EMPIRICAL STUDY / ANALYSIS

Drafting *A Simplest Systematics for the Organization of Turn-Taking for Conversation*

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Abstract

Drawing on drafts and other material from the Harvey Sacks archive this paper examines the development of one of the defining papers of Conversation Analysis, *A Simplest Systematics for the Organization of Turn-Taking for Conversation* (Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson 1974). The discussion examines four drafts of the paper along with correspondence between the authors and with William Bright, the editor of the journal *Language* where it was to be published. The four drafts trace the development of the paper from a 13-page draft to the final 106-page final draft submitted to the journal. By exploring the drafts as they evolved the discussion highlights the development of the central ideas in the paper, the distinctive style of the paper as it is revised, the changes of authorship, and the role of the editor of *Language,* William Bright, in helping to shape the paper through his own detailed reviews.

Keywords Simplest Systematics · Harvey Sacks · Emanuel Schegloff · Gail Jefferson · William Bright

Introduction

In 1974 *A Simplest Systematics for the Organization of Turn-Taking for Conversation* (Sacks et al., 1974) was published in the journal *Language.* While from the late 1960s, several papers had been published examining conversational actions and components of conversation such as openings (Schegloff, 1968), side sequences

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(Jefferson, 1972), and closings (Schegloff & Sacks, 1973; Jefferson, 1973), the *Simplest Systematics* paper was to become widely regarded as *the* foundational paper of the 'field[1]' of Conversation Analysis (CA), and a central paper within Ethnomethodology.[2] The aim of *Simplest Systematics* was to explore the fundamental organisation of turn allocation. This meant describing a 'basic' method of managing turns and speaker selection that was both locally managed each time and a routine recurrent feature within and across conversational actions. That is, that the managing of conversational turns was context free and context sensitive.

> …we have found reasons to take seriously the possibility that a characterization of turn-taking organization for conversation could be developed which would have the important twin feature of being context-free and capable of extraordinary context-sensitivity. We look for such a type of organisation for the following reasons. To begin with, a problem for research on actual conversation is that it is always 'situated'—always comes out of, and is part of some real sets of circumstances of its participants… What might be extracted as ordered phenomena from our conversational materials which would not turn out to require reference to one on another aspect of situatedness, identities, particularities of content or context? …
>
> In sum, turn-taking seems a basic form of organisation for conversation— 'basic', in that it would be invariant to parties, such that whatever variations the parties bought to bear in the conversation would be accommodated without change in the system, and such that it could be selectively and locally affected by social aspects of context. (Sacks et al., 1974: 699f.)

In these passages, taken from early sections of the 1974 paper,[3] the authors describe the principle underpinning their analysis and what the two elements of the analysis are designed to achieve. For 'turn-taking' this would entail identifying and describing a basic mechanism for managing speaker change across forms of conversation, from the most informal conversation through to formal turn-taking found in such things as interviews, weddings, seminars, etc. In demonstrating that turn-taking in conversation was both orderly and managed locally across different forms of interaction the impact of the paper was groundbreaking in several ways. Although published in a major linguistics journal, the analysis demonstrated how this form of analysis could successfully address a core sociological problem, i.e.,

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[1] That the paper is often regarded as the founding paper of Conversation Analysis is discussed by Jefferson in correspondence between members of the Harvey Sacks Memorial Association and Schegloff around the late 1980's. In a letter to Schegloff dated March 15th 1988, Jefferson acknowledges the tendency to equate this paper with 'the field' of CA, as foundational. She also relates how she is uncomfortable with the idea of her being seen as a 'co-founder' of CA based on her co-authorship of this paper because it was based on work that Sacks had already done. See footnote 6.

[2] In their paper titled "In support of conversation analysis' radical agenda' Button and Sharrock (2016: 611) Button and Sharrock relate how Garfinkel described conversation analysis as the 'jewel in the crown of ethnomethodology'.

[3] While a version of the paper was later published in Schenkein's (1978) collection (Sacks, 1978), and a comparison between the two versions could be made, the focus of this paper is the archive materials in relation to the initial 1974 publication.

how social order is achieved, in this case, orderly speaker change and speaker allocation for doing social interaction. The paper was to become seen as foundational to the developing approach of Conversation Analysis as it demonstrated a systematic methodological form of analysis and style that could be replicated and adopted by others. And, while previous CA research had been published in anthropology, semiotics and sociolinguistics journals[4] (Schegloff, 1968; Jefferson, 1973, 1974), this publication, in the Linguistic Society of America's flagship journal, heralded what would become a major locus for CA research in linguistics and remains the most cited paper of the journal.[5]

As the argument and detailed analysis contained in the *Simplest Systematics* paper will be familiar to many, the focus of this discussion will be on exploring the development of the paper by the authors as it goes through various drafts to submission to *Language*. From this, the discussion then traces and examines the detailed reviews of the paper written by the editor William (Bill) Bright, and how these comments and suggestions are then addressed by the authors.

The materials introduced and discussed below are from the Harvey Sacks archive held at UCLA and consist of several drafts of the paper, correspondence between the authors and correspondence between Schegloff and William Bright. These materials, now over 40 years old, provide a unique insight into the development of one of the foundational papers for Conversation Analysis, but which also revolutionized the study of language and social interaction. Seen within the context of the entire Sacks archive,[6] the materials also provide a glimpse into the rich collaborative research environment developing at the time andwhich laid the groundwork for their radical approach to the study of sociology and social interaction (Fitzgerald, 2019). Following a brief introduction to the archive, the discussion is divided into two main sections. The first examines the development of the contents of the paper as it evolves through three drafts before being submitted for review, while the second section follows the review process examining the comments made by the sole reviewer, William Bright, and the responses and revisions by the authors.

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[4] This also meant that many of the earlier publications appeared in edited collections.

[5] *The Preference for Self-Correction in the Organisation of Repair in Conversation.* Schegloff, Jefferson and Sacks (1977) remain the 4th most cited paper.

[6] It is important to note that the original ideas for the *Simplest Systematics* paper are contained in several of Sacks' lectures from 1964, Spring 1966 and Fall 1967 which were circulated freely at the time, (correspondence contained in Box 6, Harvey Sacks Papers), as well as in a draft produced in 1970 as the manuscript *Aspects of the Sequential Organization of Conversation* (Box 19, Harvey Sacks Papers). Also, in Box 18, there is a very detailed 17-page outline of a chapter designated 'Chapter One' on storytelling which was to be 72 pages long (Box 18, Harvey Sacks Papers). While indicating this was to be part of a larger project or book it is not clear from this document which project or book this was to be.

The Harvey Sacks Archive and Its Contemporary Relevance

The Harvey Sacks archive is held at the Charles E. Young Research Library at UCLA and consists of 145 boxes containing multiple files, folders, books, cassette tapes, 16 mm film and other materials that were collected together from his office following his death[7,8] While the unpublished and published lectures along with some previously distributed materials from Sacks have been the topic of discussion over time (Schegloff, 1989, 1992; Jefferson, 1989; Watson, 1994; Lynch & Bogen, 1994; Edwards, 1995; Coulter 1995; Hester & Eglin, 1997; Silverman, 1998; Lerner, 2004; McHoul, 2005; Fitzgerald, 2021, Smith et al., 2021), Sacks' archive remains an almost entirely untapped resource, receiving little exploration beyond his published lectures (Sacks, 1992; Fitzgerald, in press).

This lack of attention is somewhat surprising as the archive provides a fascinating insight into Sacks and his colleagues at work and a unique view of his evolving analytic interests as he observed phenomena, collected instances as data and developed forms of analysis. Of the 145 boxes, the first third contains multiple manila files holding papers, drafts, large data sets, small data fragments, handwritten notes, books, transcripts of discussions and seminars, theses, correspondence and work at various stages. The later boxes contain books, theses, lectures and other larger folders of data and research materials that he had collected from various sources. Boxes 141 and 145 contain recordings of various kinds including reel-to-reel, 8mm and 16mm film as well as C60 and C90 cassettes.

The archive materials convey the rich collaborative environment of the research community that Sacks' and his colleagues created, including various recordings and transcribed recordings of data sessions and discussions involving many of the people around at the time, and various draft papers at different stages of development. The various drafts show the routine work of collecting data, generating ideas, doing analysis, and preparing manuscripts for publication, as well as research that remained undeveloped and unpublished. Amongst these materials are various drafts of the *Simplest Systematics* paper as well as correspondence between the authors and the journal editor that document the evolution of the paper, and which give a unique insight into how what was to become a foundational paper for the study of language and social interaction took shape. By tracing the process of drafting and responding to the reviews we are able to catch a glimpse of the work behind

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[7] Despite the archives relating to Sacks, there is a large amount of material that is not his work such as books, theses, reports as well as writing and collaborative discussions and transcriptions where it is not clear the speaker or speakers. To reflect this, and in consultation with UCLA archivists, the documents are referred to as from the 'Harvey Sacks Papers' rather than attribute authorship except where this is clear. Also, the date reference is the date of accessing the archives as the files in the boxes are loose and so can be moved and reordered. If the archive is subsequently catalogued by the library more boxes may be added to spread out the files across boxes.

[8] The establishment of the archive was not without controversy, not only in relation to the time spent between Sacks' death in establishing an archive but also its location and rules of access. The perceived delay by Schegloff in establishing the archive resulted in the formation of the Harvey Sacks Memorial Association in the late 1980s' by David Sudnow and others, including Gail Jefferson.

this paper and of the mundane and familiar process of getting this groundbreaking research published.

The Archive Materials

The materials examined below were identified from time spent in the archive and from the informal catalogue of the first forty-six boxes.[9] The materials examined consist of four major draft versions of the paper and various correspondence between Jefferson to Sacks and Schegloff, and between Schegloff and William Bright, the editor of *Language*. The different drafts chart the main developments of the paper and capture the major changes that were made as the paper was drafted and revised for publication.

The Four Drafts

1. Draft 1 (referred to as SJ) is an undated draft titled *An Initial Characterization of the Organization of Speaker Turn-Taking in Conversation*, with Sacks and Jefferson as the authors.[10] The paper is 13 pages long and consists of three sections. "I.

A Positioning of Conversation among the Speech-Exchange Systems" (pages 1–4), "II. A Simplest Systematics for the Organization of Turn-Taking in Conversation" (pages 4–8) and "III. Achieving Minimization of Gap and Overlap" (pages 8–13).

(Harvey Sacks Papers, 2017, Box 13, File, *Turn taking*)

2. Draft 2 (referred to as SJS-1) is an undated draft titled *A Simplest Systematics for the Organization of Turn-Taking for Conversation* and authored by Sacks, Jefferson and Schegloff. The draft is 43 pages long and includes the sections "I. Introduction" (pages 1–5) "II. A Simplest Systematics for the Turn-Taking Organization of Conversation", (pages 6–10) "III. How the System Accounts for the Facts", (pages 11–26) and "IV. The Type of Model this is" (pages 27–43).

(Harvey Sacks Papers, 2017, Box 13, File, *Turn taking*)

3. Draft 3 (SJS-2) is an undated, more complete draft titled *A Simplest Systematics for the Organization of Turn-Taking for Conversation.* The order of the authors remains Sacks, Jefferson and Schegloff. This version is 52 pages long and now includes the familiar sections found in the final published version. "I. Introduction" (pages 1–8), "II. A Simplest Systematics for the Turn-Taking Organization of Conversation" (pages 9–14), "III. How the System Accounts for the Facts" (pages 15–38), "IV The Type of Model this is" (pages 39–43), "V. Some Consequences of the Model" (pages 44–47) and "VI. The Place of Conversation Among the Speech

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[9] With thanks to Terry Au-Yeung, Wu Xiaoping and Rachel Chen for their work in helping produce a partial catalogue of the Harvey Sacks Papers.

[10] This is the draft published in Lerner 2004 (Sacks 2004) under the same title but with the original pencilled edits on the draft incorporated into this published version. The published chapter also has Sacks as the sole author but in the footnotes (pp. 10, n. 8) mentions that the draft originally included Jefferson as co-author.

Exchange Systems" (pages 48–51). This version includes various footnotes within the paper but not data or references. (Harvey Sacks Papers, 2017, Box 21, File, *T.T Paper (Drafts)*).

4. Draft 4 (SSJ) is also undated but has a note on the front page stating that it is to appear in *Language* in December 1974. This draft is possibly the final or nearly final draft and includes transcription symbols, extensive footnotes, data extracts and a bibliography. At 59 pages the actual length of the discussion takes up slightly more pages than SJS-2's 52 pages while the remaining pages are made up of 18 pages of footnotes, 6 pages of transcript conventions, 18 pages of data and 4 pages of references.

(Harvey Sacks Papers, 2017, Box 13, File, *A Simplest Systematics for the Organization of Turn-Taking for Conversation*).

Correspondence

- Jefferson to Sacks and Schegloff, March 8th, 1973.
- Bright to Schegloff, May 31st, 1973.
- Bright to Schegloff, December 17th, 1973.
- Bright to Schegloff, May 6th, 1974.

(Harvey Sacks Papers 2017, Box 21, Box 22)

Drafting a Simplest Systematics

The first draft of the paper, *An Initial Characterization of the Organization of Speaker Turn-Taking in Conversation* is authored by Sacks and Jefferson[11] (SJ). On page 1 the first section is headed '1. A Position [handwritten insert of 'ing' at the end of 'position'] of Conversation among the Speech-Exchange Systems' and begins with the paragraph.

> 1.0 While the talk that participants to each [written insert 'any' above 'each'] conversation do is quite variably distributed among participants, one massively evident social organizationally relevant orderliness their talk's distribution exhibits is that the taking of turns of talking. Though speakers change, it is overwhelmingly true that one person talks at a time in conversations, and that feature of conversation is preserved across variation in the number of parties to a conversation, its length, the relative amount each party talks, the size of their turns, etcetera. The feature's preservation must take work, the taking of turns must be organizationally achieved. Here, on the basis of audio recordings collected from naturally occurring conversations, we attempt to characterize, in its simplest systematic form, the organization of the taking of turns at talking in conversation (SJ, p. 1).

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[11] In a letter addressed to Schegloff, also shared between members of the Harvey Sacks Memorial Association, Jefferson writes that she actually had nothing to do with this draft and that Sacks put her name on it due to having some overlapping ideas.

Despite being only thirteen pages in length the draft contains some of the major elements of the later drafts and the published paper. The section on 'Positioning of Conversation…' introduces the idea of 'one party at a time', and suggests this is observable in 'debates, meetings, press conferences, plays, therapy sessions, interviews, trials etcetera'.

> 1.1 That talk proceeds in a one party at a time fashion [written insert 'while sp ch recurs', presumably referring to 'speaker change'] is not unique to conversation: It is massively present as well for debates, meetings, press conferences, plays, therapy sessions, interviews, trials etcetera, although these latter differ from conversation in how the feature is preserved (SJ, p.1).

In section 2 of this draft (SJ), under the heading *A Simplest Systematics for the Organization of Turn-Taking in Conversation* Sacks and Jefferson set out the basic set of rules on speaker change (SJ, pp. 5–6).

(1) If a current-speaker-selects-next-speaker technique is used, then the party its use selects has rights to, and is obliged to, take next turn to speak, and all others are excluded.
(2) If a current-speaker-selects-next-speaker technique is used, then on the next possible completion of the sentence current speaker is constructing, transition should occur; i.e., current speaker should stop and next speaker start.
(3) If, by any next possible completion of the current sentence of a turn, current- speaker-selection of a next has not been done, self-selection may—but need not—be instituted, with first starter acquiring rights to a turn at talk.
(4) On any next possible completion of some current sentence, current speaker may stop, but unless he has done selection he need not stop unless another has self-selected. (SJ, pp. 5–6)

Over the next page (6–7) the rules are then fleshed out leading to Section 3 under the heading *Achieving Minimization of Gap and Overlap* (p. 8) where they set out what they mean by 'gap' in the conversation as opposed to pause, and 'overlap' as different from interruption. In these brief 13 pages Sacks and Jefferson lay out the basic mechanism and rules for the allocation of speakers that would be at the heart of the final paper. By draft 2, (SJS-1), there are already several significant changes in title, authorship and the development of the ideas.

Firstly, the original subheading of Sect. 2 in the first draft (SJ), *A Simplest Systematics for the Organization of Turn-Taking for Conversation,* is retained as section II heading, but now also becomes the title of the SJS-1 draft. Schegloff is now included as the third author and the draft is now 43 pages in length, which is close to the final paper length without the appendixes and footnotes. Differences in the content of the two drafts (SJ and SJS-1) can be seen where some of the sections in SJ have been expanded upon in SJS-1. Also, in the opening paragraph of SJ (p. 1) there is a list of examples of turn-taking, 'debates, meetings, press conferences, plays, therapy sessions, interviews, trials, etcetera', whereas in SJ-1 the reference to 'plays' has been removed, suggesting that plays were seen as a different, possibly scripted and rehearsed, form of turn-taking.

There are also more substantive changes between the two versions. In SJS-1 the points describing speaker change have now been rearranged and have undergone some changes in the content and layout under the subheading 'Rules' (p7–8), becoming much closer to the final version.

> Rules. The following seems to be a basic set of rules governing turn construction, providing for the allocation of the next turn to one party, and coordinating transfer as to minimize gap and overlap for any turn (footnote 2):
>
> (1) At any next (of which 'initial' is an instance) unit-type's next (of which "initial" is an instance) transition-relevance place:
>
> > (a) If the utterance-so-far is so constructed as to involve the use of a "current speaker selects next" technique, then the party so selected has rights, and is obliged, to take the next turn to speak, and no others have such rights or obligations, transfer occurring at that place.
> > (b) If the utterance-so-far is so constructed as to not involve the use of a "current speaker selects next" technique, self-selection for next speakership may, but need not, be instituted, with first starter acquiring rights to a turn, transfer occurring at that place.
> > (c) If the utterance-so-far is so constructed as to not involve the use of a "current speaker selects next" technique, then current speaker may (but need not) continue, unless another self-selects.
>
> (2) If, at initial unit-types initial transition-relevance place, neither 1.a nor 1.b has operated, and, following the provision of 1.c, current speaker has continued, then the rule-set reapplies at the next transition–relevance place, until transfer is effected. (SJS-1, pp. 7–8)

Points 1–3 in SJ are now made points 'a, b, c' in SJS-1, and come under the first rule concerning the next action at a transition relevance place. Point 2 in the first draft is changed from 'current speaker using the next speaker selection' to the now more familiar focus on self-selection by a new speaker (SJS-1, pp. 7–8). Also, they introduce the term 'utterance-so-far' in SJS-1 (p. 7) that remains in SJS-2 (p. 10) but will become 'turn-so-far' in the revised final draft (SSJ, p. 11), and of course, appears in the published version (1974).

It is possible that the draft SJS-1 examined here is the version that Jefferson worked on and sent back to Sacks and Schegloff and which contains several changes she has made, along with aspects in the paper she found problematic. For example, as she goes through the sections, she notes the changes and her thoughts.

> Introduction. Mainly shortened and de-biographized. Removed reference to other research. Re-arranged list of 'conversation facts' (after difficulties encountered in section III).

Section II. It's absolutely exquisite. I've broken it up into paragraphs and added lexical versions of some of the numbers, in the interests of kindness to the reader.
Section III. Reorganized it, but that doesn't seem to help. Organizing the section around a list seems a weak way to present the materials. (That's my main quarrel with the section of the paper.)
....
Section IV. It's beautiful. Since I took out the "review of literature" from section I, I removed reference to it from the opening of section IV; also removed the earlier criticism of earlier research on page 42.
Section. V and VI. I Left alone.
(Jefferson, 1973. Harvey Sacks Papers, 2017, Box 21, File *T.T. Paper (Drafts)*).

Although it is not certain that this is the actual version edited by Jefferson and sent back to Sacks and Schegloff, there is some evidence to suggest this as the paragraph referring to prior literature on page 42 of SJS-1 has been struck through with a pencil. At the end of the letter Jefferson writes "I write this knowing that by the time you guys get it, you'll have rewritten the whole god damned thing" (Jefferson to Sacks and Schegloff 8th March 1973 p2)

Draft 3, SJS-2, titled *A Simplest Systematics for the Organization of Turn-Taking for Conversation,* has the authorship as Sacks, Jefferson, Schegloff, and has increased to 52 pages in length including references as footnotes. In comparing SJS-1 to SJS-2 it is notable that there has been some reworking of the section describing the features of turn-taking from 9 points in SJS-1 (p. 4) to 14 points in SJS-2 (pp. 6–7). In SJS-1 the features of turn-taking are described as.

In Any Conversation

(1) Speaker Change recurs or at least occurs.

    (a) Turn allocation Techniques are used.
    (b) Turn-constructional units are employed for the production of talk occupying turns.

(2) Overwhelmingly, one party talks at a time.

    (a) Occurrence of more-than-one-speaker-at-a-time are common, but brief.
    (b) Repair mechanisms exist for such events as more than one or less than one speaker talking.

(3) Turn order is not fixed but varies.
(4) Turn size is not fixed, but varies.
(5) Relative distribution of turns is not fixed or specified in advance.
(6) What parties say is not fixed of specified in advance.
(7) Number of parties can change.
(8) Talk can be continuous or discontinuous.
(9) Length of conversation is not fixed or specified in advance. (SJS-1, p. 4).

The changes made to the list in SJS-2, below, are partly due to the layout of the points as they are all given equal status without subsections. It is also notable that there is a reordering of the points between SJS-1 (above) and SJS-2 (below), and a new point (point '4') on 'Transitions' has been added.

In any conversation:

1) Speaker change recurs, or, at least, occurs.
2) Overwhelmingly, one party talks at a time.
3) Occurrences of more than one speaker at a time are common, but brief.
4) Transitions from one turn to a next with no gap and no overlap between them are common. Together with transitions characterized by slight gap or slight overlap, they make up the vast majority of transitions.
5) Turn order is not fixed, but varies.
6) Turn size is not fixed, but varies.
7) Length of conversation is not fixed, specified in advance.
8) What parties say is not fixed, specified in advance.
9) Relative distribution of turns is not fixed, specified in advance.
10) Number of parties change.
11) Talk can be continuous or discontinuous.
12) Turn allocation techniques are obviously used. A current speaker may select a next speaker (as when a current speaker addresses a question to another party); parties may self-select, in starting to talk.
13) Various turn-constructional units are employed for the production of the talk that occupies a turn. Turns can be projectedly "one word long" obviously, or, for example, they can be sentential in length.
14) Repair mechanisms for dealing with the errors and violations is heir to obviously exist. When more than one party turns out to be talking at a time, procedures for correcting that are used which differentiate various possible sources of its occurrence. The brief overlaps which can characterize transitions are adjusted to by brief repeats, whereas those that are produced by the starting of one party within the obvious course of another's talk are dealt differently. The brief gaps which characterize transitions are adjusted to by, for example, the use of "filled pauses," whereas the silences that occur within a party's turn or those that develop between turns are dealt with differently. Sanctions for attributable failures are obviously used. Complaints and gossip operate for turn-taking problems. (SJS-2, pp. 6–7)

While some of the changes are quite minor, suggesting that the authors were continuing to bed down the 'observable features', there are some more substantial changes made. The original sub-points on TCU's (1, b) and Repair (2, b) in SJS-1 have been developed and now appear as points 13 and 14. Also point 14 on Repair has expanded from one sentence in SJS-1 into a substantial paragraph in

length in SJS-2. In this paragraph, more details are given which point to differential sources of repair, length of repair sequence, as well as noting 'filled pauses', sanctions and complaints. It may well be that this expansion and detail may relate to the developing work on repair as a topic in its own right, and which would also be published in *Language* in 1977 (Schegloff et al., 1977).

Reviewing and Revising A Simplest Systematics

While the two SJS drafts are undated it is highly likely SJS-2 is the version of the paper that was initially submitted to the journal, *Language*. While the order of the authors remains Sacks, Jefferson and Schegloff the letter from the editor William Bright[12] dated the 31st of May 1973 was sent to Schegloff[13] (Harvey Sacks Papers, 2017, Box 22, Envelope addressed to *Prof. E. A. Schegloff*, also, File *T.T. Paper (Draft)*). There is no date on this draft but the dates of the correspondence suggest that this version, SJS-2, was finished between March and May 1973, between Jefferson's correspondence to Sacks and Schegloff dated March 8th, 1973, and the response and review by Bright sent to Schegloff in May 1973. As this was likely the version of the manuscript originally submitted to the journal it is fascinating to see Bright's response to the paper as well as the details of the review and their responses.

From the opening of the letter Bright was clear of the potential importance of the paper for linguists, but that he foresaw the difficulty for readers of the journal in understanding the paper. At the beginning of the letter, these difficulties were mentioned.

> Dear Manny,
> Now I have gone through "A simplest-systematics" again more slowly. I look forward to publishing it because I think linguists should know about this kind of work; but it is going to be very difficult for them to read. In fact, in its present form, I predict that very few linguists would persevere past the first section. (I would not have done so myself, except for my sense of editorial duty. By contrast, I read your "Sequencing"[14] paper with great pleasure. Do I guess correctly that the writing-style of "Systematics" is more Harvey's[15] than yours?)

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[12] Prior to the mid-1970s external peer review was not a common practice and that it was the decision of the editor or associate editors whether a paper would be published (see also Bright's comment in the letter dated 17th December 1973 discussed below). It was only during the 1970s that external peer review became common practice and so this may have changed after Bright's editorship.

[13] It is not clear from the materials examined why Schegloff was chosen as the corresponding author, but this may have been because Bright and Schegloff were both at ULCA and would likely have known each other in some capacity. Indeed, in the letters Schegloff is addressed as 'Manny', along with 'Harvey' and 'Hal' and in the letter dated 6th May 1974 to Schegloff Bright writes, "I now have some queries… which are in some cases complicated enough that I would rather handle then in writing," suggesting they also met and talked about the paper.

[14] Presumably, this refers to Schegloff's 1968 paper 'Sequencing in Conversational Openings'.

[15] The difficulty in Sacks 'style' referred to by Bright may well be that it was difficult to read because 'as a linguist' (Bright to Schegloff, 6th, May 1974) he considered a number of the sentences ungrammatical, that some of the words did not make sense, were even 'grating', such as 'situatednesses' (point 6), and that some of the writing was akin to 'German syntax, not English' (points 29, 42). This 'style' would seem to be attributed to Sacks rather than the other authors.

(William Bright, 31st May, 1973, Letter to Schegloff in Harvey Sacks Papers, 2017, Box 22, Envelope addressed to *'Prof. E. A. Schegloff*)

For Bright, this set of challenges could be overcome through removing redundancies adding more examples as well as some stylistic rewording, which he offers to do himself. From this Bright then provides more details of the things he is referring to.

Anyway, I repeat my previous opinion that the paper would be more readable if some of its redundancies were replaced with examples. I also think it needs very extensive stylistic rewording, which I am prepared to undertake in consultation with you. To give you an idea of what I have in mind, let me take you on a trip with me through my pencilled [sic] annotations on your MS. Some of these points are serious, some are trivial; and many more suggestions for rewording will be produced in subsequent, still-slower re-readings.
(William Bright to Schegloff, 31st May, 1973, p. 1)

Following these general comments, the 'trip' Bright refers to is an extensive series of detailed comments over 6 pages, containing 77 points, clarifications, questions and suggestions. The version of Bright's letter and review sent to Schegloff was then circulated between the authors and includes the annotated responses to the comments by the authors written by the comment as they address each point. The annotations made beside the comments are mostly shorthand such as 'nd', 'no change', 'done', 'd', ticks, and a few short-written responses. This fascinating document makes it possible to trace how the comments in the review were responded to and how the draft changed on the way to the final draft (4), examined below.

Draft 4 of the paper, 'SSJ', is 105 pages and includes extensive footnotes, data extracts and a bibliography, and on the cover-page makes reference to its future publication in *Language* in December 1974. The draft now has the familiar author arrangement of 'Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson'.[16] The paper is both edited in response to the list of comments by Bright, and incorporates further changes made as their research developed during the revision.

Returning to Bright's review of the paper 31st May 1973, and the authors' annotated responses, many of the responses refer to Bright's suggested edits of Sacks' 'style' and other short clarifications with either 'd', 'done', 'nd', ''not done' written in pencil or red pen beside the comments.[17] For example, point '(3)' has 'nd' next to it and point '(6)' has 'd' next to it, suggesting 'd' for 'done' and 'nd' for 'not done'.

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[16] As mentioned above, Jefferson, in a letter to Schegloff and shared with the Harvey Sacks Memorial Association, relates how Sacks had persuaded her to accept the change in authorship and suggested she use her unmarried name, Ziferstein, to make the change appear as alphabetical.

[17] While it is not clear which of the authors has written which annotations besides the comments it might be reasonable to posit that the annotations here were made by Schegloff who would have received the letter and so possibly gone about making the first round of revisions and editing comments before sending the annotated letter to Sacks as this letter was from the Sacks' archive.

(3) P. 3, line 9: "problematics" is not in my unabridged dictionary, and is the kind of thing which is likely to sound offensively jargonistic to non-sociologists. Does this passage just mean "the central problem"?

(6) P. 4, line 9 up: "situatednesses" and 7 up, "orderlinesses": these are really grating. I don't think plurals of -ness nouns are even grammatical for me. (Bright to Schegloff, 31st May, 1973, p. 1)

As Bright then continues down his list of observations and questions the annotation 'no change' also appears beside some comments, for example against comment 8.

(8) P. 6, items 2–4, and discussion on pp. 15–16: these points seem to me to show logical overlap, resulting in repetitiveness in the discussion. An alternative formulation would be: (a) overlaps are common, but brief; (b) gaps sometimes occur; (c) in most transitions, overlaps and gaps are slight or absent. (Bright to Schegloff, 31st May, 1973, p. 2)

While many of the questions and points raised by Bright have 'done', 'd ', 'not done', 'nd' and 'no change' beside them against one particular comment is written 'not to be changed' in green pen (comment 9, p. 2). This is the only comment written in green while others are in black pencil and then red pen.

(9) P. 6, items 5-11 and discussion on pp. 17–25: these all relate to unpredictable features of conversation: they seem to me relevant mainly in contrasting conversation with more highly-organized types of speech exchange, and so to be relatively marginal to this paper. I think 17–25 could be drastically abridged. (Bright to Schegloff, 31st May, 1973, p. 2)

The items '5–11' refer to the list of the 14 grossly observable facts about turn-taking that the paper then goes on to discuss in more depth in 'Section III How the System Accounts for the Facts' (SJS-2, pp. 15-43), and which takes up a major proportion of the paper. Here the authors are making the point that there is no fixed size of turn, length of conversation, content of the turn, distribution of turns, or number of parties. Also, that talk can be continuous or discontinuous. Bright questions the relevance of these features for *this* paper, suggesting they may work as comparative to other speech exchange systems. Of course, this was one of the central arguments being made in the paper, that while other speech exchange systems existed, and were more or less informal and formal, it was the flexibility inherent in the turn-taking system or model for 'ordinary' conversation that was the basic form of turn-taking in any conversation. That Bright's suggestion was explicitly rejected, '*not to be changed*', is clear. However, if they had drastically abridged this part of the paper a significant part of the detail of the argument would have not appeared and the paper would have been significantly shorter.

Bright also suggests at one point that they add some further references to Garfinkel's work to their current acknowledgement in footnote 42 (SJS-2), which became footnote 49 in SSJ and footnote 40 in the 1974 published version.

(57) P. 42, last line above fn.: explanation of "recipient design" would be helpful. I like the bow to Garfinkel in the footnote: since most linguists (even "sociolin-

guists") have never heard of him, or of "ethnomethodology", would you like to add some references to Hal's works? (Bright to Schegloff, 31st May, 1973, p. 4)

In the original footnote in SJS-2, the authors say, "We owe the possibility of ever having seen this, to us deeply important, point, to our acquaintance with Harold Garfinkel" (SJS-2, p. 42). It seems this suggestion was taken up and appears in the SSJ version as footnote 49 with references to Garfinkel (1967, 1970).

In comparing drafts SJS-2 and SSJ it is also possible to see several other differences that would then also appear in the 1974 published version. For example, in relation to the start of the list of observable features of conversation on page 6 and 7 (SJS-2 p6), which begins 'In any conversation:'. Bright refers to this in point 7 of his May 31st, 1973 letter.

(7) p. 6, top: "In any conversation"—does this mean you claim cross-cultural validity? Can you cite some evidence. (Bright to Schegloff, 31st May, 1973, p. 2)

This has been annotated with what looks to be 'nd me' in pencil and is addressed in footnote 10 in the SSJ draft and in the published version footnote 10 on p. 700 (1974). The question refers to whether 'any conversation' is a universal claim. In footnote 10 (SSJ p 65) they added an extensive footnote that relates to Bright's comment which is worth quoting in its entirety.

10. The heading "In any conversation" has raised for several readers of this paper in manuscript the question of cross-cultural validity. Such a question can, of course, be settled only empirically, by examining varieties of conversational materials. We can report the validity of our assertions for the materials we have examined, and apparently for Thai materials examined by Moerman (1972), New Guinea creole materials examined by G. Sankoff (personal communication), and for an undetermined number of languages in the competency of a substantial number of linguists at the Linguistic Institute in Ann Arbor, Mich., Summer, 1973, and elsewhere) who have found what follows consistent with what they know of their languages, or illuminating of otherwise recalcitrant problems in their understanding. Furthermore, examination of cross-cultural conversation, i.e., where parties do not share a language of competence but a lingua franca in which all are only barely competent, is consistent with what follows (cf., Jordan and Fuller, in press). Finally, the cross-cultural question, as we understand it, asks how the structures on which we report vary across languages (lexically or syntactically conceived), or language communities, or across social organizations, etc., structures which are thereby cast as more basic ones. That ordering is not at all clear to us. We do find that aspects of turn-taking organization may vary in terms of other aspects of the sequential organization of conversation. And, as we suggest in the final section of the paper, there are various turn-taking systems for various speech-exchange systems, e.g., conversation, debate, etc. (SSJ, p. 65)

In the 1974 published version of the paper there are only minor changes made to this footnote, (for example, 'Ann Arbor, Mich., Summer 1973,' becomes 'Ann Arbor, Summer 1973' and 'cf., Jordan and Fuller, in press', becomes cf., Jordan and

Fuller, ms'). Despite this robust defense of their position, in the main text where the footnote is added, they did modify the sentence that the footnote refers to. Whereby, 'In any Conversation:' in SSJ (p. 7) becomes 'In any conversation, we observe the following:' (1974: 700) in the published version. Thus, they are making a slightly weaker claim in relation to the materials that they have 'observed' rather than a universal cross-cultural claim.

A second example of the author's consideration of Bright's comments is in relation to point 12 in the letter where he refers to number 14 in the list in SJS-2 and which has 'n d notes' written beside it.

(12) Pp. 6–7, item 14: This is too long in comparison with the preceding items; most of the discussion belongs (and is in fact more or less repeated) on p. 36–37. I would like to see a simple statement like: "violations, e.g. interruptions, occur; but repair mechanisms exist". (Bright to Schegloff, 31st May, 1973, p. 2)

The full version of 'item14' Bright is referring to in SJS-2 (pp. 6–7) is.

(14) Repair mechanisms for dealing with the errors and violations the system is heir to obviously exist. When more than one party turn out to be talking at a time, procedures for correcting that are used which differentiate various possible sources of its occurrence. The brief overlaps which can characterize transitions are adjusted to by brief repeats, whereas those that are produced by the starting of one party within the obvious course of another's talk are dealt with differently. The brief gaps which characterize transitions are adjusted to by, for example, the use of "filled pauses," whereas the silences that occur within a party's turn or those that develop between turns are dealt with differently. Sanctions for attributable failures are obviously used. Complaints and gossip operate for turn-taking problems. (SJS-2, pp. 6–7)

In the revised SSJ draft this becomes a much shorter paragraph on page 8.

(14) Repair mechanisms for dealing with turn-taking errors and violations obviously are available for use. For example, if two parties find themselves talking at the same time, one of them will stop prematurely, thus repairing the trouble (cf. pp. 50–52) (SSJ, pp. 7–8)

However, except for the shortening of point 14, and Bright's comments and suggestions on the 14 points, the description of the observable facts of conversation remains largely the same in the SSJ draft. There are however some other changes apparent in light of Bright's comments. In Bright's comment '12' above, along with his comment about point number 14, he also points to a later passage where 'violations' are discussed in detail in the paper (SJS-2, 36–37). Between the two versions not only is the discussion of repair reduced in point 14, and not then directly addressed in the published paper, but silences are also removed. So, for example, on page 36 of draft 3, SJS-2, there are passages on silence, repair and complaints.

Similarly, the silence that sometimes follows intended turn completion can be closed by someone starting to speak. Not uncommonly the fact of a silence can provide a topic with which the silence is broken, i.e., the silence serves to produce a resource, topicalizing the silence, for repairing its occurrence. The fact that these repair mechanisms can be used on the occurrence of what they repair means that the turn-taking organization has self-righting devices that are rapidly available to participants. (SJS-2, p. 36)

From this, they then move on to discuss sanctions and the responsibility of turn-taking violations on pages 36–37 SJS-2. However, in draft 4 (SSJ), along with point 14 being reduced in size and not discussing silences they also do not provide examples of 'rule violations'. It is possible that this material was removed as it would then form part of the more focused paper on 'repair' (Schegloff et al., 1977). Interestingly within a recorded discussion between Sacks and Schegloff, also contained in the archive, they discuss their publication strategy in relation to a 'greeting' paper and the series of papers and books they were working on. In the discussion, Schegloff suggests that if a particular aspect of conversation becomes more apparent it could be left out of current papers in order to get the 'full treatment' in later papers.

32:00
ES…. There are things one may feel more comfortable leaving out of this if we could know about them that they were in shape to get the full treatment as compared to things that don't have enough to get a full treatment on their own...
(Harvey Sacks Papers, 2017, Box 145, Tape 'yrlsc_1678_141_002b_s')

While it is clear that some features removed from the paper were then developed into full papers, there are also references to conversational features in draft SJS-2 that were seemingly not pursued further at the time. For example, on page 28–29 and page 35 of SJS-2 there is a discussion of 'one-word' questions (pp. 28–29) and a reference to a paper by Sacks titled "On One-Word Questions" in footnote 4 on page 29, SJS-2.

b) One variant of the use of first-pair-part to select a next speaker will accomplish a next-speaker selection without addressing or any such other affiliated technique, but will select only a particular other as next speaker. That variant is a variant of the "question," a type of first pair part, and that is the "one-word question," e.g., "What?," "Who?," etc., as well as repetitions of parts of a prior utterance with "question" intonation. This question-type may be done without any affiliated techniques for selecting a particular other, and thereby select speaker of the just prior turn as next speaker. That is, in the absence of any special technique (such as addressing) for locating some co-participant as next speaker, one-word questions select prior speaker (or speaker of prior utterance) as next speaker.
(SJS-2, pp. 28–29)

This discussion of 'one-word questions' continues onto page 29 and would seem to be part of point 13 on 'turn constructional units'. One-word questions are then discussed again on page 35 in SJS-2. However, in the later SSJ draft and the published version, this is not pursued in the same depth as found in SJS-2 or referenced

to a publication by Sacks. In SSJ 'one-word questions' merit only a couple of sentences of a paragraph on page 40.

> For example, discriminations between "what" as a one-word question and as the start of a sentential (or clausal or phrasal) construction are made not syntactically, but intonationally.
> (SSJ, p. 40)

Given the reference to the paper by Sacks in the footnotes and the discussion by Sacks and Schegloff about their publishing strategy, it is possible this was removed as it was to be the topic of a full paper to be developed later.

Following the submission of the revised manuscript Bright's involvement continued. In a subsequent letter to Schegloff, dated 17th December 1973, Bright still 'confesses' that he has been procrastinating about the paper and that it is one of his hardest editing jobs to date. This was not necessarily because he was deciding whether to publish it or not, but rather because of the extent of the task at hand. This letter does not contain any detailed comments on the manuscript but rather Bright describes the process he follows and what he expects of the authors. In his letter, he describes differences between journal editors and two 'types' of problems involved in revising manuscripts.

> In the meantime, let me confess that I have been procrastinating about your MS, because I see it as my hardest editing job to date. Some explanation may be in order. There are journal editors who publish articles essentially as received, perhaps with some regularizing of punctuation or the like; but I belong, for better or worse, to another class of editors, who feel compelled to make the prose of articles accepted as clear and smoothly readable as possible, even though this may call for considerable amounts of editorial revision and even re-writing.
> Type 1 involves passages which seem to need additional data for clarification or expertise that the authors have but I lack; these I refer back to the author for appropriate modifications. Problem Type 2 are those where I feel competent to change the wording myself, in the interest of clarity without consulting the authors. In the case of your paper, my memo of 31st May was a list of Type-1 problems; those were sufficiently numerous and complicated that I hoped you could act on them before I began work on the less important Type-2 problems. I also hoped that you could do the necessary tasks of addition, deletion, and rewriting on your own—NOT checking every point with both your co-authors—since I need to complete all the editorial work on the MS during January. (Bright to Schegloff, 17th Dec. 1973, p. 1)

In the letter, Bright confesses to still procrastinating about the manuscript. Not, however, about the content but in relation to the editorial work that he insists on doing and that the authors will also need to do to make the manuscript readable. Here then, not only is the editor of the journal saying he will make changes to the writing without the author's knowledge or permission, but also, he berates Schegloff for the slowness of getting back to him due to sending it to Sacks and Jefferson for

edits and comments, rather than undertaking the 'Type 1' changes himself. While this letter does not contain any detailed comments on the manuscript the final letter examined, also sent to Schegloff dated 6th May 1974 (Box 22), contains a further 21 'Type 1' problems for the authors to consider. In the review, Bright again turns to the details of the language, particularly the transcriptions and transcription system. For example, in points 6 and 8 Bright complains about the transcription style and detail.

'(6) P. 67, example 2: Starting here, and in the following examples, I am bothered (as a linguist) by some of your "phonetic" modifications on English spelling. The commonest point is the representation of the "indistinct" vowel both as hesitation noise (eh, uh) and as part of words where it gets written variously as eh, uh, i, e, a, apostrophe, and maybe other things. My objection to this is not so much that it is inaccurate, but that it makes your subjects appear like funnypaper-characters. Everyone says "up tuh there" (ex. 7); but spelling it that way is a device traditionally used by humorists to indicate that a speaker is stupid and/or illiterate. My suggestion is to substitute symbol schwa [e[18]] throughout wherever standard orthography leaves any doubt. Can you agree?'
(8) P. 68, ex. 6: Another example of unnecessary "mock-illiterate" spelling—since Mrs. is ALWAYS pronounced "Missiz", your "phonetic" spelling seems only to ridicule the speaker.
(Bright to Schegloff, May 6th, 1974, p. 1)

These and several other comments in this letter have 'GJ' next to them suggesting that Jefferson would address and respond to them. Clearly, they decided not to change any of the transcriptions or transcription symbols, but it is interesting to ponder how the now standard CA transcription system might have been different had Bright succeeded in getting the authors to change the detail of the transcriptions used. On the one hand, the distinctive style and detail of Jefferson's system was designed to capture the actual sounds made by the speakers which was often not included in traditional linguistics, but this also resisted the assimilation of CA within traditional linguistics. Indeed, not only do they decide to reject changing the transcription style, they also address the criticism explicitly in the published version of the paper in the final paragraph where they write that,

'Some linguists have objected to our use of modified English spelling—rather than, say IPA symbols: the result they claim, resembles a sort of funnypaper-English, and could have derogatory connotations. Our reply is that we have simply tried to get as much of the actual sound as possible into our transcripts; we certainly mean no disrespect to the parties cited. (Sacks et al., 1974: 734)'

While the final published work of the *Simplest Systematics* paper is a testament to the early development of CA, and what each of the authors brought to the research table, what is also clear, but not acknowledged in the paper, is the role of Bright as

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[18] The 'e' appears upside down in the letter and schwa [e] refers to the phonetic alphabet for unstressed syllables.

journal editor. Bright's reviews and comments were directed at honing and testing the ideas of the paper to improve, for him, the clarity of the argument with an eye on the potential linguistics readership, even going so far as to edit the writing. It is clear that Bright's work on the paper contributed to both the development of the paper and to making the analytic points more forceful, even if this was in rejection of the criticism he raised. Thus, even those points that were not taken up were considered while some points he raised even made their way into the final published version where his voice is heard in reference to 'several readers' (Sacks et al., 1974: 700), 'some linguists,' (Sacks et al., 1974: 734), reflecting closely Bright's comments.

Summary

The publication of *A Simplest Systematics for the Organization of Turn-Taking for Conversation* by Sacks et al. (1974) marked a major shift in the way interaction was to be considered and studied. The publication of the paper was to resonate across the social sciences and possibly none more so than within linguistics. While building on the previous papers *A Simplest Systematics* demonstrated both *that* conversation was highly organised, locally managed and context sensitive and context free, and that this messy surface of talk could be studied systematically and in detail across forms of interaction. Challenging a central canon within an established field is often difficult enough but this achievement is made even more impressive coming from a group of iconoclastic sociologists who were at the time finding it difficult to publish in their own discipline.[19] The paper is, then, a testament to the determined pioneering and collaborative work of Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson in pursuing the systematic study of lived interaction. Examining the evolution of the paper through the drafts after over 40 years offers an opportunity to trace this groundbreaking work as it develops, yet also the mundane work of getting ideas down on paper, of shifting authorship roles and contributions, of endless editing, and of course dealing with journal editors in the delicate work of getting a paper published. It is also, then, important to acknowledge the role of William Bright, who recognised the importance of the paper for a linguistics audience and who contributed to the final shape of the paper either in requesting revisions or in raising issues for the authors to consider.

Finally, the drafts and correspondence also provide a wider insight into the collaborative research environment being developed at the time. The drafts of the *Simplest Systematics* do not then stand alone and are not separate from the rest of the archive. The drafts and correspondence are part of an immensely rich interconnected collection of materials that Sacks collected and of work produced by and with his colleagues. If we have only just scratched the surface of the published *Lectures,* which offer a glimpse of Sacks' 'mind in action' (Watson, 1994), the material in the

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[19] In correspondence contained in the archive, Sacks writes about getting 'swiftly rejected' from the *British Journal of Sociology* (Harvey Sacks Papers, 2017, Box 6).

archive offers us a rich and unique opportunity to glimpse into the engine room of ideas and of the intellectual creativity of Sacks and colleagues.

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