as she deals with her recipient's gaze.

In the examples considered until this point only a single turn has been at issue. However, the speaker might repetitively make use of his ability to modify his emerging utterance to negotiate a state of mutual focus with his recipients over several turns at talk. The following provides an example of such a process:

(13) ANN: The week before last it was cold in Washington. All week.
    CHIL: =Was it?
    ANN: =It was really cold and I'm thinking, 'h I was really thinking that summer was finished.

When the speaker brings her eyes to her first intended recipient, Chin, she finds that he has not begun to gaze at her. The speaker covers a move to a different recipient by adding the words "All week." to her sentence:

ANN: ........... Chin
    [ The week before last it was col-d in Washington.
    CHIL:
    JERE: ... X

ANN: ..... Jere
    [ All w eek.
    CHIL:
    JERE:

At that point Chin quickly constructs a next turn to Ann's:

ANN: The week before last it was cold in Washington. All week.
    CHIL: =Was it?

Ann then begins to address a new utterance to Chin, but he does not move into orientation until after she has begun to gaze at him:

ANN: 
    [ It was really cold and I'm thinkin g.
    CHIL: 
    JERE: ............. X
The speaker is thus gazing toward a nongazing recipient, a situation that frequently leads to a phrasal break. Here the speaker covers a move to a recipient who has been gazing at her by recycling the last clause of her sentence, while changing its tense and adding an adverb to it:

**ANN:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chil</th>
<th>Jere</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It was really cold and I'm thinking 'h I was really</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**CHIL:**

| X _ | _ |

**JERE:**

As soon as this segment is complete, Ann returns her gaze to Chil:

**ANN:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chil</th>
<th>Jere</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It was really cold and I'm thinking 'h I was really</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**CHIL:**

| X | |

**JERE:**

This sequence provides some demonstration of how a speaker might regularly employ the ability to modify an emerging utterance so as to accomplish particular tasks posed in the construction of the turn at talk.

Although analysis has so far been restricted to the addition of segments to a sentence, units added to a turn to accomplish particular interactive tasks might also consist of whole sentences. In the following, Fred and Alice have been admiring a coat Elaine received from her husband as a Christmas present. Fred says “I love these cute dolls when they’re well dressed.” The following turn then occurs:

**(14) ALICE:**

| ___________ | Fred |
| ___________ | | |
| A::<h better yet. (0.7) | They’re well cared for. |

**FRED:**

| Glass is raised to lips |

**ALICE:**

| = That’s what you mean. Righ! |

**FRED:**

| Sip is taken |

| Mm Mmmhmmm. |

The first section of Alice’s utterance—“A::<h better yet.”—projects that the next part of the utterance will provide an alternative to what Fred has just said. However, when Alice’s gaze reaches Fred, he is not gazing at her but instead looking toward a glass that he is bringing to his lips. Despite Alice’s talk, Fred does not interrupt this action and, when the first completion of Alice’s turn arrives, has the glass to his lips. Alice then adds another sentence to her turn, explicitly locating Fred as its addressee and noting the relevance of what she has just said for what was said in his turn. At the end of this unit, the glass is just leaving Fred’s lips. Alice then adds a first pair part explicitly requesting an answer from Fred to her turn.

Though now operating at the level of the sentence, the procedures employed by speakers in these examples to achieve coordination with their recipients are structurally analogous to those examined earlier for synchronizing a phrasal break with the arrival of a recipient’s gaze. In all of these situations the possibility can arise that the projected termination of a unit being constructed by the speaker will not occur at the point required for the achievement of appropriate coordination with a recipient:

4 On yet another level of organization, Jefferson (1972) in her analysis of “side sequences” has examined how additional turns might be inserted into a sequence of turns.
to use many different types of phenomena to lengthen the units they are producing. Despite their diversity, many of these lengthening techniques—including repeats, pauses, “uh”’s, corrections, and clarifications—constitute instances of a single class of phenomena which Schegloff et al. (1977) have termed “repairs.” Some properties of this class of phenomena which might make it useful for the tasks being investigated here will be briefly considered.

First, repairs are not limited to cases where some mistake or error has occurred. Schegloff et al. (1977:363) note that “repair/correction is found where there is no visible (or hearable) error, mistake, or fault.” If repairs could only occur after some “error” had been produced, they might not be useable for the tasks being investigated here. Suppose that a recipient turned away in midturn, as in Example (9). Were the production of repairs restricted, a speaker could not use one immediately in such a situation unless he happened to have made a recognizable “mistake” just before the recipient’s gaze was lost. The lack of such restriction means that repairs are available to the speaker anywhere in the turn and thus can be employed whenever useful.

Second, the techniques available for signaling that repair is being begun (sometimes referred to as repair initiators) include phenomena such as speech perturbations, cutoffs, sound stretches, and “uh”’s. Many of these phenomena are not only units that can be added to an utterance to lengthen it, but also phrasal breaks with which tasks such as requesting the gaze of a hearer can be accomplished. Moreover, as Sacks (1971:11) has noted, beginning a repair, such as a word search, may in fact invite recipients to help the speaker. Thus, quite apart from their function in requesting a recipient’s gaze, repair initiators may request the recipient’s collaboration in the talk of the moment and may locate that talk as something he should have been attending in special ways.

Third, repairs can operate on both items not yet produced and items that have already been produced. Repairs on items not yet produced provide, with a single structure, means for both requesting gaze and adding sections to the speaker’s utterance until gaze has been obtained. Consider the following:

(15) DIANNE: He put uhm, (———) Tch! Put crab meat on

MARRSHA:

Among the phenomena that make this possible is the fact that self-repair done in a single turn can, and overwhelmingly does, combine the operations of locating the repairable and doing a candidate repair (see Schegloff et al., 1977).
Here the repair initiators provide phrasal breaks to request a hearer's gaze. The pause that follows provides time for the recipient to answer; and the retrieval of the item being sought—marked with a "Tch!"—warrants the speaker's continuing with her utterance. Repairs on items already produced, such as corrections, clarifications, and restarts, permit the speaker to add length to his turn by recycling a portion of his utterance.

Both types of processes may occur in a way relevant to the analysis being developed here in a single repair. Examples (1), (2), and (3) showed how a speaker might delay the beginning of a restart until the recipient's gaze had been secured by prolonging his pronunciation of the last sounds in the restart. Such lengthening can be heard as a repair initiation signaling, and preparing for, the upcoming restart.

Example (9) provides another example of how such processes might be used together in a way relevant to the present analysis:

(9) RALPH: Somebody said looking at my: son m y oldest son.

CHIL: __________________________

X __________________

Immediately after Chil's gaze is lost, Ralph elongates a word and produces a marked change in intonation. Such actions may be heard as displaying that the speaker is having difficulty in producing the next item in his utterance. In part because of the display of trouble they provide, these repair initiators function to request the gaze of a hearer. After Chil's gaze is regained, Ralph recycles the section of his utterance produced when Chil was not gazing by performing a repair upon the item his request for Chil's gaze has located as problematic. Thus, in this example, an appropriate state of mutual gaze between speaker and hearer is negotiated through the integrated use of both a display of trouble in an item yet to be produced and repair on that item after its production.

Maintaining Focus on Talk

Repairs provide an account for the actions the speaker is performing. Thus, repairs that recycle a portion of the utterance already produced, such as Example (9), generally use the repeated item to mark some change in the initial version of it, thereby displaying that a correction or clarification is being done. A similar account is provided when operations are performed on an item not yet produced. For example, the phrasal breaks, pause, and retrieval in Example (15) display that the speaker is involved in a word search. The aversion of speaker's gaze until recipient's gaze arrives is also accounted for by the word search. While producing the pause, speaker turns away and makes a face that is recognized as demonstrating that she is searching for the next word in her utterance.

In the present analysis, phenomena such as phrasal breaks have been argued to be produced, in some circumstances, with reference to the gaze of a recipient. The account provided by the process of repair—for example, that the speaker in Example (15) is engaged in a word search—does not, however, include the gaze of a recipient. The question might therefore be asked why, if the gaze of the recipient is relevant to the production of some repairs, it is not officially recognized in those instances.

Consider what would happen if speaker made an explicit request for gaze, for example, by saying "Look at me!" If this were to occur, the focus of the conversation, what was being explicitly talked about, would shift from the talk that the speaker had been attempting to produce in his turn to talk about his recipient's lack of proper orientation toward him. Indeed, recipient might be given an opportunity to answer the charges against him so that speaker would even lose the turn itself. If speaker wanted the activity of the moment to focus on the talk he was in the process of producing when recipient's inattention was noted, this would be a very poor way to do it. In contrast, use of a repair, such as a word search, provides a structure that enables the participants to achieve an appropriate state of mutual orientation, without allowing this task to emerge as a noticeable event in its own right. Rather than being involved in the task of securing the gaze of a recipient, the speaker is officially involved in something else entirely—searching for a word. The attention of the participants thus remains directed to the talk that the speaker is producing. By using repairs to accomplish interactive tasks, a speaker manages not only to deal with potentially disruptive events but to have these dealings interpreted as events within his talk rather than as actions dealing with phenomena outside the talk. Because the speaker is able to transform the displayed meaning of his actions in this way, neither the intrusive act nor the work dealing with it ever emerges

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8 For more detailed discussion of the ritual consequences of such a shift, see Goffman (1967:125-126).
9 On this issue see Sacks 10/67:12.
10 Goffman (1953:34) has noted that "in conversational order, even more than in other social orders, the problem is to employ a sanction which will not destroy by its mere enactment the order which it is designed to maintain."
Within the conversation as a noticeable event in its own right. Rather, the participants are constantly engaged in the details of the talk the speaker is producing.

**Changing the Length and Meaning of Nonvocal Units**

Participants have the ability to modify their nonvocal units in much the same way that they modify their vocal units. A very simple example of a task requiring for its accomplishment the coordinated nonvocal action of two participants occurs when one person lights another’s cigarette. The cigarette held by one party and the match held by the other must be brought to the same place at the same moment in time.

An example of the performance of this task, cited in the Appendix as Example [16], will now be examined. Ann, finding herself with a cigarette but no matches, asks Ginny for a lighter. Ginny opens her purse and takes out a lighter. However, while Ginny is doing this, one of Ann’s children demands her attention and Ann turns to him. Thus, when Ginny finally produces her lighter, she finds that the person who requested it is engaged elsewhere (see Figure 4.1). Ginny nevertheless brings her lighter forward; but when it reaches the place where her partner’s cigarette should be, it meets empty air (see Figure 4.2). A failure to achieve coordinated action thus seems to have occurred.

However, the participants have the capacity to modify their emerging action so that precise collaborative action can nevertheless still be achieved. When Ginny, in the course of bringing the lighter to Ann, discovers that she will not be met by Ann’s cigarette, she strikes the lighter awkwardly and it fails to light. She then brings the lighter back in front of Ann and attentively fiddles with the flint in a displayed attempt to fix it (see Figure 4.3). Ann terminates the exchange with her child and begins to turn back toward Ginny. Immediately after this happens, Ginny stops working on the lighter and brings it back to Ann (see Figure 4.4). The broken lighter thus suddenly becomes fixed just as Ann begins to return her attention to Ginny. The lighter lights perfectly on Ginny’s first attempt, just before Ann’s cigarette reaches it (see Figure 4.5).

Collaborative action is here achieved through modifications in nonvocal units, which are structurally equivalent to the modifications in vocal units considered earlier in this chapter. First, a segment is added to the action of bringing the lighter to the cigarette so that precise coordination between this act and the reciprocal act of a coparticipant—bringing the
cigarette to the lighter—can be achieved. Second, this added segment is displayed as added for reasons located within the original action: That is, that the initially offered light would not have worked and needed to be retracted in order to get it to work. It can be noted that this procedure, display of necessity of repair, is a version of one of the major reasons employed to warrant the addition of segments to vocal actions.

Summary and Conclusion

In this chapter, the ability of participants in conversation to add new sections to units they are in the process of constructing has been investigated. It was found that participants had the ability to do this to units on many different levels of organization. Specific phenomena examined included the lengthening of sound articulation within an individual speech sound, the addition of phrasal breaks of various types to an utterance, the addition of new words and phrases to a sentence, the addition of sentences to a turn, and, finally, the addition of new sections to nonvocal action. The ability to add new sections to a unit was found
to facilitate coordination of the speaker's actions, including his utterance, with the actions of a recipient, and to be useful in the accomplishment of various tasks posed in the construction of the turn at talk. Some of the reasons displayed by a participant for the addition of a new segment to a unit were also examined. Particular attention was paid to repairs, a class of actions utilized quite frequently to provide an account for the addition of sections to a unit. Often the reason displayed for the repair does not include some of the interactive tasks facilitated by the lengthening of a unit. Some ways in which the absence of focus on this process might be functional were considered. Insofar as both the length and the meaning of units such as the utterance are capable of such systematic modification, it might be appropriate to say that they are not produced by the actions of either party alone, but rather emerge through a process of interaction between speaker and hearer as they mutually construct the turn at talk.

5

Designing Talk for Different Types of Recipients

One of the most general principles organizing talk within conversation is recipient design.¹ In this chapter we will investigate some ways in which talk proposes specific characteristics for a recipient to it and the consequences this has for the organization of action within the turn. To do this, we shall examine a situation in which recipients with mutually exclusive attributes are simultaneously present. Analysis will focus on systematic methods and procedures available to the speaker for transforming an utterance appropriate to one type of recipient into one that also provides for the participation of the other.

Requesting the Aid of a Knowing Recipient

In the following, three parties—Pat, Jere, and Chil—are teaching a fourth—Ann—how to play bridge. Pat is explaining the bidding system to Ann. Analysis will begin with the talk in Line 5.

¹ See Sacks et al. (1974:727) and Garfinkel (1967).