Introduction: Analyzing turn-initial particles[1]

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Since the publication of the now classic paper "A simplest systematics for the organization of turn-taking in conversation" in *Language* (Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson 1974) the study of turn-transition between speakers has assumed an ever-increasing significance in research on spoken interaction. This has motivated studies that embrace the role of phonetics and prosody, and morpho-syntax and pragmatics in the formation of transition relevance places (places where a transition from one speaker to another may become relevant and possible), as well as the management of the actual transfer of speakership (e.g., Clayman 2012; 2013b; Clayman and Raymond 2015; Ford and Thompson 1996; Local 1992; Local and Walker 2004, 2012; Selting 1996; Walker 2010). This work in turn has potentiated cross-linguistic studies that address the role of the typological characteristics of a language and distinctive phonetic-prosodic systems as

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resources for turn transfer (e.g. Tanaka 1999). More recently, research has examined the deployment of multimodal resources to the same end (e.g., Hayashi 2005; Lerner 2003; 2004; Mondada 2006; 2007; Deppermann 2013).

In this context, it is perhaps surprising that less attention has been paid to turn beginnings themselves. In classic papers starting in the 1980's, Emanuel Schegloff observed that turn-initial position is a crucial location because it stands at the intersection between a prior and a next turn (Schegloff 1987, 1996). These observations stimulated the development of research that examines turn-initial position and various classes of vocal expressions that occur there. In general, research has focused on two main classes: i) audible preparations for speech, such as in-breaths, throat clearing, etc. which belong to the pre-beginning phase of a turn at talk (Schegloff 1996; Deppermann 2013; Kendrick and Torreira 2015), and ii) turn-initial elements that are generally not syntactically integrated to the subsequent talk in the turn, but are prosodically integrated and thereby form a unit together with the subsequent talk (Heritage 2013). These turn-initial elements are the subject of this book. With it we present a range of cross-linguistic research on turn transition, turn design and the expression of stance.

1. Background

The present volume joins a large and rapidly growing literature that directs itself to a domain of elements variously labeled as discourse markers, discourse particles, discourse operators, pragmatic particles, etc. (e.g. Schiffrin 1987; Redeker 1991; Heritage and Sorjonen 1994; Auer 1996; Hansen 1998; Schourup 1999; Mazeland and Huiskes 2001; Blakemore 2003; Bolden 2006; Fischer 2006; Norrick 2009; Degand, Cornillie, and Pietrandrea 2013; Kim and Kuroshima 2013; Auer and Maschler 2016; Heinemann and Koivisto 2016). This literature addresses a wide range of linguistic elements occurring in many different positions within the clause and text/discourse, and fulfilling a broad diversity of functions. They include such items as, for English, *well, oh, y'know, so, moreover*, which often occur at the beginning of utterances and clauses, but which may also occur elsewhere. However, they also include conjunctions (e.g., *and, but,* etc.), interjections (e.g., *gosh, man, wow*), adverbs (e.g., *obviously, frankly*) and verbs (e.g., *see, look, say*).

These studies conceptualize and examine discourse particles from a range of linguistic perspectives including, for example, relevance theory, functional linguistics and construction grammar. In general, since Deborah Schiffrin's (1987) influential study, functional approaches have assumed a large presence in the field (e.g., Hansen 1998; Fischer 2006). More recently, there have been moves in a comparative and areal direction, as in Peter Auer and Yael Maschler's (2016) recent collection on the uses of the members of

the *NU/NÅ* discourse marker family across the languages of Europe and in some languages beyond. In addition, some have been attracted by possible affinities between more interactionally focused particle research and construction grammar (e.g., Fischer and Alm 2013; Fischer 2015). However, as many authors have acknowledged, there is considerable terminological diversity in the field reflective of the diversity of theoretical approaches that it contains. This diversity also reflects genuine difficulties in bringing together all of the linguistic elements that can plausibly be treated as members of a large and heterogeneous class under a description that unites form and function in a satisfactory way.

The conceptual framework of this volume is conversation analytic (CA) (see Sacks 1992; Schegloff 2007; Sidnell and Stivers 2013), the distinctive perspective of which lies in its emphasis on analyzing verbal resources, such as particles, as tools for constructing actions that are housed in turns at talk, and located in sequences of emerging interaction. Compared to the overall set of discourse particles described in the literature, this volume takes a more specific focus on particles that are initially positioned in a turn at talk – one of the classic domains of discourse marker research. We compensate for this specificity with a consideration of turn-initial particles in a variety of languages and deployed in a variety of activities in search of commonalities that illuminate general contingencies that must be managed in the context of conversational organization.

2. Discourse markers, discourse particles and turn-initial particles

In a valuable and wide-ranging discussion, Lawrence Schourup (1999) summarizes a number of characteristics of discourse markers, as they were formulated in the literature to the year 2000. These include the following:

- Connectivity: addressing issues concerning the relationship between clauses, utterances and discourse units.

- Optionality: they can be dropped from their host clause or utterance without altering its grammaticality.

- Non-truth-conditionality: they do not contribute to the truth-conditions of the proposition expressed by the clause or utterance, or in some approaches its mental representation.

- Weak clause association: they occur outside the syntactic structure or are 'loosely attached' to it.

- Initiality: they generally occur early, i.e. at the beginning of a clausal utterance and before its central clause elements.

- Orality: they predominantly occur in speech.

- Multi-categoriality: they are heterogeneous as to syntactic class.

Although the expressions addressed in this volume exhibit most or all of the characteristics described by Schourup, we will prefer the term 'particle' over 'marker' to capture the fact that the papers collected here address the use of single uninflected elements of language. We prefer this term to 'marker' because the latter embraces formally heterogeneous classes of elements that are characterized in functional terms. The term 'particle', as

Kerstin Fischer (2006, 4) notes, focuses on linguistic form, and contrasts with clitics, full words, and bound morphemes, together with 'prefabs' that are larger conventionalized expressions (e.g., *my gosh, for goodness sake,* etc., see Bybee 2002; Thompson, Fox, and Couper-Kuhlen 2015, 64), as well as address terms (Clayman 2013a), and other fixed appositional expressions such as *look, listen, I think* and *you know* (see e.g. J. Lindström 2006).

The contributions to this volume take a uniformly semasiological[2] approach to the particles under investigation. This may shape our orientation away from the more functional and onomasiological focus suggested by the term discourse marker. Moreover, because we regard the tasks of the particles (and thus their functions) as emerging products of their interaction with diverse sequential contexts, we find the term 'particle' a more conservative and parsimonious solution to the terminological complexities encountered by all researchers in this domain of investigation (see Fischer 2006).

While a number of the particles discussed here can occur elsewhere in turns at talk (and some can function as stand-alone interjections (Ameka 1992) in their own right), the term 'turn-initial' describes an identifiable position within turns at talk, largely restricted to spoken interaction, in

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[2] That is, they start from linguistic forms and work outwards towards their functions. Semasiological approaches contrast with onomasiological approaches that start with a discourse function and investigate the different linguistic forms through which the function can be achieved. (See e.g. Fischer 2006.)

which these particles most commonly occur (they are also found in literary

interactions (Heritage this volume) and e.g. chats). In addition to its greater

specificity, the term 'turn-initial' embodies a theoretical conversation

analytic commitment to the significance of turn-initial position in the design

and construction of actions, and for what it portends for the relationship

between the turn or action in progress and what came before. Thus, because

our focus in this volume is on the specific features and functions of particles

in turn-initial position, we will refer to the objects of study in this volume as

'turn-initial particles'.

3. Position in the turn and turn-constructional unit

The concept of turn-initiality, a key reference point of the contributions in

the volume, is here approached from two intersecting yet distinctive points

of view. With the term turn-initial particle we refer to cases in which the

initially positioned particle does not perform a social action on its own, but

rather is deployed as part of a larger first turn constructional unit (TCU) of a

turn, a unit that implements a social action (see Sacks et al. 1974; Ford and

Thompson 1996; Goodwin 1986; Houtkoop and Mazeland 1985; Selting

1996; 2000). A key resource with which the initial character of the particle

is managed is through its prosodic integration with the subsequent talk.

However, complexities can emerge when considering the question of

'prosodic integration.' While it is relatively easy to identify 'stand-alone' particles (such as *oh*) that form a prosodic unit of their own, criteria for the alternative – prosodic integration – are harder to come by. For example, turn-initial particles may carry pitch accent; they may be separated from subsequent talk by silence or an articulatorily marked boundary, or they may be prosodically 'floating'. Analysis may be further complicated by grammatical features of certain languages. For example, Ilana Mushin (this volume) shows that the grammar of Garrwa provides usages that are initial but not turn-initial in the temporal sense used by most of the contributors to the volume, due to the fact that two types of initial position can be distinguished on the basis of both syntax and prosody. In addition, because turn-initial particles can participate in a 'linear syntax' (Hakulinen et al. 2004), subsequently produced particles can trump earlier-produced ones, establishing a new 'turn-initial' (or turn-prefatory) start for the turn that is not 'initial' in a strict temporal sense. It is also relevant to note, in this context, that the gaps between turns can be timed according to a variety of criteria that implement different conceptualizations of 'initiality' (Kendrick and Torreira 2015).

In general, our contributors have taken a practical auditory approach to determining turn-initiality (see Kelly and Local 1989, 25–45; Local 1996). In cases where a particle (such as *well*) cannot normally form a stand-alone action, decisions about turn-initiality are relatively straightforward. However, in cases (such as *oh, okej, voilà, naja*) where the

particle can function as a responsive turn constructional unit and action in its own right, care is required in distinguishing the turn-initial usages (Heritage 1998). Some authors distinguish a second sense of turn-initiality, to describe turns in which a particle is a first TCU (Mondada this volume; Golato this volume). This second usage, however, plays only a small role in these papers, and no role at all in the remainder of the papers making up the balance of this volume.

4. Turn-initial particles as a resource for social actions

Given that, as we have suggested, a CA approach to turn-initial particles, focuses on their role as harbingers of stance and action in interaction, the relevant context for understanding their significance (and indeed the pre-beginnings of turns as well) is as resources for the construction of social actions. This means beginning with their relationship to actions that unfold in the linear construction of turns and turn constructional units in real time.

Turn beginnings construed in terms of actions, as Schegloff (1996) observes, are occupied with two orders of relevance: the relationship of the talk being launched to what has preceded it, and the projection of what is being launched and is to come (ibid 81–2). In relation to the former, there are tasks that Schegloff labels 'generic', e.g., showing that the prior turn was heard and understood, and that its selection of next speaker was

registered. But there are also tasks that he labels 'particular' in the sense that they are tasks that are made relevant by specific prior turns or types of turns, e.g. stance-taking (aligning with or against, registering surprise or familiarity), laughing, doing sequentially appropriate next actions, or disengaging from the sequential projections of prior turns. So great is the strategic significance of turn-initial position in this regard that numerous turn-initial particles are to be found even in 'right-headed' or predicate-final languages (like Mandarin, Japanese and Korean) in which a good deal of grammatical work is lodged in sentence-final particles of various sorts (Kim and Kuroshima 2013, 271–2).

Schegloff is less explicit about projections from TCU beginnings, but we can certainly include such possibilities as indications that the current turn will be prolonged and require several turn constructional units, that it will somehow depart from expectations that the previous turn established, and so on. These operations are necessary because turns at talk are in the first instance actions that emerge in real time, and have affordances and requirements that arise from this temporal and corporeal context. In circumstances in which any utterance "begins at just the end of what precedes it" (ibid. 110), turn beginnings are inexorably particularized by the contexts in which they are produced.

The earliest conversation analytic commentary on turn-initial operations focused on 'misplacement markers' (Schegloff and Sacks 1973) – turn-initial elements such as 'by the way' used to indicate that the

following turn content is 'out of place'. In the following, a doctor is

completing a medical visit but, at line 14, discontinues this process to give

an additional instruction about the medication he has previously prescribed:

(1) [11166-106]

```
01  Doc:      .hhh Uh if the x ray is shows anything ba::d
02            (0.5) I: will ca:ll.
03  Pat:      Okay.
04  Doc:      If I can't reach you, (0.2) I'll write you a
05            letter.
06            (.)
07  Pat:      Great.
08            (10.5) ((Physician writes prescription))
09  Doc:      °Anything e:lse.°
10            (2.0)
11  Pat:      .hhhhhh No:: I don't think so.=.hhhhhhh I'm
12            doing pretty well otherwise.
13            (1.4)
14  Doc: ->   .mtch=.hh >By the way< if this bu:rns your
15            stomach you should take it with foo::d_ You can
16            take an anta:cid,
```

In the context of lines 9–12, the expectable progress of the interaction would

be towards the next elements of a closing sequence (Robinson 2001; West

2006). The doctor's move to describe a side effect of the prescribed

medication is misplaced in relation to this expectable trajectory. In this

context, the misplacement marker *by the way* displays "an orientation by

[the] user to the proper sequential-organization of a particular place in

conversation, and a recognition that an utterance that is thereby prefaced

may not fit" (Schegloff and Sacks 1973, 320). In the next example, from

ordinary conversation, a speaker manages a shift to an apprarently

unconnected topic, by restarting his turn (lines 12–13) to incorporate the

misplacement marker:

(2) [SN4:1]

```
01  Mark:       =[How're you guys.
02              (0.2)
03  Ruth:       Jis' fi:ne.
04              (0.2)
05  Mary:       Uh:: tired.
06  Mark:       Tired, I hear yih gettin' married.
07              (1.0)
08  Mary:       Uh:: you hear right.
09              (0.2)
10  Mark:       (Ih) shah-I hear ri:gh[t.
11  Mary:                             [mmhh [(heh  hh])
12  Mark:   ->                              [Didja e-]
13          -> by the way didja ever call up uh: Century City
14              Hotel 'n
15              (1.0)
16  Mary:       Y'know h'much they want fer a wedding¿  It's
17              incredible.
18              (0.5)
19  Mary:       We'd 'aftuh sell our house 'n car 'n
20              evryt(h)hing
```

Having initied the turn without any indication of its putatively misfitted

relationship to the prior sequence (*didja e-*), Mark abandons the turn in

progress, and restarts it with *by the way* before proceeding to what is

recognizable as a re-doing of the previous start of the turn *didja ever*. Here,

as in the previous case, the speaker's recognition of and orientation to the

misplaced character of his question is made visible as a part of the emerging

turn.

In cases of this nature, the apparent departure from an expectable

next action in the sequence is quite large scale in that a new activity (extract

(1)) or an abrupt topical departure (extract (2)) is initiated. However in other

cases, speakers may orient to more subtle and local departures. In the

following case, a polar question is responded to with a 'transformative

answer' (Stivers and Hayashi 2010), that treats it as if it were a 'question-word' question (the turn is *well*-prefaced):

(3) [Field (X):1:1:1:44-6]

```
01  Les:      She had a stroke in Cary last wee[k.
02  Mum:                                        [↑Oh: ↓dea-:r.
03  Les:      And she seems t'be faili:ng
04  (M):      °°(            )°°
05            (0.7)
06  Mum:      She's ↑(quite'n) old lady wasn't she.
07  Les:  -> Well she's ninety.
08  Mum:      Mm: ye:s
09  Les:      .hh An' Carol said. . .
```

Here, while Lesley's response confirms that the person in question is indeed 'old', it tacitly contests Mum's description of her as *quite old*, which in British (but not American) English might be understood to underestimate her age.[3] It also embeddedly corrects (Jefferson 1987) Mum's slide into the past tense *wasn't she* with its implied understanding that the person, rather than *failing* (line 3), is already dead. Here the turn-initial *well* indexes an orientation to the upcoming turn as departing from a straight confirmation to a polar question, the correction concerning her mortality, and the suggestion that the person was merely *quite an old lady*. In this context, the *well*-preface alerts the recipient that the following turn will depart from the agenda set by the question, and the expectations for response that it mobilizes (Heritage 2015; see also Bolden this volume, Raymond this volume, Heritage this volume).

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[3] In this context, British *quite* diminishes the description *old* in the way that *rather* would. In American English by contrast, it would intensify *old* in the way that *very* would.

5. Sequential Position

From the very beginning, conversation analysts have focused on the nature of talk as a form of social action that is organized in and as sequences, and managed in real time (Schegloff 2007). A simple schematic for characterizing the positions of turns within sequences is in terms of three basic positions:

1)   Sequence-initial position: turns at talk that open sequences, for example questions, invitations, requests, offers and other first pair parts of adjacency pairs, together with turns that open a sequence that will be preliminary to a subsequent action, e.g., pre-announcements, pre-requests, etc.

2)   Second position: Turns at talk that are responsive to turns in sequence-initial position, and that are to a greater or less extent compliant with the expectations and actions that the sequence-initial actions projected.

3)   Third position: Turns at talk representing post-expansions of the 'base sequences' comprised by 1 and 2 above. These embrace third turns that close adjacency pair sequences (*Okay; Oh good*) – 'sequence closing thirds' (Schegloff 2007, 118–147, 221–3); base sequences targeted by pre-sequences that are themselves built from

adjacency pairs (ibid: 28–57), and other more miscellaneous forms
of sequence expansion (ibid: 148–168, 223–5).

The meaning and functions of turn-initial particles are differentiated by
reference to these sequential positions. This is especially the case for
particles that can occupy very many positions within a turn or sequence and
can be used as components of a wide variety of actions such as English *well*
(Heritage 2015; this volume), Estonian *no* (Keevallik 2016; this volume),
Polish *no* (Weidner 2016; this volume), and Russian *nu* (Bolden 2016; this
volume). For example, turn-initial *well* functions in distinctive ways in these
three positions. In first position, it can index the speaker's departure from an
ongoing topic or activity, and the start of a new one. In the following case, a
discussion of the "May Company" (a department store) is followed, after a
short pause, by the initiation of a new line of talk about "the weekend" (line
8):

(4) Turn-initial *well* in first position [NB:II:I:199–208]

```
01   Emm:     Ah non't like th- I don'like the May Comp'ny
02            but they do have good bedspreads.
03            (0.3)
04   Lot:     Ye:ah down the ba:sement. y[ihkno]:w=
05   Emm:                                [Yeah.]
06   Lot:     =They- they really do:.
07            (0.5)
08   Emm: ->  Well the ↑kids sure hadda lotta fun down here
09            'at wz a(w) beautiful weekend fer the:m:.
10            M[y-]
11   Lot:      [Oh]:: ye[:ah.]
```

In second position, *well* frequently prefaces turns that depart from the

sequential relevances set by the previous turn. In (5) for example, Alan's

Yer not busy are yuh¿ is designed to elicit a confirming response (*no*) that

will indicate Karen's availability for conversation. Karen's response,

however, diverges from this expectation:

(5) Turn-initial *well* in second position [Kamunsky 1]

```
01  ALA:       Karen Baxter?
02  KAR:       Yea?
03  ALA:       Yer not busy are yuh¿
04             (0.3)
05  KAR:  -> Well yeah, I a:m.
06  ALA:       Well this'll be qui:ck I mean it's nothing
```

And in third position, *well* frequently prefaces turns that are contingent on

pre-sequences that 'clear the way' for their production (Kim 2013). Thus in

(6), Jenny's request (line 7) is contingent on Susan's confirmation that her

mother is home (line 5).

(6) Turn-initial *well* in third position [Rah:15: 1–8]

```
01  Jen:       Hello: is that Sus'n,
02  Sus:       Mm:?
03  Jen:       .h Oh is yih mum the:re,
04             (0.2)
05  Sus:       Yes ah think so (  [        )
06  Jen:                          [Oh:.
07  Jen:  -> Well ask'er if she'd like tih come round f'r a
08             coffee tell'er Auntie Vera's coming up,h
```

Here the *well*-preface, in collaboration with the subsequent request,

functions to present the request as the contingent product of the preceding

question-answer sequence: something that might not have been achieved if the request had been produced without the *well*-preface.

Considering the role of *well*-prefaces in these three sequential positions, it is quite clear that *well* is functioning in different ways. This is so regardless of possible continuities between these cases at a higher level of abstraction (see Heritage 2015 this volume). This fact points to the intimate linkages between turn-initial particles and specific sequential contexts, linkages through which the operations that a particular particle is understood to be implementing show variation that is both wide-ranging and particularized.

The relationships between contiguous turns that are indexed by turn-initial particles are also, as Schegloff (2004) notes, highly local and particular to the specific characteristics of preceding turns. Thus, in cases where a speaker merely repeats a turn (often in response to an 'open'-class repair initiation (Drew 1997)), the turn-initial particle that was part of the initial saying is routinely dropped. For example, in the following case an initially *well*-prefaced and non-confirming response is repeated in response to a repair initiation (line 5) without the turn-initial *well*:

(7) [Three sisters: Schegloff 2004: 103–4]

```
 01 Rose:     N'what's on yer agenda tuhm::orr:ow=nothing?
 02           (2.0)
 03 May:  -> Well=I'm going out tomorrow ni:ght.
 04           (0.2)
 05 Rose:     Huh.
 06           (0.3)
```

```
07 May:   -> Going out tomorrow night.=
08 Rose:     =Who yih going with.
```

Here the second version of the response is no longer produced within the
direct shadow of a question in search of confirmation (line 1), and the *well*-
preface in line 3 that projected a dispreferred, disconfirming response is
dropped in line 7. Examples of this kind, of which there are many, point to
the intensely 'local' and 'short range' character of many of the relationships
between turns that turn-initial particles manage.

      More particular again are the intimate connections between turns and
responses that formulate their implications. For example, the Finnish turn-
initial particle *elikkä* treats what will be said in the remainder of the turn as
an alternative, but equally valid and certain reformulation of what the prior
speaker had said. In the following case, an *elikkä*-prefaced turn voices an
inference from the preceding answer (lines 3–4; Sorjonen this volume).

(8) [SKA SG074_B1 Washing Machine]

```
01 Mari:    Oo-t-ko-s       sinä   sitten millonka jo
            be-2SG-Q-CLI-CLI you-SG then   when        already
            When is it that you

02          lähö-ssä poe(k[kee).      ]
            going-INE away            ]
            will be already going away ]
                               [        ]
03 Satu:                       [No  ku   mul ] o-is
                               [PRT since I-ADE] be-COND.3SG
                               [Well I'd have     ]

04       -> perjantai-na tö-i:-tä?,
            Friday-ESS      work-PL-PAR
            to work on Friday

05          (0.4)
```

```
06 Mari:    °Ai jaa:.°
            °Oh I see:.°

07          (3.1)

08 Mari: => .hh Elikkä sinun     pit:tää sillo jo
                PRT    you.SG-GEN must     then   already
            .hh ELIKKÄ you must then

09       => torst°tai-na lähtte-e°.=
            Thursday-ESS  leave-INF
            leave already on Thursday=

10 Satu: -> =Nii:.mhh .hhh Ja  varmmaa niin se<     (.)
             PRT              and probably PRT    DEM3.GEN
            =Nii:.mhh .hhh And probably

11          juhla-häly-n jäläkkeen 0 n'nku lähtee-k(h)i
            party-fuss-GEN after     0 like  leave.3SG-CLI
            after the party fuss 0 is als(h)o like

12          jo    iha  mielellää. .hhh=
            already just PRT
            quite happy to leave already. .hhh=
```

While we have emphasized the importance of these basic sequential positions, it is important to recognize, as will be apparent in a number of chapters, that the sequences themselves are situated in larger activity contexts and social relationships, to which speakers not infrequently orient in their deployment of particles.

6. Towards an understanding of turn-initial operations

In this section, we will use our contributors' papers to formulate some general perspectives on the workings of turn-initial particles. We begin with

the observation, made by almost everyone contributing to this field, that most particles, including those in turn-initial position, have general semantic and procedural meanings that are broad, variable and capable of local particularization. We have found it useful to consider particles as evoking what Penelope Eckert (2008) has termed 'indexical fields', sets of possible interpretations which will undergo indexical specification *in situ*.[4]

One of the fundamental axioms of conversation analysis (CA) is that turns at talk are doubly contextual (Heritage 1984b, 242), responding to the previous turn, while performing an action that will set the context for the next. Turn-initial particles, as parts of turns, are not exempt from this Janus-faced property, and contribute both to the stance that a turn enacts towards the preceding turn, as well as to the action that it performs in its own right. Sometimes speakers need to specifically show what the relationship between the previous turn and the emerging turn is, and this task can be accomplished with turn-initial particles in contrast to not having a turn-preface. However, as a number of our contributors suggest, the balance of orientation to these two directions, backward and forward, may vary so that the backward-looking character of some particles may be more prominent than that of others. This distinction can be a stark one. For example, Ruey-Jiuan Wu (this volume), describes the Mandarin particle *aiyou* in two

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[4] As against prior sociolinguistic research that treated linguistic variants as static and fixed markers of social categories, Eckert pointed out that the meanings of linguistic features have fuzzy boundaries thus forming a field of possible meanings, an indexical field. The general resonance of these notions with Garfinkel's (1967) broader characterization of the indexical and reflexive properties of language, speech and action will be obvious.

prosodically distinct forms which convey the unexpectedness of something said. However, *aiyou* can display that either something *about to be said* is unexpected or something *previously said* is unexpected, and it can therefore be forward- or backward-looking in character. It is this forward- vs. backward-looking distinction that is distinguished through the prosodic variation in *aiyou*.

We argue that most turn-initial particles have both backward and forward orientations. For example, *okej* in Swedish both looks backwards in acknowledging the preceding turn, while also taking a neutral stance towards it and projecting a move to a new activity (Lindström this volume). However, one of these two directions is frequently predominant in any particular usage.

Whether the situated usage of any given turn-initial particle is primarily backward- or forward-looking, is scarcely a matter of free variation. Considering the raw facts of sequential position, for example, it is likely that turn-initial particles in first position will be forward-looking, as in the case of *altså* in Danish (Heinemann and Steensig this volume), *well* in English (Heritage this volume) and *naja* in German (Golato this volume).

In second position, by contrast, turn-initial particles tend to be more backward-looking, at least in relative terms, although the extent to which this is so varies greatly from case to case. Some of the backward-looking usages are epistemic, conveying that the action of the prior turn or its content was unexpected as in Japanese *a*-prefaced turns (Hayashi and

Hayano this volume); inapposite as the English *oh*-prefaced turns (Heritage this volume); or self-evident as the Polish *no* (Weidner this volume). In these cases, the prefacing particles appear to be ones that typically carry more specific meanings, such as epistemic meanings.

Two chapters address second-positioned particles that are roughly balanced between backward looking and forward-looking orientations. These are particles that indicate that the emerging turn will be a reformulation or expansion of what the prior speaker had said. In the case of *nii että*-prefaces in Finnish (Sorjonen this volume), the anaphoric *nii* points backwards to the prior talk, while *että*, which often occurs in the context of reported talk, indexes that the subsequent talk will be based on the words of the prior speaker. Similarly, the Danish *altså* indicates that the turn just started will expand on something prior and the action to be produced departs from progressivity in a justified way (Heinemann and Steensig this volume).

In other second-position cases, the prefacing particle may contain little overt reference to what has gone before, and is primarily oriented to the remainder of the turn to come. This is particularly the case with particles that indicate that the following turn will be somehow at variance with the assumptions, preferences, etc. of projected next actions. These kinds of particles are deployed frequently and consistently in cases where the responsive turn is part of a highly conventionalized sequence type, such question-answer, or request-compliance/rejection. For example, Russian *nu* (Bolden this volume), English *well* (Heritage this volume), Spanish *Bueno*

(Raymond this volume), Garrwa *ngala* (Mushin this volume), and Korean *kulenikka* (Kim this volume) all project positionings of this kind for the remainder of the unfolding turn.

A number of our contributors discuss the role of alternative turn-initial particles for use in second position to convey different kinds of trouble with the preceding turn. For example, Stephanie Hyeri Kim shows that whereas Korean *kulssey*-prefaces index that the speaker may express a difficulty in answering a question in the balance of the turn, *kulenikka* prefaces turns that will find a difficulty with the framing of the question. In a similar way, Chase Raymond distinguishes between Spanish *bueno*-prefaced responses to questions which project dispreferred responses, whereas *pues*-prefacing projects turns that will find fault with the assumptions or presuppositions of the previous question. Thus, as he notes, whereas a wide variety of difficulties with preceding questions are indexed with English *well*, these difficulties are differentiated using distinctive turn-initial particles in Spanish. Still more diversity can be found in 'particle-rich' languages such as Finnish (Heinemann and Koivisto 2016). Marja-Leena Sorjonen discusses three turn-initial particles, *siis, eli(kkä)* and *nii että*, all of which indicate that the emerging turn will present a reformulation of what the prior speaker had said, but index subtly distinctive relationships between the prior speaker's turn and the reformulation.

Finally, turn-initial particles in third position may also be primarily either backward- or forward-looking, and the tendency of a given particle

bears a similarity to its backward- or forward-looking character in second position. Thus epistemic turn-initial particles can have clear backward-looking functions. For example, English *oh*-prefaced sequence-closing thirds to question-answer sequences (Schegloff 2007, 118–120) communicate that an answer was satisfactorily informative (Heritage, 1984a; this volume). French *voilà* can accomplish sequence closure while at the same time conveying elements of epistemic and deontic competition (Mondada this volume). Other turn-initial particles, on the other hand, are primarily forward-looking in character. For example, turn-initial *naja* in German indexes an upcoming break with the preceding sequence and a return to an earlier, and temporarily discontinued, one (Golato this volume). John Heritage, following Kim (2013), shows that the English *well*-prefacing of questions that are subsequent to question-answer sequences indexes a breaking away from the immediately preceding sequence, and arrival at the issue that the previous question-answer sequence was preliminary to.

7. Overview of the Volume

The kinds of particle-focused activities addressed by our contributors in this volume fall, with some exceptions, into three broad clusters which involve what can be termed (i) sequential departures; (ii) epistemic and related issues, and (iii) activity management.

The first group of papers focus on sequences in which the turn-initial particle participates in the management of a sequential departure. They largely take up actions occurring in second position with a concentration on responses to questions. Question-answer sequences are among the most tightly organized in conversation, generally imposing strong constraints on next turn that are usually complied with (Sacks 1987; Raymond 2003; Stivers, Enfield, and Levinson 2010). In this context, responses that modify and depart from the agendas, presuppositions and preferences expressed in questions are a frequent site of turn-initial particles that prospectively index this fact. These departures may embrace a wide variety of variation concerning, among other things, problematizing the presuppositions of the question, responding against the polarity or preferences of the question, addressing incongruities in epistemic stance between questioner and respondent, indicating that an answer will be expanded, non-straightforward or circuitous, and indicating the 'unexpectedness' or inappositeness of the question (Bolden this volume; Heritage this volume; Raymond this volume; see also Hayashi and Hayano this volume; Kim this volume; Weidner this volume.)

While question-answer sequences are a common focus of many of our contributors, other sequential departures include responses to a variety of actions, including unexpected or contradictory responses to embodied actions and or previous turns (Mushin this volume), as well as

disagreements with evaluative assertions, and ego-attentive agreements and disagreements (Heritage this volume).

Compared to the particles addressing sequential departures, those in the second group dealing with epistemic issues (broadly construed) tend to have a core 'epistemic' meaning that travels across a diversity of usages. This is certainly the case for change-of-state tokens such as English *oh* (Heritage this volume), together with others such as Japanese *a* and *eh* (Hayano and Hayashi this volume), and Mandarin *aiyou* (Wu this volume), which convey unexpectedness – a closely related epistemic meaning (see also Heinemann and Koivisto 2016). In her paper on Polish *no*, Matylda Weidner analyses a particle that projects the treatment of the prior turn, not as unexpected, but rather as self-evident, noting in addition that *no*-prefaced turns embody a 'my-sided' or ego-attentive orientation that can eventuate in sequence closure. In her consideration of Estonian *no*, by contrast, Leelo Keevallik discusses accepting responses to requests, proposals, suggestions and offers. While, as she notes, these acceptances may be presented as less than full-hearted, the *no*-prefaces convey a shift away from a resistant position – a display of 'making up one's mind' in the face of persuasion. Finally Marja-Leena Sorjonen's analysis describes a closely related set of turn-initial particles – *siis, eli(kkä)* and *niin että* – functioning to index that the turns they preface will offer reformulations of preceding talk. The particles vary, however, in indexing distinctive relationships between the reformulation and its target, varying from inference, to reliance on the exact

phrasing of prior talk, and from epistemic equality to epistemic dependence. Notwithstanding these significant variations in epistemic shading, confirmation from the speaker of the target turn is required in all cases.

Our final group of chapters address particles that are associated with activity management. Anna Lindström analyses a particle – Swedish *okej* – that, like its counterparts in other languages, is frequently used as a turn in its own right. She observes that, as a response to reports, *okej* is a neutral acknowledgment in that it neither accepts or rejects what has been asserted – an epistemically inert particle. She also shows that, in these cases, the particle *okej* projects a unilateral shift in activity towards a course of action intended by its speaker. Andrea Golato points to the role of a turn-initial particle – German *naja* – in turns that implement related kinds of activity breaks, including resumptions of previous topics and activities. Significantly, the particle is also associated with breaks in the speaker's own stance or position, for example, in revisions of previously stated opinions. Similarly in their chapter on the Danish particle *altså,* Trine Heinemann and Jakob Steensig argue that the particle prefaces turns that, in departing from the main line of the interaction to expand on something prior, simultaneously communicate the imminent reinstallation of the previous activity and are therefore justified. Finally, Lorenza Mondada examines the use of *voilà* in the context of the closings of segments of interaction and of whole conversations. She shows that while the production of *voilà* as a self-contained prosodic unit and as a self-subsistent turn establishes a break or

closure of a sequence or activity, turn-initial *voilà* can be a means of promoting epistemic or deontic competition in the context of closure – a form of competition that may, paradoxically, extend the sequence in question.

8. Conclusion

In developing this volume, we asked the contributors, each of whom represented a particular language, to select a turn-initial particle for analysis. As the chapters came in, some of the commonalities among the selections were striking. As indexed in our Table of Contents, the contributions focused on particles associated with departures and resumptions of courses of action, the upcoming production of actions that departed from the expectations of the preceding turn, and the management of epistemic stance. It could have been otherwise. Our contributors could have pursued the issue of affective, rather than epistemic, stance (Goodwin 2007; Golato 2012; Hakulinen and Sorjonen 2012; Reber 2012), or questions of the relatedness of non-adjacent turns rather than the unrelatedness of adjacent ones (Keevallik 2013). The commonalities among the contributions to this volume may reflect the preponderance of certain contingencies of interaction. For example, there may be a greater likelihood that persons will have to manage breaks in sequential continuity more than sequential

continuities across breaks, and epistemic rather than affective stances. What is fundamental, however, is that these turn-initial particles from diverse languages around the world are associated with speakers' attempts to deal with quite similar predicaments, and that turn-initial position is a strategic locus for the emergent management of these predicaments in human social interaction.

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