The Management of Topics in
Ordinary Conversation

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Abstract

'Topic' has been a relatively neglected area in conversation analytic research. Partly owing to conceptual issues, such as what precisely constitutes a topic? and how are topics defined and identified?, the management of topics in ordinary conversation has come to be less widely studied than other more superordinate organizations in conversations, especially aspects of sequence organization. However, topic is an important organizing unit for conversation, shaping talk-in-interaction in profound ways. For ordinary participants, topics are what conversations are all about, what they orient to in real-time interaction and also what they reflect on their talk retrospectively. In this thesis, I aim to dispel previous misconceptions about conversational topics and provide a systematic overview about the organization of topics in ordinary conversation.

Drawing upon recordings of telephone conversations between family members, friends, neighbors, etc., I explored various topical actions in conversation, as well as the nexus between topic and other organizing features of conversation. My analysis is divided as follows. In chapter 3, I examine two forms of topic transition – stepwise topic transition and touched-off topic transition — where a new topic is introduced by maintaining some topical link with the previous topic. In chapter 4, I further develop an early observation about creating the circumstances to introduce some next topics, where there is no natural environment to do so. In chapter 5, I focus on another topical action – topic resumption, and highlight its sequential context as well as linguistic design. In the last analytical chapter, I turn to another conversational feature, self-repairs, and explore how they interact with the organization of topics.

This thesis provides an in-depth overview on how participants orient to their topics in ordinary conversation. It shows that topic is a valid organizing factor in interaction and it can be managed in systematic ways. It is hoped that this thesis will bridge gaps in CA literature in topic and complement our understanding about topics in conversation.

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Declaration

I declare that this thesis is a presentation of original work and I am the sole author. This work has not previously been presented for an award at this, or any other, University. All sources are acknowledged as References.

Chapter 1   Introduction

1   Research Background

Topics are often considered to be at the heart of conversation - in a sense, topics may be regarded as what daily conversations are 'about'. We may anticipate and prepare to talk about certain topics at an occasion; we may find on Google or YouTube tips or videos with guidance about what to talk about under different circumstances (e.g., when you want to make an impression on a date). Following a topic, connecting what one has to say with the topic at hand, not wandering verbally down topical byways or dead ends (losing the thread), and how we make and develop topical connections in conversation lie at the core of being a socially competent and co-operative participant in social interaction. Topics are, in the vernacular perception, what constitute conversations, and engagement in topics plays an important part in our participation in society. The topic of my research and this dissertation is . . .topic, and the management of topic in conversation.

There is perhaps in Conversation Analysis and cognate disciplines a comparative dearth of research into topic. In CA, a large body of research has traditionally focused on the basic concepts (Drew, 2005, p. 79) or the 'pillars' that are constitutive of social interaction: turn-taking, which describes the sets of practices speakers use to allocate turns (Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson, 1974); turn-design, which refers to how a speaker constructs a turn to carry out an action (Drew, 2013, p. 132); sequence organization, which concerns the ways in which turns are ordered and combined (Schegloff, 2007) and social actions, which is about what speakers do with their turns (Levinson, 2013). The study of these 'first-order concepts' (Drew, 2005, p. 79) have been accompanied by research into other fundamental organizing features of conversation, notably preference organization—how speakers manage the structural principles or constraints (particularly in responding) in interaction (Pomerantz & Heritage, 2013), and repair—how speakers attend to possible troubles in speaking, hearing and understanding the talk (Kitzinger, 2013), etc. By contrast, there has not been a substantial body of research dedicated to the organization of topics in conversation, apart from the few notable exceptions (e.g., Button & Casey, 1984, 1985; Maynard & Zimmerman, 1984; Jefferson, 1984; Drew & Holt, 1998; Holt & Drew, 2005). It is fair to say that topic has been rather secondary as an area of study in Conversation Analysis: it is worth noting that in her comprehensive textbook on Conversation Analysis, Clift (2016) makes only a handful (5) of references to topic, of which there is one to topic-initiation and one to topic-shifts; these will feature prominently as foci in my research.

Such a comparative lack of study into topic is due to a number of reasons, both theoretical and practical. Theoretically, there is the problem of providing a well-grounded scientific definition of topic. In linguistics, there have been some major attempts to construct a theoretical notion of topic. Some of them approach topic at the level of the sentence (e.g., Hockett, 1958; Grimes, 1975; Givon, 1979), proposing that the topic of a sentence is usually its subjects (Hockett, 1958).

Others (e.g., Keenan & Schieffelin, 1976, Venneman, 1975) dismiss the idea of topic as a grammatical unit and instead define topics at a discourse level, proposing that the topic of a stretch of discourse is simply what it is about. In addition, there is also research that defines discourse topics using a topic framework (Brown & Yule, 1983), which incorporates contextual knowledge into the formulation of topics. Despite such efforts to define topic, none of them proves to be convincing and effective. Indeed, as Brown and Yule acknowledge, topic could be described as the most frequently used and unexplained term in the analysis of discourse, and formal attempts to identify topics are doomed to failure (Brown & Yule, 1983, p 68 and 70).

As the approaches above fail to capture the essence of topics, pragmatics and discourse analysts adopt a more intuitive and interactive approach, defining topics as 'what participants are talking about' (e.g., Brown & Yule, 1983; Bublitz, 1988; Svennevig, 1999) and focusing on the processes of topic management. This is a bottom-up approach that prioritizes participants' own orientations to topics, and it seems to be a more practical one, since 'it is not sentences that have topics, but speakers' (Morgan, 1975, p. 434, cited in Bublitz, 1988, p. 271). However, this approach is also vulnerable to some problems, since 'what we are talking about' is often susceptible to individual perceptions, focuses and interests. When determining what the topic of a piece of discourse is, different researchers, who may explore the interaction from different perspectives, could have quite disparate opinions on what the participants are talking about. More importantly, in the course of a conversation, participants themselves may have different understandings of what they have talked about. While the practice of 'formulating what the topic is' is something done within conversation by participants (Schegloff, 1990, p. 52), participants may not share the same notion of what they are or have been talking about, even though their talk is perfectly coherent and on-topic. Therefore, although we can be certain that participants have talked about a wide range of topics throughout their conversation, it is not easy to identify or pin down these topics in a satisfactory way. Such difficulty in defining or even identifying topics, therefore, have rendered topic a less attractive area to study.

With regards to the problems associated with defining topics, some researchers propose a new path to studying conversational topics. According to them, while it is nearly impossible to provide a single satisfactory definition of what participants are talking about, there are places in interactions where we can observe topic boundaries (e.g., Maynard, 1980; Maynard & Zimmerman, 1984; Crow, 1983; Bublitz, 1988; Hoffmann & Bublitz, 2017). Topic boundaries are observable where participants wind down a previous topic and where they embark on a new topic, thereby providing us a lens through which participants' orientations to topic management can be exhibited. However, this method can best be applied to disjunctive forms of topic change, where there is a distinct rupture between the previous and the next topics, or where the new topic is unrelated to the previous topic. It is more difficult to account for the relatively seamless ways of topic transition, which, according to Sacks (1992b, p. 566), is the most usual and preferred way of moving from one topic to another. As Heritage (1989) acknowledges, the achievement of relatedness between turns, which is a feature for the smooth flow of topics, is generally too complex and multifaceted to capture. Schegloff (1990) also addresses the same problem, saying that stepwise topic transitions render the topical thrust of talk 'equivocal' (p. 52). Their arguments suggest that in addition to the difficulty in

defining topics, there is also the challenging task of discovering the mechanism behind seamless topic transitions, which further contribute to the dearth of study into topics.

Finally, the difficulty in defining topics and tracking topic boundaries, as discussed above, is one of the reasons that Schegloff (1990) is wary of treating topic is a significant organizing unit for conversation. In an earlier study, he demonstrates that the study of topic is subservient to the study of actions and sequences of actions, since it is not the topical links that create the source of coherence for conversation but rather the sequential structures associated with actions (1990, p. 66). The example he shows a single extract of the conversation between two participants, in which one calls the other to borrow a BB gun. After the caller made the request ('I was wondering if you'd let me borrow your gun'), the two parties move into a lengthy talk in which they figure out which gun the caller would like to have and why the caller needs to borrow the gun, before the recipient goes back to the request and grants it ('I'll bring you my good one'). Using this example, Schegloff (1990) demonstrated that this is sufficient to show that conversation is better examined with respect to action and sequence than with respect to topic, since topics may change from one to another within the coherence provided by the overarching structure of an action sequence (in this case, a request and the response, in this case granting the request). In other words, Schegloff argues that sequence and action are the underlying sources of coherence in conversation because it is the 'pending business of the as-yet open sequence (Schegloff, 1990, p. 72)' that participants are orienting to, but not topics.

In subsequent expositions, Schegloff (1999, 2007) has convincingly demonstrated that 'the organization of topic' is not among the fundamental and underlying organizations of conversation. Schegloff considers the underlying organizations of conversation to include the organization of turn-taking (Sacks et all 1974), sequence organization (Schegloff, 2007), the organization of repair (Schegloff, Jefferson & Sacks 1977), and preference organization (Heritage & Pomerantz 2013). Indeed, this is the view held quite generally within CA. Combining this view of sequence and action (not topic) as the source for coherence, Schegloff concludes that talk-in-interaction "is better understood for what it is doing than what it is about" (Schegloff 1999, p. 409-410).

Whilst there is no denying that sequence and action (or sequences of actions) are the most fundamental underpinnings of conversation, it is also true that there are many moments in talk-in-interaction where topic, or the "aboutness" of talk becomes more salient and seems to become salient for participants. In institutional interactions, for example, participants' conversations are often guided by a fixed list of topics or agenda. In ordinary conversations, by contrast, we can always find cases where participants are working to introduce or get onto a topic (e.g., topic-proffering, Schegloff 2007), to get off a topic (as shown by Jefferson 1984) or to resume a topic e.g. after a side sequence (Jefferson, 1972: 316-321). Indeed, as Schegloff (1999, p. 410) acknowledges, doing topical talk is itself a form of action in interaction; participants' movement from one topic to another is itself achieved via a sequence of such actions. In other words, Schegloff does not dismiss topic as being irrelevant, unimportant or not worthy of research; quite to the contrary, he regards topic as being a significant, salient and researchable unit of talk, something akin to turns and turn-constructional units (Schegloff 2007,

p. 28).

So although he is concerned largely with sequence and action, throughout his research Schegloff has also focused his analytic microscope on topic, and has observed how the management of topic is intertwined with the organization of sequence and action. For example, he has used the expressions "topically appropriate" (Schegloff 1990, p. 69), "topically discontinuous with the previous talk" (ibid., p. 39), "all sorts of topics" (ibid., 113), "topicalization" (ibid., p.155), among many other references to and analyses of the management of topic, including topic-proffering turns. Whilst Schegloff has from time to time focused on topic in these ways, it would be true to say that he and others in CA have not yet given the management of topic in interaction the close and systematic attention that it deserves. Schegloff is correct that there is no 'organization of topic' that is at all comparable to 'the organization of turn-taking', for example; nevertheless, topic is organized, or displays elements of being organized, in the ways that we as analysts, and especially participants in conversations, recognize topical coherence (staying on topic or drifting off the topic), move gradually onto another topic or suddenly and abruptly introduce a new topic, perhaps as a diversion (Austin 1961), and in other ways orient to 'what we/they are talking about'. In other words, there are recurrent, systematic and organized properties to the ways in which topic is managed in conversation, even if there is not 'the organization of topic.' Hence the title of this dissertation.

There is a caveat that might be noted regarding Schgloff's arguments concerning the relation between topic and the organization of action in his 1990 paper, where he prioritizes action over topic as *the* organizing unit for interaction. It should be borne in mind that his evidence here rests on a single example, and the phenomenon he describes, a base sequence (request and granting) with nearly 100 lines of extensive insertion sequences, is perhaps not so common in ordinary conversation. Again, it is worth recalling thay for lay participants, 'what they are talking about' i.e. topic, can be just as salient as what they are doing; for instance, participants can be observed to orient to the organization of topics in their talk (Clayman & Heritage, 2002, p. 196-197).

Schegloff is, of course, not the only scholar who refers to and explores topics in conversation. For instance, in his study of well-prefaced turns, Heritage (2015) notices that they are frequently associated with topic shifts and topic closures. Then there is a body of research (e.g., Greatbatch, 1986; Grenne et al., 1994; Boden, 2006, 2009; Rosland, 2011) that incorporates the concept of topic in their analysis of various interactional practices under different settings. There is substantial evidence to suggest that participants may orient to the organization of topics in systematic ways. In terms of disjunctive topic change, previous research has discovered recurrent practices that participants use in initiating topics (e.g. Button & Casey, 1984, 1985, 1989; Maynard, 1980; Maynard & Zimmerman 1984), winding down topics (e.g., Jefferson, 19983; Holt, 2010) and managing the interactional hiatus between topics (e.g., Drew & Holt, 1995, 1998). Even in seamless topic transitions, which Schegloff (1990) describes as 'equivocal' (p. 52), previous studies have nevertheless identified participants' attentiveness to topics and how speakers can segue from one topic to the next. In her classic paper on stepwise

topic transition, Jefferson (1984) described in detail how a speaker gradually moves out of a troubles-telling step-by-step while preserving the coherence of the conversation. Holt & Drew (2005) also discuss how participants use figurative expressions to manage the smooth transition from one topic to another. While it is true that topics are difficult to define analytically, these studies have demonstrated that in conversations, participants themselves have their own ideas about when a topic begins and ends and therefore can manage their (topical) talk accordingly. In this sense, topic, just like action, sequence and other organizing units for interaction, should also be treated as a valid analytical tool for conversations.

In addition, previous research has shown that the management of topics is also a structured, coordinated achievement with recurrent patterns and practices. Either in starting a topic, closing down a topic, or resuming a topic, participants are observed to manage what they are talking about in systematic ways. They do so by attending to a range of other factors including the sequential environment in which they are situated (i.e., the preceding topic), turn design (e.g., turn-initial markers, syntactic structures, prosodic patterns, etc.) and as well as the specific nature of the topics (i.e., self-attentive, other-attentive, complainable matters or sensitive issues, etc.). CA takes it that no details of interaction should be dismissed as insignificant, random or dis-organized – as Heritage suggested 35 years ago:

> " . . . no order of detail (of interaction) can be dismissed, *a priori*, as disorderly, accidental or irrelevant . . . The initial and most fundamental assumption of conversation is that all aspects of social action and interaction can be found to exhibit organized patterns of stable, identifiable, structural features. . . . Ordinary interaction can thus be analysed so as to exhibit stable organizational patterns of action to which participants are oriented." (Heritage, 1984, p. 241)

Heritage's point here - that all aspects of interactional conduct, presumably verbal and non-verbal or multi-modal conduct (though that term was not then current), can be supposed to be organized - is developed further by a quotation from Schegloff & Sacks, in which they highlight the way in which the orderliness evident in interaction – the organizations, patterns and so forth - are 'methodically produced' by participants going about their everyday business; the orderliness of talk is the product of co-participants' understandings of what they (themselves and the other) are doing:

> "We have proceeded under the assumption . . . that in so far as the materials we worked with exhibited orderliness, they did so not only to us, indeed not in the first place for us, but for the co-participants who had produced them. If the materials (records of natural conversation) were orderly, they were so because they had been methodically produced by members of the society for one another, and it was a feature of those conversations we treated as data that they were produced so as to allow the display by co-participants to each other of their orderliness, and to allow the participants to display to each other their analysis, appreciation and use of that orderliness." (Schegloff & Sacks, 1973, p.290)

Apart from the published studies listed above, there are also some preliminary, less-developed observations about the management of topic which are worthy to be further investigated. For instance, in his early lectures Sacks made reference to the different ways of introducing a topic,

such as stepwise topic transition (Sacks, 1992b, p. 300) and touched-off topic introductions (Sacks, 1992b, p. 87). Also, Adato (1979, 1980) discussed the possibility of utilizing the circumstantially produced topicality (1980, p. 59-60) to introduce a particular topic in an unnoticed way. These initial discussions are a great inspiration for future work on the management of topic and further research on topic could complement our understanding of the mechanisms that underpin our social interaction.

Finally, the study of topic is not only important for understanding the organization of conversation but also for our understanding of social relationships. An immense research effort has focused on the relational implications of interaction, especially the interdependent connections between conversational topics and human relationships (e.g., Knapp, 1978; Berger & Bradac, 1982; Clark, 1996; Maynard & Zimmerman, 1984). According to Social Penetration Theory (Altman & Taylor, 1973; Taylor & Altman, 1975, 1987), participants' communication patterns develop in accordance with the growth of their relationships, and this process can be reflected in the topics they talk about, particularly the breadth, the depth and the smoothness of the transition of their topics (Taylor & Altman, 1987).To conclude, topic is vital for social relationships: to some extent, topics may be determined by relationships but at the same time topic may also shape and influence the ever-changing relationships between participants. Therefore, a study into the organization of topics will not only shed light on how people manage conversations but perhaps in the longer term on how people manage their participation and relationships in society.

In this first section, I have set out some of the reasons for the relative dearth of research into topic in conversation, and also the importance, nevertheless, to study it. In the next section, I will provide an overview of my methodology and the data I use.

2   Methodology and data

This section outlines the method and the data for my thesis. I will first briefly describe the analytic approach of my study — Conversation Analysis. Then I will give an overview of the data for my research. Lastly, I will illustrate the steps for my research.

2.1   Analytic approach—Conversation Analysis

With the publication of the "simplest systematics" paper (Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson, 1974), Conversation Analysis established itself as an influential paradigm within social sciences concerning language and human interaction. Being a bottom-up, natural observational science (Atkinson & Heritage, 1984a, p. 21), Conversation Analysis is dedicated to studying people's spontaneous production of conversation and their displayed understanding of one another in interaction, in real-time. Assuming that interactional orders are widely present at all points of conversation, and certain orders are robust universally (Levinson, 2000), CA studies interaction with the aim to "find rules, techniques, methods, maxims…that can be used to generate the orderly features we find in the conversations (Sacks, 1984, p. 413). Through turn-by-turn analysis of naturally occurring conversation, conversation analysts focus on the central question

of "why that now" (Schegloff, 1980, 1991; Schegloff & Sacks, 1973), exploring the linguistic and compositional feature of an utterance, the positioning of the utterance in the sequence, and the action that the participant is observed to deliver through the utterance. By studying how people interact with each other in conversation, CA offers profound insights into the competences and process which enable people to establish, manifest, maintain and manage social relationships, and to make sense of themselves in relation to one another (Drew, 2005). After developing over the past half century, CA has become the primary method for studying talk-in-interaction and has generated a significant volume of research outputs.

There are four basic concepts underlying Conversation Analysis: turn-taking, turn design, social action, and sequence organization (Drew, 2005). Turn-taking is the most basic organization of conversation, which regulates the exchange of speaker's turns and facilitates the smooth transition of speakership (Clayman, 2013; Hayashi, 2013). It consists of two components: turn-constructional components, which are the building blocks through which turns are constructed, and turn-allocation components, referring to the practices whereby turns are allocated among the participants and which thereby regulate who speaks when and negotiation of turn allocation (Selting 2000). Turns are constructed out of turn-constructional units (TCUs), which are grammatical and phonetic units such as single words, phrases, sentences, or combinations of these. (Ford & Thompson 1997). According to Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson (1974), the grammatical characteristics of TCUs "allow a projection of the unit type" (p. 702), enabling the next speaker to project, at an early stage, a transitional relevance place (TRP), where a change of speaker could be possible. The turn-taking system ensures that, at least normatively, only one speaker speaks at a time, and conversation is able thereby to proceed smoothly without substantial overlaps or gaps. In addition, it enables speakers to carry out actions, display stances, and establish mutual understanding in conversation.

Turn design focuses specifically on the compositional feature of turns. When a speaker takes a turn-at-talk, s/he needs to determine i: what action he is going to perform, such as inviting, complaining, requesting and assessing, and ii: how it is that he is going to accomplish this action (Drew 2005, 2013). There are various resources available to construct turns, including lexical choice, sentence type, prosody and even gesture and eye contact, and different combinations of these resources, although performing the same action, will have different implication for how the next speaker will respond to this action (e.g., "we had a burglar" vs. "we had a burglary" will prompt different reactions from the recipient). In addition, differences in turn design can also reflect how speakers position themselves in relation to other people, thereby reflecting social relationships (e.g., "are you coming to the meeting?" vs. "are you going to the meeting?" reflect social deixis – not the speaker's geographical location relative to the recipients, but the speaker's 'position' (e.g. in an organization) relative to the recipient.). Therefore, turn-design closely intersects with other key concepts of CA (Drew, 2013), so that notions such as action formation, sequence organization and intersubjectivity coalesce in our investigations of interaction.

Just as topics in conversation topics should be examined in relation to social actions – indeed, talking 'on topic' is in its own right a not insignificant form of verbal conduct - so are all other

phenomena in interaction. In fact, when people are talking they are not merely chatting, but are doing things with their talk. That is, they are designing their utterances, out of other possible alternative constructions, to accomplish an action to be delivered. In addition, on hearing an utterance, the next speaker is obliged to respond to the prior action according to how he/she understands it (Schegloff, 1996c). In a phrase, Conversation Analysts are interested in action formation (Levinson, 2013), to the construction of an action with utterances, and action ascription (ibid), which is the 'assignment of an action to a turn as revealed by the response of a next speaker' (ibid, p. 104). Action formation and ascription allow us to understand how talk is employed to do things, and how actions are both context-shaped and context renewing (Heritage, 1984, p. 242) within the larger conversation sequence.

Lastly, sequence organization refers to the study of how utterances and actions are positioned relative to each other in conversation. At the most basic level, sequences are formed by adjacency pairs (Schegloff & Sacks, 1973), the notion that if one speaker does a first pair action of a certain type, then the other participant is expected, or normatively obliged, to respond with an action in the same pair with the first action. In real-world conversation, however, sequence organization is always more complicated than that, and expansion sequences (pre-expansion, post-expansion and insert-expansion) (Schegloff, 20078) are widely employed by participants to address interactional issues such as indicating stances, expressing alignment or affiliation, or clearing up intersubjectivity problems (Stivers, 2013, p. 192). The process in which participants position their actions in conversation, and collaboratively deal with interactional tasks in sequence, is at the centre of our study. This focus on participants' orientations to their conduct within ongoing sequences of action is what makes CA a distinctive approach to language and interaction (Atkinson & Heritage, 1984; Stivers, 2013).

2.2   Data

The data of my research come from three sets of secondary data. The first set is the Newport Beach (NB) corpus collected in the early years of Conversation Analysis during the 1960s. It includes 29 conversations in American English, documenting the telephone talk principally between two middle-aged sisters (Emma and Lottie), but including many conversations with family, neighbours and friends. The second set is the Holt corpus, recorded in southern England in the late 1980s and consisting of 60 conversations in total, between family members, friends, colleagues, classmates and the like. The third set comes from the Rahman corpus, which includes 23 telephone conversations in British English between friends and neighbours in Northeastern England. All of the conversations above were transcribed by Jefferson, using the transcription conventions that she developed (Jefferson, 2004). Together these form the entire data for my thesis. These three corpora are widely regarded as the 'classic' CA data out of which much of the seminal work has been done. Since most CA researchers are familiar with these data, they can be in a better position to examine the basis of my analysis and may even offer their own insights into my research questions.

2.3   Research Steps

As stated earlier in this chapter, this research focuses on the management of topics in ordinary, daily conversation. However, at the start of my research, it was not clear what more specific research questions I should pursue. The existing literature on topic included research on topic initiation (e.g., Button & Casey, 1984, 1985; Maynard & Zimmerman, 1984), stepwise topic transition (e.g., Jefferson, 1984; Drew & Holt 2005), topic closure (e.g., Jefferson, 1983) and other initial observations regarding how participants organize topics in conversation (e.g., Adato, 1979, 1980). These equipped me with a general knowledge of what we have already known about topic management and the basic ways for studying topics. For example, previous research into disjunctive topic transitions (e.g., Button & Casey, 1984, 1985; Jefferson, 1983) indicates where they mostly occur in a sequence, and the linguistic format they usually take. This literature helps give me a basis to examine the data and identify other interesting phenomena regarding topic. In the meantime, by reading previous research on topic I have also come across some preliminary comments and observations which could be further studied. Combining my own observations with those preliminary ideas from past literature, several specific research issues and foci were identified for investigation.

Previous papers on CA methodology (e.g., Sidnell 2010, 2013) have set out a number of steps in developing analysis inductively, and this thesis has broadly followed them. The first step of the analysis starts with observation. In CA, observation serves as a basis for theorizing and it distinguishes CA from other streams of social sciences. In his book, Sidnell (2010) outlines some key features that analysts should focus on when doing observation: patterns across data samples, patterns within the data, formulations and formats (p. 30). In relation to research on the organization of topics, my thesis is not looking at the topical connections between turns, but more importantly, how participants are observed to orient to topics and carry out different topical actions. Using my exploration of touched-off topics as an example, my investigation started by observing across the data, to find cases where participants are observed, in a disjunctive way, to introduce a topic that seems to be occasioned by the immediately prior talk. After repeated listenings and observations, I am able to recall instances of touched-off transitions and they helped to me gradually build up a collection of similar examples. Once a collection was built, analysis could be developed by considering each case in detail, with the aim to get a sense of what is going on between the participants. At this stage, my focus is features such as turn design and composition, sequence positioning and so on. More specifically, investigation focused on the details in both the design of the turns (composition), including syntactic features, lexical markers, intonational patterns, etc., and those features in the sequential environment (positioning), including what happens in the preceding environment, how this phenomenon is managed turn-by-turn and the interplay between the sequential environment and turn design. For example, when analyzing touched-off topic transitions, attention is paid where they typically appear in sequences, how participants display the link between a current topic and previous topic, and how those links or visible connections are managed and exhibited through specific linguistic features, and how the other participant orient to this transition. Gradually, I was able to identify some recurrent patterns in terms of positioning and turn composition, and also some ways of categorizing my collection into subsets using certain criteria. For instance, across all my collected examples of touched-off topic transition, I grouped them in terms of the different turn-initial markers prefacing a touched-off

topic transition (see section 3.1 in chapter 3 for more details). These recurrent patterns and practices that I have revealed in this process serve as the general social interactional practices and competencies...which enable them to interact meaningfully with one another (Drew, 2014, p. 231). More importantly, by following this conversational analytical framework, what has been identified and described is "not the product of a clever analyst's fancy but something in the world that has real integrity" (Sidnell 2010, p. 34).

Having described the data and the methodology for my thesis, here is a brief summary of each of the following chapters.

3   Chapter summaries

This chapter explores the management of topics in ordinary conversations, to further investigate previous under-developed observations on topic management and to uncover the practices for managing different topical actions. The structure of my thesis and the primary focus of each following chapter are as follows.

The next chapter provides a review of past research on the study of topic in discourse. The literature review is divided into two parts. The first section focuses on a traditional linguistic approach to studying and defining topics. I describe their two major ways of defining topics: formed-based definition (e.g., Hoey, 1991) which defines topics mainly by identifying topic boundaries at sentence-level, and content-based definition (e.g., Brown & Yule, 1983) which is based on the sense of 'aboutness' in discourse. This section concludes by discussing the shortcomings of this approach. The second section turns to the Conversation Analytic approach to studying topics. I first point out the distinctiveness of CA approaches to topics, and then I review past research into topic. The literature review concludes with a discussion on the gaps in CA literature regarding topic and a list of research questions I will explore in the upcoming chapters.

Chapter 3 explores two forms of topic transitions where a new topic is introduced by retaining or highlighting a topical connection with the previous topic. One such connected topic transition is stepwise topic transition, which Jefferson (1984) discussed in the context of talk about personal troubles. In her paper, Jefferson (1984) proposed a five-step pattern used to gradually move away from a troubles-telling. However, we do not know if the same pattern can also be applicable to a wider range of topics. Therefore, I first explore whether this pattern can be applied to topic transitions between more general, non-troubles-telling topics. Next, I look at the sequence of turns in stepwise topic transition, and explore how they themselves are connected to each other, facilitating the stepwise transition between topics. The other form of connected topic transition is called touched-off topic transition — a term coined by Sacks in his early lectures. In touched-off topic transition, a speaker is reminded by some element in the immediate preceding talk and therefore introduces a new topic occasioned by it. I focus on three features of touched-off topic transitions: 1) the range of disjunctive markers that preface touched-off topic transition, indicating a departure from the topic direction. 2) the sequential environment for topic transition. 3) the practices for establishing topical links between the

preceding topic and the touched-off topic. Through the analysis in this chapter I hope to provide a better understanding of topic transition in addition to the disjunctive topic changes that have been more extensively researched.

Chapter 4 describes a common conversational phenomenon: in ordinary talk with others, we often have a particular topic that we might try to introduce. However, the local sequential and topical environment may not seem to warrant its introduction, and therefore we create an auspicious environment in which to introduce it. This is what Adato (1979, 1980) describes as creating the circumstance (Adato, 1980, p. 59-60) in which to create a 'because motive' (Adato, 1979, p. 181) for introducing a particular topic. This chapter aims to further develop Adato's (1979, 1980) argument and propose three ways to introduce a next topic in such a circumstantial way: 1) introducing the next topic as a second story, 2) establishing the first-topic status of the next topic and 3) alluding to the next topic and invite the co-participant to introduce it collaboratively. This chapter complements Adato's (1979, 1980) key observation of a common topical practice and adds to our understanding of the management of topics in ordinary conversation.

Chapter 5 focuses on another under-developed area of research into topic — topic resumptions, where participants go back to a previous topic after it seems to have been exhausted or interrupted. The chapter starts by describing two kinds of sequential environments for topic resumption — ones in which there has been some interactional hiatus, during which neither participant further develops the topic and therefore seeming to allow it wind down; and competing topic development, where the current talk give rise to a diverging topical direction. Then, I look at the most proximate environment prior to topic resumption and highlight the topical tension where participants negotiate for the next turn and next topic direction. Lastly, I focus on topic resumption itself and describe the linguistic practice for resuming a previous topic. While previous studies (e.g., Jefferson, 1972) have already studied topic resumption, my chapter provides a more comprehensive overview of topic resumption, by looking at both its sequential positioning, its composition, and how it is collaboratively accomplished by both participants.

In the last analytical chapter, chapter 6, I shift my attention from topical actions to another organizing feature of conversation — repairs, in order to further explore Schegloff's (1979) preliminary observation and claim about the systematic association between self-repair and topic initiation. According to Schegloff (1979), topic-initial turns are a sequential environment in conversation where self-repair frequently occurs. Using descriptive statistics, I first test if his argument remains valid across my data and ordinary conversations. Then, the chapter focuses on the operations (Schegloff, 2013) of these topic-initial self-repairs and explore the techniques for implementing them. Lastly, I look at the nature of the repairables in these self-repairs and explore what function these self-repairs may have in ordinary conversation. In doing so, I hope to combine two different organizing units and investigate how they might relate to one another.

To summarize, this thesis aims to provide a better understanding of the management of topics in ordinary conversation, which is perhaps a relatively overlooked area in the study of

interaction. Having introduced the data and the methodology of my thesis, and describing the main focus of my analytical chapters, I will now review the previous research literature on topic, in linguistics and conversation analysis.

Chapter 2 Literature review

1   Introduction

The centrality of topic has been widely acknowledged in the analysis of discourse. Conversation might be regarded as constructed by topics, and much conversational space is taken up by exchanges in which participants attempt to establish discourse topics (Keenan & Scheffelin, 1976). It provides participants with a sense of meaning and cohesiveness (Boden & Bielby, 1986), enabling them to manage interaction as competent conversationalists and to negotiate and establish social relations with others (Maynard & Zimmerman, 1984). In addition, topics are also crucial for analysis since they are fundamental to other linguistic concepts such as relevance and coherence (Brown & Yule, 1983). In other words, topics are perhaps the most essential constituent of conversation (Covelli & Murray, 1980), and all conversations can be seen as organized around them (Heritage & Watson, 1979).

Despite the importance of topics to discourse, I have noted above in Chapter 1 that there has been perhaps rather less research into topic than into other units of conversation. We might add to that that topic has been less comprehensively and systematically studied than many other practices, patterns, units and organizations of conversation. Indeed, some researchers have noted that topics could be described as the most frequently used but unexplained term in the analysis of discourse (Brown & Yule, 1983, p. 70); indeed, they treat topics as a pretheoretical notion which is difficult to define and therefore difficult to research empirically.

The fluidity of topics in discourse, especially in conversations where topics flow from one to another (Schegloff, 1990; Jefferson, 1984,), defining "what a topic is" poses a significant problem for analysts (Brown & Yule, 1983, p. 68). There is such a vast range of perspectives from which topics could be approached; on the one hand, participants themselves may have different orientations to their topics (Keenan & Scheffelin, 1977, p. 73), so that what the recipient considers to be 'the topic' may be different from other speaker's perspective. This difference in participants' respective orientation will no doubt complicate researchers' observation. On the other hand, topics could be studied at different levels of discourse (sentences, utterance, short segment, etc., see Watson-Todd, 2005, p. 94), so that each different way of expressing a topic can only represent the judgment of what is being written or talked about on that particular discourse level.

This chapter aims to provide a systematic review of existing studies that put 'topic' at the center of their research focus. It will be divided into two sections. In the first section, I will describe how topics are defined and identified from a more 'linguistic' approach, which focuses on the formal boundary and the content of topics. By using the term 'linguistic approach', I do not intend to separate Linguistics from Conversation Analysis, to indicate that they are mutually exclusive to each other. It is only a blanket term used in this chapter to review how topics have been studied in various sub-field of Linguistics, such as the Prague school of linguistics and Discourse Analysis. In the second section, I will focus on Conversation Analysis and review the

major CA research on the organization of topics in talk-in-interaction.

2   'Linguistic' approaches to studying topics

In previous literature, linguists working on different aspects of language have offered various approaches to defining and identifying topics in a stretch of discourse. However, in order to better review them, a more systematic classification is necessary. In my literature review, I classify past linguistic research on topics in terms of whether their focus is on the *form* of topics, which refers to the formal aspects of topic structure in discourse (Brown & Yule, 1983, p. 94) or the *content* of topics, since *form* and *content* are two interdependent aspects in discussion of topic (ibid).

2.1   Form-based definition of topics

Researchers who define and identify topics by *form* are mainly those Prague linguists who work on the identification of formal boundaries between topics. Their rationale is that there should be an identifiable point where the shift from one topic to another is marked. Generally speaking, there are mainly three linguistic forms by which the boundaries of topics could be identified: syntactic form, lexical form, and phonological form.

Studies focusing on the syntactic form of topic boundaries look at how consecutive sentences are related, or not related to each other, thereby identifying the boundaries of topics. As far as English language is concerned, there are mainly two form-based approaches to topics, Theme-rheme progression (Daneš, 1974; Watson-Todd, 2011), which is mostly conducted on written discourse, and Given-new Progression (Chafe, 1976, 1980), which is originally conducted on spoken discourse. In Theme-rheme progression, for example, a sentence (for example, "China started its massive programme of tax reform as part of an overall economic restructuring in January 1994", cited in Forey, 2002, p. 53) is divided into two parts: the theme, which is usually the subject ("China"); and the rheme, which is generally regarded as the predicate of the sentence ("started its massive programme of tax reform as part of an overall economic restructuring in January 1994"). These themes and rhemes then form links with the themes and rhemes of preceding and following sentences to allow the text to move forward in what is known as thematic progression (Daneš, 1974). There are different ways of observing how theme and rhemes of consecutive sentences are linked to one another, such as parallel progression which indicates topic maintenance and sequential progression which indicates topic shift (Watson-Todd, 2005; Connor & Farmer, 1990; Schneider & Connor, 1990). Where no theme-rheme progression is noticeable, a coherence break (Wikborg, 1990) can be identified, which suggests a topic boundary (Watson-Todd, 2011). To have a better understanding of how topic is identified by thematic progression, here is an example from Watston-Todd (2016). The piece of data used for topic identification is as follows. Watson-Todd firstly divided the text into different units called T-units, which is most equivalent to spoken language (p. 27):

1. OK.
2. I'm going to play a video

3. And we're going to see a scene from a, from a film.
4. You watch the video and tell me uh what you see, OK?
5. Do you know what film is it?
6. Star Wars Episode One.

Then, Watson-Todd creates a table to track how the themes and rhemes of the different units above display thematic progression.

T-Units	Theme in first T-unit	Rheme in first T-Unit	Theme in second T-unit	Rheme in second T-Unit	Type of Progression
1-2	OK	-	I	'm going to play a video	CB
2-3	I	'm going to play a video	And we	're going to see a scene from a, from a film	PP
3-4	And we	're going to see a scene from a, from a film	You	watch the video and tell me uk what you see, OK?	PP
4-5	You	watch the video and tell me uk what you see, OK?	Do you know what film	is it	SP
5-6	Do you know what film	is it	Star Wars Episode One.	-	PP

(Cited from Watson-Todd 2016, p. 92).

As can be seen from the table above, unit 1-2 display a coherence break (CB) which suggests a topic boundary. From units 2-4, parallel progression (PP) is identified, which suggests topic maintenance. From unit 4-5, a sequential progression (SP) is found and this displays a topic shift.

Given-new progression is a similar approach to theme-rheme progression, with the exception that its analysis of topic boundary is based on the epistemic status of speakers. Generally speaking, 'given information' is information already in the consciousness of the recipient, and new information is information being introduced into the recipient's consciousness (Chafe, 1976, 1980, cited in Waston-Todd 2011). One common way to distinguish given and new information is to consider the linguistic evidence traceable in the text, for example, ellipsis, pronominal, noun phrases with definite articles, intonational patterns, etc. (e.g., Chafe, 1980; Clancy, 1980; Haviland & Clark, 1974). After given information and new information are identified, an analysis of the progression between given and new information will be adopted by discourse analysts, and a given-new coherence break indicative of topic boundaries may be

found (Watson-Todd, 2011).

While topic boundaries can be indicated by the syntactic coherence breaks between both written and spoken sentences, it can also be suggested by lexical forms. Researchers looking at lexical topic boundaries focus on the density of lexical bonds and how they are connected. In lexical analysis (Hoey, 1991), the repetition or paraphrases of words create cohesive links between sentences, and sentences with a certain number of links can be seen as bonded sentences. Hoey (1991) divides paragraph into sentences, and each one is given a co-ordinate indicating the number of bonds this sentence has with the prior and the following sentence. For example, if sentence 12 in a paragraph is given a co-ordinate (2,4), this means that it is bonded to two previous sentences and 4 following sentences. If a sentence has a co-ordinate (0,0), it is not connected to any neighboring sentences and can thus be seen as a topic boundary. In addition, Hoey's lexical analysis can identify topic-opening sentences and topic-closing sentences, in that sentences with high second co-ordinate are topic opening and sentences with high first co-ordinate are topic closing (1991, p. 119).

While syntactic form and lexical form can be used to identify topics in both written and spoken discourse, phonological forms are associated with spoken discourse only. It is noticed by many studies that intonational patterns in spoken discourse have a strong correlation to the segmentation of topics (e.g. Lehiste, 1975). For instance, Brown & Yule (1983) notice that just like written paragraphs, there are structural units of spoken discourse termed 'speech paragraphs' or 'paratones' (Brown 1977, p. 86) that could be identified by prosodic features. The start of a paratone is usually made phonologically distinctive with extra high pitch (see also Lehiste, 1975), whereas the end of a paratone can be indicated by low pitch, loss of amplitude and long pause exceeding one second (Brown & Yule, 1983, p. 101). With research into several other languages yielding the same result (e.g., Swerts & Collier, 1992 for Dutch), the use of pitch height for the identification of topic boundaries seem to be a universal feature (Maslova & Bernini, 2006).

2.2   Critics of form-based definition of topics

Despite the attempts to define topics in terms of their forms, this approach is not without problems, since topic boundaries are not so easy to find as it may seem. Although Brown & Yule's (1983) concept of 'paratones' sounds like a feasible method for identifying topic boundaries, it is also subject to critics. As Rendle-Short (2006) contends, terms such as 'paratone' and 'speech paragraph' assume similarities between written and spoken discourse. However, such an approach is "too easily divorced from the actual talk that is emerging and evolving over time" (p. 32), neglecting the characteristics unique of spoken discourse, such as the idiosyncratic speech habits of speakers, and the contextual features of talk, etc, which will make the definition of paratones obscure in the first place. As Waston-Todd (1998, p.3) observes, "phonological topic boundaries are at most incidental rather than defining characteristics of topics. They may help to identify topic change, but they are not always present". In my view, paratones and speech paragraphs concern only with how topics are expressed; they do not highlight the nature of topics. In this sense, phonological form can

hardly be seen as a reliable source for the identification of topic boundaries.

Compared to phonological forms, identifying topic boundaries using syntactic forms seems much more controversial. In theme-rheme analysis, analysts' opinions vary hugely in terms of where a theme ends and where a rheme starts. The example quoted from Watson-Todd (2016) represents one analyst's opinion on defining themes and themes. As we can see from the example, in most cases Watson-Todd (2016) simply defines theme and rheme by splitting the subject and the predicates of the sentence. However, as Erdmann (1990) admits, there is no consensus on the definition of theme and rheme in a sentence. For example, Halliday (1994) defines a theme as the starting point for the message, or the first element that has a function of transitivity (Halliday, 1994, p. 53)— a function that can generate speaker/writer's reflection of the world and how they account for their experiences. However, there are also alternative definitions of theme. For example, Berry (1995, 1996) argues that theme need not be only the first element that has transitivity function, and it may include elements of rheme in Halliday's analysis, such as auxiliary verb and even lexical verbs. As the definition of theme varies, the identification of rhemes differs accordingly (e.g., Halliday, 1994; Bloor & Bloor, 2004). Indeed, the example quoted from Watson-Todd (2016) represents only an idealistic and simple scenario; there are far more complicated cases where defining theme and rheme requires much more analysis and attention. The difficulties relating to the definition of theme and rheme also affect the patterns of thematic progression. In addition to the basic parallel/sequential progression mentioned above, more types of progression have been identified, such as multiple theme progression (Paltridge, 2006, p. 150), split theme progression (McCabe, 1999), rheme reiteration and zigzag pattern (Lan, 2008). Although there is no right or wrong among these different definitions of theme and rheme, they do pose great difficulties to researchers who try to identify topic boundaries using theme-rheme progression. Putting aside the multiple definitions of theme and rheme, the various thematic progression patterns, in which themes and rhemes are closely intertwined with each other, makes the identification of topic boundaries a problematic and unfeasible endeavor.

Similar to theme-rheme analysis, topic boundaries are also difficult to pin down using given-new progression analysis. This is because given and new information, the prerequisites for determining topic boundaries, are difficult to define in the first place. As Loock (2013) acknowledges, "the notions of givenness and newness have been used in many different ways by researchers and the different definitions are not always interchangeable, leading to blurry concepts that in time became nonoperational " (Loock 2013, p. 70). Given-new analysis reaches another obstacle if we think about the possibility of an intermediate level between given and new information. To be more specific, there are occasions where a piece of information is delivered to multiple receivers (for example a public speech or a piece of news), who are heterogeneous in terms of their knowledge status (Loock, 2013, p. 74). However, approaches to studying given and new information (e.g., Prince, 1981) fail to address this problem and take into consideration situations when given-old status cannot be determined precisely (Loock, 2013, p. 74). These major problems discussed above will undoubtedly bring trouble to topic researchers who try to pinpoint topic boundaries using given-new progression.

2.3   Content-based definition of topics

Having discussed form-based definition of topics, which focuses on identifying topic boundaries, we now turn to contend-based definition of topics. Researchers who adopt this approach examine topics at the level of discourse analysis, seeing that formal attempts to define topics (such as form-based methods) as "doomed to failure" (Brown & Yule, 1983, p. 68), and proposing that analysts should instead consider how the notion of topic relates to the representation of discourse content (ibid.). The central concept of content-based definition is that of 'aboutness', from which various content-based definitions of topics arise. For example, Kuno (1972) sees topic as the expression that denotes the thing that the sentence is about. Reinhart (1982), who regards the concept 'topic' is a category of pragmatic aboutness, claims that topics are the entities that a sentence says something about. In this section, I will discuss two prominent content-based approaches to defining topics: Keenan & Schieffelin's (1976) propositional definition, and Brown & Yule's (1983) discussion about topic.

Keenan & Schieffelin (1976) define discourse as "any sequence of two or more utterances produced by a single speaker" (Keenan & Schieffelin, 1976, p. 69), and propose that discourse topic should be considered by looking at the 'low-level', "immediate" concerns that the speaker may be attending to. As pointed out earlier, content-based definitions of topic focus on the 'aboutness' of discourse, and in Keenan & Schieffelin (1976), this sense of 'aboutness' is the question that an utterance is responsive to, i.e., *the question of immediate concern* (p. 73). Drawing on the concept of "presupposition pool" (Venneman, 1975), Keenan & Schieffelin (1976) defines topic as "the proposition or set of propositions that the question of immediate concern presupposes" (p. 74), or in a more concise term, the *primary supposition*. Having defined discourse topics, Keenan & Schieffelin (1976) describes two main types of discourse pattern: continuous discourse and discontinuous discourse. In continuous discourse, the following utterances either share the topic of the preceding utterances (collaborating discourse topic) or incorporate the preceding topic (incorporating discourse topic). In discontinuous discourse, the newly-introduced topic is either the topic of an utterance further back than the immediately preceding one (re-introducing discourse topic) or it is not connected with any of the previous topics (introducing discourse topic). For instance, in the talk between Allison, a little girl, and her mother:

(1) Allison III, 20,3½ months (taken from Keenan & Schieffelin 1976)
   Mother: (trying to put too large diaper on doll, holding diaper on) *Well we can't hold it on like that. What do we need? Hmm? What do we need for the diaper?*
   Allison: *pin.*

According to Keenan & Schieffelin (1976), the discourse topic of this extract is the primary presupposition of the question "*What do we need for the diaper?",* namely the proposition that "we need something for the diaper". Allison's reply, in providing an answer to the question of immediate concern, thus forms the topic-collaborating sequence, because the proposition attended to in both the question and the answer is the same. By expressing topic with presuppositions, Keenan & Schieffelin's (1976) approach to defining topics highlights the

pragmatic nature of topics and the importance of background assumptions (Svennevig, 1999, p. 166).

Similar to Keenan & Schieffelin (1976), who emphasize the importance of background presuppositions in the definition of discourse topic, Brown & Yule (1983) step further by proposing the concept of *topic framework*. They see contextual knowledge as essential for establishing the discourse topic, something that discourse analysts must take into consideration when studying topics. The contextual knowledge includes physical context (Jaszczolt, 2002, p. 161) such as who the interlocutors are, time and place of the conversation, and co-text (ibid)— the preceding conversation. The physical context and co-text combine together to form an overarching *topic framework*, which includes "those aspects of the context which are directly reflected in the text, and which need to be called upon to interpret the text" (Brown & Yule, 1983, p. 75). In addition, it should be inclusive enough to "allow each of the possible expressions, including titles, to be considered (partially) correct" (ibid). Seeing discourse topics as naturally and collaboratively achieved by interlocutors, Brown & Yule's (1983) paper claim that topic framework lays the basis for interlocutors to make their contributions "relevant in terms of the existing framework" (speaking topically) while at the same time constituting their own "personal topics". The way that topic framework is usually displayed is through sentences of introductions before the conversation transcription is given. The diagram below shows how a topic framework can be devised which is pertinent to the analysis:

"Partial topic tramework existing in a conversation

Between   K (20+, female, Edinburgh resident, university student...)
And   J (60+, male, Edinburgh resident, retired...)
In P   (working men's club, Edinburgh...)
At T   (early evening, spring, 1976)
Mentioning   (J's three children-J's brothers-the schools they attended-the schools J attended-that J did badly at school-J left school at fourteen)
When   K asks J what he did after he left school"
(cited in Brown & Yule 1983, p. 85)

After creating the topic framework, Brown and Yule go on to consider how this applies to this utterance:

"J: oh I done odd jobs+ like paper boy+ chemist's shop worked in a chemist shop +and done two or three others +and I finally started in the bricklaying + so I served my time as a bricklayer......" (ibid.)

According to Brown & Yule (1983), the topic framework shown above enables analysts to identify the topic of the discourse that follows.

2.4   Critics of content-based definitions of topic

Compared to form-based definitions of topics, who take a static and segmented view on discourse (e.g., theme-rheme progression, given-new progression, lexical analysis, etc.), content-based definitions have the merit of capturing the "pragmatic nature" (Svennevig, 1999, p. 166) of discourse. However, content-based definitions of topics also lead to problems.

First of all, Keenan & Schieffelin's (1976) propositional approach has been widely seen as too simplistic (e.g., Brown & Yule, 1983; Svennevig, 1999; Enç, 1986). Brown & Yule (1983) evaluate this approach as "replacing the idea of a single correct noun phrase as expressing the topic"— the way adopted by form-based definitions —"with the idea of a single correct phrase or sentence (Brown & Yule, 1983, p. 71) realized in the form of a proposition, such as "we need something for the diaper " (Keenan & Schieffelin, 1976, p. 68) , with the implication that there is a unifying way to describing the topic of a discourse. In reality, however, there is a number of different ways of expressing the topic; judgments about topic are never definitive, always provisional, and the perspective is at no single point given or fixed once and for all (Svennevig, 1999, p. 167). As Enç (1986) agrees, "Keenan & Schieffelin's (1976) notion of topic is narrower than what is needed since it would result in many different topics where we would want only one" (Enç 1986, p. 199). In fact, Keenan & Schieffelin (1976) acknowledge this problem, and they attribute it to analysts' limited access to interlocutors' shared background knowledge, as in their own words:

> "If A says to B:"Tom called today", the question of immediate concern may be "what happened today?" or "who called today?" or "what did Tom do today?" or "what is the good news?" or some other question relevant to speaker and/or hearer." (Keenan & Schieffelin 1976, p. 74-75)

However, apart from pointing out this issue, they do not propose how analysts could solve it, stating only that:

> "The more information about the speaker's and the hearer's shared knowledge the observer has access to, the easier it will be for him to determine the question of immediate concern and the discourse topic… it is to the advantage of the observer to have available the most complete record of the situation." (Keenan & Schieffelin 1976, p. 75)

Here, another objection to Keenan & Schieffelin (1976)'s approach arises, an objection also raised against Brown & Yule (1983). Although background knowledge is essential for the understanding of discourse topic, analysts may risk over-relying on it when approaching discourse topics. By providing the solution as cited above, Keenan & Schieffelin (1976) naturally assume that the shared background knowledge between interlocutors is readily available for analysts to get access to. Similarly, by suggesting that analysts can construct topic framework from the content of the text (p. 75), Brown & Yule (1983) expect content to be an accessible and reliable source for constructing the whole picture of the discourse and make unfounded assumptions about what contextual feature might matter to participants. More importantly,

the topic framework itself is created subjectively by analysts, who incorporate elements from preceding discourse that may seem relevant for analysis from their own point of view. Therefore, the topic framework may not truly reflect what has really been going on in the discourse, and what may influence the discourse that follows. Also, as Park-Doob (2001) observes, shared background knowledge which is salient for participants at the time of their conversation, may not all be later identifiable by the analyst, nor will it necessarily be directly reflected in the content of the text. In other words, participants' shared knowledge can only be partially reconstructed by observers, and discourse content may not include every aspect of contextual information for developing a topic framework. Considering these constraints on shared background knowledge, deciding the question of immediate concern, or what a topic framework should consist of, will remain an unsolvable problem.

Apart from the over-reliance on background knowledge between interlocutors, Keenan & Schieffelin (1976) and Brown & Yule (1983)'s view on discourse topic is also observed to be focusing too much on the content aspect of topic while neglecting its dynamic feature. By suggesting discourse topic as the proposition about which the speaker is either providing or requesting new information (Keenan & Schieffelin, 1976, p.68), and highlighting the question of immediate concern that a topic is addressed to, Keenan & Schieffelin (1976) treat discourse topic as a vehicle for information transmission. As a result, a topic in their approach is defined from the perspective of the *speaker only*; how the topic is actually received and treated by the recipient is therefore left undealt with. In other words, their approach fails to capture the interactional nature of topic negotiation (Svennevig, 1999, p. 166). Brown & Yule's (1983) topic framework, though not specifying one single expression of topic, incorporates many more possible formulations based on discourse content or the notion of 'aboutness'. This method is equally problematic since it only invents "an elastic tool for classifying discourse" (Svennevig, 1999, p. 167) to an abstract level, overlooking the rich details of conversation, and the actions that participants carry out to manage topics in their talk. According to Maynard (1980), these two approaches are among the early work on topics that have addressed topicality as a problem in content analysis. In his view, on the contrary, attention to topics should be directed to how topics are organized and produced in discourse (particularly in conversation). Other researchers (e.g., Bublitz, 1988; Clarks, 1996; Ainsworth-Vaughn, 1998) share this view, stating that topicality is not only a matter of content but also a matter of participants' social actions, and that the difficulty in dealing with discourse content can well be avoided by turning to the action aspect of topicality (Ainsworth-Vaughn, 1998, p. 58)—an aspect that focus on the specific actions that are conducted by participants to manage topics.

2.5   Linguistic approaches to topics

Having discussed the respective shortcomings of form-based and content-based approach to topics, the most significant limitation shared by both of them begins to emerge. This limitation is what distinguishes the above approaches to topics from a Conversation Analytic approach to topics, which my thesis adopts. In order to discuss this limitation, it is worthwhile to make reference to the product vs. process discussion in previous discourse literature (Widdowson, 1979; Brown & Yule, 1983; Svennevig, 1999) in past literature.

The existing literature divides into two perspectives in terms of their treatment of topics. Early linguistic approaches see topics as *products* of discourse, which "reduce, organize and categorize semantic information of the sequences as wholes" (Van Dijk, 1977, p. 132). They analyze topics in order to ascribe certain topics to stretches of discourse in retrospect, i.e. after the discourse has been produced. Under this view, topics are regarded as a fixed object, and the ascription of topics to discourse can be done independently without reference to preceding and following discourse (Svennevig, 1999, p. 165). Form-based approach to topics belongs to this line of view, in that they see discourse, both written and spoken, as segments that can be delimited by boundaries, with each segment being attributable to a certain topic. Although analysts seemed to be looking at the relationship between sentences/utterances in theme-rheme progression and given-new progression, their scope is confined to sentence/utterances-level only, thereby failing to explore the organization of discourse as a whole. Content-based definitions of topics also belong to the product view (Svennevig, 1999), since they also retrospectively attribute topics to discourse, instead of focusing on the interactional procedures and cooperation between participants. Keenan & Schieffelin's (1976) propositional definition of discourse topics treats topics as a result of the speaker's prior utterance, and thus as a textual product. Although Brown & Yule (1983) perceive their approach to topics as a discourse-as-process view (p. 24), their fundamental perception of discourse is "attempts by a producer to communicate his message to a recipient"(ibid.)—a view that nevertheless regards discourse as a product of content delivery. In this sense, Brown & Yule (1983) do indeed treat discourse as a process, but only as a process of message delivery, not as a dynamic process of topic negotiation. Therefore, Brown & Yule's (1983) topic framework still bogs down in the tradition that treats discourse as a product.

In contrast to the discourse-as-product view adopted by form- and content-based approaches to topics, the other research tradition treats discourse as a process and view topic as a set of techniques for organizing discourse in real-time (Svennevig, 1999, p. 167). They propose that the notion of "topic" not only pertains to discussions on the content but more importantly, it should be thought of in terms of the actions performed in discourse process (Bublitz, 1988; Schegloff, 1990; Clark, 1996). In the process view on discourse, topics are perceived and organized "prospectively" (Hazadiah, 1993), and therefore analysis of topics should also be conducted as they occur but not retrospectively (more on this will be discussed in the next section). This is how Conversation Analysis studies topics, and in the rest of the chapter, I'm going to review the distinctiveness of Conversation Analysis, and how topics are explored in a Conversation Analytic approach.

3   Sequence, action, topic and coherence

In this section, I will begin by discussing how CA approaches to topic relate to the linguistics approaches reviewed above, particularly in terms of its view on coherence. Then, I will describe the distinctiveness of CA's approach to topic, and will provide an overview of the major research into different aspects of topical actions — boundaried topic initiation, topic transition and topic closure — through which participants' attention to and management of topics can be

observed. I will finish this section by outlining the research direction I am taking in my thesis.

3.1   Sequence organization and topic management

In moving to consider CA's approach to conversational topics, it will be worth considering again the largely content-based approach to topic prevalent in linguistics, even in Brown & Yule's (1983) treatment of topics in discourse. Brown & Yule (1983) take a more dynamic view of topic than is general in linguistics, especially evident in the static and segmented approach of grammarians. By contrast, Brown & Yule's treatment of topic takes into account the dynamics of discourse and the connections between one turn of talk and another – connections which they view as predominantly topical. Fitting one turn to the prior is managed through "making your contribution relevant in terms of the existing topic framework" (Brown & Yule 1983, p. 84). A relevant contribution to talk is, therefore, to 'speak topically', in Brown & Yule's phrase. Hence 'relevance' is linked to (topical) content, so that sequences are driven by (relevant) topical connections. This has a certain affinity with the equally dynamic view taken by CA; these two approaches connect to each other in one important respect – and that is the notion of the coherence of talk. Brown & Yule (1983, ch.3) focus on the role of topical relevance in accounting for discourse coherence. Instead of trying to delineate topics at a sentential level and accounting for linguistic cohesion between sentences, Brown & Yule (1983) argue that topic should be understood as providing the key to the overall coherence of sequences of discourse. According to them, topics serve as the source of coherence for stretches of discourse, and topics may even be the central organizing principle for discourse. In their words, topic 'may enable the analyst to explain why several sentences or utterances should be considered together as a set of some kind, separate from another set. It might also provide a means of distinguishing fragments of discourse which are felt to be good, coherent, examples of English from those that are, intuitively, incoherent concatenations of sentences', (Brown & Yule 1983, p. 73-74). Hence, they argue that it is topic and 'what is being talked about' that matter most for the overall coherence of a stretch of discourse or interaction.

Coherence is the respect in which there is an affinity between the discourse analytic view taken by Brown & Yule (1983) and the account of sequence in CA. Put simply, whereas Brown & Yule treat topic as the source of coherence in discourse, CA regards sequences of action as providing for the coherence of interaction. In particular, Schegloff takes an action-based (rather than a topic-based) view of the 'clumps' of turns that hang together in conversation. These clumps, Schegloff argues, correspond to courses of action, which are executed through a succession of turns-at-talk, and 'sequences of turns are not haphazard but have a shape or structure, and can be tracked for where they came from, what is being done through them, and where they might be going'" (Couper-Kuhlen, 2010: 250).

To begin with, for Schegloff and CA generally, the notion of topic is vulnerable to a number of problems. Apart from the difficulty in defining them, there is also the problem of 'fixing' topics and formulating them in stretches of talk where topics may move seamlessly from one to another (Schegloff 1990: 52). In contrast to topic, sequence and action, with identifiable turns and components, serve as more identifiable units of conversation. But more significantly,

Schegloff shows convincingly that conversation progresses and is organized around actions that are realized through sequences. ". . . focusing on 'the topic' of some unit of talk risks the danger of not addressing analysis to what participants in real wordly interaction are doing to or with one another with their talk, with their talk-about-something, or with particular parts of it; that is, all talk is then treated as talk-about, rather than talk-that-does, a vulnerability especially of academic analysis" (Schegloff 1990: 52). In his analysis of a long sequence of talk that opens with a request ("I was wondering if you'd let me borrow your gun.") and closes (well, almost closes – there's a little more talk after about collecting the gun) 80 lines later with "Yeah: you can use 't,", Schegloff demonstrates that the coherence of the sequence of talk lies not in the topic of the BB gun, but in the request, as first part of an adjacency pair, and the granting, the second pair part – between which are various expansion sequences. In brief, the talk is not so much as 'about' the gun as about a request. Indeed, according to Schegloff "most talk-in-interaction is better understood for what it is doing than for what it is about, and topical talk is a particular form of sequence organization" (Schegloff 1999, p.409).The organization of sequences is one of the central forms of organization that gives shape and coherence to stretches of talk and the series of turns of which stretches of talk are composed. The focus of this organization is not, in general, convergence on some topic being talked about, but the contingent development of courses of action". (Schegloff 2007, p. 251).

Here too, in his most sustained treatment of the interconnections between topic and sequence, Schegloff describes some specific ways where sequence organization plays a central role in regulating the management of topics. One position in which sequence and action intersect with topic management is where a topic is raised in a 'topic-proffering sequence' (Schegloff 2007, ch.8), after the prior talk has been brought to a sequence closure. In a topic-proffering sequence, a speaker firstly proposes a potential topic by asking an other-oriented question, typically in the form of a yes/no question. This first move performs a 'double duty' (Schegloff 2007, p. 169) in that it not only enacts their own action, for instance a questionthat makes a response relevant, thereby enacting the first move into a new topic. As the second step, the other speaker responds to the topic-proffer, by either encouraging or discouraging the topic proffered. If the recipient of the topic-proffer embraces the topic, then the profferer will make another, yet more detailed pursuit of the topic, thereby steering the talk towards a particular aspect of the topic. Topic-proffering sequence demonstrates how a new topic is raised out of a trajectory of orderly sequence of turns, and therefore how sequence and action serve as the instrument for the management of topics. In this way, topic proffers are themselves actions, which generate sequences of actions initiated by a topic proffer.

Another example of how sequence and action intersect with topic is where a long topical talk sequence is brought to closure. In his discussion of sequence-closing sequences, Schegloff (2007, ch.9) observes a pattern in which participants collaboratively end a topic or sequence. In its most basic form, this sequence-closing sequence is composed of an initial turn that proposes the possible closing of the topic (in the form of summaries, idiomatic expressions, assessments, etc.), a second turn where the recipient aligns with the action displayed in the first turn, and a final turn where the initiator finally terminate the topic and move to a new topic (Schegloff 2007: 186-194). Just as in topic-proffering sequences, Schegloff again shows how sequence

functions as the central organizing principle for conversation and serves as a driving force behind the opening and closing of topics.

Apart from topic initiations and closures, Schegloff (2007) mentions another scenario where sequence organization intertwines with the flow of topics. When describing exchange sequences, Schegloff (2007) observes that such exchange sequence can serve as a vehicle for launching a particular telling. Since many types of sequences are 'reciprocatable' (2007, p. 203), such as 'how are you' sequence, a speaker may reply on the reciprocity of the sequence to talk about a particular topic. In his own words, 'exchange sequences can supply a resource for a particular form of conversational practice, a practice for telling' (ibid.). Apart from topic-proffering and topic closure, here Schegloff (2007) shows that how topics can be introduced in a more coherent fashion under the overarching mechanism of sequence organization.

In each of these ways, 'topic' is managed through an action – a topic proffer, for example – that generates or is part of a sequence, so that in that way 'topic' and sequence intersect. There is, however, another respect in which topic and sequence organization interconnect that is especially significant. Schegloff argues that in topic proffering sequences:

> "there is a systematic reversal of the ordinary differential expansion relevance of preferred and dispreferred second pair parts. *Specifically, in topic-proffering sequences, as we will see, preferred responses engender expansion and dis- preferred responses engender sequence closure.* In this distinct sequence type, expansion has a very different interactional import, and poses sequential problems of a different character, so much so that the development and extension of these sequences cannot be assimilated to what we have been referring to as post-expansion." (Schegloff 2007: 169) (Italics in original.)

Expansions of adjacency paired sequences of actions more usually result from dispreferred responses, i.e. responses which in some way block (perhaps only temporarily) the progressivity of the sequence initiated by a sequence-initial action; whilst by contrast, preferred responses further the sequence, without necessitating the expansion of the sequence. For example, the preferred response to a request is a granting, so that if a request is granted, there is no need for the kind of expansion(s) that Schegloff (1990) describes in his analysis of the request to borrow a friend's BB gun; the recipient's response to that request was to ask "My gun, what gun?", thereby expanding a request sequence that did not end until 80 lines later. The reversal Schegloff describes of the preference system for sequence expansion associated with topic proffers, such that the preferred response – accepting the proffer – results in sequence expansion, which the dispreferred response – declining the proffer – results in sequence attrition or closure, is a quite specific way in which the management of topic can have consequences for sequence organization (Schegloff 2007, ch.8).

In sum, Schegloff has shown that:

> "The organization of sequences is one of the central forms of organization that gives shape and coherence to stretches of talk and the series of turns of which stretches of talk are

composed. The focus of this organization is not, in general, convergence on some topic being talked about, but the contingent development of courses of action. The coherence which is involved is that which relates the action or actions which get enacted in or by an utterance to the ones which have preceded and the ones which may follow." (Schegloff 2007: 251)

Hence, Schegloff has provided a clear picture of how the organization of paired sequences of action plays a fundamental role in all aspects of conversation, as well as showing that some aspects of topic management can impact sequence organization. It should be allowed, however, that there are nevertheless occasions when topic management are outside the scope of sequence organization. In other words, there are certain aspects of topic management that are not coordinated by the principles of sequence organization.

In relation to topic-proffering sequence, for example, while Schegloff has provided a convincing pattern of how such a sequence brings about a new topic, he does not give an account of how the conversation proceeds in a topically coherent way once the topic is initiated. As he acknowledges, the topic-proffering sequence 'cannot take up the organization of the topic talk once launched' (Schegloff, 2007, p. 170). Although sequence organization could provide a description of the recurrent patterns for topic initiation and topic closure, it may not by itself handle the analysis of topical-talk itself, talk that may not necessarily exhibit distinctive sequential patterns. Indeed, Schegloff himself observes that some long stretches of talk 'might better be understood as sequence-organizationally simple, and as well understood by reference to topic as by reference to sequence structure' (2007, p. 216).

In addition, while Schegloff observes that exchange sequences can be utilized as a resource for introducing a topic, the use of such a sequence is also subjected to the type of topics being talking about. While sequences such as 'howareyou' are potentially relevant between any two participants, some other types of topics (e.g., 'how's school going') are not reciprocal and therefore an exchange sequence will not be in operation. In these cases, topicality seems to me a more prominent feature than sequence organization.

It is notable that Schegloff repeatedly adopts formulations such as sequence/topic and topic/sequence (e.g., sequence/topic-closing sequences in Schegloff 2007: 216), and continuing talk on the sequence/topic (ibid p. 187). Putting sequence and topic together in this way is an implicit acknowledgement that, sometimes, topicality may have some autonomy in regulating conversation, some autonomy that is independent of sequence organization. This again reflects how sequence organization, while serving as the central organizing principle for conversation, may not able to account for all aspects of interaction, and therefore why the study of topic management is necessary.

Having considered the more general framework for CA's approach to topic, in particular Schegloff's quite justified alternative approach to coherence to that previously put forward by linguists, and having considered also his explorations of the interconnections between sequence organization and topic management, I will now discuss a variety of more specific

approaches in CA when studying topics.

3.2   The distinctiveness of CA's approach to conversational topics

CA's treatment of conversational topics is distinctive in multiple ways, the most fundamental being the view that topics should be seen as a process and not as a product. As mentioned in the previous section, form- and content-based approaches tend to view discourse topics as fixed objects with identifiable boundaries. Conversation Analysts, in contrast, believe that topics are not fixed and unchangeable entities existing independent of participants (Bublitz, 1988, p. 18). They regard topic as a dynamic process in which a set of techniques are used to organize topics in real-time (Svennevig, 1999, p. 167). Therefore, CA analysts are neither eager to define what a topic is nor to delineate one topic from another and draw definitive boundaries of topics. They instead are interested in how topical actions, i.e., what participants do about topics, are managed by them and the way topics flow from each other in conversation.

This fundamental approach adopted by CA generates other unique treatments of conversation topics. First of all, seeing topic as a process in discourse means that CA analysts examine topics in relation to the conversational context. To be more specific, instead of looking at topics in isolation, CA study topics in terms of their sequential structuring and ordering vis-à-vis other topics (Richards & Seedhouse, 2005, p. 198) in preceding and the following conversation. On the one hand, a current topic should be approached by examining where and how it is placed in sequence by reference to previous topics. For example, when studying topic introduction, researchers should pay close attention to what has been talked about previously, and how it may have an impact on the type of topic initiated in the next turn, as well as the specific ways that the new topic is introduced. On the other hand, researchers also need to closely examine how a topic is acted upon by the co-participant in following turns, how it is developed, closed down, and how it provides for the introduction of new topics to follow.

Another key distinctive feature of the CA approach to topics is the focus on topical actions rather than the definition of topics. This is also what distinguishes the CA approach from traditional linguistic approaches. Topical actions, in Bublitz (1988, p. 40)'s definition, are the actions "participants use to intervene in the development and the course of the topic, and thus to contribute to a topical thread being initiated, maintained and completed". Conversation Analysis's interest in topic lies in how topics are locally established and managed by participants themselves through various topical actions, such as introducing, changing and terminating topics. It is these observable topical actions and participant's displayed orientation to them that matter for Conversation Analysts. One quotation from Levinson (1983) best illustrates this point:

> "Topical coherence cannot be thought of as residing in some independently calculable procedure for ascertaining shared reference across utterances. Rather, topical coherence is something constructed across turns by the collaboration of participants. What needs then to be studied is how potential topics are introduced and collaboratively ratified, how they are marked as 'new', 'touched off', how they are avoided or competed over

and how they are collaboratively closed down.."(Levinson, 1983, p. 315)

Lastly, the process of Conversation Analysis is undertaken from a prospective position, as compared to the retrospective position of form-based and content-based approaches to topics. This characteristic of CA is alternatively defined as emic (Ten-Have, 1999), or bottom-up, which captures CA's research focuses on participants' displayed orientations to interaction through their actions in sequences. When observing the organization of topics, CA researchers prioritize participants' orientation and displayed understanding rather than researchers' own *a priori* interpretation (Schegloff, 1990; Button & Casey, 1988). This is because topical actions such as topic introduction and topic transition are "something done within conversation by participants" (Schegloff, 1990, p. 52), who are trusted as competent "resource persons" (Diamond, 1996, p. 95) being able to co-create or shape the topic in orderly ways. In other words, it is participants who have topics, not the researchers. As Sacks observes,

> "One doesn't listen to a story for what can be treated as 'the topic' of any such story and extracted as the topic of this story, but one listens for the issue of how is it that A is telling this story to B, where 'topics' should be an interactional phenomenon…we want to ask: what is it a story about, by virtue of the fact that it's between those two? Stories are 'about'—have to do with—the people who are telling them and hearing them." (Sacks, 1992a, p. 767)

According to Schegloff & Sacks (1973), if researchers could observe certain orderliness in the conversational materials they work with, it is only because they are normatively oriented to by participants in the first place.The practices that participants use to manage topics can be made observable through their own turns and utterances, and therefore it allows researchers to observe and understand how topics are managed by participants in real-time. Without looking at participants' own displayed conduct in conversation, analysts may risk using their own subjective speculations to account for various topical phenomenon and actions, which could be misleading and distorting.

In this section, I have outlined how CA researchers have studied topic in conversation. Seeing topics as a process instead of products, CA researchers examine topics in context, considering how they came into being in relation to the preceding conversational environment, and how it will affect what comes next. Next, CA researchers are interested in the actions participants perform to manage topics, instead of the content in their topical talk. Lastly, CA researchers prioritize participant's role in conversation and their orientations to topics rather than their own subjective interpretations. In the next section, I will review the major studies on topic in ordinary conversation, and how research into topics are conducted based on the basic concepts reviewed above.

3.3   CA research on the management of topic

Earlier in my introduction chapter, I have discussed Schegloff's viewpoint on topic in relation to the major organizations of conversation. Compared with the more prominent organizations

such as sequence and action, especially paired action sequences, topic serves more like a secondary unit of conversation, the managment of which is intertwined with the organization of sequence and action. However, topic itself is such an important unit of conversation that an investigation into topic management could yield significant findings. Just like the organization of sequence, action and other features of conversation, the management of topics, including the transition from one to another, is also achieved in systematic and orderly ways. However, this does not mean that conversationalist's management of topics is always readily observable, given that for most of the time, talk "drifts imperceptibly from one topic to another" (Coulthard 1985, p. 80). Nevertheless, there are still several places where analysts can observe the monitoring and management of topics by participants. These places are: where participants are generating a topic in a segmented way, where participants are shifting topics, and where they are trying to terminate a topic. In this section, I will give a general review of the key CA research papers that discuss these phenomena. Before I start, there is one point that needs to be made: Although I discuss CA work on the management of topic in three different sections below, in real interactions, however, topic initiation, transition and closure are always integrated with each other. It is only for a clearer presentation of the literature review that I discuss them separately.

3.3.1   Boundaried topic-initiation

Boundaried topic initiation, or segmented topic initiation, refers to generating a topic in a sequential environment where the natural flow of topics is not available, or in the absence of a prior topic. Button and Casey (1984, 1985) have identified three types of such sequential positions (following opening components, following closing components, and after topic-bounding turns), and three types of actions that serve to initiate topics in these contexts. Button and Casey (1984) study the use of topic initial elicitors and the three-turn sequence it generates. Topic initial elicitors usually take the form of questions such as "what's new" or "anything to report", and if taken up by a collaborative recipient, will be followed by the report of a newsworthy event (e.g., *I've got my hair cut*) as the second turn and a subsequent topicalizer (e.g., *really?*). Itemized news enquiries, the second action type, refers to generating a topic by making an enquiry into a newsworthy recipient-related event, thereby initiating a sequence of talk. Itemized news enquiry is similar to "topic proffering sequences" proposed by Schegloff (2007). While topic proffers (Schegloff, 2007) encompass a wider range of recipient topics (Svennevig, 1999; Couper-Kuhlen & Ford, 2004), itemized news enquiries focus exclusively on those recipient-related events that are newsworthy, for example, ongoing activity or recent trouble which the recipient have. In news announcement sequences, the third action type, a speaker gives a partial report of an activity/circumstance that relates to the speaker himself/herself, which may be elaborated with further details on request of the recipient of the news, thereby generating a new topic. To sum up the three sequence types, the first type negotiates the possibility for a new topic, the second provides the opportunity to talk about recipient activities, and the third creates a slot for talking about speaker's news. In overlap with Button & Casey's work (1984, 1985), Maynard (1980) offers a more concise summary. It notes that the two most commonly-used practices for introducing a topic are invitation and announcement (also Covelli & Murray, 1980; Jefferson, 1984, Maynard &

Zimmerman, 1984). Invitation incorporates topic-initial elicitor (Button & Casey, 1984) and itemized news enquiries (Button & Casey, 1985), while announcement resembles Button & Casey (1985)'s news announcement sequences discussed above. By manifesting the interest in talking about something and providing for the recipient to collaborate in generating the topic, these practices for boundaried topic-initiation create the opportunity for a topic to be raised without being directly elaborated (and so is the topic-proffering sequence proposed by Schegloff). This shows participant's displayed sensitivity to the nature of a potential topic and the particular ways of how it might be raised (e.g., volunteered or elicited). Though invitations (topic-initial elicitors and itemized news enquiries) and announcements facilitate topic changes in a disjunctive manner, invitations are generally regarded by researchers as more subtle and coherent, since by displaying attention to the co-participant, they preserve a sense of interactional cohesiveness (Jefferson 1984) between participants.

However, while a co-participant can collaboratively respond to a topic initial elicitor, an itemized news enquiry, or topicalize a news announcement, they can also choose to decline the initiation of the new topic. In other words, the first turns in these three sequence types may be curtailed from the very beginning. In Button and Casey (1988) they have identified how participants could prevent this potential curtailment by evoking the known-in-advance status of a topic. The known-in-advance refers to the status that "the caller may know in advance that there is an item of business and that the called may orient to the possibility of such items" (Button and Casey 1988, p. 68). This status is achieved by introducing the topic as a reason for call, by scheduling the topic for later introduction, or by making a list of the topics at the beginning of the conversation and then moving through one by one. In doing so, the introducer of a topic establishes a warrant for the legitimate initiation of a topic, and for the coparticipant's collaborative participation in this topic.

In contrast to Button and Casey (1984, 1985, 1988) and Schegloff (2007) who focus on topic generation between acquainted conversationalists, Maynard & Zimmerman (1984) explore how unacquainted people start topical talk at the beginning of their conversation. They find that the way in which they start a topic is by initiating a categorization sequence (e.g., "where do you come from"), in which they classify themselves with respect to membership devices, or by initiating a category-activity sequence (e.g., "what course are you taking"), in which they talk about activities related to their membership categorizations. This is a different way of initiating topics compared with acquainted parties, who could employ shared knowledge and previous experiences to start topical talk. While Button and Casey (1984, 1985, 1988) and Schegloff (2007) explore the positioning and composition of topic-initiating sequence and how a topic is generated through turns, Maynard & Zimmerman (1984) focus more on the "ritual and relational import" of the topic-initiating sequence between unacquainted parties. Noticing that all topical talk between unacquainted parties is initiated through categorization sequences, they contend that categorization sequences are the "required conversational and cultural forms" or the ritual for generating topics (see also Laver, 1981). In the meantime, this categorization sequence helps to produce topical talk that is sensitive to the other, thereby providing the possibility for doing affiliation and establishing intimacy relationship. Compared to Button & Casey (1984, 1985, 1988) who notice the mutual nature for topic initiation,

Maynard and Zimmerman go further by examining how the conversationalists' relationship is also mutually shaped through conversation, and that the generation of topical talk is a means by which this relationship is established.

This section has reviewed research into topic initiation in a boundaried way, where the stepwise introduction of the topic is not operative. By discussing how a topic is established over sequences, these major papers on topic initiation highlight the point that topic arises from members' organization rather than from analysts' definition (Button & Casey, 1988). In the next section, I will review influential CA research on topic transition.

3.3.2   Topic transition

Topic transition can be seen as the topical action that attracts the most analytical interest. As a consequence, a multitude of terms relating to topic transition have been coined, ranging from topic shading (Schegloff & Sacks, 1973), topic drift (Hobbs, 1990), topic leap (Svennevig, 1999), topic change (Maynard, 1980), topic shift (Jefferson, 1984), coherent/non-coherent shift (Crow, 1983), and many others. While each of these studies presents unique findings, the phenomena they explore do overlap in one way or another. According to Hoffman and Bublitz (2017), a central distinction that could possibly subdivide these terms (and the topical phenomena that they represent) is that between *unbounded* and *bounded* (Hoffman & Bublitz, 2017) topic transition, depending on whether the new topic is introduced as connected to the previous topic or not. Bounded topic transition refers to the phenomenon where the newly introduced topic is raised as a disjunctive, individual mentionable which bears no relation to the previous talk. In other words, it is the boundaried topic introduction after topic bounding turns which have been discussed earlier. Unbounded topic transition, on the other hand, is the gradual, step-by-step transition of the topic thrust (Schegloff, 1990), or the "fitting of differently focused but related talk to some last utterance in a topic's development" (Schegloff & Sacks, 1973, p. 81). In doing unbounded topic shift, a participant retains one aspect of the ongoing topic and makes it the subject of the new topic. Starting from bounded topic transition, I will give a brief outline of research into these two types of topic transition.

Bounded topic transition is more widely termed as topic change (e.g., Maynard, 1980; Bublitz, 1988). According to Maynard, the new topics "are unrelated to the talk in prior turns in that they utilize new referents, and thus they implicate and occasion a series of utterances constituting a different line of talk" (Maynard 1980, p. 264).. Bublitz (1988) contends that topic change, in the broader sense, is accomplished through two separate actions—closing the old topic and introducing the new topic. Researchers have identified two major sequential environments where the previous topic comes to an end. As the commonest scenario, the previous topic winds down , by mutual consent as it were, via collaborative effort (Schegloff & Sacks, 1973; Svennevig, 1999; Crow, 1983; Jefferson, 1981); in other cases, the previous topic ends when speaker transition fails (Maynard, 1980), which may be due to various interactional issues such as lack of interest, potential disagreement and so on. While new topics may be introduced after the termination of the previous topic, they may also be brought up in their own right, thereby being more abrupt and disjunctive. This phenomenon is termed topic

digression by Bublitz (1988), non-coherent shift by Crow (1983), and unilateral topic change by West & Garcia (1988), where the production of the new topic is unwarranted by the other participant.

However, topic transitions in ordinary conversation do not always have clear-cut boundaries. Often in conversation, participants raise a new topic in a connected way, linking new topics to the previous so that the new topic could be introduced without explicit closure of the prior topics. This phenomenon is first noticed and described by Sacks as stepwise topical movement, and his initial observation of the stepwise movement of topics has invited some major studies into this phenomenon. Some studies have discovered that even within stepwise movement of topics, there are subtle differences between ways of achieving topic transition. For example, Svennevig (1999) highlights the difference between what he terms as "topic leap" and "gradual topic transition". Topic leap, according to Svennevig (1999), is a more radical form of stepwise movement, involving a focus shift, or recontextualization (p. 205), where some matter that is peripheral in the previous topic is introduced as a central component in the next topic. Gradual topic transition, on the other hand, involves a much longer sequence that no cohesive break is easily observable. Downing makes a similar observation, noticing the difference between topic drift proposed by Hobbs (1990) and Sacks' version of stepwise transition, with the former seeming more loosely controlled and less "deliberately strategic" (Downing 2000, p. 46).

As Sacks also notices, a means of accomplishing stepwise movement for topics is that if the new topic is not connected to what is being talked about now, participants can create a link that is connected to both and use that first as a pivot (Sacks, 1992b, p. 300). Some studies have then focused on the practices to generate such pivotal links, and the most prominent ones are Jefferson (1984) and Holt & Drew (2005). In Jefferson's (1984) discussion of stepwise movement out of a troubles-telling, she proposes a five-step mechanism, which includes summing up the trouble, moving to ancillary matters, stabilizing the ancillary matter, producing pivotal utterance and finally the establishment of the new topic. The third step, producing pivotal utterance creates one such "link" proposed by Sacks because the utterance has independent topical potential while at the same time staying recognizably on-topic (Jefferson, 1984, p. 203). Holt & Drew (2005) go further and identified one type of such pivotal utterance, which is idiomatic expressions, such as "had a good innings" or "make a hole in your pocket". Compared to general pivotal utterance, idiomatic pivotal utterance is more effective in facilitating stepwise transition. Whereas the pivots in Jefferson (1984) comes after a summary of the previous topic, idiomatic expression itself acts as a summary while at the same time paving the way for the next topic. By producing pivotal utterances, participants are able to tie any next topic coherently with the previous ones, thereby creating an "indefinite nesting of a conversation" (Sacks, 1992a, p. 372) in which topics move from one to another seamlessly.

It has been widely acknowledged that stepwise topic transition is the commonest way to change topics (Sacks, 1972, cited in Coulthard 1985; Silverman, 1998, etc.). However, by briefly reviewing both disjunctive and stepwise (or bounded and unbounded) ways of topic transition, this section shows that they are of equal importance. Although stepwise/unbounded topic transition is more prevalent in conversation, disjunctive/bounded topic change serves its

irreplaceable function where stepwise movement is not in operation. In other words, they complement each other and offer participants a whole range of choice for achieving topic transition, depending on the sequential environment where topic transition takes place.

3.3.3 Topic closure

Although topic closure is briefly reviewed here separately, it should be noted that in ordinary conversations it is not a stand-alone topical action. As many scholars have pointed out, closing a topic is a basic action performed as part of more complex topical actions (Bublitz, 1988, p. 130), and it is only when participants embark on a new topic that the preliminary moves to closing down a topic could be ratified (Drew & Holt, 1998, p. 508). Just like other topical actions such as introducing and changing/shifting a topic, closing a topic is also a collaborative practice whose accomplishment depends on mutual efforts from both parties. Speakers display to each other the closing implication of the current topic, and then jointly bring it to an end by various means.

In past research, a variety of practices have been identified which serve to signal that the current topic is potentially exhausted. One category among them is the display of recipientship (Jefferson, 1993). This can be realized in multiple forms, ranging from minimal acknowledgment tokens, formulations (or reformulation, see Svennevig, 1999, p. 192) of the prior talk, to recipient assessment (e.g., Maynard, 1980; Jefferson, 1993; Button & Casey, 1984; West & Garcia 1988). These practices differ in terms of the level of interactional engagement that they entail. Minimal acknowledgment tokens are the least interactionally engaged way to close a topic—they serve no more function than giving "a merest nod to the other's materials before/while launching one's own" (Jefferson, 1993, p. 7). Formulations, as compared to mere acknowledgment tokens, are more interactionally engaged. By providing a formulation of what has been talked about, a speaker exhibits his/her newly arrived-at understanding (Heritage & Watson, 1979), which serves as a warrant for moving into the closure of the current topic. Assessments are seemingly even more elaborate than formulations because they exhibit a position to whatever has been discussed. They can be done as stating the 'moral' of the current topic (Couper-Kuhlen, 1993, p. 211; West and Garcia, 1988, p. 554), or through providing an idiomatic expression (Drew & Holt, 1998) as summative assessment (or through a combination of both). However, it must be highlighted that assessments are no more topically engaged than the mere acknowledgment tokens. In the provision of idiomatic summary assessment, for example, the speaker is seen to be gradually moving away from the empirical details of the current topic (Drew & Holt, 1998, p. 503). Similarly, in the data examined by Jefferson (1993, p. 9), one recipient assessment ("oh how really lovely") is topically misfitted to the previous turn ("… but I don't know yet of course you can't tell, until about a month"). Therefore, assessments are still simply responsive at best to the ongoing topic without contributing to the further development of it, and in doing so they bring a halt to the progressivity of the current topic.

However, displaying recipientship is not the only way to initiate the termination of a topic. Another strategy, which seems to stand in direct opposition to it, can also have the same interactional outcome. Instead of merely acknowledging the current topic, participants can also

further elaborate on the current talk while at the same time disengaging from it. Covelli & Murray (1980) have identified one such practice called enumeration, in which the speaker signals that he/she is almost finished by listing more than enough examples in answer to a question. With more detailed examples, Jefferson (1993) discusses a more commonly-used practice—recipient commentary. Compared to the content-free acknowledgment token and the responsive summary assessment, a commentary enables the speaker to talk on the topic (Jefferson, 1993, p. 16), therefore extending the progressivity of the current topic. Sometimes a commentary could be extremely elaborate so that the previous speaker now becomes a recipient of the extended commentary. While at first glance this may help develop the current topic rather than closing it, Jefferson (1993) argues that nevertheless, such commentary has a "topical-exhaustion" (p.21) function, so that as the commentary progresses, it will become increasingly vacuous and finally detach from the current topic—a phenomenon partly resembling the movement into and the stabilization of ancillary matters in stepwise topical transition.

With the two seemingly opposite approaches to terminating a topic and the various practices to carry out the topic-closing action, it is up to the participants to decide which method to adopt for winding down the topic in progress, depending on the negotiation between participants through turns and the sequential environment of the topic closure. This section could only provide a general review of the specific techniques for topic closure, and more details of topic closure within sequences will be examined in the following chapters.

3.4   Discussion of CA approaches to topics

From this literature review on CA approaches to topics, we have gained an understanding of how CA isdistinct from other approaches to studying topics. To recap, this distinctiveness resides in CA's view of topic as a process, its analytic interest in the action aspect of conversational topics, and its emphasis on participants' orientation to topics which is made observable through their turns and actions. Also, we have known what has been researched in the organization of topics in ordinary conversation. Current research has been mainly working on three topical actions: topic initiation, topic transition and topic closure, and they have provided insight into the specific ways of initiating these actions (composition) in accordance with the specific sequential environment of their occurrence (positioning).

By reviewing what is already known about the management of topics, I will now point out what is missing. To begin with, comparing with topical actions such as topic initiation and topic closure, I find that topic transition is an action where further research is much needed. Although they could be seen as one of the topical actions that attract most analytical interest, it is precisely because of this that further study is necessary. To be specific, in describing topic transitions from their own starting point, past researchers have coined such a myriad of term so that they may cause confusion to readers' understanding. On the one hand, by looking at the examples of topic transitions defined by these terms, I have discovered a lot of convergence and overlaps in their features, which results in a repeated description of the same phenomenon. For example, although termed differently, topic-initial eliciting sequence and itemized new

enquiries sequence (Button & Casey, 1984, 1985), when used for topic change, refer to exactly the same practice as topic invitation described by Maynard (1980). On the other hand, some seemingly identical terms may turn out to be referring to two opposite forms of topic transition. For instance, Crow's (1983) definition and examples of topic shading exhibit a sharply different pattern of topic transition as topic shading in Schegloff & Sacks (1973)'s terms. These problems relating to the terminology of topic transition practices necessitate the need for a refined analytical framework that captures the various parameters for describing topic change/transition, which haven't been explicitly systematized in previous studies.

It is apparent that most of the published research focused on those boundaried topic changes that are positioned and initiated in an identifiable fashion (e.g., Maynard, 1980; Button & Casey, 1984, 1985; Svennevig, 1999; Schegloff 2007). This research direction leaves a conspicuous gap in the literature on topic transitions in which topics flow from one to another in a seamless or connected way, which is widely acknowledged as the most common way to move from one topic to another (e.g., Schegloff 2007, p. 192; Sacks 1992b, p. 566) . As noted by Heritage (2013, p. 391), stepwise topic transition, which is one form of such connected topic transition, is still an under-investigated conversational phenomenon. This gap in literature is not due to the lack of interest in stepwise topic transition; it is rather because of the difficulty in defining topics and in collecting examples of it in ordinary conversation. Compared with boundaried topic changes, stepwise transitions usually involve a much longer portion of talk, and therefore much longer extract of text on transcripts. This makes it a hard task for researcher to identify examples of stepwise transition among conversations in the first place. Moreover, considering the unnoticed nature of such connected transitions, it is even more difficult to identify and capture their recurrent patterns. For example, with a few notable exceptions of Jefferson (1984) and Drew & Holt (2005), there has not been any further contribution to the study of stepwise topic transition. In other words, most of what we know about stepwise transitions comes from Jefferson (1984) and a few others (Dew & Holt, 2005) that are developments of it. Although in his book, Svennevig (1999) identifies topic leap, another form of connected ways of topic transition, he does not exemplify in detail the mechanisms for topic leap, and how it may differ from other ways of topic transition. In my thesis, I will try to expand our knowledge of connected or seamless ways of topic transition in ordinary conversation.

Lastly, in addition to the better-known research into topic, there are also some lesser-known, preliminary observations which are worthy to be investigated. For example, Adato (1979, 1980) made some important arguments about the circumstantial feature for topics in ordinary conversation, and how participants may utilize such 'circumstantially produced topicality' to introduce a particular topic. His observation brings our attention to a very common topical practice in ordinary talk and should be given a more comprehensive account. Also, in research on other practices and phenomena in conversation, there are some cases where the organization of topics are briefly talked about in a passing manner. For example, when discussing self-repairs, Schegloff (1979) observed that there may be a systematic relationship between self-repair and topic, based on his observation that self-repairs frequently appear in topic-initial or topic-shift turns. Although these papers do not elaborate on the organization of topics in detail, they have pointed out possible directions that researchers can work on in the

future. In my thesis, I will try to focus on these under-developed observations about topic and provide a fuller picture of how participants manage topics in ordinary conversation.

4   Conclusion

This chapter has aimed to bring a comprehensive review of past studies on topic. In reviewing the 'linguistic' approaches to studying topics, I have pointed out the major drawback inherent in these approaches, and the need to examine topic as a process—the perspective adopted by CA. I firstly discussed the relationship between topic management and sequence organization, which is the central organizing principle for conversation. I have highlighted the CA perspective on coherence for conversation, how CA focus on the dynamic relationship among topic, sequence and conversational coherence, and how CA views that 'topical coherence is something constructed across turns by the collaboration of participants' (Levinson, 1983, p. 315). Then, I have discussed how CA differs from other research methods in the organization of topics, and what CA work has been done on topic management. Finally, I have identified areas of CA research that need to be further developed, so as to extend current knowledge on topic .

To conclude, the specific research questions that I will address are as follows:

1. How do conversation participants move from one topic to another in a connected way, by maintaining some level of cohesion with the previous topic?
2. How do conversation participants create an auspicious environment to introduce a particular topic?
3. How do conversation participants resume a topic after it has been exhausted or interrupted?
4. What is the possible relationship between the management of topic and other organizations of conversation, particularly the relationship between topic and self-repair?

With these questions in mind, I will move to the fist analytical chapter of the thesis.

Chapter 3 Topic transitions in ordinary conversations

1   Introduction

As shown in the literature review, Hoffmann and Bublitz's (2017) classified different forms of topic transitions into two categories: bounded and unbounded. Their classification is based on the occurrence of discernible disruptions in speaker change and the introduction of the new mentionable. Bounded topic transitions refer to disjunctive topical transitions across clearly disparate episodes of talk (Hoffmann & Bublitz, 2017); unbounded topic transitions are subtler transitions of topics that do not display clear disruptions or disfluencies (ibid.). However, such a way of categorizing topic transitions only focuses on one aspect of topic transition — the design of the topic-initial turn, or the manner in which topic transition is accomplished. It fails to give an account of the relationship between one topic and another, and how participants orient to topic transition. In this chapter, I am going to consider topic transitions from the perspective of topical coherence between the old and the new topics and classify different forms of topic transitions into two types: disjunctive topic transition and connected topic transition.

In disjunctive topic transition, the new topic bears no identifiable propositional relationship to any prior topic (Crow, 1983, p. 147). In other words, the new mentionable is not topically related to the previous one. Disjunctive topic transition is also what Maynard (1980) calls topic change, where a new topic utilizes new referent which is unrelated to the previous topic. One form of disjunctive topic transition is those marked with turn-initial prefaces (for example, 'oh', 'hey', and 'well' which are interjections (Ameka 1992) that highlight the speakers' departure from the previous topic. These new topics are often introduced in the form of news announcements, which have been discussed in past papers (Button & Casey, 1984, 1985; Maynard, 1980, Maynard & Zimmermann, 1984; West & Garcia, 1988). New topics raised in such a marked, disjunctive fashion usually exhibit a self-oriented nature, relating to the speaker himself/herself of his/her epistemic domain. Below are two examples of marked topic transition:

1. [Holt:2:12]

```
01 Joy:    You know you see:, (0.3) yer own every day an' don't notice
02         it b't u=
03 Les:    =M [m:.
04 Joy:    see[Go:rdon the other day I thought (.) g*o:sh hasn'ee
05         gr*own *u:[p. You kno:w].tch No longer th'little boy,
06 Les:             [ Mmhm hm-hm ]
07 Les:    [No:::,
08 Joy:    [.t.hhhh Anyway what I'm phoning ↓for in the:, .hh in that
09         envelope, the[re's a:: an N.H.R. program.
10 Les:                 [Yes
```

At the start of example 1, Joy is talking about Gordon, Lesley's son, and how grown up he has become. Starting from line 8, Joy initiates a new topic that bears no topical relationship with the previous talk about Gordon. She designs her topic-initial turn with a long in-breath, which displays her preparation to take the turn (Schegloff, 1996), a lexical marker 'anyway' which register a moving away from the previous talk, and she introduces the new topic as the reason for call (Button & Casey, 19898). In addition, the new topic is introduced in the form of news delivery, in which Joy is informing Lesley about something previously unknown to her.

In example 2, topic transition is also accomplished in a similar way:

2. [NB:IV:13R]

```
01 Lot:     Wul she had migrane headiks.
02 Emm:     Ya:h
03          (0.4)
04 Lot:     .t.k.hh.hh En the:y found out thet evcry time she ate a
05          ha:mburger she had b-uh:: u-she gotta headik.
06 Emm:     Isn'that sump'n.
07          (0.2)
08 Lot:     So: she g-jis quit (.) eateen uh ha:mburgers.
09 Emm:     .t.hhhhh W'l I: tellyih Lottie, I s:lep' so beautif'lly
10          la:s'ni:ght<God we (.) took a lo::ng lo:ng walk'n came back
11          en we wentuh bed et eight t;hirty ↑c'z it wz long trip fer
12          Bu:d up'n down let's: face it there [wz HARDLY a]ny tra:ffic=
13 Lot:                                          [Ye :  ah, ] hh
```

At the beginning of this extract, Lottie and Emma are talking about a mutual acquaintance who always has headaches when she eats hamburgers. In line 9, Emma embarks on a telling that is topically disjunctive to the previous topic — that she slept particularly well last night. Similar to the previous example, Emma's delivery of the new topic is also initiated with a long in-breath. In addition, she prefaces her new topic with the lexical expression 'W'l I: tellyih Lottie,' that projects a 'my-side' telling (Heritage, 2015). Once again, here the new topic is self-oriented, and it is introduced as a piece of news-telling.

While a disjunctive topic can be introduced in a marked, noticeable way, it can also be introduced in an unmarked fashion. In unmarked topic transition, although the new mentionable is totally disjunctive to the prior talk, such disjunctiveness is not highlighted by the speaker. Different from topics introduced in a marked way, in unmarked topic transitions the new topics are often (but not always) introduced as questions, enquiring into the other speaker's experience (see Button & Casey, 1984, 1985; Maynard & Zimmerman, 1984; Schegloff, 2007 on topic-proffering). Here are two examples of unmarked, disjunctive topic transition. Prior to example 3, Lesley and her mum are talking about Katherine — Lesley's daughter and the cushions covers she makes.

3. [Holt:1:1]

```
01 Les:     ihYes. ↑Okay the:n↑ I'll get her  tuh do ↓one.
02                  (0.3)
03 Mum:     Ye:h that's right,
04 Les:     Yes.
```

```
05                    (.)
06 Les:    .t (.) ↑Ri:ght.h
07 Mum:      Yes.
08               (1.2)
09 Mum:    wuh:- yih- (.)Are you teaching this week?
10 Les:    Oh I don't know I never kn:o::[w.
11 Mum:                                   [°Ri:ght.°
12               (0.7)
13 Mum:    They (break up on) Wednesdee (anyway) don't they.
14 Les:    No here it's Thursday.
```

At the beginning of this excerpt, Lesley promises to ask Katherine to make a cushion cover for her grandmother, and this reference to a future activity is suggestive of the termination of their current topic. After a series of topic-bounding turns (Button & Casey, 1984, 1985) that brings the current topic to closure, Mum launches a new topic direction at line 09, enquiring about Lesley's work plan ('wuh:- yih- (.)Are you teaching this week?'). This new topic displays Mum's attentiveness to Lesley (other-oriented), and it is designed in the form of an enquiry about her life, without any turn-initial markers that explicitly display a departure from the previous topic.

Example 4 is another illustration of unmarked topic transition:

4. [Rahman: I]

```
01 Ver:    She didn't u Well ushe's gotta send thehr foh:rm bahck.
02         Sh[e d'sn't know w]hen=
03 Jen:      [O h  :  :  :   .]
04 Ver:    =the[interview  i : s [yet.]
05 Jen:        [Oh it's jist th' [foh ]:rm,=
06 Ver:    =N[o.
07 Jen:      [Yes,
08 Jen:      M[m,
09 Ver:       [No.
10 Jen:     Ye:s .h What's happ'ning nex doo:r they moving in or moving
11          out I couldn' de[ci:de,  heh heh]
12 Ver:                     [(I:  know.) u-e]h::m I'll tell you all the
13          news when y'come down. No theh gettin the key:: Is it the
14           sixtinth tihday,
```

Here Vera and Jenny are talking about their friend Jano, who has just applied for a job. After the topic about Jano gradually winds down, Jenny at line 10 introduces a new topic about Vera's next-door neighbour. Again, this new topic is introduced in an unmarked fashion, in the form of an other-attentive question.

The four examples above demonstrate some unique features of disjunctive topic transition. In terms of their sequential environment, disjunctive topic transitions usually occur in fixed sequential environments, such as after conversational openings, after conversation's closings have been initiated and after the shutting down of a previous topic (Maynard, 1980; Button & Casey, 1984; Maynard & Zimmerman, 1984; Schegloff, 2007). In terms of composition, disjunctive topic transitions, whether marked or unmarked, are usually designed in distinctive

components or structures. This means that disjunctive topic transitions are easier to identify in the course of a conversation, and they exhibit recurrent patterns that are ready for analysis. As a result of this, most previous research on topic transitions has focused on these forms of disjunctive topic transition.

However, disjunctive topic transition is not the only way of topic transition; in many cases, topic transition is accomplished in a connected way in which the new topic retains some topical link with the previous one. In connected topic transitions, participants rely on the natural course of conversation to create next topics. For example, the prior talk about food going bad occasions the next topic about potential lead poisoning of Mexican pottery, and a previous mention of a tiny dog generates the next topic about Born Free, a film featuring orphaned lion cubs (see Sacks, 1992b, p. 299). Compared with disjunctive topic transitions, connected topic transition is still an under-investigated phenomenon (Heritage, 2013). This might be because connected ways of topic transitions do not exhibit clear-cut boundaries as do disjunctive topic transitions, and they are often accomplished across a long sequence of talk, making it difficult to observe. In addition, the topical link between turns in connected ways of topic transition can sometimes be vague to identify. In this chapter, I am going to explore the ways of connected topic transition, and examine the mechanisms for their accomplishment. In the next section, I will explore the features of stepwise topic transition. Then I will describe and discuss another form of connected topic transition — touched-off topic transition.

2   Stepwise topic transitions

In ordinary conversations, participants often move from topic to topic in an apparently seamless and imperceptible way. They may be talking about one subject at one moment, and a few seconds later, they may be gradually moving to an entirely different topic. Here is an example of such movement from one topic to another. At the beginning of this extract, Jenny is telling Ann about the arrival of the furniture that their mutual friend has recently purchased. Specifically, they are talking about the scuff on the new furniture caused by sub-standard packaging, and how their friend is upset about it.

5. [Rahman:B:1:JMA(13)]

```
01 JEN:     .hhh Ahn' the chairs uh beautiful ez well. .hh B't theh badly
02          (kipt).
03          (0.3)
04 ANN:     Aoh[::::.
05 JEN:        [Yihknow they scuffed uh- .hh e- They hahdn't sort'v ehm
06          .p .hhhh ti:ed th'm all (down) d'you know the le:gs.
07          eh-[ih- i(round)
08 ANN:        [Yes.
09 JEN:     =they should be packed with corrugated cahr:d'n thaht.
10 ANN:     Ye[:s?,
11 JEN:       [.hhh Well obviously theh hahdn' been.ahn' they- the  ahr(p)
12          I: must edmit they ahr .hh cuz I wz looking et mine ah:
13          thought well I've brought five boys up on mi:ne, ahn'[mine=
14 ANN:                                                          [Mhm?,
15 JEN:     =ahn't ez badly: .hh chi- yihknow [yihknow knocked.=
16 ANN:                                       [Yes.
```

```
17 ANN:      =I know whatchu mea:n.=
18 JEN:      =M[m^::::.
19 ANN:        [I mean they[should give]
20 JEN:                   [She  w'zve]ry upset actually coozih- she's-
21 JEN:      £waited sich a£ long[ti:me for it en I mean=
22 ANN:                          [(                   )
23 ANN:      = [Ye:s.
24 JEN:      = [ it's such enexpe:nsive[s e t  isn't it.]
25 ANN:                                [Where did she bu]:yth'm throu:gh.
26          Barker en[Stone(*house*).
27 JEN:              [Bahrker'n Stonehouse. Mm, .hhFazil nevuh liked
28          the manager in theah though,[Faz'l[w'dnevuh[go in theah,]=
29 ANN:                                  [No:, [well he [h e ' s   a-]=
30 JEN:      =M-[hm,
31 ANN:         [No you see I tau:ght the little bo:y.
32 JEN:      Ye:s,=
33 ANN:      =En:: e-his (.) this: (.) the managuh marrie:d, .hh this
34          mothuh who already had a little bo:y.=
35 JEN:      =Oh::ah[hm?
36 ANN:             [En I: had this little boy en he usetih come tsu
37          open night. .hhEn I hed heard thet'e wzvery stroppy.Eez
38          ^only y'know'e looks a kid imse:lf.
39 JEN:      eYe:s.
40 ANN:      Anyway um (.) e-he 'eesort'v settle ddo:wn. .hh An' I(w)
41          (.) metth'm about a fortnight ago they've gotta little
42          guhrl'v their own no[w.
43 JEN:                          [Aoh::::.h
44 ANN:       Uh b't e-he's very offputting. Rah:ther (0.4) .t .hhh a
45           cocky little devil.=
```

In line 25-26, Ann asks about the name of the furniture shop ('Where did she bu:y th'm throu:gh.'), and in answering this question, Jenny makes a brief comment on the manager in there ('Fazil nevuh liked the manager in theah though', Fazil being Jenny's recently deceased husband). At line 31, Ann picks up the topic of the manager and starts to talk about his personal life — that he marries a mother of a little boy, and they now have a girl on their own. At this point, they have moved from the topic about the furniture to a quite different though related topic.

Example 5 highlights the multi-topical characteristics to be found in most ordinary conversations. Moreover, what is also noticeable in this example is the way in which topics shift from one to the other. Between the scuffed furniture and the discussion about the manager, there is no observable termination of the previous topic and no disjunctive introduction of the next topic. Rather, the transition from the previous topic to the next is achieved in a connected way without any disruption of topical coherence that occur in disjunctive forms of topic transition. Sacks calls this phenomenon stepwise topic transition, and has made observations about how stepwise topic transition is done:

> "It's a general feature for topical organization in conversation that the best way to move from topic to topic is not by a topic close followed by a topic beginning, but by what we call a stepwise move. Such a move involves connecting what we've just been talking about to what we're now talking

about, though they are different. I link up whatever I'm now introducing as a new topic to what we've just been talking about." (Sacks, 1992b, p. 566).

This preliminary observation of stepwise topic transition is then developed in Jefferson (1984), in which she identifies a five-step pattern for stepwise transitions from a troubles-telling to a report of an enjoyable time. To recap, these five steps are: the troubles-teller summing up the trouble (step 1), the troubles-teller moves to an ancillary matter (step 2), the troubles-recipient topically stabilizing the ancillary matter (step 3), and then produces a pivotal utterance (step 4), which finally leads to a report of a good time (step 5). However, Jefferson's (1984) discussion about this pattern is in the context of talk about troubles only; we do not know whether a similar pattern for stepwise transition can also be found between any kind of topics in general. In the next section, I will compare Jefferson's (1984) pattern of stepwise transitions between non-troubles-telling, and explore the generalizability of it.

2.1   Exploring Jefferson's (1984) pattern for stepwise topic transitions

By examining examples of stepwise topic transition that I have collected, I find that Jefferson's (1984) pattern is also compatible with topic transitions between a wider range of topics. Below are three examples, and I will use Jefferson's (1984) original description to demonstrate this compatibility. Example 6 illustrates this similarity. Prior to this extract, Edna, who is going to retire soon, is speculating about how much money she might receive from her social security.

6. [NB:IV:14]

```
01 Oli:     Yihknow Mary uh::::=
02 Edn:     hhhhh
03 Edn:     =hhhhhh//hhh
04 Oli:     nOh:: whatwzit.Uh:: Tho:mpson. Remember th//e hhhhhhh
05 Edn:     Ye-e-ah,
06 Oli:      Wul she got it in::: those days that wz twunny four dollars
07          'nthat's not, yihknow,
08 Edn:     That's- that'll pay my go:lf,
09          (0.3)
10 Edn:      hhhh get my hair done once'n awhile but I won't go'n spend
11          f::five fifty en six bucks on my hair- hhh Gee it costs▓
12          a lottuh getcher hair fixed?
13 Oli:     Yeah gee I wore my wi:g.  ((snort!))
14 Edn:     Oh I betchu looked beau:ti//ful::.
15 Oli:     I uh:::-uh- uh I had it cut real short. Ih wz too much hair.=
16          =Yihknow. // (Looked-)
17 Edn:     Yeah, en we're get- I don't like it too long ez we get older.
18 Oli:     No en // I had 'er cut it en gee it wz good'n uh errybuddy
19          wz lookin at me 'n I didn' tell Earl 'e siz God yer
20          hair looks beautiful 'n I didn'tell im en so// when I ca(h)me
21          (h)home I too(h)g id (h)off 'e says don't tell me. hh//uh-huh
22          uh-huhuh-huh hhhh
23 Edn:     ((sniff))
24 Edn:     Myeah.
25 Edn:     Oh that's darling,
26 Oli:     Yeah, ih- we hadda real good ti:me.
27 Edn:     Oh en yih gotta big tro//:phy::::
28 Oli:     Oh you should see it it's a:::. It's a b- it's a beautiful,▓
```

In response to Edna's telling, Olive produces a second starting line 01, recollecting how much Mary (their mutual acquaintance) used to receive in earlier days. In line 08 and line 10, Edna produces an evaluation of Mary's pension ('That's- that'll pay my go:lf,' and 'get my <u>hair</u> done once'n awhile'), which Jefferson refers to as '*summing up the heart of the trouble*'(step 1). Although in this example, Edna is not summing up any 'problem', she is still giving a summative assessment of the information that Olive has provided.

Soon after this, Edna moves to talk about the cost of 'getting hair fixed' (line 10). By saying 'get my hair done once'n awhile ', Edna provides further comment on the amount of money that Mary used to receive. However, instead of focusing more on Mary's pension, Edna moves to a related yet slightly different direction -- how expensive it is to have hair fixed now. It is in this sense that Edna has now moved to an 'ancillary matter' (step 2, Jefferson, 1984). Olive then *stabilizes the ancillary matter* (step 3, Jefferson, 1984) by saying 'Yeah gee I wore my wi:g.' (line 13), which generates some further exchanges in which they talk about the ancillary matter of hairstyles, and in which Olive talks about a party she went to. At line 26, Olive produces a summing up of her telling ('we hadda real good ti:me.'). This turn serves the function of a pivotal utterance (step 4, Jefferson 1984), as it enables Edna to introduce something relating to 'having a good time', namely the trophy Olive earned, thus providing Edna an opportunity to move in a different direction.

Looking back to the start of this extract, it is striking to find how seamless and smooth the transition of topics is achieved. At line 1, Edna and Olive are still talking about social security, but shortly after, they are engaged in a totally different topic. In Sacks' words, at the end of this extract, Edna and Olive are far from where they began, though neither of them has started a new topic (Sacks, 1992b, p. 566).

Here are two more examples from my collection which could be compared to Jefferson's (1984) findings. At the start of example 7, Mum and Lesley are talking about the bad weather in their respective areas.

7. [Holt:l:8]

```
01 Mum:    We had th'most awful hai:l storm this afternoo:n
02 Les:    Oh:.
03 Mum:    Wz like u-half crow::ns c[oming dow]n.
04 Les:                            [Y e : :s.]
05 Les:    Ye:s.
06         (0.3)
07 Mum:    Terrible weather fer this time a'the ye[a:r,]
08 Les:                                          [I kn]o:::w,
09         (0.3)
10 Les:    I [mean flowers are not coming out are the:y.
11 Mum:      [Mm:.
12 Mum:    ^No::. No:.
13         (O.7)
14 Mum:    Got couple of daffodils out in the ga[:rden] (   )
15 Les:                                         [Oh I ]haven't,
16         (.)
17 Mum:    Hm:. .h An' s'm crocuses [b't[ not a lot at a:l[l.
18 Les:                            [.h [Yes          [.h Well we
19         have snowdrops'n the cro:cuses look all battered,
```

```
20             (.)
21 Mum:     Ye[s.
22 Les:       [An' I've got a few scyllas ou:t.=
23 Mum:     =Isn'it a shame.
24 Les:     Ye:s.
25             (.)
26 Mum:     that you:- look forward to'm they come out'n then they
27          get- battered tuh pie[ces.
28 Les:                          [Ye:s.
29 Mum:     Mm[:.
30 Les:       [I, I pruned a few roses t'day'n gave them some manu:re,
31             (0.6)
32 Mum:     (which) is good.
33 Les:     Ah:,hh (1.6) But then Mar- ah:-:,h (_) then I've run out've
34          it s:o anyway m-uh- aa-Mark's coming home t'morrow so .hh
35          he'll mix me suh mo:re if he [thinks:
36 Mum:                                 [(          ) compound it was?=
37 Les:     =Yes.
38            (0.9)
39 Mum:     T'morrow ni:ght?
40            (.)
41 Les:     Uh: five uh'clock t'morrow.
42 Mum:     .hh E:vening.
43          (0.3)
44 Les:     Yes.
45 Mum:     (      ), oh ( [          )
46 Les:                   [So I expect they:'ll be: um: travelin:g
47          (0.5) Well what happen:s they usually get up about two uh'
48          clock in the morning,
49 Mum:     Oh: yes.
50          (1.1)
51 Mum:     Ye:h when Miriam goe:s she (.) she hastuh set off at three
52          uh'clock in the mo:rn[ing,
53 Les:                          [Ye:s.=
54 Mum:     But it's (.) it is a nuisance.
55           (0.6)
56 Les:     .t Yes well they had to .hh[h
57 Mum:                                [Ye:s.
58 Les:     But they didn't (0.7) e-have to: get there til: (1.2) three
59          at u-three thirty. uh .h It was gon't'be o:ne thirty but (.)
60          that seemed too early. so they made it three thirty
61           (1.8)
62 Mum:     'T's'n awful time t'get up isn'it.
```

After a brief opening exchange about the hail storm, at line 7 Mum produces a summative assessment of this news topic (Mum's news announcement in line 1), similar to step 1 (summing up the heart of the trouble) in Jefferson (1984). In affiliating with Mum's assessment on 'Terrible weather', Lesley comments on the late growth of the flowers in her garden (line 10). By talking about the late growth of flowers as a result of the terrible weather, Lesley has moved to a related or "ancillary" (Jefferson 1984) matter that is tangentially relevant to what they have been talking about in prior turns. This generates a series of exchanges between Lesley and Mum about different species of flowers, which stabilizes the talk about the ancillary matter (step 3). At line 33, Lesley mentions her lack of manure for pruning roses, and in relation to this, she mentions that 'Mark's coming home tomorrow' (line 34), so that he may be able to mix some for her. This remark serves as a pivotal utterance, since it is related to their previous talk about growing flowers but at the same time also has the potential for generating a new,

unrelated topic about Mark himself. As we can see, Mum later develops this pivotal utterance (line 39), which gradually leads to a new topic: the nuisance of getting up early for travel (step 5). Just like example 3, the transition of topics from weather, to the late growth of garden flowers, and finally to the nuisance of getting up early is accomplished so seamlessly that we could not observe any noticeable introduction of a disjunctive new topic.

Example 8 is a final illustration of how Jefferson's (1984) findings are applicable to stepwise topic transitions in general. As we join this example, Hal is telling Skip about his trip to Chilham, a village in Kent. Specifically, Hal is saying that the staff on the railway station couldn't understand where he wanted to go, since he didn't pronounce 'Chilham' correctly (there is a town with a similar name near where Hal lives, so Hal might have confused the names).

8. [Field: September-October 1988 (II): Side 1: Call 4]

```
01 Hal:      Yea:h. And when I came back to Canterbury
02           station 'n had to get a ticket I said .hh I've ↓I: said
03           I(h) wanted two to Gill↓im:.=
04 Ski:      =.p.h[˚aa-˚
05 Hal:           [Gellin:g Gill↓im[:.
06 Ski:                            [ihYeh,?=
07 Hal:      =So 'ee said where ↑the devil[do y(hh)ou] ↑come[vro(h)m↑]=
08 Ski:                                   [g n i k k ] ehhh [h h e h ]=
09 Ski:      =↑hhe[h  [eh[uh
10 Hal:           [sai[d [oh So[merset.'ee said I ↑THO]U:GH[T ↓so(h)o,
11 Ski:                       [.knokh .knokh-whheeuw ]    [ehh heh.hh
12            h↑e:h [↑hih  u h h ]
13 Hal:            [He said w'l]we call it Jillim o[ver (here).]=
14 Ski:                                           [.h u h h h ]=
15 Ski:      =[eh ↑hih ˚h[u˚.hh.hhh]
16 Hal:      =[(    )   [ha ha  ha]:h ha ha-:
17           (.)
18 (Hal):    ngk [gn
19 Ski:          [.hhhhhhh=
20 Hal:            =But um: .hh I: I: no I-I mean it gay-[ih-it's amazing=
21 Ski:                                                 [mkh-mghhhh
22 Hal:      =for a small[village they've got such a good- (0.2) ↑rail=
23 Ski:                  [.k
24 Hal:      =↓servi[ce.
25 Ski:             [.tl eYe:s, u we:[ll Kent is:: (.) you know=
26 Hal:                             [(    )
27 Ski:      =they're very busy cuz they o: (.) they(k) (.) g-a:ll
28           tied up wi'th' Lond'n servi[ces  [.hhhhhh  [.hhhhhh
29 Hal:                                 [Yes I[spoze it's[quite a
30           computer sort of[area.](        )
31 Ski:                      [Ye:s ]Oh it tis no:w,.hh h[I did lot a'=
32 Hal:                                                 [Yeah.
33 Ski:      =my milit'ry ↑service in Canterbury,
34           (.)
35 Hal:      ↑Did ↓you[↑:?
36 Ski:               [Ye:sp all the (            ) nearly[: u::]=
37 Hal:                                                   [WUH: ]=
38 Ski:      =[ a year there,  ]
39 Hal:      =[WHAT service w'r]you in there the[n.
40 Ski:                                         [hIn the Buffs.=
41 Hal:      =[Were] ↓you.
```

```
42 Ski:     =[˚u˚ ]˚u˚ It wz the headquarters a' the Buffs
```

Similar to previous examples, we can see Hal summing up his previous story-telling at line 20 (step1). By providing a summative assessment of Chilham, Hal is detaching himself from the details of this trip and instead commenting on the rail services of the village in general. At line 25, Skip firstly agrees with Hal, and then provides a parallel assessment (Heritage, 2011) on the rail service in Kent. In doing so, Skip moves out of the story about Chilham and introduces a related (or ancillary) matter, the rail service in Kent, where Chilham is geographically located (step 2). In his next turn, Hal firstly affiliates with Skip's assessment ("yes" in line 29) and contributes more to the exchange regarding the rail service in Kent ("I spoze it's quite acomputer sort of area."). In doing so Hal is extending their talk about Kent and therefore stabilizes the ancillary matter (step 3). In contrast to previous examples, the ancillary matter in this example does not last very long. After briefly aligning with Hal's remark on Kent ('Ye:s Oh it tis no:w,' line 31), Skip produces an announcement-like utterance "I did lot a'my milit'ry ↑service in Canterbury,". This is comparable to a pivotal utterance in Jefferson (1984), since his mentioning of Canterbury is occasioned by their previous talk about Kent (Canterbury is also located in Kent) but at the same time, Skip is no longer focusing on their previous topic about rail services. As shown in the example, Hal picks up this pivotal utterance, and they start talking about Skip's military service (step 5). Once again, the transition of topics in this example is also achieved through a natural flow of conversation. Without disjunctive introductions of new topics, Hal and Skip gradually move from one topic to another by connecting an upcoming turn to its prior.

The three examples above display a phenomenon that complements Jefferson's (1984) observation. While Jefferson (1984) reveals a five-step pattern for moving out of a topic, the scope of this pattern has been confined to topics about troubles only. We do not know, therefore, how do participants move between topics that do not have a troublesome nature. By using the three examples above, I have shown that Jefferson's (1984) pattern for stepwise transitions out of troubles-telling is also applicable to any type of topics. As Sacks has already noted, stepwise topic transition is probably the best way for moving between topics (Sacks, 1992b, p. 566). When getting off a troublesome or delicate topic, stepwise topic transition enables a speaker to gradually close down the topic without an abrupt restart or closure of the conversation. In addition, stepwise topic transition can also benefit movement between normal, non-delicate types of topics, too. Whenever a disjunctive topic change occurs, participants will create a topical rupture (Jefferson 1984) that interrupts conversational coherence and the flow of topics. By firstly moving into a temporary, ancillary matter and finally into a whole new topic, participants manage to accomplish the seamless and coherent transition between any topics without undermining the overall coherence of the interaction.

2.2   Practices for creating cohesiveness in stepwise topic transitions

In addition to exploring how widely Jefferson (1984) can be applied to transitions between more ordinary topics, I'm also interested in how stepwise topic transition is accomplished turn by turn, by 'connecting what we've just been talking about to what we're now talking about' (Sacks, 1992b, p. 566), and how this connection is established. Although Jefferson (1984) points

out places in stepwise topic transitions where connections between the steps can be observed (e.g., step 2, moving to ancillary matters and step 4, producing pivotal utterances), she does not explore in detail in what way these steps are connected to each other. To be more specific, she does not examine what are the features in talk that could provide the interactional sources for topical continuity between the steps. While we have seen how this five-step pattern enables participants to move from topic to topic, we don't really know how participants move from one step to another in an equally connected and coherent way.

It has been noted (e.g., Ellis, 1984) that the sequential connectivity of topicality can be ascertained by examining the linguistic, logical, propositional, referential relations, etc., that adhere between temporarily related utterances. In the rest of this section, I am going to explore two major resources that enable participants to achieve topical connectedness within the five-steps for stepwise topic transition.

2.2.1 Grammatical Resources

In stepwise topic transition, participants can connect one turn or one step to another grammatically by using linguistic cohesive devices. In ordinary conversation, grammar provides participants a powerful tool to display the connection between their turn and immediately preceding talk, by designing their responsive turns and actions with certain grammatical resources that are parasitic on the preceding turns (Schegloff, 1996d; Mazeland, 2013; Thompson, Fox & Couper-Kuhlen, 2015). Previous research (e.g., Halliday & Hasan, 1976; West & Garcia, 1988; Bloor & Bloor, 2013; Drew, 2013) has identified various practices for creating cohesion and coherence in both written and spoken discourse, and those that are frequently used by conversation participants are:

1. Repetition: the restatement of the same lexical item

2. Deixis: using pro-terms and deictic words to refer to already mentioned items.

3. Ellipsis: the deletion or omission of a lexical item.

Using the examples below, I will show how these linguistic cohesive devices enable the movement from one step to another coherently.

Repetition:

Repetition is the simplest form of cohesion, which involves the reiteration of the same lexical item in a previous turn. Here are two examples of repetition.

9. [Rahman: I]

```
01 Jen:    Cz Ivan said in the mohrning wd I take im to Saltbehn en I
02         said well u.hih hI don'kno:w th'roads uh so ba-ad
03         I(h)mi(h)ght not (.) make ^i:t.=
04 Ver:    =Neo:? No-Were they verry ba:d, Jenn[y,(   )]
05 Jen:                                         [Ehm- no]it wasn'it's jst
06         thetchu cahn't go: so fahs:t you kne[ow- yih-Yih  kn]eow yih]=
07 Ver:                                        [N  o  :  :  : ,] N   o.]=
```

```
08 Jen:      =jist haftih: be thaht little bit mo' ca:[reful.
09 Ver:                                              [Ah ^think it's thaht
10           little bit wah:rmuh tuhni:ght i:sn't it
```

Example 9 is an example from Jefferson (1984), at the start of which the troubles-teller is complaining about not being able to 'go typing'. According to Jefferson (1984), at the start of this extract, Vera and Jenny are moving into an ancillary matter,the bad road condition (lines 1-3); Vera's enquiry in line 04 is step 3, thereby stabilizing the ancillary matter, and her comment about the warmer temperature serves as a pivotal utterance (lines 9-10). In this excerpt, there are two notable instances of repetition facilitating the smooth transition from one step to another. The first instance is the repetition of 'bad' (lines 2-4), together with the partial repetition of the degree adverbs ('so' and 'very'). In doing so, Vera connects her utterance to what Jenny has been talking about; by embedding her repetition in this other-attentive question (Bolden, 2006, 2009), she stabilizes the matter of the bad road conditions. The second instance is the repetition of the phrase 'that little bit' in lines 9-10. In this way, Vera designs her pivotal utterance about the weather in such a way that echoes with Jenny's immediate prior turn. To sum up, the two instances of repetition helps the stabilization of the ancillary matter and the production of a pivotal utterance in a connected way.

Returning to example 8, repetition again functions as a cohesive device in stepwise transition:

8a. [Field: September-October 1988 (II): Side 1: Call 4]

```
20 Hal:   =But um: .hh I: I: no I-I mean it gay-[ih-it's amazing=
21 Ski:                                         [mkh-mghhhh
22 Hal:   =for a small[village they've got such a good- (0.2) ↑rail=
23 Ski:               [.k
24 Hal:   =↓servi[ce.
25 Ski:          [.tl eYe:s, u we:[ll Kent is:: (.) you know=
26 Hal:                           [(      )
27 Ski:   =they're very busy cuz they o: (.) they(k) (.) g-a:ll
28        tied up wi'th' Lond'n servi[ces  [.hhhhhh  [.hhhhhh
29 Hal:                              [Yes I[spoze it's[quite a
30        computer sort of area.(          )
```

As was discussed previously, Hal sums up his telling about Chilham by assessing its excellent rail service. In response, Skip moves to an ancillary matter –the rail service in the surrounding area of Kent to which Chilham belongs. In this process, the repetition of 'service' (line 28) establishes a connection between Hal's summative assessment and Skip's introduction of the ancillary matter, contributing to the coherent transition from one to another.

Deixis:

From the two examples above, we can see that repetition is a straightforward cohesive device for connecting the steps for stepwise topic transition. By repeating a previously-mentioned item, a participant sets up a direct link between his/her turn and previous steps. In contrast to repetition, the use of deixis, i.e., using personal pronouns, demonstratives and other referentials, is less straightforward, because the deictic words cannot be interpreted

semantically in their own right (Halliday & Hasan, 1976), so the other speaker is required to identify what previous item it is referring to. By referring to the same item, participants create connections between turns and steps for stepwise transition of topics. The following are two examples of deixis through which topical connections are displayed.

9a. [Rahman: I]

```
01 Jen:    Cz Ivan said in the mohrning wd I take im to Saltbehn en I
02         said well u.hih hI don'kno:w th'roads uh so ba-ad I(h)mi(h)ght
03         not (.) make ^i:t.=
04 Ver:     =Neo:? No-Were they verry ba:d, Jenn[y,(    )]
05 Jen:                                         [Ehm- no]it wasn'it's jst
06         thetchu cahn't go: so fahs:t you kneow
```

Apart from the repetition of 'bad' as discussed before, the use of deixis also contributes to the coherence of the transition from one turn or step to another. At line 2, Jenny mentions the condition of 'the roads' as being very bad. When producing a turn to stabilize the ancillary matter on bad road conditions, 'the roads' is replaced with a demonstrative 'they' by Vera. In the next line, Jenny uses the third person pronoun 'it' to refer to Vera's understanding in the prior turn, that 'the roads are bad and impassable', and explains what she meant by 'the roads are so bad' — in the sense that she can't drive fast. Throughout this short excerpt, the use of deixis contributes to the transition from step 2, moving to ancillary matter to step 3, stabilizing the ancillary matter, and also the further development of the ancillary matter.

Here is another example of deixis:

6a. [NB:IV:14]

```
26 Oli:    Yeah, ih- we hadda real good ti:me.
27 Edn:    Oh en yih gotta big tro//:phy::::
28 Oli:    Oh you should see it it's a:::. It's a b- it's a beautiful,
```

In example 6a, Olive proterms 'a big trophy' by 'it' (line 28), thus topicalizing the pivotal utterance at line 27. Relating to the five-step pattern in Jefferson (1984), the proterm 'it' links together step 4 — producing pivotal utterance and step 5 — the arrival of a new topic, which is about the trophy that Olive receives.

To sum up, deixis in ordinary conversation can be realized in the form of personal references and demonstratives, which point backward to an element in a previous turn. In doing so, they 'provide a link with a preceding portion' (Halliday & Hasan, 1976, p. 51) of the talk, creating a connection between the next step in topic transition and a previous step.

Ellipsis:

While the use of deixis involves the replacement of an original item with a deictic word, ellipsis, the third cohesive practice, is simply characterised as 'substitution by zero' (Halliday & Hasan, 1986, p. 142), or 'the omission of an item' (ibid.) from the preceding turn. Ellipsis provides a

cohesive tie in that an elliptical utterance can only be understood in relation to a previous turn, where the item being omitted first occurs. Below are two examples of ellipsis.

9a. [Rahman: I]

```
01 Jen:    Cz Ivan said in the mohrning wd I take im to Saltbehn en I
02         said well u.hih hI don'kno:w th'roads uh so ba-adI(h)mi(h)ght
03         not (.) make ^i:t.=
04 Ver:     =Neo:? No-Were they verry ba:d, Jenn[y,(   )]
05 Jen:                                         [Ehm- no]it wasn'it's jst
06         thetchu cahn't go: so fahs:t you kneow
```

Jenny's answer in line 5 is an elliptical response to Vera's question in line 4. The TCU 'no it wasn'' is an omitted form of 'no it wasn't very bad', and the understanding of it is dependent on the previous turn. In this instance, although Jenny's elliptical turn does not link together two distinct steps for stepwise topic transition, it is responsive to Vera's stabilization of the ancillary matter (step 3), and does further develop the ancillary matter on the road condition, paving the way for the pivotal utterance that appears later.

Similarly, in example 7a, Lesley responded to her mother's turn in an elliptical form, too:

7a. [Holt:l:8]

```
14 Mum:    Got couple of daffodils out in the ga[:rden] (   )
15 Les:                                         [Oh I ]haven't,
```

In their exchange on the growth of garden flowers, Mum mentions the daffodils in her garden. This prompts Lesley to talk about her side of the story, in an elliptical turn 'oh I haven't', whose elaborate form could be 'oh I haven't got any daffodils'. In doing so, Lesley and her mother collaboratively stabilize the ancillary matter about the late growth of flowers, from which Lesley produces the pivotal utterance.

In proposing that ellipsis is one of the practices for 'tying' a turn with its prior turn, thereby connecting it topically as well as in terms of action (e.g. in answer to an enquiry), we follow the standard way in conversation analysis of considering topical connectedness, or cohesion, as understood by participants in the interaction (see e.g. Wootton 1989, on the understanding of a prior turn displayed in next turn). It appears that the term ellipsis has not gone unchallenged, and that some interactional linguists consider that ". . . the notion of a positionally sensitive grammar provides a framework much better suited than notions like ellipsis *to furthering our understanding of grammar as it emerges in real-time social interaction*" (Thompson et al. 2015, p.8) (my emphasis). Thompson et al. later claim that "An account of short forms in terms of ellipsis states that the short forms are best understood as being truncated versions of larger, clausal counterparts. On this account, listeners allegedly make sense of a 'part' of an utterance by reconstructing the 'complete' utterance from which it is derived" (ibid., p.298). However, the aims of conversation analysis are not restricted to, and cannot be reduced to, "furthering our understanding of (emergent) grammar", as Thompson et al. state. That has not been my aim here; I make no claims about that, and how, recipients make sense of an elliptical (so-called) 'short form'. My point is only that a next speaker does not (have to) repeat 'got daffodils out in the garden' in order for 'Oh I haven't' to be understood as saying that she, Leslie, has not got

daffodils out in her garden which as the conversation proceeds is precisely how this is understood (subsequent turns refer to crocuses and snowdrops, thereby using the co-class membership of 'flowers' to further display 'talking on topic', on which see the next section).

2.2.2   Co-class membership for terms

The examples above demonstrate how linguistic cohesive resources such as repetition, deixis and ellipsis could enable speakers to establish connections between their current turn and preceding turns, therefore tying the steps together resulting in stepwise topic transition. But in addition to these practices, there is another cohesive device for displaying a connection between turns in stepwise topic transitions. In his consideration of touched-off utterances, Sacks considers the role played by "class status phenomenon for terms" (Sacks, 1992a, p. 761), about which he made the following preliminary observation:

> "A given part of an utterance can be analyzed to find that it has some (actually many) class status. Having found some class status for that given item, one may in the next utterance present such a term as stands in co-class membership with a term used in the last…In fact, one of the most general ways that attention to topic is done is via the use of co-class membership…presenting a second after a first, one shows some attention to the first." (1992a, p. 757)

As Sacks (1974) suggests, any description of a person or an object is made selectively, and co-class membership for terms is used for the identification and description of persons and objects. McHoul & Watson (1984) show that when a teacher nominates public buildings as the subject of discussion, students talk about various types of public buildings, such as courthouses, fire stations, universities and churches. By naming one item of public building after another, students display their orientation to what has been talked about before, as well as the general topic under discussion. As McHoul and Watson (1984) observe, such co-class membership comprises a crucial feature in the 'cementing together of topic items' (p. 296), providing one means for topical consistency (p. 285).

Regarding stepwise topic transition, I find that the connection between the steps can also be created in this way, by participants talking about some mentionable that forms a co-class relationship with an item in the previous turn or step. In doing so, their talk can still be perceived as on-topic by the other participant despite gradually moving away from the previous topic. Below are several examples showing how co-class relationship of terms at different stages facilitates stepwise topic transition.

7b. [Holt:I:8]

```
14 Mum:     Got couple of daffodils out in the ga[:rden] (   )
15 Les:                                     [Oh I ]haven't,
16          (.)
17 Mum:     Hm:. .h An' s'm crocuses [b't[ not a lot at a:l[l.
18 Les:                             [.h [Yes          [.h Well we
19          have snowdrops'n the cro:cuses look all battered,
20          (.)
```

```
21 Mum:      Ye[s.
22 Les:        [An' I've got a few scyllas ou:t.=
```

In this example, the major cohesive device connecting Lesley's and her mother's turns is mentioning different species of flowers. These flowers share a co-class membership, in the sense that they are all species of flowers, which, according to Sacks (1992a), is a 'natural' class — a class by using pre-given, common sense knowledge independent of contextual knowledge. In other words, the turns in this extract are connected to each other under the class of flowers, so that when Mum presents several categories of flowers (daffodils, crocuses), Lesley continues talking about the late growth of flowers — the ancillary matter — by listing other co-class members of flowers. The listing of different species of flowers one turn after another, together with the use of ellipsis (line 15) and repetition (line 19), functions to further stabilize the ancillary matter and promote the later production of the pivotal utterance.

In example 5a, Ann likewise links her turn to Jenny's through co-class membership.

5a. [Rahman:B:1:JMA(13)]

```
24 JEN:      =  it's such enexpe:nsive[s e t  isn't it.]
25 ANN:                              [Where did she bu]:yth'm throu:gh.
26           Barker en[Stone(*house*).
27 JEN:              [Bahrker'n Stonehouse. Mm, .hh Fazil nevuh liked
28           the manager in theah though,[Faz'l[w'dnevuh[go in theah,]=
29 ANN:                                  [No:, [well he [h e ' s   a-]=
30 JEN:      =M-[hm,
31 ANN:         [No you see I tau:ght the little bo:y.
32 JEN:      Ye:s,=
33 ANN:      =En:: e-his (.) this: (.) the managuh marrie:d, .hh this
34           mothuh who already had a little bo:y.=
```

After Jenny mentions the manager of the furniture shop, Ann, at line 31, reports a little boy she used to teach. Here the manager and the little boy form a class relationship because it later turns out that the manager is the stepfather of the little boy (line 33-34), so that they are co-members of the same family. By talking about the stepson, Ann connects her turn to Jenny's, in which she mentions the stepfather. In terms of the five-step pattern for stepwise topic transition, Ann's pivotal utterance (step 4, line 31) is tied to Jenny's stabilization of the ancillary matter (step 3, line 27-28) through this stepfather-stepson relationship.

In example 6, step 2 (moving to ancillary matter) and step 3 (stabilizing the ancillary matter) are also connected to each other in the same way:

6a. [NB:IV:14]

```
08 Edn:      That's- that'll pay my go:lf,
09             (0.3)
10 Edn:      hhhhh get my hairdone once'n awhile but I won't go'n spend
11           f::five fifty en six bucks on my hair- hhh Gee it costs
12           a lottuh getcher hair fixed?
13 Oli:      Yeah gee I wore my wi:g.  ((snort!))
14 Edn:      Oh I betchu looked beau:ti//ful::.
15 Oli:      I uh:::-uh- uh I had it cut real short. Ih wz too much hair.=
```

```
16          =Yihknow. // (Looked-)
17 Edn:     Yeah, en we're get- I don't like it too long ez we get older.
```

In this example, after Edna moves to the ancillary matter about getting her hair done, Olive in the next turn responds to Edna's assessment 'Gee it costs a lottuh getcher hair fixed?' by mentioning her wig. Here Edna's hair and Olive's wig also have a class resemblance, and by talking about her wig, Olive connects her turn to Edna's and stabilizes the ancillary matter about hairstyling in a coherent way.

The three examples above illustrate how in stepwise topic transitions, connections between steps can be created by introducing co-class members. However, I have identified a variation of co-class membership. Instead of introducing co-class members (e.g., daffodils — snowdrops, stepfather — stepson, real hair — wig), participants can instead propose a superordinate item and move the prior talk to a more general level, or they can also talk about a subordinate item which is a specific member of an item mentioned previously. In doing so, participants are still able to connect one step to its prior via this super-subordinate class relationship. At pure lexical level, systematic functional linguistics has made some similar observations. According to Halliday and Hasan (19941976), there is cohesion between pair of lexical items that have some 'recognizable lexicosemantic relation' (p. 285), including hyperonyms and hyponyms, which echoes with the use of upper-lower class status phenomenon for terms. Returning to example 7 again, it is worth seeing how Mum's turn about daffodils is linked to the previous conversation:

7c. [Holt:l:8]

```
07 Mum:     Terrible weather fer this time a'the ye[a:r,]
08 Les:                                           [I kn]o:::w,
09          (0.3)
10 Les:     I [mean flowers are not coming out are the:y.
11 Mum:       [Mm:.
12 Mum:     ^No::. No:.
13            (O.7)
14 Mum:     Got couple of daffodils out in the ga:rden (   )
```

At line 10, Lesley affiliates with her mother's complaint about the terrible weather by commenting on the late growth of the flowers, and thus moving to an ancillary matter (step 2). In return, Mum first agrees with Lesley ('No::. No:.'), and after a pause, she nominates one specific category (i.e., hyponym) of flowers, daffodils, which links back to Lesley's turn by providing supporting evidence for her claim. By talking about a specific instance of flowers, Mum embarks on the first move to stabilize their discussion on the ancillary matter about flowers (step 3), which helps to disengage from their previous topic.

In this extract of example 8, the talk between Skip and Hal exhibits a reversed pattern:

8b. [Field: September-October 1988 (II): Side 1: Call 4]

```
20 Hal:     =But um: .hh I: I: no I-I mean it gay-[ih-it's amazing=
21 Ski:                                          [mkh-mghhhh
22 Hal:     =for a small[village they've got such a good- (0.2) ↑rail=
```

```
23 Ski:                    [.k
24 Hal:      =↓servi[ce.
25 Ski:              [.tl eYe:s, u we:[ll Kent is:: (.) you know=
26 Hal:                              [(      )
27 Ski:      =they're very busy cuz they o: (.) they(k) (.) ga:ll
28           tied up wi'th' Lond'n servi[ces  [.hhhhhh  [.hhhhhh
29 Hal:                                  [Yes I[spoze it's[quite a
30           computer sort of area.(         )
```

As also mentioned above, the practice that binds Skip and Hal's turns together in this extract is repetition. However, it is possible that super-subordinate class status relationship also contributes to the coherence of this excerpt. From line 20 to line 24, Hal summarizes his trip to Chilham and the satisfactory rail service in there (step 1). In reply, Skip talks about the rail service in Kent. In terms of geographical location, Chilham is a village of county Kent, so that Kent could be seen as a geographical upper-class term (i.e., superordinate or hyperonym) of Chilham. Moving from a small village to a county where the village belongs to, Skip's assessment about Kent encompasses Hal's earlier talk about Chilham while at the same time moving to an ancillary matter (step 2) about the rail service in Kent in general.

2.3   Summary of Stepwise Topic Transitions

In my discussion above about stepwise topic transition, I have mainly explored two questions. First of all, I have examined the five-step pattern for moving out of a troubles-telling (Jefferson, 1984) in a wider topical environment, where participants are moving between more general types of topics. I have found that stepwise topic transition between non-troublesome topics shares a similar pattern with transition out of troubles-tellings. Secondly, I have closely examined the specific steps for topic transition, and have identified two devices, linguistic cohesive devices and the class status phenomenon for terms, which are present at various stages of stepwise topic transition, enabling the seamless transition from one step to another. In doing so, I have extended earlier discussion on stepwise topic transition to wider topical contexts, and have provided a more in-depth exploration of the detailed techniques for doing stepwise topic transition.

In the next section, I am going to discuss another form of connected topic transition, where the new topic is touched-off by an item mentioned in the previous topic.

3   Touched-off topic transitions

In the course of a conversation, some item in the ongoing talk may provide the other speaker (or the same speaker) a source for remembering a related mentionable. Instead of responding to the immediate prior turn, the speaker introduces this mentionable that is disjunctive of the ongoing talk. In other words, touched-off topic transition is a way of introducing a new topic occasioned by prior talk in an abrupt way, or in Schegloff (2007), in a way that is "virtually unilateral" (p. 181). In contrast to disjunctive forms of topic transitions, the new topic introduced in a touched-off manner maintains an observable link to the preceding talk. Here is an example of touched-off topic transition:

9 [Rahman: I]

```
01 Ver:     An' then Jenny ah'll do it mahself ahftiwoods it's
02          a bit'v a: (fahpo:n) yih kno:[w,
03 Jen:                                   [Oh w'l=
04 Jen:     =ih[tih (y'll) be waiting fer- fer |her t' deci-
05 Ver:        [(goin up            cz she        )
06 Jen:     Wuh- what wz th' mahtt'r on ^Wednesday.
07               (0.3)
08 Ver:     Eh::::m,
09            (0.5)
10 Ver:     Well ah think it wz the wea^the:r yihkno:w, she didn like-
11          feel like goin in the weather yi[h know *real]ly[: (y'know)*
12 Jen:                                      [A o h : : :.]  [Oh I- e sh-
13          cuz she said she wouldn' be going if Jano wz going t'thaht
14          keep fit thing.
15 Ver:     uRight yeh .hh Oh I met Jano:, eh:::m yestihday en she'd
16          hahdda foh:rm from the Age Concehrn about thaht jo:b.h=
17 Jen:     =Oh=she=hahs?
18 Ver:     So: eh she wz sending the foh:rm bahck[the:n  you]  know]
19 Jen:                                           [Oh she di-]a OH:w']'l
20          thaht's goo:dah'm s- pleased she applie:d,
```

At the start of this example, Vera is telling Jenny that she didn't go to get her hair done and is explaining why she didn't: her friend who is supposed to go with her didn't feel like going on the planned day. In aligning with Vera's explanation, Jenny mentions the name of another mutual friend of theirs, Jano (line 13). The mention of Jano suddenly reminds Vera of an encounter with her the previous day, and she elaborates on it instead of continuing the previous topic.

From this example, we can observe some similarities and differences between touched-off topic transition and stepwise topic transition discussed in the previous section. Similar to stepwise topic transition, in touched-off topic transition, the speaker introduces a new topic by displaying its relevance to or connection with the previous talk. In the example above, Vera initiates the new topic by repeating the name 'Jano' that was first mentioned in the previous turn. However, touched-off topic transitions are also notably different from stepwise topic transition. First of all, the touched-off new topics are mostly placed immediately after the item in the previous turn that occasions the new topic, whereas in stepwise topic transition, the introduction of a new topic usually involves a five-step pattern (Jefferson, 1984) that occupies a long sequence. Secondly, while in stepwise topic transition the new topics are introduced in a seamless, imperceptible way, in touched-off topic transitions the new topics are initiated with disjunctive prefaces that highlight their departure from the previous conversation. Of course, the introduction of new and disjunctive topics potentially compromises conversational coherence; acknowledging in this way that a topic being introduced is disjunctive, and accounting for its introduction through it's being 'touched off', is a means by which speakers display their orientation to topical cohesion as normative. Disjunct markers and prefaces are the visible signs of an orientation to the normativity of topical coherence.

In this section, I will examine touched-off topic transitions in detail, focusing on three of their features. First, I will discuss the range of disjunct markers (Jefferson, 1978) that preface a touched-off new topic. Then, I will explore the sequential environment for touched-off topic transition. Lastly, I will give an account of how the connection between the touched-off new topics and the preceding talk is displayed or established.

3.1   The use of disjunctive markers

In conversation, participants are normatively obliged (Sacks, 1987; Heritage, 2013) to design their turns as emerging from and responsive to the immediately preceding context. This is the notion of 'nextness' in conversation, which is central to the ways in which talk in interaction is organized and understood (Schegloff, 2007, p. 14). However, on many occasions next turns often bear little relation to preceding turns, and therefore participants may display that their next turns are non-contiguous (Bolden, 2015) to what has been going on before (Heritage, 2013; Wu, 2014). Touched-off topic transition is one such occasion, and the topic-initial turns are characterised by the use of various turn-initial disjunct markers (Jefferson, 1978).

Previous research into touched-off topic transition has discussed some typical disjunct markers for touched-off telling, such as 'by the way' (Sacks, 1992a, p. 751), 'incidentally' (Jefferson, 1978, p. 221) and 'before I forget' (Crow, 1983, p. 142), etc. However, I have found that these disjunct markers are not common. Although occasionally new topics are prefaced by 'by the way', they are not necessarily touched-off by previous turns. For example, in the example below, the telling prefaced by 'by the way' is not occasioned by the previous context.

10 [Holt:1988 Undated: Side 2: Call 2]

```
01 Les:     That's righ[t.h Oh we did it- (0.2) Oh A Level year we=
02 Kev:                 [(           )
03 Les:     =made no plans,hh
04 Kev:     An:d eh:: (.) we'll think about something round about
05          um (0.3) eh: September'r October time when
06              (0.6)
07 Les:     hoo-[Yes. whhe
08 Kev:         [(      blee:) uh (0.9) uh[(                )
09 Les:                                   [You know what yer doing.h
10          That's ↑what ↓we did. We (.) we went away in October
11          last year when Gordon .hhh had taken iz A Levels,hh
12              (0.3)
13 Kev:     Ye:s. Well th-that-that's what we've got in  m[ind.
14 Les:                                                   [hhhra:ss.
15 Les:     Ye:s. Very nice.hhh Ah[hah
16 Kev:                           [(     )- ↑one thing by the wa:y,
17              (0.2)
18 Kev:     uh, we thought abou:t you: on: uh- (0.3) uh: (1.3)
19          Mon↓day I think↓ it was,
20              (0.3)
21 Kev:     Uh:m we went out tuh lunch.
22              (0.2)
23 Les:     hYes,
24              (0.6)
25 Kev:     En we went tuh Bankum.
```

As we join this example, Lesley and Kevin are discussing their family plans. Specifically, they both agree that they should not make any big plans while the children are preparing for their A-level exams. At line 16, Kevin raises a new topic with the preface 'by the way' — that he and his wife have been to a pub for lunch and had thought about Lesley. When examining this excerpt retrospectively, there is hardly any observable topical relation between the two topics. In other words, although the new topic about going to a particular pub for lunch is a sudden remembering (Jefferson, 1978, p. 23) by Kevin, it is not touched-off or occasioned by the preceding conversation. In fact, many topic-initial turns prefaced by 'by the way' have this feature, registering a sudden and unconnected recalling. (It is notable in this respect, and in view of its comparative rarity in my data, it is suggested that 'by the way' is the prototypical device for initiating abrupt changes to 'noncoherent' topics, in a recent study of conversations with people with aphasia (Leaman & Edmonds, 2019).

In this section, I will give a summary of the disjunct markers for touched-off topic transition, which are more common than the ones discussed above. They can roughly be classified into three types. The first type is interjections such as 'oh', 'you know', which index a change in the speaker's awareness (Heritage, 1998, 2002; Bolden, 2006), and preface a my-side telling or a self-attentive new topic (Bolden, 2006; Heritage, 2015). The second type is exclamatory words such as 'gee', 'god', 'hey'. In contrast to normal interjections such as "oh" and "you know", they also express a certain emotional stance towards the new topic. The third type is the expression 'it's funny that…', which conveys a sense of coincidence between the new topic and the previous talk. Now I'm going to discuss these disjunct markers in detail.

A distinctive feature of touched-off topic transitions is the sense of suddenness in the introduction of the new topics. That is, they are introduced as if it has just now occurred to the speaker (Bolden, 2006, p. 663). Turn-initial 'oh' and 'you know' serve this function. '*Oh*' is a classic change-of-state token (Heritage, 1984a, 1998, 2002), and when used at turn-initial position, it can register a noticing so that the other speaker is alerted to incoming new information that may be disjunctive with their previous talk. Turn-initial 'you know' functions to create a focus on the information it projects (Fuller, 2003), enhancing the salience of the mentionable it frames (He & Lindsey, 1998). Below are several examples of touched-off topic transitions prefaced by 'oh' or 'you know'.

9a [Rahman: I]

```
10 Ver:     Well ah think it wz the wea^the:r yihkno:w, she didn like-
11          feel like goin in the weather yi[h know *real]ly[: (y'know)*
12 Jen:                                   [A o h : : :.]  [Oh I- e sh-
13          cuz she said she wouldn' be going if Jano wz going t'thaht
14          keep fit thing.
15 Ver:     uRight yeh .hh Oh I met Jano:, eh:::m yestihday en she'd
16          hahdda foh:rm from the Age Concehrn about thaht jo:b.h=
```

In line 13, Jenny mentions Jano by name, which reminds Vera of a previous encounter with her. Using an 'oh' preface, Vera displays a shift in her attention from Jenny's previous turn and topics to the new mentionable that she is going to talk about.

A turn-initial 'oh' prefaces touched-off topic transition in example 11 also.

11 [Holt:1:1]

```
01 Mum:     Hm:. Oka:y then love,
02                 (.)
03 Les:     Alright w'yuh don't think Ann w'd (0.3) mi:nd if I drop a
04          hint thet we really don't want any mo:re
05                 (1.0)
06 Mum:     No::.
07                 (0.2)
08 Mum:     No I don't think she'd be upset about it,
09 Les:     No.=
10 Mum:     =Cz what's the good'v sending'em if they're not gon'be
11           wo:rn.
12 Les:     That's ri:ght. Well they jus'stay in the cupboard.
13 Mum:     That's ri:ght.
14 Les:     Yup=
15 Mum:     =(I might even tell'er) they're useless,
16 Les:     Yeh.
17                 (.)
18 Les:     Okay then,
19 Mum:     (   )! Oh you know that Indian: skirt you sent me thet I
20          never wo:re,
21 Les:     =Ye:s?
```

In this example, Lesley is complaining about the T-shirts that her relative Ann always sends to her children as Christmas gifts, because they do not like them. She closes by asking Mum for advice about whether she might 'drop a hint' to Ann not to send her T-shirts anymore. Their discussion about T-shirts reminds Mum of an old Indian skirt that she never wears, and this sudden remembering is highlighted by the turn-initial 'oh you know' at line 19.

In the next example, the new topic is prefaced by 'you know', which projects a 'my-side' telling.

12 [NB:IV:14]

```
01 Edn:     I read that Julia Mead yesterday in the paper boy she wrote
02          a beautiful article, did you read her article on uh? ((sniff))
03 Oli:     No:. Whu:. Uh:.  In the Time//s (     ),
04 Edn:     Yea:uh.
05 Edn:     Ih wz- Oh ih wz beauty hints. En, and uh-h-h hhhhh uh how tuh
06          relieve yerself a tensions 'n all this bit, really it's just
07          beautiful article.
08          (0.2)
09 Edn:     Do // you have yesterdays' Times,
10 Oli:     hhhh
11 Oli:     No I gave it to Emm//a.
12 Edn:     Oh,
13 Oli:     Eyea://h,
14 Edn:     r:Really a good- y'know she usetuh be on that TV program
15          with uh.
16 Oli:     hhhh Y'know who I saw the other day on:: Mike- Douglas show
17          wz uh:: hh not- A:bbey, uh Dear Abbey but ther-uh:: her sister.
18 Edn:     Ann Landers?
19 Oli:     Uh huh,
20 Edn:     Oh they're- they're twins aren't they, ((sni//ff))
21 Oli:     Are they?
```

```
22 Edn:      Yea:h.  ((sni//ff))
23 Oli:      She is the mos' beautiful person I have ever laid my eyes on.
24 Edn:      Is she rea//lly,
25 Oli:      hhhh Oh:: God she came out there even Mike.=I think that's a
26           most // beautiful pro//gram,
```

Here Edna is talking about an article she read in the newspaper, and how helpful she finds it. At line 14, she mentions that the author of this article, Julia Mead, used to be on a TV program. It is the mentioning of a TV program that touches off Olive's memory about a newsworthy telling — that she saw someone (Ann Landers) on another TV program and thought that she is the most beautiful person she ever sees. Here Olive's telling about Ann Landers is prefaced by her self-interjective 'you know', with which she prefaces the new topic which is currently in Olive's knowledge and serves to present this new topic to Edna.

While disjunctive markers like 'oh' and 'you know' can appear alone, they can also be used together with other expressions for introducing a touched-off new topic.

13 [NB:IV:10:R]

```
01 Emm:      .hhh W'l HONEY I'M GLA::Dju hadda byoo I ↑THOUGHT
02           ABOUTchu'nI m:ISSTCHU: but I been r*i-u (.) I've RILLY
03           hadda very ni:ce time Sundee wz kahnd'v a lo:ng da:y but
04           uh.hmhh[hh
05 Lot:             [Ye:a[:h
06 Emm:                  [.huhh I:'M use tih evrything no:w'n
07               (0.6)
08 Emm:      °I['m° brayh]hh
09 Lot:        [°Ye:ah,° ]
10               (0.2)
11 Emm:      I dmy toenails er fallin'[ahff ah[don'°nu°]
12 Lot:                              [.t    [O  h : ]waita minute.
13           Dat's I'm gladju me:ntion'tha:t.Yihknow A;deline ha:d her:
14           nai:l taken o:ff like you hadjer  (.) toenail[taken o]:ff=
15 Emm:                                                  [ Ye:ah ]
16 Lot:      =en nit jist abah:t killed'er yihknow[she near]ly die:d=
17 Emm:                                           [ Ye:uh, ]
18 Lot:      =a thous'n times'n I'z tellin'er abah:t you:.
```

Emma has had a quarrel with her husband Bud and as a result, Bud had walked on her, leaving her alone in their beach house. In this excerpt, Emma expresses that although living alone, she still tries to get used to things and enjoy her staying by herself. At line 11, she mentions some problems with her toenails, and it suddenly reminds Lottie, her sister, of similar toenail problems that their friend Adeline has got. In an overlap with Emma's ongoing turn, Lottie introduces this new telling. She first produces an 'oh' preface, registering a sudden remembering. Then with the expression 'wait a minute', she explicitly proposes to discontinue the topic direction so far. In addition, she also directly points out the connection between Emma's previous telling to what she will talk about next ('Dat's I'm gladju me:ntion'tha:t'). The turn-initial 'oh', combined with the other components, highlights the disjunctive nature of Lottie's touched-off.

The topic-initial utterance in the next example displays a similar combination of disjunctive markers.

14 [NB:IV:10:R]

```
01 Emm:      DidjuWEAR YER ↑WI::G?
02 Lot:      .h ↑YE:[A H .]
03 Emm:           [Is it]beautuhful?
04 Lot:      .hh Go:d Emma it's jhghis go:rgeou[s.
05 Emm:                                        [°Oh: I'm ha:ppy L*ottie°
06           When didju get ↑tha*:t.
07 Lot:      Uh Gladdee gave it to me: Sundee night before I le:f'.
08 Emm:      .hhuhhhh (.) Oh wul weh-uh no:w duh: didju HAVE a hard trip
09           goin up there Sundee? That Sunee Anna Canyon's kahna ba:d=
10 Lot:      =[.hh
11 Emm:      =[isn'it[with ahll those li:ghts.=
12 Lot:             [hh
13 Lot:      =I: dint yihknow I wz thinkin I thik (.) God I'm crazy tih
14           go et night yihknow by my[s:-elf en the]n I I
15 Emm:                               [M  m    h m : ]
16               (0.2)
17 Lot:      Then I we:nt yihknow[en]God  I be]t I din pa:ss two cars=
18 Emm:                          [I ]kno:w it,]
19 Lot:      =on the road'n so .hhh *e-uh::: (.) uh Mister Billings lig.
```

Prior to this extract, Lottie is describing the weekend that she spent with her friend Adeline: they have been to Palm Springs, and have been shopping there at Bullock's. At the start of this example, Lottie mentions a wig that Adeline gave to her before she left on Sunday evening. Her mentioning Sunday generates Emma's enquiry about the traffic condition around Anna Canyon, and Emma initiates her enquiry in a touched-off manner (line 8). She produces an 'oh' which indexes a sudden remembering, and then a repeated 'well' preface which often prefaces a 'my-side' telling (Heritage, 2015). After a short hesitation, she produces another preface — 'now', which serves as a transition marker and changes the direction away from the previous topic direction (Stenström, 1994; Aijmer, 2002), and finally initiates the new topic about the traffic condition on Sunday night.

The second type of disjunct markers for touched-off topic transitions is interjections, such as 'God, 'Gee', 'Hey', etc. Similar to 'oh', these interjections also index a noticing or a sudden remembering of a mentionable. But in addition, some interjections have an inherited emotive import in them, which are related to the expression of feelings (Ameka, 1992; Goddard, 2014). In examples of touched-off topic transitions, some topic-initial turns are prefaced by such emotive interjections (Goddard, 2014).

15 [NB II:1:R]

```
01 Emm:      So:: anywayay .hh I: thou:ght she always likes tuh go do
02           somethi:ng °en: I thought may'wec'd go [sh:o:ppin'° =
03 Lot:                                             [wgl
```

```
04 Emm:      =°e[r do sump'n,°
05 Lot:        [ml
06 Lot:      u-h Ohye:ah. Gee the May Comp'ny er sure havin a big
07           sale,
08 Emm:      °Are the:y?°
09           (0.2)
10 Lot:      .hhYe:ah:. Yihknow ther forty fifth annavers'ry.
11 Emm:      °Yehah'd like tih get s'm beds- (.) new bedspreads°
12           well people'rcom'n in nex' (.) Sa:turdee en I hope tuh:
13           goodness it's good weather.
14            (0.5)
15 Lot:      Oh: ya:h they ha:ve (0.2) beau:tiful bed spreads
16           up there.
```

In this example, Emma is describing the difficulty she experienced trying to call her friend Nancy: there might be some problem with the telephone signal. In line 01, Emma explains the reason to call Nancy ('I: thou:ght she always likes tuh go do somethi:ng °en: I thought may'wec'd go sh:o:ppin'). The word 'shopping' in her turn prompted Lottie to think about the sale in the May Company — a department store. In line 06, Lottie introduces this touched-off topic in a way that gives it a sense of excitement. The topic-initial 'Gee', which expresses surprise, highlights the newsworthiness of the new topic and portrays the sale at the May Company as something to be excited about. As it turns out, Emma also receives this piece of news as newsworthy (line 08), going on to talk about what she would like to get from there (lines 11-13).

Example 16 is a similar example of interjections:

16 [NB:IV:10:R]

```
01 Lot:      No: I know A:deline go:t one she took it outta the (.) f-uh:
02              freezer duhda:y it (.) e-has that po:p up thing w'n it'do*:ne.
03 Emm:      °Mm: hm:,°
04                (.)
05 Lot:      They[got it]down et Al:pha Beta .hh↑Go:d down in I:ndio=
06 Emm:          [°Duh°]
07 Lot:      =that place is really bui:ld u:[p yihknow]
08 Emm:                                     [°Mm:hm°hm]::.
09                (0.3)
10 Lot:      u-Oh they got S:ea:rs 'n: (.) yihkno[w
11 Emm:                                          [°Isn'° that
12            beautif'l=
13 Emm:      =['n thet]
14 Lot:      =[Oh:(g) ]
15                (.)
16 Emm:      [pretty] m o]tel]
17 Lot:      [↑Ghod ]that]pla]ce
18                (.)
19 Lot:      .hhAh'm goin down there'n (0.2) pro:bly in a (.) 'n:other
20           coupla weeks. Uh maybe I jis go do:wn en:d gi-uh get a place
21           'n:d sta:y (.) yihknow a coupla da:ys,
```

At the start of this extract, Lottie is describing the turkey ('it' at line 1) that her friend Adeline has bought. In line 05, she mentions the places where the turkey was bought, Alpha Beta. Instead of continuing the talk about turkey, Alpha Beta reminds Lottie about some new mentionable, which is about the recent development of Indio, a city in California where Alpha Beta is located. Similar to the previous example, here Lottie's telling is also prefaced by an emotive interjection 'god', which adds a sense of surprise or excitement about the discovery of the recent development in Indio.

Again, in example 17, topic-initial utterance is prefaced by an interjection:

17 [NB:IV:10:R]

```
01 Lot:      Well you have tha:t'n she said fer you tuh use this o:n the
02           (.) on: yer::uh psoriasis. 'n see if it mi:ght
03           he[:lp ut.]h
04 Emm:        [°M m :°]°°hm:°°
05                  (0.4)
06 Emm:      .t.hhehhh Ah:'ll get that. v:VI-a-f::oam[::.u]
07 Lot:                                             [vee:]:-eye:- oh::,
08 Emm:      f-o-r-[m:. ]
09 Lot:           [*e-:]iYe:ah.
10                  (0.2)
11 Emm:      [.hh
12 Lot:      [Ye:ah.
13 Emm:      I ha[ftuh WR]ITE evrything DOWN becuz I: k-e-my memry is=
14 Lot:          [°Ye:h.°]
15 Emm:      =getting (.) kahna bla:nk.h Eff VI:↑aform-
16 Emm:      =Ah'll>g[ed id up<.h]hhh Hey ↑Gunderson the druggis'↑lives=
17 Lot:              [Ye : : a h.]
18 Emm:      =right down't the ↑corner across the ↑street from me. Ah
19           lea:rned about more el ↑people ↑down he:re,
20                  (0.5)
21 Lot:      Ye:ah.
22                  (.)
23 Emm:      Yih know the hou:se un the corner wer they built th'
24           beautiful new hou:se nex'doo:r?
25 Lot:      ↑Oh ↑ye: ↑ah.
26 Emm:      .hhhh.hh (0.4) Well he ↑sold ↑that lo:(.)t u-uh MARgy knows
27           all these peop*le (.) e-a[nd uh]:
28 Lot:                              [Yeah,]
29                  (1.0)
30 Emm:      Uh: that's wer he lives. in that (.) nice home there on the
31           corner aCROSS fr'm *uh (0.2) yihkno:w at thih a(.)CROSS f'm
32           weh-wer the ↑PINK hou:se is.=
```

As we join this example, Lottie is recommending an ointment, viaform, which might cure Emma's psoriasis. At line 16, Emma starts out by saying that she would get viaform from the drugstore. However, before she completes her TCU 'Ah'll>ged id up the drugstore', she is reminded of Gunderson — a druggist working in the drugstore, about whom she has a piece of news to tell. Here, she stops prior to the completion of the unit, and restarts her turn 'Hey

↑<u>Gun</u>derson the <u>drug</u>gis'lives right down't the <u>cor</u>ner across the str<u>ee</u>t from me.' Her new topic-initial turn is again prefaced by an interjection 'hey', which register a sudden remembering of something. Together with the distinctive rising intonation, Emma portrays the information she tells Lottie as something interesting and newsworthy to talk about.

The third type of disjunct marker for touched-off topic transitions is the expression "it's funny that' or 'isn't it funny that'. While disjunct markers like 'oh' and interjections serve to discontinue the current topic direction, 'it's funny that' usually prefaces a telling that is a further development of the current topic, though from a new focus or perspective. In other words, new topics prefaced by 'oh' or interjections are entirely disjunctive of the previous talk, but those prefaced by 'it's funny that' are less disjunctive and are heard more as a focus shift of the same topic. This resembles what Drew & Holt (1998) describe as 'touched-off topical development'; where a speaker finds in the previous talk some opportunity to develop the current topic by shifting the focus or reference. Here are two examples of such touched-off topic developments prefaced by 'its' funny that' or 'isn't it funny that'.

18 [NB:IV:3:R]

```
04 Emm:      .hh See I gotta (.) figure sump'n tuh kuh:: coordinate WELL
05           AAH'LL LEAVE IT go Lottie I think yih got the best buy'v
06           the whole village.
07             (0.7)
08 Lot:      Oh I lo:ve that blue one,
09             (0.9)
10 Emm:      eeYa:h  but then ah have nothing tih ↑wear I haven' (.)
11           blue: shoe:s uh (0.4)  .hhh  ah gotta ged theh I got so
12           damn m'ny shoes I'm not wearin ↑no:w.thet uh: (0.3) .hhhh I
13           ↑could al:most wea:r puu- uh:: dubuhnay with that blue:.
14           couldn' ah I've s'm blu-u-dubuhna:y::
15             (.)
16 Lot:      Ye:ah.
17 Emm:      S::ue:de th*ou:gh,
18             (0.4)
19 Lot:      No tha'wouldn be to[o  good,]
20 Emm:                         [° N*a:h°]
21             (0.2)
22 Emm:      .hh AH'LL TALK ABOUT IT LATER,
23 Lot:      W'l you kno:w I wz juh I wz Isn'at funny I wz js think'n
24           aBAH:T it (.) uh:: (.) I LI:KE uh I'm jis gonna getta
25           cheap pair en then I'm gonna take'em up (.) tuh Anthony's
26           'n dye'm because they dye a(b) uh:(b) (.) nthe(b) (0.2)
27 Lot:      perfect ma::t[ch.
28 Emm:                   [Do they,
29             (0.2)
30 Lot:      Ye:ah,
31 Emm:      Uh huh:,
32 Lot:      I mean somedimes yuh buy'em et these places I (.) bought
33           o:ne pair en they jis (.) didn come out'n I hadtih have'm
34           redye:d agai:n.
```

At the start of this extract, Emma is making a mild complaint about her difficulty in matching her clothes with her dress, because they are different colours. It reminds Lottie of her thoughts about dying her shoes to other colours. Lottie's touched-off thoughts can be seen as a further

development of their talk about matching clothes with shoes because it offers a possible solution to Emma's difficulty. At line 23, Lottie prefaces her turn with 'well you know', which projects a 'my-side' telling of hers. Then she tries to connect her following thoughts to Emma's previous talk by saying 'I was just thinking about it'. However, she abandons it twice, and inserted the expression 'isn't that funny' before she fully produces 'I wz js think'n aBAH:T it'. The insertion of 'isn't that funny' delivers a sense of coincidence between the previous talk and what will be introduced later, conveying something like 'it's interesting that you complained about the colour of your shoes because I have just thought about dying them'. In this way, the insertion of 'isn't that funny' provides a warrant for the introduction of the touched-off new telling; such adjustment reflects Lottie's orientation to the normative feature for introducing a touched-off next topic. (Drew, 2013, p. 133-134).

Similarly, 'it's funny that' also prefaces a touched-off topical development in the following example. At the start of the excerpt, Margy, who has hosted a luncheon party, was explaining to Edna why she was not able to stay with her guest for a long time. It turns out that Margy had to help her husband during the party.

19 [NB:VII Power Tools]

```
01 Mar:     =I:: s-I: be-I knew I hedtuh be away fm the table a lot b't-
02          .hhh wir all frie:nds'n you guy[s  didn't  ca]:re,=
03 Edn:                                    [That's ri:ght]
04 Mar:     =En uh-.h-.h it's jis stuff I haftuh do fer [° Larry,]
05 Edn:                                                 [°Ye::ah.]
06 Edn:     I [know en y[er do] in real good ar[ntche.]
07 Mar:       [.t.hhh   [E : n]                [I:']m jis:so delighted I
08           cn  do it E[dna cz] if:I didn'do it we'd haft[uh hire it] do:ne,
09 Edn:                 [.hhhhh]                          [Wih y'know]
10 Edn:     i-yihknow it's funny uh:: uh Bud played et San Mar-av yih
11          gotta minute?=
12 Mar:     =Su::re.] °Mm  h m,
13 Edn:     .hhh B't anyway we played golf et San or Bud played et San
14          Ma:rcus so I went down with'im yihknow that's back'v Ensk-
15          (.)
16 Edn:     E[sc'ndi]do [so,]
17 Mar:      [Ye:ah.]   [M h]m,
                (13 lines omitted)
31 Edn:     .hhh Al Turner I wz with his wi:fe cz theyt hadda motel down
32          there over the weeke:nd[en::d I: s]saw her=
33 Mar:                            [°(Uh: uh.)]
34 Edn:     =en I visitid with her a li'l bit so fin'lly Al came in fr'm
35          playing go::lf en oh we got tuh- talking how's the beach'n
36          evrything I z'oh fine I s'd-.hhhhh Ged I have the most
37          wonderful neighbors down the street- frie::nds'n.hhhhhh O
38           said you no probly kno:w Larry Fridee 'e sz oh: a'course I do.
39 Mar:     i[y-yehh]
40 Edn:     [°En  I] s- 'e sz how's'e doin:g. End I sz° e-he is doing
41          fa:ntastic.
43          (.)
44 Edn:     Yihknow (I)-
45 Mar:     e[Yeah.]
```

```
46 Edn:      [I  we] h- I  jis put't on thi:ck.=
```

Mary's reference to her husband Larry suddenly reminds Edna of how she previously met a mutual friend of theirs (Al Turner), and how she spoke well of Larry in from of him ('I sz° e-he is doing fa:ntastic.'). At line 10, Edna embarks on her telling with a preface 'you know it's funny'. Here 'it's funny' again highlights the coincidental link between Margy's previous mention of her husband and Edna's new telling, displaying Edna's incoming telling as touched-off by what Margy has talked about before. Similar to the previous example, here Edna's talk about her speaking well of Larry further develops Margy's previous mention of him, which alludes to Larry's busy career.

I have discussed various turn-initial disjunct markers that are widely used in touched-off topic transitions. To sum up, they can be divided into three types. Interjections such as 'oh', 'well' and 'you know' halt the topic-so-far and alert the recipient to a change of topical direction. Interjections such as 'God' 'Hey' and 'Gee' bring a certain emotive import to the new topics to be introduced. Finally, expressions such as 'it's funny that' often preface a touched-off topical development, which expands the current topic by a shift in reference or focus.

Having described the disjunct markers that are essential for touched-off topic transitions, I will examine the sequential environment in which touched-off topic transition occurs.

3.2   The environment for touched-off topic transitions.

By examining the sequential environment for touched-off topic transition, a recurrent pattern emerges: many examples of touched-off topic transitions discussed before occur in a context in which the previous topics seem to be winding down. In other words, touched-off topic transitions are frequently associated with topic-terminal sequences.

In some examples, the termination of the ongoing topic is made explicit by the participants prior to the introduction of the touched-off new topic:

18a [NB:IV:3:R]

```
04 Emm:      .hh See I gotta (.) figure sump'n tuh kuh:: coordinate WELL
05           AAH'LL LEAVE IT go Lottie I think yih got the best buy'v
06           the whole village.
07           (0.7)
08 Lot:      Oh I lo:ve that blue one,
09            (0.9)
10 Emm:      eeYa:h  but then ah have nothing tih ↑wear I haven' (.)
11           blue: shoe:s uh (0.4)  .hhh  ah gotta ged theh I got so
12           damn m'ny shoes I'm not wearin ↑no:w.thet uh: (0.3) .hhhh I
13                   ↑could al:most wea:r puu- uh:: dubuhnay with that blue:.
14           couldn' ah I've s'm blu-u-dubuhna:y::
15           (.)
16 Lot:      Ye:ah.
17 Emm:      S::ue:de th*ou:gh,
18           (0.4)
```

```
19 Lot:      No tha'wouldn be to[o  good,]
20 Emm:                         [° N*a:h°]
21           (0.2)
22 Emm:      .hh AH'LL TALK ABOUT IT LATER,
23 Lot:      W'l you kno:w I wz juh I wz Isn'at funny I wz js think'n
24           aBAH:T it (.) uh:: (.) I LI:KE uh I'm jis gonna getta
25           cheap pair en then I'm gonna take'em up (.) tuh Anthony's
26           'n dye'm because they dye a(b) uh:(b) (.) nthe(b) (0.2)
27 Lot:      perfect ma::tch.
```

As discussed earlier, in this example Emma is talking about her problem of finding the perfect match for her shoes and clothes. Beginning from line 15, their talk about this problem seems to be exhausted, reflected in the gaps between turns (line 15, line 18 and line 21), the participants' minimal responses (line 16, line 20) and the reduced volume of the brief agreement (line 20)– all indicators of topic atrophy. However, it is Emma's 'topic-bounding' (Schegloff & Sacks, 1973, p. 82) turn at line 22 that explicitly brings a close to the current topic. By saying, with increased amplitude, 'AH'LL TALK ABOUT IT LATER,' Emma straightforwardly proposes to bring an end to the discussion about her problem with her shoes and clothes. It is after this topic-closing turn that Lottie embarks on the talk that is touched-off by their previous discussion.

Example 11a exhibits a similar sequential environment:

11a [Holt:1:1]

```
01 Mum:      Hm:. Oka:y then love,
02                (.)
03 Les:      Alright w'yuh don't think Ann w'd (0.3) mi:nd if I drop a
04 Les:      hint thet we really don't want any mo:re
05                (1.0)
06 Mum:      No::.
07                (0.2)
08 Mum:      No I don't think she'd be upset about it,
09 Les:      No.=
10 Mum:      =Cz what's the good'v sending'em if they're not gon'be
11           wo:rn.
12 Les:      That's ri:ght. Well they jus'stay in the cupboard.
13 Mum:      That's ri:ght.
14 Les:      Yup=
15 Mum:      =(I might even tell'er) they're useless,
16 Les:      Yeh.
17                (.)
18 Les:      Okay then,
19 Mum:      (    )! Oh you know that Indian: skirt you sent me thet I
20           never wo:re,
```

After talking about whether she should ask Ann not to send more T-shirts, Lesley initiates the first part of a pre-closing (Schegloff & Sacks, 1973), suggesting the termination of the on-going topic (line 18). By saying 'Okay then', Lesley explicitly displays that she has nothing more to contribute to the current topic, and inviting her mother to collaboratively moving into closing (Schegloff & Sacks, 1973; Beach, 1995). However, at this moment Mum is reminded of some mentionable — the Indian skirt she never wears — and introduces this matter as a new topic (lines 19-20).

In the two examples discussed above, the termination of the ongoing topic is explicitly proposed by one participant, in other cases, however, topic closure is only implied through participants' dwindling contributions to the current topic turn by turn.

13a [NB:IV:10:R]

```
01 Emm:     .hhh W'l HONEY I'M GLA::Dju hadda byoo I ↑THOUGHT
02          ABOUTchu'nI m:ISSTCHU: but I been r*i-u (.) I've RILLY
03          hadda very ni:ce time Sundee wz kahnd'v a lo:ng da:y but
04          uh.hmhh[hh
05 Lot:           [Ye:a[:h
06 Emm:               [.huhh I:'M use tih evrything no:w'n
07               (0.6)
08 Emm:     °I['m° brayh]hh
09 Lot:      [°Ye:ah,° ]
10               (0.2)
11 Emm:     I dmy toenails er fallin'[ahff ah[don'°nu°]
12 Lot:                             [.t    [O h : ]waita minute.
13          Dat's I'm gladju me:ntion'tha:t.Yihknow A;deline ha:d her:
14          nai:l taken o:ff like you hadjer  (.) toenail taken o:ff=
```

In example 13a, we can see that the talk prior to touched-off transition at line 12 has a strong tendency towards exhaustion. At the start of this extract, Emma is expressing in an enthusiastic way how she misses her sister Lottie, reflected in the raised volume of her speech, and emphasizing what a nice time she had on Sunday ('I've RILLY hadda very ni:ce time Sundee'). However, instead of elaborating on her nice time, she only produces a flat summary of her current status — that she is used to everything now. Her summary has a complainable character, because by saying 'I:'M use tih evrything no:w ', Emma may be alluding to the previous quarrel with her husband, who walked out on her, and to the fact that she is living alone. However, Lottie does not immediately affiliate with Emma, leaving a substantial silence at line 07. It is only at line 09 that she produces a brief acknowledgement of Emma's complaint, in overlap with Emma's turn at line 08 which is even more minimal. From line 01 to line 10, Emma's contribution to the conversation is diminishing turn by turn, and Lottie's response has been non-affiliative. Both Emma and Lottie's turns and actions create an environment for topic atrophy. After a short silence (line 10), Emma reports incidentally another complainable matter — that her toenails are falling off. However, instead of affiliating sympathetically to Emma, Lottie initiates a new topic that is touched-off by Emma's toenail problem, which further moves away from the previous talk.

Example 15a also exhibits a sequential environment that is topic-closing implicative. Below is an excerpt prior to touched-off topic transition:

15a [NB II:1:R] (expansion of example 16)

```
01 Emm:     Well I jis tried tih getta ca:ll through ah wz gunnuh
02          call Nancy: uh Ja:mes she's (0.2) been comin do:wn here
```

```
03            once in awhi:le en I: can't get her number so I thou:ght
04            (0.2) .hh ah'll call you ah didn'know whether: (.) uhb
05            uh wz my ↑telephone wz funny. I couldn't uh:   .hh I
06            gotta busy si:gn all th'ti:me. So,
07             (0.2)
08 Lot:      From he:r?
09 Emm:      .hh ng-Uh tried tuh get her number then it's: uh busy.
10            (.)
11 Emm:      E[n I hang up'n then it's busy when I pick it u:p.=
12 Lot:       [M-
13 Emm:      =Ah don'know whether'r phone's bih- (.) di:s-c'nnected'r
14           not they'd tell me I'm su:re.
15               (0.7)
16 Emm:      So I trie:d you I thought well now maybe I c'n get
17            Lottie a:nd uh (0.3) by gosh I go:tchu.
18           (0.2)
19 Lot:      Y[e :]ah.
20 Emm:       [B't]
21            (.)
22 Lot:      eh [heh] Yeah yo(h)u ↑di:d.
23 Emm:         [So:]
24 Lot:      [ehhh
25 Emm:      [Y(h) ↑EAH [heh heh heh]
26 Lot:               [huh huh huh] hu- [uh hu:h
27 Emm:                                 [.hhhh
28 Emm:      So:: anywayay .hh I: thou:ght she always likes tuh go do
29           somethi:ng °en: I thought may'we c'd go [sh:o:ppin'° =
30 Lot:                                              [wgl
31 Emm:      =°e[r do sump'n,°
32 Lot:         [ml
33 Lot:      u-hOh ye:ah. Gee the May Comp'ny er sure havin a big
34            sale,
```

Here Emma is explaining how she came to call Lottie. It turns out that Emma at first wishes to call her friend Nancy, but her phone call would not go through. Therefore, she tries to call Lottie in order to double-check if her telephone is working. After Emma completes her telling, Lottie only responds to it in a brief way. After a gap (line 18), she merely produces a short acknowledgement ('Ye:ah.'), which is followed by a brief repetition of her prior acknowledgement ('eh heh Yeah yo(h)u ↑di:d.'). In addition, there are several laugh particles in her turn at line 22, which may serve as an invitation to Emma to laugh together (Holt, 2010). As a result, starting from line 24, Lottie and Emma are engaged in shared laughter, which winds down into Emma's in-breaths at line 27. This joint laughter, together with the completion of Emma's storytelling (line 17), as well as Lottie's minimal response, may display participants' orientation to the ongoing topic as possibly exhausted. It is at time point that Emma resumes her story-telling, and provides an ancillary detail of why she wishes to call Nancy ('I: thou:ght she always likes tuh go do somethi:ng ° en: I thought may'we c'd go sh:o:ppin'), which touched-off a new topic introduced by Lottie.

A similar pattern occurs in example 12a.

12a [NB:IV:14]

```
01 Edn:     I read that Julia Mead yesterday in the paper boy she wrote a
02          beautiful article, did you read her article on uh? ((sniff))
```

```
03 Oli:    No:. Whu:. Uh:.  In the Times (     ),
04 Edn:    Yea:uh.
05 Edn:    Ih wz- Oh ih wz beauty hints. En, and uh-h-h hhhhh uh how tuh
06         relieve yerself a tensions 'n all this bit, really it's just a
07         beautiful article.
08         (0.2)
09 Edn:    Do you have yesterdays' Times,
10 Oli:    hhhh
11 Oli:    No I gave it to Emma.
12 Edn:    Oh,
13 Oli:    Eyea:h,
14 Edn:    r:Really a good- y'know she usetuh be on that TV program
15         with uh.
16 Oli:    hhhh Y'know who I saw the other day on:: Mike- Douglas show
17         wz uh:: hh not- A:bbey, uh Dear Abbey but ther-uh:: her sister.
```

As mentioned earlier, here Edna is describing a good article she has read, written by Julia Mead. Although Edna is describing this article with much detail, Olive does not display much interest in it and does not respond to Edna with much affiliations. When Edna finishes her description of the article with a summative assessment (line 06-07), Olive produces no response at all. This prompts Edna to ask her another question (line 09) which attempts to seek her response. However, Olive produces a series of responses which are strongly disaffiliative: in lines 10-11, she answers Edna's enquiry in a delayed, negative way; after Edna's receipt of her dispreferred answer, at line 13 she only produces another minimal token without giving any further explanation or asking anything about Edna's previous telling. At this moment, Edna's talk about Julia Mead's article could terminate: she is not adding anything more about the article, and Olive is not showing any interest in it, and at the beginning of line 14, Edna initiates the closure of the current topic by repeating the evaluation of the article she maked at line 06-07. However, before she finishes it, she cuts off her evaluation, and produces an incidental remark, not on the article, but on Julia Mead herself ('y'know she usetuh be on that TV program'), and it is her mentioning of the TV program that touches-off a disjunctive next topic.

Example 17a is a final demonstration of the topic-terminal sequential context for touched-off topic transitions.

17a [NB:IV:10:R]

```
01 Lot:    Well you have tha:t'n she said fer you tuh use this o:n the
02         (.) on: yer::uh psoriasis. 'n see if it mi:ght
03         he[:lp ut.]h
04 Emm:     [°M m :°]°°hm:°°
05              (0.4)
06 Emm:    .t.hhehhh Ah:'ll get that. v:VI-a-f::oam[::.u]
07 Lot:                                           [vee:]:-eye:- oh:::,
08 Emm:    f-o-r-[m:. ]
09 Lot:        [*e-:]iYe:ah.
10              (0.2)
11 Emm:    [.hh
12 Lot:    [Ye:ah.
13 Emm:    I ha[ftuh WR]ITE evrything DOWN becuz I: k-e-my memry is=
```

```
14 Lot:            [°Ye:h.°]
15 Emm:      =getting (.) kahna bla:nk.h Eff VI:↑aform-
16 Emm:      =Ah'll>g[ed id up<.h]hhh Hey ↑Gunderson the druggis'↑lives=
17 Lot:             [Ye : : a h.]
18 Emm:      =right down't the ↑corner across the ↑street ↑from me.
```

To re-cap earlier description, Emma has psoriasis, and here Lottie is recommending a treatment called Viaform to her. After Emma confirms the name of Viaform with Lottie (line 09), Lottie's recommendation seems winding down. At line 10, there is no take-up by either participant, and then Emma starts to complain about her bad memory, which is quite an ancillary matter to their previous talk about Viaform. At line 16, Emma produces a partial promise to get Viaform from the drugstore — a reference to a future activity, which is strongly associated with topic closure (Jefferson, 1984; Button, 1985, 1987, 1988). Before completing this, however, she is suddenly reminded of Gunderson, the druggist, and introduces a next topic touched-off by her own utterance.

Having examined these examples of touched-off topic transition in detail, particularly in terms of their sequential environment, one recurrent pattern seems to appear: touched-off topic transitions often take place when the previous talk is terminating. In some cases, the termination of the topic is proposed directly by one participant. In others, the previous topic is gradually winding down, exhibiting signs of 'topic extinction' (West & Garcia, 1988, p. 562). In addition, some participants may be observed to produce an incidental or ancillary utterance in relation to the dwindling topic and it is often these utterances that touch off the next topic.

In the next section, I will describe the ways in which participants display the relationship between touched-off new topics and previous talk.

3.3   Practices for displaying the connection between touched-offs and prior turns.

Apart from disjunctive markers, another characteristic feature for touched-off topic transitions is displaying the element in the prior talk which touches off the new topic. Previous research has identified two ways in which such connections are created. The most straightforward way of doing so is to use 'speaking of X' expression (Jefferson, 1972), in which the component of a prior talk is framed explicitly in this format. For example,

20 [GTS:II2:2:50:r:2]

```
Roger: Speakin about forties. I worked on a k-o::n Morganelli's Forty.
```
                                                        (Jefferson, 1978, p 221)

In the short example above, Roger explicitly frames the word '*forties*' into the 'speaking of X' format, highlighting the fact that it is '*forties*' in the prior talk that prompts him to talk about the new mentionable, 'Morga*ne*lli's Forty'. It is worth noting that this repetition is a practice for topical connection, exactly as the same practice as shown in the section above. In other words, repetition is a practice that is generally used in a number of different forms of topic transition.

Indeed, other devices for displaying the touched-off nature of subsequent (topical) talk to be discussed below have previously been shown to be used also for stepwise topic transition.

The second practice for displaying the connection between prior talk and touched-off new topics is 'embedded repetition' (Jefferson, 1978, p. 221), where an element of prior talk is not isolated in a 'speaking of X' format but is blended into the touched-off utterance. Some examples discussed in the previous sections illustrate this point.

9a [Rahman: I]

```
10 Ver:    Well ah think it wz the wea^the:r yihkno:w, she didn like-
11         feel like goin in the weather yi[h know *real]ly[: (y'know)*
12 Jen:                                   [A o h : : :.]  [Oh I- e sh-
13         cuz she said she wouldn' be going if Jano wz going t'thaht
14          keep fit thing.
15 Ver:    uRight yeh .hh Oh I met Jano:, eh:::m yestihday en she'd
16         hahdda foh:rm from the Age Concehrn about thaht jo:b.h=
```

Returning to example 9, Jenny at line 13 mentions Jano in a passing manner. However, this mentioning of Jano enables Vera to initiate an entirely different topic through embedded repetition. What was only briefly mentioned in the previous turn now becomes the subject of the next topic.

In the next example, Lottie does something similar.

13b [NB:IV:10:R]

```
11 Emm:    I dmy toenails er fallin'[ahff ah[don'°nu°]
12 Lot:                            [.t     [O  h : ]waita minute.
13         Dat's I'm gladju me:ntion'tha:t.Yihknow A:deline ha:d her:
14         nai:l taken o:ff like you hadjer  (.) toenail taken o:ff=
```

In line 11, Emma starts to describe her problem with her toenail ("I dmy toenails er fallin'ahff "). But before she is able to elaborate further, the mentioning of "toenail falling off" reminds Lottie of a different matter, that her friend Adeline has got similar problems. Instead of aligning with Emma's telling, Lottie interrupts Emma ("Oh:waita minute.") and introduces her topic.

The same practice is shown in example 14a, too.

14a [NB:IV:10:R]

```
04 Lot:     .hh Go:d Emma it's jhghis go:rgeou[s.
05 Emm:                                        [°Oh: I'm ha:ppy L*ottie°
06          When didju get ↑tha*:t.
07 Lot:     Uh Gladdee gave it to me: Sundee night before I le:f'.
08 Emm:     .hhuhhhh (.) Oh wul weh-uh no:w duh: didju HAVE a hard trip
09          goin up there Sundee? That Sunee Anna Canyon's kahna ba:d=
```

```
10 Lot:      =[.hh
11 Emm:      =[isn'it with ahll those li:ghts.
```

At the start of this extract, Lottie is talking about her wig that her friend Gladys gave to her. In response to Emma's question ("When didju get ↑tha*:t."), Lottie mentions "sundee night", which serves to touch off an entirely different topic introduced by Emma. Starting from line 8, Emma raises her question concerning the weather, which includes a repetition of the word "Sundee"

However, neither the 'speaking of X' format nor embedded repetition are employed in every touched-off topic transition. In some cases of touched-off topic-initial turns, there is no observable repetition of any element in the previous turn. A participant simply produces the new topic without explicitly showing how it is touched-off by the previous talk. Nevertheless, there is still a sense of connectedness between the new topic and the prior talk. This connection can be created by some categorical connections between the touched-off mentionable and an element in the prior turn, or through the new topic's implicit reference to a previous mentionable in the previous talk. Therefore, even though no explicit 'speaking of X' format or embedded repetition is used, it is still clear that the new topic is touched-off by the previous talk. Below are five examples in which connections between touched-off topics and prior topics are created.

11a [Holt:1:1]

```
01 Mum:      Hm:. Oka:y then love,
02                  (.)
03 Les:      Alright w'yuh don't think Ann w'd (0.3) mi:nd if I drop a
04 Les:      hint thet we really don't want any mo:re
05                  (1.0)
06 Mum:      No::.
07                  (0.2)
08 Mum:      No I don't think she'd be upset about it,
09 Les:      No.=
10 Mum:      =Cz what's the good'v sending'em if they're not gon'be
11           wo:rn.
12 Les:      That's ri:ght. Well they jus'stay in the cupboard.
13 Mum:      That's ri:ght.
14 Les:      Yup=
15 Mum:      =(I might even tell'er) they're useless,
16 Les:      Yeh.
17                  (.)
18 Les:      Okay then,
19 Mum:      (   )! Oh you know that Indian: skirt  you sent me thet I
20            never wo:re,
21 Les:      =Ye:s?
```

After talking about the 'useless' T-shirt that Ann keeps sending, Mum at line 19 introduces a new topic – a skirt that Lesley gave to her that is never worn. Here, there are two links that connect Mum's telling about the skirt and the T-shirts that Lesley receives. First of all, they are both characterized by 'not being worn', which is displayed in Mum's reiteration at lines 10-11 and 19-20. Also, they are both presents from another person: the T-shirts are presents from Ann (line 3) and the Indian skirt comes from Lesley. The fact that they are both never worn and

they are co-class members of being a present serve as the basis that touches off Mum's new topic.

In example 12b, the touched-off topic is also introduced by reference to a shared similarity:

12b [NB:IV:14]

```
14 Edn:    r:Really a good- y'know she usetuh be on that TV program
15         with uh.
16 Oli:    hhhh Y'know who I saw the other day on:: Mike- Douglas show
17         wz uh:: hh not- A:bbey, uh Dear Abbey but ther-uh:: her sister.
```

After Edna mentions the TV program (line 14) that Julia Mead (discussed in earlier conversation) used to be on, Olive is reminded of Mike Douglas show, which serves as a resource to introduce an unrelated next topic, somebody she saw on the show. Here the Mike Douglas show is introduced as a co-class member of the TV program that Edna mentions. Although Olive does not repeat any element in Edna's prior turn, she creates a co-class resemblence between the previous topic and the next topic.

In the next example, Lottie links her touched-off utterance to Emma's prior turn by referring to a shop.

15b [NB II:1:R]

```
01 Emm:    So:: anywayay .hh I: thou:ght she always likes tuh go do
02         somethi:ng °en: I thought may'we c'd go [sh:o:ppin'° =
03 Lot:                                            [wgl
04 Emm:    =°e[r do sump'n,°
05 Lot:       [ml
06 Lot:    u-h Ohye:ah. Gee the May Comp'ny er sure havin a big
07         sale,
```

After Emma mentions her plan of going shopping with Nancy, Lottie introduces a new topic touched-off by mentioning 'going shopping' (line 2) — the sale at the May company (line 6-7), which is a department store. Although no explicit repetition is involved in the new topic-initial utterance, Lottie's announcement of the 'big sale' at the May company makes an implicit reference to 'going shopping' and creates a topical link with prior talk. By mentioning the big sale at a department store, Lottie further extends Emma's talk about 'shopping' but proposing a new topical direction . In this way, Lottie displays that her remembering the sale at the May company was prompted by Emma's mentioning of 'going shopping'.

In example 16a, the touched-off new topic, the recent development of Indio, is introduced in a similar way.

16a [NB:IV:10:R]

```
01 Lot:     No: I know A:deline go:t one she took it outta the (.) f-uh:
02
03 Emm:     °Mm: hm:,°
04                   (.)
05 Lot:     They[got it]down et Al:pha Beta .hh↑Go:d down in I:ndio=
06 Emm:         [°Duh° ]
07 Lot:     =that place is really bui:ld u:[p yihknow]
08 Emm:                                   [°Mm:hm°hm]:.
09                 (0.3)
10 Lot:     u-Oh they got S:ea:rs 'n: (.) yihkno[w
11 Emm:                                         [°Isn'° that
12           beautif'l=
13 Emm:     =['n thet]
14 Lot:     =[Oh:(g) ]
15                   (.)
16 Emm:     [pretty] m o]tel]
17 Lot:     [↑Ghod ]that]pla]ce
18                   (.)
19 Lot:     .hhAh'm goin down there'n (0.2) pro:bly in a (.) 'n:other
20          coupla weeks. Uh maybe I jis go do:wn en:d gi-uh get a place
21          'n:d sta:y (.) yihknow a coupla da:ys,
```

In contrast to the examples above, here Lottie's new topic is touched-off by her own prior utterance. After Lottie mentions the chain supermarket Alpha Beta, where her friend Adeline bought her turkey, she displays being reminded at the moment of Indio and how 'built up' it is. Here Indio is also topically related to the preceding talk about Alpha Beta, since this chain supermarket is located in the city Indio. The new topic that Lottie introduces is therefore brought about in a related, touched-off manner.

Lastly, the same practice can also be found in touched-off topical development prefaced by 'it's funny…'.

18a [NB:IV:3:R]

```
04 Emm:     .hh See I gotta (.) figure sump'n tuh kuh:: coordinate WELL
05          AAH'LL LEAVE IT go Lottie I think yih got the best buy'v
06          the whole village.
07          (0.7)
08 Lot:     Oh I lo:ve that blue one,
09          (0.9)
10 Emm:     eeYa:h  but then ah have nothing tih ↑wear I haven' (.)
11          blue: shoe:s uh (0.4)  .hhh  ah gotta ged theh I got so
12          damn m'ny shoes I'm not wearin ↑no:w.thet uh: (0.3) .hhhh I
13          ↑could al:most wea:r puu- uh:: dubuhnay with that blue:.
14          couldn' ah I've s'm blu-u-dubuhna:y::
15          (.)
16 Lot:     Ye:ah.
17 Emm:     S::ue:de th*ou:gh,
```

```
18              (0.4)
19 Lot:    No tha'wouldn be to[o  good,]
20 Emm:                       [° N*a:h°]
21              (0.2)
22 Emm:    .hh AH'LL TALK ABOUT IT LATER,
23 Lot:    W'l you kno:w I wz juh I wz Isn'at funny I wz js think'n
24         a:BAH:T it (.) uh:: (.) I LI:KE uh I'm jis gonna getta
25         cheap pair en then I'm gonna take'em up (.) tuh Anthony's
26         'n dye'm because they dye a(b) uh:(b) (.) nthe(b) (0.2)
27 Lot:    perfect ma::tch.
```

As outlined before, here Emma is complaining that although she has many pairs of shoes, she can't really wear them because she can't match them with her dresses. Prompted by Emma's complaint, Lottie introduces her idea of taking shoes to get them dyed. Although Lottie does not explicitly repeat elements in Emma's prior talk, her suggestion of dying shoes connects with Emma's previous complaint. Lottie does so in a turn which is prefaced wth a number of components, notably "Isn'at funny" and "I wz js think'n a:BAH:T it". Together, these components work to break with a prior topic; but in particular "Isn'at funny" claims a coincidence between what Emma has just said and Lottie's proposal. It is through this claimed 'coincidental' reference to prior talk that the connection between touched-off telling and the prior talk is established.

In this section, I have examined how participants display the connection between newly touched-off topics and their preceding talk. Firstly, participants can employ the classic 'speaking of X' format (Jefferson, 1972), or create a direct lexical 'embedded repetition' (Jefferson, 1978). In addition, there are also more implicit ways of establishing such connection, by highlighting the shared categorical similarity (e.g., co-class membership) between the two topics, or alluding to the prior talk when introducing the new topic.

3.4   Summary of touched-off topic transitions

This section focuses on touched-off topic transition, a form of topic transition where a new topic occasioned by prior talk is introduced in a disjunctive way. First of all, I explored the ways in which this 'disjunctiveness' is displayed. To mark an abrupt move into a new topic, speakers use disjunctive markers such as 'oh', emotive interjections such as 'God', 'Gee' or 'Hey', or the expression of 'it's funny that', before the introduction of the new topic/telling. Then I examined the sequential environment for the occurrence of touched-off topic transition and showed that they recurrently occur at a place where the current topic is winding down. In other words, touched-off topic transitions often appear at topic-terminal positions. Lastly, I described how speakers of the new topic display a connectedness between the new topic and the element in the prior talk that occasions it. In addition to the 'speaking of X' format and embedded repetition, I identified another way of displaying such connectedness. Rather than explicitly locating or citing the element in the prior talk, a speaker can construct a sense of similarity between the new mentionable and a prior element, or allude to the prior talk when introducing the new topic. Comparing touched-off topic transition and stepwise topic transition, I find that both of them maintain a connection between the previous topic and the new topic. However, in

touched-off topic transitions, the movement to a new topic is not achieved in a gradual, step-by-step fashion, but rather in a way that is disjunctive to the ongoing topic direction.

4   Conclusion

In this chapter, I have described two forms of connected topic transition, where a new topic is introduced in a way that preserves some link to the previous topic. On stepwise topic transition, I have first shown that in addition to moving out of a troubles talk, the five-step pattern in Jefferson (1984) can also be applied to stepwise transitions between a wider range of topics. Then I explored the specific ways that participants display a connection to previous turns and topics while gradually shifting the topic. They include the use of various grammatical cohesive devices such as repetition, deixis and ellipsis, and co-class membership for terms.

In touched-off topic transition, some item in the ongoing talk reminds a participant of a next topic, and he/she introduces this topic in a seemingly disjunctive manner. Firstly, I examined how participants highlight the departure from the previous topic by using different kinds of turn-initial disjunctive markers. Then I looked at the positioning of touched-off topic transition, and the recurrent sequential environment of its occurrence. Lastly, I described ways in which participants establish a topical link with the previous talk. In offering an in-depth observation of stepwise topic transition and touched-off topic transition, this chapter complements research into connected ways of topic transition, which has been under-investigated in CA literature.

Chapter 4   Manoeuvring topics into being: exploiting 'the circumstantially produced topicality' of talk

1   Introduction.

As discussed in the previous chapter, stepwise topic transition has been widely acknowledged as the most seamless and coherent way of moving from topics to topics (Sacks, 1992b; Coulthard, 1977; Crow, 1983; etc.). In stepwise topic transition, a new topic gradually emerges from whatever has been talked about in preceding turns. Therefore, the new topic is arrived at in a connected way, maintaining the interactional cohesiveness (Jefferson, 1984, p. 194) and progressivity of the conversation.

In stepwise topic transition, although the next topic is in some fashion connected to the previous topic, such connected transition is not intentionally achieved. That is, the movement from one topic to another is not a predetermined action; there is no prearranged topic agenda for participants when doing stepwise topic transition. According to Adato (1980), in stepwise topic transition, participants orient to the upcoming new topic in the mode of 'open possibilities' (Schutz, 1971, cited in Adato, 1980, p. 55). Open possibilities, unlike problematic possibilities which entail pre-given, competing alternatives, present various upcoming topic directions as equally possible, and the arrival of the next topic is the achievement of negotiation between the participants. For example, when talking about the late growth of garden flowers, there might be a wide range of next topics that Lesley and her mother could move into in a stepwise fashion. The next topic that they actually turn to – that Mark (Lesley's husband)'s coming home, is just one of the possibilities arrived at through turn-by-turn collaboration between Lesley and her mother. To summarize in Adato's (1979) own words, the way that stepwise topic transition occurs is 'characteristically circumstantial, involving items which, in earlier appearances, were unintended for the topics they get turned into' (p. 179).

This circumstantial characteristic of stepwise topic movement prompts Adato to consider the possibility of a related phenomenon: is it possible that such 'circumstantially produced topicality' (Adato, 1979, p. 184) could be employed to introduce a specific topic? Is it possible that a speaker intent on achieving/maintaining the topicality of remarks would monitor the talk in such a way that a certain topic can occur 'by circumstance'? Circumstances, according to Adato (1979, 1980), are those artefacts in conversation to which participants are mutually oriented, which provides a 'because motive' (Adato, 1979, p. 181) for the introduction of a particular topic. In face-to-face conversation in a company cafeteria, for example, the Italian sandwich one is eating can serve as the circumstance for the other colleague to talk about his experience in Italy; in telephone conversation, as seen in the previous chapters, a remark that just has been made could serve as the circumstance to talk about a related matter. Regarding such use of circumstance for topic introduction, Adato (1980) makes the following insight:

"Let us consider a case in which I, as a conversant, initiated a topic concerning the use of nuclear weapons by making reference to a political cartoon in the newspaper that the conversant sitting next to me was reading... Raising such a topic was not easy for me, not because their views were so different from mine, but in that I did not want them to suspect that my motives in raising such a topic were any more serious that 'just making conversation.' In deliberately looking to raise such a topic and finding that I could do so 'by circumstance', I provided for its motivated character other than that which I thereby 'concealed'... If circumstance is a specious sort of causality in its characteristic consciousness of the fact, it likewise imparts to the topic its inevitable motivated character, such that a conversant may distinctively prefer this way of raising the topic...circumstance furnished not only the grounds for its proper occurrence but also its preferred sense as an intendedly productional object" (Adato 1979, p. 59-60).

In other words, Adato (1980) suggests that when there is no natural environment to introduce the topic we intend to raise, we could possibly make use of local resources in the conversation, so that our target topic can be raised as if it is arrived at by circumstance. Although he has made such an interesting assumption, there are two things that Adato did not further explore. First, there isn't any actual example from naturally occurring conversations that support his observation. After all, the scenario described in the quotation above is an invented one. Second, without a collection of examples, there isn't any detailed examination of how such a circumstance could be created to establish an appropriate environment in which to introduce a topic. Indeed, since Adato (1980), there hasn't been any research that further investigate this phenomenon.

Although such manoeuvring of topics into being has been understudied, in ordinary conversations participants indeed employ this practice. Here is an example where a speaker is creating the circumstances for introducing a specific topic.

1. [Holt: May 88: 1:5]

```
01 Rob:      ↑Suddenly it'll all ↓happe[n.
02 Les:                            [ehYe::s: yes.
03 Rob:      [↑ (  )-
04 Les:      [Oh ↑how's Mary ↓keeping. Cuz uh her aller↓gies. Are
05           they:?
06               (0.5)
07 Rob:      Well she ↑came in blotchy the other ↓day an' they
08           didn't (.) couldn't decide what it wa↓::s
09               (0.3)
10 Les:      Hm:.
11 Rob:      I mean I feel
                (16 lines omitted)
27 Rob:      (w'l) beige'n navy,
28 Les:      Oh yes cz she can't wear blue:.
29               (0.4)
30 Rob:      She ↑can't ↓wear blue, ↓=
31 Les:      =No: that's one'v the colors she's all↑ergic ↓to.
```

```
32              (0.3)
33 Rob:    W'l that's funny she wz wearing all blue the other
34         da[:y
35 Les:       [.hhhh Oh eh she has to wear a specific sort'v blue.
36         .hhh uh-one: (.) e-eh she c'n only wear thin:gs .hhh
37         that don:'t have indi  go in them.
38              (.)
39 Rob:    Oh::::.
40              (0.7)
41 Rob:    Well- and she-[told me how this'd suddenly: started=
42 Les:                  [((sniff))
43 Rob:    =over the last (.) year, two yea:rs?[an-
44 Les:                                        [Ye:s.
45 Rob:    the su:n is another one isn't it.
46 Les:    .hh Who: e-The sun[ye:s.
47 Rob:                      [The su:n.
48              (.)
49 Les:    .hh[h ↑Well: th:this ↑is eh why I'm not ↑quite ↓so well=
50 Rob:       [Mm:.
51 Les:    =at th'moment I'd thought I'd got t'the: bottom a'my
52         ↑allergies but I came out'n most ↑terr↓ible rash last
53         week,.hhhh[hh
54 Rob:              [↑Oh:[↓:
55 Les:                   [An' I wz telling th'm all at school how
56         m'ch better I wa:s but I: ↑think it might've been: um
57         primulas I touched.
```

After their previous topic has wound down, Lesley raises a question concerning the allergic reaction of a mutual colleague Mary (lines 4-5). This question generates an elaborated account from Robbie, who proposes a possible reason for Mary's condition (line 27). In the next lines, Lesley confirms this reason and gives a further explanation of Mary's allergic reaction. By raising the question of Mary's allergic reaction and further developing it, Lesley creates some circumstances or some grounds on which her next topic could be raised. From line 49, Lesley embarks on a telling about her own recent allergic reaction, in relation to their immediately preceding talk about Mary's.

In this chapter, I will present examples where a participant creates the circumstances for the subsequent and 'appropriate' introduction of a next topic. Based on these examples, I will also describe some recurrent practices through which a topic can be introduced in such a circumstantial way. These practices include:

1. Occasioning some talk that will be relevant to the next topic.
2. Resetting the conversation and introducing a topic as a first topic.
3. Alluding to the next topic and inviting the co-participant to topicalize it.

Before saying more about these practices, one point should be made clear. In the case that Adato (1980) invents, he describes the topic about nuclear weapons as being a topic that he wishes to raise deliberately. However, when looking at real examples that I have collected, it is

difficult to decide whether or not the topic that speakers introduce was intended in the first place. Indeed, conversation analysts do not aim to investigate the cognitive process or mental behaviours of participants. When understanding the actions of conversation participants, they are 'bracketed off in favour of pursuing features of public interaction and how that unfolds' (Potter & Edwards, 2013, p. 705). When discussing the intention and strategy behind actions in conversation, Heritage (1990) observes that they are usually designed to be ambiguous and invisible. Even if the strategies do become discernible, there is the problem of deciding when such intention or strategy was formed in the mind of the participants. Therefore, when describing the practices through which a topic is introduced, my focus is not the intentionality of speakers. That is, I will not assume that the topics that are later brought up were indeed pre-planned by participants, or that the practices are employed intendedly to arrive at a 'desired' topic. Using a bottom-up approach, I aim to examine these practices as they occur in the actual conversation, how they unfold turn by turn, and how they are oriented to by the co-participant.

In the next section, I am going to outline the first practice, where a speaker generates some talk that comes to be linked to the topic she later introduces.

2   Occasioning talk that is relevant to the target topic

When doing topic transitions in ordinary conversation, new topics are almost always introduced with some level of conversational cohesiveness (Jefferson, 1984, p. 213), by the speaker displaying his/her attentiveness to the co-participant. Even in disjunctive topic transitions, a speaker is normatively required to respond to the prior topic with either an acknowledgement token, an assessment, or a comment (Jefferson, 1993) before embarking on the new topic. These actions combine interactional engagement and topical disengagement (Jefferson, 1993, p. 10), and are general techniques for managing topic rupture (Jefferson, 1984, p. 213).

When creating the circumstances to introduce a topic, this is also done in a cohesive, other-attentive way. For example, a speaker can embed the next topic in relation to what the co-participant has just talked about, as if the next topic is a second story (Sacks, 1992a, 1992b; Arminen, 2004; Siromaa, 2012) occasioned by it. By producing a second story, a speaker displays that she not only listens but also understands and is 'in the same boat' (Arminen, 2004, p. 321) with the co-participant. Therefore, second stories are highly other-attentive and cohesive.

Apart from achieving interactional cohesiveness, second stories also establish a sense of topic similarity. As Sacks argues,

> "Topic similarity is something that the second can exhibit, though you wouldn't have thought from the first that such a second would be a coherent topic with the first. That is to say, the relationship 'topic similarity' is one in which the second is crucial. Given the second you can see that they're topically similar." (Sacks, 1992b, p. 255).

Such topic similarity of second stories can be utilized to introduce a certain next topic. Paraphrasing Adato (1980), second stories provide a natural circumstance for introducing a topic, letting the other speaker see that the motives in raising such a topic were not any more serious than 'just giving a second story' (Adato, 1980, p. 59-60).

However, sometimes first stories, which are the basis for second stories, are not always readily available. Under these conditions, a participant may first occasion some talk that leads to a first story and then introduces the next topic as a second story. In some cases, first stories are generated by a question. By answering the question, the co-participant provides the circumstances — a first story — for the introduction of a second story. Here is a more elaborate examination of example 1.

1. [Holt: May 88: 1:5]

```
01 Rob:    ↑Suddenly it'll all ↓happe[n.
02 Les:                         [ehYe::s: yes.
03 Rob:    [↑ (   )-
04 Les:    [Oh ↑how's Mary ↓keeping. Cuz uh her aller↓gies. Are
05         they:?
06              (0.5)
07 Rob:    Well she ↑came in blotchy the other ↓day an' they
08         didn't (.) couldn't decide what it wa↓::s
09              (0.3)
10 Les:    Hm:.
11 Rob:    I mean I feel
12 Les:    .khh
13              (0.2)
14 Rob:    uh::::::m: (0.3) ↓I mean she seems very well she
15         certainly lost some: weight'n she looks ever so nice
16         she's g- obviously had s'm new: .hh ↓clo:thes which
17         (0.2) y'know (.) suit her very well,
18 Les:    Oh good.
19 Rob:    Yes. So: that- (.) that's very ni:c[e in fact we find=
20 Les:                                       [Hm:.
21 Rob:    =we're wearing more of the same colors, we haf t'be
22         careful,
23              (.)
24 Les:    Oh:.
25 Rob:    ↑eh[hh
26 Les:       [Ye:s:.[Cuz sh-
27 Rob:              [(w'l) beige'n navy,
28 Les:    Oh yes cz she can't wear blue:.
29              (0.4)
30 Rob:    She ↑can't ↓wear blue, ↓=
31 Les:    =No: that's one'v the colors she's all↑ergic ↓to.
32              (0.3)
33 Rob:    W'l that's funny she wz wearing all blue the other
34         da[:y
35 Les:      [.hhhh Oh eh she has to wear a specific sort'v blue.
36         .hhh uh-one: (.) e-eh she c'n only wear thin:gs .hhh
37         that don:'t have indigo in them.
38              (.)
39 Rob:    Oh::::.
```

```
40              (0.7)
41 Rob:    Well- and she-[told me how this'd suddenly: started=
42 Les:                  [((sniff))
43 Rob:    =over the last (.) year, two yea:rs?[an-
44 Les:                                        [Ye:s.
45 Rob:    the su:n is another one isn't it.
46 Les:    .hh Who: e-The sun[ye:s.
47 Rob:                      [The su:n.
48              (.)
49
50 Les:    .hh[h ↑Well: th:this ↑is eh why I'm not ↑quite ↓so well=
51 Rob:       [Mm:.
52 Les:    =at th'moment I'd thought I'd got t'the: bottom a'my
53         ↑allergies but I came out'n most ↑terr↓ible rash last
54         week,.hhhh[hh
55 Rob:             [↑Oh:[↓:
56 Les:                  [An' I wz telling th'm all at school how
57         m'ch better I wa:s but I: ↑think it might've been: um
58         primulas I touched.
```

Prior to this excerpt, Lesley and her colleague Robbie have been talking about various things at the primary school they work at. Then, Robbie enquires about Lesley's house, and their talk on this subject gradually winds down (lines 1-3).

At line 4, Lesley asks a question concerning a colleague they both know, who has had an allergic reaction. The incomplete syntactic structure 'Are they:?', produced with elongation and rising intonation, strongly invites some updates about Mary's allergic reaction. In response, Robbie starts to talk about how Mary looks, but her talk shortly becomes a bit off-topic: instead of focusing on the allergy, Robbie moves to comment on Mary's shape and clothes. When Robbie mentions the colour (navy) that Mary wears (line 27), Lesley gets back to Mary's allergy problems by pointing out a similar colour (blue) that Mary is allergic to (line 31).

When their talk about Mary's allergic reaction comes to a possible end, Lesley, at line 50, introduces her own allergic reaction. The in-breath and the turn-initial 'well' clearly preface a 'my-side' telling (Heritage, 2015), but the deictic word 'this' conveys that Lesley's upcoming talk about her allergy is linked to their previous talk about Mary's allergy. In other words, Lesley introduces her own allergy as a second story after Mary's allergy. Looking retrospectively, Lesley positions her allergy condition in the position of a second story, as if it is occasioned by the first story about Mary's allergy. Instead of introducing it in a disjunctive manner, she now introduces her trouble as a 'reciprocal second' (Jefferson, 1985, p. 450). However, the first story about Mary's allergic reaction is not naturally arrived at from the previous topic about Lesley's house. Rather, it is prompted by the question that Lesley herself raises in a disjunctive manner. By introducing her own allergy as a second story, Lesley preserves the interactional cohesiveness (Jefferson, 1984, p. 213) which would be missing if it is introduced disjunctively.

In the next example, Emma is employing the same practice that Lesley used.

2. [NB:II:3:R]

```
01 Emm:     Oh that's swel< Yih haven'got the H'waiian House rented
02          then °huh? °
03 Lot:     .kh.hh We:ll u.-no: I (.) u.-we k-we ke:pt it open for a
04          couple weeks cuz I want the-uh: Doctor Livingston wan'duh
05          come down gee I wan'oo: (.) pay im fer yihknow gi'n me
06          that stuff fer mah arthr*i:ti[s en I mean]:=
07 Emm:                                  [° m-Mm:hm,°]
08 Lot:     =Ee won't take any money en errything .hh.hhh en then (.)
09          Earl's gonnuh ha:ve uh:: (0.2) a guy fr'm:: Central.
10           (0.3)
11          do:wn,
12          (.)
13 Emm:     [M m  ] hm: ]
14 Lot:     [For a] wee:]k so: hyihkno:w
15          (.)
16 Emm:     Mm hm,
17 Lot:     .k I mean it's j's::
18          (.)
19 Emm:     ih bu[siness, ]
20 Lot:          [(ta:kes)] Yea::uh,
21          (.)
22 Lot:     Ye[a:h. ]
23 Emm:       [Yeh a]t's goo:d. u.-How is yer artherahtis, yih still
24          tak'n sho:ts?
25 Lot:     ↑Ye:a:h u- [ w u l:  i]t's:  i-it's  awri:::ght <I mean:=
26 Emm:                [°°Ah-ha°°  ]
27 Lot:     =it's e- uh::: (0.2) it ut hurts once'n a [whi:le] but
28 Emm:                                               [Mm hm ]
29          (.)
30 Lot:     it's oka:y.=
31 Emm:     =.t.hh Couple my fingernails ev started back in little
32          tiny spot again but they grow ou:t I mean it j's seems
33          y'can't get ↑ridda that can yuh.
34 Lot:     What that fumgu[s?
35 Emm:                    [Ah hah?
```

Early on in this example, Lottie is telling Emma how she plans to do with her 'Hawaiian house' (line 1-21). After her telling gradually ends, Emma at line 22 initiates a question about Lottie's arthritis. From line 24 to line 26, Lottie gives a description of how she feels, and concludes by providing a summative assessment 'it's oka:y.=' (line 29). Upon Lottie's completion, Emma nearly simultaneously embarks on her turn and talks about the problem with her fingernails. From an analyst's perspective, Emma's telling about her fingernail problems has a co-class resemblance to Lottie's prior telling about her arthritis, since they are both health problems. Once again, Emma, just as Lesley does in the previous example, introduces her telling in the position of a second story, as if Lottie's arthritis problem provides the circumstance for her to talk about her fingernails. In doing so, Emma manages to talk about her fingernail problems while simultaneously preserving the interactional cohesiveness of the conversation. This example, together with example 1, partly resonates with what Jefferson (1985) notices about one environment for 'unpacking a gloss', where a speaker with some details to tell prefer to wait for an auspicious environment where she can talk about it in an 'interactionally elicited' manner, rather than 'self-generated' (p. 450). As indicated above, it is not in my remit to discuss whether Lesley and Emma are introducing their problems intentionally as an 'interactionally elicited' second, but their actions shown in the examples display a similar pattern. That is, they

introduce their self-attentive topic after the co-participants provide the first story. In contrast to Jefferson's (1985) observation, however, Lesley and Emma do not wait for a first story; they create some talk (i.e., other-attentive questions) so that the co-participants will produce the first story for them.

Apart from introducing a topic after a first story elicited by a question, a next topic, in the form of a second story, can be raised in another way. In some cases, the two speakers are already engaged in an ongoing topic. After the co-participant finishes her turn, the speaker who introduces the next topic first aligns with the co-participant by commenting on her immediate prior talk (Jefferson, 1993). However, the comment itself is not fully affiliative, because it is not entirely focused on what the co-participant has just talked about. Instead, the comment addresses a peripheral item that is only 'tangentially relevant' (Adato, 1979, p. 180) to it, but which is directed to the next topic she will introduce. By commenting on a different aspect of the first story, the speaker manages to guide the topic direction towards the next topic in a coherent way. After the co-participants collaborate and further extends the new topic direction by producing the first story, the speaker introduces her topic as a second. In example 3, Emma's topic is introduced in such way.

3. [NB:IV:10:R]

```
01 Lot:       hn-hn-hn WITH ↑NO:k-.hh[h h]CLO:THES=
02 Emm:                          [.hh]hh
03 Emm:       =[↑a]aaaa]aaaaaaaa]°::°]
04 Lot:       =[ON] GOD]IT'S GOO]: D.][hu-uh ↑HUH]HU:H↑ ].hh
05 Emm:                           [I : s n't ]that e]xc i:ting,
06                   (.)
07 Lot:       Uh[↑:
08 Emm:         [Oh: that's wonderf'[l °*ah-*a]h°l
09 Lot:                           [ O h : : ]Go:d we had (.) u-We, I
10            never had so much fun m[uh life.]
11 Emm:                             [O h : I]'m gladju went ↑GOD
12            LOTTIE AH WISH you c'd meet somebuddy li:ke that.h
13                   (.)
14 Lot:       .p.tch.hh God I wz tellin A:deline we talked abaht the
15            thing yihknmow en she siz well it's prob'ly ih: lo:tta
16            yer fault too you sh'd make up tih him en errything
17            en[I siz]w'l]=
18 Emm:         [°Mm h]m?°]=
19 Lot:       =I jis ↑CA:N'T yihknow en[she s-.h]hh
20 Emm:                                [°Mm hm,°]
21 Lot:       So th'las'thing w'n ah le:ft why .hh she sa:ys well na:h
22            you know wut I: said now you du-uh you try it fer a month
23 Lot:       n see if it doesn' work[ou:t 'n I]siz the he:ll I↑:'m
24 Emm:                              [°Mm hm:,°]
25 Lot:       ↑not gonna (.) ah'm ↑not gonna ma:ke u:p I mean you know=
26 Emm:       =[°M m  h m,°]
27 Lot:       =[why sh'd ↑I] ↑:.
28 Emm:       .hmh .te::ahhh WELL EVRY TIME YIH HA:VE these pro:bums
29            Lottie they get(.)chu fa:rther'n farther awa:y .hhh.hh.hh
30            Et's ↑so da:mn ri↑diculous in MY: sit(.)chuation yihkn:ow
```

Lottie has just been returned from visiting her friend Adeline and her husband Claude. Prior to and at the beginning of this extract, she has been describing her friend's beautiful house and their nude swimming at night. When Lottie's telling seems to be finishing with a summative assessment (line 9-10), Emma firstly affiliates with her ('Oh: I'm gladju went'). But shortly afterwards, Emma comments on a different aspect of Lottie's story '↑GOD LOTTIE AH WISH you c'd meet somebuddy li:ke that.h' (line 11-12), referring to Adeline's husband Claude, whom Lottie has talked about earlier in a passing manner. Now, Emma topicalizes Claude and addresses a different aspect of Lottie's telling — that Claude is a nice man and she hopes that Lottie could meet someone like him. In terms of topical relevance, Emma's comment on Claude is not directly responsive to Lottie's previous topic. Nevertheless, focusing on an ancillary aspect of Lottie's telling maintains some level of topical connection. In doing so, Emma responds to Lottie's story, creating the circumstances for the topic she later introduces.

As it turns out, Lottie affiliates with Emma's comment about Claude, embarking on a detailed narrative about her and her husband. It is likely that there is some problem between Lottie and husband, and in her telling, Lottie resolves that she's 'not gonna ma:ke u:p' (line 25). At this point, circumstances are in place for Emma to introduce the next topic. She firstly affiliates with Lottie's telling (line 28-29), and then introduces the topic about her own problems with her husband as a second story to Lottie's response, showing that she is 'in the same boat' (Arminen, 2004, p. 321) with Lottie.

Compared to the previous two examples, Emma's introduction of her topic is more seamless. In examples 2 and 3, the questions that prompt the first stories ('Oh ↑how's Mary ↓keeping. Cuz uh her aller↓gies.' And 'How is yer artherahtis, yih still tak'n sho:ts?') are raised in a disjunctive manner. In comparison, Emma's comment ('↑GOD LOTTIE AH WISH you c'd meet somebuddy li:ke that.h') is connected to Lottie's previous telling, therefore it maintains the topical connection with what has been talked about before. In this sense, example 1 echoes with what Sacks observes on one feature of stepwise topical movement:

> "If you have some topic which you can see is not connected to what is now being talked about, then you can find something that is connected to both, and use that first." (Sacks, 1992b, p. 300).

That is to say, the way that Emma introduces her problem with her husband shares some similarity with stepwise topic transition, in that it is done in a more interactionally cohesive way compared to the other two examples.

In this section, I have described one practice for creating the circumstances for introducing a topic. That is, the introducer of the next topic can raise it in the form of a second story, in relation to the first story produced by the co-participant. In particular, I have also examined two ways that a first story can be elicited, so as to provide the circumstance to introduce the next topic. One involves the speaker asking the co-participant a question. When answering the

question, the co-participant provides a story which can serve as the basis for introducing the next topic as the second story. The other involves the speaker making a 'tangentially relevant' (Adato, 1979, p. 180) comment on some ancillary matters in the previous topic. When the co-participant further responds to this comment, the speaker introduces her next topic in the form of a second story. In doing so, the speaker avoids displaying a motivation for raising such a topic (Adato, 1980), and manages to maintain the interactional cohesiveness of the conversation.

In the next section, I will move to another way in which the circumstances for the next topic can occur — creating a chain of narrative and place the next topic at the end of it.

3   Resetting the conversation and introducing a topic as a first topic.

Instead of introducing the next topic as a reciprocal second, a speaker can also create the circumstances for a next topic independent of preceding talk. That is, she first resets the conversation and then introduces the next topic in a disjunctive manner, as if it is the first topic in the conversation.

How can a speaker reset a conversation? According to Sacks (1992b, p. 302), a speaker, either the caller or the called, can do so by giving an account of 'how I came to call', by which he means a description of her activities prior to the conversation. As Sacks (1992b, p. 301) observes, routinely at the beginning of the conversation, 'a party can volunteer or be asked what she was doing before the phone call." (Sacks, 1992b, p. 301). Indeed, an examination of transcripts shows that such 'how I came to call' reports are common at the beginnings of daily telephone conversations. Here are two examples:

4. [Holt: May88:2:1]

```
01 Dwa:     ↑He↓llo you[miserable ol' de↑vil 'ow[are you.
02 Mar:                [.hhhh                  [be:hhhheh heh
03          .hhehhh I'm alright 'n ↑you?
04               (0.5)
05 Dwa:     Ve:ry well in↓deed. Ye[s.
06 Mar:                           [.k Good? Why aren't you gardening?
07               (0.3)
08 Dwa:     Uh:m (.) we:ll a[ctually: [uh:::
09 Mar:                     [((noise))[Cuz you've done it ↓all yeah I
10          know,
11               (0.5) ((Mark fidgeting, with phone))
12 Dwa:     [(                         ) it's been (.) pourin' with=
13 Mar:     [((fidgeting ------------------------))
14 Dwa:     =rain all day lo:n[g
15 Mar:                       ['Az ↑it?
16               (0.2)
17 Dwa:     Ya:p?
18 Mar:     hOh: gosh.
19 Dwa:     An' we've jus'[set- sat down an:d um (.) Dierdre an'=
20 Mar:                   [((fidgeting and swallowing))
21 Dwa:     =I've just eaten Donald's just come in, he's having his
22          ↓dinner.
23 Mar:     Ah:.
24               (0.5)
25 Mar:     .hh[hhh
```

```
26 Dwa:          [An' I wz tryina (.) get rid'v a mouth full'v
27                uh:m: (.) pud before I ↓spoke to you.↓
```

5. [Holt:x:1:2:7]

```
01 Les:     Oh hello[:,
02 Mum:             [↑Me::,
03             (0.4)
04 Les:     .hhh ↑Oh: hello I've just ↑bin watching the ↑fi:lm
05            on: Channel ↑Fou:r. Have ↑you- are ↑you
06            seeing↓ i[t
07 Mum:              [What is it.
08             (0.4)
09 Les:      .hhh Oh it's a ↑lovely film. i-It's-u it's about
10          this ma:n who's got to get rid'v a turke:y
11          (0.3) .p.hhh an:d eighty four pou:nds to a ↑poor
12          family f'↑Christmas:.
13 Mum:     ↑Oh: hnh-[hn
14 Les:              [An' he's having the most ↑awful difficulty:
15          he[h heh
16 Mum:       [↑Oh:. ↑Yah. ↑We've js c'm in fr'm ↑chu:rch
17          actua[lly
18 Les:           [↑Oh have you↑:
```

As shown in example 4 and 5, both Dwayne, Lesley and her mother volunteer to talk about what they were doing immediately prior to the phone call. These two examples support Sacks' (1992b, p. 301) claim that a 'how I came to call' account is the routine activity that frequently occurs at conversation beginnings. By giving such an account later in the conversation, a speaker can bring the talk 'in a sense back to the point where the conversation began' (Sacks, 1992b, p. 302). In doing so, the next topic would be oriented to as if it is the first topic.

Such 'how I came to call' narration can also be used to create the environment for introducing the next topic. After the previous topic is closed down, a speaker can start an enumeration of her activities prior to the phone call, as if she is redoing the start of the conversation. Then she introduces the next topic after the 'restart' of the conversation, so that the next topic, as a 'first topic', can be raised in its own right. In doing so, the speaker manages to create a sequential environment comparable to a conversational start, bringing the talk to the point where the next topic can be introduced as if it is the very first topic of the conversation. Although step-by-step topic introduction is not in operation here, 'how I came to call' description serves to provide a warrant to talk about something that could not be raised in a seamless way. Here are three examples where a speaker manages to introduce the next topic in this way:

6. [NB:II:4:R]

```
01 Emm:     °t.khh° (.) A:ND uh I  jis'm not gunnuh wahlk around a
02          LOT be [c:u:z ]  uh: ]
03 Nan:            [°N: ↑o:] ::.°]
04            (.)
05 Nan:     °N:o↑::.Huh[uh.°]
06 Emm:              [°*ah]:.° Ah:::,hh (.) It's not worth it tuh be
07           on my fee:t. Yih [know ]
08 Nan:                      [eeYa:]h,h ri:ght.
```

```
09                    (.)
10 Nan:    Ah huh? .t.hhhhhh OH I WZ JIST OU'WOH:SHING windo:ws: ih-
11         a:nd uh my mother ca:lled so I ca:me in ah thought w'l
12         wahlI'm in here'n I looked the clo:ck'nuz 'leven thirty
13         in I thaw wul: (.) ther .hhh.hh theruhm (.) surely
14         ↑th*erUP.yihkn*ow I knew it [wzkahn] 'v a: [s l e e]p in
15 Emm:                               [Y e s.]      [A  wee-]
16 Nan:    d*a::y but uh:=Idin't g*et home til (.) .hhhh two
17         las'night I met a very:,h very n:i:ce g*uy.
```

Earlier in this conversation, Nancy invited Emma to go shopping with her. However, Emma has just had a toe operation, so she could not walk around a lot. As we join this extract, Emma is explaining this to Nancy. After the topic about going shopping winds down, Nancy starts to give an account of what she has been doing just prior to the phone call. From line 10, Nancy begins to describe a string of activities: she has been out washing windows (line 10), she came in to answer her mother's call (line 11), and she looked at the clock and found out it was eleven-thirty (line 12). By using the conjunction word 'and', Nancy connects her activities closely with each other, and by using 'just' (line 10), she describes her activities as happened very recently prior to the phone call, highlighting their temporal proximity to the conversation. Although Nancy and Emma have been talking for a while, this 'how I came to call' enumeration helps to create an environment just like the beginning of the conversation and establish a warrant for introducing the next topic. Starting from line 13, Nancy starts to describe her subsequent thoughts occasioned by the look at the clock. The time, eleven-thirty, reminds Nancy that Emma must have got up, and then she realizes that today is a sleep-in day. The fact that people usually get up late on sleep-in days prompts her to report her getting back home late in the previous day, and in relation to this, Nancy announces the reason for this —she met a very nice guy. Nancy constructs her thoughts restrospectively, as though they are all linked together, one leading to another. In doing so, she introduces this topic at the end of a chain of thought (line 11), giving it the appearance of spontaneity.

In the next example, Emma introduces her topic in a similar way:

7. [NB:IV:10:R]

```
01 Lot:    =i:t was horrible. Man I really held on tih that ca:r.
02 Emm:    Yea:h. W'l I wz worried abou:tche becuz yihknow the:
03          yesterday wz just uh: the power li:nes I think'n: evrything
04          went out (.) 'n round San Fernand*o y*ihkn*o:w
05                  (0.2)
06 Lot:    Rea:lly?
07                  (.)
08 Lot:    [.khhh
09 Emm:    [Oh: yeah it wz a big dea:l.
10                  (.)
11 Emm:    .hh I'm d's ↑TAKIN OFF my CLOZE yuh ah ownee ha:ve ONE
12         berzeer'n pa:nty (.) GOD I HAVEN'T EATEN ↑HO:ME I BEEN
13         invi:ted ou:t ah ↑this ih the (.) this is a'↑LI:FE down
14         here.
15                  (0.2)
16 Emm:    [i h]
17 Lot:    [Did]Buh u-ez Bud called[jih?]
```

```
18 Emm:                                [.hhh]Yeah I k-*ah
19                   (0.2)
20 Emm:     uh WE:LL I WON'T (.) ko intuh this bit uhhh
21                   (.)
22 Lot:     ↑Why:.
23 Emm:     .hhhhhh (.) ↑I CA:LL' BA:Rbr*a.
```

Prior to this example, Lottie has been describing her visit to her friends and at the start of this extract, she is talking about the high winds she experienced when she was driving back. Starting from line 2, Emma affiliates with Lottie by commenting on (Jefferson, 1993) the high winds from her own perspective. After their talk about terrible weather comes to an end, Emma reports what she is doing and where she has been: she has been invited out for dinner, and she has just been back and took off her clothes. Placed immediately after the closure of the previous talk (about terrible weather), it again helps to, in a sense, 'reset' the conversation so that the next topic could be heard as a first topic.

Different from the two examples above, we cannot see Emma introduce a new topic here. After a short gap (line 15), Emma starts to embark on a new TCU (line 16). However, at the same time, Lottie intercepts Emma's incipient turn and raises the next topic with a question (line 17): several days prior to this phone call, Emma's husband Bud left her after a quarrel, and now Lottie asks for an update on it. Since Lottie initiates the next question in overlap with Lottie's, we are not altogether certain what Emma has planned to say, and whether she will introduce a new topic. Nevertheless, this example still displays a similar pattern — after the previous topic winds down, a speaker produces a 'how I came to call' description before she embarks on some potential new direction. No matter what Emma has planned to talk about in line 16, her preceding 'how I came to call' account establishes a new sequential environment where her following talk has a first-topic status.

Although we are not able to see what Emma might be going to say, one possible conjecture is that her family problem is just what she likes to talk about. When describing what she has been doing prior to the phone call, Emma is constantly alluding to her family problem. When calling Lottie several days ago, Emma reported that Bud has walked out on her, leaving her alone with nothing to wear, except for only 'a brassiere and a panty'. Here Emma is revoking her lonely situation with the exact wording. In addition, her emphasis on 'taking off clothes', 'haven't eaten home', on 'I've been invited out', and even the exclamation 'this is a life down here' highlights her freedom of being alone, the freedom of not having to conform to her husband's expectations and habits. All this alludes to the fact that she is now alone, and points to Emma's problem with her husband Bud. In this sense, it is likely that by producing a 'how I came to call' description, Emma paves the way for mentioning her marital problems.

Returning to the main point of resetting the conversation, I have shown how it can create an auspicious environment in which to introduce a topic. Since it is an activity frequently associated with conversation beginnings (Sacks, 1992b, p. 301), by listing what she has been doing prior to the phone call, especially by highlighting the temporal proximity of the activities prior to the phone call, a speaker can in a sense 're-establish' the start of the conversation. Under such circumstance, the next topic can be introduced in its own right as the first topic,

instead of in connection to what went on before.

4   Alluding to a particular next topic

In example 7 I have pointed out how, apart from describing what she has been doing prior to the phone call, Emma also alludes to the topic that is later talked about. In fact, alluding is also a practice that speakers use to create the circumstance (Adato, 1979, 1980) for the next topic. It enables speakers to hint at a specific mentionable without raising it in a way that is disjunctive and incoherent. In this section, I will focus on the use of allusion in more detail, to describe how allusions are constructed by speakers, and how the co-participants orient to them.

1a. [Holt: May 88: 1:5]

```
01 Rob:    it'll be jolly good in th' g(hh)a[r(h) dheh ↑hehn ↑heh]
02 Les:                                     [It  ↓w i : : l l   ]
03 Les:    =↓Ye:s that's true↓
04 Rob:    Yes
05              (0.2)
06 Les:    [Hm.
07 Rob:    [↑But what abou:t u:m:
08              (O.9)
09 Rob:    Ye-  ↑What about ↓you now. How're ↓you.
10 Les:    .hh ↑Oh fi:   neh-we:ll: nah:- yes I am: fair↓ly fi:ne,
11              (0.5)
12 Rob:    Oh[↓:.
13 Les:      [m-Uh:m
14              (0.9)
15 Rob:    Dare I ask how: the house is or sh'l I not.
16              (O.5)
17 Les:    Uh:m::: no eh- neyss not at the moment ehh ↑hheh hheh
18         [heh
19 Rob:    [Oh::: drat
20 Les:    Hm:.
```

In example 1a we see the interaction between Robbie and Leslie, before and up to their conversatio shown in example 1. Here we can see that prior to raising a question concerning Mary's allergy, as discussed about in example 1, Lesley first hints at her own trouble through allusion. This allusion is created in her trouble-premonitory (Jefferson, 1980) answer to Robbie's delayed 'how are you' inquiry (line 9). In line 10, Lesley starts out by producing what Heritage (2015) calls a 'super downgraded response' (p. 322) — '↑Oh fi:', with the turn-initial 'oh' greatly intensifying the degree of downgrading. Before Lesley fully pronounces this super downgraded response, however, she abandons this trajectory with the negation word 'neh (no)'. Then she seems to be attending instead to her trouble and embarking on a troubles-telling with the 'well' preface. However, by producing another 'nah:' Lesley again discards this direction. From these abandoned formulations we can see that Lesley is struggling between attending the trouble and attending the business as usual. After this observable tension, Lesley finally produces a full response 'yes I am: fair↓ly fi:ne,'. Though without the 'oh' preface, ''yes I am: fair↓ly fi:ne,' is still a downgraded response, with the qualifier 'fair↓ly' strongly suggesting the presence of a trouble. Not surprisingly, Robbie orients to Lesley's response as implying

some trouble (line 12), and pursues the potential trouble by asking about a problem that she knows about ('D<u>a</u>re <u>I</u> ask h<u>ow</u>: the house is or sh'l I not.'). However, Robbie's guess is wrong (line 17-18), and Lesley fails at alluding to her real problem. This leads to another way of introducing her trouble which has been described before. Although Lesley's allusion here is not as successful as Emma's in example 8, it is clear that the co-participant does orient to the allusion as suggestive of a potential topic, and the allusion indeed creates an opportunity in which a speaker's preferred topic can be raised.

With this example and their following interaction examined before, it is safe to claim that Lesley's allergic reaction is indeed the desired topic she is pursuing since she has made repeated efforts to raise it. As Heritage (1990) argues,

> "Under what circumstances do we, as analysts, tend to conclude that an interactant 'intended' to use a particular conversational procedure or employed it 'strategically'?...These contexts routinely involve observing in interactional data that a participant has produced two or more actions (sometimes alternative actions, sometimes not) that appear to be directed towards the same goal." (Heritage 1990, p. 316)

Lesley's efforts to introduce her allergic reaction resembles Heritage's (1990) observation. It is possible that she has hinted at her allergy reaction much earlier when she is producing the trouble-premonitory response to Robbie's question. When that fails to elicit the correct guess from Robbie, Lesley intendedly produces a question about Mary, so that Mary's allergy can be the first story and can serve as a circumstance (Adato, 1979, 1980) to introduce her own allergy.

Returning to allusion, example 8 shows a similar pattern.

8. [Holt:May 88: Side 1: Call 5]

```
01 Les:     Oh h<u>e</u>llo::- Is <u>it</u> (0.2) yo<u>u</u>: R<u>o</u>bbie,
02               (.)
03 Rob:     <u>It</u>'s <u>me</u> Robbi<u>e</u>?
04 Les:     <u>Oh</u>: ↓yes. .hhh uh <u>L</u>eslie Field.
05               (.)
06 Rob:     ↑<u>O</u>h he↓l[ l o[ : <u>:</u>,]
07 Les:         [.m.t[<u>Hello</u>]<u>:</u>=
08 Rob:     =I wz ↑th<u>i</u>nking ↓about you toda<u>:</u>y,
09 Les:     <u>Oh</u> yes (↑wuss'at.)
10 Rob:     ↑<u>O</u>h I wz th<u>i</u>nking (0.2) <u>my</u>-: ↓God there's a lotta
11          children in this cla(h[h)ss
12 Les:                            [.t <u>I</u> ↓kno::w.
13 Rob:     ↑↑<u>Di</u>d you: ↓find though edj-u- <u>I</u> m<u>e</u>an
14               (0.8)
15 Rob:     uIs this <u>a</u> cha:t or are you ruh-ah: is this a short one.

            (21 lines omitted)

37          ↑<u>A</u>n' <u>I</u> felt I'd achie::ved nothing'n th<u>e</u> children're
38          really ah- (.) I f<u>ee</u>l (0.3) yo<u>u</u> know I need to lick'm
39          into ↑sh<u>a</u>pe a↓gain.
40 Les:     .<u>hhh</u> <u>Y</u>es eh you haf to <u>fo</u>::rce the writing'n:: the maths
```

```
41            on them don't you. eh- (.) ih-eh[i:t's a ques]tion of=
42 Rob:                                      [↑↑Y e : s . ]
43 Les:    =bulldozing it i-.hhhhh uh: into the curriculum at times
44 Rob:    Yes do you- Did ↑you: ↓find that I mean is it just m:e.
45         I mean am I .hhh I mean I consider myself pretty strict.
46              (.)
47 Les:    Ye:s.
48 Rob:    But I found them quite (0.2) you know I had t'keep
49         remind'n them t'be qui↓et.=
50 Les:    =.hhh I kno:w. Uh::m I found they got very high towards
51         the end'v last te:rm..hhhh
```

After their greetings, Robbie, the recipient of the call, preempts Lesley's opportunity to introduce the first topic (line 8) and alludes to her problem for the first time ('my-:↓God there's a lotta children in this clahhss'). By commenting on the large number of pupils in the class, Robbie hints at what might possibly be bothering her, though she doesn't specify what is it exactly. Although Lesley in the next line (line 12) affiliates with Robbie, she does not further elaborate on it. After several turns, Robbie makes the second attempt to talk about her pupils. This time, her allusion comes in the form of an idiomatic expression. By evoking the figurative meaning of 'lick'm into shape', Robbie indirectly suggests the problems of the pupils, that they need to be more desciplined. The expression 'lick'm into ↑shape' helps Robbie hint at her problem more clearly without explicitly announcing it. This time Lesley responds to Robbie in more detail: she again affiliates with Robbie and displays her understanding of Robbie's problem–the children need to be 'bulldozed into the curriculum'. As it turns out, however, Lesley's understanding is not quite right. Instead of making another allusion to her real problem, after Lesley's incorrect guess, Robbie introduces it directly (line 48-49). Throughout this excerpt, we can see that Robbie starts out by vaguely alluding to her problem, and then she gradually specifies it in her subsequent but still implicit reference. When Lesley fails to grasp what she is referring to, Robbie abandons her allusion and announces her problem straightforwardly. In this example, although Lesley guesses incorrectly, Robbie's allusion still creates several opportunities in which Lesley orients to Robbie's implicit problem and topicalizes it.

In the final example, Emma's allusion to her preferred topic is correctly recognized by Nancy.

9. [NB:II:2:R]

```
01 Emm:    [.hhhhh] Bud js lef']t'play go:lf he's gotta go tuh
02 Nan:    [(0.4) ] °Y e h  ah°]
03 Emm:    Riverside=
04 Nan:    =[ O  h  : . ]
05 Emm:    =['nna comp'n ]y dea:l so, .t.h[hhhhh
06 Nan:                                   [Oh::?
07 Emm:    ↑GOD [it's bih-]
08 Nan:         [Tuh River]side tihda:y?
09 Emm:    .hhh Yeah they: theh gun'tee off et twelve it's a comp'ny
10         dea:l so (.) th'couple wz spozetih come do:wn tuh (.)
11         la:s'ni:ght'n yuhknow k-Harry en Kath'rn ther uh keh cz
12         Harry wz gunnuh play k-
13 Nan:    Oh[:.
14 Emm:      ['n comp'ny en then .hhh there wz a death in their
15         fa:m'ly so: (.) [.hhh
16 Nan:                    [Aww:::.
```

```
17                (.)
18 Emm:     ↑THE:Y gosh uh this is really been a wee:k ha:sn'it?=
19 Nan:     =Oh:: it rilly ha:s. ((sadly))
20 Emm:     I[t's r i h]
22 Nan:      [Gee it ri]:lly, it rilly ha:[s.
23 Emm:                                   [Ah won't ev'n turn the tee
24          Vee o:n,h
```

This conversation took place in the week that Robert Kennedy was assassinated, and the media had been flooded with news about the post-assassination arrangements. Emma discovered that she is personally connected to one of the arrangements: her flight for Honolulu had taken off from the same place that Kennedy's body had been sent away. Therefore, Emma calls Lottie to tell her about this discovery.

Before introducing her personal involvement, Emma first has to introduce the topic about the assassination. She does so with an exclamatory comment 'this is really been a wee:k ha:sn'it?' (line 18), thereby alluding to the assassination. By adding a tag question 'ha:sn'it', she makes it conditionally relevant for Nancy to respond to her comment. In line 19, Nancy affiliates with Emma's exclamation emphatically 'Oh:: it rilly ha:s', and repeats her affiliation in line 22 with even more emphasis 'Gee it ri:lly, it rilly ha:s'. The emphatic formulation of Nancy's response, realized through the exclamatory preface 'Gee', and the repetition of 'really', help to emphasis that Nancy embraces Emma's opinion in line 18, and display that she understands what Emma is talking about. From this point Emma starts to embark on her telling of how the post-assassination activities have coincided with her trip to Honolulu.

Prior to her allusion to the assassination, Emma seems to have done some extra work. At the start of this excerpt, she has been talking about her husband Bud and his golf activities, which bear no relationship to what she introduces later. However, in line 10 Emma mentions a couple who were supposed to come but couldn't make it, and in line 14 she announces the reason — 'there wz a death in their fa:m'ly' which is affiliated by Nancy in the following line. Now some link has been created between their current topic and the next topic Emma introduces: there is some topic similarity between the 'death in their family' and the assassination of Robert Kennedy, since both involve someone being killed. In this way, Emma is doing what Sacks (1992b, p. 300) describes as finding something that is connected to both the prior and the next topic and using that first. Just as mentioning Kennedy's assassination serves as the circumstance for Emma to talk about her personal involvement in the post-assassination activities, the death in the couple's family (lines 14-15) furnishes the circumstance through which Emma could subsequently introduce Kennedy's assassination.

In this section, I have introduced a third way of creating the circumstances for introducing a topic — allusion. Compared to the previous two practices, alluding to the next topic is the most 'unmarked', since the speakers do not mention the next topic explicitly. Instead, they only hint at what the next topic could be and invite the co-participants to topicalize it. While in some cases they succeed, it is also possible that the co-participants fail to grasp their allusion and initiate the next topic incorrectly. Therefore, alluding to the next topic could not guarantee its successful introduction, as the previous two practices do. Nevertheless, speakers do employ this practice recurrently, and if successful, it enables them to raise a topic imperceptibly.

## 5	Observations on the practices for topic manoeuvring

Having examined each of the practices, in this section I will describe some features shared in common by them. These features are speech perturbations in the construction of the practices, the display of other-attentiveness, and the use of linguistic cohesive devices. In addition, I will also highlight a common characteristic of the topics introduced through these practices, and how they may differ from topics introduced in other ways.

### 5.1	Speech perturbations in the construction of the practices

From the previous examples we can see that, when creating the circumstances for the next topic, speakers often do not formulate their turns smoothly. Instead, we can often observe various forms of speech perturbations. Such disfluencies are particularly recurrent in 'how I came to call' descriptions and allusions to the next topics. In example 6, Nancy's description of what she's been doing earlier is full of cut-offs, sound stretches and pauses.

6a. [NB:II:4:R]

```
10 Nan:     Ah huh? .t.hhhhhh OH I WZ JIST OU'WOH:SHING windo:ws: ih-
11           a:nd uh my mother ca:lled so I ca:me in ah thought w'l
12           wahl I'm in here'n I looked the clo:ck'nuz 'leven thirty
13           in I thaw wul: (.) ther .hhh.hh ther uhm (.) surely
14           th*erUP.yihkn*ow I knew it [wzkahn] 'v a: [s l e e]p in
15 Emm:                                 [Y e s.]       [A  wee-]
16 Nan:     d*a::y but uh:=I din't g*et home til (.) .hhhh two
17           las'night I met a very:,h very n:i:ce g*uy.
```

For instance, when Nancy finishes the first component of her account 'I WZ JIST OU'WOH:SHING windo:ws', there are some dysfluencies ('ih- a:nd uh') before she is able to continue.

Similarly, there are also pauses and cut-offs in Robbie's enumeration of her activities prior to the phone call.

8a. [Holt:May 88: Side 1: Call 5]

```
16 Rob:    ↑No I've jus' (0.4) I've been to the m::: uh delevel-
17          developmental writing thing at Westfield't was very
18          enjoyable .hhh 'n then I just thought I'd do a bit'v: the
19          shopping
20              (0.2)
21 Les:    Ye[s.
22 Rob:      [I (        ) ju:st really come in.
```

Here, the perturbations are in the form of within-turn pauses, restarts ('develel-developmental') and in-breath.

In allusions to some possible next topics, we can also find many instances of speech perturbations, such as in Lesley's trouble-premonitory answer '.hh ↑Oh fi: neh-we:ll: nah:- yes I am: fair↓ly fi:ne,' and in Robbie's allusion to the noisy pupils:

8c. [Holt:May 88: Side 1: Call 5]

```
10 Rob:      ↑Oh I wz thinking (0.2) my-: ↓God there's a lotta
11           children in this cla(h[h)ss

(26 lines omitted)

37           ↑An' I felt I'd achie::ved nothing'n the children're
38           really ah- (.) I feel (0.3) you know I need to lick'm
39           into ↑shape a↓gain.

(9 lines omitted)

48 Rob:      But I found them quite (0.2) you know I had t'keep
49           remind'n them t'be qui↓et.=
```

When alluding to her problem with the pupils, Robbie produces a number of pauses, which interestingly occur just when Robbie is about to formulate the problems of her pupils ('the children're really ah- (.)', 'I found them quite (0.2)') or when she is reporting her opinions on them ('↑Oh I wz thinking (0.2)', 'I feel (0.3) you know').

Compared to touched-off topic transitions and stepwise topic transitions, we find more instances of speech perturbations in the examples in this chapter, in which the next topics do not emerge from the immediately prior conversation, but are organized by the speakers who are "stacking the odds" (Heritage, 1990, p. 316) to introduce them. According to Chafe (1980, p.33), "speakers do not achieve the expression of a series of idea units without some trouble; natural speech exhibits a variety of perturbations in this process.'' Creating the circumstances for next topics involves just this kind of process, and perturbations may be the result of speaker's careful formulation of their turns in order to introduce the next topic. These cut-offs, restarts, pauses and sound stretches are the indication of the intricacies of topic manoeuvring.

5.2   Displaying other-attentiveness

A second shared feature of the three practices is the display of other attentiveness. This feature is most discernible when speakers are trying to introduce a topic as a second story. In example 2, Lesley first asks Robbie about Mary's allergic reaction. In example 2, Emma also asks about Lottie before talking about her own health problems. In example 3, Emma first comments about Lottie before embarking on her problem with her husband.

Displaying other-attentiveness is equally present in the other two practices — 'how I came to call' account and allusion. Although these two practices may not have any other-attentive questions, they are employed by participants only after other-attentiveness has been displayed. Prior to alluding to her problem in example 7, Robbie first establishes that she has been thinking about Lesley ('I wz ↑thinking ↓about you toda:y'), and then asks Lesley if she could proceed with her telling ('Is this a cha:t or are you ruh-ah: is this a short one' in line 8 and 'I don't mean a long long chat' in line 13). In example 8, Emma affiliates with Lottie's previous topic with elaborated comments, and introduces her own topic only after the previous topic winds down.

As I have pointed out earlier, the display of other-attentiveness is an important technique for managing topic rupture (Jefferson, 1984) because it combines interactional engagement and topical disengagement (Jefferson, 1993, p. 10). When creating a circumstance to introduce the next topic, a speaker is faced with two similar tasks: she needs to attend to the current topic while at the same time preparing for the next one. By producing various forms of other-attentive moves, speakers are able to address the interactional cohesiveness for ordinary conversation and go on to introduce the next topics.

5.3   Linguistic cohesive devices

In the previous chapter on stepwise topic transition, I detailed how speakers can connect their turns to prior turns with linguistic cohesive devices such as repetition, deixis and ellipsis. These devices also appear in the examples in this chapter. In particular, they are frequently employed when speakers are introducing their topics as second stories, or when they are alluding to the next topics.

In example 1, after Lottie finishes her description of her friend's house, Emma comments 'AH WISH you c'd meet somebuddy li:ke that.h'. 'That' in her turn refers to her friend's husband Claude, and in producing this comment, Emma connects her turn to Lottie's while at the same time creating an environment in which she could later talk about her husband. Later on, after Lottie complains about her husband, Emma affiliates with her by saying 'EVRY TIME YIH HA:VE these pro:bums Lottie they get(.)chu fa:rther'n farther awa:y' before talking about her own problems. Here the deictic word 'these' again links Emma's turn to Lottie's and serves to smooth out the introduction of Emma's second story.

In example 2, Lesley builds her topic on Mary's allergic reaction by saying 'th:this ↑is eh why I'm not ↑quite ↓so well at th'moment'. She also uses the deictic word 'this' to link her topic to Robbie's immediate prior telling. In addition, she also repeats the word 'allergy' ('I'd thought I'd got t'the: bottom a'my ↑allergies') which previously appeared in her question ('Oh ↑how's Mary ↓keeping. Cuz uh her aller ↓gies.').

In example 7, Robbie also uses lexical repetition and deixis when introducing her problem with the pupils. After the first allusion ('there's a lotta children in this clahhss'), Robbie produces a second one ('I felt I'd achie::ved nothing'n the children're really ah- (.) I feel (0.3) you know I need to lick'm into ↑shape a↓gain.') in which she repeats the word 'children' and uses the deictic word 'them' ('lick'm into shape').

By using different forms of linguistic cohesive devices, a next speaker manages to retain a link to previous turns when working towards a new topic, so that the next topic can be heard as in some way connected to the previous talk. As in displaying other-attentiveness, these linguistic devices also enable speakers to exhibit their orientation to interactional cohesiveness.

5.4   Topic manoeuvring and the delicate nature of the topics

Examining the examples in stepwise topic transition and touched-off topic transition, we can find that the new topics introduced in these two ways are mostly emotionally 'neutral'. In other

words, these topics are not filled with strong feelings or tension. Rather, they are merely about sharing some personal experience or telling my-side knowledge regarding the current topic, such as the personal details of the manager at a furniture shop, the nail problem that a friend is having, or just a telling about a recent trip.

In contrast, the topics introduced through topic manoeuvring show a different pattern, in that they are topics that are much more emotionally charged. Some topics involve some distressing content (e.g., the assassination of Kennedy) or the revelation of personal difficulties (e.g., Lesley's allergic reaction, Emma's fingernail problems), while other topics have a complainable nature (e.g., Emma's husband Bud and Robbie's problem with the noisy pupils). Although they do not involve any explicit complaint about the co-participants themselves or any tabooed subjects, these topics may nevertheless be regarded as interactionally delicate. Interestingly, the three patterns I have identified for manoevering topics into the conversattion display a common property, in that they are often associated with the introduction of such kind of interactionally delicate topics.

Without speculating about the intentionality of the participants, these practices described in this chapter enable them to introduce these emotionally charged topics in an unmarked, neutral way. By occasioning some talk that is relevant to the next topic, some first stories can be generated, and they serve as the warrant in which the next topic can be introduced as a reciprocal second. By producing a 'how I came to call' account, speakers bring the conversation in a sense back to the beginning, so that the next topics are given a first-topic status — another sort of warrant for their introduction. In the third practice, the speakers allude to the next topics and the co-participants often participate in topicalizing them. Just like idiomatic expressions are frequently associated with the formulation of complaints (Drew and Holt, 1988), the three practices described in this chapter facilitate the talk about topics that are more emotionally charged than ordinary ones.

6   Conclusion

This chapter is built based on Adato's preliminary observation on the 'circumstantially produced topicality' of talk (1979, p. 184). According to Adato (1979, 1980), a speaker intent on establishing the topicality of some mentionable would monitor the talk to find the circumstances for introducing it. Based on this argument, I examined a series of examples where a speaker is observed to manoeuvre the conversation so that such circumstances are created. In addition, I have identified three main practices to create these circumstances.

The first practice involves generating some talk that is relevant to the next topic, so that the next topic can be introduced in the form of a second story. To generate such talk, a speaker can ask a related question to the co-participant, who will produce a first story. Based on the first story, the speaker can then introduce her next topic as a reciprocal second. Also, a speaker can produce recipient comment that is only tangentially relevant to the current topic. This kind of comment, while relevant to the current topic, helps to divert the conversation towards the next

topic. In doing so a speaker establishes the circumstances for the next topic while still staying on the current one.

The second practice is to introduce the next topic as if it is the first topic of the entire conversation. To give the conversation a 'restart', a speaker produces a 'how I came to call' account in which she enumerates what she has been doing prior to the phone call. In ordinary conversations, 'how I came to call' description is frequently associated with conversational starts. It brings the conversation in a sense back to its beginning, as if to reset the whole interaction. As a result, any next topic will be given a first-topic status, and this kind of first topic importance provides a warrant for its introduction.

Lastly, a speaker can also introduce her preferred topic through allusion. Without explicitly raising the topic, a speaker only hints at it in her turn and invites the co-participant to bring it up collaboratively. In most cases, the co-participant orients to the allusion and attempt to topicalize it, but sometimes they fail to grasp its implications. Therefore, the speaker has to make her allusion clearer and introduce the next topic more straightforwardly.

Although different from each other, these three practices also share some commonalities. First, when creating the circumstances to introduce a topic, speakers often could not formulate their turns without some troubles. As a result, we can frequently observe speech perturbations in their turns, such as cut-offs, restarts, pauses, etc., which reflect the speaker's careful planning for the formulation of their actions. Second, speakers always attend the interactional cohesiveness of the conversation when trying to introduce the next topic. In some examples, they display their attentiveness to the other speaker by producing other-attentive questions or highly affiliative comments. In other cases, they employ linguistic cohesive devices, such as lexical repetition and deictic words, to connect their following turns to preceding talk.

Lastly, the topics introduced through the three practices also have a feature in common. That is, most of them seem to be topics that are emotionally charged, involving subjects that may be distressing or complainable. Compared to topics introduced in touched-off or stepwise fashion, these topics need to be more carefully formulated and communicated. The three practices I have identified furnish the ground on which they can be brought up in an appropriate way.

In this chapter, I have examined Adato's (1979, 1980) arguments with empirical examples and detailed analysis, and offered specific ways of achieving the circumstantially produced topicality of topics. Returning to Adato's (1979, 1980) initial argument, it is now clear that speakers indeed employ the 'circumstantially produced topicality' to introduce topics, and they do so with recurrent practices. By presenting another way of topic transition, I hope this chapter has offered some further insight into the management of topic in ordinary conversations.

Chapter 5   Topic atrophy and topic resumption

1   Introduction

In the previous chapter, I explored how participants launch a specific topic by creating an auspicious environment. They can firstly generate some talk through questions or comments, and then introduce the next topic in relation to the talk in the form of a second story (Sacks, 1992b, p. 255). Also, they can give the next topic they introduce a 'first-topic status' (Sacks, 1992b, p. 301), by giving an account of what they have been doing immediately prior to the conversation. Lastly, they can also allude to the next topic and invite the co-participants to topicalize it collaboratively. Through these practices, speakers can manage to introduce a particular next topic in a coherent way, as if it is occasioned by circumstances (Adato, 1979, 1980).

While the previous chapter focused on introducing a topic, in this chapter I will investigate a slightly different matter – resuming a topic. In addition to raising a topic, in ordinary conversations speakers also work to stay on a particular topic, even if it seems to be exhausted or replaced by a different topical direction. The example below is an illustration of this phenomenon.

1.   [NB:IV:13:R]

```
01 Emm:     En then I ha:d (0.2) ya::ms God they don'eat half the
02          food you'av suh da:mn much: tih ea:t yihkno:w
03          th[et you]
04 Lot:       [Oh:: I]: know [it. [Ye[:ah.]
05 Emm:                   [.hhh[h [ S o]: wur HAVIN turkey. But
06          Lo:ttie you t:ell (0.2) P:olly*:: you have NEver ha:d such
07          healing in yer li-:fe en you know this is rilly funny it
08          dawned on me la:s'night. (0.2) .t.hhhhh ↑Firs'time I been
09          tuh (.) be:d an'there wz no problem. Aa jis like I wz
10          perfect.
11          (.)
12 Emm:     I sid my Go:d I'm hea:led. En then I got tuh thinkin I've
13          had this da:mn turkey.
14          (.)
15 Emm:     .hnff An' this girl'n the'partm'nt came up the othuh day en
16          tol' me th't (0.2) yihknow she read this?
17          (0.3)
18 Emm:     .hh.hhhhh whu:r? a doct↑er cures ↑iz pa↑tients buh
19          eating turkey
20          (0.4).
21 Lot:     Wul now why don'tchu leave off the mea:t.=
22 Emm:     =[I  A : : M.]
23 Lot:     =[Jis get tur]:key.=
24 Emm:     =I a:m.
25 Lot:     .hh You g'n bu:y turkey .hh I:: do: lo:tsa ti:mes. e-in the
26          ja:r that Lynden ha:s that tur:[key.]
27 Emm:                                    [ Ye:]ah.
28          (.)
```

```
29 Emm:     .hhhh Well I'm gunnuh ha:ve chicken too en ah love chicken
30                          _____(1.2)
31          en I c'n ha:ve uh .hhhh.hhh.hhuhh (.) oh:: lotta stuff
32          Lottie like that I mean I dthink ah'll d's:(.)t [cook a]
33 Lot:                                                     [I :'d ]u-
34 Lot:     I::'d uh leave o:ff the mea:t.
35 Emm:     °I think I ↑wi:ll.°I haven't hadda piece a'mea:t since I
36          been down here.
37          (.)
38 Emm:     I don't thi:nk except °whe:n° we eat out ↑No ah din'have
39          any w'n I ate out with you:.
40          (1.0)
41 Emm:     .t [.h °Wuh-°]
42 Lot:        [No  y o u] hadda bowl a'sou:p,
43 Emm:     .t nYe:ah,
44          (0.2)
45 Emm:     I haven't had a piece a'mea:t.
46          (1.0)
47 Emm:     Over et Bill's I had ta:cos Mondee ni::ght little bitta
48          mea:t the*:re. B't not much.
49 Lot:     W:ah'ontche [try it'n s[ee  that] mi:ght h]elp it.=
50 Emm:                 [.schnff  [°Think I]  wi:ll.°]
51 Lot:     =I mean rilly: s:tick to it. Yihknow non't (.) fuss around
52          a bout it jis:(.)t go ahead'n do it'n .t.hh.hhhh  an' uh =
53 Emm:     =I ↑mean it. .hhh I have neh-u-↑You tell Polly. .hh It's
54          ↑jis like it's completely go:ne.
55          (0.6)
56 Lot:     [N  o  : -]
57 Emm:     [There's n]o:thing. It jis thez no pro:blems et a::ll.
58 Lot:     Eh co[ r e]     [wu-
59 Emm:          [°Jis]:° l[ike yer perfec' TEL YUH look et cherself'n
60          then .hhhh then 't's flaking off on the big ones it's jis
61          comin'off bah itse:lv yihkno:w
```

Prior to this example, Emma has been telling Lottie about her Thanksgiving dinner, an account that draws to a close at the beginning of this excerpt. At the start of this example, Emma's telling is coming to completion. Touched off by the reference of turkey, Emma is reminded of the medical effect of turkey has on her psoriasis. She treats this recent discovery as something very newsworthy and shares with Lottie how turkey has cured her (line 5-19). In response to Emma's telling, Lottie affiliates by suggesting Emma to 'leave off meat and just get turkey' (line 21-23), but their following conversation seems to take them to a slightly different direction. Instead of focusing on the effect of turkey on psoriasis, Lottie and Emma have moved to talk about their diet pattern in general, and what they have eaten recently. When their conversation seems to have moved further away from turkey and psoriasis, at line 53-54, Emma, resumes the topic and then adds further details about how her skin has recovered, thereby restoring the topicality of turkey's effect on treating psoriasis.

This phenomenon of topic resumption is a common practice in ordinary conversation. In this chapter, I will examine this practice in more detail. In the next section, I will describe two kinds of general sequential environment where topic resumption occurs. In the third section, I will highlight the immediate prior environment of topic resumption, where participants are making a choice between embarking on a new topic and resuming an earlier topic. In the fourth section, I will focus on the linguistic practice through which topic resumption is accomplished.

2   Sequential environments for topic resumption.

By describing example 1 as involving a case of topic resumption, I am distinguishing it from a similar phenomenon — topic continuation. As Jefferson (1972) proposes, if a speaker works to return to an ongoing sequence after a side sequence, he could construct the return as either a continuation of the ongoing sequence or as a resumption of it. In the case of continuation, the return is tied directly to the ongoing sequence, as if the side sequence does not occur. For example:

2. Example from Jefferson (1972, p.317)

```
01 A:     An' everybody's askin 'im t'dance.
02 B:     An' because he's scareda dancing he's gonna dance in private til
03        he learns how.
04 A:     And a goodlooking girl comes up to you and asks you, y'know,
05 B:     'GI(hh)rl asks you to—'
06 ..        …
07 C:     Well it's happened a lotta times,
08 B:     Okay okay go ahead.
09           (1.0)
10 B:     So he says 'no'.
11           (1.0)
12 B:      Cause he's scared to admit that he can't dance an he's scared to
13         try.
```

Using a turn-initial 'so' in line 10, B designs the return to his ongoing telling as a continuation, blending it with the immediately previous side sequence.

In resumption, however, the speaker marks that there is a problem (Jefferson, 1972, p. 319) in the preceding conversational environment for an unmarked return, so that a restart of the abandoned telling is required. For example:

3. Example from Jefferson (1972, p.316)

```
01 A:     Wouldju call somebody like that a nut?
02 B:     No,
03 A:     Whaddiyuh call 'em. You can't say they're nuts,
04 B:     He's a person who's well illuminated.
05 ..        …..
06 C:     'Well illuminated'?
07 ..        …
08 ..        …
09 ..        …
10 ..        …
11 B:     Well he well he's freed from all the eh inhibitions society
12        imposes on him.
13 A:     Listen. When he had the responsibility — when he had the responsibility
14        to take – take charge of – he was second in charge of the dorm…
```

In line 13, the attention getter (Jefferson, 1972, p. 319) 'listen' explicitly marks that the side sequence should now be brought to a halt and participants should go back to the ongoing sequence.

Focusing on topic resumptions, I have identified two types of their problematic sequential environments (Jefferson, 1972). One type is an interactional hiatus, where a topic gradually winds down by lack of contribution from participants. The other is the emergence of a competing line of topic development that gradually pushes the previous topic aside. I will discuss these two types of sequential environments in turn.

2.1   Interactional hiatus

In many cases, topic resumption occurs after the preceding conversation moves into a hiatus. Hiatus can be seen as an unmarked form of topic atrophy, because during a hiatus, neither parties further develop the current talk, letting the topic wind down gradually. Interactional hiatus is also what Hoey (2018) observes as lapses, which are "periods of nontalk that develop when all interactants forgo the opportunity to self-select in a place where speaking was possible (p. 1). Below are several examples of topic hiatus prior to topic resumption. In many examples, the same topic is resumed for more than once throughout the conversation. To clearly show the temporal ordering of the multiple resumptions, the original line numbers are kept in the extracts.

4. [Holt: 1988 Undated: Side 2: Call 4]

```
610 Car:    =Bu(.)t uh (.) [I mean e:ven to-: uh-: dial or: press=
611                        [((clattering----------------))
612 Car:    =these butt'ns on:'telephone. .hh to get the right I
613         mean I ↓know where each number i:s b[u(.)t I'd go wrong=
614 Ski:                                         [ihYe:s.
615 Car:    =without m'glasses on I thi[nk,
616 Ski:                               [n-Ye:s. Yes.
617              (0.2)
618 Ski:    [.hhhhhhhhhhhhh
619 Car:    [°I usually put th'm on to do it but uh°
620              (1.2)
621 Car:    °anywa:y,° .hh[ But we ]heard fr'm one'r t- I heard from=
622 Ski:                  [BU'WHAT-]
623 Car:    =one 'r two people ↓in Norfolk frie:[nds
```

Before this excerpt begins, Carrie has been talking in detail about nearly every detail of her widowed life — including the acquaintances who have written condolence letters to her and the sleeping habits she has adopted after her husband's death. At the start of this excerpt, Carrie is talking about her reliance on glasses in her daily life.

Although Skip is aligning with Carrie during her talk, we can observe that he makes attempts to bring the current topic to a closure. His flurry of minimal, repeated acknowledge tokens

("ihYe:s." in line 614 and "n-Ye:s. Yes." in line 616) and the brief silence in line 617 suggest that Skip is not contributing anything further to the current topic. In overlap with Skip's in-breath in line 618, Carrie murmured a turn that is syntactically incomplete ("°I usually put th'm on to do it but uh°"), which is followed by a long silence (line 620). The reduced volume and the incompleteness of her turn both indicate that Carrie is also moving into the closure of her telling. Here the conversation stalls and a hiatus occurs: on the one hand, Carrie's long sequence of talk is declining; on the other, no new topic has been launched by either of the speakers.

Shortly afterwards, another interactional hiatus emerges.

5. [Holt: 1988 Undated: Side 2: Call 4]

```
658 Car:      And he also said he would very much've liked to
659           've come to the chu:rch. .hh But he had a memorial
660           service for a very old friend in Essex the following
661 Car:      da:[y.
662             [((clo[h))
663 Ski:          [gOh[:.
664 Car:              [an'ee couldn't come .h[h an' I really=
665 Ski:                                     [tchhhh
666 Car:      =think he would've tak'n the trouble to've ↑co:[me.
667 Ski:                                                     [ehYe:s .=
668 Car:      =[(             )
669 Ski:      =[W' it's a long wa:y too [isn' it.
670 Car:                                [Oh I ↑kno:w:. ↑Ye:s. I mean I
671           (0.8) I wz quite gratef'l for tha[:t
672 Ski:                                       [n:Ye:s. Ye:s.
673 Car:      Well 'course 'ee knew me too becuz I'd worked
674           the[re for a few]years (you]see:)?
675 Ski:         [ bY  e  : s ]'v cou:rse]
676              (0.2)
677 Ski:      .hhhh[hhhh
678 Car:           [Bu(.)t uh
679              (0.9)
680 Car:      He wrote' very ↓nice letter.
```

This extract closely follows the one above. Here Carrie is talking about the letter she received from a friend Philip Hammond[1]. From line 663, another conversational hiatus begins to emerge. That is, while Carrie is elaborating the details of her friend's letter, Skip is steering away from them. When Carrie's telling arrives at a possible completion point (line 666), Skip, instead of talking about the letter or about Carrie's friend, makes a comment on an ancillary matter (Jefferson, 1984), the long distance that prevented Carrie's friend from coming to the funeral (line 668-669) — which could potentiate a new line of talk. However, Carrie does not further develop this ancillary matter, but again returns to the talk about the letter and her friend (line 673-674). In this case, her return is accomplished in the form of a continuation, where her new turn 'Well 'course 'ee knew me too becuz I'd worked there for a few years you see:' can be

---

[1] Here Philip Hammond is a pseudonym but not the current chancellor of exchequer.

incorporated into her previous one 'an' I really think <u>he</u> would've tak'n the trouble to've ↑<u>co</u>:me' before Skip's turn at line 667.

This time, Skip aligns with his co-participant with only minimal tokens (line 672, line 675). Apart from the simple acknowledgements of Carrie's telling, Skip does not make any contribution to the development of Carrie's talk about her friend. The flurry of minimal acknowledgement tokens that Skip produces lead to possible topic atrophy of Carrie's telling, and as is evident from the gap in line 676, Carrie does not pick up her next turn immediately as she did previously. A similar hiatus can be seen in example 6.

6. [NB:II:3:R]

```
168 Emm:      *I r*illy sh'd st*ay d*own Let's see this is the end a'
169           the. (0.8) .t (0.4) W*e:ll maybe,h I say ne:x' week I: aven
170           got too many clothes God I made ay beautiful dre:ss tuh
171           wear et the dinner:'n evrythi:ng en .t.hhhh ah DDN'EV'N
172           HA:VE IT O::N. I: wz in sho::rts 'n: (0.2) blou::se 'n:d
173           Go:d almighty you couldn'ev'n DRE:SS it wz so da:mn ho::t.
174           (0.3)
175 Emm:      .t.hh (.) So we jis: (.) le:ft 'n   .hh-.hh-.hh   Cliff
176           Brow:n wz there remember he usetih be ar nei:ghbor?
177 Lot:      ↑Ye::[a h :.]
178 Emm:          [The Br]o::wns 'n[:
179 Lot:                          [Ye:ah,
180 Emm:      We hadda drink with him he pla:ys golf  he °works fer
181           th'comp'ny 'n°
182           (0.2)
183 Lot:      [Ye:a[h.
184 Emm:      [.h  [ Go:d eez a gra:nfather .hhhuhhh So I sat with th'
185           girls aroun'  the poo::l 'n: uhh (0.2) So w'n Bud got
186           through: why we had'check out et two uh'clo:ck
187           (0.4)
188 Emm:      .t=
189 Lot:      =Uh [huh]
190 Emm:          [S o]
191           (0.6)
192 Emm:      S'let's head fuh the bea:ch I didn' ev'n stay fer the
193           dinner.
194           (0.3)
195 Lot:      Oh::.
196           (.)
197 Lot:      Uh huh,
198           (0.7)
```

As we join this extract, Emma and her sister Lottie are talking casually about somewhere Emma stayed where the weather was very hot. She complains specifically that because of the hot weather, she was not able to wear her beautiful dress and stay for dinner at an event (line 171-173). After the complaint finishes, Emma resumes her report of the event, including whom she met (line 176-176), what she had done (line 184-185), and when she checked out (185-186).

However, during this process, Emma seems engaged in a monologue; Lottie does not exhibit any strong interest in her telling. As we can see from the beginning of the extract, Lottie responds with only minimal answers and acknowledgement tokens (e.g., line 177, line 179, line

183, and line 189). Even Emma's encounter with their old neighbour, which she regards as newsworthy, fails to elicit a more elaborated response from Lottie (note the pause and the in-breath after Emma's news announcement-like sentence in line 184, which could be seen as waiting for Lottie's response). The minimal gap before uptake (line 194, line 196) and the acknowledgement tokens (line 195, line 197) strongly suggest Lottie's readiness to close down the current topic. As it turns out, Emma does not extend her telling any further, thereby leaving a gap (line 198) during which no one volunteers to talk.

From the three examples above, we could see how interactional hiatus can gradually develop in the course of a conversation. In the hiatus, we can see that the conversation has moved into a stage where the previous telling is gradually winding down but no party proposes to initiate a new sequence of talk.

2.2   Competing topic development

In her discussion on side sequences, Jefferson (1972) notes that in addition to questioning repeat, which will lead to a repair sequence, there is another way to halt an ongoing conversation. This is done by initiating what she calls a 'competitive activity' (Jefferson, 1972, p. 312). According to her,

> "There can be, for example, a 'change in topic' or, on a finer scale, within a recognizably 'same topic', a shift of focus. These provide to varying degrees that what has been on-going is now no longer on-going." (Jefferson, 1972, p. 312-313)

Svennevig (1999) describes a similar activity which was called 'topic leap' (P. 195). Topic leaps are occasioned by prior conversation but open up a slightly different topic direction. In other words, they 'recontextualize' (Svennevig, 1999, p. 200) the prior conversation and suspend the ongoing topic.

Some extracts I have described in previous sections exhibit cases of such 'competitive activities' (Jefferson, 1972, p. 312) or in Svennevig (1999)'s term, topic leaps. In example 1, after Emma introduced how turkey cured her psoriasis for the first time, the conversation then gradually moved to her eating habits in general, thereby suspending the topic of turkey and her psoriasis. In example 4, after Carrie talked about how her old friend would have taken the trouble to attend her husband's funeral, Skip comments on the long distance preventing her friend from coming, which has the potential to initiate a different direction of the   conversation.

Here are two additional examples of competing topic development, which represent another sequential environment for topic resumption.

7. [Holt: 1988 Undated: Side 2: Call 4]

```
619 Car:     °I usually put th'm on to do it but uh°
620                 (1.2)
621 Car:     °anywa:y,° .hh[ But we ]heard fr'm one'r t- I heard from=
```

```
622 Ski:                       [BU'WHAT-]
623 Car:     =one 'r two people ↓in Norfolk frie:[nds
624 Ski:                                          [Oh had you ye:s,
625              hhh[hh
626 Car:     'nd as[ I said I wz surprized that Well you see we put
627          it in the (Eastern) Daily Press the announcem'nt 'n then
628          .hh that wz the quickest way of letti[ng people kno:w]=
629 Ski:                                          [ i h Y e : s . ]=
630 Car:     =sort'v acquaintences,
631 Ski:     lgihYe:[s
632 Car:            [An:d Philip Hammon[d ↑saw ↓it. ('n'ee)]=
633 Ski:                               [.h h h h h h h h ]=
634 Car:     =[(an'ee wrote a  ve]ry nice[↓letter).
635 Ski:     =[ A h   I    s e e ].h h h [WELL I::'m glad 'ee did eez
636          a nice ol' chap he wz very much the gentle↑man was
637          Philip I thou[ght
638 Car:                  [Well: that's what Jo (.) ↓awl u uh:,hh
639          she's Jo Adams now who was Jo Applega:te.
640 Ski:     Oh y[es
641 Car:         [An' she said n- (.) He's a(p) (.) Mister Hammond's
642          a perfect ↓ge:ntleman.
643              (0.3)
644 Car:     She always sounds you kno:w .hhh I said well (.) Ronald
645          said he 'ad mellowed which 'ee had I mean .t.hhh It was
646          rather- his b'avior wz rather different from: when 'ee
647          met me in the office after my fa:ther'd died'n said ↑Oh:
648          they tell me your fa:ther has died 'n I nearly said sh'd
649          'ee've asked your p(h)erm(h)issio(h)o[n
650 Ski:                                          [Oowehhhh hhah ha:h
651          uh-: .uh:: .uh .hfhh[hh
```

This extract comes immediately after example 4. At line 621-622, Carrie produces a news announcement-like turn 'I heard from one 'r two people ↓in Norfolk frie:nds', which terminates the previous topic about her sleeping habit since the death of her husband. Then, Carrie narrows down the scope of her 'Norfolk frie:nds', focusing on one of them in particular — Philip Hammond, who 'wrote a very nice ↓letter'.

Skip's response to Carrie's announcement (line 635-637) could be considered as initiating a competing line of topic development. Although it is perfectly on topic, it has the potential to create a slight shift of topical focus. That is, instead of treating Carrie's announcement as news and asking for further details, Skip comments warmly on the personality of Carrie's friend (line 635-line 636). In doing so, he does not respond to the immediate prior turn about the letter. In other words, his comment has the potential to push aside Carrie's topic direction. As could be seen in her next turn, Carrie temporarily suspends her talk about the letter, and at great length affiliates with Skip by reporting a similar comment about Philip Hammond made by another person (638-649). When Carrie's telling finishes (line 651), their conversation has already moved to a different direction and therefore going back to the talk of the letter requires extra effort and design. By focusing on a related yet peripheral aspect of Carrie's topic, Skip initiates a competing topic direction that halts Carrie's talk about the letter she received from her old friend.

The example above show another type of sequential environment for topic resumption, where a potential new topic direction is created thereby blocking the original topic that they have been talking about. Just like an interactional hiatus, such a competing topic direction makes it difficult for the speakers to go back to the previous topic in an unmarked way, thereby requiring extra practices to resume it.

3   The topical tension associated with topic resumption

Before focusing on the linguistic means of resumption, it is worth considering another feature of topic resumption, which is the observable topical tension displayed just prior to resuming the previous topic. Such topical tension arises from the sequential environment for topic resumption, where the current topic gradually winds down, or where a competing topic direction emerges. Unfortunately, previous research into topic resumption paid little attention to this type of topical tension and how it is managed by the participants prior to topic resumption. However, topical tensions appear quite frequently prior to topic resumptions, and they exhibit in detail how, between different topic directions, topic resumptions succeed in gaining the conversational floor. Therefore, topical tension is an important feature of topic resumption that should be highlighted.

From the extracts discussed above, I have found several cases of topical tension. In example 2, for instance,

4a. [Holt: 1988 Undated: Side 2: Call 4] (begins with line 619 in example 2)

```
619 Car:     ˚I usually put th'm on to do it but uh˚
620               (1.2)
621 Car:     ˚anywa:y,˚ .hh[But we ]heard fr'm one'r t- I heard from=
622 Ski:                  [BU'WHAT-]
623 Car:     =one 'r two people ↓in Norfolk frie:nds
```

As noted earlier, Carrie produced a syntactically incomplete sentence at line 619, followed by a substantial silence which could lead to conversational breakdown (Jefferson, 1989). Here, neither Carrie nor Skip volunteers to take the floor, and the topic they have been talking about (Carrie's sleeping habit) gradually winds down. The topical tension between the two speakers could be observed from the overlap in line 621 and line 622. In line 621, Carrie first produces 'anywa:y', a marker of topical discontinuity (Drew, 1997, p. 76), signalling the ending of her previous line of talk and an incoming new turn. After a short pause, she starts to breathe in and resume the topic she introduced several minutes ago. At exactly the same moment, Skip also starts to speak (line 622). It is possible that hearing the in-breath as a preface for a new round of telling (Schegloff, 1996d, p. 92), Skip raises a what-prefaced question so that his own preferred topic could be raised before Carrie takes the opportunity. As a result of this topical tension, however, Skip withdraws his turn, leaving the floor to Carrie. Although Skip fails to win the floor, his overlapping talk underlines the topical tension between him and Carrie, each of whom has a different agenda for their conversation.

Later on, Carrie and Skip's conversation reveals another topical tension:

5a. [Holt: 1988 Undated: Side 2: Call 4] (a shorter extract of example 3)

```
670 Car:     Oh I ↑kno:w:. ↑Ye:s. I mean I (0.8) I wz quite
671          gratef'l for tha[:t
672 Ski:                     [n:Ye:s. Ye:s.
673 Car:     Well 'course 'ee knew me too becuz I'd worked
674          the[re for a few]years (you]see:)?
675 Ski:        [ bY  e  : s ]'v cou:rse]
676               (0.2)
677 Ski:     .hhhh[hhhh
678 Car:          [Bu(.)t uh
679               (0.9)
680 Car:     He wrote' very ↓nice letter.↓
```

Focusing on line 676 to line 679, we could see that Skip and Carrie are again competing for the turn to talk after the gradual closure of the previous topic. By producing a repeated acknowledgement token (line 672, line 675), Skip exhibits his readiness to close down the current topic. Just like line 620 in the previous example, here in line 676 there is also a short gap which signals an interactional hiatus. After a short silence, Skip starts to take a long in-breath (line 676), which could possibly preface some new, incoming talk (line 677). Taking Skip's in-breath as a pre-beginning element, Carrie interjects with a turn-initial but (line 678), which helps her take and hold of the conversational floor. Then, with a floor holding device uh, Carrie again secures her floor for the next turn, in which she resumes her old topic. This excerpt presents a similar topical tension as shown in the previous one, in that both Skip (in the previous excerpt) and Carrie try to compete for the conversational floor by pre-empting their co-participant's imminent talk, just before topic resumption.

While topical tension can be created and negotiated by both participants in the conversation, a single participant may also face such tension, even if the co-participants are not actively competing for the floor, as Skip and Carrie did in the previous two examples. In this case, the speaker who works to resume an old topic is faced with two options: attending to the co-participant's immediate prior turn and developing the current topic, or resuming a previous topic. Therefore, the speaker is often observed to be hesitating between these two choices, and such hesitation often leads to observable speech perturbations (Schegloff 2000) within turns.

9. [NB:IV:4:R]

```
339 Lot:     Ih-ih wasn'a BI:T BA:D la:s'ni:ght,
340 Emm:     °Ya:h.°
341 Lot:     Yihknow ih wz: uh(b) (.) a hi:gh fo:g but it is:n'bad out
342          tihda:y I don't know why'ee esstuh crab about that fer
343          cryin ou-.hh It's better'n the da:mn smog in tow:n,
344 Emm:     .t.hhh Oh-:. (.) Uh ↑Bud's not crabbin ub Oh: yeh he's (.)
345          t-.hh.hh *ah ↑Ah don'know what tuh do abou:t Barber sh'd I
```

This occurs later in the conversation shown in example 6, where Emma calls Lottie to complain about her husband's conduct. At the beginning of this extract, Lottie and Emma have temporarily moved away from talking about Emma's family trouble and are discussing the weather. In her comments on the weather, Lottie mentions Bud (Emma's husband) and complains about his behaviour (lines 342-343, "I don't know why'ee esstuh crab about that fer cryin ou-.hh"). The focus of this extract is line 344 and line 345, where Emma deals with the tension between attending to Lottie's immediate prior turn and attending to a possible topic resumption. In response to Lottie's comment on Bud (I don't know why'ee esstuh crab about that), Emma firstly produces an explanation for him ("Oh-:. (.) Uh ↑Bud's not crabbin ub"), which is hearable as a negation of Lottie's complaint. However, before finishing it, Emma abruptly abandons her ongoing track and heads toward an opposite direction ("Oh: yeh he's"), thereby confirming Lottie's perspective. It is before she fully embarks on this confirmation that Emma once again abandons it. After a series of pauses and in-breaths (line 345), Emma resumes her turn, but this time she is not resuming her previously-suspended turn, but instead is returning to her distant previous topic — her family trouble and her complaint about her husband ("↑Ah don'know what tuh do abou:t Barber"). This example, including the speech perturbations, shows how Emma, presented with two choices of topic development, is attempting to manage the topical tension between two topical directions before initiating resumption.

Returning to example 1, we can observe another case of topical tension, where Emma appears to try to go in two directions in line 53.

1a. [NB:IV:13:R] (a shorter extract of example 1)

```
45 Emm:      I haven't had a piece a'mea:t.
46           (1.0)
47 Emm:      Over et Bill's I had ta:cos Mondee ni::ght little bitta
48           mea:t the*:re. B't not much.
49 Lot:      W:ah'ontche [try it'n s[ee  that] mi:ght h]elp it.=
50 Emm:                  [.schnff   [°Think I]  wi:ll.°]
51 Lot:      =I mean rilly: s:tick to it. Yihknow non't (.) fuss around
52           a bout it jis:(.)t go ahead'n do it'n .t.hh.hhhh  an' uh =
53 Emm:      =I ↑mean it. .hhh I have neh-u-↑You tell Polly. .hh It's
54           ↑jis like it's completely go:ne.
```

As we join this extract, Emma and Lottie are talking about what they have been eating lately. In particular, Emma emphasizes that she hasn't eaten any meat. In response, Lottie suggests that Emma keeps off meat because it might cure her psoriasis (line 49, line 51-52). This suggestion is accepted by Emma, who affiliates with Lottie ('°Think I wi:ll.°') in overlap with her turn at line 49. After Lottie elaborates her suggestion at line 51-52, Emma again affiliates with her by confirming that she will leave off meat ('I ↑mean it.'). After an in-breath, she produces an incomplete TCU 'I have neh-u-' before she resumes the topic she introduced earlier — how she finds turkey healed her psoriasis. The incomplete TCU again highlights the topical tension that Emma is facing. It is possible that by starting with 'I have neh-u-', Emma is trying to say 'I have never had a piece of meat', thereby reiterating her turn at line 45. However, in the middle of

her turn, Emma seems to find an opportunity to go back to the earlier topic — how turkey might cure psoriasis. Therefore, before she talks further along the current topic direction, Emma cuts off the TCU she is producing and returns to the previous topic. In this process, some speech perturbation is evident, which reflects Emma's careful planning of her turn in dealing with the two possible topic directions.

In this section, I have looked at the immediate prior environment for topic resumption. From the examples where the two participants are competing for the floor after an interactional hiatus, we can see that topic resumption may not be an action that is mutually oriented to by both participants. Under this circumstance, topic resumption is the outcome of participant's negotiation for the subsequent topic direction, through which one party gives the floor to the other speaker who returns to a previous topic. Even if there is no such observable topical tension, a speaker who initiates topic resumption may still face two different topic directions. In this case, she is normatively required to respond to the immediate prior turn while at the same time preparing for a topic resumption, and this process is often highlighted by the distinct speech perturbations before topic resumption. By attending to the prior turn before resuming an old topic, the speaker preserves the sense of interactional cohesiveness (Jefferson, 1984, p. 213) which is 'a general technique for managing topic rupture' (ibid.).

4   Linguistic practices for topic resumption

Having examined the wider as well as the immediate environments for topic resumption, in this section I will focus on the linguistic practices employed to resume an old topic. Across all the examples above, topic resumption is accomplished in one simple practice. As also noted by previous research (Bulblitz, 1988; Svennevig, 1999; Mazeland & Huiskes, 2001; Bolden, 2009), this simple practice is the repetition of a turn or a part of the previous topic. For example, in the conversation between Carrie and Skip, Carrie resumes the topic about the letter from Philip Hammond several times by recycling her own utterance produced earlier.

4b. [Holt: 1988 Undated: Side 2: Call 4] (this is an extended version of example 2)

```
610 Car:    =Bu(.)t uh (.) [I mean e:ven to-: uh-: dial or: press=
611                        [((clattering----------------))
612 Car:    =these butt'ns on:'telephone. .hh to get the right I
613         mean I ↓know where each number i:s b[u(.)t I'd go wrong=
614 Ski:                                        [ihYe:s.
615 Car:    =without m'glasses on I thi[nk,
616 Ski:                               [n-Ye:s. Yes.
617              (0.2)
618 Ski:    [.hhhhhhhhhhhh
619 Car:    [˚I usually put th'm on to do it but uh˚
620              (1.2)
621 Car:    ˚anywa:y,˚ .hh[ But we ]heard fr'm one'r t- I heard from=
622 Ski:                 [BU'WHAT-]
623 Car:    =one 'r two people ↓in Norfolk frie:[nds
624 Ski:                                        [Oh had you ye:s,
625         hhh[hh
626 Car:       ['nd as I said I wz surprized that Well you see we put
627         it in the (Eastern) Daily Press the announcem'nt 'n then
```

```
628            .hh that wz the quickest way of letti[ng people kno:w]=
629 Ski:                                           [ i h Y e : s . ]=
630 Car:       =sort'v acquaintences,
631 Ski:       lgihYe:[s
632 Car:              [An:d Philip Hammon[d ↑saw ↓it. ('n'ee)]=
633 Ski:                                 [.h h h h h h h h h ]=
634 Car:       =(an'ee wrote a  very nice ↓letter).
```

After the interactional hiatus discussed earlier, Carrie initiates topic resumption at line 621. Immediately after a brief pause and an in-breath in line 621, Carrie shifts to a different topic with a news announcement-like sentence (But we he̲a̲rd fr'm one'r t- I he̲a̲rd from one 'r two people ↓in Norfolk frie̲:nds). In fact, the content of her announcement is nothing new, since she has already introduced this matter 4 minutes earlier in their conversation:

10. [Holt: 1988 Undated: Side 2: Call 4]

```
390 Car:       But I mean I wouldn't know who wz the̲re 'n who
391            [wa̲s[n't
392 Ski:       [.hh[nNo::. No I don't suppo̲se so.
393 Car:       =Whether he̲ was I don't kno̲:w b[ut
394 Ski:                                      [nNo:,
395 Car:       I ↑wo̲ndered if I'd've he̲a̲rd from 'im .hhh I had a very
396            nice letter fr'm Philip Hammo[nd.
397 Ski:                                   [.hhh ↑hO̲h: did yo̲u?=
```

Although on an earlier occasion Carrie refers to more than one friend (one'r two people), later in her talk she again focuses on the same person (Philip Hammond) about whom she had already talked (line 632-634). By recycling the same action (news announcement) with repeated wording, Carrie successfully manages to gain the floor after the topical tension and steers the conversation back to her detailed account of this letter from Philip Hammond.

4c. [Holt: 1988 Undated: Side 2: Call 4] (continuation of example 2b)

```
635 Ski:       =[ A h   I   s e e ].h h h [WELL I::'m gla̲d 'ee did eez
636            a ni̲ce ol' cha̲p he wz ve̲ry much the gentle↑man was
637            Philip I thou[ght
638 Car:                    [Well: that's wha̲t Jo̲ (.) ↓awl u uh:,hh
639            she's Jo A̲dams now who wa̲s Jo̲ A̲pplega:te.
640 Ski:       Oh y[es
641 Car:          [An' she̲ said n- (.) He's a(p) (.) Mi̲ster Hammond's
642            a pe̲rfect ↓ge:ntleman.
643              (0.3)
644 Car:       She̲ always sounds yo̲u kno̲:w .hhh I said well (.) Ronald
645            said he 'ad mello̲wed which 'ee ha̲d I me̲an .t.hhh It was
646            rather- hi̲s b'avior wz ra̲ther di̲fferent from: whe̲n 'ee
647            met me in the office after my̲ fa̲:ther'd died'n said ↑Oh:
648            they tell me yo̲ur fa̲:ther has died 'n I nearly̲ said sh'd
649            'ee've asked your p(h)erm(h)i̲ssio(h)o[n
650 Ski:                                            [Oowe̲hhhh hha̲h ha̲:h
651            uh-: .uh:: .uh .hfhh[hh
652 Car:                          [But ↑'ee wrote a ↑very ↓nice letter
653            'n 'ee said 'ee do̲e̲sn't ↓come to Shipton very ofte̲n .hhhh
654            but when 'ee di̲d he use to go 'n have a cha̲t to̲ Ro̲na̲ld'n=
```

As noted earlier, Skip's response to Carrie opens up a competing line of topic development (line 635-637), and Carrie suspends her ongoing talk and responds to Skip (line 638-line 649). When her telling reaches a possible completion point (line 649-650), Carrie again repeats her turn at lines 652-654 with exactly the same wording. In doing so, she manages to divert the focus of the conversation back to the one she is pursuing and continues her report of the content of the letter.

5b. [Holt: 1988 Undated: Side 2: Call 4] (extended version of example 3a)

```
669 Ski:    =[W' it's a long wa:y too [isn' it.
670 Car:                              [Oh I ↑kno:w:. ↑Ye:s. I mean I
671          (0.8) I wz quite gratef'l for tha[:t
672 Ski:                                      [n:Ye:s. Ye:s.
673 Car:    Well 'course 'ee knew me too becuz I'd worked
674          the[re for a few]years (you]see:)?
675 Ski:       [ bY  e  : s ]'v cou:rse]
676              (0.2)
677 Ski:    .hhhh[hhhh
678 Car:         [Bu(.)t uh
679              (0.9)
680 Car:    He wrote' very ↓nice [le[tter . ↓
681 Ski:                            [.k[Haa:h,
682 Car:    He said I expect you've settled in Somerset now and .hh
683          an:d got several frie:nds around you you kno:w
```

Once again, after her talk about the letter seems to dwindle for another time, Carrie resumes her old topic with the same strategy. By repeating the news of her receiving the letter (line 680), Carrie renews this nearly-terminated topic for the third time.

The use of repetition to resume a previous topic does not only appear in Carrie and Skip's conversation. When complaining about her husband, Emma employs the same practice several times to keep her topic on the floor.

8. [NB:IV:4:R] (this is an extended version of example 6)

```
64 Emm:    Well I fill emberessed fer Bill'n Gla:dys shiknow I'adtuh
65         go out'n te:ll him thet he wasn'gunnuh go: so fin'y siz I'm
66         goin home I siz go wa:n he wanduh go home wen'e got down
67         'ere c'z the weather wz bad'e siz'f u-the weather's bad I'm
68         going ba:ck. innee bitched'n I sz ↑w':l oka:y go on
69         ↑ba*:ck (.) I'm gonna st*a:y yihkno:w?
70         (.)
71 Emm:    You can't have good weather evry minu[te?
72 Lot:                                         [°Oh:: fer cryin°
73         ah ihz it's jih it's pretti[er do:wn] here'n is in tow:[:n,]
74 Emm:                               [m h h h ]                  [.hh]
75 Emm:    =Of ↑COU:RSE it i:s, so: he wz *e-*e *u ↑Oh en I don't know
76         there's a coupl'other dih-ah- DO I do a good jo:b'n that s-
77         that stuff ↑I don't put it ba:ck in the ↑freezer after
78         it's been on the sink
```

As pointed out earlier, while Emma is describing her quarrel with her husband, Lottie embarks on an alternative topical direction which drifts away from Emma's ongoing one. Starting from line 75, Emma first responds to the immediate prior turn — Lottie's comment on the weather, thus displaying her attentiveness to her co-participant ("Of ↑COU:RSE it i:s,"). Then with a "so" preface, she initiates a return to her immediate prior narrative of how the quarrel started ("he wz"). However, before this detailed narrative starts again, Emma cuts it off abruptly. Using an exclamatory "↑Oh", Emma self-interrupts the ongoing trajectory and starts listing Bud's annoying conducts. In her listing from line 76 ("I don't know there's a coupl'other"), Emma repeats what she had said about Bud earlier in her turns ("DO I do a good jo:b'" as a recycle of line 36, "↑I don't put it ba:ck in the ↑freezer" as a recycle of line 26-27):

11. [NB:IV:4:R] (this is the beginning of the conversation between Emma and Lottie)

```
25 Emm:      ha:ve that'n (.) .hhhh 'ee siz w'l yih kno:w you've gotta put
26            that back in the rih .hhhh y'don't put it ba:CK in the
27            freezer,h
28            (0.2)
29 Emm:      w'n yih (0.2) take out'n I sid w'l I: know tha:t,h
30            (.)
31 Emm:       Yihkno:w,h
32            (0.2)
33 Emm:      .hhhh En then wen'e khh-came in w'n ah-uh fr'm fishin en I
34            sid gee lookit I: did a:ll the hhh things with aw- va:cuum
35            cleaner I've been all over the(b) f::- wul .hhh (.) 'e siz
36            w'l hhow couldje do i:t. uh: uh Didje do a good jo::b,h.hh
37            .hhh w'l that tee:d me o::ff,hh
```

By listing and repeating what Bud had said that made her angry ('teed me off', line 37), Emma constructs her turn as a new round of outright complaining. In doing so, she pushes aside Lottie's competing line of topic and manages to resume her complaint about her husband.

When their conversation progresses to line 129, Emma and Lottie temporarily move out of her complaint and talk about their plans for the next few days.

12. [NB:IV:4:R]

```
129 Lot:      Jee:z i-ih-nu-i-No: I: jis got up uh well wuh-eh will you be
130           DO:WN HERE MONDEE'N TUESDEE [ALL the]
131 Emm:                                  [YE:AH. ]
132           (1.3)
133 Lot:      .tch °Oh: sh:oo:t.h°
134           (.)
135 Emm:      Well ↑you go wan en go[:  n a h]
136 Lot:                            [You want] me tuh can[cel [it?]
137 Emm:                                               [.hh [ NO]::.
138 Emm:      °Oh° GO:d n*o L*ittue f*er heaven sake<
139           (0.3)
140 Emm:      Uh Bill'n Gladys uh gonna be'ere he's gonna teh .hhh W'L'Z
141           K:AHND'V EM↑BERREssing in FRONNA ↑BILL'e didn'ev'n go out'n
142           apologi:ze yihknow'e jis: gets all iz clothes'n takes off
143           I sz ↑go wan get (.) get (.)outta here (.) .hhh.hh The
```

121

```
144          weather isn't ri:ght eez gonna go ho:me'n all th-ehe minute
145          'e gits do:wn here  ↑This is re:dicul*ous.
```

At line 140, Emma mentions that her friends will come to see her ("Uh B**i**ll'n Gl**a**d**y**s uh gonna be'**e**re"), and starting from here, Emma again returns to her complaint. Emma self-interrupts her TCU "**he's** gonna teh", and restarts her turn by reiterating how her quarrel with Bud affects their friends ("W'L'Z_K:AHND'V EM↑BERREssing in FR**O**NNA ↑B**I**LL'"). In doing so, she repeats a sentence from her previous complaint ("I fill ember**e**ssed fer B**i**ll'n Gl**a:**dys sh**i**know", line 64 in example 8), and then continues with a detailed explication of how her quarrel with Bud started. Once again, Emma's getting back to a prior topic is prefaced by a recycle of her previous turn.

9a.[NB:IV:4:R] (this is an extended version of example 7)

```
339 Lot:     Ih-ih wasn'a BI:T BA:D la:s'ni:ght,
340 Emm:     °Ya:h.°
341 Lot:     Yihknow ih wz: uh(b) (.) a hi:gh fo:g but it is:n'bad out
342          tihda:y I don't know why'ee esstuh crab about that fer
343          cryin ou-.hh It's better'n the da:mn smog in tow:n,
344 Emm:     .t.hhh Oh-:. (.) Uh ↑Bud's not crabbin ub Oh: yeh he's (.)
345          t-.hh.hh *ah ↑Ah don'know what tuh do abou:t Barber sh'd I
346          let her know.Ah'll dis tell'er I'm sick'n won't bih I
347          don't pih I: can't (.) do it Lo:ttie if he's not gonna be
348          here it's gunnuh be s*o *emb*arr*ass*1ng.h
```

In the previous section, we have seen that Emma manages the topical tension and chooses to resume her previous topic that was diverted by Lottie. The way she achieves this resumption is again by recycling her prior talk. Her TCU at line 345 ("↑**A**h don'know wh**a**t tuh d**o** abo**u**:t B**a**rber") is an exact repetition of her own words at the beginning of this phone call:

8a. [NB:IV:4:R] (extended version of example 8)

```
80 Emm:     W'l anyway tha:t's a'dea:l so I don'know wut tih do about
81          Ba:rbra .hhhhh (0.2) c'z you see she w'z: depe[nding on:=
82 (L):                                                  [(°Y*eh°)
83 Emm:     =hhim takin'er in tuh the L.A. deeple s:- depot Sundee
```

Although the conversation has been moving on for a while, from the repetition we can see that Emma is still able to recover her own utterance from long before and use it as a resource to go back to a previous topic.

Without the need to provide more examples, the extracts described above are sufficient to show how repetition is frequently deployed in topic resumptions. As previous research (e.g., Mazeland & Huiskes, 2001; Bolden, 2006, 2009) has also pointed out, the reiteration of the previous talk is a major practice for resuming a topic. However, these studies have only noticed such practice; they do not, however, discuss how is it that repetition could function as a means of resumption. In the rest of this section, I will briefly discuss the relationship between repetition and resumption, and why topic resumption can be achieved through repetition. To begin with, I will briefly show some other ways of returning to a previous topic.

One way of resuming a suspended topic is by proposing an explicit and straightforward return to it. For example,

13. [NB:IV:10:R]

```
01 Emm:      Yihknow there's so many other wunnerf'l people arou:ndju .hh
02           .hhh uh it's googhd tih get awa:y from:: yer famly sometimes
03           yih-ih g'n be yers:↑E:lf. yih[know w't I me]EA:N?
04 Lot:                                   [Y e : : a h .]
05 Lot:      Ye:a[h.
06 Emm:          [.huhh Uh gett'n ba:ck tih this Vi:afo:r: foam, Lottie
07           is'er NAIL A:LRIGHT no:w?
08                (1.5)
09 Lot:      Her NAI[ul?]
10 Emm:             [A h :[hah?]
11 Lot:                   [Ye::]ah.
12                (0.2)
13 Lot:      It's ↑beautif'l.hh B'T IH would (.) iYIHKNO:W IH WOULD JIS:T
14           HOERT.hh innee ↑took the NAI:L O:F[F yihknow en ih k]ept.hhh
15 Emm:                                       [°(O h :  G o d )°] Lot:
16           gitting li:ke you:rs.=
```

After digressing from the topic about Viaform (an ointment for psoriasis) for a while, at line 6-7 Emma returns to it by explicitly suggesting to 'gett'n ba:ck tih this Vi:afo:r: foam'. This resumption is accomplished without any marker or turn-initial preface that indicate an oncoming topic resumption.

The second practice for resuming a topic is to use turn-initial 'resumption markers' (Mazeland & Huiskes, 2001). In English, 'so' (Bolden, 2006, 2009) and 'anyway' (Sacks, 1992b, p. 254) are two common resumption markers. They can be conceived as 'right-hand parentheses' (ibid), displaying that 'without regard to the topicality of the last utterance, returning to the topic talked about before that, I have this to say' (ibid.). Bolden (2009) discusses one example where 'so' preface is followed by topic resumption.

14. [Schenkein II] (from Bolden (2009))

```
20 Edith:    That w'z on Fridee he went for the long walk.
21   Jim:    where didje go.
22 (  ):        (    )
23   Joe:    [No, Thursdeh-
24 Edith:    [(         )-
25   Sam:    [(            ).
26 Edith:    [(            ).
27   Joe:     Friday, Friday yeah.)
28 Edith:    (   [         ],
29   Sam:        [From hud hass to the Chinese theetuh.

((about 5 minutes omitted))

30           (0.6)
31 Jim:      .hhh so you walked all the way up t'the Chinese theater.
```

At the beginning of this extract, the participants are talking about Sam, who went for a long walk. About five minutes later, Jim returns to this topic via a resumption marker 'so', and an other-attentive question asking Sam to tell more about his walk.

However, such a direct proposal for topic resumption, as shown in example 10, is very rare in ordinary conversations. In addition, resumption markers such as 'so' and 'oh' are seldom used alone; they are often followed by some degree of repetition of what has been established before. As discussed in the section on stepwise topic transition and topic manoeuvring, lexical repetition functions to connect the following turn to some previous talk, therefore maintaining interactional cohesiveness when managing a departure from the immediate prior topic. In the context of topic resumption, repetition also has a similar function: it creates some cohesive link between the topic that will be resumed to what has already been talked about. In doing so, the speaker also points out what specifically in the previous topic she wishes to talk more about, to enable the co-participant can easily recollect and locate the topic being resumed and be ready to collaborate in this topic. Therefore, the resumption could be achieved in a less disjunctive and abrupt way than happens in example 10.

Why are topic resumptions frequently achieved through repetition? Adato (1979) has given an explanation. According to Adato,

"A topic, as an object in itself (transcendently) is not a repeatable object. It can only be 'formulated' (Garfinkel and Sacks, 1970) as its mode of explicit apprehension. Repeatable objects must somehow exhibit a certain 'concreteness', and topicality is a construct of such an order that this feature is lacking. Nevertheless, members may implicitly intend a topic by repeating a 'concrete part' of it – a remark — and the repeat may thus 'represent' something more than the object it repeats (cf. Durkheim, 1965)." (Adato, 1979, p.176)

In other words, topicality in itself is more like an abstract and intangible construct which cannot be realized without the concrete and specific remarks that are produced in relation to it. When resuming the topicality of some previous mentionable, the remarks being repeated may invoke the topicality that it represents and the knowledge or memory of what has been talked about before. This might also be a reason why topic resumption is frequently achieved through repetition.

5   Conclusion

This chapter has described another major topical action: topic resumption. Rather than introducing a topic for the first time, as in topic manoeuvring, in topic resumption speakers go back to a topic that has been suspended earlier or has already been talked about. In particular, I have focused on three aspects of topic resumption.

First of all, I looked into the general sequential environment where topic resumption usually takes place. In one type of sequential context, the topic that the participants are talking about shows signs of atrophy since no one volunteers to talk more to advance it. The resumption works to restart this topic so that they can keep talking about it. In the second type of sequential environment, another topic direction gradually emerges, with the potential to replace the current topic. Under these circumstances, topic resumption functions to lead the topic direction back to the main topic.

It then became clear that the immediate environment is one in which there is an observable topical tension. Such topical tension occurs just prior to resumption, where the speaker who plans to resume a previous topic and her co-participant have two different topic directions and are competing for the floor. In addition, an topical tension may also occur within a single speaker's turn, resulting in observable speech disfluencies. This is because in initiating a resumption, the participant is faced with two tasks: responding to the immediate prior turn produced by the co-participant and planning to resume the topic she pursues.

Lastly, I focused on the actual practice of topic resumption and the linguistic means of achieving it. I have found that in ordinary conversations, topic resumption is mostly done by repeating some prior talk in the old topic. In topic resumption, repetition serves two functions. Firstly, it reformulates the topic, which is itself a non-repeatable object, with specific remarks that are concrete parts of it (Adato, 1979), enabling the co-participant to recollect the preceding talk and orient to it in a new context. Second, it serves to establish a cohesive link to the resumed topic as it is talked about previously, thereby maintaining the sense of interactional cohesiveness of the conversation.

Chapter 6   Self-repairs and topic initiation

1   Introduction

In some approaches to studying human language, repair has long been treated as epiphenomenal to the proper object of study, often taken to be grammatically well-formed expressions or sentences (Hayashi, Raymond & Sidnell, 2013). By contrast, Schegloff (1979) argues that repairs are actually a central feature for interaction, and their relevance to conversation may be fundamental. He contends that the hitches and disfluencies associated with (self-)repair are not merely some intractable 'degeneracies' of 'performance' (1979, p. 262), but meaningful conversation phenomena that are 'orderly' and 'describable' (1979, p. 262). Schegloff begins by posing a question:

"Consider the question: Is there a class of sentences such that, in their actual occurrence in conversation, repair appears systematically relevant? If such a class of sentences could be described, and if what defined the class was such that any sentence of the language could on some occasion of production be a member of that class, then it would follow that repair was potentially relevant for any sentence in conversation and that provision for repair was as systematically relevant to an adequate syntax as provision for anything else." (Schegloff, 1979, p. 270).

In addition, he further contends that the orderly nature of repair is attributable to the sequential features of the conversation. To put his argument to the test, Schegloff (1979) considered one class of sentence — first turns in topic-initial or in topic shift position, to explores the sequential forces that may generate the occurrence of self-repairs.

Schegloff reports two major findings in topic-initial sentences relating to repair. First, he finds that on a very regular basis, first sentences in topic-initial or topic transition turns contain self-repairs, and the repair is regularly placed at the word that *keys* (1979, p. 270) the new topic. Below is an example that illustrates this point:

1. [TG, 338-366] (Schegloff, 1979, p. 270)

```
01 B:     That's too bad ((very quiet))
02 A:     hhhh!
03          (0.5)
04 B:     (I'unno) hh Hey Do you see V-(0.3) fat ol' Vivian anymouh?
05 A:     No, hardly, en if we do:, y'know, I jus' say hello quick'n hh
```

In line 4 speaker B begins to ask A whether she sees 'V(ivian)' but then inserts 'fat ol', thereby, according to Schegloff's argument, keying (fat ol') Vivian as the new topic.

The second major finding is that if self-repair does not occur at first sentence in topic-initial or topic shift positions, then 'with great frequency' (Schegloff, 1979, p. 271) the other speaker will

initiate repair in the next turn:

2. [TG, 70-76] (Schegloff, 1979, p. 271)

```
01 A:    Ripped about four nai:ls, 'n Okhh!
02 B:    Fantastic.=
03 A:    =B't it wz fun-You sound very far away.
04       (0.7)
05 B:    I do?
06 A:    Nyeahm.
07 B:    mNo? I'm no:t.
```

Speaker A introduces a new topic in line 3 when she cuts off her concluding assessment and changes to something quite different, 'you sound very far away'. This topic initiator is done without any self-repair. The recipient's subsequent repair initiation in line 5, 'I do?', illustrates Schegloff's claim rather well, that if Self does not repair their own topic initial turn, Other (recipient) will initiate repair in response.

Schegloff (1979, p.272) also suggests that the organizational source of these repairs is not the sentences themselves but the topical sequences (p. 272) that incorporate these sentences. In other words, it is the topic-initial or the topic-transitional status of the sequence that make repairs in topical initial turns relevant.

Although the arguments in Schegloff (1979) are generally well-supported by his data extracts, the examples used to justify the arguments are relatively few (four examples). Considering the research interest of this dissertation, it is worthwhile to test Schegloff's observation with the large corpus of topic-initial and topic-transitional turns collected during the course of my research, which contains 148 cases in total. While Schegloff (1979) seems to differentiate first sentences in 'topic-initial' and 'topic-shift' turns, he does not further explicate the difference between the two. In fact, first sentences in topic-initial and topic-shift turns are essentially the same, since they are both first sentences of a new topic though at different sequential positions. Therefore, in this chapter, my usage of the word 'topic-initial turns' includes initial turns of both a first topic of a conversation (topic-initial in Schegloff's terms) and following new topics (topic-shift turns in Schegloff's terms).

This chapter consists of the following sections. Section 2 provides a general review of past CA literature of research into repair, which serves as a background for my following analysis of self-repairs at topic-initial turns. In section 3 I will give a brief statistical report of the incidence of self-repairs at topic-initial turns, which indicates that self-repairs do occur at topic-initial turns with some frequency, but not to an extent to be regarded as systematically relevant. In section 4 I divide the examples of self-repairs into different repair operations (Schegloff, 2013) and describe the characteristic features for each of them. Lastly, I will further explore the nature of self-repairs at these topic-initial turns and propose different types of troubles associated with them. Although self-repairs at topic-initial turns may not have a systematic relevance as Schegloff (1979) claimed, it is still rewarding to provide a detailed description of self-repairs in the context of topic introduction and topic transition, and to explore the possible relationships

between self-repairs and topic-initial turns.

2   Repair: a brief literature review

In Conversation Analysis, repair refers to the 'practices for dealing with problems or troubles in speaking, hearing and understanding' (Schegloff 2000, p. 207) within talk-in-interaction. The term 'repair', rather than 'correction' which has been more frequently used in previous studies (e.g., Bolinger, 1965), was adopted by Schegloff, Jefferson & Sacks (1977) based on the observations that not all errors are corrected, and that not all matters that are subject to repair involves errors or mistakes, at least according to some external objective criterion. In this sense, 'repair' is a more inclusive term that incorporates not only factual errors and mistakes, but also all other matters that are deemed troublesome by speakers. In doing so, Schegloff et al. expanded the domain of research into repair, since under the new concept of repair, 'nothing is, in principle, excludable from the class 'repairable'' (Schegloff et al., 1977, p. 363). Compared to other approaches to studying human language, the term 'repair' highlights the Conversation Analytic focus on actions rather than usage (Hayashi, Raymond & Sidnell, 2013, p. 10), and is therefore widely adopted in subsequent CA studies.

While the term 'repair' has already become well-established to describe the practices involved in addressing troubles in interaction, in their book Bergmann & Drew (2017) offer a reappraisal of the distinction between 'repair' and 'correction' by reviewing Jefferson's (as well as Sacks') preference for the use of 'correction,' rather than 'repair'. According to Bergmann & Drew (2017), both Jefferson and Sacks use the term 'repair' much less frequently than 'correction'; indeed, they use 'repair' hardly at all. The rationale behind their preference for 'correction' is that in cases of self-repairs, repairs are first and foremost the speaker's activity. Whether to correct some factual mistakes, or to address some inappropriately produced expression and pronunciation, a repairable is always firstly associated with what the speakers (rather than the recipients) in real time regard as mistaken or incorrect. By producing a revised formulation of a troublesome item, it is the speakers who regard themselves as having made an error and therefore correct it. In comparison, the term 'repair' implies a reliance on the proof procedure of the recipient's subsequent response (Bergmann & Drew, 2017, p. 14). Therefore, it does not have the sense of 'temporal, process-based order' (Bergmann & Drew, 2017, p. 10) of correction because it fails to capture how the producers of corrections themselves orient to the mistakes they have just made and work to address them. Since this chapter focuses on self-repairs, Bergmann & Drew's (2017) discussion is particularly relevant. Although I will continue to adopt the more widely used term 'repair', in my description and analysis I will not overlook Jefferson and Sacks' view on correction, and will take into consideration speaker's perspective on repairs.

The publication of Schegloff et al. (1977) was perhaps the first in a series of studies in which Schegloff developed research into the organization of repair in talk-in-interaction; of particular relevance for present purposes is Schegloff (2013), in which he identifies ten main operations that speakers use to deal with potential trouble-source in their own turn. They include replacing, inserting, deleting, searching, aborting, recycling, reformatting, reordering and two

other operations. By naming the operations using the present progressive form, Schegloff emphasizes that they are the operations that speakers '*do*' (p. 43) rather than the '*pre-packaged products*' (ibid: 43) they choose. Instead of focusing on the organization of repair from a sequential aspect, in this paper Schegloff pays attention to the turn-compositional aspects of repair, which offers insight into the specific ways and operations through which a self-repair is accomplished.

Along the same direction, Wilkinson & Weatherall (2011) further investigate one of the ten repair operations—inserting, and the technology of insertion repair, namely its initiation, the locating of the repairable item, and how inserting modifies the ongoing talk by specifying or intensifying the original reference. Apart from analyzing insertion repairs, Wilkinson & Weatherall (2011) also call for further research into other repair operations for a deeper understanding of the relationship between grammar, repair and interactional actions. Inspired by Schgegloff (2013) and Wilkinson & Weatherall (2011), the current chapter aims to adopt their approach and analyze self-repairs at topic-initial turns by looking at their repair operations.

Since Schegloff's (1979) observations also concern other-initiated repairs at next turns, it is necessary to review briefly how the other speaker initiates a repair. The most common way for the other speaker to deal with a repairable item is to initiate a repair sequence but to leave the speaker of the trouble-source to provide the repair solution (Bolden, 2011). The device that the other speaker uses to initiate a repair is called Next Turn Repair Initiators (NTRI, Schegloff et al., 1977; Schegloff, 1992), which consist of two basic forms. One form of NTRI is designed to locate a specific repairable item in the co-participant's prior turn. It includes displays of candidate understandings of the prior turns (Kitzinger, 2013), repetitions or partial-repetitions of trouble-source (Robinson & Kevoe-Feldman, 2010), and category-specific interrogatives such as 'who?', 'when?' and 'what?' (Kitzinger, 2013). Another form of NTRI is also called open class repair initiators (Drew, 1997), such as 'sorry?' and 'pardon?', which is a form that does not locate a specific repairable item, but leaves open the location, source and nature of the trouble/repairable. These different types of NTRIs vary along a continuum in terms of how precisely they are able to locate the repairable item (candidate understandings being the strongest form and open class NTRI being the weakest) (Schegloff et al., 1977). In addition, considering their sequential environment and compositional formats, NTRIs are systematically employed in different preceding conversational context (see Drew, 1997), and they will prompt different patterns of repair solutions (Kitzinger, 2013).

Having reviewed some of the key points in Schegloff's (1979) observations about the association between topic initiation/transition, and repair, we now turn to an empirical investigation of Schegloff (1979)'s observation. Since Schegloff (1979) emphasizes the frequency with which topic-initial repairs occur, the next section will provide a basic, descriptive statistical report of the incidence of topic-initial turn repairs in my collection of topic-initial/ topic shift cases.

3   Incidence of self-repairs: a descriptive statistical report

It should be borne in mind that Schegloff's claim about the association between self-repair and topic initial turns was made in the relatively early stages of CA research into the organization of repair in conversation. At that time, research in CA was often not based then, as it usually is now, on collections of a large number of instances. For instance, it was not until the 1980s that Schegloff was able to make systematic collections of repair phenomena. The exploratory character of research publications then often relied on a relatively small number of perspicuous examples; I have mentioned that Schegloff showed four examples to support the claim of this association between self-correction and topic change/transition (two examples of self-repair, and two instances of other-initiated repair following the non-occurrence of self-repair). Moreover, this was an early stage in his research into repair, nor was he interested in topic change *per se*; he was engaged in demonstrating that "the occurrence of repair within the boundaries of sentences is not incidental but is the systematic product of other sequential features of conversation" Schegloff (1979, p. 267). His attempt to show that self-repair was *systematically* relevant directed him to looking for sequential circumstances in which self-repair might be especially salient, and which he supposed might therefore be especially common. Hence his question quoted earlier, "Is there a class of sentences such that, in their actual occurrence in conversation, repair is systematically relevant?" (Schegloff, 1979, p. 270), his answer being, "first sentences in topic-initial turns or in topic shift position" (ibid). Having some perspicuous examples with which to make the case for this "systematic relevance", he was not thereafter inclined to explore this further.

In order to assess the association between self-repairs and topic-initial turns, I conducted a brief statistical exploration. First, all the cases of topic initiations were examined, and 148 instances of topic-initial turns were identified. By "topic-initial turns", I searched for cases where a new topic is raised in a disjunctive way, rather than in a seamless or stepwise fashion. In order to do so, I went through examples of disjunctive topic transitions in past papers (e.g., Button & Casey 1984, 1985; Maynard, 1980; Maynard & Zimmerman 1984, etc.) and searched for similar examples from my data. Several examples of the topic-initial turns are:

1.   [Holt 1:1:115-125]

```
01 Mum:     Well actually uh I think (.) with t'day being the firs'day
02          'n (.) and I ha:d fruit et lunch time so .hh I think
03          probably that wz it,
04 Les:     Yhhe(h)e(h)s
05 Mum:     (  )-[(it's the co  )]
06 Les:        [nh-u-          ].*eh::-.eh
07               (.)
08 Les:     .hh Oh  by the wa:y Ann hasn::'u-sent Gordon anything,=
09 Mum:     =Yes she ha:s,
10 Les:     Well it hasn't co:me,
11 Mum:     Oh well probably get it t'morrow.
```

In example 3, the introduction of the new topic (line 8) is prefaced by a turn-initial "oh", which typically marks disjunctive topic transition (Heritage 2015), together with "by the way", which indicate a sudden remembering unrelated to previous turns. In addition, the new topic is

introduced as a news announcement (Button and Casey 1985). Therefore, this example is a clear case of disjunctive topic transition.

2.   [Holt:1:1]

```
01  Les:      ihYes. Okay the:n I'll get her tuh do one.
02                 (0.3)
03  Mum:      Ye:h that's right,
04  Les:      Yes.
05                 (.)
06  Les:      .t (.) Ri:ght.h
07  Mum:       Yes.
08                 (1.2)
09  Mum:      wuh:-yih- (.) Are you teaching this week?
10  Les:      Oh I don't know I never kn:o::[w.
11  Mum:                                    [°Ri:ght.°
12              (0.7)
13  Mum:      They (break up on) Wednesdee (anyway) don't they.
14  Les:      No here it's Thursday.
```

Example 4 is different from example 3 in that there is no disjunctive turn-initial marker preceding a new topic. However, it is still a case of disjunctive topic transition. On the one hand, there is a long gap before Mum starts her turn at line 9, which suggests a topic juncture. Indeed, prior to the gap Lesley and Mum have already moved into the closing of their previous topic, reflected in their minimal exchanges. On the other hand, in line 10 Lesley's response is prefaced by a change-of-state token 'oh' (Heritage 1984), displaying that Lesley herself is orienting to Mum's question as raising a new topic. Therefore, I have also included this example and other similar cases into my collection of topic-initial turns.

Having collected 148 cases of clear topic-initial turns, my next step was to find out how frequently do self-repairs occur in such turns. Self repair refers to the case where a same speaker both initiates the repair and accomplishes it (Fox, Benjamin and Mazeland, 2013), and I identified examples of self-repairs by following the ten self-repair operations discussed in Schegloff (2013). Example 4 above contains just one example of self-repair: at line 9, Mum initiates the repair by suddenly cutting of her pronunciation ("wuh:-yih-") and accomplishes the repair by replacing 'wuh:-yih-" with "Are you". Here is another common type of self-repair:
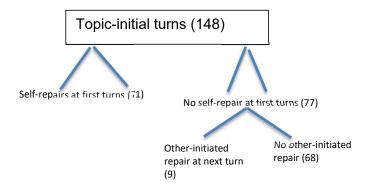
5. [Holt: 2:02]

```
01  Bon:      If you don't hear anything
02  Les:      M[m?
03  Bon:       [tomorrow or the nex'day will you let me know again,
04            (.)
05  Les:      Ye:s.
06  Bon:      Okay.
07  Les:      .hh EHM I- eh- I st'll owe you the money I think don't I.=
08  Bon:      =Yih do actually yes I'd f'gotten about that,
```

At line 7, Lesley cuts off her turn after she first produces "I". Then, after a filled pause "eh", she self repairs by recycling her abandoned "I", followed by a restart of her turn.

An examination of the 148 cases of clear topic changes/transitions has resulted in my finding that self-repairs occurs in 71 (48%) out of the 148 cases. A finding that under half of all the topic initial turns in my collection involve self-repairs does not seem to be evidence for the systematic relevance of self-repairs in these turns; to be 'systematically relevant', many more instances of self-corrected topic-initial turns would have been expected. The collection of 148 cases were examined again to see whether, in those 77 cases in which the speaker initiating a new topic does *not* self-repair, the recipient subsequently (i.e. in their turn after the topic initiation) initiated other repair, as Schegloff supposed ("If first sentence in topic initial does not have self-initiated repair, then with very great frequency the next turn involves the initiation of repair by some other", Schegloff, 1979, p. 271). In only 9 (11%) of cases did that happen. Therefore, neither of Schegloff's observations concerning the association between topic initiation and self-repair seems to be borne out by the quantitative evidence, from my collection of topic-initial turns, and certainly nothing that could support claims such as "with very great frequency".

A diagrammatic summary of this basic statistical investigation of topic-initial repairs is shown below:

Of course, it is possible that there may be a systematic basis for occurrences and associations, without that being (entirely) reflected in frequencies of occurrence. In this respect it is worth noting that self-repair is frequent in all kinds of turns at talk, in all kinds of sequential positions and environments; this frequency in itself is perhaps some further counter evidence for the systematic relevance of self-repair in topic initial turns. This suggested making a statistical study of a data sample, to compare the results of the frequencies for all turns (turn types) and for topic initial turns; but this seemed both daunting, and to detract from the focus on my research. An example might, however, make the point, and for this purpose a brief excerpt from one of the conversations in my corpus was selected at random.

6. [Holt May 88: Side 2: Call 4]

```
01 Dee:                                                  [Well exactly
02         I know the feeling cz I'm: still on full time Mark an'
03         quite honestly w- .p.hh what you can't do durin' the
04         week you've jus' got t'd[o (        )
05 Mar:                            [That's ri:ght yeh even I've
06         .hhh had t'do hou:sework this las'[year
07 Dee:                                      [˚Mm˚ Yeh I'm not at
08         all surprized anyway is she pleased that sh[e's full=
09 Mar:                                               [.p.k.p
10 Dee:    =ti[me,
11 Mar:      [.hhhh hYe:s:.
12 Dee:    U[h huh whe]re is sh-
13 Mar:     [Y e : s .]
14             (0.2)
15 Mar:    We:ll she's in a local schoo:l, she went .hhhh she gotta
16         ca:ll:: at the beginning a'September to ass'to go i:n::
17         (.) .k gn to cover for z- a teacher 'oo wz i:ll,
18 Mar:    .hhh[hh
19 Dee:        [Yea[:h?
20 Mar:            [An' this teacher turn'out t'be seriously i:ll
21         (.) ah:m:: with a back problem a:n::d uh::: .hhhh she's
22         in fact only j:us' sta:rted to come back she's j's star'
23         to come back for a few hours u-a wee:k,h [.hhhhh
24 Dee:                                             [Ya:h?
25 Mar:    hEh::m and we ho:pe actually Leslie'll be finishing
26          the:re .hhh (0.2) uh::m: (0.5) at the en:d of this
27         month. possibly,=
28 Dee:    =M[m hm:
29 Mar:      [It depends how the- how it goe:s .hh[hhhh
30 (D):                                          [(Yeah,)
31 Mar:    But uh:m:n (0.2) it wz a bit unexpected< (0.3) b'you
32         know ih-ih-ehhheh huh .hhe:hh she sudd'nly got la:nded
33         with it really .hhh But she's enjoyed it very mu[ch..hhh
34 Dee:                                                    [We:ll
35         this is (.) this is the thin[g Mark an' after all it=
36 Mar:                                [hhhohhh
37 Dee:    =does get her out doe[sn't it and uh (0.6) I[mean at uh=
38 Mar:                         [Ye:h. .h .hhhhh        [That's right
39 Dee:    =even at our time a'life dear we c'n do with a few extra
40         pennie[s ca:n't[we.
41 Mar:          [.p.hhhh [We::ll yes it doesn't hu:rt ye:[:s. ˚hu˚
42 Dee:                                                   [No:. I
43 Dee:    mean you've got to co:me what we've we:'re we-we're j's
44         goin' through a wedding an' my goodness Mark does that
45         make a 'ole in[your po[cket
46 Mar:                  [.hhhh  [hWell I: gather so:.[ye:h..h[hhh
47 ( ):                                              ((w)) [(      [   )
48 Dee:                                                     [Good
49         gr:ief you don't well we had been wa:[rned I mean one]=
50 Mar:                                         [hhhh:h:hhhhhhhh]=
51 Mar:    =[hhhhhhhhhh
52 Dee:    =[of Dierdre's k- (.) closest friends. .hh[(0.2) was=
53 ( ):                                              [wuh
54 Dee:    =married la:st year 'n Dierdre was bri:desmaid .hhhh
55         An[d (.) you know (   ) when 'er mum 'n dad said how=
56 Mar:      [hnhhhh
57 Dee:    =much it wz costing the:m .hhh I sai[d yes: (.) I you=
58 Mar:                                        [gmhhh
59 Dee:    =know I had got['n idea, but it (.) really does make a]=
```

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```
60                              [((fidgeting -----------------------))]=
61 Dee:      =[hole in your [pocket becz we're not doing anything=
62 Mar:      =[((fidgeting) [mnYe:s
63 Dee:      =ourselves Mark we're going to a very nice[
64 ( ):                                                 [(        )
65              (0.2)
66 Dee:      hote:l, . . .
```

It can readily been seen that self-repairs occur at least once in 10 turns in this excerpt (there are more than one self-repair in some turns); there are 21 turns in all, some of which are single words (e.g., line 13, line 19), and other single word/vocalization in others (e.g., line 28). The proportion of turns, none of which is topic initial, in which speakers self-repair is therefore little different from their frequency in topic initial turns. Although this can hardly be claimed to be a representative sample, nevertheless this brief example adds further evidence that self-repair may not be especially associated with topic initial turns. Again, by itself this does not disprove a systematic association with topic initial turns; but this informal evidence suggests that there is unlikely to be a characteristically systematic relationship between self-repair and topic changes in conversation. Self-repair is a common, frequently occurring practice in talk; it may not be generated by factors in turn types in the way Schegloff suggested, but rather by other aspects of speakers' conduct.

However, although this quantitative evidence alone is not sufficient to offer a further insight into self-repairs, a detailed qualitative examination is essential in order to fully understand the repairs at these topical-initial turns. Schegloff's paper still offers an opportunity to examine self-repair specifically in the context of topic management. paying closer attention to the self-repairs themselves and focus on the repair operations. A number of further questions will be explored, including: should self-repairs occur at topic-initial turns, what operations do they usually involve? What specific interactional functions could they serve? Along these lines I first explore the self-repair operations at topic-initial turns will be investigated, initially by classifying the 71 cases of self-repairs into different categories and describe the practices and techniques for doing self-repairs, including initiating a repair, locating a repairable, etc. Also, I notice the similarity between two self-repair operations (reformatting and aborting) will be identified, together with a suggestion about how they can be better distinguished.

4   Patterns of self- repairs: repair operations

In this section, the 71 topic-initial turn repairs will be explored, in accordance with the ten self-repair operations proposed by Schegloff (2013). Generally speaking, these 71 topic-initial turn repairs fall into six operation categories: recycling, replacing, reformatting, searching, inserting and aborting. Below is a brief summary of how the examples are distributed across the six operations:

Self-repairs at topic-initial turns		
Self-repair operation	Frequency	Proportion
recycling	31	44%

replacing	22	31%
reformatting	7	10%
searching	3	4%
inserting	5	7%
aborting	3	4%
TOTAL	71	

Next, each of the six categories will be examined to see how self-repairs are accomplished through these operations.

4.1   Recycling

Recycling, as defined by Schegloff (2013), refers to a speaker's saying again some stretch of talk—almost always less than a full TCU—that they have just previously said (p. 59). The elements being recycled could be as long as nearly a full TCU (e.g., '*I don't think they grow a I don't think they –grow a culture to do a biopsy*'), or it could be as short as the first element of a TCU such as a person reference (e.g., '*Oh: I I say Gordon's jus' come home*'). Below are some typical examples of recycling in my collection:

7. [Holt C85:4:1]

```
01 Les:     Areyou not feeling very [we:ll,
02 Joy:                             [°(      )°
03          (.)
04 Joy:     No I'm alri:ght
05           (.)
06 Les:     Yes.
07           (0.6)
08 Joy:     °Ye:s I'm alright,°
09 Les:     °Oh:.°hh Yi-m- You↓ know I-I- I'm boiling about
10          something hhhheh[heh  hhhh
11 Joy:                     [Wha::t.
12 Les:     Well that sa↓:le. (0.2) at- at (.) the vicarage.
```

After the initial how-are-you sequence (line 1-3), Lesley starts to introduce the first topic—a complaint concerns her encounter with an acquaintance whom Joy also knows. The topic-initial turn is at line 9-10, and there are two observable self-repairs by recycling. The first one is the partial recycling of the discourse marker *you know*. Here Lesley cuts off her production of this turn-entry device (indicated by the single dash) at the first element '*you*' ('Yi'), and after a brief hesitation ('m-'), restores her turn by recycling *you* and producing the discourse marker ('You↓know') in full form. The second recycling happens immediately after the first one. This is the recycling of '*I*' twice before the topic-initial turn is fully articulated. In a similar fashion, Lesley recycles the preposition word 'at' twice (line 12) in her detailed story-telling.

The second example exhibits a similar pattern:

8.[Rahman:B:1:IDJ(12)]

```
01 Jen:      Oh hello I:da.
02 Ida:      Ye:h. .huh:m (0.2) ah'v jis ruung tih teh-eh tell you (0.3)
03           uh the things ev arrived from Bahrkerr'n Stone'ou[:se,
04 Jen:                                              [Oh::::::.
05              (.)
06 Jen:      O[h c'n ah c'm rou:nd,h[h
07 Ida:       [An'                [Ye[s please[that's w]'t=
08 Jen:                              [ha  ha  [.a : h  ]
09 Ida:      =I wantche tih come rou:nd.
```

In this conversation, Ida calls Jen to say that her new furniture has arrived, and to invite Jenny over to see them. In her news announcement sentence at line 2, Ida initiates repair by cutting off her pronunciation of the word 'tell'. After a brief hesitation as in the previous example, Ida provides the repair solution by recycling the abandoned word 'tell', which is followed by the main purpose of her call ('the things ev arrived from Bahrkerr'n Stone'ou:se,').

In the third example, the recycling occurs at a topic-shift sentence, the new topic being introduced in a touched-off manner.

9. [NB:IV:1:R]

```
01 Emm:      A:n d uh .h-.hh ↑Ah'll: see yih Fri:d*ee
02              (0.2)
03 Lot:      Oka::y,
04 Emm:      I really f-Oh wul I'd if we git down early=
05 Emm:      =Ah[dn't nuh h]ow this:] week's gonn[a be,
06 Lot:         [°O  h  :  ] (well)°]         [Maybe ah'll see yuh
07           Sa:tur (.) Oh I (.)  .hh.hh  I renned the uh(p) (.)
08           partmen' fou:rto: uh: (0.3) two uh nurses from uh::
09           (0.3) ah think it's the Presspterterian hospit'l i
10           Whittier.
11 Emm:      Yuh ↑DI:U:D?
```

When Lottie and Emma are making future arrangements to meet, when Lottie is suddenly reminded of something she forgot to mention—that she has just let her apartment. In line 7, she cuts off what is initially going to be 'Saturday' and launches this new topic. In her topic-initial sentence, she pauses at the first person reference 'I', which delays the progressivity of the turn. Then, after a hearable in-breath, she recycles 'I' and restores the topical sentence. Once again, the element being recycled here is only a single word—much less than a full TCU.

Here are three additional examples of recycling:

4a. [Holt 1:1]

```
01 Mum:      Ann s'd well it's the:re now and it looks horrible. .hh
02           Looks as though y've got a sore in yer ea:r,
03                 (.)
04 Les:      Ye:s. It'll leave a sca:r.
05 Mum:      Mm:.
06 Les:       Yeah.[.t .hhhhhhhhh]h
```

```
07 Mum:                [    (1.3)    ]Oh: w[ell
08 Les:                                    [Ooo:hh
09 Mum:        Stan's been: not-not too good this wee:k,=
10 Les:        =Why:.
11 Mum:        Y'know he had uh:m (0.8) a sto:ne in iz kidney a l- a
12             whi:le ago:?
```

10. [Holt 2:09]

```
01 Les:        So they all went tuh wa:tch this::[battle.]
02 Mum:                                          [Oh-:,  ]hih heh huh
03 Les:        being televi:zed.
04 Mum:        Oh: dear me:
05 Les:        Ya:h.
06             (1.9)
07 Mum:        w:We:ll how's (.) how's everybody<How's Kathrine.
08             (.)
09 Les:        ↑Oh: she's got a co:ld an' a bad ches:t at the moment
```

11. [Holt: Sept-0ct 1988: Side 1: Call 5]

```
01 Gor:        Got this massive great Land Rov'r it' gnreally (.) brilliant .
02             hhh it duh doesn' matter (.) you know (.) sort'v where you
03             drive in the road cz everyb'dy gets out'the way for you
04             .hhhlsshhh you're s- you're sat about two meters above
05             evyb'dy else you c'n d-look do:w:n. .hllh on the
06             rooves['v cars goin' below you..khh
07                   [((sound))
08 Gor:        't's[got
09 Sus:            [I wz juh I wz js really nervous in my test I think
10             an' my nerves js took over.
```

In addition, these examples above as well as the whole 31 recycling cases have another feature in common. As Schegloff (1979) initially observes, the nature of the trouble at topic-initial or topic-shift turns are often obscure. In other words, not all troubles subjected to repair operations contain errors. From the examples above, we can see that there is no grammatical or factual error or any interactional problems (see Jefferson, 1974 on error correction) at these topic-initial or topic-shift turns. The repair operation involved is solely the recycling of the exact element produced immediately before. This is a distinctive feature of recycling self-repair operation, at least in my data examples.

4.2   Replacing

The operation of 'replacing' involves the substitution of a wholly or partially articulated element of a TCU-in-progress with another, different element, while retaining the sense that 'this is the same utterance' (Schegloff, 2013, p. 43). Here are several examples showing how topic-initial turns involve self-repair by replacing.

4. [Holt:1:1]

```
01 Les:        ihYes. ↑Okay the:n ↑I'll get her tuh do ↓one.
02                    (0.3)
03 Mum:        Ye:h that's right,
```

```
04 Les:      Ye̲s.
05                    (.)
06 Les:      .t (.)↑Ri̲:ght.h
07 Mum:      ↓Yes.
08                  (1.2)
09 Mum:      wuh:-yih- (.) Are you teaching this week?
10 Les:      Oh I do̲n't kno̲w I n̲ever kn:o̲::[w.
11 Mum:                                    [°R̲i̲:ght.°
12                  (0.7)
13 Mum:      They (break up on) Wedne̲sdee (anyway) do̲n't they.
14 Les:      No he̲re it's Thu̲rsday.
```

After some previous arrangement has been completed (line 1-8), Mum initiates a change of topic by producing an other-attentive question (line 9). Starting from 'were you' ('w̲u̲h:-yi̲h-'), Mum immediately replaces the past tense form with the present progressive form ('Are yo̲u teaching this week').

In the next example, the repairable has a different character:

12. [Holt:2:12:18-24]

```
01 Joy:      see Go̲:rdon the other day I thought (.) g*o̲:sh hasn'ee
02            gr*o̲wn *u̲:[p. Yo̲u kno:w].tch N̲o longer th'little boy,
03 Les:                  [ Mmhm hm-hm ]
04 Les:      [No:::,
05 Joy:      [.t.hhhh Anyway what I'm phoning for in the:, .hh in that
06           envelope, the[re's a:: an N.H.R. program.
07 Les:                    [Yes
```

Prefaced by a disjunctive marker 'anyway', Joy launches a marked topic change at line 5. This repair is initiated by the sound stretch (Wilkinson & Weatherall, 2011, p. 68) of (' the:'), and is framed by the repetition of the prepositional word 'in', which serves to locate the trouble. The replacing operation is the substitution of the determiner 'the' with the deictic 'that', which makes Joy's referring to the envelope more specific. While in the previous example replacing concerns the choice of what the speaker regarded as the 'correct' or more appropriate tense, the repair in this example involves the choice of what is, again from the speaker's perspective, a more appropriate functional word.

Here is another kind of trouble that is resolved through replacement.

13. [Holt:X1: 1: Call 1]

```
01 Les:      .tch.hhhh ↑It's good th't I've done most a'my Christmas
02            shopping cz poor old Mark's working most Saturday[s
03 Mum:                                                        [Ye:s.
04                  (0.5)
05 Mum:      Hmm::.
06                  (0.5)
07 Les:      .hhh[h But ↑nex:t Thursday he has to go to Yeov ehm(0.2)
08 Mum:          [(           )
09 Les:      Bristo:l? (0.6) They've pu̲t in: to win uhm (0.5) .t.h
10 Les:      an e̲xport award.
```

```
11                   (0.5)
12 Mum:      Oh↑::.=
13 Les:      =A:nd em: (.) he's ↑been invited to a dinner at the city
14           ha:ll (0.2) We:ll (.) Rimbold's=
```

In line 7, Lesley introduces a new topic, that her husband Mark is going to an event, in the manner of a news announcement. In the middle of the news about where he has to go, Lesley begins giving the wrong information and corrects this error by replacing. That is, after making the mistake, Lesley abandons what was going to be 'Yeovil', and replaces it with the correct version 'Bristol' (line 9) after a short pause and hesitation. Compared with the previous examples, the repairable in this example is a factual mistake.

Here are three additional examples to further demonstrate how replacing works:

13. [Holt: 1988 Undated: Side 1: Call 8]

```
01 Dan:      I'll b(h)ring my biology folder we c'n have a really
02            good ti:me. hheh-h .hh Sorry..t.h[h Okay
03 Gor:                                        [mhh-hm-hm::mh .t.hhhh
04 Gor:      I[nstru]ctions.
05 Dan:       [Uh  :]
06 Gor:      .hhhh Did ↑yo[u-
07 Dan:                   [Ohh[h (      )
08 Gor:                      [Av(e you drop' some biology ↓notes.
09              (0.4)
10 Dan:      Have I wha[t them.]
11 Gor:                [ .hh.hh]h Dropped theh-them. Los:t.
12 Dan:      Why[:?
13 Gor:         [Mislai:d.
```

14. [NB:IV:10:R]

```
01 Emm:      .hh I'm d's ↑TAKIN OFF my CLOZE yuh ah ownee ha:ve ONE
02           berzeer'n pa:nty (.) GOD I HAVEN'T EATEN ↑HO:ME I BEEN
03           invi:ted ou:t ah ↑this ih the (.) this is a'↑LI:FE down
04           here.
05              (0.2)
06 Emm:      [i h]
07 Lot:      [Did]Buh u-ez Bud called[jih?]
08 Emm:                          [.hhh]YeahI k-*ah
09                (0.2)
10 Emm:      uh WE:LLI WON'T (.) kointuh this bit uhhh
11                (.)
12    Lot:      Why:.
13 Emm:      .hhhhhh (.) ↑I CA:LL'BA:Rbr*a
```

16. [Rahman:II]

```
01 Ida:      How uz things. A'ri:gh[t?
02 Jen:                           [Ye:s fi:ne: yes I'm ringin up
03           about tomorruh actually: en:d I'm d-I'll do coffee
04           t'morrow moh:rning.
05              (.)
06 Ida:      It chee-Not Vera's.
```

```
07 Jen:      (.h) eh- Insteada Vera's.h
08 Ida:      A::lrright,
```

By now the two major self-repair operations in the collection have been introduced. Together, recycling and replacing account for nearly three quarters of the 71 topic-initial repairs operations. In the following sections, the remaining operations will be briefly introduced.

4.3.   Reformatting

According to Schegloff (2013), the basic reformatting operation is grammatical. In other words, speakers shift from using one grammatical form to using another, for example from a declarative to an interrogative (Schegloff, 2013, p. 62). Below are two examples of reformatting:

17. [Holt:1988 Undated: Side 2: Call 2]

```
01 Les:      .hhhh ↑Ri:ght. well love to everybody,
02                (0.3)
03 Kev:      We:ll yes. We mus:t u:[m (0.6) u-eh::
04 Les:                            [.tlach
05                (0.2)
06 Kev:      We invited you o:ver [didn't we 'n[: (              )]=
07 Les:                            [.hh .hhh    [We:ll (.) e-that's]=
08 Kev:      =[(          )
09 Les:      =[alright uh i-it all got a bit um .hhhh short (.) the
10           holiday didn't it a lot t'doan:dhh the kids were
11           dashing about 'nd .hhhhhh I've forgotten what happened
12           now Oh 'n Skip had tih go awa::y 'n you(h) had t(h)ih
13           g(h)o a(h)wa(h)ay .hhhhe-an:d uh (0.2) We'll do it
14           again sometime.
```

Immediately before this excerpt, Lesley was talking about her trip to Salisbury and how much she liked the city. When their conversation seems about to finish, Kevin initiates a change of topic to an invitation for getting-together. At line 3, Kevin first formulates this invitation in the form of a declarative ('We mus:t . . .'). However, before completing that construction, Kevin suspends his ongoing turn and displays some hesitancy. After a noticeable pause, Kevin reformats his previously abandoned turn with an interrogative tag 'didn't we' (line 6), asking Lesley if he has invited her already ('We invited you o:ver didn't we').

The next example is another illustration of this point:

18. [Rahman:B:2:JV(14)]

```
01         Jen:    Yah .h bec'z you'd a'thou:ght they'd'v grown out'v it by
02        now r[eally.
03 Ver:         [Yes
04               (.)
05 Ver:     [Yes
06 Jen:     [Th- ah mean theh not ba:bies ahr they.
07 Ver:     Theh not no:,
08 Ver:     .h 'R yih[goin yih won't be goint'th'town tomorrow will you.
09 Jen:             [*No:*
10 Jen:     .h Well ah hahf tih go ah:'mah'v got s'm:: eh:: Liz enuhr
```

```
11          husb'n coming foh::
```

At line 8, a topic-shift interrogative, a Y/N question ('are you going') is reformatted into an assertive declarative ('you won't be going to town tomorrow') plus a tag ('will you').

4.4   Inserting

In inserting, a speaker 'inserts one or more new element(s) into the turn-so-far, recognizable as other than what was on tap to be said next' (Schegloff, 2013, p. 45). Wilkinson & Weatherall (2011) identify two types of inserting: *specifying*, which adds either a unique referent or a type of referent, and *intensifying*, which strengthens the original formulation. Below are two examples from the collection, each representing one type of inserting:

19. [NB:II:3:R]

```
01 Emm:    Yeh 't's cool th's morning ah mean it's ni::ce,
02            (0.2)
03 Lot:    Yeah but it i:s'n (0.2) too coo[:l,
04                                         [Huh-uh:,
05         (0.7)
06 Lot:    So: uh:
07         (.)
08 Lot:    Oh: Tuesdee I'm 'onna: it's Zero's birthday en I'm 'onna
09         give'm a party over et the 'waiian 'ou:se °with a s'prize
10         party 'e doesn ev'n know abaht[it.°
11 Emm:                                  [Oh reall[y?
12 Lot:                                           [ I got abaht twunny
13         two peophhle kh(h)o(h)min[hn
14 Emm:                             [Oh: rea:lly:?
```

In line 8, Lottie initiates a marked topic shift to talk about her husband's birthday party. Starting out by announcing 'Oh Tuesday I'm gonna', Lottie initiates a repair through a sound stretch ('I'm 'onna:') and insert 'it's Zero's birthday', before resuming her original formulation. By inserting 'it's Zero's birthday', Lottie *specifies* for whom the birthday party is going to be given, thereby providing more background information for her news telling.

The next example illustrates how *inserting* can add something to the original phrasing, in this case 'strengthening' or more clearly marking the topic initial character of a turn.

20. [Field: September-October 1988: Side 2: Call 10]

```
01 Dan:    I'll call him sometime,
02            (0.3)
03 Les:    Yes. Yes. Okay.hh I'll tell im t'keep his ears flapping,
04 Dan:    u-[Ri::ght, okay,
05 Les:      [.h h h h h h
06 Les:    O:[kay,
07 Dan:      [I've got (0.3) Oh I've got that book to give back t'
08          you as we:[ll.
09 Les:               [↑hO-↓oh well (.) uh- you know I-I ↑really
10          would love to see you sometime so please ca:ll: .hhh
```

At the start of this excerpt, Dana promises that she will keep in touch with Lesley's son, who was her boyfriend at that time. In return, Lesley also emphasizes that she will remind her son to expect a telephone call from Dana. After this topic trails off, Dana in line 7 announces a new topic: she has to return a book to Lesley. In the middle of the announcement, however, Dana stops and inserts a first-position 'oh' (Heritage, 2018), which is used to 'introduce a relatively abrupt shift from some ongoing action to another (Heritage, 2016, p, 207). In contrast to beginning her telling in an unmarked fashion, the 'oh' particle highlights Dana's departure from their previous topic to a self-attentive new topic, and it reflects Dana's orientation to the normative way for introducing a news telling (Boden, 2006).

Except for one example where the inserted material is a functional word ('WE WANT t'come over sih- (.) to see you'), the two types of inserting operations, specifying and intensifying, account for most of the insertion examples in my collection.

4.5.   Searching

Past CA study on searching divides this operation into two types: 'precises' and 'delicates' (Lerner, 1991). 'Precises' is most commonly found in search for names, while 'delicates' involves the search for a more appropriate term or expression for some particular interactional purpose. Here are two examples of searching from the current collection:

21. [Holt: 1988 Undated: Side 2: Call 4]

```
01 Car:    There wz quite a[few people the:re (though)=
02                          [((door-------------))
03 Ski:    =ihYE:s,
04               (.)
05 Ski:    Ye:[s.
06             [((squea:[:k-----))
07 Ski:                  [.hhhhhh
08             ((slam rattle))
09 Ski:    hhOh: good we were jus' talkin' about you the other uh
10              hwhen wz it musta been Saturday night=
11 Ski:    =I sp[oze or Fri]:dee night]hh We 'r wond'rin how you=
12 Car:        [ ↑Did you ]↓Did you: ]
13 Ski:    =were gettin' o::n, .t
14 Car:    ˚Well we're doin:g eh-˚ (1.0) We're settled down quite
15         ↓well really you kno:w,
```

Previously in their conversation, Carrie was talking about her husband's funeral and the old friend she saw there. In line 9, Skip produces a topic-shift turn which directs the topic back to Carrie's wellbeing and her widowed life. In his topic-shift turn, Skip stumbles over and searches for the correct day to which he is trying to make reference. At the end of line 9, Skip produces a filled pause ('uh'), which is followed by an overt searching utterance ('hwhen wz it musta been Saturday night I spoze or Fri:dee night'). This example belongs to Lerner's 'precise' type of searching.

The next example closely resembles the previous one:

22. [Holt: 1988 Undated: Side 2: Call 2]

```
01 Kev:     Ye:s. Well th-that-that's what we've got in ↓m[ind.
02 Les:                                                    [hhhra:ss.
03 Les:     Ye:s. Very nice.hhh Ah[hah
04 Kev:                          [(    )-↑one thing by the wa:y,
05              (0.2)
06 Kev:     uh, we thought abou:t you: on: uh- (0.3) uh: (1.3)
07          Mon↓day I think↓it was,
08              (0.3)
09 Kev:     Uh:m we went out tuh ↓lunch.
```

Just like the previous example, Kev starts his new topic with the same format ('I thought about you') and the searching operation is once again about which precise day to which he is referring.

Across the 3 searching operations in the current collection, all of them belong to the 'precise' category. More examples need to be included to identify the 'delicate' type of searching.

4.6.   Aborting

According to Schegloff (2013), there are two realizations of aborting: one is abandoning the previous TCU without attempting to recover it; the other is abandoning the previous formulation in favor of another one. Below is an example of the second realization:

23. [Holt: 1988 Undated: Side I: Call 9]

```
01 Dan:     Give (h)everyone a look No sorrhhy .hhh[hh
02 Gor:                                            [.t
03              (0.2)
04 Gor:     .hhhhhahh[h
05 Dan:              [W['l
06 Gor:               [Oh: s:-Ah: thank you ↓Dana,hhhh[h
07 Dan:                                               [I, um
08          actually you're- you g'n- .t I'm: gon' to get you big
09          surprize tomorrow so
10              (0.2)
11 ( ):     .p.h
12               (0.2)
13 Gor:     ↑ARE yo[u.
14 Dan:            [(        ).
15 Gor:     .hhhh[hh
16 Dan:          [(      ) prob'ly a lih- very little surprize but
17          .hhh something anyway
```

At line 7, Dana shifts the topic from the previous one (about their embarrassing driving experience) to her incoming surprise for Gordon, and the new topic-initial turn involves aborting and redoing. Dana starts with 'I', which possibly leads to a first person declarative, and then she stops here to launch another attempt after a brief hesitation. In her second attempt, Dana abandons the first person reference and starts with the second person pronoun 'you', which is once again aborted and changed in favor of a similar but alternative version 'you g'n'.

This third attempt, 'you g'n', turns out to be aborted yet again, until Dana manages to produce the final topic-shift turn 'I'm: gon' to get you big surprize tomorrow'

Finally, here is another example of aborting from my collection of topic-initial turns.

15. [NB:IV:10:R]

```
01 Emm:     You dow'tchu WA:N' en if you want this place onna
02          b Mondee er any d[ay got]the[key]y'g'n HAVE]=
03 Lot:                      [N o : ]    [No<] Y e :ah.]=
04 Emm:     =the whole damn thi:ng.
05 Lot:     ↑No:: no<=
06 Emm:     =[*Ah m*ean ]khh
07 Lot:     =[↑W e : l l]↑↑YEAH ↑that I know tha:t b't I: js won't uh
08 Emm:     nYah,
09                 (0.3)
10 Emm:     .hhh[h
11 Lot:         [°have it.°
12 Emm:     We:ll Bill'n Gla:dys er: (.) he took'er tih the Puhvillion I
13          had'em over fer a dri:nk
```

The topic-shift sentence in this example is at line 12, where Emma shifts from her trouble-telling about her family arguments to talking about her friends' (Bill and Gladys) brief visit. Emma's initial formulation is 'Bill'n Gla:dys er:', which contains the recognitional reference form (Schegloff, 1996a, p. 459) of first names, and a present tense indicated by the 'are'. In the middle of her production, however, Emma brings this to an end and embarks on a new formulation. This time she chooses the person pronoun 'he' and 'she' instead of first names, and uses past tense instead of present tense.

Based on the ten self-repair operations proposed by Schegloff (2013), the topic-initial/topic-shift turn self-repairs in my collection were explored. However, when trying to group my examples into the ten repair operations, it appeared some instances appear to resemble more than one type of operation. As Schegloff (2013) has previously noted, some operations have a resemblance to each other in nature (for example aborting and recycling). In my investigation of self-repairs at topic-initial turns, another pair of operations were identified that look similar to each other. The next section will focus on these two operations and how they may be distinguished.

4.7   Revisiting reformatting and aborting

Among the ten self-repair operations, aborting and reformatting closely resemble one another. For instance, both operations include abandoning an original TCU and introducing a new one. Below are four examples from Schegloff (2013), two of aborting and two of reformatting.

24. [SN-4, 08]

```
01   Shr:     Who w's the girl that was outside
02            (his door¿)/(the store¿)
```

```
03              (0.8)
04   Mrk:       Debbie.
05              (0.8)
06   Shr:        Who's Debbie.
07   Mrk:       °(Katz.)
08               (0.7)
09   Mrk:       Sh's just' that girl thet: uh:, (0.2)
10              .hh I met her through uh:m::, (1.0)
11              I met 'er in Westwood. =I (caught that-)
12              'Member I wenttuh see the premie:r of (0.3)
13              Lost Horizon¿ [(          )]
14   Shr:                    [I DID'N K]NOW YOU did,=
```

This is an example of aborting; at lines 9 and 10, Mark launches two attempts to describe Debbie, but both attempts are abandoned. At line 11, Mark finally produces a completed turn construction unit, 'I met her in Westood' (though this is then followed by an insertion).

25.[Fish Dinner, 29]

```
01   Kal:       Hey Mo::m, ((from the stairs))
02               (.)
03   Mom:       Aloe an' [Vitamin E an' whatever.
04   Kal:                [I (   uh) splinter (in)
05   Bet:       Which one [should I have.
06   Kal:                 [but .hh
07   Kal:       when I used thuh tweezers, I even did it really har:d¿
08   Mom:       What [happened.
09   Kal:            [It's-It's just (.) too:, It's just (.) too:
10              uhm (buh [it's] barely op[en skin.
11   Bet:                [Kalin.       [Kalin.
```

In this example of aborting, Kalin has tried several times to explain some problem but failed (line 9). At line 10, he launches a new TCU and finally addresses the problem.

The following two examples are reformatting:

26.[Virginia, 5]

```
01   VIR:       ˙hh Beth gets all the clo:thes.
02              (.)
03   MOM:       Well: -Beth (.) spends her own money on her clothes.
04              (0.7)
05   VIR:       <Well if I got more money °I could spend my own
06              mon[ey.
07   MOM:          [But Beth works.
08   VIR:       Wull why can't I::?
09   MOM:       Beh- oh:, Vuhginia, we've been through this. When you're
10              old enough you ca:n work in the store.
11              (0.2)
12   VIR:       ˙hh Well Beth didn' Beth get tih work b'fore she was sixteen?=
13   MOM:       =No::! I'd- (0.2) I would let her wrap presents an' packages et
14              Christmus an:'- °times we needed somebady.° ˙hh >But people
15              just don't want< (0.4) chu:ldren (0.2) waiting
16              on[('um).
```

In her argument with Mom, Virginia uses 'didn't' as a pivot, thereby reformatting the original

negative *declarative* ('well Beth didn't . . ')' into a negative *interrogative* ('Didn't Beth get tih work . . .').

27. [TG, 04]

```
01   Bee:    so, <I got some lousy cou(h)rse th(hh)is te(h)e(h)rm
02           too.
03   Ava:    Kehh huh!
04   Bee:    .hhh[h  m-]
05   Ava:        [W-whe]n's yer uh, weh-you have one day y'only
06           have one course uh?
07   Bee:    mMo[nday en Wednesday:[s right.] That's ] my=
08   Ava:       [.hh               [O h     ] that's-]
09   Bee:    = linguistics course [[hh
```

In this example of reformatting, Ava abandons the WH-question and reformulates her turn as a Y/N-question.

As we can see, each of the four examples above involves the speaker abandoning one trajectory of the turn in favor of another one. This is one factor that makes aborting and reformatting similar to each other.

Another reason that makes it hard to distinguish aborting and reformatting is that Schegloff (2013) was not completely clear about what is meant by reformatting. Although he points out that the starting point for reformatting is grammatical (Schegloff 2013, p. 62), without a more detailed specification it's still hard to decide whether an operation is reformatting or not. Since grammar is such an inclusive term, nearly any change of turn design could be regarded as a grammatical reformulation. Taking the reformatting instances in Schegloff (2013) for example, the grammatical reformatting could be either the change of sentence type (e.g., from declarative to interrogative), or the change of one type of question to another (from WH-question to Y/N –question), or the insertion of a cleft-construction (e.g., 'I-I wwhut I ho:pe happens is that I hope'). As for the aborting examples, they are also grammatical in the sense that a clearly different sentence is produced in place of the previous one (e.g., the change from 'Sh's just' that girl' to 'I met 'er in Westwood'). Therefore, Schegloff's description of reformatting as 'grammatical' is not completely adequate to capture the subtler feature of this self-repair operation, since reformatting could operate at nearly every level of grammar.

In the collection of self-repairs at topic-initial/topic-shift turns, a way of describing and identifying reformatting has been identified, in addition to the grammatical aspect proposed by Schegloff (2013). This new method is based on the basic CA concept of adjacency pairs and turn design.

Since the different pair parts of adjacency pairs are relatively ordered through their pair-type relationships (Schegloff & Sacks, 1973), each utterance in a conversation has a reflexive relationship with what comes before and with what comes next (Sacks, 1992b, p. 332-43). In other words, the production of a first-pair part will impose a normative obligation (Stivers, 2013) on the production of the second-pair part, in a way that the design of the prior will create a

context within which the next is designed.

From here an observation emerges: if pair parts are positioned and composed in relation to each other, then changes in the design of the prior turn will normatively lead to changes in the design of the next responsive turn. In repairing the type of action, or the format of the same action in the first pair part, the next speaker will face a normative obligation to alter his turn design so as to produce a type-fitted response. The next short excerpt illustrates this point:

27. [Field: September-October 1988: Side 1: Call 3]

```
01 Dan:     Ri:ght so I'll poh- eh w'l- (.) D'you wan'
02 Dan:     [me t' pop over.
03 Gor:     [.p.hhhhhh
04 Gor:     Please.
```

In line 1-2, Dana changes her action from a possible suggestion ('Right so I'll pop over…') to an offer to come over and give him a lift in her car (Drew, Walker & Ogden, 2013). In return, Gordon produces an acceptance as a type-fitted response to Dana's repaired offer, but not to the abandoned suggestion.

The collections of reformatting and aborting examples were examined once again, and one major difference between these two operations was identified. In reformatting examples, there are two types of re-formation made to the original turn. The first type of reformatting alters the entire turn type of the original turn; the second type simply adjusts the format of the turn while retaining the original turn type. No matter what changes are made, the repaired first turns all have the potential to affect the design of the response produced by the co-participant. Below are several examples of reformatting from my collection:

17. [Holt:1988 Undated: Side 2: Call 2]

```
03 Kev:     We:ll yes. We mus:t u:[m (0.6) u-eh::
04 Les:                         [.tlach
05              (0.2)
06 Kev:     We invited you o:ver [didn't we 'n[: (          )]=
07 Les:                          [.hh .hhh    [We:ll (.) e-that's]=
08 Kev:     =[(         )
09 Les:     =[alright uh i-it all got a bit um .hhhh short (.) the
10          holiday didn't it a lot t'do an:d hh the kids were
11          dashing about 'nd .hhhhhh I've forgotten what happened
12          now Oh 'n Skip had tih go awa::y 'n you(h) had t(h)ih
13          g(h)o a(h)wa(h)ay .hhhhe-an:d uh (0.2) We'll do it
14          again sometime.
```

Looking back at example 16, the focus for now is Lesley's response to Kevin's reformatting at line 3-6. Had Kevin continue his imperative 'we must get together some time…', Lesley's response would normatively (but doesn't have to) be an acceptance like 'yes we would like to see you sometime,' or a declination. When Kevin alters his turn type from a declarative invitation to an interrogative by inserting a tag "didn't we", Lesley faces the normative obligation to respond to Kevin's repaired turn differently. Indeed, as Sacks, Schegloff &

Jefferson (1974) notice, tag questions have an eliciting function by transforming a turn not designed as a first pair-part into one. As could be seen from line 9 and 14, Lesley produces a lengthy explanation why she had to turn down Kevin's previous invitation, instead of a more straightforward acceptance of declination.

18. [Rahman:B:2:JV(14)]

```
01              Jen:     Yah .h bec'z you'd a'thou:ght they'd'v grown out'v it by
02          now r[eally.
03 Ver:          [Yes
04                   (.)
05 Ver:     [Yes
06 Jen:      [Th- ah mean theh not ba:bies ahr they.
07 Ver:      Theh not no:,
08 Ver:      .h 'R yih[goin yih won't be goint'th'town tomorrow will you.
09 Jen:              [*No:*
10 Jen:      .h Well ah hahf tih go ah:'mah'v got s'm:: eh:: Liz enuhr
11           husb'n coming foh::
```

In a similar fashion, Jen's response to Vera's turn at line 8 also shows that reformatting constrains the co-participant to alter his/her response accordingly. Should Vera carry out her original question 'are you going to town tomorrow?', Jen's response to this polar question would have been to have *answered*, either 'yes' or 'no' 'yes'. Since the reformatted turn reverses the polarity of the original Y/N question, and is designed for a negative (i.e. that indeed Jen would not be going into town tomorrow), now in order to produce a fitted response/next turn Jen produces a dispreferred response (with the *well* preface, see Heritage 2015, Raymond 2003; Schegloff & Lerner 2009), *disconfirming* Vera's assumption about whether she (Jen) would be going into town. In contrast to the preference or presupposition built into Vera's reformatted version, Jen will be going into town. The difference in response type involved here is between an answer (to a polar question) and a confirmation/disconfirmation.

28. [Field: X(C)2: Side 1: Call 2]

```
01 Joa:     Have a ↓drink with us?
02          (0.2)
03 Les:     ↑Yes we↑:ll thank you very mu↑:[ch
04 Joa:                                    [Are you going- You
05          u:sually go to Joyce Taylor's though New Yea[r's ee-
06 Les:                                                 [Sorry?
07 Joa:     You usually go to Joyce Taylor's ↓on New[Year's=
08 Les:                                             [.hhh
09 Joa:     =E[ve (      )
10 Les:       [↑Well yes we do: but (.) um no↑thing's bee:n:: put
11          forward this year an' we're (0.2) well- I↑: don't feel
12          I c'n do it,
```

Once again, the change of turn type of the topic-shift turn (from interrogative 'are you going...' to declarative 'you usually go to...') leads to the change in next turn's response. Since Lesley is NOT going to Joyce Taylor's, her original answer would be a dispreferred one ('no I don't feel I

can do it this year') should the original question is produced ('are you going to Joyce Taylor's this year?'). However, since Joan has reformatted her turn, Lesley has to confirm Joan's assertion with a preferred 'yes' before explaining her situation for this year.

29. [Field: September-October 1988 (II): Side 2: Call 4]

```
01 Les:     .t How uh-huh-↑Where w'r you thinking about still.↓
02          [((swa[llowing---))
03 Dan:     [(0.3)[Well um (0.3) I've been to see Derrick again
                  (16 lines omitted)
20 Dan:     we s- we've made out uh-: (0.2) short list between us.
21 Les:     eeYe[s.
22 Dan:         [And um (0.7) theh-theh th-we've got quite nice
23          places on there (       ) b't they're mostly[in either=
24                                                       [((fidget))
25 Dan:     =Scotland or Wa:les at the mhhoment,
```

In this last example, the reformatting of the topic-shift question (line 1) does not alter the turn type (i.e. interrogative), but still has the potential to influence the response produced by the other speaker. At line 1, the reformatting simply alters the interrogative from 'how' to 'where' (asking about Dana's preferred universities to apply for). However, it is possible that by using 'where' instead of 'how', the question potentially narrows down the range of answers that Dana could produce as fitting with the question. No matter what the HOW-question might be, Dana would have a wide choice of answers to give, as long as it relates to her plans for her university application. With the WHERE-question, however, Dana is obliged to provide place names as a fitted answer.

From the four examples from my collection we could notice a major feature of reformatting: the original turns and the reformatted turns could potentially yield different types of responses; the reformatting of the original version has the potential to normatively constrain the other speaker to alter his/her response accordingly to produce a fitted response.

Aborting, in contrast, does not. Since the aborted component and the new version are both directed to the same undertaking (Schegloff 2013, p. 53), the change in turn design does not alter the turn type. Therefore, the other speaker would not be obliged to alter his/her response type accordingly. Several examples of aborting from my collection will demonstrate this point:

23. [Holt: 1988 Undated: Side I: Call 9]

```
01 Dan:     Give (h)everyone a look No sorrhhy .hhh[hh
02 Gor:                                            [.t
03             (0.2)
04 Gor:     .hhhhhahh[h
05 Dan:             [W['l
06 Gor:               [Oh: s:-Ah: thank you ↓Dana,hhhh[h
07 Dan:                                                [I, um
08          actually you're- you g'n- .t I'm: gon' to get you big
09          surprize tomorrow so
10             (0.2)
11 ( ):     .p.h
12             (0.2)
```

```
13 Gor:      ↑ARE yo[u.
```

Although Dana has made several failed attempts to deliver her message, the final turn she produces is in the same turn type as the aborted ones — a news announcement of an upcoming surprise. In return, Gordon responds to this piece of news by displaying his curiosity and appreciation. Even if Dana had continued with any of the aborted attempts, it is likely that Gordon would have responded with the same type of response as he does in line 13; that is, in response to 'Actually you're going to (get a surprise)' a fitted response would have been 'Am I?', which of course is the same turn *type* as 'Are you?', albeit a different token of that type.

By comparing reformatting and aborting, one major difference between them becomes noticeable: reformatting has the potential to impose a normative obligation on the other speaker to change the type of his/her response, while aborting does not. This is neither to say that this feature applies to every single example of reformatting and aborting, nor to contend that Schegloff (2013)'s discussion of the two operations is insufficient. By presenting examples of reformatting and aborting at topic-initial/topic-shift turns, I aim to contribute to the analysis of these two self-repair operations with observations from a different perspective.

Although having identified ten recognizable and recurrent operations, Schegloff (2013) makes it clear that they address only one aspect of self-repair. Many other themes relating to self-repair, for example, the technology for implementing self-repairs and the interactional import that self-repairs bring into the conversation are equally worth studying. The next and final section will focus on one aspect of topic-initial self-repair that has seldom been previously explored.

5   Exploring the nature of the repairables at topic-initial turns

In noticing the high frequency with which self-repairs occur at topic-initial turns, Schegloff (1979) also acknowledged the difficulty describing the nature of the repairable (1979, p. 270). With the help of the ten self-repair operations, the nature of the repairables - what kinds of trouble are being repaired – in topic-initial turns was explored. By examining all of the self-repair examples carefully, several types of trouble at topic-initial turns were identified:

5.1   Grammatical repairables

Grammatical troubles are related to how topic-initial turns are grammatically constructed. They appear most frequently in replacing operations, where troubles include the use of the wrong tense ('w<u>uh</u>:-y<u>ih</u>- (.) Are yo<u>u</u> teaching this week?' in example 10), or the wrong functional word ('<u>i</u>n th<u>e</u>:, .hh <u>i</u>n that <u>e</u>nvelope, there's a:: an <u>N</u>.H.R. pr<u>o</u>gram.' in example 11). As discussed previously, reformatting and aborting could also be regarded as addressing grammatical troubles, since in these two operations, one grammatical form is reformatted or abandoned in favor of another one (example 17 and example 22).

5.2   Factual repairables

Factual troubles include errors, incorrect information, and missing elements to be corrected or added in order to deliver the right or the full information. Compared to grammatical troubles, factual errors are much fewer in my collection of topic-initial/topic shift self-repairs. Some of them can be found in replacing, where the wrong information is replaced by the correct one ('But n<u>ex</u>:t <u>Thurs</u>day he has to go to Yeov ehm (0.2) Br<u>i</u>sto:l?' in example 12), while others cluster in inserting ('<u>Oh</u>: <u>Tues</u>dee I'm 'onna: it's Z<u>e</u>ro's b<u>i</u>rthday en I'm 'onna g<u>i</u>ve'm a <u>party</u>' in example 18).

5.3 Action formational repairables

This type of trouble appears almost exclusively in reformatting, where one form of action (such as a declarative) is reformatted as another one (such as an interrogative). It is important to distinguish them from pure grammatical troubles. Rather than changing the tense or a functional word, action formational troubles are repaired in such a way as to produce a different action, which are likely to influence the shape of the following sequence.

5.4 Repairables in recycling operation

Compared with other operations, it is difficult to identify the nature of trouble in recycling operations at topic-initial turns. This is because in recycling, a speaker is simply repeating what he/she has just produced before, and therefore the repairable item and the repair solution are indistinguishable. However, by going through all the topics that are being initiated in a recycling operation, an interesting phenomenon emerges: among the 31 new topics introduced in recycling, half (16 topics) can be seen as 'delicate' topics in interaction.

Many CA studies of delicate/sensitive topics have focused on medical settings, where the topics are intrinsically delicate, such as illness (AIDS), sex and death (e.g., Peräkylä, 1993; Silverman & Peräkylä 1990; Weijts, Houtkoop & Mullen, 1993; Yu & Wu, 2015, etc.). In ordinary conversations, on the other hand, some topics may not be intrinsically delicate, but may be treated by participants as being interactionally delicate in some way, and are constructed to display their sensitivity or awkwardness. The display of the delicacy of these topics may be associated with a number of factors, such as the occasion on which they are initiated, the relationship between the speakers, any other parties that are implicated (for example evaluating a third party), etc. In my collection of topic-initial recycling, many delicate topics introduced involve these factors, for example:

7. [Holt C85:4:1]

```
09 Les:    °Oh:.°hh Yi-m- You↓know I-I- I'm boiling about
10         something hhhheh[heh   hhhh
11 Joy:                    [Wha::t.
12 Les:    Well that sa↓:le. (0.2) at- at (.) the vicarage.
```

Lesley introduced the new topic as being a delicate or awkward one, and is working in some way in her self-repairs in line 9 to fashion the right way to begin her telling, about something

that she is 'boiling about' (i.e. angry about). Something of the delicacy to which Lesley orients in this telling is not only is the mutual acquaintance someone they know to be unpleasant (Leslie goes on in a collusive manner to refer to ' your friend and mine Mister R'); more significantly, her complaint is about this mutual acquaintance jeering at Lesley's not buying anything at a sale, which potentially alludes to Lesley as being a cheapskate. Combining these aspects together, Lesley introduces a new topic as being somewhat interactionally delicate, for it is potentially face-losing for the introducer.

The next example is also about a speaker telling about an unpleasant experience:

10. [Holt: Sept-0ct 1988: Side 1: Call 5]

```
01 Gor:     Got this massive great Land Rov'r it' gnreally (.) brilliant .
02          hhh it duh doesn' matter (.) you know (.) sort'v where you
03          drive in the road cz everyb'dy gets out'the way for you
04          .hhhlsshhh you're s- you're sat about two meters above
05          evyb'dy else you c'n d-look do:w:n. .hllh on the
06          rooves['v cars goin' below you..khh
07               [((sound))
08 Gor:     't's[got
09 Sus:         [I wz juh I wz js really nervous in my test I think
10          an' my nerves js took over.
```

Susan has just failed her driving test and has called Gordon for commiseration. Gordon, however, was keen to talk about driving his father's Land Rover, and does not seem to attend to Susan's failure. At line 9, Susan introduces her topic again, where she recycles 'I wz juh' before producing a full turn. In addition to its unfortunate nature (Maynard, 2003), Susan's topic can also be delicate, considering the sequential context where her topic is introduced. First of all, Susan has introduced a misfortune, whilst by contrast Gordon responded with a happy experience. Secondly, Susan introduces her topic quite abruptly, without waiting for Gordon's telling to wind down (notice the overlap between line 8 and line 9). Susan may be orienting to these aspects in her topic introduction (resumption), the awkwardness of which may be reflected in the self-repairs.

Here is a final example of recycling operation that involves a delicate topic:

30. [Field: September-October 1988: Side 1: Call 8]

```
01 Les:     I don'=if you want to go over there an' see them ↓a↑:ll?
02 Nor:     I can't I'm dialyzing at the mo-:ment. he[h
03 Les:                                              [Sorry?
04 Nor:     I'm  dialyzing at the mome[nt, (   )
05 Les:                               [.hhh Oh:: hhu-[n:: Tell me=
06 Nor:                                             [(Yeh)
07 Les:     =↑have you have you got on: have you heard ye[t
08 Nor:                                                  [I've got'n
09          the results t'da:y,
10 Les:      Yes:,?
11 Nor:     'T's a B:,
```

The topic Lesley initiates at line 7 concerns Norman's privacy — his 'A' level exam results (these being almost intrinsically a delicate matter for a teenager who may or may not have heard his results). Lesley's recycling of '<u>ha</u>ve you', and her aborting of the ongoing 'h<u>a</u>ve you got on:' in favor of 'have you h<u>ea</u>rd yet' both exhibit her probing for the possibility (or the entitlement) to know about Norman's exam results. In recognition of (i.e. orienting to) the privacy and potential awkwardness of the subject of exam results, the way that Lesley formulates her question (the recycling of prior TCU, the avoidance of mentioning the word 'result') conveys the delicacy of this new topic.

In addition to the three examples above, there are many other recycling operations which involve the introduction of a delicate topic. The delicate topics include: selling a guitar to a friend for money, explaining to a relative why his mother is not invited to a family event (a wedding), complaining about a course that the speaker does not like, explaining why the speaker has not contacted her sister, asking for an update of a friend's family trouble, etc. Interestingly, in all these examples, recycling occurred at turn-initial positions. As already noticed by many earlier studies, when introducing a delicate topic, a speaker can constitute the topic as delicate through many practices and techniques (Peräkylä, 1993; Silverman & Peräkylä, 1990; Yu & Wu, 2015). These practices include (but are not limited to) using euphemistic formulations, letting the other speaker name the delicate matter, and so on. In particular, the introduction of a delicate matter is often achieved by suspending the mention of the delicate item, i.e., by 'delaying the further realization of a turn's talk (Lerner, 2013, p. 111) through word search, pauses and other techniques (ibid.). As could be observed from the examples above, there is a strong tendency that self-repairs at topic-initial turns, especially involving recycling operations, may serve as another delaying technique for the introduction of interactionally delicate matters. In recycling an element just produced, a speaker also in some fashion halts the progressivity of the turn-in-progress and puts off the announcement of the delicate mentionable (although the place that the recycling occurs may not be the point where a new topic is 'keyed', as Schegloff (1979) finds). In light of this, recycling may also have some interactional implications, enabling us to understand the possible relationship between 'the organization of the talk itself to the emergent interpersonal relationship' (ibid.).

This being said, it must be pointed out that the possible relationship between topic-initial self-repairs and delicate topics does not contradict the point I made at the beginning of this chapter that there is unlikely to be a systematic relationship between self-repairs and topic-initiation. While self-repairs are not systematically relevant in any sort of topic-initiation, they may be particularly relevant to the initiation of interactionally sensitive topics. In chapter 4, I have already noticed that topic maneuvering can be accompanied by various forms of speech perturbation, or indeed self-repairs, and this could add further evidence for the association between self-repairs and the introduction of delicate topics. Although self-repairs are not systematically involved in topic-initial turns, in cases where they do occur (especially in the form of recycling), there is a strong tendency that they mark the introduction of interactionally delicate topics.

This section has focused on one aspect of topic-initial self-repairs — the nature of the troubles being repaired. In replacing, reformatting, searching, inserting and aborting, the nature of the troubles can be classified into three categories: grammatical trouble, factual trouble, and action formational trouble. In recycling, however, the troubles exhibit a different nature. Among the 31 recycling examples, half of them are closely related to topics that are interactionally delicate, and the recycling operations serve some interactional function by delaying the delivering of the delicate topic.

6   Conclusion

In this chapter, I focused on Schegloff's (1979) preliminary observation on self-repairs and investigated the possible association between the management of topical unit and one of the major organizations of conversation. To demonstrate his point that the occurrence of repair is not incidental but is systematically relevant to certain sequential features of or environments in conversation, Schegloff (1979), made two observations. First, he contends that self-repairs appear very regularly at first sentences in topic-initial and /or topic-shift turns. Second, where there is no self-repair at these sequential positions, with great frequency the other participant will initiate repair in the next turn. However, Schegloff's (1979) observation was based only on very few examples and it was unclear whether his argument is valid more generally, or not. Therefore, this chapter aimed to further examine his argument.

148 cases of topic-initial turns were first identified, all instances in which a new topic is raised in a disjunctive or marked fashion. If Schegloff's (1979) claim about the systematic relation between self-repairs and topic-initial turns is well-grounded, self-repairs would be expected to occur in most of these 148 cases. However, self-repairs were found in only 71 of the 148 cases – under half of the whole collection. In addition, in the remaining 77 cases in which speakers did not do some form of self-repair in their topic initial turn, there is no indication that the other-participants frequently initiate other-repairs; indeed, they did so in only 9 of these 77 cases. Without substantive statistical evidence, Schegloff's (1979) claim about the relevance of topic-organization to self-repairs has to be doubted.

Although Schegloff's (1979) observation is not well-supported, nevertheless he points to an interesting phenomenon relevant to topic management. Therefore, I focused on the 71 cases of self-repairs at topic-initial turns and explored the various repair operations (Schegloff, 2013) in them. The repair operations in these cases are mainly recycling, replacing, reformatting, inserting, searching and aborting. Each of these were examined in detail, including how these operations are initiated, how a repairable is located and how the self-repair is accomplished. Then, focusing particularly on reformatting and aborting, a means to distinguish the two has been proposed. In reformattings, the changes in the original topic-initial turns have the potential to normatively constrain the other speakers to alter his/her responses accordingly to produce a fitted response, whereas in abortings such features do not apply.

Lastly, the nature of the repairables in these self-repairs was explored, resulting in a classification into several categories. Some of these troubles involve grammatical errors, some

have factual errors, while other self-repairs involve a change in action type. In cases of recycling specifically, it appears that the repairables in recycling are often associated with the introductions of interactionally delicate topics. Just like word searches, pauses and hesitations, self-repairs may serve to delay the introduction of delicate matters by halting the progressivity of then turn-in-progress. In this sense, self-repairs at topic-initial turns may also have some interactional implications, helping participants to shape and formulate the introduction of delicate or interactionally sensitive topics.

Chapter 7   Conclusion

The aim of this thesis has been to investigate how topics are managed in ordinary conversation, focusing especially on how speakers initiate topics and transition from one topic to another, with an underlying theme that in the ways speakers may mark a topic change, in the means (practices) through which they transition through topics, that 'topic' is salient to what they are doing in the talk – that they orient to 'topic' in these moments of change and transition, as well as in the practices through which they pursue or persist with topics. I have not suggested that 'topic' is a superordinate dimension of conversation, a dimension that trumps (the organization of) turn-taking, or action and so forth. These organisations are interwoven in conversation; it can happen, for instance, that while talking about a given topic, participants may engage in or conduct a range of actions, or that whilst engaged in a particular action, participants may move from one topic to another. Topic is simply *a* way in which conversations may be organized, albeit one that can have a particular significance for participants for whom talking 'off topic' or interjecting with an unrelated topic or pursuing a topic beyond its interest to others may be noticeable, remarkable, even sanctionable matters. At any rate, I have explored how participants orient to topic and organize their talk, at least in some respects, in terms of topic, and that their orientations to topic are visible at certain moments and in certain practices in conversation. It has become conventional perhaps for researchers to shy away from studying topic in conversation because of the many difficulties in defining topic, identifying or labelling topics in talk, accounting for topical coherence and other such problems that have beset linguists and analysts of interaction (Brown & Yule, 1983). My focus, as far as possible on participants' orientations to topics and topical management, has been to move beyond definitional problems, and consider how participants to navigate topics in their talk with one another.

Using audio recordings of telephone conversations, and analyzed through the perspective and methods of conversation analysis, I have described various practices through which participants organize their topics and thereby form a topic trajectory of their conversation. By adopting a bottom-up approach, i.e. working inductively, I have also demonstrated how the management of topics is achieved by participants themselves through turn-by-turn negotiation and collaboration. In this conclusion to my thesis, I will first discuss how this thesis contributes to the study of topics in ordinary conversation (section 1). In section 2, I summarize each of the preceding chapters, summarising the focus and findings of each one. In the last section, I acknowledge the limitations of this thesis, and propose some research directions that future studies could pursue.

1   Contribution to the study of topic management in ordinary conversation

My thesis has contributed to the study of topics in CA in two principal respects. It has re-considered some of the longstanding beliefs regarding topic and the definitional, conceptual and other difficulties in studying it. Also, it has hopefully expanded our understanding of how

topics are organized in ordinary conversations. Although it might be thought that 'topic' is a redundant or unworthy focus for research, and that little good could come of exploring something so nebulous, so ill-defined and difficult to pin down as 'topic', my research has nevertheless shown that the organization of topics lies at the center of our daily conversation and that the study of topics is a worthy research area in CA. In this section, I will summarize how my thesis contributes to our understanding of topic management.

1.1.   Transforming long-held views about the difficulty in studying topics.

In my thesis, I have revisited two long-held views regarding the difficulty in studying topics. One such view argues that topic is not qualified to be a proper subject of study because it is too difficult to define. Indeed, from qualitative approaches (e.g., Keenan & Schieffelin, 1976) to quantitative perspectives (e.g., Hoey, 1991), from sentence level (e.g., Chafe, 1980) to discourse level (e.g., Brown & Yule, 1983), no one has so far provided a wholly satisfactory or cogent definition of 'topic'. My thesis acknowledges this difficulty but at the same proposes that this problem is not as terminal, in research terms, as it might seem. On the one hand, there are places in conversation where we can clearly observe topic boundaries, and more importantly where we (analysts) can see that participants themselves orient to and manage topic boundaries dynamically. For example, we see such orientations in touched-off topic transitions, the disjunctive markers being the means (practice) through which speakers indicate the occasioning of and move to a new topic: in topic resumptions, the recycling of a previous turn is the practice through which a speaker displays that she/he is getting back to a prior topic: while in giving a description of his/her activities immediately before the conversation, a speaker is suggesting that he/she may be paving the way for a next topic. This forms a sharp contrast to the linguistics approach to defining and observing topics, which regards discourse as a fixed object and tries to abstract topic out of it. On the other hand, we can begin to study topics without needing to define them. No matter how we try to provide a well-developed, cogent definition of topics, we nevertheless study topics from analysts' point of view; our definition of topics cannot account for how participants themselves orient to and manage topical talk in real-time. If we are to adopt an emic, conversation analytic approach to studying topics, we should move beyond a preoccupation with the definition of topic and focus instead on participants' own conduct and understandings of one another's conduct. I have followed the path suggested by some previous work that has explored aspects of the organization of topic in interaction, notwithstanding the definitional and conceptual difficulties that have been documented and acknowledged in the literature (see e.g., Sacks, 1992; Jefferson, 1984; Drew & Holt, 1998; Holt & Drew, 2005, etc.).

Another misunderstanding about the study of topic is that since topics are difficult to define, research into topics may not produce significant results. Therefore, topic may not be a worthy subject to be studied. Discussions favoring this view contend that due to the changeable nature of topics and the difficulty in defining them, topic does not seem like a solid, fundamental organizing principle for conversation. Also, since "topic" is such an uncapturable concept, research on topics may not yield any systematic findings, or recurrent patterns. However, my thesis has shown that conversations are not only about sequences and actions; while we accept

that sequence and action are essential for conversation, we should not dismiss the importance of topic. Also, if topic plays an irreplaceable role in conversation, it should be managed in a systematic and organized way too. As shown by a large body of previous studies, topic is by no means a haphazard or erratic phenomenon in conversation. From introducing a topic (e.g., Button & Casey, 1984, 1985, 1988) to closing down a topic (Jefferson, 1983), we can identify systematic patterns that participants use to regulate the course of their conversation. Therefore, the idea that topic is not an adequate organizing unit of conversation should be set aside, and more research should be conducted to further discover the systematic features of topic management.

Last, as already noted above, some of those who espouse these long-held views nevertheless incorporate 'topic' in their analyses, they still refer to topic initial turns (Schegloff, 1979) or describe a unique 'topic-proffering sequence' (Schegloff, 2007), and indeed will sometimes give glosses of what participants are 'talking about'. Such self-contradictions further validate the omnipresence of topic in interaction and its significance in the organization of conversation. By re-examining some of the long-standing beliefs in the difficulty in studying topics, I have contributed to CA literature by offering an insight into how we should treat and approach the organization of topics.

1.2   Contribution to the research on topic

How my research contributes to the CA literature on topic: After demonstrating that topic is an equally eligible organizing unit for conversation, I continued to explore the systematic ways employed by participants. My investigation focuses on some major topical actions we conduct in ordinary conversation, for example moving from one topic to another (topic transition), introducing a particular topic (creating an environment to introduce a topic) and getting back to a previous topic (topic resumption). By describing the underpinning mechanisms behind these topical actions, I have once again highlighted that topic is not a fuzzy and unstable concept but rather a plausible organizing tool to which participants orient in systematic ways. Also, I have demonstrated that topic is not a stand-alone organizing factor for conversation; rather, it is always inextricably linked to other dimensions of interaction. In stepwise topic transition, participants design their turns in such ways as to create a sense of cohesion between the previous topic and the emerging new topic. In touched-off topic transition, turn-design is also employed to indicate a departure from the prior topic but at the same time justifying the introduction of the occasioned new one. When introducing a particular topic, speakers are observed to attend to the sequential environments of the conversation and work accordingly to create an auspicious circumstance tailored to what has been going on previously. In topic resumption, participants display a sensitivity to the shutting down of the previous topic or the emergence of a different topical direction and therefore work to bring back a previous topic. Together with past studies into other forms of topical actions, my thesis has provided a systematic overview of how we manage our topics in daily talk – those actions we perform nearly every day in every conversation.

As I have shown in my literature review (chapter 2), there have been a number of previous

studies either focusing directly on topic (e.g., Maynard, 1980; Button & Casey, 1984,1985; Jefferson, 1984) or which consider aspects of topic in the course of the analysis of other conversational phenomena (e.g. Drew & Holt, 1998). However, in the years since these studies there seems to have been a relative dearth of interest in the topic of 'topic' – aside, that is, from Schegloff's enquiries into the greater role that sequence organization and action sequences have in the coherence of talk across sequences. However, in many previous CA studies, there are important and fruitful observations and comments regarding topic management, which offer considerable scope for further investigation. In this thesis, I have further developed past studies into topic; and brought unexplored observations back to the center of discussion, thereby bridging gaps in the CA literature on topic. For example, my investigation of stepwise topic transition is a further development of Jefferson (1984), the section on touched-off topic transition is based on Sacks' early lectures (e.g., Sacks, 1992a, p. 87), my second analytical chapter is inspired by Adato (1979, 1980) while the last chapter is an exploration of Schegloff (1979). By studying what may be lesser-known aspects of topic management, I have revealed how the organization of topics is an intricate yet well-ordered process, and how crucial it is for the organization of the whole conversation.

<u>Action and sequence organization, and the role of topic</u>: apart from studying some lesser-known aspects of topic management, I have also probed into how topic management can interact with other aspects of conversation. That is, I have extended the scope of my thesis to explore the possible nexus among topic management, sequence organization and action. In doing so, I have reviewed Schegloff's position on topic and sequence organization, and presented my own discussion based on Schegloff's perspectives. According to Schegloff, conversation should be understood for what it is doing rather than for what it is about (Schegloff, 1999, p. 409), since all topical talk is carried out in actions that are accomplished through sequences. In topic-proffering sequences (Schegloff, 2007), for example, the initiation of topics is collaboratively achieved by participants via a recurrent sequential pattern. The same situation also applies to topic closure, where there is also an underlying sequential pattern regulating how a topic could gradually be winded down. In addition, Schegloff also finds that certain sequential patterns could serve as a source or vehicle for introducing particular topics. Taking exchange sequences as an example, Schegloff (2007) displays how the reciprocity of sequences such as "how are you" sequences could create an environment for launching a particular telling. To summarize Schegloff's position, it is sequence organization that provides for the coherence for conversation, and topic management is one form of sequence organization.

There are nevertheless some aspects of topic management that are not subject to the principles of sequence organization. In other words, sequence organization could not account for all practices in topic management. For instance, although Schegloff (2007) has identified recurrent sequential patterns for initiating a topic (i.e., topic-proffering sequence) and for closing a topic, he himself acknowledges that his findings 'can not take up the organization of topical talk once launched' (Schegloff, 2007, p. 170), or the more seamless ways of topic transitions such as stepwise topic transition (Jefferson 1984). Also, while Schegloff contends that exchange sequences could serve to launch a specific telling, the use of such sequence also depends on the topic being talked about, since not all topics are as exchangeable between participants as 'how

are you' sequences. In addition, as can be seen quite often, Schegloff uses expressions like sequence/topic and topic/sequence (e.g., sequence/topic-closing sequences in Schegloff 2007: 216) in his discussion about sequence organization. This also suggest that topicality may sometimes function independent of sequence organization. In fact, topicality may not only have certain autonomy over sequence organization, it can also impact sequence organization in some ways. In topic-proffering sequences, Schegloff notices 'a reversal of the ordinary differential expansion relevance of preferred and dispreferred second pair parts' (Schegloff 2007, p. 169), where a preferred response results in sequence expansion and a dispreferred one leads to sequence closure, displaying how topic management could also influence the organization of sequences. To conclude, although sequence organization serves as the central organizing principle for conversation, it may not be able to account for all aspects of conversation, particularly for the management of topics. Therefore, a study into topic management is necessary and will contribute to a better understanding of conversational practices.

In my investigations into topic management, and particularly into how topics are launched, I have added to our knowledge about the variety of practices through which participants manage the tasks, or actions, associated with introducing a topic, transitioning to a new or 'next' topic, or persisting in renewing a topic that might otherwise have been finished with. Those practices display patterns that differ from the topic-proffering sequences and topic-closing sequences described by Schegloff (2007), since they usually involve a longer expansion of talk and do not exhibit easily identifiable recurrent patterns. In other words, I have explored different phenomena in topical talk that may lie outside the scope of sequence organization. Therefore, I have contributed to CA literature by re-examining the nexus between topic and sequence, and have explored a wider range of practices in topic management.

2   Summary of chapters

Chapter 2 Literature review: I offered an appraisal of past studies of topic in linguistics and CA during the past several decades. In the first half of the literature review, I discussed linguistic approaches to defining topics, which are broadly divided into a form-based approach and a content-based approach. A form-based approach (e.g., Watson-Todd, 2011; Chafe, 1976, 1980; Hoey, 1991) to defining topics works to identify the formal boundaries between topics by observing the syntactic, lexical and phonological clues or cues that suggest topic boundaries. On the other hand, a content-based approach (e.g., Keenan & Schieffelin, 1976; Brown & Yule, 1983) examines topics at a discourse level, proposing that attempts to defining topics should focus on discourse content and its sense of 'aboutness' (Kuno, 1972; Reinhart, 1982). However, both of these approaches fail to capture the interactional nature of topics and therefore do not qualify as appropriate approaches to studying topics in interaction. In the second half of the literature review, I turned to a conversation analytic perspective on topic – the perspective adopted in this thesis. I started by pointing out the uniqueness of CA approach to topic as compared to traditional linguistic approaches. First, CA approach views topic as a process and examine topic in an ever-changing context. Second, it takes a bottom-up perspective, prioritizing participants' own orientation to topics and their own actions. Then, I reviewed the major CA works on the organization of topics, namely those on topic initiation (e.g., Button & Casey, 1984, 1985, 1988;

Maynard & Zimmerman, 1984), topic change (e.g., Maynard, 1980) and transition (e.g., Jefferson, 1984; Holt & Drew, 2005) and topic closure (e.g., Jefferson, 1983; Couper-Kuhlen, 1993; West & Garcia, 1988). In doing so, I noted some research gaps that should be filled and proposed several research questions that this thesis pursues:

1. How do conversation participants move from one topic to another in a connected way, by maintaining some level of cohesion with the previous topic?
2. How do conversation participants create an auspicious environment to introduce a particular topic?
3. How do conversation participants resume a topic after it has been exhausted or interrupted?
4. What is the possible relationship between topic-organization and other organization feature of conversation, for example, the relationship between topic and self-repair?

Chapter 3 Topic transitions in ordinary conversation: Here I explored two forms of topic transitions in which new topics are introduced by retaining or highlighting the topical link to previous topics. One of them is stepwise topic transition that Jefferson (1984) describes. Noting that Jefferson's (1984) patterns for stepwise topic transition are discovered mainly in troubles-telling, I first investigated whether it is also applicable to a more general topical context. Using examples in non-troubles-telling environment, I showed that the five-step pattern in Jefferson (1984) can be extended to apply to some more general topical environments. Next, I took a closer look at the details of stepwise topic transition, in particular, the sense of connectedness between turns, and proposed some mechanisms for linking one turn coherently to another one. In the latter half of the chapter, I focused on another form of connected topic transition, touched-off topic transition, in which the new topic is occasioned by some mentionable in previous turns and is raised in a disjunctive fashion. I first described three types of turn-initial markers that preface the introduction of touched-off topics. Then I explored the sequential environments in which touched-off topic transitions typically occur. Finally, I gave an account of how the link between the previous topic and the occasioned topic is highlighted. This chapter aims to further our understanding of two forms that are less-studied topic transitions *as compared to* disjunctive topic changes which are more widely studied (e.g., Button & Casey, 1984, 1985; Maynard, 1980, etc.).

Chapter 4 Manoeuvring topics into being: exploiting the 'circumstantially produced topicality' of talk: My analysis here arises from a preliminary observation by Adato (1980) about creating the circumstances for introducing a particular next topic. According to Adato (1980), in the absence of an auspicious environment to introduce a topic, speakers can manoeuvre the conversation to create some circumstances for introducing the next topic in a related and coherent manner. This chapter further developed this argument by proposing three recurrent practices to do so. The first practice is to construct the next topic as a second story. Speakers are seen to produce other-attentive questions or comments to the co-participants, whose answers or responses serve as a first story. The first story produced by the co-participant provides a good basis or circumstance or environment in which to introduce the next topic, in the form of a responsive action. The second practice is to introduce the next topic as if it is the first topic of the whole conversation. Such first-topic status is established by giving an account of what the speaker has

been doing immediately prior to the conversation, which according to Sacks (1992b, p. 302) is the routine activity at conversational beginnings. It helps to recreate a sequential environment similar to conversational starts so that the next topic introduced would be oriented to as if it is the first topic and therefore can be introduced legitimately. In the third practice, speakers allude to their next topic and invite their co-participants in topicalize it together. The co-participants' response to the allusion creates a topical environment making it easier to introduce the target more coherently, rather than doing so abruptly. By naming these practices 'topic manoeuvring', I have demonstrated that instead of going with the flow in conversation, speakers can also work around the conversation to talk about a particular topic when preceding talk does not warrant its introduction.

Chapter 5 Topic atrophy and topic resumption: In this chapter I focused on another under-developed area of topic management, namely topic resumptions and provided a systematic overview of this practice. I began by describing two types of sequential environments for topic resumption. One type of environment is where some interactional hiatus appears. Hiatus can be seen as an unmarked form of topic atrophy, during which neither party contributes to the current topic with new information and therefore they move into the closing of the topic. Another type of environment is the emergence of a competing topic development. Such competing topic development is often created by a co-participant's comments or responses which re-contextualizes the current topic and opens up a diverging topical direction. Then, I gave a closer look at the most immediate environment prior to topic resumption and highlighted the topical tension between the participants before topic resumption is initiated. This topical tension shows how participants negotiate or compete with each other for the next topical direction, and it can be characterized by the gap, in-breaths and hesitations which often accompany turn beginnings, the overlap of the two speakers and other features. In addition, such topical tension is evident also in one speaker choosing a topical direction between two alternatives. Last, I focused on the practice of topic resumption itself and described the linguistic practice to resume a previous topic — repetition of a prior turn in the previous topic. Repetition serves to establish a direct cohesive link between the current turn and what have been previously talked about and can, therefore, resume a previous topic in a more coherently way.

Chapter 6 Self-repairs and topic-initiation: This chapter departs from my interest in topical actions and focused instead on Schegloff's (1979) preliminary observation about the relationship between self-repair and topic introduction/shift. According to Schegloff, topic-initial turns recurrently have self-repairs in them, and I was interested in finding out whether his observation is justified. First of all, I provided an informal statistical test for his claim. From the data I have, I identified 148 cases of topic-initial turns where a new topic is introduced after an observable topic hiatus. However, among these 148 topic-initial turns I only found 71 cases of self-repairs. Statistically speaking, these 71 cases of self-repairs are insufficient to establish a systematic relationship between topic-initiation and self-repair, and therefore I concluded that Schegloff (1979)'s assertion does not have a sound basis. Nevertheless, I still examined in detail the occurrence of self-repair at topic-initial turns, to explore how they are carried out and what interactional function they may have. I first classified the 71 cases into different repair

operations (Schegloff, 2013): recycling, replacing, reformatting, searching, inserting and aborting. Then I described in detail the different techniques for implementing these operations, including indicating a trouble source and initiating a repair. In addition, I also explored the difference between two operations — reformatting and aborting, and how they can be more accurately distinguished. Last, I looked at the nature of the repairables involved in self-repairs at topic-initial turns and identified a special relationship between self-repair and the introduction of some delicate topics in ordinary talk. I argued that self-repairs, just like hesitation, word search and pauses, may serve as one of the delaying techniques (Lerner, 2013) for introducing delicate topics, which may help the speaker better formulate his/her turns, or even let the co-participant introduce the topic collaboratively. In contrast to the previous analytical chapter, in this final chapter I turned to the relationship between topic and repair and explored how the organization of topics may intersect with other organizing features of conversation.

3   Limitations and Directions for Future Research

Sample size: One limitation of my research lies in the size of the corpus of audio recordings I worked on. Although theoretically, the three corpora (Holt, NB and Rahman) seem sufficient for a PhD study, sometimes they may not be fully adequate for the study of topic management. On the one hand, the telephone conversations in the three corpuses are mainly between a fixed number of participants (e.g., Lesley and her mum and families in Holt corpus; Emma and Lottie in NB corpus). If any of them had a particular conversational style in terms of topic management, it may have been over-represented in my research (Drew, Chatwin & Collins, 2001). On the other hand, considering the nature of this thesis, some topical actions are not easy to identify and collect. For example, in ordinary conversations we do create opportunities to introduce a specific topic, but we don't always do so every single time. Therefore, examples of this phenomenon may not be as abundant as other features of interaction (e.g., self-repairs). If I had been able to work with more data, I might have a broader basis to identify more examples of the phenomenon I'm interested in.

The nature of the data: In order better to focus on the linguistic features for topic management, my research is solely based on audio recordings of telephone conversations. This means that I was not able to examine the multi-modal practices and corporeal conduct (e.g. eye gaze) that may be employed in the management of topics *in face-to-face interactions*. Just like other interactional phenomena, the management of topic must also be an embodied achievement, where visual resources (e.g., gesture, gaze and body posture) and physical surroundings are jointly used to perform coherent social actions (Mortensen, 2012). For example, considering the prevalence of gaze in interaction (Goodwin, 1980; Rossano, 2012; Kendrick, 2015), it is worth exploring how the deployment of gaze is associated with various topical actions (i.e., how gaze is used in combination with talk when managing the topical tension prior to topic resumption). Since my data are audio recordings only, however, I did not have the chance to study face-to-face interaction and investigate how bodily features also contribute to the organization of topics.

As I have tried to show throughout my thesis, topic is something to which participants

continually orient in conversation. In addition to the practices described in the analytical chapters, this thesis gives some useful pointers on some research directions that future studies could pursue. Apart from a multimodal approach to studying topics as discussed above, another direction is to explore the nexus between topic and other organizing features of conversation. A smooth and coherent conversation does not depend solely on the management of topic; it is the outcome of the orderly coordination of all dimensions of interaction. It is worthwhile, therefore, to explore the mechanism behind this synergy to discover how they interact with each other for the progress of conversation. My last analytical chapter on topic-initiation and self-repair is one such attempt. But in addition, there are other aspects of conversational features worthy to be studied. For example, when talking about epistemics, Heritage (2013) argued that it would be rewarding to explore the interplay between epistemics and stepwise topic transition – a phenomenon still much understudied. This observation provides a good starting point, enabling future CA work to deepen our understanding of the organization of conversation.

Another direction that future studies might take is to focus on the nuances associated with how conversation weaves from one topic to another, and how participants may orient to what they are talking "about", and how they transition from one topic to another. My research has mostly uncovered the general patterns or practices at a somewhat macro-level, which expand over a large sequence of turns, and which are manifest in explicit changes in topics directions. Therefore, it may have glossed over (missed) some interesting properties at a more micro, implicit level. They may include some fixed expressions, turn-initial, mid-turn or turn-final particles, prosodic patterns and embodied actions, etc. Combining features in both positioning and composition, future studies will surely produce more fruitful outcome.

This thesis has taken an initial step in providing a systematic overview of the practices involved in the management of topic. It has shed new light on the practices associated with the management of topic, and complemented our appreciation of various topical actions that participants perform in nearly every ordinary social conversation. It is hoped that future research could develop this line of CA enquiry and further extend our knowledge of the organization of topics in ordinary conversation.

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