

TOPIC NOMINATION AND TOPIC PURSUIT *

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Introduction

In a previous consideration of 'generating a topic' a sequence of conversation was described which is initiated by a topic initial elicitor and which is oriented to the interactional and mutual generation of a topic (Button and Casey 1984). In this description another form of topic beginning, topic nomination, was indicated. This present analysis now has topic nomination as one of its central concerns, but in order to build a partial resource for the subsequent analysis it is necessary to first introduce some aspects of the topic initial elicitor sequence.

A systematic feature of topic organisation is that topics flow from one to another,¹ and this means that a distinct beginning of a topic may not be readily apparent. In particular sequential environments, systems that organise topic flow are not, however, used. Three pervasive environments in this respect are where topics are started where conversations' openings are produced; where a prior topic shut-down has been accomplished; and, where conversations' closings have been initiated. Should a topic emerge in such sequential environments it is recurrently disjunct from prior topic(s) and may be organised by means of a series of sequential moves which constitute a 'topic beginning'.² A topic initial elicitor can initiate a topic beginning which is designed to interactionally and mutually establish a topic.³

Although a topic initial elicitor has features which project as a relevant next activity the production of a possible topic initial, neverthe-

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less, because of its orientation to the interactional and mutual establishment of a topic, a recipient of this first move to topic generation may not present a topicalisable item but may make a no-news report. As was previously described, one response to such an activity is to shift from a topic initial eliciting activity by making a topic nomination in order to pursue the initiation of a new topic.

Topic nomination itself, may also be used to start a topic by organising a topic beginning in sequential environments where topic does not flow out of a prior topic. Unlike topic initial elicitors which are designed to elicit a candidate topic from the next speaker whilst being mute with respect to what that topic may be, topic nominations are oriented to particular newsworthy items. In common with topic initial elicitors, however, they use a sequence structure to constitute the topic beginning and this, as for topic initial elicitors, is designed to interactionally and mutually produce topic.

Two sequence types that may be used as vehicles for topic nomination and which are to be considered here are (characterised by their sequence initial turn) *itemised news enquiries* and *news announcements*. Whilst both sequence types may organise a topic beginning by nominating a topic for talk, they perform different interactional tasks in organising who amongst the interactants will elaborate on-topic and where, sequentially, on-topic talk will be done. Moreover, they are selectively used in order to pursue the production of a topic where a move that could possibly curtail topic production is made. Both sequence types, though, preserve two features of beginning a topic which is disjunct from prior topic(s); these are features that emerged from the previous consideration of topic initial elicitors.

The first of these is that the sequence structure is capable of receiving extended talk. This point will be elaborated subsequently. The second feature is that beginning a topic in the three sequential environments is, by virtue of the activity's very occurrence in these environments, done interactionally and mutually. The reasons for this can be briefly reiterated.

For conversations whose opening sections have not produced first topic in the form of reason-for-call⁴ or material that is being made topical, the first topic may be produced interactionally and mutually, in order to establish a warrant for talking to that topic now and at a point where the reason-for-call may still be awaiting delivery. The second environment indicated, prior topic shut-downs, occasion a sequential environment which is ripe for initiating a closing track.⁵ Beginning a new topic places the conversation on a different trajectory.

Topic beginnings done in an environment in which the relevance of more than one trajectory for the conversation can be projected are designed to be interactional and mutual in order to legitimise that as the trajectory which is produced. Conversations' closing structure, the third pertinent environment, are themselves designed to interactionally and mutually accomplish the closure of conversation (Schegloff and Sacks 1973), and beginning a new topic in a closing section is done interactionally and mutually so as to be sensitive to this organisation of closings.

This paper will proceed by examining how itemised news enquiries and news announcements are used to organise topic beginnings that preserve the two features indicated above. In the course of this examination it will be noted that interactants may make moves which could possibly curtail the production of topic. It will then be found that the sequence-type initial turns of the topic initial elicitor, itemised news enquiry and news announcement sequences may be variously fitted for, and used in turns that follow a possible curtailing move in order to pursue the production of a topic and to organise how elaboration on the news will be done.

Itemised news enquiries

The following three extracts of conversation are examples of itemised news enquiries being used in the three sequential environments which have been referred to.⁶

(1) (Frankel:TC:I:1:22–23)

Shirley : ·hh S₀ c'm over later.

Geri : Yeh ah'll come over I wannih(g) (.) git s'm work
do:ne'n then ah'll c'm over'n ah'll help

Joe [:y,en
Shirley : [Okay

(.)

Shirley : ·hhhhhh [Good w'l have coffee
Geri : [^{oo}()^{oo}

(0.3)

Geri : °Oka:y,°

Shirley : Alright?

Geri : Mm-h m:?

→ Shirley : D'yih talk tih Dana this week?

(2) (Rahman:II:4-5)

Ida : ·h it's a:ll the money
 eez had in iz back pocket thass made

Jenny : [im (like thah:t),
 eh HEH HE:h'he h h

Ida : [HA HA=

Ida : = [ha ha :::

Jenny : = [(thet's makin' the-) ·hh That'll teach
 i:m hheh he h-he.

Ida : [That will teach him] ↓ yes,

Jenny : [hhh

he-eh hh ay [you gn'--hh

Ida : [Yeh.

→ Jenny : When ih you gettin yer: ↑ dining room suite.

(3) (SB:1:1:1)

Sheila : Hello:?

John : Hi: Sheila?

Sheila : Ye:ah.

John : How are you.

Sheila : Fi:ne, how are you.

John : O::k:a:y.

(0.2)

→ Sheila : Have yo::u heard yet.

Itemised news enquiries project particular sequential relevancies for the next turn, and the itemised news enquiry and the next turn which is produced as a response sensitive to these relevancies, possess characteristics which are integral to the organisation of a topic beginning. Before these characteristics are described, however, the sequential relevancies that an itemised news enquiry projects for next turn can be elaborated upon.

The object of enquiry in itemised news enquiries stands in contrast to that of topic initial elicitors. The latter make enquiries into the possibility of providing newsworthy event reports without specifying an item of news about which to make a report whilst the former aim themselves directly at a particular item. For instance, in the examples above, (1) whether Shirley has talked to Dana, (2) when Ida is getting her dining room suite, and (3) whether John has received the information

he is waiting for, constitute specific items of enquiry. By specifying a particular item, itemised news enquiries make two proposals. First, they propose that the specified item is newsworthy, and second they propose that this item is known about by the recipient.

By making the first proposal, itemised news enquiries display that speakers have some access to, and knowledge of, the proposed newsworthy item, but in making the second they also display that the enquirer's knowledge is only partial relative to the recipient's. Itemised news enquiries attribute this knowledge by virtue of the objects of enquiry being oriented to as recipient-related events about which the current speakers have some knowledge.

This orientation, however, does not just take the form of a request for a lack of, or gap in knowledge to be filled. Some forms of enquiry display speakers to be deficient regarding some item of information, and provide just for a recipient to furnish that information. For instance, in the fragment below, B's enquiry into whether the school is open references climatic conditions which put that in doubt. She thereby displays a lack of knowledge with regard to an item of information and provides for it to be subsequently filled-in; the conversation can then begin to move towards termination.

(4) (JG(I)S: X16)

A : Hello Hillcrest High School.

B : Yes is Hillcrest going to be open today?

A : We don't know yet uh Mrs Rodgers just came in an' she's goin t tell us (if) we're gonna have (a) school or not.

B : Well this [is

A : [We are going to have a school ma'am

B : You are.

A : Yes.

B : Okay fine cause I'm waiting for the bus service and apparently she's a little late too.

A : Okay.

B : Thank you [bye bye.

A : [(You're welcome).

A : Bye bye.

Whilst itemised news enquiries also display some lack of, or gap in information, and do relevance a recipient furnishing this, they also provide for a recipient to do more. It is in this respect that itemised

news enquiries take the form of enquiries which are, indeed, oriented to *news*. It seems that itemised news enquiries may take at least three forms which provide for a recipient to do more than just fill some knowledge vacuum.

First, as with examples (1), (2), and (3) presented above, itemised news enquiries may be structured as requests to be brought up to date on developments concerning an ongoing recipient-related activity or circumstance, and are oriented to finding out about the latest developments, the latest news about the activity or circumstance.

In example (1) Shirley displays that she knows that Geri has a relationship with Dana but she also displays herself as wanting to know about the current 'state of play'. In example (2) Jenny displays that she knows that Ida is expecting some furniture and that she is enquiring into the latest news on its delivery date. In example (3) Sheila displays that she knows that John is waiting to hear about some event and that she wants to know about developments on that front. In all three of the fragments the itemised news enquiries provide for the recipients to tell their latest news about a referenced, ongoing activity or circumstance and not to just fill in some knowledge gap.

A second way in which itemised news enquiries are structured is as solicitous enquiries into troubles which recipients are known to have.⁷

(5) (NB:I:6:13)

Clara : I w's jist washin the dishes.

Agnes : Yeah,

Agnes : Wir jis -- cleanin up here too.

(0.4)

Clara : How'r you –

→ Clara : How's yer foot. ?

(6) (Rahman:II:2)

Ida : u – Verra's awri:ght is she:?=

Jenny : = eYes she's fine eh I popped (doa:n) lah's night. =

Jenny : = [()]

Ida : = [Oh: thaht's good. She's awri [ght,

Jenny : [f'r awhile,

Mathew came with me, s:o : uh

Ida : [ee Yeah.

→ Jenny : ·hh so that wz it ·h How's De:z anyway.

(7) (Heritage:01:18:4)

Jane : Ah've gotta ru(h)un,
(.)

Ilene : Awright,

→ Jane : ·hh Okay< How'r you feeling

A solicitous enquiry references a known trouble. This contrasts with enquiries into personal states – such as “How are you” – which do not presume a trouble. Sacks (1973) has described how these may receive just minimal ‘value state descriptors’. It can be proposed that a distinction between the two types of enquiries is oriented to by their recipients, as an enquiry into a personal state need occasion no more than a minimal value state descriptor, but a solicitous enquiry provides the sequential occasion to do more in terms of the recipient telling the latest news about their referenced trouble.

In example (5) above, Clara makes a solicitous enquiry by aiming at a trouble she knows Agnes has, and by so doing she relevances any up-date on its progress. In example (6) it turns out that Dez has hurt his back.

(6) (Rahman:II:3)

Ida : w Oo – ih – Ye:s his bahck hahs been muuch better
the lahs' two: da:ys? =

Jenny, by making her initial enquiry, similarly provides for Ida to tell any latest news about Dez and his trouble. Again, in example (7) it transpires that Ilene was ‘looking white’.

(7) (Heritage:01:18:5)

Jane : Y'r no ɾt ih: y'r not white anymoh .hh!

Jane, through checking out Ilene's progress, also relevances Ilene telling the latest on the trouble. In all of these examples the current speaker provides the sequential occasion for the recipient to tell what is new about an ongoing trouble: the latest news.

A third form that itemised news enquiries into a recipient-related activity or circumstance may take does not so much have to do with knowledge of a newsworthy event as with the two other forms, but is, instead, concerned with knowledge of a recipient-related activity which is oriented to as news generational. The current speaker orients to the recipient-related activity or circumstance marked in the enquiry

as possibly news generational but does not display any knowledge of a particular newsworthy item. Accordingly, this form of itemised news enquiry may relevance the telling of any news which could derive from out of the activity, if there is news to tell.

In example (8) below, Agnes' enquiry does not display knowledge of a particular newsworthy item but offers a recipient-related activity, Portia's work at the restaurant, as a context from out of which she can generate something to report. Similarly, in example (9), Maggie offers a recipient-related activity – again work – as a context for news generation.⁸

(8) (NB:II:3:8)

- Portia : How come yih didn't stay?
 Portia : OH ih w'zis [too hot huh,
 Agnes : [Oh::there–
 Agnes : Jus' too hot Portia, an'it was uh–
 Agnes : Oh I don' know,
 Agnes : Yih git kinda tahrd of– big kloojie buncha people,
 Portia : Yea:h.
 Portia : Uh.huh
 Agnes : ·hhhhhmhhh
 → Agnes : How's ev'rything et the rest'rantee?

(9) (JG:6:8:2–3)

- Lawrence : Yea:h. Well ya haven't got a steady boyfriend
 either, have ya
 Maggie : ·hh No:. Not really
 Lawrence : N'ahh well anyway I thought maybe I'd give you
 a call.
 Maggie : 'h What 'ave you been up to?
 (0.5)
 Lawrence : We:ll 'uv about the same thing. One thing
 anoth [er. I sh'
 [Maggie : [Ya still in the real estate business,
 Lawrence?

In the next extract, (10), Maggie shifts away from Lawrence's invitation. She implicates his circumstances by asking after some members of his family and she thereby provides for the generation of news regarding them.

(10) (JG:6:8:2)

- Lawrence : Well I'm up to calling you to see if I ken
see you an have some fun with you again
(maybe)
- Maggie : AHhh ha ha ha ha ha
- ↳ Maggie : ·hh Sounds delightful. How's your sister
↳ an her husband?

All three ways in which itemised news enquiries may be structured are aimed at a recipient-related activity or circumstance about which it is proposed that there may be 'things to tell'. In so doing they occasion the relevancy of doing more than just filling in some gap in speaker's knowledge. The recipients of itemised news enquiries may construct their turns under the auspices of the relevancy to produce talk on a proposed newsworthy item, or they may produce an appropriate newsworthy item projected by the itemised news enquiry. Thus, they can provide the latest news about an ongoing activity or circumstance, give a progress report on a trouble, and generate news from out of a furnished context. This can be seen in the responses to the itemised news enquiries presented below.

(1) (Frankel:TC:1:1:23)

- Shirley : D'yih talk tih Dana this week?
- ↳ Geri : ·hhh Yeh I talk 'tih Dana uh::m (0.4) ·tch
↳ k ·hh (0.4) ° uh::m°
↳ (0.5) Monday night I gue:ss.

(2) (Rahman:II:5)

- Jenny : When uh you gettin yer: ↑ dining room suite?
- Ida : Well not ye:t, i-eh we ca:lled. lahst wee:k.h.

(5) (NB:I:6:13)

- Clara : How's yer foot?
- Agnes : Oh it's healing beautif'lly!

(6) (Rahman:II:2)

- Jenny : =·hh so that wz it ·h How's De:z anyway?
(.)
- ↳ Ida : Yes he's eh'ee: 'ee went for iz eksh ray:s, on
↳ Fri:da:y?

(8) (NB:II:3:8)

- Agnes : How's ev'rything at the rest'rantee.
 Portia : ·hh uh- Gee we were really busy las' night ih
 was like summer.

(10) (JG:6:8:2)

- Maggie : Ahhh ha ha ha ha ha ·hh Sounds delightful.
 How's your sister an her husband?
 Lawrence : Oh t'che. Well as a matter
 fact uh ih Dawn is alright. She had a very
 very bad cold the lahst month. An Charlie is:
 had a very serious operation. Surgery on the
 gal, ga'l bladder. But I guess he's alright.
 But ·hhh at his age maybe it's little
 roughhh.

These responses have a common feature: they take an elaborated form. This is, itself, responsive to the sequential relevance occasioned by the itemised news enquiry for telling more than would just fill in an enquirer's gap in knowledge. The responsiveness can be seen to operate for each of the ways in which an itemised news enquiry may be structured.

Itemised news enquiries which are oriented to the latest news about a recipient-related ongoing event or circumstance may receive an elaborated response. In the examples which follow, (1) and (2), the speakers begin by satisfying the constraint that an enquiry may place upon next turn to fill in some knowledge gap. Thus Geri begins by minimally answering the enquiry – “·hhh Yeh” – as does Ida – “Well not ye:t”. However, such replies would not be responsive to the relevance, occasioned by the prior turn, to tell the latest news. Their elaborated replies are.

(1) (Frankel:TC:1:1:23)

- Geri : ·hhh Yeh I talk' tih Dana ih::m (0.4) ·tch ·k
 ·hh (0.4) uh::m^o (0.5) Monday night I
 gue :ss.

(2) (Rahman:II:5)

- Ida : Well not ye:t, i-eh we ca:lled. lahst wee:k·h

For the cases of solicitously structured news enquiries a minimal reply would only be a response to the enquiry constraint of complementing partial knowledge, and would not be a response to the relevance projected by the news enquiry to provide a progress report. An elaborated response, however, does attend to that relevance. In the following two examples, (5) and (6), Agnes and Ida index that they are providing a progress report in their elaborated response. In the first example Agnes casts her response as on ongoing report – “healing” – and marks its newsworthiness with “Oh”.⁹ In the second example Ida begins with a minimal response – “Yes” – which again satisfies the constraint to fill in a knowledge gap, but she then elaborates her response.

(5) (NB:I:6:13)

Agnes : Oh it's healing beautif'ly.

(6) (Rahman:II:2)

Ida : Yes he's eh'ee: 'ee went for iz eksh ray:s on
Fri:da:y?

An elaborated response would comply with the relevance to tell any news that is occasioned by the third way in which itemised news enquiries may be structured. In fragment (8) below, Portia selects ‘how busy the restaurant was the night before’ as something to tell Agnes, and marks it as newsworthy by referring to its interest in that it was “like summer”. Lawrence in the second example (10) responds elaborately by bringing his co-participant up to date on Dawn and Charlie.

(8) (NB:II:3:8)

Portia : ·hh uh-Gee we were really busy las'night ih
was like summer.

(10) (JG:6:8:2)

Lawrence: Well as a matter fact uh ih Dawn is alright.
She had a very very bad cold the lahst month.
An Charlie is:had a very serious operation.
Surgery on the gal, g'll bladder. But I
guess he's alright. But ·hhh at his age
maybe it's little roughhh.

The responses to the itemised news enquiries presented originally, (1), (2), (5), (8), and (10), display a second common feature which is, as will be discussed shortly, pertinent for beginning a topic: they are all oriented to further sequential development of the newsworthy material. This is done by presenting the news as recognisably incomplete. Thus, although Geri (1) responds elaborately by telling the latest bit of news, there is, nevertheless, more to be told than is actually told. Ida (2) does not tell, for example, what happened when she called. Agnes (5) can talk on her remarkable recovery, Ida (6) does not indicate what the results of the “eksh ray:s” were, Portia (8) does not, for instance, offer any explanation as to why the restaurant was “busy”, and Lawrence (9) could elaborate on Charlie’s condition.

Next speakers may continue to talk to the news by either addressing its incompleteness or by using ‘continuation markers’.¹⁰, objects such as “Yeah”, “uh huh”, and “Mm Hm”, which provide the sequential opportunity for continuation by the recipient. Thus, just to take three of the examples, Shirley (1) directly addresses the issue that more could be told than has been already, with an enquiry into Dana’s personal state, Jenny (6) orients to Ida’s progress report with the use of a continuation marker that provides the sequential opportunity for Ida to tell more news and indicates Jenny’s willingness to hear more news, and Maggie (10) in assessing Charlie’s condition affords Lawrence the opportunity to comment further.

(1) (Frankel:TC:1:1:23)

Shirley : D’yih talk tih Dana this week?

Geri : ·hhh Yeh I talk ’tih Dana uh::m (0.4) ·tch
·k ·hh (0.4) uh::m^o (0.5) Monday night
I gue:ss.

.

.

.

→ Shirley : ·hh uhm how is he?

(6) (Rahman:II:2–3)

Jenny : ·hh so that wz it ·h How’s De:z anyway?

(.)

Ida : Yes he’s eh’ee: ’ee went for iz eksh ray:s, on
Fri:day?

→ Jenny : eeYes:

(10) (JG:6:8:3)

- Maggie : How's your sister an [her husband?
 Lawrence : [Oh t'che well as a matter
 fact uh ih Dawn is alright. She had a very
 very bad cold the lahst month. An Charlie is:
 had a very serious operation. Surgery on the
 gal, g'll bladder. But I guess he's alright.
 But ·hhh at his age maybe it's little roughhh
 → Maggie : No more wild game hunting 'uh.

In the introduction two features were noted which are characteristic of a topic which is started in the sequential environment in which topic is not, as a systematic matter, organised to flow from out of prior topic. It was observed, first, that it is done interactionally and that the topic is produced mutually, and second, that the sequence of talk which begins the topic does so, in part, by virtue of its ability to receive extended talk. The sequence of itemised news enquiry followed by an elaborated response that commences to tell the news can be used to begin a topic in the previously noted sequential environments as it may also satisfy these two features for starting a topic which is disjunct from prior topic(s). This can be shown for each of the two features.

Itemised news enquiries relevance the presentation of a facet of a recipient-related activity or circumstance, and in this regard current speaker is oriented to receiving talk on that item. That is, current speaker makes a sequential commitment to the object of the news enquiry.

Itemised news enquiries also provide the occasion for an elaborated response. Should an elaborated response be produced in next turn the recipient of the itemised news enquiry also displays an orientation to talk on the item of the enquiry in as much as the recipient is not only talking to the item but is also, since elaborated responses provide the sequential opportunity for further talk on the item of news, oriented to receiving further talk on the item. The recipient of an itemised news enquiry, then, can also make a sequential commitment to talk on the object of the itemised news enquiry. In two turns at talk speakers can display a mutual orientation to, and availability for, talk on the item.

Itemised news enquiries as a sequence type also realise the second feature pertinent to beginning a topic which is disjunct from prior topic(s): they are capable of initiating extended talk on an item. This can be highlighted by briefly considering the operation of an enquiry oriented to just filling in a knowledge gap. Such enquiries may be struc-

tered in such a way that conversationalists may project, roughly, in advance of its production where an end to talk on the item of the enquiry could possibly be.¹¹ In example (4) concerning the enquiry into whether or not the school would be open it is possible for the interactants to, roughly, project from the enquiry a trajectory for the course of the interaction.

(4) (JG:(I)S: X16)

A : Hello Hillcrest High School.

B : Yes is Hillcrest going to be open today?

Having tabled the enquiry as the object of the interaction, then following the eventual response and answer to the enquiry, it is possible for interactants to find that with the object of the interaction being concluded, the interaction may also be concluded. This can be seen, generally, further on in this conversation. B does introduce some material that could be made topical – “cause I’m waiting for the bus service and apparently she’s a little late too”. In this respect B’s response – “Okay” – might seem an inappropriate one to the news that she has just been given. However, it can be oriented to as an appropriate one in terms of the sequence initiated by the knowledge-gap enquiry, and A can accept the appropriateness of this response under the auspices of that enquiry which provides for the given response as relevant. Even where possibly topicalisable material is introduced, the constraint of a knowledge-gap enquiry can result in non-topicalisation.

(4) (JG: (I)S: X16)

A : Hello Hillcrest High School

B : Yes is Hillcrest going to be open today?

A : We don’t know yet uh Mrs Rodgers

.

.

.

A : We are going to have a school ma’am.

B : You are.

A : Yes.

B : Okay fine cause I’m waiting for the bus service and apparently she’s a little late too.

A : Okay.

B : Thank you [bye bye.
(You’re welcome).

A : Bye bye.

In contrast, itemised news enquiries are oriented to receiving ‘things to tell’ about a particular newsworthy item, the details of which are proposed by the itemised news enquiry itself, as being unknown to the enquirer. Accordingly, it is not possible to project, even roughly, a trajectory for the conversation. Due to the design of the itemised news enquiry the current speaker is not in a position to know what news might be received and what that might subsequently relevance.

This feature is preserved by an elaborated response. Such a response, as described previously, is designed to permit further talk on the latest news about the furnished item. Thus, talk on an item of news by the recipient of an itemised news enquiry is not offered as the end of the talk on that item, and further talk is the active possibility.

Consequently, the sequence, because of the design of an itemised news enquiry and the design of an elaborated response, does not just talk on the item of news carried in the two turns but, indeed, specifically creates the sequential conditions for extended talk; the sequence is designed to begin a topic. Following, are the examples which have been considered above, tracked through a number of turns past the two-turn sequence that has hitherto been examined. It can be noted for each one that the item of news carried in the two turns is preserved in the subsequent talk, and, that the topic of that talk is begun in those two turns.

(1) (Frankel:TC:1:1:23)

- Shirley : D'yih talk tih Dana this week?
 Geri : ·hhh Yeh I talk 'tih Dana uh::m (0.4) ·tch
 ·k ·hh (0.4) ^ouh::m^o (0.5) Monday night I
 gue┐:ss.
 Shirley: ┐·hhhh Joey check the macaroni wouldjeh?
 (.)
 Shirley : ·hh Uhm how is he?
 Geri : (Well) he's fi:ne┐ (yeh),
 Shirley : ┐ss-
 Geri : Yih know he's no:w (.) in (0.2) competition,
 ·hhh=

(2) (Rahman:II:5)

- Jenny : When ih you gettin yer: ↑ dining room suite?
 Ida : Well not ye:t, i-eh we ca:lled. lahst wee:k.h
 Jenny : e Ye┐: s,
 Ida : ┐^o(But) Jenny:^o ey: . less 'ope it

Jenny : doesn't com ferr a(h)nothih two muu:nths,
 : (W'l then) ah thought chu sid Fe:bery:. that wz
 (why:)

(5) (NB:I:6:13)

Clara : How's yer foot.?
 Agnes : Oh it's healing beautif'ly!
 Clara : Goo__::d.
 Agnes : └ The other one may haftuh come off, on the
 other toe I've got it in that.
 Clara : But it's not infectid.
 (0.4)
 Clara : Why 'onche use s'm stuff on it.

(6) (Rahman:II:2-3)

Jenny : ·hh so that wz it ·h How's De:z anyway.
 (.)
 Ida : Yes he's eh'ee:went for iz eksh ray:s, on
Fri:day?
 Jenny : ee Ye:s,
 Ida : And eh e-we're waiteen fuh the rresu:lts, now'e
 hastih go tih the doctor's on Monday ferr
 (a) sick nuh:te?
 Jenny : Mm:?

(8) (NB:II:3:8)

Agnes : How's ev'rything et the rest'rantee.
 Portia : ·hh uh-Gee we were really busy las'night ih
 was like summer.
 Agnes : Was it,
 Portia : Ma:n Go:d
 Agnes : ·hh I bet it was what. It wuh-musta been, -
 ih was so hot'n this boss

(10) (JG:6:8:2)

Maggie : AHhh ha ha ha ha ha ·hh Sounds delightful.
 How's your sister an └ her husband?
 Lawrence : └ Oh t'che
 Lawrence : Well as a matter fact uh ih Dawn is alright.
 She had a very very bad cold the last month.
 An Charlie is:had a very serious operation.

Surgery on the gal, g'll bladder. But I guess he's alright. But ·hhh at his age maybe it's little roughhh.

Maggie : No more wild game hunting 'uh?

Lawrence : No. No more. No.

Maggie : Mmm now 'at must be awful for a man who's been so active.

Lawrence : Well no he's, he's, he's alright

It was pointed out previously that this form of topic beginning preserves an orientation to the mutual and interactional start of a topic, and that this is a feature of topic generation in the sorts of sequential environments considered here. The recipients of itemised news enquiries collaborate in the start of a topic by producing their talk under the auspices of the two relevancies occasioned by the itemised news enquiry. However, although the sequential relevancy projected for the next speakers by the itemised news enquiry is a collaboration in the start of a topic, a recipient may *not* construct their turns in compliance with this projection but may begin a move that could possibly curtail the development of talk on that news. One way in which the next speaker may do this is to construct the turn under the influence of only one of the sequential relevancies which has been established for the next turn by the itemised news enquiry. Recipients of itemised news enquiries may produce only a minimal response which orients to filling in a gap in the prior speaker's knowledge but which does not also orient to the relevance of providing 'things to tell', or they may give an elaborated response but, again, one that does not provide 'things to tell' and only fills in a knowledge gap.

In examples (11), (12) and (13) which follow, the recipients of the itemised news enquiries treat them as 'personal state enquiries' by answering them with a personal state declaration. Even though in examples (11) and (12) the personal state declarations are elaborated, they do not provide any form of progress report, and the speakers do not produce their talk in accord with the sequential relevancy, projected by the prior turn, to present the progress report. Thus such responses may possibly move to *curtailing* the production of the topic because they too do not actively provide material designed to take extended talk on the news.

(11) (Goodwin:91:1-2)

A : How's Tina doin.

(.)

→ B : Oh she's doin good.

(12) (Heritage:OI:18:4-5)

J : How'r you feeling.→ I : ↑ Oh I feel ↑ fine.

(13) (Frankel:QC:1:2)

L : How you feelin Mahrge=→ M : = Oh fi:ne.

In the next fragment, (14), Nancy's reference to the mail implicates an event that she considers is potentially newsworthy, that is, Hyla receiving a letter from someone she would like to contact her. Clearly, Nancy's interest is not, simply, in the information. She wants more than a knowledge gap filling in and she provides the sequential opportunity for Hyla to go on to tell any news that is implicated in getting the mail. However, Hyla does not orient to this aspect of Nancy's enquiry, and she responds minimally under the auspices of answering only the informational aspect of Nancy's enquiry. This response provides the sequential resources whereby Nancy can orient to Hyla's response as not wanting to produce talk on that topic, and she then marks that she understands the topic to be problematic for Hyla with "Sorry I brought it uhhhp".¹²

(14) (HG:II:22)

Nancy : ([] didju get] th' mail [t'day] y?]
 Hyla : [It's a c'ns] p i r [a cy] ag] ai (hh)nst
 m(h)e,

(.)

Nancy : Didja a'ready get the mai:l,=

Hyla : = ·hhh Yes, hh-hh-h [h,

Nancy : [Oh, hhhmhh [hh

Hyla : [hh-hh

(.)

Nancy : Sorry I brought it uhhhp.Hyla : Yeah,

In section IV of this examination, turns which follow possible topic curtailing moves will be considered in relation to a further activity, the pursuit of topic. For the moment, though, it can be noted that itemised news enquiries may orient to beginning a topic in an interactional and mutual manner. The described sequence is designed to establish the warrant for talking on an item of news which is deemed to be known about by the recipient of the itemised news enquiry, and, furthermore, it is an item of news which the sequence initial turn draws forth.

III News announcements

News announcements may also start a topic where topics are not organised so as to flow from one to another.¹³ This can be observed in the three extracts which follow and, as with the examination of itemised news enquiries, some features of the news announcement sequence can be described as a resource with which to examine how the sequence operates to organise a topic beginning.¹⁴

(15) (Frankel:TC:1:1:1)

- Geri : Howyih doin .h
 Shirley : Okay how'r you
 Geri : Oh alri : [:ght,
 (Shirley) : [(:hhhhhh)
 → Shirley : Uh:m yer mother met Michael las'night.

(16) (Heritage:III:1:5:3)

- Joan : becuz (0.3) () like my feet. Because I
 went t'get those injections (), the
 () injections, en in one day my:feet
 were:uh::do:wn.
 Edgerton : Yah,
 Joan : (), they were do:wn.
 Edgerton : Yah,
 Joan : En heahu you see ()
 Edgerton : °Mhm,°
 Joan : Oh, well ().
 [→ Edgerton : Now look (.) im-uh Ilene has just pushed a note
 in front'v my fa:ce,

(17) (W:PC:1:MJ(1):21)

- Jenny : be et school.
 Marian : n:No::, hh No [they wo::n't.=
 Jenny : [()]
 Jenny : =when the [:y want to] go: [bec'ss u h:,
 Marian : [Nao:]
 (0.5)
- Jenny : Anyway.
 Marian : i [Ye:s, .h
 [Jenny : [Ani:ta ca me: u oh: they oll came over
 all'v them=

Unlike itemised news enquiries which enquire into an activity or circumstance, the above news announcements report on an activity; for example, Geri's mother meeting Michael (15), Edgerton receiving a note (16), and Anita visiting (17). The announcement, structured as an activity report, displays three characteristic features, which will be seen to have particular sequential relevancies for next turn. First, the activity reported is speaker-related, as opposed to being recipient-related as it is in itemised news enquiries. It is current speaker who in some way displays first-hand knowledge of the activity. So for example, it is Shirley who knows that mother has met Michael (15), Edgerton who has received the note (16) and Jenny who has been visited (16).

Second, whilst the activity reported is speaker-related it contains components which display that the current speaker orients to the recipient as having some knowledge of aspects of the report. In examples (15), (16), and (17) above, current speakers orient to the recipients as knowing the third parties who figure in the activity report by using their christian names as the sole reference term.¹⁵

Since the activity report is structured to display that the activity involved the speaker first-hand, it proposes that a recipient does not know about the activity being reported, or at least that the recipient is known to have not been involved. However, because current speakers also propose that the recipients know the principals of the report, they further orient to the recipients as candidates for hearing the news about the persons whom they know. This news is something that current speakers are able to tell because of their first-hand knowledge.

The third feature which is characteristic of news announcements structured as activity reports is that they are produced as partial reports. That is, there is more that could be told than is actually told in the activity report. For instance, in fragment (15), such things as where

and how mother met Michael, what happened, etc., are available to be told, whilst in example (16) what the note is remains untold, and in example (17) Jenny does not indicate what they did and said, how things went, etc.

The activity report, thus, selectively presents aspects of the activity whilst projecting that there is more which could be told. Therefore, these announcements do not, in themselves, constitute 'news deliveries', but rather 'headline' news which, following an appropriate response (as will be detailed above), may then be delivered.

These three features of news announcements project particular sequential relevancies for the next turn. Since the news announcement 'headlines' the news about which there is more to tell, it offers that news as available to be told; that is, as available for delivery in some further turns at talk. However, since current speaker in making a news announcement orients to next speaker as being deficient with respect to the available news, and should this deficiency indeed be the case, a recipient cannot contribute to telling the news, nor fill in the, as yet, untold details of the news. Furthermore, the news announcer has oriented to the next speaker as a candidate for hearing the news. Recipients of news announcements may design their turns under the auspices of these relevancies and testify to their candidacy as recipients of news.

They may do this by providing the sequential opportunity for the news announcer to go on and develop talk on the activity reported in the news announcement, that is, to elaborate on the news. Next speakers may use items that relevance talk on the reported activity. These are topically embedded in the prior turn and do not, themselves, elaborate on the news. This is consistent with the news announcer's orientation to the recipient as not possessing the news. Next turns may thus *topicalise* that news. That is to say, they provide the sequential occasion to now talk to, and elaborate upon the news.

(16) (Heritage:III:1:5:3)

Edgerton : Now look (.) im-uh Ilene has just pushed a note
in front'v my fa:ce,

→ Joan : Ye:s?

(17) (W:PC:1:MJ:(1):21)

Jenny : Ani: ta came: u oh: they oll
came [over all'v them =

Marian : [Fer Eastuhr]

Jenny : =o:n [uh ().
 → Joan : [Did the:;y, Oh: good:d. ·hh

(18) (Heritage:V:2:6:3)

Ilene : I've jus' got u – I've jus' been getting suh-uh
 buying uh doing my shopping
 → Joyce : You ha:ve

With the production of the topicalising response a warrant is established for the news announcer to go on in next turn and elaborate on their previously announced news. This can be seen in the continuation of the above extracts.

(16) (Heritage:III:1:5:3)

Joan : Yes?
 (0.3)
 Edgerton : Ten pou:;nds,

(17) W:P:C:1:MS(1):21)

Marion : Did the:;y, Oh: good:d. [·hh
 Jenny : [Eh
 (.)
 Jenny : Juus (0.2) came 'euhr for a cuup a'tea in the
 ahftinoon.

(18) (Heritage:V:2:6:3)

Joyce : You ha:ve
 Ilene : An' getting the various bits of biscuits'n stuff
 in.

The turns to talk that constitute the news announcement sequence like itemised news enquiry sequences, may be used to begin a topic. They, too, are designed to begin talk on a topic in a mutual and interactional way, and they too, are capable of generating talk which carries the news item over an extended course of conversation. Both of these aspects can be elaborated upon.

News announcements only headline news and are designed to receive a response which will provide the sequential opportunity to go on and fill in the news. Accordingly, for that opportunity to be occasioned, both participants are involved in the production of the sequential posi-

tion which is to be occupied with material on the newsworthy item. The design of a news announcement sequence is, thus, capable of interactionally and mutually beginning a topic.

News announcement sequences are also designed to receive extended talk on the material they carry. The news announcement proposes that there is more to tell about the item, and actively provides for a response from a recipient that will provide the sequential opportunity to tell more. Again, the news announcement sequence may be used for beginning a topic because, as a sequence of talk, it provides the occasion to produce extended talk on the item of news.

Whilst a topicalising response provides the sequential opportunity for the original news announcer to now go on and elaborate on the news it is, nevertheless, a recurrent observation that they may not elaborate in the manner that was observed in examples (16), (17), and (18), but that rather they may produce an item which only confirms the previously delivered news.

(19) (Rahman:B:1:JMA (13):4)

- Jenny : ·hhheh u-hOh: deah ·hhh I [went round lahs' =
 Ann : (Ho:peless.)
 Jenny : = night cuz Ida'd got huhr fuhr::niture so she'd
 rung me up t' say
 Ann : [Oh hahs she.
 → Jenny : Mm::.

(20) (FD:Finger:1)

- B : Oh I got hurt a li'l bit las' night
 C : You did.
 → B : Yeah,

(21) (Goodwin:91(b):3)

- J : Terry is got the ki:ds,
 (0.3)
 A : ↑Terry doe:s,
 → J : Yep

In these instances it would appear that the news announcer is conforming that there is news and is thereby displaying an orientation to the prior speaker as having been in receipt of delivered news. However, as was just noted, the recipient's response to the news announcement is located topically in the prior turn and permits topical development.

Therefore the news announcer in only confirming the previously announced news may make a move that could possibly curtail continuation of the topic because the news announcer does not provide further material for the recipient to talk to. Thus by not elaborating on the news the news announcer has not provided a resource for further talk on that news and this may possibly curtail the development of the topic.

A question can, consequently, be posed: what might the news announcer be doing by not elaborating upon the news given the sought after sequential opportunity to do that? Further, what sort of activity may the recipient of the possibly curtailing move engage in? These two questions will be carried over into the next section and will inform part of the consideration of 'topic pursuit'.

IV In pursuit of topic

The sequences of itemised news enquiries and news announcements, together with the topic initial elicitor sequence, furnish conversationalists with at least three ways in which a topic that is disjunct from prior topic(s) may be produced in sequential environments where topics do not flow from one to another. It has been observed here, however, for itemised news enquiries and news announcements, that moves which may possibly curtail the production of topic may be made, and it was previously observed (Button and Casey 1984) that a possible curtailment move could also occur in response to a topic initial elicitor where a recipient produced a no-news report.

Such possible curtailing moves do not, though, entail that interactants halt attempts to generate a topic, and it can readily be found that following possible curtailing moves attempts to *pursue* a topic may be made. Topic pursuit may be done by using one or other of the three sequence types' initial turns. Thus, in example (22) below the possible curtailment of an attempt to generate topic initiated by a topic initial elicitor is followed by an itemised news enquiry. In example (20) the possible curtailment of a topic initiated by a news announcement is also followed by an itemised news enquiry, whilst in example (11) the possible curtailment of topic production initiated by an itemised news enquiry is followed by, and this will be clarified subsequently, a news-recipient's version of a news announcement.

(22) (HG:II:19)

- Nancy : What's doin
 (.)
 Hyla : aAh:, noth [i:n:,
 → Nancy : [Y'didn't g o meet Grahame?

(20) (FD:Finger:1)

- B : Oh I got hurt a li'l bit las' night.
 C : You did.
 B : Yeah,
 → C : Wut' app'n tih you.

(11) (Goodwin:91:1-2)

- A : How's Tina doin
 (.)
 J : Oh she's doin goo:d.
 → A : Is she I heard she got divo:rc:ed.=

The use of one of the sequence type initial turns to pursue topic production can be found to be systematically related to both the original move to begin a topic and to the possible curtailment move, and thus it is fitted for the sequential position it occupies. Attempts to pursue topic production will be considered by looking first at turns which follow a possible curtailment of a topic initial elicitor, then at those which follow curtailed news announcements, and, lastly, at those that come after curtailed itemised news enquiries.

1. *Curtailed Topic Initial Elicitors*

Below are two examples (23) and (24), of no-news reports which are made in response to topic initial elicitors. In example (23) the recipient of the no-news report attempts to pursue the production of topic using an itemised news enquiry, and in (24) the person who produces the no-news report goes on to return a topic initial elicitor.

(23) (JG:6:8:3)

- Maggie : ·h What 'ave you been up to
 (0.5)
 Lawrence : We:ll 'uv about the same thing. One thing
 anoth [er. I sh'
 [Maggie : [Ya still in the real estate business
 Lawrence?

(24) (NB:III:2:R(rd):2)

- F : W't's goin o:n
 → J : Not mu:ch. Wuddiyuh know

The itemised news enquiry and the returned topic initial elicitor can be seen to be systematically fitted for the respective positions which they occupy. Taking example (23) the itemised news enquiry preserves a feature of the original topic elicitor by continuing to orient to recipient's news. However, it can now, in addition, increase the pressure to collaborate in beginning a topic because where the recipient of a topic initial elicitor reports no-news, then, presenting the recipient with a possible newsworthy item which 'belongs' to them, and, furthermore, providing that speaker with a sequential place to tell more about the item offers a basis and an opportunity for the delivery of a report. In example (23) Lawrence goes on to deliver a report concerning his real estate activities.

(23) (JG:6:8:3)

- Maggie : Ya still in the real estate business, Lawrence ?
 Lawrence : Wah e'uh no my dear heartuh ya know Max Rickler
 h: (0.3) ·hhh uh with whom I've been 'sociated
 since I've been out here in Brentwood
 Maggie : [has had a series of um-bad experiences
 [Yeah
 Lawrence : uhh ·hhh I guess he calls it a nervous
 breakdown .hhh

This procedure can be put to a particular use where beginning a topic coincides with the further activity of 'eliciting a due report'. In the following extracts, (22) and (25), Nancy and Agnes attempt to initiate a topic with a topic initial elicitor, but both attempts are followed by a no-news report. Within the sequential vicinity of the no-news report, and indeed contingent upon that report, each of the initial speakers is now able to enquire into a particular item which was not present in the original enquiry.

(22) (HG:II:1)

- Nancy : What's doin
 (.)
 Hyla : aAh:, noth [i:n:,
 → Nancy : [Y'didn't g]o meet Grahame?

(25) (NB:IV:13:2)

- Agnes : What's new with you,
 (0.8)
 Portia : Nothing,
 Agnes : [Yeh—
 Portia : [really,
 → Agnes : I-yih had Len down.

Both of these itemised news enquiries have an accusatory character, that is they formulate an issue in such a way that their recipients are held to be active and responsible for the indicated matter. Notice the contrast between “You didn’t go meet Grahame” and “What happened with Grahame”, and between “I-yih had Len down” and “Len was down”. The utilisation of the accusatory form means that each of the recipients is held accountable for the matter formulated by the itemised news enquiry. Furthermore, the occasion for the now *itemised* news enquiry is the prior absence of the report. That is, in the absence of a report, current speakers may use an itemised news enquiry to get to an issue they display as reportable. The recipients of the itemised news enquiries are now given the opportunity to report on the matter for which they are held responsible. The enquirers are, consequently, eliciting a report which they display as being due to them.

This sequence is produced through the same systematic procedure used in example (23). However, in that example the itemised news enquiry offered the recipient a basis and opportunity for the delivery of a report, whereas in examples (22) and (25) the itemised news enquiry undercuts the grounds for the prior no-news report by providing news-worthy material where it had been proposed that there was none. In this manner it provides for a report as now being due. In the first instance Hyla continues by commencing just such a report, and in the second instance Portia eventually delivers news regarding Len, following Agnes’s continued orientation to hearing news about Len being down.

(22) (HG:II:1)

- Nancy : What's doin,
 (.)
 Hyla : aAh:, noth [i:n:,
 Nancy : [Y'didn't g]o meet Grahame?
 Hyla : ·pt ·hhhhahh Well, I got ho::me, =
 Nancy : = u-hu:h?
 (.)

Nancy : Ayu:::n:: :hh he hadn' called yet 'n there weren't
any messages'r

(25) (NB:IV:13:2-3)

Agnes : What's new with you,
(0.8)

Portia : Nothing,

Agnes : [Yeh-

Portia : [really,

Agnes : I-yih had Len down

Portia : Yeah.

Agnes : Yeah I saw iz car las' ()

Portia : [Yeah, His mother's real low.

The procedure for eliciting a due report may also coincide with beginning a topic. Whilst it is oriented to eliciting a due report it can contemporaneously constitute a topic for talk. The use of an itemised news enquiry may, consequently, also pursue the production of a topic, where the topic is one which the topic initial elicitor could have drawn forth. It is used systematically with relationship to the no-news report, being used in the face of a no-news report when, at least as far as the current speaker is concerned, there is, in fact, some matter to report. However, whereas in example (23) the topic that is eventually begun may or may not have been the one which could have been possibly initiated in response to the topic initial elicitor, the particular topics which are pursued in examples (22) and (25) are ones now oriented to as the topics that could have been initiated in response to the topic initial elicitor. In all cases though, the itemised news enquiry is systematically fitted and selected to pursue topic in a sequential environment in which topic generational moves made by a topic initial elicitor may possibly be curtailed.

A returned topic initial elicitor may also be systematically fitted for the position following on from a no-news report, as in the example below.

(26) (NB:III:2:R(rd):2)

J : Hello there.
(0.6)

F : Hello:

J : Hello: hello.
(0.4)

F : W't's goin o:n,
 → J : Not mu:ch. Wuddi ꞑ yih know,

J's no-news report may curtail F's prior move which is oriented to the initiation of a possible topic. However, by going on to return a topic initial elicitor, J may display that although she is not introducing a possible topic initial she is, nevertheless, oriented to the generation of a topic. J may then pursue topic generation although she declines to introduce a possible topic initial. This is sensitive both to the original topic generational move, and to the no-news report. This is because a returned topic initial elicitor displays, like the first topic initial elicitor, an availability for continued talk,¹⁶ and it also preserves a feature of the no-news report (that there is no news being reported) as it, too, does not use speaker-related news to begin the topic. Rather, it places the onus for the possible initiation of a topic on the person who made the first move to begin a topic.

The returned topic initial elicitor is thus fitted for the place it occupies following on from a no-news report. It still displays that the speaker is not introducing newsworthy material and it also orients to the prior speaker's proposal in their topic initial elicitor that they are not introducing newsworthy material. This latter point resides in the fact that the returned topic initial elicitor provides an occasion for the prior speaker to now introduce some possible newsworthy material though providing for that material to be down-graded in newsworthiness.¹⁷ This is in keeping with the prior proposal made in the original topic initial elicitor that a speaker is not introducing newsworthy material.

So, following no-news responses to topic initial elicitors, topic production may be systematically pursued. However, the topic that is pursued may be oriented to in two different ways. The first orientation may be displayed by either an itemised news enquiry or by going on and returning a topic initial elicitor. It is where the topic pursuit introduces or generates that topic for the *first time*. Where a topic is introduced by an itemised news enquiry it provides a basis and opportunity for the delivery of a news report, and where a topic is generated through a returned topic initial elicitor, it provides an opportunity to introduce anything that is possibly newsworthy. The second orientation is displayed where the production of a topic coincides with now eliciting a due report. Here an itemised news enquiry may be used, but it takes the form of an orientation to a particular item which the current speaker presents as one that the original topic initial elicitor could

have drawn forth. Here, then, the pursuit of a topic may *not* be oriented to broaching the topic for the first time but is oriented to providing for talk on a topic which was being previously addressed, albeit, indirectly, by the prior topic initial elicitor. A question can now be posed: are there any methodic grounds for pursuing a topic's production in a way that displays one or another of these two orientations?

An answer to this question can be developed by first considering the following fragment.

(27) (NB:III:1:4)

1. Fran : Whad'r y' guys doin et the bea::ch
2. Ted : n:No:thin, hh
3. (.)
4. Fran : NO:the:: [:in,
5. Ted : [No::,
6. (0.2)
7. Fran : Oh: good he [av'n.
8. Ted : [Get'n] pi:nk,
9. (.)
10. Ted : hh [hn, hh-hn] =
11. Fran : [Hu: h?]
12. Ted : = ·hh Gitt'n ↑pi:nk,
13. Fran : Wah thoughtchu weren't goin down tel nex'seh-u-th'
14. week eh:- ah mean the end a' the mo:nth.

Fran's initial enquiry (line 1) is followed (line 2) by Ted's proposal that there is no-news concerning them being at the beach. Fran (line 4) recycles the no-news report and thereby presents Ted with his original no-news report to talk to. This recycle can operate as a possible 'challenge' to Ted's no-news report by providing him with an opportunity to amend or elaborate upon his previous report. Ted (line 5) preserves the no-news report, which Fran (line 7) marks as surprising. Ted now introduces material pertinent to them being at the beach (lines 8 and 12). Following this, however, Fran (lines 13 and 14) reveals a possible resource behind the initial enquiry, which is Ted's presence at the beach before the expected time. Ted may now directly address this. In this respect Fran's previous 'challenge' of the no-news report may display an orientation to Ted having *withheld* a report on their, as far as Fran is concerned, premature arrival. It could provide the opportunity to make that report where it had been, for Fran, previously withheld.

Something similar may be found in the following extract.

(28) (JG:I(S):X15:3)

Marvin : How'r things goin,
 Pete : Aw:::::noth'n doin
 Marvin : Noth'n doin uh,

Here Pete proposes that he is not reporting news, but does not go on and provide any other topic productional activity as does, for example, J in extract (26), where following on from the no-news report the speaker returned a topic initial elicitor. Like Fran in the previous extract, (21), Marvin recycles the no-news report and again provides for the recipient to address that report. Again like Fran, Marvin may 'challenge' the no-news report and in doing so may display an orientation to Pete as having withheld some item of news. It subsequently emerges that Pete is out of work.

(28) (JG:I(S):X15:4)

Pete : Jee:z's ah'v had a hell'va ti:me.=
 Marvin : =hih u-Hev you?
 (0.3)

Marvin : [wuh
 Pete : [Since the ei:ghth'v O:ctober.
 (0.2)

Marvin : W:uh-u what's 'a:t.
 (0.2)

Pete : We:ll ah nothing t' DO:;
 (0.3)

Marvin : Oh you mean yer not workin?

If the examples in which topic was pursued through an itemised news enquiry, which is also designed to elicit a due report, are returned to it emerges that the form of the no-news reports is similar to those in the above two fragments. The speakers make no-news reports – “aAh: nothi:n” (22), and “Nothing” (25) – but they do not go on and provide either a basis for that report nor do they project other and particular relevant next activities for their recipients to be occupied with.

(22) (HG:II:1)

Nancy : What's doin,
 (.)

Hyla : aAh:, nothi:n:

(25) (NB:IV:13:2)

Agnes : What's new with you.
(0.8)

Portia : Nothing.

These extracts contrast with the other two examples. In example (26) J goes on and returns a topic initial elicitor and thereby furnishes the grounds for the next speaker to be engaged in a particular next activity which is the presentation of a possible newsworthy item. In example (23) Lawrence, in reporting no-news, provides the grounds for that report in terms of it being 'business as usual'.

(26) (NB:III:2:R(rd):2)

F : W't's goin o:n.

J : Not mu:ch. Wudd:yih know

(23) (JG:6:8:3)

Maggie : h What've you been up to.
(0.5)

Lawrence : We:ll 'uv about the same thing. One thing
anothrer. I sh'

It appears that where a no-news response to a topic initial elicitor is formulated so as *not* to reveal the grounds for the report, nor in such a way that there is a projection for a next speaker to be engaged in activity oriented to topic generation, the recipient may orient to that bare no-news report as possibly withholding some newsworthy material. They may consequently attempt to pursue the presentation of that material, and in doing so pursue a particular topic. Contrastingly, topic may be pursued where that topic is not located in the no-news report. A basis for orienting to a topic which is being pursued following a possible curtailing response to a topic initial elicitor may, thus, reside in the form of the possible curtailment. Where pursuit of topic coincides with eliciting a due report the issue seems to be not so much concerned with whether or not there is news but with how the person who possesses the news is to elaborate on the news. Following the original topic initial elicitor news may be voluntarily shared with the co-participant whereas following the itemised news enquiry which pursues topic, the elaboration on the news is elicited. The organisation of topic pursuit may then be sensitive to the issue of how news is approached and how a speaker may elaborate on that news. This issue will be expounded in the conclusion.

2. Curtailed news announcements

The examination of news announcements revealed that the recipients may structure their responses as ones which are topically embedded in the news announcement, and which provide the sequential opportunity for the news announcer to elaborate on the news, but that following this topicalising activity the news announcer may just confirm the news and thus possibly curtail the production of the topic. It can now be observed that recipients of a possible curtailment may use an itemised news enquiry in order to pursue topic productional activities.

(19) (Rahman:B:1:JMA(13):4)

- Jenny : ·hhheh u-hOh: deah ·hhh I [went round lahs' =
 Ann : [(Ho:peless.)
 Jenny : = night cuz I da'd got huhr fuhr: :niture so she'd rung
 me up t' [say
 Ann : [Oh hahs she.
 → Jenny : Mm [::.
 → Ann : [Dz it look ni: ce.

(20) (FD:Finger:1)

- B : Oh I got hurt a li'l bit las' night.
 C : You did.
 → B : Yeah,
 → C : Wut' app'n tih you.

(21) (Goodwin:91(b):3)

- J : Terry is got the ki:ds.
 (0.3)
 A : Terry doe:s,
 → J : Yep.
 (0.2)
 → A : Why::.

This gives rise to the following question: are itemised news enquiries systematically fitted for the position which they occupy following a possible curtailing move to topic production activities? In order to answer this question further features of the possible curtailing activity, in addition to those previously described, may be observed by returning to the question which ended the section on news announcements, that is, what might the news announcer be doing by not elaborating upon

the news given the sought-after sequential opportunity to do that?

The description of topic nomination sequences has revealed the interactional and mutual nature of beginning a topic. For news announcements it appears that this characteristic extends to *how* the news headlined in the news announcements is to be elaborated upon. Whilst the sequence may be designed to provide the sequential occasion for elaboration, speakers may engage in further activities which are oriented to how the news will be elaborated. This becomes a matter for both the news announcer and the recipient.

In order to develop this description note 13 can be returned to. It is indicated there that some forms of news announcements may occasion a recipient to display that they have some knowledge of the circumstances of the announcement and they may structure their response as a 'request to tell'. This structure provides for the elaboration of the news to be a relevant next activity, but it also projects that in elaborating, the news announcer will be '*answering*' the prior speaker. Contrastingly, where the response to the news announcement is a topicalising one, and although it may provide the occasion for elaboration, any elaboration that may be done, given that the topicalising response does not actively request the speaker to elaborate on the news, takes the form of the '*volunteering*' of news.

Where the recipient of the news announcement provides a topically embedded response but one which is not structured as a request to tell, then, *not* elaborating on the headlined news in the next turn proposes that in order for the recipient to receive that elaboration they may have to construct their next turn in such a way that the sequential occasion for elaboration is specifically produced. A systematic consequence of the original news announcer having constructed their turn as one which confirms that there is news but without having elaborated on that news, is that any subsequent elaboration may be in the form of an answering. Not elaborating on the news systematically proposes that for elaboration to take place the recipient may have to request it, and this can result in the news delivery answering as opposed to volunteering, as it would have done in the turn following a topicalising response. It will be seen shortly that such an activity can be sensitive to other practical concerns of speakers.

Where the news announcer does not elaborate on the news the recipient is placed in a position in which they may pursue that elaboration and hence pursue topic production. Itemised news enquiries in this position can actively pursue elaboration and the production of

topic. The itemised news enquiry attends to the announced news and provides for the next turn to be one in which the news announcer can elaborate on the news in such a way as to be answering the prior speaker. It is in this respect that the itemised news enquiry is systematically fitted for the sequential position it occupies, as it requests elaboration, and provides for that elaboration to take the form of an answering. For examples (19), (20), and (21) the original news announcer goes on to elaborate on the previously announced news.

(19) (Rahman:B:1:JMA(13):4)

- Jenny : ·hhheh u-hoh: deah ·hhh I [went round lahs' =
 Ann : : (Ho:peless.)
 Jenny : = night cuz Ida'd got huhr fuhr::niture so she'd rung
 me up t' [say
 Ann : : [Oh hahs she
 Jenny : Mm [::.
 Ann : : [Dz it look ni: ce.
 [Jenny : ·hhhh Well it's↓ beautiful fuhrnitchuh ·hh But
 [eh:m (0.2) the table is gohr:geous'n the che:z. It's-
 [it's rou: nd.

(20) (FD:Finger:1)

- B : Oh I got hurt a li'l bit las' night.
 C : You did.
 B : Yeah,
 C : Wut'app'n tih you.
 [B : Well ah(,) like tuh cos' much little finger they had me
 [in surgr'y f'about three'n a haf hours gettin ()

(21) (Goodwin:91(b):3)

- J : Terry is got the ki:ds,
 (0.3)
 A : Terry doe:s,
 J : Yep
 (0.2)
 A : Why::.
 (0.4)
 A : Sh is gave'm (.) give'm up hu:her,
 [J : ee: Ya :h rilly, ah:::, (1.0) Shso:-y'know she got
 [married too young

The issue of whether news is elaborated by answering or volunteering can be sensitive to other matters of practical concern for the interactants. For example, in fragment (19) it emerges that Jenny has some negative comments to make about Ida and her furniture.

(19) (Rahman:B:1:JMA(13):4–5)

Jenny : ·hhh Ahnd eh-I like the cabinet ez well b't (.) it's
a bit (.) too big I:think fer wh_h ere ih ti:s.

Ann : _hUh huh Ye:s

Jenny : ·hhh I would've liked the two:- (0.2) It's a three:
(.) kubbid one.

(0.2)

Jenny : ·hh Ih tis lovely. ·hh But she's not very happy
bec'z there's eh:m ·hhh mahrks heahr'n mahrks theh-
ah wouldn' °ev'n'v noticed th'm°
quite honest_hly but you kno:w:=

Ann : _hNao: °(Nao:).°

Jenny : = Ida's uh: so p'tocilah.

·
·
·
·
·

Jenny : she likes the three becooz she wants
t'put all uh chiner in it.

Ann : Ye_h:s.

Jenny : _h·hhhh But eh:m ah-I think the two w'd look
ahbsolutely supuh.

In the news announcement sequence which initiated this topic it was seen that Jenny did not elaborate on the news which she had announced and that she placed Ann in a position of having to specifically enquire into the issue. Jenny may then be able to introduce her negative comments so as to be answering Ann's enquiry rather than volunteering her comments unsolicitedly. This may attend to what could be a sensitive matter: making adverse comments which pertain to a mutual friend. Her comments are now made not so much as volunteered but as requested.

In example (20) there is an issue of recipient's availability for talk. Just prior to the point from which the extract was taken, B has offered the possibility of closing the conversation.

(20) (FD:Finger:1)

- B : How's the city faring up there.
 (0.6)
- C : Prittih biggih
- B : Yea:h ah know w't [chu me^{an}:n]
- C : [(Ah men)] not
- B : [Well ah'll letache
 go then=

Providing for the news to be elaborated as an answering may then be sensitive to recipient's availability to talk as the recipient can unequivocally display availability with the request for elaboration. This issue of availability may not be attended to so sensitively where the news is volunteered.

Whilst the news announcer may provide the sequential conditions for any elaboration on the headlined news to be produced as an answering as opposed to a volunteering, the recipient is required, nevertheless, to make an itemised news enquiry, and thus, determining how the news will be elaborated is, in this respect, at least, an interactional matter. It is possible, though, to find that the recipients of news announcements which could possibly curtail topic production do not pursue topic with an itemised news enquiry, but continue to produce topically embedded responses that do not specifically request the news announcer to elaborate on the news. Where the occasion has been provided for a recipient to collaborate in changing the form of an elaboration from a volunteering to an answering, but where the recipients do not collaborate in this activity by producing an itemised news enquiry, the news announcer may then go on and elaborate by volunteering the news.

(15) (Frankel:TC:1:1:1)

- Shirley : Uh:m yer mother met Michael las'night.
- Geri : Oh rilly?=
- Shirley : = Ye:ah.
- () : ·hh- ·hh
- Geri : ↑Oh:::.=
- ↳ Shirley : = Yeah. She wz taking Shilah out. just as we w'r
 coming back fr'm dinner.

(29) (TCII(a):14:15–16)

C : Th' reason they're vacant is becuz they got 'm all torn up.

(0.6)

C : Replumbing the whole place.
 E : You are?
 C : Yeah.
 → E : Wul goo:: d.h
 → C : Me a:nd my: plumber friend,

(30) (NB:IV:10:R(rd):56–57)

L : Oh'n she gave me the (.) most' beautiful swi:msuit
 ch've ever seen in yer li:fe,

(0.2)

E : Gave it to yuh:,
 L : Ye:ah.
 E : °Aw* :: [::°
 L : [A twunny two dollar o:ne.

This latter observation, together with a previous one (the observation that what might otherwise constitute a curtailment, that is, a news announcer not talking on topic following a recipient's topically embedded response, does not entail that topic production activities are halted at this point), would seem to suggest that news announcements are a 'strong' form of movement to topic constitution. A news announcement projects the relevance of the news over succeeding turns, so that the topic remains 'live' although no on-topic talk has occurred. The recipient can, and may specifically have been invited to, use an itemised news enquiry and thereby collaborate still further in the mutual production of the topic. Even where the recipient does not collaborate by providing an itemised news enquiry their response still, nevertheless, permits elaboration of the news and the topic remains 'live', as the news announcer still has the news to talk to. Although a news announcer may display a 'preference' to elaborate that news by answering as opposed to volunteering, that speaker is still able to go on and talk to that topic.

This issue of a 'preference' can be briefly expanded upon. If note 13 is again returned to it can be seen that where some forms of news announcements are followed by a 'request to tell' the news, the news announcer may elaborate on the news by immediately answering. However, where a request-to-tell format is not used by the recipient the

news announcer may not elaborate but can instead provide for the enquiry, which was not present in the prior response, to be made. Following this, elaboration may now occur, again as an answering. It is only where a recipient persistently does not specifically provide for elaboration to be done that eventual elaboration takes the form of volunteering.

3. *Curtailed itemised news enquiries*

In the examination of itemised news enquiries it was observed that their recipients may make a move that could possibly curtail the prior speaker's topic productional move. Two ways in which this could be done are by either an elaborated response, but which orients only to the enquiry without telling more, or by just minimally responding to the enquiry. Following such a possible curtailing move, however, a form of a news announcement may be used in order to pursue topic. This form is a news recipient's version of a news announcement; a version of the news which is given by the person who, in the initial turn, constituted themselves as the intended recipient of news.¹⁸

(11) (Goodwin:91:1-2)

- A : How's Tina doin.
 (.)
 → J : Oh she's doin goo:d.
 → A : Is she I heard she got divo:rc:ed.=

(12) (Heritage:OI:18:4-5)

- J : How'r you feelin
 → I : ↑Oh I feel ↑fine.
 (1.0)
 → I : °Abs'lutely ↑fine?°
 → J : Y:ih do.
 (.)
 J : Alright. Yih hadda good ↑slee:p?

(13) (Frankel:QC:1:2)

- L : How you feelin 'Mahrge =
 → M : =Oh fi:ne
 ↵ L : Cuz -- I think Joanne mentioned that yih weren't so
 ↵ well? a few weeks ago:?

In these three examples, as noticed before, the recipients of the itemised news enquiries treat them as 'personal state enquiries' by answering them with personal state declarations. The speakers who produced the itemised news enquiries then challenge the absence of any news report. In example (11) this is done by questioning whether Tina is "doin goo:d" with "Is she", followed by the grounds for so questioning, "I heard she got divo:rc:ed". In example (12) the 'challenge' takes the form of one encountered in the examination of topic initial elicitors; the prior speaker is given the opportunity – "Y:ih do" – to revise or amend their prior response. In example (13) the grounds for the absence of a news report are 'challenged' by revealing that the itemised news enquiry originates ("Cuz") from a report made by a third person, "I think Joanne mentioned that yih weren't so well? a few weeks ago:?"

In the course of the 'challenges', or following on from them, the speakers display that they know some more regarding the enquired-about item other than was actually displayed in the itemised news enquiry, and by structuring this display as a 'challenge' to the absence of news, they display the possible news which they present as of an order which the prior speaker could have delivered in response to the itemised news enquiry. In delivering this possible news, then, the original enquirer is giving a version which could have been previously delivered.

However, the form of this delivery also displays that the enquirer has only partial access to that news. This is achieved by orienting to the prior speaker as one who can confirm or disconfirm the possible news. In this respect the current speakers are still orienting to it as 'belonging' to the recipient.

So whilst announcing news, the speakers orient to it as something which they could have received, but in that announcement they simultaneously display only partial access to the news. They are, consequently, providing a version of the news; in other words, they produce a news recipient's version of a news announcement. In this way the recipients of a possible topic productional curtailing move can pursue topic by producing a form of a news announcement. This is fitted for the turn position it occupies in as much as it preserves an orientation to news which 'belongs' to the co-participant and it occasions the opportunity to talk to that news.

This activity displays some of the ordered features that were seen to figure in the pursuit of a topic both following a possible curtailing move to a topic initial elicitor, and following a possible curtailing move

to a news announcement. In the latter case, it has just been seen that the possible curtailing move could result in the news delivery being in the form of an answering rather than a volunteering. With respect to the possible curtailing move following the itemised news enquiry, a speaker may give a form of news announcement which is oriented to the prior speaker's news, so that any news will now be delivered as an answering as opposed to a volunteering. Again, as with possible curtailing moves to news announcements, the issue is not so much whether or not there is any news, but rather how that news is to be delivered.

As the examples unfold, however, it can be seen that the recipients of the versions of the news announcements continue to display a 'reluctance' to elaborate on the news. In example (11) A continues to pursue the matter and eventually gets J to elaborate on the news, but in examples (12) and (13), although both J and L continue to pursue an elaboration over several turns their recipients persistently 'refuse' to elaborate on the news, and both examples subsequently move to closings and the termination of the conversation.¹⁹

(11) (Goodwin:91:1-2)

- A : How's Tina doin.
 (.)
 J : Oh she's doin goo:d.
 A : Is she I heard she got divo:rc:ed.=
 J : = Mmhm?
 (.)
 A : Is she?
 J : (sh)sposeuh get rema:rried again thou:gh, next couple
 A'wee:ks,=
 A : = ↑Oh yer ↑kiddee:n. Who's she marryin.

(12) (Heritage:OI:18:4-5)

- J : ·hh Okay <How'r you feeling.
 I : ↑Oh I feel ↑fine.
 (1.0)
 I : ^oAbs'lutely ↑fine?^o
 J : Y:ih do.
 (.)
 J : Alright. Yih [hadda good ↑slee:p?
 I : [oYeh^o
 I : Yes thank you=
 J : =Y'r no [tih: [y'r not white anymoh.hh!
 I : [oYeh^o [oYeh^o

- I : No: <u – howde(h)h n(h)o ha I(h) loo (h)ook
t(h)iehh heh ·hhh
- J : O:khhaHHHHHy? [·ihhhh
eO:kay. ((smile voice))
(.)
- J : Bye [:,
- I : [So we'll see you laytuh,
- J : O:k [ay.
- I : [Bye:,
- J : Bye:,
..... end call

(13) (Frankel:Q.C.:1:2)

- L : How you feelin 'Mahrge.=
- M : = Oh fi:ne.
- L : Cuz – I think Joanne mentioned that yih weren't so
well? a few [weeks ago:?
- M : [Yea : h, Couple a' weeks ago.
- L : Ye:ah. An'yer alright no: [w?
- M : [Yeah. Everything's
a'right now.
- L : A'right good. ·hhh [uhkay
- M : [So jus'tell 'er I'll talk to 'er
about it t'morrow then.
- L : Ah:kay. [Swell.]
[Ok a]y bye
- L : Bye
..... end call

In these examples the pursuit of topic also coincides with the activity noticed for possible curtailment following a topic initial elicitor, of 'eliciting a due report'. The news recipient's version of a news announcement may occasion the opportunity to report on a matter that could have been reported previously, the absence for which, the recipient of the version is held accountable.

V. Conclusion

The three sequence types examined may be used to organise a topic beginning. Topic initial elicitors are used to elicit a possible topic

initial, and itemised news enquiries and news announcements are able to introduce a topic, which in the former case is oriented to recipient's news and in the latter, to speaker's news. Particular attention has been paid in this examination, and in the previous examination of topic initial elicitors, to the organisation of the sequences once they have been initiated. In the investigation that lies behind this current report an attempt was made, though, to answer the following question: given that there is more than one way in which to interactionally and mutually begin a topic, is there, on the occasion of using a particular sequence type initial turn, any methodic basis for its selection?

One way in which an attempt to answer this question was made was to consider whether or not a methodic organisational relationship exists between the initiation of a particular sequence type and the actual sequential position in which it was initiated. All three of the sequence types may be sensitive to the sequential environments in which they may be used, in that they are designed to interactionally and mutually initiate a topic in places where topic is not organised to flow from one to another, but an attempt was made to see if one or more of the sequence types displayed a particular sensitivity to a particular sequential environment. The only methodic relationship that could be observed, however, pertained to the initiation of topic in conversations' closing sections. Here, a topic seemed to be begun distinctly using a topic initial elicitor whilst news announcements appeared to be absent. The interest of this lay not in some statistical frequency but rather in the fact that the design of topic initial elicitors was particularly apt for generating topic in a closing section whereas the design of news announcements was not.

It has been observed, here, that news announcements may constitute a 'strong' move to introduce topic. However, elsewhere it has been described (Schegloff and Sacks 1973) how a closing section may militate against the introduction of a new topic. Hence, news announcements may not display a particular sensitivity to a closing section. Topic initial elicitors, conversely, in as much as they propose that any topic produced as a result of their enquiry is downgraded in newsworthiness, are sensitive to, and apt for a sequential environment in which the introduction of a new topic may be a delicate matter.

Since this seemed to be the extent of any regular relationship between the use of particular sequence types in a particular sequential position, a more fruitful line of enquiry into the initiation of any one sequence type to begin a topic emerged from asking "what was a speaker 'doing' in initiating a topic beginning in one way given that

there are a variety of ways in which topic could be begun?" It is this line of enquiry which has been developed in this analysis. By way of a conclusion this issue can be underscored for each of the sequence types.

One place, as was just indicated, where a topic initial elicitor may be used is in a sequential environment in which conversation may be in the course of being closed. Here, in using a topic initial elicitor, a speaker may display their availability for continued conversation. In as much as the topic initial elicitor provides for the possibility of 'anything' to be introduced, the eliciting speaker is orienting to continuing the interaction 'whatever may be talked about' rather than orienting to talk on a *particular* newsworthy item. The speaker may then, in using a topic initial elicitor, display an orientation to remaining in interaction with their co-participant over and above 'wishing' to talk about some particular matter. In the following example (33) Nancy displays a willingness to hear about anything that Hyla may find to be reportable, and she marks this as further for the conversation with "else". This displays an orientation to continuing in conversation with Hyla, whatever may be talked about, as opposed to working towards termination.

(33) (HG:II:15)

Nancy : You'll come about (.) eight. Right?=
 Hyla : = Yea::h,=
 Nancy : = Okay.

(0.2)

→ Nancy : Anything else to report,

(0.3)

Hyla : Uh::::::m:::,

(0.4)

Hyla : Getting my hair cut tihmorrow,=
 Nancy : = Oh rilly?

In the following example (31) a topic initial elicitor is used in an attempt to generate topic early on in the conversation.

(31) (Northridge:2:1)

Pete : Hullo,

Dave : Hello Pe te

Pete : Yeah.

→ Dave : (h)ts goin o::n

However, it emerges eleven turns on that there is a reason-for-call.

(31) (Northridge:2:1)

Dave : Tch we:ll what I wanda caw-w'talk t'yuh about
wha'yah doin next week.

Dave's previous use of a topic initial elicitor provides the sequential opportunity for Pete to introduce any news he may have, so although Dave has a reason-for-call, he is able to propose that the basis for their current interaction does not just reside in that reason alone. In this way Dave may, as Sacks (1972) describes it, 're-find' Pete. That is, he may be able to bring himself up to date with anything newsworthy that may have happened to Pete since their last interaction. The provision of this possibility can demote the status of the reason-for-call as the sole reason for the interaction. By making a first move to generate topic with a topic initial elicitor, Dave is able to propose that the interaction can be oriented to Pete's news and that it can take any topic, not just the reason-for-call, which can be subsequently delivered.

A topic initial elicitor may also be used to approach an issue without the speaker specifically mentioning it. Where beginning a topic coincides with eliciting a due report the use of a topic initial elicitor, in as much as it provides for 'any' item to be reported, may also provide the occasion to receive a report on the activity, even though the speaker has not directly enquired about that activity. Should, however, no report on that matter be offered, the original enquirer may directly mention the item with an itemised news enquiry. A speaker may, in producing, the original topic initial elicitor, display a sensitivity to co-participant. Pomerantz (1979) describes how such a sensitivity may be oriented to co-participants' business as *their business*. Thus, possibly introducing the matter with a topic initial elicitor provides for co-participant to share their business voluntarily. Should they not do so it is still possible for the original enquirer to occasion a report by directly enquiring into the matter. In the following example, (22), Nancy, without mentioning the matter, has occasioned an opportunity for Hyla to deliver the report which she eventually makes. It is only when Hyla does not begin with such a report that a direct enquiry is made with an itemised news enquiry. Nancy then displays her knowledge of a particular issue, thereby offering it as one which Hyla could have reported on; business that Hyla could have voluntarily shared with Nancy.

(22) (HG:II:1)

Nancy : What's doin

(.)

Hyla : a Ah:, noth [i : n : .]Nancy : [Y'didn't g]o meet Grahame?=
 Hyla : a Ah:, noth [i : n : .]

Itemised news enquiries display a similar sensitivity to the kinds of issues dealt with above. In beginning a topic with an itemised news enquiry a speaker may orient to a recipient's news and display a 'willingness' to hear recipient's news, thereby shaping some part of the conversation around co-participant. A speaker may, consequently, use an itemised news enquiry early on in the conversation to 're-find' a co-participant with relationship to some particular business. Thus in the following example Sheila begins talk on a matter pertinent to Tony by ascertaining the 'current state of play', and uses the response to shape her subsequent talk on the matter. Sheila is then able to comment on Tony's business but now in the light of Tony's current state, which she has been able to find out about with her initial itemised news enquiry.

(3) (SB:1:1)

Sheila : Hello:?

Tony : Hi: Sheila?

Sheila : Ye:ah.

Tony : How are you.

Sheila : Fi::ne, how are you

Tony : O::k:a:y

(0.2)

Sheila : Have yo::u heard yet

Tony : No::: not yet

Sheila : Well I sa:id you should've written again.

An itemised news enquiry may also be used to approach a particular matter, without as such mentioning it. However, whereas a topic initial elicitor may be used to get at a recipient-related matter, an itemised news enquiry may be able to get at a matter that recipient may know about but which is not, necessarily, their *personal* business. Here what might be their business is their *knowledge* of the matter. The itemised news enquiry can direct the recipient to a particular issue whilst it is also sensitive to how the recipient will share their knowledge. It can provide for them to volunteer their knowledge and

thereby it displays a sensitivity to their possession of the knowledge. So, in the following example (11), A subsequently displays that she is in possession of some news about Tina, but she originally initiates talk on that matter by providing the opportunity for J to volunteer the information. This displays a sensitivity to J's possession of the news and how she will deliver it. She can voluntarily share what she knows. It is only when this is not done that A actually mentions the particular item in which she is interested. The itemised news enquiry may operate in a similar fashion to one of the ways in which a topic initial elicitor may be used in as much as it can approach a matter without directly mentioning it. However, a topic initial elicitor here, might have received news pertaining to J whereas the itemised news enquiry may be used specifically to approach J's news about Tina.

(11) (Goodwin:91:1-2)

A : How's Tina doin.

(.)

J : Oh she's doin goo:d.

A : Is she I heard she got divo:rc:ed.=

The sensitivities that have been observed for topic initial elicitors and itemised news enquiries are also displayed by news announcements. In making a news announcement a speaker may headline some news without actually delivering news, and may elaborate on the news only when requested to do so by their co-participant. That the co-participant may request elaboration is a sequential possibility given that the news remains 'live' even when a news announcer has not elaborated on the news in a position in which that could have been done. A news announcement may then be able to approach some issue without volunteering any elaboration. Thus when the news announcer subsequently raises a potentially sensitive issue it has been requested, not volunteered. So in the following example (19), Jenny, as noticed before, is able, by *not* elaborating on the previously announced news to provide a place for Ann to request elaboration. This makes Jenny's subsequent comments ones which have been elicited rather than volunteered. This displays an orientation to the sensitive business of making judgment about a mutual friend's possessions.

(19) Rahman:B:1:JMA(13):4-5)

Jenny : ·hhheh u-hOh: deah ·hhh I went round lahs' =
Ann : Ho:peless,)

- Jenny : = night cuz Ida'd got huhr fuhr::niture so she'd rung
me up t' [say
- Ann : [Oh hahs she.
- Jenny : Mm [::.
- Ann : [Dz it look ni:ce.
- Jenny : ·hhh Well it's †beautiful fuhrnitchuh. ·hh But
eh:m (0.2) the table is gohr:geous'n the che:z
[It's – it's rou:nd.
- (Ann) : [(·hhh)
- (.)
- Jenny : And ih [ih-it's very luh-very very nice.=
- Ann : [Yes,
- Jenny : = ·hhh Ahnd eh-I like the cabinet ez well b't (.)
it's a bit (.) too big I : think.=
- Jenny : = fer wh [ere ih ti [:s.
- Ann : [Uh huh [Ye:s.
- Jenny : ·hhh I would'v liked the two:- (0.2) It's a three:
(.) kubbidone.
- (0.2)
- Jenny : ·hh Ih tis lovely. ·hh But she's not very happy
bec'z there's eh:m ·hhh mahrks heahr'n mahrks
theh

Beginning a topic using the three sequence types can consequently generate and introduce a topic in an interactional and mutual manner whilst being sensitive to the issue of how a topic is to be elaborated upon. For all three of the sequences the sensitivity revolves around the determination of whether the elaboration of news is produced voluntarily or is elicited.

NOTES

1. See, for example, Sacks (1967) and (1968). Briefly, Sacks describes how new topics are systematically placed with reference to some aspects of prior topic. This is a direct result of a pervasive conversational orientation to produce current utterances as related to prior, thereby displaying and preserving understanding. A product of this organisation is that topics flow from one to another. Jefferson and Lee (1980) deal with some systematics of topic flow, and Jefferson (1976) deals with related issues in her examination of story-telling. See also Casey (1981).

2. A topic beginning is constructed over a number of turns which are oriented to the task of initiating talk on a topic. Consequently a topic beginning is a particular mechanism for starting a topic. Topics may also start where speakers do not organise a topic beginning through a methodical number of sequential steps.
3. For a detailed exposition of this see Button and Casey (1984). However, because this current paper includes a consideration of this sequence a brief description of its operation can be given. The sequence is designed to interactionally and mutually generate a topic and consists of three parts occupying successive turns to speak. The first part is a topic initial elicitor which is produced as an enquiry into the possibility of next speaker presenting a report of a newsworthy event and is oriented to receiving that in next turn. In the example which follows it is Shirley who makes the enquiry following a neutral response to a personal state enquiry. The second part of the sequence is the recipient's presentation of a report of a newsworthy event. Geri offers that she had some friends over as newsworthy. However, this is systematically produced as a possible topic initial. In this example Geri marks it as possibly newsworthy, and as a response to prior turn by marking it as searched for – "Olemme^o see". The third part is a topicaliser that testifies to the appropriateness of the possible topic initial by providing for talk on the reported event, and is produced by the speaker who made the topic initial eliciting move, Shirley. This fragment of conversation is, as are all the others that will be presented, taken from recordings of telephone conversations, many supplied by Gail Jefferson.

(F:TC:1:1:12–12)

Shirley : Y'know I teh anyway it's a hunk a'shit goes on I don'
havgih tell you.

(0.7)

Shirley : ·hmhhhh ·t· hhhhh BU ::::T? hhh SO HOW'R YOU:?

Geri : ·t·hh I'm oka:::y?

→ Shirley : What's new,

↳ Geri : We :ll? ·t^olemme see^o las' ni^oght, I had the
girls ove r?

→ Shirley : Yea:h?=
((Continues on topic))

4. Topics which are started as reason-for-call may be produced using a different technique to the topic beginnings described here. Their design may involve outlining what is to be talked about.

(Rahman:C:DS(16):1)

Jenny : Oh hello theah

(Jenny) : ·hhh

Ida : Uhm ah'v rrung to ahsk uhm ·hh
wouldju like a ruun uup to Middlsb'r
in the mohrn ling

Jenny : ·hhkHey that's funny.

Topics beginnings which interactionally and mutually start a topic may be used, in the environment of openings, in the absence of forms of topic start like these.

All three of the environments involve the possibility of closing the conversation. This is evident for a closing sequence itself, and a prior topic shut-down following which a closing track may be initiated (see note 5) but it is also technically possible following an opening section that has not produced a first topic. No topic having been initiated, then, unless a topic is generated or nominated, conversationalists have nothing to talk to.

5. A topic may be shut down by a methodical and ordered completion of talk on a topic, for example, by the production of an aphoristic conclusion that sums up the topic (Schegloff and Sacks 1973). A closing track is talk that methodically furnishes the sequential conditions for an orderly movement into a closing sequence, for example, making arrangements, (Schegloff and Sacks, 1973). So, shutting down a topic may provide an occasion for making arrangements and a subsequent movement into closing the conversation.
6. In the first example a closing section has been initiated by Geri using a pivotal closing component – “^oOka:y^o – the closing initial potentiality being oriented to by Shirley – “Aright?” – (see Schegloff and Sacks (1973) and Button forthcoming). In the second example the prior topic has been shut down. Jenny offers an aphoristic conclusion – “hh that ‘ll teach i:m” which rounds off the talk on the topic and is echoed by Ida. In the third example, the returned greetings and enquiries into personal states making up this fragment’s opening sequence, have not been made topical, and neither have the turns been used to introduce reason-for-call.
7. See Jefferson and Lee (1980) for a description of the organisation of a trouble’s telling.
8. The itemised enquiry here is used in the sequential environment of a possible negative response to a prior topic initial elicitor. There is a relationship between the use of the two types of topic beginning and this is taken up later on in this analysis.
9. See Heritage (1984) for a description of ‘oh’ as a news marker.
10. Sacks (1970) for example has described how such objects may be used by recipients of a story that is in the course of being told to signal their understanding of a segment of the story whilst also providing for its continued telling.
11. Sacks (1964) discusses types of questions which once they are answered may provide for the possible completion of the conversation.
12. Subsequently Hyla makes a move that could possibly implicate another topic (what she did last night). Nancy makes a guess which could be on her prior topic where Sim may be the person Hyla was waiting to hear from. It emerges, however, that the guess is wrong and that Hyla, as Nancy eventually guesses, called Richard.

(HG:II:22–23)

Nancy : Sorry I brought it uhhhp
(.)

Hyla : Yeah,
(.)

Nancy : [·hnnnn,
 Hyla : [So em I:-:·.·hhh [hhhhhh-h-h-h-h
 Nancy : [Oh:::,
 (.)
 Hyla : Y'know w't I did las'ni: [ght?
 Nancy : [Wha:t,=
 Hyla : =Did a te:rrible thi:: [ng,
 Nancy : [You called Si:m,
 (0.4)
 Hyla : No:,
 (.)
 Nancy : What,
 (.)
 Hyla : ·t·hhhh [Well I had -
 Nancy : [You called] Richard,=

13. News announcements can be structured in different ways and placed in positions apart from those considered here. Only one form of news announcement and its use in the sorts of sequential environments noted for itemised news enquiries will be examined. It is concerned with news which is proposed as being 'brand new' for recipients. It appears that it is this form of news announcement which is oriented to interactionally and mutually beginning a topic which is disjunct from prior topic(s). Other forms of news announcements may involve a matter which is known about by the recipient and whilst they may also initiate a topic they may be used in other sequential environments to the ones informing this investigation. The two fragments below exhibit other types of news announcements. In the first example Hyla displays that she is continuing on the prior topic with "Bu:t" eventhough this is overlapped by Nancy's announcement. In the second example the prior topic has not been shut down when H makes her news announcement. In both instances the recipients display that the circumstances of the news announcements are not r.ew to them. Hyla enquiries into a person and an event previously unmentioned in this conversation, thereby displaying knowledge of the circumstances of Nancy's face hurting, and C enquires into an event, again displaying knowledge of the circumstances, that 'everyone' went 'somewhere' for their good time. In this respect the news announcements have invoked for their recipients some prior talked about (though not necessarily for 'this' conversation) matter, and accordingly they provide for material that was topical to form a resource for the production of their current talk. Both of the responses take on a 'request to tell' format (Heritage 1984) which will, as the analysis develops in the body of the text, be seen to contrast with those topicalising responses received by the news announcements described there, where the recipient does not display knowledge of the event beyond that which is revealed by the news announcement.

(HG:II:2)

Hyla : ·hhhh I c'n live without er, O ·hhhh
 (.)

- Hyla : That's a'right,
(.)
- Nancy : U-uh Oh::,
(.)
- Hyla : [Bu:t]
→ Nancy : [My f]:face hurts,—
Hyla : Ow't.°
(.)
- Hyla : Oh what'd'e do tih you.

(JG:IIa:6:10–11)

- C : She barewed-hm fa the da:y
H : ()
C : Ve:ry impressive two door convertible.
→ H : Lemme tell ya everybody had an evening las night.
→ C : Oh rilly, where did everybody go?

14. In the first example (15) the news announcement follows components which are part of the conversations' opening. This news announcement is not, though, the reason-for-call, rather it is being used to produce a topic in the absence of topic being developed from out of the opening components (see note 5). The second and third examples (16) and (17) are used where a prior topic is being bounded off. News announcements do not seem to be readily found in closing sequences; a reason for this is briefly outlined in the conclusion.
15. Sacks (1971) describes identification by christian names which he dubs Type I identifications, and identifications which are further elaborated, Type II identifications, and how there is a preference for Type I identifications, if possible. Sacks and Schegloff (1979) elaborate on this by showing how a minimal recognition resource such as a christian name is preferred, this preference being relaxed only in the face of a recognitional problem.
16. This point has been dealt with before (Button and Casey 1984). Briefly, it notices that in as much as the topic initial elicitor does not introduce newsworthy material and provides for 'anything' to be presented as a possible topic initial, the speaker may be oriented to continued interaction rather than hearing about some particular item of news. This issue is returned to in the conclusion to this paper.
17. Again this has been described in more detail before (Button and Casey 1982). It is to say that in as much as the person who produces a topic initial elicitor does not implicate newsworthy material – as in an itemised news enquiry or a news announcement – they provide an opportunity to produce a *possible* topic initial. This status accrues from the fact that anything that is offered as a topic that could be newsworthy has not yet been oriented to by the initial speaker as newsworthy – again in contrast to itemised news enquiries and news announcements. Consequently, the topic initial is only a possible one, and the news offered only possibly newsworthy, the initial speaker having as yet to orient to its newsworthiness. A topic initial elicitor, then, offers the opportunity to introduce possible news and in that respect provides for anything that is offered to be down-graded in newsworthiness. The sequence

- does, though, allow for this to be up-graded in the next turn by the speaker now displaying an orientation to the item by providing, through a topicalising utterance, for that news to be elaborated.
18. Pomerantz (1979) introduces this sort of issue when she describes how, should an 'indirect' attempt to approach some information not succeed, a speaker may then enquire more 'directly' by giving *their* version of the information which they are attempting to elicit.
 19. It was mentioned in the introduction that topics that are disjunct from prior topics are begun interactionally and mutually in order to warrant that trajectory for the conversation, and that should that topic not be mutually established, a place for initiating closings may be occasioned.

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