

*Sequential order and sequence structure
– the case of incommensurable studies
on mobile phone calls*



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ILKKA ARMINEN
UNIVERSITY OF TAMPERE

ABSTRACT Two recent conversation analytical (CA) studies draw contrary conclusions from seemingly very similar materials. Hutchby and Barnett 'show that, far from revolutionizing the organization of telephone conversation, mobile phone talk retains many of the norms associated with landline phone talk'. Arminen and Leinonen, however, state that landline and mobile calls differ systematically from each other. These incommensurate findings raise the question of why the comparisons between landline and mobile call openings have not been able to determine whether social and communicative practices are changing. It is suggested that auxiliary elements in CA allow the emergence of incompatible findings. The auxiliary assumptions enable authors to construct the phenomenon examined from their chosen perspective. Further, it will be shown that unquestioned assumptions materialize into theoretical notions that guide the research. CA studies seem to conceptualize the relationship between sequential order and sequence structure in different ways, which leads to different findings and results.

KEY WORDS: *call openings, conversation analysis, mobile call openings, mobile phones, sequential order, sequence structure*

Two recent studies on mobile phone openings draw almost diametrically opposed conclusions from seemingly very similar materials. Hutchby and Barnett (2005: 147) 'show that, far from revolutionizing the organization of telephone conversation, mobile phone talk retains many of the norms associated with landline phone talk', while Arminen and Leinonen (forthcoming) claim that landline and mobile calls as well as their openings differ systematically from each other.

In this article, I will first introduce these two comparisons between landline and mobile call openings. Investigating these comparisons is relevant, as the studies on social interaction ought to be able to determine whether social and

communicative practices are changing or remain the same. I will distill the authors' vision on mobile phone talk, and articulate their understanding of the sense in which it offers some new and unique discursive features that show a change taking place in social interaction and communication patterns, and the sense in which it has retained the communicative practices and norms of the landline phone.

Second, I will focus on 'auxiliary' elements in CA studies. The argumentative tools and devices used in the scientific rhetoric allow authors to construct the phenomenon examined from the author's chosen perspective. Consideration of the rhetorical construction of social scientific findings enables us to reflect upon the nature of studies on discourse and social interaction. We cannot genuinely expect progress in the field if the basis of argument is taken-for-granted.

Third, I will discuss the relationship between findings and the auxiliary elements, and show that the findings are guided by assumptions which are taken-for-granted. As a whole, Hutchby and Barnett (2005) use established conversation analytic work on landline telephone conversations to articulate the sequential structures of mobile phone call openings. In effect, they use the canonical pattern of US landline call openings (Schegloff, 1968, 1986) as the benchmark that they also seek in mobile call openings. Consequently, in their hands the observed orderliness based on the US landline call-opening pattern is transformed to a device to proffer their academic skepticism of immature speculations about a change taking place in the microcosm of call openings.

Finally, the unquestioned assumptions materialize into theoretical notions that guide the research. In CA studies a crucial but neglected distinction is that between sequential order and sequence structure. The sequence structure concerns the relationship between turns at talk, that is, the organization of talk-in-interaction. The sequential order is a broader configuration that concerns the relative positioning of any kind of move, utterance or action, that is, the organization of talk-and-action-in-interaction. CA studies seem to conceptualize the relationship between sequential order and sequence structure in different ways, which leads to different findings and results.

Mobile talk – radically different from landline telephone talk?

Arminen and Leinonen claim that mobile talk (openings) differs critically from landline telephone talk (openings), suggesting that the summons–answer sequence has undergone a number of substantial changes. The most striking new features include the disappearance of the self-identifications that were a canonical part of the Finnish landline call openings. The answerers have adopted a greeting response to the summons. Callers have also almost unanimously withdrawn from identifying themselves (see Table 1).

A new type of a summons–answer sequence has emerged. The answerer orients to a personalized summons that conveys information about who is calling. Correspondingly, the phone answers have diversified, as they no longer

TABLE 1. *Types of answers to summonses (first turns) in Finnish call openings*

<i>Type</i>	<i>Landline calls (N = 107)</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Mobile calls (N = 63)</i>	<i>%</i>
Self-presentations	104	97	24	38
Greetings	0	0	28	44
Channel openers	1	1	5	8
Try-marked openings	2	2	6	10
		100		100

are responses to a neutral summons. Moreover, summons have also become variable, as calls from unknown callers or from silent numbers do not reveal the identity of the caller, merely informing the answerer only about the unknown or silent number. The answers to the summonses have become tailored through recipient-design, unlike the analogue telephone system, on which summonses were uniform.

Further, the greeting opening on the mobile phone differs from the voice sample 'hello' opening of the landline call. When a mobile call is initiated with a greeting, the caller does not consider the greeting as simply an answer to a summons and a voice sample, but a greeting that makes a return of the greeting relevant. Since the anchor position for the reason of a call is established after the return of greeting, the opening sequence is systematically reduced from earlier analogue landline openings.

(1) 2002-06-21_10-44-47.wav (S= answerer, T= caller)

- 1 S: no moi,
Prt. [greeting]
[] hi
- 2 (0.3)
- 3 T: no mo:i,
prt. [greeting]
[] hi:,
- 4 (.)
- 5 T: ooks sää lähössä,
are you((informal)) about-to-go ((idiom))
are you leavin,
- 6 (.)
- 7 S: e,
neg.
no,

The core mobile opening sequence – 1) a recipient-designed greeting, 2) return of the greeting, 3) topic initiation – seems to involve some systematic features. Let us consider the properties of the first turn. The turn initial 'no' is commonly used for initiating the answer to the summons. The speech particle 'no' in the Finnish landline calls has shifted from the second turn to the first vocal turn of

the call. Through 'no', the answerer portrays the answer as being a responsive action to a recognizable activity. In this way, the answer to the summons that indicates who is calling is treated as a move in an already ongoing interaction. Unlike landline calls, the recipient-designed shaping of a call can start immediately from the answer to the summons given that the summons that conveys information about who is calling makes a recipient-designed response relevant. Mobile calls are heterogeneous from the very opening of a call in that different types of summons occasion different responses. As heterogeneous as mobile calls and their openings are, there is a systematic difference between these and analogue landline calls.

Mobile talk – not so different after all?

How then do Hutchby and Barnett establish as a fact that mobile talk has retained many of the norms of landline telephone talk? They also use a comparison with landline calls as a method, focusing on three aspects of call openings: a) the organization of openings; b) the achievement of identification; and c) the introduction of the first topic. Of these dimensions, they try to seek both similarities and differences between landline and mobile call openings.

To introduce their analysis of mobile call openings, Hutchby and Barnett (2005: 155) direct the reader in the following way:

In the following extract, for example, we can observe all of the four core sequences of the canonical opening for LLTC (landline telephone call, I.A.) described in the previous section. Moreover, they occur in the same order as that described by Schegloff (1986).

(2) [20.05.02 INC NNR] (SB = answerer; Tasha = caller)

- | | | |
|---|--------|----------------------------------|
| 1 | | ((summons)) |
| 2 | SB: | Hello |
| 3 | Tasha: | Hi <i>Sim Simma</i> |
| 4 | SB: | How are you |
| 5 | Tasha: | I'm doin >quite> <i>fi::ne</i> = |
| 6 | SB: | =Yeah you settled in? |

At lines 1–2, there is a standard summons–answer sequence. Here the data identification code NNR shows that the caller's number was not recognized. In this respect, the call opening proceeds almost like the traditional analogue telephone calls in which technology did not allow number recognition. At line 3, the caller provides a recognitional greeting. At line 4, the answerer responds with a how-are-you inquiry. After the caller's response to this, SB initiates the first topic at line 6. Without drawing any conclusions beyond their observation that the opening contained all core sequences of the American landline telephone call, Hutchby and Barnett move on to demonstrate the similarity between landline and mobile calls through examples in which the caller has already been identified in the summons. Here is the first of their two examples (3).

(3) [25.4.02 INC CD: c5] (SB = answerer; Irene = caller)

- 1 ((summons))
 2 SB: Hello
 3 Irene: Hiya: ba::by
 4 SB: You a 'right what's hap'ning
 5 Irene: ↑What's going on
 6 SB: °Nut'en man
 7 Irene: How was ya day::

Hutchby and Barnett conclude:

It is difficult to pin down what, if anything, is specifically 'mobile' in these MPC extracts, or specifically different from properties of LLTC as described in the previous section. One thing this suggests is that, if the communicative affordances of mobile phones are indeed modifying the terms under which conversations are initiated and pursued, the modifications are not pervasive, or not immediately obvious. Rather, such modifications have to be located in the subtle details of the organization of interaction. (2005: 157)

As an overall conclusion, they stress that their inquiry highlights the limits to change, the retention of normative practices associated with the earlier technology, and the numerous ways in which the norms of landline telephone conversation persist in mobile phone conversation.

The 'auxiliary' elements in CA studies

Research activity is a matter of defining and describing relevant objects of knowledge. Various discursive practices are necessary to distill the objects of knowledge from the domain of scrutiny (Goodwin, 1994). Defined this way, the elements that could be called 'auxiliary' are indeed central to research activities. Without discursive practices, no identifiable phenomena would appear in the data. Goodwin (1994) has studied various discursive practices, such as coding and highlighting, which are essential for professional vision. The domain of scrutiny has to be divided by highlighting a figure against a ground, coding has to be applied to constitute relevant events. In addition, evaluative statements guide and restrict the relevance of observations. Here I will discuss how coding, highlighting and evaluative statements operate in the studies on mobile call openings.

Though the notion of 'coding' is not generally used in CA literature, there seem to be operations that transform objects of research into events and categories relevant to the study, which can accordingly be called 'coding'. Table 1 in Arminen and Leinonen summarizes their perspective. In terms of analytic operations, it narrows down the scrutiny to the first vocal turn of the call, and suggests a classification of answers to summonses: initial self-presentations, initial greetings, channel openers and try-marked openings. Hutchby and Barnett for their part focus on three aspects of call openings: their organization; the achievement of identification; and the introduction of the first topic. This approach also constrains the domain of scrutiny to distinct objects of knowledge.

Highlighting organizes the domain of scrutiny through the figure/ground distinction. The focus of attention highlights the salient figure that is placed against the background, which is taken for granted. In their abstract, Hutchby and Barnett state the purpose of their study: 'We first show that, far from revolutionizing the organization of telephone conversation, mobile phone talk retains many of the norms associated with landline phone talk.' (p. 147) In this fashion, the permanence of norms has been set as the figure for which the supposed revolutionary change poses the background.

Through their chosen figure/ground distinction, Hutchby and Barnett manage to find that 'modifications (between landline and mobile talk, I.A.) are not pervasive or immediately obvious'. (p. 157) In other words, since they put the differences between landline and mobile talk in the background; hence, they do not consider them perspicuous. For Arminen and Leinonen, the permanence of some norms is no news.

Finally, evaluative and prescriptive statements sanction the chosen perspective. The evaluative contours of scientific texts also guide the reader. Before presenting mobile data, Hutchby and Barnett suggested the way to read it:

In the following extract, for example, we can observe all four of the core sequences of the canonical opening for the LLTC (landline telephone call, I.A.) described in the previous section. Moreover, they each occur in the same order as that described by Schegloff (1986: 155).

In this fashion, authors present their interpretation as self-evident, and the alleged finding is established prior its demonstration. The evaluative contours also permeate throughout the text. At one point Hutchby and Barnett discuss the relevance of location for mobile phones. In their data, 61 percent of the calls include an inquiry about location (where are you?) within the 20 first seconds of a call. Hutchby and Barnett comment that 'In our data, we found that locational inquiries or the proffering of locational information are not ubiquitous, featuring in only just over half (61%) of the calls recorded' (p. 163). Despite some slight inadequacy (their recordings consist mainly only of first 20 seconds, only few calls being recorded in full), their finding sounds plausible. Elsewhere Arminen (forthcoming) found that in 62 out of 74 mobile calls the location is explicitly mentioned, hence 61 percent of location inquiries within first 20 seconds sounds plausible. For Arminen, this finding indicated the ubiquitous relevance of location for mobile calls in contrast to fixed landline calls. In comparative research, there has been a long-standing debate about 'how much is a lot?' (Pöntinen, 2004); 61 percent of cases either may not seem to be much (only just over half, Hutchby and Barnett) or it may seem a great deal, making indicating location a predominant practice in mobile calls (Arminen, forthcoming).

The neglect of anomalies

Research has to face the problem of anomalies, that is, that not all the features of the phenomenon fit its suggested description. Auxiliary elements may help to

play anomalies down. Hutchby and Barnett (2005: 157) state that the differences between landline and mobile calls 'have to be located in the subtle details of the organisation of interaction'. In this fashion they suggest that 'subtle details' have not been the subject of their analysis. Indeed, there are a number of features that they have chosen not to comment upon. The potential anomalies are hidden beneath the surface of analysis.

In their data analysis, they characterize the answers to summonses as 'the same anonymous voice sample as found in the Anglo-American LLTC' (p. 156). These similar voice samples, however, seem to be prosodically different. The landline 'H'llo?' were typically produced with a rising intonation (marked with ?), which contributes toward requesting the caller to initiate the interaction. In Extracts 2 and 3, 'hello' has been marked as completely flat. This kind of 'flat' hello is very rare in Schegloff's American landline data (1979). According to Schegloff (1986) answerers orient to their task to providing a recognizable voice sample. Schegloff calls this a signature 'hello' that bears permanent prosodic marks which distinguish it to a voice signature. The prosodically flat, anonymous 'hello' in Extracts 2 and 3 do not seem oriented to this task. The flat 'hello' seems also to be procedurally relevant, oriented to by the interactants, and consequential for building the parties a shared understanding of talking on a mobile phone, as the continuation of interaction shows.

In American data the second turn, that is, the caller's first turn, is what Schegloff (1979) has called an initial greeting, the first pair part of the exchange of greetings. The answer to the summons is not a greeting, the greeting exchange follows it. In landline calls, this exchange of greetings achieves the reciprocal recognition. In Extract 2, the caller's greeting is responded to with 'how are you'. SB does not return the greeting here, as if the recognition of the caller was not an issue. The flat 'hello' and the missing second pair part of the greeting seem to derive from the parties' orientation to the mobile context. When someone calls a mobile phone, the caller will also know who is likely to answer, as mobile phones tend to be personal, unlike landline phones, which are often party lines, such as in families or work places. In this way, the answerer knows she is known, and does not need to orient to recognizability. After the caller's greeting, the call is ready for the how-are-you inquiry, as in Extract 2. The English mobile call opening is organized exactly like the Finnish ones (Extract 1).

On mobile phones the whole greeting exchange and the identification/recognition stage can in fact be entirely skipped. Extract 4 is a case in point. Here the answerer does not even produce a flat hello, but simply opens the line, and the caller goes straight into the business (for further discussion, see Arminen and Leinonen, forthcoming).

(4) [30.04.02 INC CD: c11] (SB = answerer; Kisha = caller)

- 1 ((summons))
 2 → Kisha: >Wha' time you finishin' uni<
 3 SB: °Ummh wot's wrong.°

- 4 Kisha: ↑Huhh?
 5 SB: °Why what's wrong°

In mobile calls, the speaker identification is automated, and call openings can accordingly be reduced, even radically, as in Extract 4. Despite massive and obvious changes in telephone opening etiquette, Hutchby and Barnett manage to neutralize anomalies. Selective coding, highlighting and guiding of readers with the help of evaluative statements contribute to underlining permanence and downgrading change.

Unquestioned ideologies as presuppositions

Hutchby and Barnett (2005: 147) reveal their commitment to academic skepticism in stating for their own purposes that mobile phone talk is not 'revolutionizing the organization of telephone conversation'. The (meta)theoretical perspective then guides the empirical analyses, which are selective, so that the chosen perspective is validated (cf. the documentary method of interpretation; see Garfinkel, 1967).

Media and technology studies have a long tradition of the idea of progress (McLuhan, 1967), and its counter-discourses, such as the Frankfurt school theory of popular culture as deception (Horkheimer and Adorno, 1972). Discourses on mobile telephony are also structured around the discourse of progress (e.g. Ling, 2000), and its counter-discourses (Myerson, 2001). Katz and Aakhus (2002) discuss mobile telephony as mind and society altering technology. Their agenda is to determine how mobile telephony changes social life and organizations, how it creates, destroys and reinforces communicational forms and how it demands new conceptual frames to understand mobile communication. Rheingold (2002) sees mobile communication technology as the agent of a new social revolution. According to Rheingold, people who apply mobile technologies cooperate in ways never before possible because they carry devices that possess both communication and computing capabilities. For his part, Myerson (2001) criticizes mobile technologies for colonizing the authentic life world of human subjects by luring them into ever-present communication networks that eventually promote the dominance of the system.

Hutchby and Barnett do not commit themselves to the ideological critique of communication technologies, offering a study of actual talk-in-interaction as a caveat against immature and grandiose claims about the impact of technology. However, through their commitment to challenge the techno-optimism, Hutchby and Barnett end up trading on a set of assumptions that restricts the scope of analysis and determines their attitude to the domain of scrutiny. In contrast to techno-optimism, their 'examination highlights the limits to change, and the retention of normative practices associated with the earlier technology' (p. 147). Their assumptions guide the formation of figure/ground configuration through which the permanence of social order is highlighted against the irrelevant nuances of change.

Hutchby and Barnett eventually end up into a classical functionalism. The immutable core sequences of telephone openings represent the organic unity of society, which meets the needs of individuals. Since the core opening sequences satisfy the basic functions of communication; they find this immutable core in mobile calls, even if some of their empirical materials (Extract 4) do not exhibit any of its feature.

Discussion

The proposition by Hutchby and Barnett to study actual talk-in-interaction as a caveat against immature and grandiose claims about the impact of technology sounds commendable. However, it seems that researchers would need to first inspect their own assumptions so as not to blur the particular features of the phenomena in question. Only the re-inspection of an unquestioned basis for research will allow genuine development because otherwise 'it can be difficult to decide whether a specific case in fact supports or undermines a given sociological generalization' (Heritage, 1984: 234). It would be relevant to differentiate the patterns of mobile communication from landline telephony and the degree to which they have remained the same.

The problem encountered seems to be generic. A case in point is that no overall consensus has ever been achieved on whether the call openings in different cultural contexts can or should be compared, and the degree to which they are unified or diversified (Luke and Pavlidou, 2002). This dispute reflects the fact that there is no unified view of the elements of the call openings that might form a basis for intercultural comparison.

Schegloff's studies on US call openings in the 1960s (1968, 1979, 1986) have been widely influential, but still it has remained debatable whether Schegloff's findings provide a basis for comparisons in the call openings in other countries and in other cultural settings. Schegloff (2002) has adopted a position according to which CA research is 'internal' to the episodes in the given linguistic cultural setting analysed. The comparisons with openings from other cultures are problematic, he maintains, because the observable differences between openings in different cultural contexts are not available to any speaker who is acting within his or her own cultural setting, where the practices from other cultural settings are not available. 'At the very least, the practices and forms being described need to be grounded in their within-culture sets of alternatives' (Schegloff, 2002: 273).

For Schegloff, the study of social interaction has to remain endogenous to its setting. One may analyze talk-in-interaction in one's own language and culture. Any contrastive analysis is nonsensical, as the alternatives from the other culture are not available or relevant to any member of a given culture.¹ He discusses the example of the Japanese and Korean speech articles *kedo* and *nuntey* for which there are no parallels in American telephone openings. For Schegloff (2002: 264) the fruitful line to follow is not to inspect these forms in contrast 'to what is

done in other cultures', but to see them '*as a type of move-in-interaction within the culture in which it is found*'. His position in inter-cultural comparisons derives from his general view of social structures. Schegloff (1991) warns against stipulating about the socio-structural relevance of talk prior to determining the generic relevance of sequential features for talk-in-interaction. He systematically prioritizes the inspection of talk-in-interaction in its own right within its given cultural setting. This prioritized inspection of talk is not only internal to the linguistic/cultural setting, but also to the episodes of interaction (Schegloff, 2002).

A useful distinction can be made between sequential and sequence organization. Sequential organization is a broader term that refers to relative positioning of any kind of move, utterance or action. Sequence organization refers to the actions realized through talk only. The sequence organization is a sub-set of sequential order. Thus far, there is no systematic theory about their relationship. The internal analysis of episodes of interaction seems to refer to sequence organization. The distinction between sequential order and sequence organization appears to be relevant for understanding the emergence of the incompatible findings.

It turns out that the novelties of mobile phone talk concern the sequential properties of talk and action in interaction. If somebody phones to ask directions while driving a car, or answers a mobile phone while in the toilet of the train, the contingencies of talk in interaction emerge and are inseparable from the embodied action. Further, the difference in responses to mechanical landline summonses and identity-information conveying mobile summonses shows that people do orient themselves to media other than talk only and to their communicative relevance in ways consequential for the action-and-talk-in-interaction. The specificity of mobile phone talk seems to emerge from the mobility and other new socio-technical features that speakers orient to while speaking and using wireless communication devices. The sequences of mobile talk may well have remained basically the same as in the landline phone talk.

Indeed, Hutchby and Barnett were successful in discovering in mobile openings an order that is still based on the sequence structures which characterize landline phone talk. They effectively played down the potential relevance of sequential properties of talk-and-action-in-interaction. The fact that 61 percent of mobile speakers related their location within the first 20 seconds were 'only just over half' of the cases, but nothing to pay attention to. In this fashion, the auxiliary assumptions guide the relevance of findings. The internalist reading of British mobile call openings enables Hutchby and Barnett to inspect the basics of sequence organization of phone talk. Moreover, even if they use Schegloff's findings on American telephone openings to elucidate sequences of British mobile openings, they avoid emphasizing any of the obvious differences between the British mobile openings and the US landline openings. They thus also avoid being charged with the fallacy of transporting contrastive features from other cultures to one in which they are not relevant.

In contrast, Arminen and Leinonen are committed to strict comparative analysis of sequential organization of social action. From their point of view, the differences between American and Finnish landline telephone call openings are fascinating. The Finnish and the American ways of opening telephone conversations are small but significant cultural practices that figure in the production of corresponding cultural and social institutions. The observable changes from landline to mobile calls also form part of socio-cultural practices through which members of cultures adapt to new forms of technology and orient to the new possibilities these technologies afford. The meaning of these changes and differences is not internal to sequences of talk-in-interaction, but this does not mean that there is no change or that the change is insignificant. We are still far from understanding how talk-in-interaction figures in the production of larger socio-cultural structures. The analysis of sequential organization of talk-and-action-in-interaction is as pertinent as the internal analysis of sequences of talk, but it demands reworking of auxiliary assumptions of studies of social interaction.

Finally, though the sequential organization of social action is a broader domain of scrutiny than the sequence organization of talk, its analysis does not need to be less strict and detailed. In contrast, many subtle nuances of sequences of mobile talk are related to its mobility. For instance, the prosody of answers to summonses, the reconfiguration of greeting exchanges are part of the parties' orientation to the new activity context of mobile talk-in-action. For Hutchby and Barnett, these subtle nuances are irrelevant as they are not interested in understanding mobile social action but want to stick to the level of sequence structure only. However, the separation of analysis of sequences of talk from the sequential organization impoverishes the analysis and is against Sacks's original idea of conversation analysis.

CA emerged through Sacks's contemplation of the idea of the science of social life, which would reconstruct and analyze the practices that permit members of society to see and grasp things the way they do (Arminen, 2005). The idea was to move beyond relying on what-everybody-knows. Instead the most basic details of interaction that allow parties to establish the ideas they have were to be scrutinized (Sacks, 1992b; Silverman, 1998). The aim was to develop an approach which could handle the actual details of actions, in order to be able to reverse engineer what various phenomena in society are made up of (Sacks, 1992a). The reproducibility of findings was the key for the scientific nature of the enterprise. While the reader would ideally have as much information as the author so that the analysis could be reproduced (Sacks, 1992a; Silverman, 1998), Sacks was not interested in restricting the analysis internal to the episodes of interaction only. In fact, he stated that his research is about conversations only in an incidental way, that conversation is something that one can get actual instances of on tape. Through the reproducibility of actual details of actual events the science of social life became possible (Sacks, 1992b).

The idea of narrowing down the analysis emerges, at the latest, in Schegloff's

notion of the procedural relevance of context (1991). The key question concerns the distinction between the generic and the institutional relevance of sequential patterns. Schegloff (1991) claims that we first have to address the generic relevance of sequences and only then try to seek what is institutionally distinctive about them. Accordingly, if an interactional pattern is an endemic 'part of the methodic practices of doing *sequences of that sort*, then there is no warrant for introducing *social structures of that sort* into the account' Schegloff (1991: 59). In other words, Schegloff warns against making 'an ecological misjudgement' in which a phenomenon found in a given context is taken as characteristic of that context without inquiring about its potential generic relevance. If a 'factual' institutional context is invoked to account for talk through its function in the context, it may distract one from considering how conversations are accomplished by naturalizing the talk. For instance, Schegloff criticized a study of emergency calls which related the call taker's recurrent use of insertion sequences, 'interrogative series', to organizational and institutional contingencies supposedly dealt with in these calls. He claimed that a hasty conclusion about the institutional relevance of these sequences risked missing 'the potentially general relevance of insertions to sequences of this type' (1991: 59).

Schegloff's critique naturalizes the call taker's embodied action and misses the institutional relevance of the interrogative series by addressing only their generic interactional relevance. The generic interactional relevance of 'interrogative series' is primarily a researcher's construct, a technical artifact, such as the grammar of language. Just as Hutchby and Barnett analyzed organization of sequences of mobile talk simply as phone talk, Schegloff analyzes embodied actions of institutional practices as talk. The mere explication of sequences of talk misses how talk-in-interaction figures in the production of embodied, institutional practices, which is the primary concern of parties in interaction. The relevance of subtle details of interrogative series appears only after opening up talk as a part of embodied, institutional practice.

Conclusion

Just as Bales's Interaction analysis is able to show that a jury is a small group, Hutchby and Barnett demonstrated that mobile phone talk is talk (Garfinkel et al., 1981). Arminen and Leinonen, for their part, demonstrated that speakers tailor mobile openings, as the technology affords the answerer the opportunity to identify the caller prior to answering, which differentiates these openings from those on the analogue telephone systems. Consequently, both claims that 'mobile phone talk retains many of the norms associated with landline phone talk' and that 'mobile calls differ systematically from landline calls' are simultaneously true.

This quandary reveals that thoroughly empirical studies are also guided by tacit assumptions. The studies on talk-in-interaction or other discourse studies

are not free from theoretical underpinnings or other auxiliary elements. Further, these studies seem to be in conflict, not so much because of the empirical instances of materials studied, but because of the worldviews that are inflicted upon the material through underlying theoretical notions.

A central but hidden distinction prevails between sequence organization and sequential order. Since there is no systematic theory about their relationship as yet, CA studies seem to adopt ad hoc solutions with unquestioned auxiliary assumptions. A possible solution is to try stick to the internal details of interaction only, as Schegloff has repeatedly suggested (1991, 1997, 2002). A separation of talk from other activities performed via various other media, however, misses details of the parties' ongoing orientation to action in interaction (Arminen, 2005). From a sociological point of view it would be interesting to try to relate the role of talk-in-interaction to the emergence of social and cultural structures other than the talk itself (cf. ten Have, 2002). We should at least acknowledge that both these projects are possible (and not inherently right or wrong), although their auxiliary assumptions are different, so that direct comparison of findings is impossible. The opening up of auxiliary elements of research enables a discussion between approaches that differ in their underlying frameworks, thereby allowing steps toward a more comprehensive understanding of talk-and-action-in-interaction for themselves and for social and cultural structures.

NOTE

1. Schegloff seems to presuppose that people are members of one culture only.

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ILKKA ARMINEN is a Professor in the Department of Sociology and Social Psychology at the University of Tampere, Finland. He is the author of *Therapeutic Interaction – A Study of Mutual Help in the Meetings of Alcoholics Anonymous* (1998), and *Institutional Interaction? A Guide for Analysing Institutional Talk and Action* (2005). He has also published articles in a number of edited collections and journals, including *Acta Sociologica*, *Discourse & Society*, *Journal of Pragmatics*, *Personal and Ubiquitous Computing*, *Research on Language and Social Interaction* and *The Sociological Quarterly*. ADDRESS: Department of Sociology and Social Psychology, 33014 University of Tampere, Finland. [email: Ilkka.Arminen@uta.fi]