

① An alternative point of view has already been foreshadowed. This is that the adjacency pair structure is a normative framework for actions which is accountably implemented. Within these terms, the production of an utterance identifiable as a first pair part (e.g. a question) – the utterance being so identifiable by reference to some combination of its syntactic features, sequential positioning and conventional properties (see, for example, Schegloff, 1980, 1984; Terasaki, 1976) – selects a next speaker who should immediately proceed to produce the appropriate second pair part. In this analysis, the first speaker's production of a first pair part proposes that a second speaker should relevantly produce a second pair part which is accountably 'due' immediately on completion of the first.

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② Questioners. In the following two cases, an initial question (arrow 1) fails to elicit any response. Whereupon the intending questioner repeats (arrow 2) and, in the further absence of response, re-repeats (arrow 3) the question and finally gets an answer (arrow 4). Notice that in each case the questioner repeats the question in increasingly truncated form, thereby proposing that the recipient in fact heard the original question.

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(3) (Atkinson and Drew, 1979:52)

- 1→A: Is there something bothering you or not?  
(1.0)
- 2→A: Yes or no  
(1.5)
- 3→A: Eh?
- 4→B: No.

(4) (Atkinson and Drew, 1979: 52)

- 1→Ch: Have to cut these Mummy.  
(1.3)
- 2→Ch: Won't we Mummy  
(1.5)
- 3→Ch: Won't we
- 4→ M: Yes.

In each of these cases the first speaker, by repeating the question, proposes that the answer to the original question was 'due' and is thus noticeably or 'officially' absent (Schegloff, 1972). In each case, the repeat (and re-repeat) evidences the first speaker's understanding that, while an answer was 'due', it was not provided. The proposed absence is invoked in – and thus simultaneously warrants – the repetition of the question. In each case, the questioned party finally acknowledges the normative requirement to respond by providing an answer (arrow 4). This class of cases, together with related instances in which second speakers' responses are treated as 'not answering the question', demonstrates that questioners attend to the fact that their questions are framed within normative expectations which have *sequential implications* in obliging selected next speakers to perform a restricted form of action in next turn, namely, at least to respond to the question with some form of answer.

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Answers. In each of the following cases, second speakers respond to first pair part questions but their utterances are not hearable as answering the question as put.

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(5) (Trio:2:II:1)

M: What happened at (.) wo:rk. At Bullock's this evening.=

P: =h h h h Well I don'kno::w::.

(6) (W:PC:1:MJ(1):18)

J: But the trai:n goes. Does th'train go o:n th'boat?

M: h h Ooh I've no idea:. She ha:sn't sai:d.

(7) (Rah:A:1:Ex:JM(7):2) ((Concerning a child's welfare))

M: 'S alri:ght?

J: Well'e hasn' c'm ba-ack yet. Well he hasn't com back yet.

In each of these cases, the question is not answered. But rather than failing to reply, the second speaker in each case offers an account for the absent answer, the account being produced in the place where the answer is due. Because the point is fundamental and because the forms of accounting differ in the three examples, we will work through them in some detail.

Initially we can notice that a questioner, in addition to proposing that an answer should be provided 'next' by a selected next speaker, also proposes through the production of a question to be 'uninformed' about the substance of the question (e.g. what happened at Bullock's, whether the train goes on the boat, etc.). Moreover the questioner also proposes by the act of questioning that the recipient is likely to be 'informed' about this same matter. Thus a standard way of accounting for the non-production of an answer is for the intended answerer to assert a lack of information and, hence, an inability to answer the question as put. This is exactly what occurs in (5) above.

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In (6) and (7), we see an extension of this procedure. Thus in (6) M accounts for her failure to produce an answer by reference to her ignorance ('Ooh I've no idea:'.) and then proceeds to account for her 'uninformed' status with 'She ha:sn't sai:d.' In effect, an account (i.e. 'ignorance') is given for the absence of an answer and then a further account is offered for that 'ignorance', which attends to the fact that the questioner had, by the act of questioning, implied that M was likely to have been 'knowledgeable' on the matter.

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Finally, in (7), this logic is extended so that only the second kind of account is offered. Here J merely states a possible obstacle (the child has not returned yet) to her knowing whether the child is 'alright'. And this statement, in occurring immediately after the enquiry, is heard as addressing the conditional relevance of the prior question and, hence, as accounting (through implied ignorance) for the absence of an answer to the question as put.

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