CA and its heresies

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Absract

My title refers to two heretical moments for Conversation Analysis (CA). The first was the discovery of conversation as the primordial site of natural language use. The second is found in contemporary calls for 'heretical' innovations for CA's program. The paper discusses three such proposals, and pursues the third through a re-analysis of transcript. The first two are the arguments developed by Stivers (2015) on the coding of CA transcripts, and then Kendrick (2017) on aligning CA with laboratory experimentation. Each begins with similar moves: CA is rendered a 'methodology' and thus a technique, as one among others that could join in the pursuit of shared inquiries, on the premise that inquiries and methods are freely iterable. If agreeable, CA would then join a project of methodological 'pluralism' (Kendrick, 2017: 1). And each proposal is framed as a 'heretical' one that must nonetheless be considered. In doing so, each assigns an orthodoxy to CA, while leaving without remark the orthodoxy of 20th century social scientism that ethnomethodology and conversation analysis took to task. The paper then turns to a recent study that proposes that long recipient eye blinks are social actions, oriented to the completion of TCUs and self-repairs (Homke, Holler and Levinson, 2017). The study, and then an exemplary transcript, is examined to show how the relevance of 'long blinks' is reverse engineered: first, they are technically measured, and then a statistical narrative of their placements in the talk is produced. The paper concludes with a discussion of how Schegloff (1993, 1999) anticipated proposals such as these. It begins with a reflection on Schegloff's withdrawal from our professional community.[1]

INTRODUCTION

As is widely known, Emanuel Schegloff has not been able to work for some years now. We won't be hearing his voice any longer, or see again the brilliance of his conceptual clarity, or find again his deeply revealing excavations of single case materials as the central exercise of sequential analysis and the creation of its collections. And for the development of this paper, there is a particular voice I have in mind. It ties back to the repair

[1] A draft of this paper was presented to the 2017 LANSI conference with Jean Wong as co-author. The journal reviews were thoughtful, collegial, and quite on target. The paper has benefited from them, though perhaps not as fully as the reviewers recommended.

paper (Schegloff, Jefferson, and Sacks, 1977) and its opening footnote to Bolinger about matters of correction, or 'saying 'no' to an expression', and its tie to seacoasts and maps.

The central passage reads:

> Correction, the border beyond which we say 'no' to an expression, is to language what a seacoast is to a map… Its motive is intelligibility… (Bolinger [1953] 1965: 248).

The repair paper had its own use for the larger citation, as Schegloff developed the domain of self and other repair over the next 30 years.

But for our purposes, it is the play of conceptual seacoasts and maps that holds interest, and how Schegloff has been writing about the intelligibility of sequential analysis—about its conceptual map—while saying 'no' to various competing expressions for 40 years, as we see in his remarks on 'The relevance of repair to syntax for conversation' (1979), on discourse analysis (1982), on 'talk and social structure' (1991) and 'socially shared cognition' (1991b), on quantification (1993), 'narrative analysis' (1997) and person reference (2007), and across remarkable exchanges with Billig, (1999b), Levinson, (2005), Searle (1992), Sidnell (2009) and Wetherall, (1998), among others. Each engagement is taken up with CA's seacoasts and maps.

In the company of Garfinkel's ethnomethodology (1967), Sacks, Schegloff, Jefferson and their students and colleagues have given us a remarkable map of the reflexive relations of social action and order as grammars of natural language use, revising at once familiar expectations for 'language' study, and the remit of sociology. Their works leveraged enormous conceptual innovations, enormously novel map works and coastlines. And in their looming absences, now including Schegloff's, I think we are seeing and will continue to see a kind of conceptual global warming, a rising tide of proposals that may have the effect of eroding these coastlines. The paper pursues this possibility in the particulars of three recent proposals. The aim of the review is to get at what they may mean for our understanding of CA and EM as conceptualizations of the intersections of sociology and natural language.

THE HERESIES

The heresies of ethnomethodology and conversation analysis (EMCA) premise the discussion. My every impression is that they were indeed received by the disciplines as disruptive heresies (cf., Coser, 1975; Gellner, 1975; and Goldthrope, 1973), and for good reason: they were. But see also the disruptors' good reasons, in Button, 1991; Garfinkel, 1967, 2002; Lynch, 1993; Livingston, 2008; Moerman and Sacks, 1971/1988; Pollner and Zimmerman, 1970; Sacks, 1992; Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson, 1974; Sharrock and Anderson, 1986; Sudnow, 1970; Turner, 1974, and elsewhere. And just how heretical their enterprise was, was quite well known to them. You couldn't do EMCA and not know it; they didn't doubt it for a moment.

But rather than these first and identifying heresies of EMCA, this paper takes interest in some contemporary proposals for which it is allowed by their proposers that what they are proposing may be heretical, and for which 'ethnomethodology/conversation analysis',[2] rather than the certainties of 20th century sociology and language study, is the foil. And distinctively in these proposals, the 'heretical' isn't the judgment of others *or* their own; it is rather a kind of preemptive first assessment offered by the proposers to invite disagreement and disarm the possibility that others might find their proposals so. The proposers, notwithstanding their suggestions, actually find nothing heretical in them at all.

Stivers

The first is Stivers' (2015) proposal for the coding of transcribed materials, in a special issue of *Research on Language and Social Interaction* (ROLSI). Several arguments are made, and some are quite familiar in other briefs on behalf of social science coding. (I especially have in mind the early 'classroom interaction analysis' coding program of Ned Flanders (1970). Largely discredited, though still in use, he forthrightly claims that language itself is the 'most elaborate and flexible encoding-decoding system used by man', and amazingly promises to 'abstract communication by ignoring most of its characteristics' (1970: 29).)

Flanders is quite thoughtless, and Stivers certainly proceeds differently. Yet there are alignments too, as when she argues that coding and distributional measures are already implicit to sequential analysis and language use itself. By her account, 'clear characterizations'—the codes—and their distributions are coding's fundamentals, and CA's fundamentals. She argues that CA is quite disciplined in its 'clear characterizations' of things like turn types and their production features, and observes:

> Just as clear characterizations are necessary for formal coding and are already central to CA methods, distributional evidence is a key outcome of formal coding and is also a part of how CA findings are arrived at and represented (2015: 5).

The clear characterizations here are of turn and sequence types, whose 'distributions' are expressed in CA in vernacular or 'members' measures' of regularity (Sacks 1988), as in how some turn constructions or sequential organizations are 'quite common', or 'regular', or 'rarely done'. Pressing her case, Stivers then observes that CA 'relies on distributional patterns to some extent' (Stivers, 2015: 5). But conceptually, 'some extent' is a tellingly low bar; we will find everything to some extent. The measure elides conceptual difference.

In this way, a pre-alignment between CA and normative coding practices anchors the argument. CA's findings about things like 'questions', 'answers', 'greetings' and their

[2] See Sacks, 1984 for the expression.

regularities are, by this account, coding's antecedents. There are some lovely topics here, as in whether the study of things like 'members' measures' should aim to displace them with formal ones.[3] But as Schegloff observed,

> [I]t is misleading to start to account for such categories of action as questions, promises, and so on as the analytic objects of interest. They are commonsense, not technical, categories and should be treated accordingly (Schegloff, 1984: 30).

Note also how Goffman, in his preface to *Relations in Public* (1971) discussed how his work made use of ordinary expressions of category and regularity—things like 'middle class culture', or how 'it's often the case'. He continued:

> …I claim as a defense that the traditional research designs… have considerable limitations of their own… Concepts are devised on the run in order to get on with setting things up... The work begins with the sentence 'We hypothesize that…', goes on from there to a full discussion of the biases and limits of the proposed design, reasons why these aren't nullifying, and culminates in an appreciable number of satisfyingly significant correlations… *as though the uncovering of pattern in social life were that simple* (Goffman, 1972, *xvi;* emphasis added).

We can also note, as Steensig and Heinemann do in their commentary to the 2015 special issue, how Stivers' treatment makes no mention of Garfinkel's first work on coding's *ad hoc p*ractices and how the coders in his study were 'assuming knowledge of the very organized [affairs] that their coding procedures were intended to produce descriptions of' (1967: 20). Coding is itself an exercise in natural language reckonings.

With these and other arguments for adding coding to the so-called 'methods of CA', Stivers then writes their warrant in a very different register, as being in the service of inquiry, on the one hand, and of CA itself, on the other. With coding,

> First, it is possible to answer research questions that are impossible with CA methods alone. These include questions such as whether interaction practices are associated with attitudinal variables; socio-demographic variables such as age, gender, race, language, or culture; or [other] outcome variables… (2015: 12).

But we should ask—and Schegloff does ask—are those questions CA's questions? The temptation to imagine that CA can take interest in *any* question follows from its rendering as a technical 'method' rather than a conceptual program. A 'normative methodism'—whereby any question can be hooked-up to any 'method'—underwrites Stivers'

[3] This was, of course, the aim and certainty of modern social science: to eclipse common sense expressions with formal, social scientific ones, rather than understand the ordinary grammars of their use (see Pollner and Zimmerman, 1970).

proposal.[4] But as Schegloff has repeatedly argued, and Sacks demonstrated with such brilliance, CA has its own questions, and they are quite central to its seacoast and map (cf., Schegloff 1991, 2006, 2007b and 2009 for discussions). Part of their promise is that they that might dissolve the sense of more familiar questions.

The 'second main advantage' for the coding proposal is that 'it allows conversation analysts to reach audiences who would otherwise be inaccessible' (2015: 12). But CA's 'inaccessibility' may have far more to do with its conceptual register: in scholarship, 'accessibility' is usually through the exercise of study. Study takes time. Regrettably, perhaps, one must study CA to understand its questions and work-ways, and Stivers is proposing a 'work around'. She acknowledges the indelicacies of her proposals, and prefaces their limitations by observing:

> I hope to have made a strong case for the value of CA-grounded formal coding in interaction research. I believe that this kind of formal coding is not a heretical notion and that it can be done in a way that is not antithetical to CA (2015: 13).

Her belief that it is not a heretical notion is completely understandable. Coding is hardly so. It is rather the most familiar engine of modern social science, the device whereby the world is rendered as data and correlational evidence for formal structure. The putative 'heresy' here is little more than a return to the deeply normative. But she allows that others might think otherwise, and Kendrick (2017) takes much the same tack.

Kendrick

Kendrick edited a 2017 special issue of *ROLSI* titled 'Experimental and Laboratory Approaches to Conversation Analysis'. Our interests begin with his Introduction—'Using CA in the Lab'—and then turns to one of the substantive papers in the issue. Kendrick and Stivers share two central moves in their map-works. One is to treat CA as a technical methodology, one among others. He begins by observing that 'naturalistic inquiry' has been 'the engine of discovery that has propelled CA for four decades':

> This has been done, quite remarkably, without the use of two of the most powerful and widespread tools of the natural sciences: quantification and experimentation (2017: 1).

But of course, what's remarkable or not depends on what you were expecting. Sacks, Schegloff et al. were hardly engaged in 'self handicapping'. Conceptually, they simply had no *use* for those tools however 'powerful' or 'widespread' they were claimed to be; they had no use for the conceptual confusions that underwrite social scientism, and, alongside Garfinkel, were proposing a remarkable alternate.

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[4] Speaking of Heritage and Greatbatch's (1986) coded recordings of political speech, Stivers observes, '…although the study involves a reduction of behaviors to categories it remains relatively more true to CA principles than other formal coding approaches' (2015:10). This too is a low bar.

Kendrick goes on to ask 'has the time come for CA as a field to expand its methodological tool kit…', and thus we hear again the confusion of a conceptual program with a technical one, and a rendering of sequential analysis as one method among others, where every *other* method just might be in CA's service too. Kendrick is a methodologist brokering an offer, as he aims to 'uncover the threads of continuity that exist between CA and less naturalistic methods for the study of conversation, no matter how thin they may be' (2017: 5). But once again, the measure of 'no matter how thin', as Stivers' measure of 'some extent', sets the bar as low as skinny can get. 'No matter how thin' does indeed invite all comers.

Like Stivers, Kendrick also offers up the spectacle of a (hedged) 'heretical' proposal:

> The question of whether CA as a field should welcome experimental and laboratory studies of interaction and embrace or permit their methods may strike some as heretical. Even so, it is not a question we should leave unanswered (2017: 2).

But of course, it hasn't been left un-answered. Kendrick's question was being addressed from the very beginning of EMCA, and *they* were its answer, leveraged from critiques of formal analysis that are replete in Sacks' *Lectures* and most directly in Garfinkel's *Studies*. This was the controversy of EM and CA, the flash point of their hostile receptions, for having asked—and answered—*that* question. The question has been long and well answered across a 60 year corpus.[5]

ON BLINKS

To further the discussion, I want to turn to one of the substantive papers in the Kendrick special issue, a paper that finds meaningful co-productions of self repair and long recipient eye blinks (among other findings). The paper, 'Eye blinks as Addressee Feedback in Face-to-Face Conversation' by Homke, Holler and Levinson (2017) begins with a first finding that recipients tend to blink their eyes in and around the completions of extended TCUs. Their discussion aligns blinks with 'continuers' and the like, as doing interactional work, and they make the case that 'If addressee blinking does not serve a feedback function in spoken conversation, one may expect addressee blinks to be randomly distributed across turns…' (2017: 55). In this fashion, the question they pose seems settled from the outset. But it can be hard to imagine what a regime of 'random blinking' would look like, given that 'blinks' could well be shaped by other, non-conversational and hybrid systems, as when watching TV, driving in traffic or doing the dishes with friends or family. The idea of the random seems to be a backstop for distributional logics.

[5] Kendrick's absent account of this history ignores as well how EMCA does indeed take interest in experimental and laboratory studies. But rather than pursuing the putative physicalistic foundations of interaction or natural language, EMCA takes interest in experimental and laboratory studies as topics for the excavation of how natural language underwrites normative inquiry too, rather than as resources to their own inquiries. (Cf., Pollner and Zimmerman, 1970; Lynch, 1985, 1992, *passim*.) Kendrick's and Stiver's arguments seem to have no place for the difference.

The authors' discussion of 'blinks' collects diverse literatures, about neonates, primates, and cognitive load.[6] But a pivotal task for the study is to leverage the difference between long and short blinks. The difference is central to all that follows. And as it turns out, the distinction is entirely nominal. A long blink or short one is not a 'members' measure' (Sacks, 1988). Rather, given a mean blink duration of 300–400 milliseconds, the authors decide on a threshold of 410 milliseconds. Anything less is a short blink; anything more a long one. What then separates them isn't a matter of the parties' 'demonstrable orientations'; it is rather a matter of parsing highly technical measures.[7]

THE CORPUS

The authors' first interests are in blink productions in environments of projectable turn completions, whose measures of completion were assigned to coders who achieved 'high inter-coder agreement' (2017: 57).[8] In natural conversation, of course, identifications of things like projectable turn completions are the work of the parties themselves, displayed in the initiation of each next turn and its orientation to the turn underway. CA has taken keen interest in how the parties give evidence of these orientations, manage their practical contingencies and secure the progress of sequences and their understanding (Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson 1974; Jefferson, 1973, *passim)*.

The study Homke et al. go on to report concludes with three transcripts, the first of which is presented and discussed below. But their study is not then a study of transcript or singular occasions. It is rather a study of a much larger corpus of materials, collected from 10 dyads of college students, each speaking on camera for three 20 minute segments, which is no mean task as we'll see. It yields a data corpus of ten hours, and the study disaggregates these coherent streams of social action to yield measures of their putative taxonomic parts and correlations. Thus, from their interest in eye blinks as a type of 'visual addressee feedback and more specifically, as visual conduct potentially serving a continuer function', (2017: 55), blinks were measured, turns were counted, projectably complete constructional units were coded, as were other familiar things found in the CA corpora, to search for co-occurrences.

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[6] It includes a discussion of a neuroimaging study of how '…blinking activates the default-mode network while deactivating the attention network, suggesting an active involvement of blinking in attentional disengagement (Nakano, Kato, Morito, Itoi, & Kitazawa, 2013).

[7] 'We used a threshold of 410 ms, which separated the longest 25% from the rest (splitting them at the upper quartile). This resulted in 350 short blinks (<410 ms) and 61 long blinks (≥ 410 ms) … We assessed for each addressee blink co-occurring addressee behaviors. We focused our analysis on the most salient addressee responses, namely, on nods…, vocal continuers (e.g., mm-hm), and combinations of these. Blinking was considered to be co-occurring if the blink overlapped with a nod or a vocal continuer or if it preceded or followed the nod or vocal continuer without perceived interruption… Blinking was not considered to be co-occurring if there was a temporal distance ≥ 250 ms between the blink and the nod or the vocal continuer' (2017: 57).

[8] In ways un-examined, these measures of agreement are entirely expressions of the coders' mastery of conversational Dutch. Rather than eclipsing it, coding relies no less on the mastery of natural language, as Garfinkel argued and demonstrated (1967).

> While short blinks occurred at a wide range of sequential locations in conversation, the use of long blinks was restricted to specific sequential contexts, namely, in response to repair solutions in self-initiated, same-turn, self-repair (47.5%), in response to disfluent speech (e.g., uh, uhm; 19.7%), at early recognition points (16.4%), and referring expressions (8.2%). Comparing all 61 long blinks to 61 randomly selected short blinks revealed that short blinks were significantly less likely to occur in these same contexts: in response to repair solutions in self-initiated, same-turn, self-repair (6.5%); at early recognition points (8.2%); in response to disfluent speech (3.2%); and referring expressions (1.6%). Predicting blink duration (short, long) by sequential context (self-repair, disfluency, early recognition point, referring expression) in a binomial logistic regression analysis confirmed this observation statistically, indicating that the sequential context reliably predicted blink duration, χ^2 (4) = 45.9, p = .001 (2017: 61).

No doubt, the counts are impeccable and clearly the study is highly disciplined. (Mean blinks per minute in their corpus were found to be 30:53; SD 20:45.) And no doubt, 10 hours of real-time records could sustain a few inquiries. The question of how we come to take up the interests we do has no single answer, but may have a useful first question: what, analytically, do we figure we have a collection of? And that question, by CA lights, leads us to take interest in singular events, to build their production descriptions in order to see what 'same things again' we might find elsewhere within the corpus. CA's collection parameters aren't known in advance; they are themselves matters of discovery.[9] Homke et al. proceed quite differently, so that although we take keen interest in one of the transcripts they present, their interest in transcript is not so keen. Transcript is the last thing they consult, and then only as exhibits on behalf of a completely different study history and conceptualization of inquiry.

Many things were measured, but not the entire corpus. The ten-hour corpus was parsed for the study's interests in *recipient* blinks, and as every blink has its occasion, the study decided that the analyzably richest productions might be found in the telling—and receipt—of solicited stories.

> We selected tellings that occurred naturally in the conversations, and of these we selected only those that were elicited by the other speaker ('second-position tellings'; Mandelbaum, 2013). To address the question of whether addressee blinking may have a feedback function, we treated the whole telling, over several syntactically, prosodically, and

[9] Schegloff insists on the 'convincing analysis of single episodes of conversation' as the foundation for developing collections:

> One of the key tasks of researchers in developing claims for a phenomenon is not to sacrifice the detailed examination of single cases on the altar of broad claims–especially when the cases are meant as evidence for the broad claim; one of the key tasks of readers is to examine the detailed analysis of single cases as episodes with their own reality, deserving of their own rigorous analysis without respect to their bearing on the larger argument for which they are being put forward. (Schegloff, 2010: 42, italics in original).

> pragmatically complete TCUs, as a single turn and excluded tellings with 'recipient disruptions' (Mandelbaum, 2013), that is, nonminimal recipient responses (larger than three syllables), and other-initiations of repair or news receipts (e.g., Oh did you?) since they make a speaker response relevant before the telling continues… (2017: 56).

These three features of the study design are intended to in some way elicit, collect and vividly render the production of recipient blinks. But how they do so, and how sequential organizations are mobilized to that end, is not clear. It is not clear, for example, how second rather than first-position tellings would differently produce recipient blinks. (Perhaps it's a motivational gambit, on the theory that we attend more closely to stories we solicit, and that blinks evidence attention). And note how the character of turns themselves is caught up in their treatment of 'whole tellings'. Stories and jokes are indeed told in extended turns of multiple TCUs, but the formations of extended turns are the contingent productions of the parties' orientations to TCUs *throughout* the extended turn's production (see Sacks, 1974 for a remarkable example). To treat the 'whole telling' as the authors do is to ignore, or as they say 'exclude', its sequential production features.[10] Nor is it clear how recipients responding *within* an extended turn's production (the fourth syllable problem), and tellers then responding to them, impedes the inquiry.

The discussion leaves the impression of an inquiry that needs only the-so-much of conversation's products that will generate the data of interest, whose interests may not be sequential-analytic at all. The interest in 'addressee feedback', for example, is quite clear (and explains why there are no notations for the blinkings of the speaker in the subsequent transcripts). But the phrase has a tenuous conceptual alignment with sequential analysis; the sociology of CA isn't about describing feedback mechanisms. At all events, from this decision tree, and from the 10 hour corpus, 46 turns, possessing 456 points of possible completions, were selected for study, yielding the finding of a 'clear tendency of addressees to coordinate their blinking with the end of TCUs' (2017: 59). But while the discussion began with the alignment of blinks and turn completions, the study's interests turn to *long* blinks and their alignment with other sequential organizations, and especially to self-repairs, as the environment where half of all recipient long blinks in the (reduced) corpus were found. As noted above,

> While short blinks occurred at a wide range of sequential locations in conversation, the use of long blinks was restricted to specific sequential contexts, namely, in response to repair solutions in self-initiated, same-turn, self-repair (47.5%), in response to disfluent

[10] In their second footnote they observe: '… we chose extended turns as a starting point because—compared to more turn-by-turn interaction—they provide a relatively clear distinction between speaker and addressee roles' (2017: 56; footnote 2). But the idea of a more 'clear distinction of roles'—and who has what need for it—is puzzling. If conversation entails turn taking, those distinctions—speaker and recipient—would seem to be baked into turn taking itself, and the understandings it achieves. They would seem to be no less or more clear irrespective of turn length, as in an exchange of greetings.

speech (e.g., uh, uhm; 19.7%), at early recognition points (16.4%), and referring expressions (8.2%) (2017: 61).

A TRANSCRIPT

It is within the context of this highly technical program of parsed and measured co-occurrence that the study then presents three brief transcripts (and a reference to a fourth, p. 64), the first of which shows the play of a long recipient blink in the environment of a teller's self-repair. In the second and third transcripts the interest is in environments of disfluent speech. The first transcript is presented and discussed below.

Line 1 shows the original transcript format, beginning with its production in Dutch, and ending with spoken English. Beyond line three, the transcript presented here shows only the English. Recipient blinks (identified in the left margin with a lower case 'a' to align with recipient 'A') are notated by a sequence of bold dots, each standing for 100 milliseconds: 3 dots note a short blink; 4 dots, a long one. There are other novel notations that my discussion will not treat, but the authors provide a transcript appendix that is copied below. My focus is chiefly on their account of the sequence and its production.

The transcript begins with a preface.

> In Extract 1, A and B had talked about experiments to participate in at the university when A asks about a particularly long one B had previously mentioned (line 1).

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1   A:  Maar wat was die andere nou? (.) tweenhalf uur nog wat
        but what was the other one now two.and.a.half hour something
        But what was the other one now? Two and a half hour something
2       (0.3)
3   B:  -> + Ja en dan moest je-dan krijg je zo'n m+iddel toegediend?
        [Yes and] Then you get some agent administered?
        + gaze averted                                    +
4       TMS or something, I don't know exactly,
    a   •••
5   A:                              [Yeah]
6   B:  And then your brains were then stimulated .h,
7       (0.2)
8   a   [°mhm° ]
        •••
9   B:  [Or certain parts of your brain
->  a                                      ••••
                                              *nod*
    fig                                    #fig. 5
10  B:  An- uh: then they go and do all sorts of tests with you
          + gaze averted                                      +
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   a                                                    ••• ->
11 B:  I don't know exactly.
   a  —>.
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The authors identify two 'same-turn self-repairs' in the sequence, one in line 4 about the 'agent' that was referenced and 'try marked' in line 3; and then in line 9 in repair of line 6, which appears to be in turn transition rather than 'same turn' (note lines 7 and 8). Of the second one, 'The addressee registers the repair solution with a long blink and a nod in line 9, before the speaker averts his gaze from the addressee and continues his telling in line 10' (2017: 63). There are then two self-repairs, by this account, one of which gets a long blink and nod, and this is the central finding of the treatment. Alternatively, however, the transcript may be showing us four turn re-completions, perhaps two in line 4, and then in lines 9 and 11.[11]

There are two further features of the study and this transcript to note from the CA side of things, though in the end they may not matter too much for leveraging a narrative on behalf of a nominally long recipient blink. The first, as mentioned, is that the parties have been asked to talk for an hour across three 20 minute segments. It is a task few of us have ever considered or encountered, and *that* it was a task is evidenced in the transcript. And second, this 'solicited telling'—a telling in second position—shows itself as a *re*-telling, or telling a story a second time.

Returning to the transcript preface, as the authors' note, 'A. has asked B. about a particularly long experiment that B. had previously mentioned', and A. actually begins the telling he solicits with a first piece of it: that it took 2.5 hours (line 1). And though B's agreement in the Dutch of line 3—the 'Ja'—is deleted in the English rendering of the turn, B. acknowledges his first telling, and begins to talk about it again. B. thus takes up a re-telling, and re-tellings entail an orientation to the 'speakers' maxim' that we don't tell others what they already and evidently know, as Sacks discusses in several passages of his *Lectures*.[12] Thus, when we do a telling a second time, teller and recipient are oriented to the 'the more of it' that wasn't said the first time. And in the particulars here, the teller seems to have little more to say. This is what the transcript shows us in B's re-completions of line 4 that follow the 'try-marked' line 3, and in line 11. Each tells the

[11] The difference between self-repairs and re-completions can be delicate, as these materials suggest. Re-completions premise a hearable completion of the turn [as do repairs in turn transition]. Self-repairs, and their initiations, tend to be produced within on-going turns that do not show completions, as in word searches and the perturbations that precede them (see Schegloff et al., 1977). These materials seem to show re–completions or repair in transition throughout, but the transcript is hard to read in matters of turn completion, because only line 11 shows the closing intonation of a 'period' at the turn's end, if that is indeed its purpose.

[12] For example, '…if you 've already told something to someone then you shouldn't tell it to them again, or if you know in other ways that they know it then you shouldn't tell it to them at all' (1992, V. 2: 438). The maxim isn't simply a prohibition; it underwrites forbearance and caring when we listen to an elder's or victim's story, *again*. So too with 'party talk', as when a partner re-tells a vacation story to another party couple, that is well known to her own partner. These occasions aren't exceptions to the maxim; they are its elaborations. They show us how we *do* things with it.

recipient, 'I don't know exactly', and the clear implication, in his orientation to the speaker's maxim, is that he has said what he can about the experience already.[13]

So it seems to be a re-telling that produces the recompletions and/or repair-in-transition that holds the paper's attention. And it seems to be on the recompletion and/or repair-in-transition of line 6, in line 9, that we find a 'long blink' of four dots where the others show only three. But again, how the difference—a tenth of a second—holds for the parties is nowhere discussed. The graphic alone assures the weight of difference.

But note also and especially how whether we find self repairs or re-completions, and whether this is a solicited telling or a re-telling produced with an orientation to the speaker's maxim—and thus whether the authors' descriptions of the sequence are apt or not as descriptions of its sequential production—really doesn't matter. *Any* of the great many 'clear characterizations' (Stivers, 2015) of CA's findings found hanging from its coat hanger of findings—if we treat them that way—will do, to sustain a narrative of special relevance for the 'long blink' found beneath line 9. It can be paired with a great many things from CA's stable of findings. In this fashion, *some* relevance for *any* co-occurrence—once the paired items are named—can be argued. And in this way, CA is treated as a literary and taxonomic repository for the study. The study freely takes what it finds useful. Though it is difficult to find a patient sequential analysis of how the sequence was assembled by the parties, or how the long blink of line 9 has a constitutive place within it, once sighted, re-tellings can also be added to the list of affiliates for long blinks.

And if the authors' sequential treatment of the transcript seems modest, perhaps it is because not much more is needed beyond the display of a self-repair, and a blink in 'next turn'. The transcript-picture is sufficient to its task, which is to render an instance of the study's statistical findings ideographically, in the fullness of CA's (amended) notational page-space, to suggest not simply a co-occurrence but a motivated co-orientation. But transcript, in this case, shoulders an impossible burden when we examine the narratives that organize the study's 'Summary and discussion'.

'SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION'

The study is striking enough as a program for annealing formal-analytic accounts with transcript, with no particular need for a close sequential analysis to achieve it. But what the authors sum as the significance of their findings is far more striking. The paper comes to life in their summary interpretations, and these turn out to be matters of substantial conceptual ambition, and perhaps reading habits. The discussions throughout show a recurrent effort to frame 'recipient long blink productions' as a narrative of social action. The aim is to disclose how these blinks 'register' or index whatever they may be blinking about. This is the functional description the paper is pursuing: that blinks are functional for talk-in-interaction, and thus actionable. On their account, 'long blinks' in response

[13] Were the first telling recorded in the transcript, we might see more of the work of the second.

to self-repairs are 'giving feedback' for the pacing of turn—and thus sequence—progression. They do so by accomplishing various actions.

> [W]e have seen that long addressee blinks were especially produced in response to repair solutions in speakers' self-initiated, same-turn, self-repairs. The long addressee blink in these positions (combined with a nod in 83% of cases) appears to pass up the opportunity to initiate repair or to take a full turn (Schegloff, 1982). By orienting to the continuation of a turn-in-progress, the addressee's long blink also seems to signal that by having received a repair solution the speaker has reached sufficient informativeness for current purposes. It may signal to (*sic*) that there is no need to clarify or specify further by producing more self-repairs, thereby helping the speaker in avoiding underinforming and overinforming (Grice, 1975 ; Mazeland, 2007; Sacks and Schegloff, 1979). If this is true, then speakers may strategically produce self-repairs in order to mobilize addressee responses (see Goodwin, 1980; Jefferson, 1974; Stivers and Rossano, 2010) (2017: 65).

But none of this is evidenced in the transcript we have examined, nor can it be. Absent their sequential analysis—and perhaps not even then—transcripts cannot tell us that a recipient's 'blink' has 'passed up an opportunity', or signals or manages informativeness, or gives evidence of a strategy for initiating self-repair by the other party. This summary narrative is not then on behalf of what transcript can say, but rather on behalf of the larger corpus findings, writing an animated account of the correlations the study has found. The 'Summary and discussion' of the paper is specifically *not* a discussion of real-time records in their sequential-material detail. That work simply hasn't been done, and in this way, the exercise gives a cautionary inflection to the phrase 'Using Conversation Analysis in the Lab'. Yet the authors continue:

> [W]hile the long addressee blink cases presented here already provide suggestive evidence, future research will be required to provide conclusive evidence. More conversation analytic research would be desirable to further demonstrate that participants orient to long blinks as consequential social actions, while experimental research will be required to confirm the hypothesis that speakers are *causally* influenced by addressee blink behavior (2017: 66, original emphasis).[14]

It is difficult to know what to make of these passages, what to make of these animating narratives and the vision for future work that follows. They transform 'blinks' into many possible social actions, and then assign CA the task of demonstrating that this is so (and to experimental study that it is *causally* so). Gilbert Ryle (1949) may be helpful here in his

[14] Note how there is no need for 'experimental research' to 'confirm the hypothesis', for example, of the speakers' maxim. The maxim isn't a hypothesis at all; it is a conceptualization that follows from the close study, in material–sequential detail, of that and how an orientation to the maxim is evidenced. It is a description, and CA otherwise shows a very different relation to 'hypotheticals'. See, for example, Schegloff on 'possibles' (2006).

remarks on 'Thick Description', and the exemplary pair he uses for leveraging the difference between thin and thick: it is the difference between blinks, and winks. The one is a speck of behavior, duly available for behavior studies. The other is a thick piece of meaningful social action, duly available for sociological study. In seeming to conflate the difference, Homke et al. may have committed what Ryle calls a 'category mistake' (Ryle, 1949), treating the one for the other.[15]

But, to be clear, the argument here isn't that long blinks cannot sometimes be doing something. A long blink with a head turn can show, and be produced to show, an assessment, a disagreement, a disparagement, etc.[16] It can be produced as a 'wink' in next turn, for an observant recipient or third party to catch. We all have done them. So it's not that blinks cannot sometimes do concerted interactional work. It is rather that Homke et al. treat blinks, long or short, here and there, as generic things, each to be counted and measured as the one or the other. The authors seem to have little use for the occasioned, indexical character of action and its expressions as other than candidates for correlation, and thus, perhaps, little use for the central conceptual excavations of EMCA.

CONCLUSION

These contemporary proposals for CA's future tend to treat CA as a coat-hanger of stable findings, readied for the search for correlations with other measurable things (as in Stivers' 'attitudinal [and] socio-demographic variables'). But CA's findings do not sit well on coat-hangers. CA's findings are embedded in the stunning detail of sequential productions, of how things like 'questions' and 'ambiguities', in their actual, occasioned contingency, are distinctively, sequentially produced (Schegloff, 1979). Taxonomic coat-hanger accounts of CA specifically miss the sociology of Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson, and Garfinkel before them, and these proposals for 'heretical' innovations risk the same.

It is offered that by these innovations, CA's wisdoms can reach a broader audience, join a plurality of other 'methods', and answer other people's questions.[17] But on closer inspection, each may be a bit more instrumental than that. Each of the three proposals we have reviewed aims to amend, simplify and expedite the production of *collections* (see also Clift and Raymond, 2018), whether by taxonomic coding, or methodological

[15] David Sudnow's very instructive 'Temporal Parameters of Inter-Personal Observation' (1972) about glances and winks is included in the bibliography to underscore the difference.

[16] There is a cottage industry in contemporary American journalism for noticing the embodied responses to Donald Trump's reckless remarks by his scientific or professional advisors, standing on the podium behind him. Long blinks may well be found there too, but they are of a character and occasion quite distant from Homke et al's collection. They are expressions in a setting where 'saying no' isn't permitted.

[17] Perhaps we can get some purchase on these proposals if we imagine similar advice for Garfinkel, Ryle or Wittgenstein: if only they would speak more simply, agreeably or commonly, they might have found more readers and thus influence. Beyond imaginings, working from Garfinkel's archive, Fitzgerald (2019) reports that the editor of the journal *Language* at the time of the submission of Sacks et al., 1974, advised the authors to dispense with their curious transcripts and unconventional orthography; they would only lose the readers they hoped to reach.

pluralism, or correlational deployments of CA's corpus findings. And collections are, of course, the central exercise in the organization and display of CA's formative findings. They are its front piece, first widely introduced in the turn taking paper (Sacks et al. 1974). They are what every student who would take up CA hopefully learns to do. Schegloff has repeatedly reminded us that collections are assembled from the labors of single-case analyses—many analyses—and how the impulse to taxonomic accounts subverts the effort.

> The single most troublesome misunderstanding harbored by those just exposed to conversation analysis, or still coming to terms with it, is that the work of analysis is done when a bit of data is recognized as belonging to some category, and the category term is applied to the data fragment. But that is a taxonomic act, not an analytic one. It locates one possible feature of the event being examined, but not how that event was achieved in its particularity... The formal features do not add up to an analysis until they are filled out by the particulars that constituted that achieved event… (Schegloff 2007: 252).

Schegloff is speaking of the rigors of building collections through the analysis of singular events in their distinctive productions. Single case analyses leveraged the extraordinary conceptual innovations of Sacks' program and lectures (1992); they are the first place where keen analysis and what it has to teach us shows itself. We cannot read Sacks and Schegloff, et al. and not see their extraordinary innovations in just such places.

But by the lights of these proposals, building collections becomes hugely expedited and simplified, via codings, statistical measures, and the unexamined taxonomic and natural language moves that underwrite them. By eliding CA's conceptual landscape—doing so first by re-writing CA as merely a technical-methodological program—CA certainly can be brought to a wider audience, by rendering it in terms that a wider audience *already knows*. And as for 'heresies', you cannot have them without 'orthodoxies', and the clear reading of these proposals (or at least the first two) is that, in some way, CA has become orthodox. It certainly has a 60 year history. But the suggestion misses how CA and EM before it were arguably the most disruptive *and* productive heresies of 20th century social science. The putative 'heresies' we have reviewed are deeply modest by comparison to the conceptualizations they seek to reform. They in fact return us to the orthodoxies that EMCA distinctively set aside.

To return to where we began, the far more serious heretical work of EMCA, to be found in Garfinkel's corpus, Sacks' *Lectures* and Schegloff's corpus throughout, is still available for our instruction. But we will have to proceed without their engagement. The task of sustaining the greater heresy of EMCA—its coastlines and conceptual maps—falls to those who find there the promise of a sociology of everyday life in its constitutive detail, relieved of scientism and taxonomic renderings.

APPENDIX (HOMKE ET AL. 2018: 70)

Transcription conventions (Based on Mondada, 2014)

Gestures and descriptions of embodied actions are delimited between two identical symbols and are synchronized with correspondent stretches of talk (one symbol per embodied action: · for addressee blinks (each ● reflects approximately 100 ms), * for nods, + for speaker gaze aversion during the telling, ∞ for addressee gaze aversion during the telling, ♦ for other bodily conduct). The action described continues until after the excerpt's end (*—≫) or across subsequent lines (*—>) until the same symbol is reached (—->*). Participants are identified in the margins. Capital letters (e.g., A) indicate speakers, small letters (e.g., a) indicate addressees. The moment at which a still image has been taken is indicated with a # showing its position within the turn. The corresponding figure number is shown in a separate line (e.g., #Figure 5).

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