Out of context: an intersection between domestic life and the workplace, as contexts for

(business) talk

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Abstract: This paper explores the intersection between two very different contexts - domestic life and the workplace - and the membrane which lies between them. This membrane is manifest in the practices through which participants come to treat certain of their identities as salient for the present interaction. This is explored through close examination of a conversation, the beginning of which happens to offer a kind of 'natural laboratory': the failure by a husband to recognise his wife's voice when she calls him at work affords us the opportunity to see how each manages the talk as being, respectively, 'workplace' or 'domestic'.

Schegloff's first published conversation analytic paper[i] was a study of telephone call openings (Schegloff 1968), and was based on chapters from his PhD dissertation, itself a study of the "first five seconds" of conversations (Schegloff 1967).[ii] One of the principal reasons for this early focus on call openings was perhaps that they provided a kind of natural laboratory for investigating the systematic properties and specifically the sequencing of ordinary interaction: "An attempt is made to ascertain rules for the sequencing of a limited part of natural conversation and to determine some properties and empirical consequences of the operation of those rules" (Schegloff 1968:1075), shortly after which Schegloff refers to "sequencing structure". In other words, telephone call openings became a testbed for the earliest explorations in Conversation Analysis (CA) of sequential patterns and sequence organizations in interactions. In this his first paper, and in the context of *summons-answer sequences*, Schegloff began to set out some of the features of sequence pairs or what came to be termed adjacency pairs, for instance in his account of conditional relevance, both in summons-answer and question-answer sequences.

Another possible reason for his interest in this "limited part of natural conversation" was the opportunity it afforded to develop the methodology of CA, most notably in justly famous exploration of a deviant case, the one case in approximately 500 cases in his corpus in which the distributional rule he identified does not hold (Schegloff 1968:1079-1080). Finally, the relative blandness and routine character of call openings were ideal for Schegloff's purpose in demonstrating how the "tasks of conversational openings" were conducted through their sequence structure (Schegloff 1968: 1075). Schegloff's view was, quite correctly, that the routine 'moves' or turns in call openings were not at all ritual moves, as Goffman proposed, but were the vehicles for action and interactional tasks – for greeting someone, for identifying and managing recognition and for displaying participants' relationships with one another. Schegloff recalls that one of Sacks's earliest insights into the apparatus of conversation, perhaps the key breakthrough, came from his consideration, in his first lecture on CA, of the opening of a call to a suicide prevention service, in which the caller manages the opening sequence in such a way as to avoid giving his name/identifying himself (Schegloff 1992a: xxiv-xxvii; and for the lecture see Sacks 1992a, lecture 1, pp.3-11). So that whilst mutual identification is, together with recognition, one of the principal activities that constitute the 'work' of telephone call openings (this in the days before digital displays show the caller's identity), Sacks's key insight – close to a Newtonian moment – came from examining how the caller was able to 'disturb' the opening sequence, through inserting a repair initiation, in such a way as to avoid the slot in which he might have

given his name to the counsellor, or more precisely in which it would have been conditionally relevant for him to give his name.

In this very first paper Schegloff was beginning to explore the management of the tasks or activities that participants managed in telephone call openings, and thereby develop his and CA's distinctive understanding of how action and interactional tasks are managed through sequences of interaction. The tasks of identification and recognition, broadening to what might be regarded as 'relational activities' – associated with displaying who we are to one another (Schegloff 2007a), and what it means to be who we are to one another – and how these activities are managed through the sequencing of call openings, have been enduring interests off-and-on throughout much of Schegloff's career (notably Schegloff 1968, 1972, 1979, 1986, 2002, then 2007b:195-201). Moreover he has, over the years, often encouraged graduate students to investigate the beginnings of conversations, precisely to explore further the interactional and relational work being managed through the opening sequences in any conversation (e.g. Pillet-Shore 2008, 2011). This paper of mine was inspired by Schegloff's investigations into the sequencing of call openings, and especially into identification and recognition in openings; my paper (which is reprinted here, Drew 2002a) concerns non-recognition and mis-identification – or to misquote Oliver Sacks, 'the man who mistook his wife for someone else' . . . though is it he who did not recognise his wife on the phone, or she who did not recognise her husband? Only an analysis of the opening sequences of this call, in the manner of Schegloff, will help us understand what went wrong.

Introduction

        In this paper I will consider how it is that a man, who is a husband, does not recognise a woman, who is his wife, from her voice at the beginning of a telephone call. I am exploring this issue not to engage in any kind of psychology, or to speculate on the nature of their relationship, but to show how context impacts on talk - here, thrown into sharp relief by the participants (the husband and wife) having different understandings about, or orientations to, the context in which they are talking. But the differences are very subtle indeed, because in one sense they share a common understanding of the context: he is at work, and she is calling him at work. But that will somehow not be sufficient. My purpose in examining what each does in the opening of the call is to explicate a quite general issue about the relationship between talk in a context, or setting, and participants' relevant identities in that setting. My point will be that participants' identities do not determine the talk in the setting; rather, the salience of speaker identities is constituted through the way in which they manage the talk, and manage it as being a certain type or genre. But before I come to the data in question, and to the issues we can see reflected in the husband's failure to recognise his wife, it is necessary to consider, in a preliminary fashion, some connections between talk and social context.

Context, identities and forms of talk

        There are a variety of intersections between language and social context, and those intersections have been explored in a variety of directions. One of these involves the study of talk-in-interaction in what are vernacularly considered to be institutional settings, for instance in courts, in medical settings, in the classroom, in counselling, in the workplace and so forth. Such research aims to identify something of the distinctiveness of the talk through which people conduct their business in these settings, whether in contrast to talk in ordinary conversational interactions, or when compared with talk in other institutional settings (for instance, comparing the practices of questioning in court cross-examination, news interviews, survey interviews or medical consultations) (Drew and Heritage 1992). We do not yet have any explicitly comparative

framework for grounding findings about what may seem to be distinctive or characteristic properties of talk in a given setting (Drew 2002b). But implicitly, at least, we work with a comparative perspective, arising from the manifest differences between, for instance, talk in a medical consultation and talk in other settings, such as a telephone conversation between friends. The hope is that research will yield up the particular linguistic and interactional features which lie behind one's sense of those differences, and of what seems to be distinctive about the talk-in-interaction in one setting as compared with that in another.

One immediate and familiar problem with any such programme is that the kind of interactions which are conducted within a given setting are not uni-modal. Just as there is no necessary relationship between a particular form of interaction and a given physical setting - cross-examination can be done at the breakfast table, as well as in a court of law; and diagnosis can be done in a car repair shop just as easily as in the doctor's office - so also settings admit of more than one form or type of interaction. It is an over-simplification, therefore, to refer to *the* talk in a medical consultation, or in the classroom etc, as though there was only one form, because different forms or types of talk are to be found within such settings. This is perhaps most visible at points at which transitions occur from one mode or form of talk to another, on a certain occasion within a given setting. Schegloff has shown this in relation to a news interview, in which '..a course of talking in interaction for a while amounts to *doing* a news interview, and as the talk practices change, the occasion slips from being an interview to being what was generally received as a 'confrontation'' (Schegloff 1992b: 117). His purpose was to exemplify the ways in which '..the social structural location does not by itself endow occasions of interaction with a genre identity...(and that) labelling and announcing an occasion of talk-in-interaction as an interview...does not *ipso facto* make it one, nor does it guarantee that what begins as one will remain one' (Schegloff 1992b: 117-118). Schegloff's point is that we cannot rely on something like a description of a social structural location or setting by itself to 'explain' the talk which occurs in that setting: simply that the talk occurs during what is billed as an interview in the political media does not warrant our treating, analytically, that setting as determining the

character of the talk within it, on that occasion. Instead we need to show, in the details and practices of the talk, how the participants manage the talk as being 'an interview', 'classroom instruction', 'medical examination' and so forth. As Schegloff puts it, we need to explicate 'how did the parties to this event conduct themselves so as to make of the occasion, to constitute it, first as an interview, and then as a confrontation - how did they 'do interview'; how did they 'do confrontation'' (Schegloff 1992b: 118).

This so much lies behind what follows that it will be worth illustrating very briefly with two examples. The first is taken from the beginning of an internal telephone conversation between colleagues in a large administrative office in the US (an internal call is one made between offices of the same organization, usually within the same building). Kate has called a department in that office, and has been transferred to Joe.

```
#1      [UTCL: J1MORE:12:4]
1       Kate:       Hey Jim?
2       Jim:        How are you Kate Fisher
3       Kate:       How are you doin'
4       Jim:        Well I'm doin' all right [thank you very [much
5       Kate:                                [We-            [Well goo:d
6       Jim:        And a lo:vely day it is.
7       Kate:       Oh:, isn't is gor[geous=
8       Jim:                         [Yes
9       Kate:       =I snuck out at lunch
10                  its [really [difficult to come [back
11      Jim:.           [hhh    [You(h)oo          [.hhh that was not-
12                  good
13      Kate:       See it (was[ese-)
14      Jim:                   [You're s'pose to stay in your office
15                  and work work work [h e h  ha:h
16      Kate:                          [Well-
17      Kate:       Jean and I went- she- she works in our office too
18                  we went together too: uh- .hhhh u:h do some
19                  shopping
20      Jim:        [Um hum
21      Kate:       [A:nd we each made each other come ba:ck,
22      Jim:        Atta girl, ye:s I know what you mean
23      Kate:       So maybe that's the ke(h)y of going [like that
24      Jim:                                            [Huh huh huh
25      Jim:        That's it
26      Jim:        pt .hhhhh [What's up
27      Kate:                 [Well-
28      Kate:       Well, I've had a call from Frank toda:y and after
29                  he called, I checked with your- terminal over
30                  there and they said our order's not awarded ...
```

It's pretty evident that there are two very distinct kinds of talk, or phases, during this brief extract. The opening is characteristically 'social' - characteristic both in so far as many such calls open with a similarly 'social' phase, Holmes 2000; and that their talk is quite evidently light, jokey, teasing, friendly, conversational, and not yet about the business Kate has called about. The nature of the talk manifestly changes in lines 26-28, when they simultaneously move on to business, Jim asking 'What's up' just as Kate introduces the business she has to discuss with him. Thereafter they talk in a way which is characteristically business-talk between colleagues (beginning line 28, remainder of data not shown). It is unnecessary for present purposes to identify the various practices through which the participants here 'do social talk' (to echo Schegloff), though their reciprocal *how are you* greetings in lines 2 and 3 are characteristic of 'ordinary' conversational openings, and tend to be attenuated in calls about business (Drew and Chilton 2000, Schegloff 1986). Right away Jim's opening offers 'being sociable' as a way to start, and that is consolidated by Kate's reciprocal enquiry. The point is just to illustrate that, within a given setting (an administrative office), between particular participants (colleagues), on a given occasion (calling to conduct some business), the participants may engage in a variety of forms of talk; the talk between them cannot be characterised as business/work, just because they happen to be colleagues speaking in their place of work.

A second illustration shows more succinctly a direct connection between a linguistic/interactional practice and transitions between forms of talk. It is commonly the case that when doctors ask patients questions in primary care consultations, they respond to the patients answers with *Right*, a rather neutral acknowledgement which gives no hint (to the patient) of the diagnostic or other import or significance of their answer. Here is a quite unexceptional case in point.

```
#2 [UK Doctor-patient] (History-taking, about the patient's anemia)
1     Dr:        You're not on the pill.
2     Pat:       No:. (.) No.=
3     Dr:    +   =Ri:ght.
4                (0.4)
5     Dr:        And you don't need it really.
6     Pat:       No:
```

In line 3, the doctor acknowledges the patient's confirmation that she is not on the pill with *Right*,

before asking a next question. Across a whole range of primary care data, doctors are found to respond with *Right* or some neutral equivalent such as *Okay*. In primary care, the length of each consultation is highly constrained (in the UK it is said that the average length of a consultation is 7.5 minutes): in order to manage this, doctors tend to keep the talk focused tightly on medical matters, on the patient's medical condition. However, occasionally they engage in social 'time outs', very brief episodes when, for instance, they ask patients about themselves, about matters which lie outside a medical framework. There happened to be just two such episodes later in the same consultation from which #2 was taken.

```
#3 [UK Doctor-patient] (Later during same examination)
1    Dr:      Ah:: it's a slow release preparation it comes to the same
2             thing as three but .hhhh ah: (0.4) we try the three ones
3             first because they're rather cheaper (     ) the national
4             health service.
5                   (2.2)
6    Dr:      Where're you going the:: (0.7) va:c.
7    Pat:     .t Uh:m I hope to go (in trailing) with a friend of mine
8             (0.2) round Europe,
9    Dr:            To where?
10   Pat:           (In trailing) roun[d Europe
11   Dr:      +                       [Oh I see.=
12   Pat:           =( [     )
13   Dr:      +        [Yes. (0.2) That's ni:ce, .hmhh .hnhhh Uh::
14            (0.5) .p.t
15            (1.2)
16   Dr:            Ri:ght. (1.9) Apart from giving blood...
```

```
#4 [UK Doctor-patient] (Later still during same examination)
1     Dr:   But future pla:n, after six months of i:ron, (1.2) I would
2            certainly want to see you again, (1.2) six months later
3             which will be: about your finals time.
4                  (0.6)
5     Dr:   What're you going to do after that
6                  (0.6)
7     Pat:  (This's a) question (      ) going to do a year (0.2) do
8            voluntary service first
9     Dr: + I see.
10                 (0.7)
11    Dr: + Good.h (.) That sounds (1.4) very laudable
```

In #3 the doctor asks the patient about what she's going to do during the forthcoming vacation (line 6), and in #4 he asks her about what she intends doing when she leaves university (line 5). What is immediately noticeable about these episodes is that, by contrast to the medically neutral

Right, the doctor responds to what she tells him in a much more conversational and undoctorly fashion, with news receipts and assessments (in lines 11 and 13 in #3, and lines 9 and 11 in #4). These are the only times the doctor responds in such a way, and these are the only non-medical, social episodes during the consultation. Thus the doctor's responses/acknowledgements are part of the constitutive practices for *doing* medical talk, and *doing* social talk respectively. The differences between the response types is distinctive of the different forms of talk in which they engage, transitions from one to another being characterised by his selection of medically neutral or socially empathetic responses (and notice that in the last line of extract #3 his transition back to medical talk is marked by the prefaratory *Right*).

It is worth highlighting two points to be drawn from these examples. First, we cannot rely on the setting itself, nor even on relevant speaker identities in a setting, as warranting the (analytic) treatment of talk in the setting as 'administrative business' or medical etc.. For one thing, different kinds or forms of talk occur within the setting, and between the same speakers, with no change in their relevant speaker identities - for surely the identities of colleagues, and of doctor and patient, are as relevant to the kind of 'social' phases of these interactions as they are to the 'business' phases (whether administrative or medical business). Instead, we need to show how the context or setting is, as Schegloff (1992b: 111) puts it, *procedurally consequential* for the talk; which involves demonstrating how the details of the talk were shaped by participants' orientations to certain relevant identities and tasks in their interaction. Second, there is a kind of membrane evident in these examples, between on the one hand *institutional* talk (when interaction is focused on the administrative or medical business to be done), and on the other hand ordinary casual *conversational* interaction, with which they might begin or into which they might move from time to time. These two issues - how the interactional salience of relevant identities in a given setting (their procedural relevance) is manifest in the details of talk; and the membrane between institutional and conversational interaction - are matters which will be taken up and developed in examining the opening of the call in which a husband fails to recognise that the caller is his wife.

On failing to recognise the voice of an intimate

It is too well-known to need further demonstration here, that participants in telephone conversations (where visual identification is not available) orient to how well known they are to one another through the ways in which they manage identification and recognition in the

openings of calls. For instance if after speaker A has answered the phone, speaker B says *Hi*, speaker B does so in the expectation that speaker A will recognise them just from that voice sample. The intimacy associated with spouses, partners or companions, and other close family relationships, would seem to be the strongest possible basis for such expectations about mutual recognition from one's voice alone (without having to identify oneself by name); and it is this to which Robert Hopper refers in his comment about a vignette from Tom Wolfe.

> ' A scene from Tom Wolfe's novel *The Bonfire of the Vanities* illustrates our acuity for detail in the telephone opening. Sherman, who intends to telephone his mistress, mistakenly (by habit) dials his own home number:

>> Three rings, and a woman's voice: 'Hello?'
>> But it was not Maria's voice. He figured it must be her friend Germaine, the one she sublet the apartment from. So he said: 'May I speak to Maria please?'
>> The woman said: 'Sherman? Is that you?'
>> Christ! It's Judy! He's dialed his own apartment! He's aghast - paralyzed!
>> ' Sherman?'
>> He hangs up. Oh Jesus. What can he do? He'll bluff it out. When she asks him, he'll say her doesn't know what she's talking about. After all, he said only five or six words. How can she be sure?

> Every telephone user knows that Sherman is in trouble: we surely *can* identify a spouse's voice from just a few words...' (Hopper 1992:51)

One might notice, *contra* Hopper's certainty about the recognisability of a spouse's voice, that the vignette illustrates something rather different - Sherman did *not* recognise his wife's voice when she answered the phone. In order to make the fictional scene work, Wolfe has Sherman hearing only that it is not the voice of the person whom he called and expected to answer; and his attempts to figure out who then it might be centre around context (someone associated with the apartment). Thus Wolfe trades off a difficulty, on the phone, which parallels the familiar one we have when we recognise a face, but are unable right away to put a name or identity to that face - because we are seeing that person *out of context*. We struggle, sometimes without success, to

recall where we know that person *from*, from which then we'll be able to recall who they are (the person who serves at such-and-such a shop) or their name. Sherman's problems, springing from the connections between recognisability, expectations and context, is perhaps particularly acute. Nevertheless, such things happen, as this example demonstrates.

```
#5 [TCI(b)13:68:1]
1     Jerry:      Wichitaw'(bluepri:nt)
2     Linda:      Hey Jerry?
3                 (.)
4     Linda:      .h[h
5     Jerry:        [Ye:[s.
6     Linda:           [hHi:. .h[h
7     Jerry:                    [HI:[:.
8     Linda:                        [He:y- you don'haftuh bring'ny
9                 paper plates I think ah'll jus:t use the plates ah'v
10                go::t,hh
11    Jerry: +    Who's thi:s.
12    Linda: +    ↑Linda.ehh[hhhkhhh
13    Jerry:                [↑OH(h):.
14    Linda:      ° henh °
15    Jerry:      H[i::.
16    Linda:       [Wuhdihyou mean uwho(h)'s[this,
17    Jerry:                                [heh heh .hh
18                (.)
19    Linda:      [.hhhhhhhhhh
20    Jerry:      [Hm:, huh hu-eh .hu::[:h.
21    Linda:                          [khh[hh
22    Jerry:                              [Oh::: yeah fine? En you?
```

It emerges from his enquiry in line 11 that Jerry has not recognised whom he's talking to, his wife Linda (line 12): from what she has said in lines 2, 6 and 8/9, he has failed to recognise her voice. 'What she has said' includes not only samples of her voice, but also something specifically relating to a party they are going to that evening (lines 8/9), the preparations for which Jerry is going over after work to help with (this is evident from their conversation immediately after this extract). So he's had the sound of her voice, plus talk about an arrangement relating to the evening's fun, to go on - a pretty comprehensive recognition failure.

Workplace calls

It is evident that Jerry is at work: the identification with which he answers the phone is the name of the business (line 1), a quite standard way for members of organisations, at work, to

answer. The organisation's identification may be used alone, as Jerry does and as do the speakers in these next examples.

```
#6 [J10ORETUR:5:1]
Rec: +      General Land Office
Kay:        Hello Tod Nuffel ple:ase?
Rec:        Just a moment
Kay:        Thank you
```

```
#7 [Holt:SO88:1:4:2]
Ray:  +     He(.)llo:, g'morning Ri[mbold
Ski:                               [.hhh
Ski:        .hhh hOh hello:: .hh Uh:m (0.3) Ray is: ↑Fred the:re,hh
                 (0.4)
Ray:        Uh: that's[Skip is it?
Ski:                  [.t .t .hhh Yeah.
Ray:        Yeh (.) just one moment please
```

Or the called/answerer may give [name of organisation] + [personal name].

```
#8 [UTCL:J20B:09]
Taren: +    Ca:lifornia Data. This is T⎕aren?
                 (0.5)
Harry:      Hi. Is Phil aroun[d
Taren:                       [tch .hhh I: can probably f⎕ind him for
                 you.=May I ask who's call↑ing?
```

Linda has called Jerry at work, to talk about domestic matters, namely preparations for the party. From 'you don'haftuh bring'ny paper plates', it is plain that this is something they have discussed and arranged (that he should bring home paper plates); in *you don't have to*, she is now annulling that previous arrangement. She does so at just the point when she figures that he knows that it's her to whom he's speaking (notice that there is an earlier point at which she might have begun to talk about the plates, at line 6; but here, in ways to be explored below, there is no clear indication that he has yet recognised her). Recalling the point made earlier about the *membrane* between institutional talk and ordinary conversation, we can see that when Linda refers to the arrangement concerning the plates, she has grounds for 'knowing' that Jerry has, as it were, crossed that membrane from workplace/business to 'domestic conversation', by virtue of having identified her, and knowing that he's speaking to his wife, and not for instance a customer or colleague. As in

the examples discussed above, the physical context remains the same: what she understands will have changed, for him, from his answering the phone in 'business mode' to now talking about domestic matters, is that he has recognised that it is his wife who has called.

Greetings exchanges

The basis she has for believing that he has recognised her is, of course, his 'recognitional' *Hi* in line 7. Again, the research on telephone openings is too well known to require any further demonstration of the recognitional work which a reciprocal, increased amplitude, slightly stretched and unelaborated *Hi* achieves (but see especially Schegloff 1972, 1986). The point is that Jerry's 'HI::.' in line 7 demonstrates that he recognises to whom he's speaking.

But a caution should be added to the point about his greeting demonstrating that he recognises her. His reciprocal 'HI::.' *claims* recognition, but does not display it (Sacks discusses the distinction between *claiming* and *displaying* understanding at several points; but see Sacks 1992b: 249-260). That's to say, he does not display that he knows to whom he's speaking by naming or otherwise identifying her. Compare his greeting with a similar recognitional greeting in the following extract.

```
#9 [NB:II:2:1]

1     Nan:    Hel↑lo:,
2     Emm:    .hh HI::.
3             (.)
4     Nan: +  Oh:'I::: 'ow a:re you Emmah:
5     Emm:    FI:NE yer LINE'S BEEN BUSY.
```

In line 4 here Nancy both reciprocates Emma's 'HI::.', thereby claiming that she recognises the caller; she goes on to show that she knows, by naming her. A kind of equivalent display - rather than simple claim - of recognition on Jerry's part might have been along the lines *Hi [Linda]/[honey], what's up*, which would both show that he knows it's her, through the [first name] or [endearment term], and recognise that since she's calling him at work then she would be calling him about something particular (*what's up*).

Might then the sheer absence of a [first name] or [endearment] identification not have alerted her to the possibility that he has not recognised her? Well no, for two reasons. First, the claim which an unelaborated *Hi* makes to recognition may be treated as sufficient, that is as displaying that the speaker does indeed recognise to whom he is speaking. Second, that would be

consistent, for her, with the kind of suppression of domestic and sentimental attachments which can be a feature of calls between spouses (partners, lovers, etc.) when one is at work; by suppression, I mean the absence of surprise, delight, or other mode which recognises the 'intrusion' of the domestic/sentimental into the workplace. She has called him at work, and orienting to the situation in which he answers the phone and is speaking to her, it's therefore reasonable that he does not name her or greet her affectionately.

A kind of extreme case is the following. The phone has been answered by a receptionist/operator at Skip's place of work.

```
#10 [Holt:2:11] ((opening unrecorded))
1     Les:  Oh hello Dianne (.) Can I speak, t'((mock affected))
2           Mis:ter Fiel:d plea:se,
3     Dia:  Certainly. ((smile voice)) J'st a minute Lesley,
4     Les:  Thank you:?
5           ((ca. 4 seconds)) ((opening unrecorded))
6     Les:  Oh hello: (.) uh:m- (.) You asked me t'ring about twel[ve.
7     Ski:                                                        [Oh:
8           yeh: yeh.
9           (1.5)
10    Ski:  Ah:m a bit tied up,
11          (0.4)
12    Les:  Sorry?
13    Ski:  I'm a bit tied up at th'moment,
14    Les:  .hh Oh yes alright w'l can you get the ham at lunch time?
```

Although the moment when Skip, Lesley's husband, answers the call which has been put through to him is unrecorded (line 5), it is evident, from her providing an account for why she's calling (line 6), that he has answered in a manner which is not encouraging, and may even be distracted. And that is confirmed by his acknowledgement in lines 7/8 (again, displaying distraction) and his account in line 10, repeated in line 13. Even though Skip had grounds for expecting his wife to call about this time (that he asked her to 'ring about twelve', line 6), the circumstances of the workplace are such that he does not exhibit wholehearted commitment to the domestic intrusion of his wife's call.

Given an orientation on Linda's part to her husband being at work, the absence of his reciprocating by naming her, or his displaying that he knows it's her by using an endearment term, and the absence of any special delight or other emotion on hearing that it's her, is consistent with the possibility that colleagues may be present in the room and so on. Given that he's at work, she knows that his talk may in a sense be 'constrained' by that context: they are not talking exactly as

they might 'ordinarily' do as husband and wife. Thus his unelaborated *Hi* is sufficient to confirm, to her, that he recognises her and therefore that she can talk about their domestic business. In this respect notice that his 'HI::.' here in line 7, where it turns out he has *not* yet recognised her, is nearly identical intonationally to his 'Hi::.' in line 15, by which time he certainly knows who she is.

Let's consider then how he comes to produce this unelaborated recognitional greeting 'HI::.' in line 7, which as I have mentioned reciprocates Linda's greeting in the previous line, 'hHi:.'. Therefore he is both responding to her greeting, and doing so with an identical form. In other words, in order to understand how his *Hi* was produced, we need to consider what Linda is doing in her *Hi*, to which he is responding. One thing she does *not* do in her recognitional greeting in line 6 - and which if she had, would have avoided the difficulty which subsequently arises - is to self-identify: she does not say who she is, as in *Hi, it's Linda* or *Hi it's me*. Nor does she do something else which would have identified her, by adding an endearment term referring to him (other-identification), as in *Hi honey*.

But there are two further features of her greeting which give it the character of being 'business-like'. The first is that it lacks any prosodic inflection marking special closeness or intimacy. Though it's difficult to see this from the transcript, Linda's 'hHi:.' contrasts with the kind of 'social' initial greeting illustrated by Emma's 'HI::.' in #10, line 2. Linda's is prosodically flatter, and conveys more of the routine than special. Second, and more significantly, it partially implements the *greetings bypass* which is characteristic when one is calling the other to do business of some kind. The greetings bypass involves the elision of the 'standard' greeting sequence in 'social' calls (Schegloff 1986) by omitting an exchange of *how are you?* enquiries. Here are two examples of the greetings bypass, selected to replicate as nearly as possible the circumstances of #5.

```
#11 [Holt:88U:1:10:1]
1    Fre:    H'llo [(    ) speaking,]
2    Ski:          [ .h h h h h h h]h h h hOh Fre:d,
3            (0.3)
4    Fre:    Ye[↑:s.
5    Ski:      [.hh Oh it's Ski:p. .h
6    Fre:  +  Yes Ski[p.
7    Ski:  +        [.h Did you go back to wo:rk,h
8            (0.2)
9    Fre:    I've gotta me:ssage to ring Raymond Smith...
```

```
#12 [Holt:Christmas85:4]
1    Joy:     ˚(Eight four eight seven: six oh five)˚
2    Les:  +  Oh ↑hello Joyce are ↑you going↑ t'the mee↓ting t'ni:ght,
3             (0.2)
4    Joy:     .hhh No I'm not Lesley.
```

In each of these extracts, the participants orient to the calls as 'business' - though in both cases
the calls are made outside a business setting; Skip and Lesley, respectively, are calling from home,
to recipients in their homes, and in the case of #12 Lesley and Joyce are friends who regularly
call each other on a social basis. One of the ways in which this orientation is manifest is their
passing over opportunities to do 'social' greetings exchanges, including an exchange of *how are*
you? (in lines 6 and 7 in #11, and line 2 in #12). In eliding the call openings in this way, they are
getting straight down to business (and in #12 especially, indicating thereby that this is a call about
some business, rather than a social call: Drew and Chilton 2000: 142-149. See also Wakin and
Zimmerman 1999 on the similar reduction of openings in calls to the emergency services).

In #5, Linda only partially implements the greetings bypass, in so far as she does a
recognitional greeting, *Hi*, but does not add a version of *How are you?* (as in *How's it going?*, or
some such variation appropriate to their having seen one another only a short while ago).

```
From #5 [TCI(b)13:68:1]
1    Jerry:    Wichitaw'(bluepri:nt)
2    Linda:    Hey Jerry?
3              (.)
4    Linda:    .h[h
5    Jerry:      [Ye:[s.
6    Linda:         [hHi:. .h[h
7    Jerry:                  [HI:[:.
8    Linda:                      [He:y- you don'haftuh bring'ny
9              paper plates I think ah'll jus:t use the plates ah'v
10             go::t,hh
```

Notice that Linda also bypasses an exchange of *How are you?* when in line 8 she straightaway
introduces (domestic) business. It is specifically this omission of the *How are you's?* to which
Jerry attends in his now mock-greeting in line 22, when, having re-done a recognitional greeting
(line 15), he first 'answers' the missing/elided enquiry, 'Oh::: yeah fine?', and then 'reciprocates'
by asking her 'En you?'.

```
From #5 [TCI(b)13:68:1]
15    Jerry:        H[i::.
16    Linda:         [Wuhdihyou mean uwho(h)'s[this,
17    Jerry:                                    [heh heh .hh
18                  (.)
19    Linda:        [.hhhhhhhhhhh
20    Jerry:        [Hm::, huh hu-eh .hu::[:h.
21    Linda:                              [khh[hh
22    Jerry:                                  [Oh::: yeah fine? En you?
```

Here it is the very absence of the 'social' *How are you's?* which in line 22 Jerry treats as salient.

The way in which Linda only partially implements the greetings bypass, by greeting him with *Hi*, without a self- or other-identification, and not then doing (either there in line 6 or subsequently in the slot in line 8) a version of *How are you?*, reflects just this membrane between 'domestic' and 'business': in brief, she is striking a balance between intimacy and work. Her greeting, 'hHi:.', without adding self- or other-identification (as in *Hi it's me*, or *Hi honey*), claims at least that degree of familiarity, that the speaker expects recipient to recognise them from that alone. By doing a greeting, rather than moving straight into business in this slot in line 6, and by doing *that* greeting, Linda transcends the purely functional, work(place)-oriented opening, whilst simultaneously suppressing any overt reference to their domestic or intimate life. Thus in their exchange of *Hi*'s in lines 6 and 7 we see the misunderstanding that has developed between them: Linda, figuring that Jerry will have recognised her from her opening, uses a recognitional 'familiars/intimates' greeting - but expressly without adding the kind of *How are you?* inquiry which would betoken their domestic life. For Jerry, her *Hi* indicates that the caller is someone he ought to recognise, given that she recognised him (in her other-identification in line 2) and is now using only the recognitional *Hi* without self-identifying: he might suppose she's a colleague he knows particularly well, even though he can't for the moment recognise who it is. He reciprocates with *Hi* in line 7, perhaps in the expectation that subsequent talk (eg. what she's calling about) will give him the clue to her identity. She goes ahead on the understanding that he has recognised her: he goes ahead not yet having recognized who is calling, but expecting that he will. However she apparently is not alerted to the possibility that he has not recognised her: his reciprocal *Hi* is a sufficient display of recognition, and in any case she would not expect more, along the lines of *Hi honey/Linda*, given that *Hi* is sufficient (domestic/intimate), and anyway he's talking in a work context.

Whilst it is at this point, in lines 6 and 7, that the matter of their mutual recognition goes

awry, the seeds of their different orientations are sown in the openings exchange. Her opening 'Hey Jerry?' is *try marked*: that is, it is marked intonationally - with questioning intonation - as a guess at who he is, rather than being certain. Although she produces a first name identification of him, she does so in a manner which conveys that she is not necessarily sure that it is him. In one respect, her naming *Jerry* is responsive to the form he selected in answering the phone in line 1, in which he used the [name of organisation] alone (see #6 and 7 above), rather than [name of organisation] + [personal name] (as in #8). Had he added his own name, Linda *would not have produced* the try-marked identification. She would instead have gone straight to a greeting, either simply as *Hi*, or as *Hi Jerry* (ie. without rising/question intonation). The try-marked identification is produced specifically in those circumstances in which the answerer, who has not self-identified, *may* be someone other that the one to whom the caller wishes to speak, ie. when calling a shared 'multi-occupancy' number: the identification of a voice which 'fits' (is male, sounds like the person being called etc.) and therefore may be/probably is the person one intended to call, is tentative. As a consequence, Jerry hears a greeting by someone who *thinks* she recognises him, but may not be sure.

The standard response to try-marked identifications in telephone openings is confirmation (that is, if the recipient is indeed the person so identified).

```
From #11 [Holt:88U:1:10:1]
Fre:        H'llo [(    ) speaking,]
Ski:    +         [ .h h h h h h h]h h h hOh Fre:d,
                (0.3)
Fre:    +   Ye[↓:s.
Ski:          [.hh Oh it's Ski:p. .h


#13 [UTCL:D8:3] (from Hopper 1992:64)
Pat:        Hello:?
                  (0.3)
Jon:    +   Pat?
Pat:    +   Yep
                  (0.2)
Jon:        Jon what are you up to


#14  [NB:VII:1]
Mar:        Hello:,
Edn:    +   Hello Margy?
Mar:    +   Ye:[s,
Edn:          [.hhhh We do pai:::nting, a:ntiqui::ng,
```

In each case, the called party responds to the try-marked identifications simply by confirming: they do not add an identification (or even similarly attempted identification) of the caller. So there is nothing relevantly 'missing' in the slot in which Jerry answers Linda's try-marked identification 'Hey Jerry?'; that's to say, it wouldn't be expected that Jerry should (attempt to) identify Linda in that slot in line 5, and hence the absence of such an identification would not be noticeable, to Linda. Her try-marked identification sets up a sequence in which the recipient (called) confirms it is the person named, after which the caller will self-identify (as Skip, Jon and Edna do in #11 line 5, #13 line 6 and #14 line 4 respectively). Herein lies the difficulty: although Linda does identify herself, she does so only implicitly through her recognitional *Hi*, and without giving her name. However by this point Jerry has heard himself identified in a way which is consistent with the workplace setting in which he answers the call, that is, tentatively, by someone with whom he's reasonably familiar (hence the *Hi*), but who does not know him well enough to be sure it is him, who needs first to check. He, then, is oriented to the workplace as the relevant context in which he's being called - not merely because he is in the workplace, but because the caller identified him in a way which is consistent with workplace calls. She also orients to his being at work, in so far as, because he may be only one of several potential answerers, when he answers she checks first that it is indeed him, before she proceeds. But then she does a self-identification which relies upon their intimacy, and the expectation that he'll recognise her; instead of doing a named self-identification (as in #s 11 and 13), which would stay with the 'workplace' orientation, she uses an implicit form which switches to a 'domestic' orientation. She has crossed that membrane between work and home, but she has not carried Jerry with her.

There is one further detail worth noticing about her opening, and that is that she says 'Hey...', not *Hi*. *Hey* is consistent with the tentative, try-marked identification (since *Hi* claims recognition, that would not have been consistent with the try-marked '...Jerry?'). But *Hey* is also something like a preliminary to business, side-stepping greetings exchanges entirely. Except that Linda doesn't: having set up a position in the next slot in which to introduce 'business', instead - having business to conduct, but not *that* kind of (workplace) business - she moves out of that action trajectory when in line 6 she does the recognitional greeting. In a sense even the attenuated greeting she does there was not projected by her opening in line 2. And when she returns to (domestic) business in line 8, she repeats just that 'business preliminary' *Hey*.

<u>Conclusion</u>

The question posed in the introduction was, how was it that Jerry failed to recognise the voice of his wife in this telephone call? I have not attempted to ask *why* he didn't recognise her; ultimately there's no answer to that question (or if there is an answer, it's beyond the scope of an analysis of the interaction between them). But we can trace *how* he came not to recognise her, the stages of which involve selections which they each make during the opening. For instance, his selection of the contextual identification [name of organization] alone as the means of answering, and not adding his own name, made relevant an attempted (try-marked) identification by the Linda. Jerry produced the quite standard response to try-marked identifications, which is simply to confirm (or disconfirm). Linda's recognitional greeting *Hi* generates the reciprocal recognitional greeting from him, even though he has not yet recognised her. The steps in the evolving misalignment - she figuring by line 6 that he knows to whom he is speaking, an assumption which seems to be endorsed by his greeting in line 7, although in fact he has not recognised her - are interactionally and not psychologically driven.

However, each of the selections they make is the product of their understandings of context. What each of them says and does is not bound in a determinate sense to a single characterisation of context, nor even to their mutual identities of husband and wife. For instance, we have seen that for Linda, the absence of any expressive sentiment in Jerry's reciprocal recognitional greeting amounts to a suppression of the markers of intimacy, consistent with his having recognised her (hence the recognitional greeting) but speaking in an office context, from the world of work (hence the suppression). She orients to the salience of both work and domestic contexts, in ways which can 'account for' the absence in his turns of any overt recognition of her, through more intimate conversational forms. She in turn matches her 'moves' to what she takes will have become his understanding of the context, that this is a domestic call, but being taken (by him) in a workplace context. Moreover, her opening turns are designed with a view to conducting some business, albeit domestic business, rather than this simply being a 'social' call. Her opening turn (line 2) is preparatory to that business; and whilst the (domestic) *content* of her turn in lines 8-10 might have alerted him to who was speaking, its *form* of getting down to business, *in the context of prior moves* which have been consistent with leading up to business, enable him to hear this as just that kind of business conducted in the workplace - even though, as is evident when he asks 'Who's <u>thi</u>:s.' in line 11, he cannot recognise that business in the context

of whatever work he is doing, or connect that to the identity of anyone he knows in or related to the workplace. So here he is confronted with 'business talk', which therefore continues to sustain the salience of the workplace; but the business is about something which fails to give him a clue as to the identity of the caller within the workplace context. In this way Linda's orientation to the salience for their talk of both domestic and workplace contexts is manifest in her construction of turns across the membrane between these, such that her turns are consistent with their 'domestic' relationship whilst their talking in a way which is constrained or adapted to his being in the workplace. And by virtue of that, he has grounds for treating this as simply a workplace interaction, with an as-yet-unidentified colleague, perhaps.

Examining closely a call made by a wife to her husband, at his place of work, moreover a call in which the husband fails to recognise his wife's voice, is a kind of device to illustrate Schegloff's point, discussed earlier, that '..the social structural location does not by itself endow occasions of interaction with a genre identity...' (Schegloff 1992: 117). Nor, we might add, do the participants' mutual identities determine the shape and texture of the talk. The general aim of this exercise, and of using this device of the dual relevant contexts of domestic life and the workplace, has been to show how the procedural relevance of context and speaker identity is managed in the details of the talk - in the sequence and design of turns at talk.

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Endnotes

[i] Schegloff published a paper on psychiatric theory in the Berkeley Journal of Sociology, in 1963.

[ii] I take it that the "first five seconds" was intended to demonstrate that much could be learned about the systematic organisations of conversation from a close, detailed analysis of a short interactional excerpt - shorter even than "the first five minutes" of the psychotherapy session that Pittinger at al. 1960 studied), a study to which Sacks had referred in his lectures in the spring 1966.