What Does "Resistance" Actually Look Like? The Respecification of Resistance as an Interactional Accomplishment

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Abstract

In this introductory article to the special issue on *Resistance in Talk-in-interaction*, we review the vast body of research that has respecified resistance by investigating it as and when it occurs in real-life high stake encounters. Using methodological approaches such as ethnomethodology, conversation analysis, and discursive psychology, studies of resistance "in the wild" treat social interaction as a sequentially organized joint enterprise. As a result, resistance emerges as the alternative to cooperation and therefore, on each occasion, resistant actions are designed to deal with the sequential and moral accountabilities that arise from the specifics of the situation. By documenting the wide array of linguistic, prosodic, sequential, and embodied resources that individuals use to resist the requirements set by interlocutors' prior turns, this article provides the first comprehensive overview of existing research on resistance as an interactional accomplishment.

Why Respecify Resistance?

The questions of when and why a person should cooperate with others or submit to authority – and when they should resist – has been a central preoccupation of students of human sociality at least since Hobbes. In the modern history of social psychology, the broad outlines of contemporary approaches were initially sketched by Milgram's (1974) experiments investigating whether ordinary Americans would fare any differently than Germans soldiers in the Nazi regime did when a person in authority directed them to participate in morally odious conduct. Subsequently, the classic conformity experiments of Solomon Ash (1956; and others, e.g., Darley & Latané, 1968) extended these findings, showing the power of social groups or peers in apparently compelling participants to surrender private reasoning in deference to the views expressed or conveyed by others. More recently, research on persuasion has focused on the conditions or psychological characteristics of human participants that promote the acceptance of "persuasive messages" or enable their resist to them. Researchers have investigated reactance (Brehm, 1980) and other motivations that ostensibly underlie resistance, have inventoried the strategies that individuals use to resist persuasion (Fransen et al., 2015) and their counters (Fransen et al., 2015). Thus, at present there is a substantial body of social psychological research that documents why and when resistance emerges and how it can be dealt with.

Across these approaches, researchers have displayed remarkable creativity in finding new ways to identify and isolate dimensions of human social life in experimental settings as a method for establishing their import for the choices, and sometimes the conduct, of isolated humans acting in experimental settings. In conducting experiments that seek to isolate the psychology and intentions of the actor, the role of interlocutors and bystanders, and the informational content of messages, however, these approaches largely treat the interactional encounters that underpin and enable such experiments as if they are a transparent,

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"structureless medium" for the expression and observation of psychological phenomena (Schegloff, 1989, p. 140).

Over the past four decades, researchers using the methods of ethnomethodology, conversation analysis, and discursive psychology have scrutinized, critically reflected on, and respecified social and psychological phenomena such as identities, attitudes, emotions, mental states, and the like by seeking to understand how they are constituted and used in occasions of everyday life, primarily by studying occasions of talk-in-interaction. For example, Drew's (2005) analysis poses the question "Is confusion a state of mind?". In establishing the basis for answering such a question, he lays out many of the challenges associated with treating forms of social conduct as windows into the mental states of social actors, and shows that while "confusion may be a state of mind, it is not one which exists independently of its interactional generation and its interactional 'moment'" (2005, p. 182; see also Potter & te Molder, 2005). Similar themes have been taken up by discursive psychologists, who have respecified foundational social psychological phenomenon such as *persuasion* by treating them as naturally occurring and putting them (back) in their interactional context (Humă, Stokoe, et al., 2020) to challenge conceptualizations of them as primarily cognitive phenomena that can be isolated and accessed in the lab via well-designed experiments. Crucial to this program of respecification has been the embrace of talk as a vehicle for social action in interaction (see Humă, Alexander, et al., 2020 for a review of discursive psychology's respecification enterprise).

In this special issue, we take up this effort to respecify "resistance" by examining it as a routine form of social action *in interaction*, and thus re-encounter this basic element of human sociality in its natural habitat. We begin by observing just how basic "resistance" appears to be for humans. Forms of resistance emerge as key turning points in the very early psycho-social development of humans. For example, developmental psychologists document

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that across families (and presumably languages) "no" (or its equivalent) recurrently emerges as among the first words that children learn (typically following "mom" and "dad" (Hart, 1991). Beyond identifying resistance as crucial to the interdependent and reflexively organized processes of developing social competences and the child's individuation (i.e., increasing social competence enables children's individuation from caregivers), we can register more simply where and how early forms of resistance emerge in social life. The status of "no" as a responsive interjection highlights that resistance emerges as a form of action deployed in and as part of a *sequence* of actions (Lerner & Zimmerman, 2003). While young children can simply accept a proffered item – food, a toy, pacifier – if they want it (or do not, or cannot, object to it), they must affirmatively act in some way if they wish to resist or alter the in-progress course of action. Once situated in the context of sequences of action conducted in interaction, we are thus in a position to appreciate that resistance, as much as cooperation, is partly constitutive of humans as a social species.

Having raised a connection between cooperation and resistance, we are confronted with the moral implications of these alternative orientations for social action. In many of the early social psychological experiments, acquiescence appeared as the morally dubious option (most famously in Milgram's research), and resistance its difficult and heroic alternative. In this way, these experiments also depended on an unexplicated, tacit understanding of social action in interaction. While one can readily generate heroic examples of resistance – to war, to racial oppression and subjugation, to discrimination based on gender and sexuality – one can also conjure less credible or defensible occasions, such as in the counter movements to these struggles, or more recently to vaccines and masks (which may nevertheless be cast as heroic by their proponents).

So, what is going on? We approach the matter by first attending to the ways in which occasions for resistance are structured by the sequences of actions in which they occur. As it

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happens, somewhat independently of what is being done in a course of action, cooperation and resistance are unequal alternatives. In most cases, the resources for cooperative next actions are simple and unelaborated. By contrast, actions that resist a prior action or challenge a current state of affairs tend to be complex (e.g., delayed, composed of multiple elements, etc.) and *morally accountable*. The now vast literature on "preference organization" has established biases inherent in the very ways that virtually any action sequence is constructed will position these two alternatives – cooperation and resistance – as having a different moral status (*cf.* Schegloff, 2007).

Rather than casting cooperation as weak and resistance as heroic, we instead attend to how actors manage the social positioning and moral status of their actions by reference to what is happening in the occasion – and how whatever is happening is composed and organized as a sequence of actions. This can be illustrated if we turn the tables, and use the organization of action sequencing (*cf.* Schegloff, 2007) as a basis for evaluating aspects of the early experiments on resistance (Gibson, 2019). For example, by attending to whether a subject complies with a directive or agrees with a prior assessment both the Milgram (1974) and Ash (1956) experiments focused primarily on *responsive* actions. By contrast, Latané and Darley's (1968) famous smoke-filled room experiment isolated the experimental subjects' unwillingness to *initiate* actions or otherwise intervene in some problematic state of affairs so long as other bystanders remained passive. As these examples suggest, the apparent moral contrast between cooperative actions and ones composed to resist some or all of a current state of affairs highlights what is so risky about resistance: resistance is the alternative to cooperation. As a consequence, whether one is resisting civil rights abuses or mask mandates, those who are resisting must manage how their actions depart from some state of affairs, and thus the moral or accountable status of their actions as well. How they do this may depend on whether their actions are positioned as first or initiating actions, or they are composed as

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responsive to an action by a different party. More basically, we can note that social actors engaged in cooperation or resistance must nevertheless manage the *local* moral status of this actions by reference to the particularities of the situated occasions in which they are acting.

By casting the matter in primarily psychological terms – does the individual comply with, acquiesce to, or join others – experimental approaches transform an emergent, unfolding feature of social action into a binary choice ostensibly made at a single, discrete point in time. In so doing, these approaches miss the wide array of resources participants may use to manage their participation in a course of action, and how these simultaneously comprise the various methods participants have for managing the moral character of their conduct in real time. We simply note here – and detail below – the proliferation of practices for composing turns at talk to participate in sequences of action that systematically depend upon and exploit talk-in-interaction as a temporally unfolding affair.

As researchers have documented, delays in producing responsive actions – and the practices for implementing such delays, including in breaths, lexical, and phrasal prefaces and their prosodic features, and so on – are overwhelmingly devoted to calibrating how a next action resists one or more elements of a first or prior action, and are oriented to as such by others (see Heritage, 1984). More generally, studies of the sequential organization of interaction reveal fundamental asymmetries between agreeing and disagreeing (Sacks, 1987), conforming to the relevancies set in motion by an initiating action and its alternatives (Raymond, 2003; see also Stivers & Hayashi, 2010), accepting the epistemic and deontic frameworks embodied in action and challenging their terms and assumptions (Heritage & Raymond, 2005; Raymond, 2018; Raymond & Heritage, 2006), selecting among alternative lexical choice in service of recipient design (Gasiorek et al., 2021; Holler & Stevens, 2007) and so on. A review of the occasions where parties use these intersecting methods to exert influence suggests that next actions do not entail a simple binary choice between conformity

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and resistance (see also Llewellyn, 2015). Rather, we find that resistance and its alternatives emerge in and through a constellation of forms and practices that reflect participants' efforts to manage a structured spectrum of alternatives in real time. Nevertheless, the range of ways that next actions can be composed to resist the terms or features of first or initiating action, is beyond our capacity to document because the scope of such actions appears to be as broad as the organization of social action more generally.

The social positioning of resistance as an alternative to cooperation should encourage us to appreciate how understanding resistance is key to understanding cooperation. Within any encounter, a person can only be said to have cooperated in some course of action only if they could have resisted but opted not to do so. In this respect, cooperation and resistance can be differentiated from coercion (insofar as persons cannot choose to resist) and full-blown conflicts and disputes (insofar as these may be constituted via the absence of cooperation). Thus, resistance, like cooperation, is the epitome of sociality. We therefore propose to investigate resistance in interaction, and thus do so by attending to the features of the occasions in which it emerges. In this most basic way, our views are aligned with Milgram, Asch, and others. And yet rather than seeking to control and manipulate how occasions for resistance emerge in experimental settings, we instead specify how occasions of interaction are constituted and organized, including how to understand the occasion for the interaction, who the parties *relevantly* are to one another (and whatever differences in status or power may be associated with these institutional or other categorical identities), how parties distribute opportunities for acting and the social projects they pursue; how they compose talk or other conduct as actions that contribute to a larger course of action, how they deal with troubles in understanding, and the vast range of other resources participants draw on in making an encounter or setting intelligible.

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Occasions for Resistance

Resistance can take a multitude of forms that differ considerably from each other, depending on whether a person resists an interlocutor's project, their prior action, or just some aspect of it, such as an assumption or presupposition. For example a politician can resist a journalist's question by refusing to answer altogether or by answering a slightly different version of the question (Clayman, 2001). In producing the latter, the politician can either highlight or obfuscate the answer's departure from the parameters of the question (Clayman, 2001). A patient can resist a doctor's diagnostic statement by producing a newsmaker (e.g., "really"), thus treating the diagnostic as unexpected, or by directly questioning the diagnosis, thus implying it may actually be wrong. These and all other forms of resistance have one common feature: they all entail participants (temporarily) suspending their cooperation in the joint "definition of the situation" (*cf*. Bolden, 2009). By the "definition of the situation" (Goffman, 1959, p. 51) we mean the topical, action, and activity trajectories as well as the presuppositions and expectations projected by an interlocutor's prior talk (*cf*. Raymond & Heritage, 2021; Raymond, 2003). Thus, resistance can manifest by withholding collaboration in the accomplishment of joint courses of action and activities, slowing down or halting the progress of the ongoing activity, withholding endorsement of proposed versions of reality (e.g., self- and other-categorization), or misaligning with the epistemic, deontic, or affective stances proposed by initiating actions.

In addressing resistance in occasions of talk-in-interaction, the reports in this special issue draw on the large body of cumulative findings regarding the interdependent forms of social organization that constitute the procedural infrastructure of interaction (Schegloff, 2005) to specify and analyze occasions of resistance to social influence. As these findings, which we review in the next section, reveal, the very warp and weft of conduct-in-interaction comprises myriad practices for asserting constraints and posing choices in and through social

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action. These can then be adjusted, resisted, or otherwise countered in the other party's next action. Each study in this special issue, which we briefly summarize in the final section of this article, unearths, tracks, and demonstrates how resistance is practically accomplished in and as part of the activities that participants are engaged in.

Resistance: How It's Done

Early conversation analytic work revealed that social interaction consists of sequences of action accomplished collaboratively by interactants (Schegloff, 1968; 2007). In this section, we will argue that the interactional structures underpinning the organization of these sequences and in particular one type of sequence – the adjacency pair – also make resistance in talk-in-interaction possible. Adjacency pairs constitute the primary interactional infrastructure through which resistance is organized, potentiated, mitigated, or enhanced. First, sequence organization provides an individual with the basis to project what an interlocutor may do next. Thus,

> [s]hould something intervene between some element and what is hearable as a/the
> next one due – should something violate or interfere with their contiguity, whether
> next sound, next word, or next turn – it will be heard as qualifying the progressivity of
> the talk, and will be examined for its import, for what understanding should be
> accorded it (Schegloff, 2007, p. 15).

Most often, resistance is accomplished through practices that hinder the smooth progress of the interaction to the projectable next element and, thus, complicates the successful accomplishment of courses of action and activities (Joyce, 2022). Second, through their position within a sequence and their design, some actions can exert quite strong constraints on what an interlocutor ought to do next. In resisting, individuals' responses depart from or even push back against these constraints. After we make our case for sequence organization

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being the primary framework for resistance in the first part of this section, we will then review existing conversation analytic research on resistance in talk-in-interaction on the basis of the opportunities for resisting available across the response space.

Sequence Organization as the Primary Framework for Resistance

Adjacency pairs[1] (hereafter AP), consisting of two adjacent turns at talk – the first pair part (hereafter FPP) and the second pair part (hereafter SPP) – produced by two different speakers, are the fundamental building blocks of social interaction (Schegloff, 2007).

They constitute the vehicles through which speakers ordinarily implement a wide range of courses of action such as requesting help, giving advice, complaining about others, or providing information (Schegloff, 2007). Importantly, by producing a FPP, an individual mobilizes a series of relevancies for what an interlocutor is accountable for doing in the SPP slot. When interlocutors' responses deviate from these sequentially mandated relevancies, they can be seen as resisting.

Let us zoom in on the range of relevancies that could be set in motion by FPPs. First, a particular initiating action in the FPP slot renders a responsive action necessary or *conditionally relevant* (Schegloff, 2007) in the SPP slot. Conditional relevance furnishes the grounds for treating the absence of the responsive action as resistance to the ongoing course of action (see also Clayman & Heritage, 2002 on the "action agenda" of interview questions). It is worth noting that a "lighter" version of sequential relevance also operates in other types of sequential environments such as stories, where interlocutors can be held accountable and treated as resistant if they, for example, fail to support the storytelling activity (Kitzinger, 2000; Liddicoat, 2007; Schegloff, 1982).

Second, initiating actions often feature presuppositions and assumptions about a wide range of issues such as who the interactants are (to each other), what they ostensibly (should)

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know, what their rights and obligations are, and so on. In the responsive slot of the AP, interlocutors can correct, object to, or refute them. Note that resisting a presupposition or an assumption does not necessarily entail resisting the whole course of action implemented through the AP (Heritage & Raymond, 2012; Stivers & Hayashi, 2010).

Third, initiating actions can set up a topical agenda for the responsive action, meaning by-and-large the domain(s) an appropriate response should draw from. The failure to uphold the topical agenda may sometimes take very subtle forms, but can still be treated by individuals as resistance (Clayman & Heritage, 2002; Stivers & Hayashi, 2010).

Fourth, initiating actions can be implemented via different grammatical formats that have distinct consequences for the form of response they make relevant (Raymond, 2010). Initiating actions composed as interrogatives and imperatives work to make relevant a choice between alternative actions, for example confirming or non-conforming, complying or non-complying (Heritage, 2002; Llewellyn, 2015), while, declaratives put fewer constraints on the types of actions that relevantly come next (Stivers & Rossano, 2010).

Fifth, from among the possible response alternatives that can occupy a SPP, an initiating action often invites a particular type of responsive action, the one that facilitates the successful completion of the course of action implemented via the sequence. This is called a *preferred* response. Conversely, responsive actions that fail to successfully complete the course of action are *dispreferred* (Schegloff, 2007). A dispreferred response, say refusing to answer a question, terminates the ongoing course of action and thus constitutes one of the strongest forms of resistance (Clayman, 2001).

Lastly, the relationship between a FPP and a SPP is also characterized by a preference for contiguity (Sacks, 1987). This means that gaps, delay tokens, turn-initial particles or laughter, and other preliminary elements that are found between the initiating and responsive

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action, often employed to deal with the constraints set in motion by the former, can be treated as indicative of an upcoming resistant response.

Besides the characteristics we have laid out above, adjacency pairs also provide a way for understanding the sequential placement of resistance and its implication for what is resisted. There are three positions where resistance can occur in relation to an AP. First, an individual can pre-emptively resist a not-yet-started but anticipated course of action, in which case, the resistance precedes the FPP and targets the course of action as a whole (see Gill et al., 2010). Second, resistance can occur in the space between the initiating and responsive action. A wide range of practices for doing resistance that occupy this slot have been documented such as various forms of delays (Koenig, 2011; Stivers, 2005a) and turn-initial particles (Heritage, 2018). In conjunction with other aspects of the responsive turn, these practices most often deal with the constraints on the SPP set in motion by, for example, the presuppositions embedded in the FPP. Finally resistance can be implemented via the responsive action, such as in the case of dispreferred responses. In this slot, individuals can draw on both the format of the response and the action it implements to modulate the strength of their resistance and the aspect(s) of the initiating action that it targets.

In conjunction with sequence organization, in accomplishing resistance, individuals can draw on resources from other domains such as repair, and on extrasequential resources for sequence organization such as the occasion of the interaction (Raymond & Zimmerman, 2016) and the overall structural organization of larger units of interaction (Robinson, 2013).

By initiating repair on an interlocutor's prior turn, the current speaker signals that there is some ostensible trouble in hearing, or understanding of the prior talk (Kitzinger, 2013). Repair takes precedence over other courses of action. When it is initiated, the ongoing activity is temporarily suspended until the ostensible problem is satisfactorily resolved. This feature of the social organization of repair constitutes a valuable resource in the

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accomplishment of resistance. For example, take an instance of repair that occurs after a FPP such as a question or request. By initiating repair, an individual holds off producing a fitted response and thus, at least momentarily, resists the constraints of the FPP (Kitzinger, 2013; Schegloff, 2007). The repair also initiates a new adjacency pair rendering the interlocutor accountable to attend to it. Moreover, when the repair functions as a pre-rejection or pre-disagreement, it can prompt a revision of the stance or polarity of the original FPP (Koshik, 2005) through self-correction (Schegloff et al., 1977).

Occasions comprise the oriented-to particularities related to the aim, purpose, reason, basis, or ground of the ongoing conversation arising from the (institutional) setting in which the interactions takes place. The "reason for the call" slot in a telephone call constitutes one of the main loci where aspects of the occasion of a conversation are discussed by interactants (Raymond & Zimmerman, 2016). Similarly, conversational closings make relevant a renewed ratification or perhaps a redefinition of the social occasion for the soon-to-be-terminated interaction (Raymond & Zimmerman, 2016). However, the occasion for the current interaction can become salient in the midst of the conversation and can be used by an individual as the grounds for resisting an ongoing course of action initiated by the interlocutor (see also Humă & Stokoe, 2023/this issue; Raymond et al., 2023/ this issue).

Finally, the overall structural organization of a conversation provides for the coherence of larger units of interaction, like activities, projects, or whole conversations, by specifying their internal composition and the sequential ordering of their constitutive elements (Robinson, 2013). Thus, individuals can accomplish resistance by hindering the progression from one component of the activity to the next projectable one or by withholding their collaboration in jointly bringing off activity closure (Raymond & Zimmerman, 2016; see also Benwell & Rhys, 2023/this issue).

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To briefly summarize, in this section we reviewed the conversational structures that make resisting in talk-in-interaction possible. We argued that sequence organization provides for the majority of resources employed in resisting an interlocutor's course of action. Last, we also highlighted that and how other interactional orders such as repair, social occasions, and the overall structural organization of larger units of talk can furnish interactants with resources for accomplishing resistance. In what follows, we proceed by reviewing the large and diverse body of conversation analytic work that has documented the practices through which resistance is accomplished in a wide range of domestic and institutional settings.

Practices for Accomplishing Resistance in Talk-in-interaction

With a few exceptions such as pre-emptive resistance (Gill et al., 2010), resistance in talk-in-interaction occurs in the response space opened up by an initiating action. In what follows, we will review the extensive body of conversation analytic work on resistance on the basis of where it occurs within this space and how it is accomplished. This section consists of four parts. We start by reviewing practices that occupy the space immediately after the completion of the FPP, move on to practices found in turn-initial position, then to the responsive action as a whole, and finally explore forms of resistance accomplished through non-response / sequence-initiating actions.

Resisting Before Responding: Practices for Doing (Very) Early Resistance. As soon as a speaker has finished the production of an initiating action, a response is due and, when it is not forthcoming, that can be interpreted by the original speaker as resistance. Thus, staying silent when a response should be forthcoming constitutes one of the simplest ways of resisting. Based on the preference for contiguity (Sacks, 1987) mentioned above, any delay in responding to an initiating action becomes a noticeable event and can be taken to indicate

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trouble (Schegloff, 2007). Furthermore, given that a FPP makes a SPP conditionally relevant, by remaining silent, the person to whom the FPP is addressed flouts the obligation to respond that is instituted through the initiating action. Resisting by withholding a SPP and remaining silent has been documented, for example, in healthcare interactions, specifically in treatment recommendation sequences in primary care (Koenig, 2011), pediatric (Stivers, 2005a, 2007), and psychiatric consultations (Kushida & Yamakawa, 2020), and in sales encounters, specifically at the sales relevance place (Pinch & Clark, 1986, p. 171), the point where an acceptance of the proposed sale becomes pertinent (Clark et al., 1994; Clark & Pinch, 2001). Additionally, silence can embody resistance not only in the sequential environment of adjacency pairs, but also in extended tellings, at points where recipients' affiliation would be relevant, such as after tellers deploy idioms to summarize their stances (Kitzinger, 2000).

Akin to remaining silent, remaining still (immobile) when a FPP makes relevant an embodied response, will also be treated as resisting (Kent, 2012). Moreover, in this environment, the interplay between vocal and embodied responses – which can display different levels of alignment to the FPP – may provisionally blur the distinction between collaborative and resistant responses. For example, Kent (2012) identifies "incipient compliance" as a response option to parents' directives whereby children produce multi-component turns comprising vocal resistance and delays in performing the solicited bodily movements, followed eventually by compliance. By responding this way, children retain their autonomy and frame their responsive action as independently performed, while also avoiding parental aggravation (Kent, 2012).

In the sequential environment of an AP, a gap after a FPP can often be followed by a response token, such as an unmarked acknowledgment token like "mm hm", "yeah", or "right" (Clark et al., 1994; Koenig, 2011; Stivers, 2007). These "token agreements" (Kitzinger, 2000, p. 130) can also be produced without a gap (see, for example, in Heritage &

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Sefi, 1992). In both cases, they can accomplish resistance by replacing a preferred SPP that would have aligned with and completed the initiating action. Instead, they function as continuers (Heritage & Sefi, 1992) and, thus, while they appear to be moving the conversation forward, in fact, they slow down its progressivity by treating the initiating action as incomplete and, thus, requiring the FPP speaker to extend their turn.

A side-note on how speakers deal with silences and token agreements. In the pursuit of a (new) response, they extend their turns at talk by either incrementing the in-progress turn-constructional unit or by producing new turn-constructional units (Couper-Kuhlen & Ono, 2007; Ford et al., 2002). While both practices refresh the relevance of a response, the former plays down the absence of a SPP by treating the FPP as potentially incomplete, while the latter implicitly acknowledges the absence and deals with potential grounds for resistance. The majority of the studies on resistance accomplished via silence and token agreements tended to group them together, probably because they often co-occur in the same sequence. Still, it is worth noting that, by remaining silent after a FPP, individuals do not give up their right to the conversational floor, while by producing a token agreement, they hand over the conversational floor to their interlocutors. Thus, a finer-grained analysis of these practices might reveal interesting particularities in their use and interactional uptake.

Beginning to Respond: Turn-initial Practices for Doing Resistance. The turn-initial slot of the SPP constitutes a locus of a particularly dense set of practices for resisting and therefore deserves to be discussed in a dedicated section. This slot provides speakers with the opportunity to indicate, at an early stage, their stance towards the prior action as well as to signal that, and sometimes even how, their response will depart from the constraints and expectations imposed by it. Thus, turn-initial objects in second position are known for their role in "resist[ing] the constraints on second position speakers arising from first positioned

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turns" (Heritage, 2013, p. 331). There is a wealth of conversation analytic research documenting the various "linguistic objects" (Heritage, 2013, p. 331) that occupy this slot and the nuanced ways in which they accomplish resistance (for a brief overeview, see Heritage, 2013). We will discuss these practices, starting with the ones that subtly push back on some aspect of the initiating action and moving towards more explicit challenges and departures from it.

By prefacing their answer with the particle "oh", speakers can provide a preferred response, while still signaling that the question might have been redundant or mispositioned (Heritage, 1998). Similarly, "of course" prefaced responsive turns deliver a preferred action but contest the question's presupposition that both agreeing and disagreeing would have been possible (Stivers, 2011). Another subtle push back can be achieved through a repetitional response to a polar question which signals the speaker's relative independence in answering by confirming rather than affirming the state of affairs put forward by the polar question (Heritage & Raymond, 2012). More substantial departures from the constraints of the initiating action can be achieved through well-prefaced and kulenikka-prefaced responses (in Korean) which signal that answers will be expanded and will not conform to the expectations embodied by the initiating action (Heritage, 2015; Kim, 2013). Slightly more confrontational, ani-prefaces (in Korean) signal an upcoming dispreferred response to a polar question that can also resist the framing of the question or challenge its presupposition that the question's hypothesis is confirmable (Kim, 2015). A similar outcome is achieved through the use of repeat prefaces in responsive actions that resist the agenda, presupposition, or implication of the initiating action (Bolden, 2009). This practice marks a response more clearly as confrontational by highlighting, through the repetition, the problematic aspect of the prior turn and by unpacking the issue with it in further talk.

Interestingly, some particles can signal resistance to different aspects of the initiating actions without specifying what the problem is. Hayashi and Kushida (2013) document how the negative token "iya" (in Japanese) deployed in responsive turns to wh-questions precedes turns that resist the question's epistemic stance, the type of response it solicits, the assumptions it conveys, or the larger course of action it helps to implement. This insight hints towards differences in the role of turn-initial items in the accomplishment of resistance: while some linguistic practices – for example, negative tokens such as "iya" (Hayashi & Kushida, 2013) or non-lexical tokens such as "eh" (Hayashi, 2009) – can signal resistance while remaining opaque to what exactly the problem is, others, like repeat prefaces (Bolden, 2009), give interlocutors a more precise indication of the objectionable aspect(s) within the prior talk.

Resisting While Responding: Practices for Producing Resistant Responses. Beyond turn-initial position, the resources speakers have to display resistance to an initiating action diversify. Largely, these can be divided in resources pertaining to the action accomplished via the SPP and resources pertaining to its packaging. We will start with the latter.

While less frequent, particles and other lexical items implicated in accomplishing resistance can be found in other than turn-initial positions. For example, in Korean, the delimiter particle "ya" can be attached to another linguistic element in an answer allowing the speaker to signal which aspect of the question they found problematic (Kim, 2013). "Ya" is employed in responses that treat questions as self-evident, sequentially misplaced, or irrelevant. In Danish and Swedish, speakers can use the modal adverbs "jo" (Danish) and "ju" (Swedish) to respond to questions while also signaling that their answer should have already been known by the questioner. Finally, the use of the Danish modal adverb "da" in

dispreferred responses treats questions as inapposite because they target knowledge the questioner should already possess (Heinemann, 2009).

Prosodic resources, such as pitch, pace, volume and so on, can also be mobilized in the service of, most often, tacit resistance whose basis is not explicitly conveyed. For example, Golato and Fagyal (2008) showed that the German response token "ja↑ja" (whereby the second "ja" is produced with a higher pitch than the first one) is deployed when speakers take issue with the action or content of a prior utterance which is treated as either unwarranted or self-evident. The subtle but powerful impact of prosody in accomplishing resistance is also documented by Raymond (2013). He shows how a prosodically marked "<u>yea</u>:h" token deployed in response to a yes/no interrogative insinuates a rebuke of the question. The subtlety of this interactional move comes from the combination of a type-conforming response (Raymond, 2003) with an unusual prosodic delivery. This combination signals that the speaker is doing something other that fully going along with the agenda of the question and all its implications. The author notes that resisting by prosodically marking the response token constitutes an alternative to other practices for resisting (for example producing a type non-conforming response) that the speaker has available in this particular circumstances. By selecting the former, the speaker averts a possible incipient conflict while also tacitly taking exception with their interlocutor's action. Thus, prosodic resources enable speakers to walk the razor-thin line between affiliation and conflict and to fine-tune their actions to precisely convey to interlocutors the extent to which they are willing to cooperate with the ongoing course of action.

Laughter is another resource that can be deployed in the accomplishment of subtle resistance. Due to its versatility, laughter can actually be employed in various locations within the responsive turn and as Glenn (2003, p. 143) notes it can selectively target different aspects of the initiating action: "laughter plays a part in resisting topical development, the

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sequential import of a first pair part, or complaining talk. Yet laughter may also go along with the activity. There is a third possibility between these two, which involves minimally laughing along in a way which, at the same time, resists". Unlike pre-SPP gaps and token agreements that convey misalignment with the conversational activity, laughter is designedly ambiguous (like incipient compliance) and can be followed by either more displays of resistance or, conversely, by displays of affiliation. Thus, we need to pay attention to where laughter occurs, and what precedes and follows it.

Depending on the exact location within a turn at talk, laughter can instantiate various shades of resistance. For example, isolated laughter in a responsive position allows an individual to withhold a fitted SPP and to disengage from the ongoing activity, thus hampering the progressivity of the conversation (Ticca, 2013). By contrast, laughter particles that are interspersed throughout recipients' dispreferred responses are less obstructive of progressivity and can mitigate disaffiliation (Zayts & Schnurr, 2011). How exactly this effect is accomplished requires further investigation. One possible explanation could draw on the observation that the deployment of interpolated particles of aspiration (i.e., laughter) convey speakers' awareness that their actions may be troublesome for recipients (Potter & Hepburn, 2010). Uninvited and unshared laughter in second and third sequential position can modulate the seriousness of the action accomplished within that turn (Ticca, 2013; Zayts & Schnurr, 2011). This has been documented in medical settings, specifically in patients' responses to doctors' criticism (Ticca, 2013), as well as in doctors' receipts of patients' refusals of diagnostic testing and in their responses to patients' requests for advice that they are not allowed to provide (Zayts & Schnurr, 2011). In these knotty situations, "laughing off" a prior turn treats it as non-serious and, thus, plays down its disaffiliativeness (Zayts & Schnurr, 2011).

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Providing a response that partially misaligns with the initiating action and, thus, resists some aspect(s) of it constitutes another method through which an individual withholds full cooperation with their interlocutor involves. Such responses have been thoroughly documented in question-answer sequences (but see Bolden, 2009; Stivers, 2005b for other sequential contexts), where, through their answers, individuals negotiate the topical scope and moral implications of the question. For example, Stivers and Hayashi (2010) explain how transformative answers break away from the constraints imposed by the polar questions they respond to. They distinguish between answers that transform the terms of the questions and those that transform their agendas. Employing the former, respondents target problems with the clarity or specificity of the questions and attempt to repair them in the service of agreeing with the questioner. Employing the latter, they target problems with the questions' focus, bias, or presuppositions and, in addressing them, end up answering different questions altogether. Interestingly, while pushing against some constraints of the initiating actions transformative answers still promote progressivity by adjusting the terms or agenda of the questions in order to facilitate the provision of an answer which may otherwise have not been possible (Stivers & Hayashi, 2010). Furthermore, in a particular institutional setting, breaking away from the response format imposed by the initiating action – for example, by providing extensive details about one's personal experience instead of a standardized response in an interview – can be done in the service of cooperating with the wider institutional agenda – in this case the gathering of accurate information (Iversen, 2012).

Producing a dispreferred response to an initiating action constitutes another way in which individuals can refrain from cooperating with interlocutors. Dispreferred responses such as rejections, refusals, or disagreements do not carry out the course of action projected by the FPP and stop the sequence from progressing (Schegloff, 2007). Resistance implemented through dispreferred responses has been documented, for example, in couples

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counselling (Muntigl, 2013), primary care consultations (Peräkylä, 2010), health visits of first-time parents (Heritage & Sefi, 1992), news interviews (Clayman, 2001), and peer tutoring (Waring, 2005). Within the same sequence type, the extent to which different dispreferred responses push back against the constraints and presuppositions mobilized by the initiating action can vary. Take for example advice sequences. Recipients of advice can resist in multiple ways, such as: (1) by asserting their own knowledge and competence, thereby treating the advice as unnecessary (Hepburn et al., 2018; Heritage & Sefi, 1992), (2) by invoking difficulties with implementing the advice, thus challenging its usefulness or applicability (Bloch & Antaki, 2022; Waring, 2005), or (3) by refusing to take the advice, thus treating it as inoperative, or flawed (Waring, 2005). From surveying the different options available to resist advice – and probably other initiating actions also – what transpires is that they differ in the extent to which they disaffiliate and, thus, tear at the fabric of social solidarity (Clayman, 2002). Moreover, the sequential trajectories they engender also vary, as they make possible different comebacks from the advice giver (Bloch & Antaki, 2022; Waring, 2005).

It is worth wondering whether all dispreferred SPPs accomplish resistance. To date, conversation analytic studies have mostly ascribed this label either when dispreferred responsive actions are treated by the participants as resistance, for example, when they are followed by pursuits of a response reversal, or when they get in the way of the successful completion of institutionally mandated activities. Therefore, we would argue that while resistance can be accomplished via any dispreferred responsive action, not all dispreferred responses are also resistant ones.

Resisting Without Responding: Practices for Resisting Through Next-positioned (Non-responsive) Actions. Resistance can also be accomplished through actions that, instead of

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responding to a prior turn, make a response from another person relevant. These actions do not only momentarily suspend the progressivity of the ongoing activity, but they can also temporarily or permanently divert the trajectory of the interaction. They often occur in the environment of prior, less explicit, resistance (Clark & Pinch, 2001; Hollander, 2015) or in the context of extensive and even escalating disagreement and disaffiliation such as arguments, and accusations (Joyce, 2022). We start by outlining how resistance is accomplished via other-initiated repair in the slot following the FPP.

Other-initiated repair (OIR) can take different forms (see Kendrick, 2015 for a review), but not all of them have been linked to resistance. To date, conversation analysts have documented the use of open class repair (Drew, 1997; Kendrick, 2015), repeat repair (Kendrick, 2015; Koshik, 2005), and understanding checks (MacMartin, 2008) in the accomplishment of resistance. We will briefly describe each of them in turn. Open class repair, initiated through practices such as "What" or "Sorry", signal that there is some trouble with the immediately preceding turn at talk, without giving an indication of the source or kind of trouble (Schegloff et al., 1977). Therefore, open class repair can signal that the trouble is not necessarily related to what was said, but to why it was said now, in this sequential environment (Drew, 1997). Through an open class repair initiation, an individual can indicate that the prior action may be sequentially inapposite or inappropriate, thus providing the interlocutor with an opportunity to redo it with a partially revised stance (Drew, 1997). By contrast, repeat repairs are more precise in locating the ostensible issue within the prior turn, thus pointing to the item that the repair initiator has some trouble with. When implemented through a reverse polarity question[2], a repeat repair can be heard to challenge the correctness or truth value of a prior assertion, thus prompting its reversal (Koshik, 2005). Finally, a speaker can also signal incipient resistance through an understanding check (MacMartin, 2008). While this repair format indicates minor difficulties in comprehending prior talk

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(Kitzinger, 2013), it still prompts interlocutors to at least inspect their turns for possible problems and, thus, grounds for resistance. Further investigations of the use of understanding checks to accomplish resistance could look into the relation between the operations employed in the repair and the aspects of the prior turn that are being resisted.

Besides initiating repair, an individual can also resist by producing a type of action that was not made conditionally relevant by the FPP. Examples of this abound in conversation analytic studies of medical encounters. In the context of diagnosis delivery, patients can exhibit resistance by producing newsmarks such as "really" (Stivers, 2007), by questioning the diagnosis or its underpinning evidence, by bringing up new symptoms, or information (Peräkylä, 2010), and by asserting an alternative diagnosis (Ijäs-Kallio et al., 2010; Koenig, 2011; Kushida & Yamakawa, 2020; Stivers, 2007). Some of these practices are also employed in resisting treatment recommendations. For example, patients resist the doctors' treatment recommendations by describing additional concerns, by questioning the (effectiveness of the) treatment, by invoking negative consequences of the recommended (lack of) treatment, and by asking for specific (other) treatment options (Kushida & Yamakawa, 2020; Stivers, 2007). Finally, still in medical consultations, but in response to recommendations for further tests, patients can exhibit resistance by questioning doctors' decisions, by proposing alternative plans, and by providing additional information (Zhao & Ma, 2020). All these practices make relevant some response from the health professionals who need to deal with the patients' resistance before progressing with the temporarily suspended courses of action.

Finally, instead of responding to an initiating action, individuals can initiate a new and competing course of action, otherwise known as a "sequential juncture" (Küttner, 2020, p. 248). The second position is an inherently strong position (Sacks, 1992) by virtue of having the opportunity to (re)cast the first action as potentially oppositional (Hutchby, 1996).

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For example, rather than addressing a prior accusatory turn, a speaker may orient to the manner of its delivery thereby arresting the accusatory course of action and "turning the tables" to hold the accusing speaker's talk as accountable (Clift & Pino, 2020). These sorts of sequential junctures commonly occur in disputative environments, such as in radio call-in shows where hosts have a natural incumbency in second position to challenge callers' claims without having to construct a defense for an alternative view (Hutchby, 1996). These diversions of the course of action illustrate an orientation to the potentially non-innocent nature of the prior speaker's turn, such as enticing sequences (Reber, 2019; Reynolds, 2015) which position the target as responding to a course of action consequently pushing the challenger's agenda. Yet these sequences can be successfully blocked by halting their progress and initiating a new course of action undermining the basis for the challenge (Joyce, 2022).

Resisting by initiating a new course of action can also maintain a cooperative relationship between speakers. In complaint sequences, speakers might resist the direction of a complaint by (re)topicalizing the complainable matter to avoid making it explicit and instead leaving their recipient to do so (Drew & Walker, 2009), thus avoiding "going too far" in complaining. Indeed, speakers may avoiding endorsing/agreeing with a complaint-in-progress by launching a new action and thereby transforming the character of the sequence. At this point, the original complainer may attempt to resuscitate their complaint but this is at odds with the current course of action and can be defended against (Küttner, 2020). Resistance in this way can smoothly bypass incipient disagreement and ultimately mitigate potential disputes (Tiitinen & Lempiälä, 2022). A crucial point to be made here is that speakers have available to them an array of interactional resources for tying their new course of action to the prior turn to mitigate against being sanctioned for their resisting maneuver (see, for example, Clayman (1993; 2001); Tiitinen & Lempiälä, (2022); Küttner (2020)).
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Having reviewed the vast body of research that has documented the practices through which resistance is accomplished before, during, or instead of responding to an initiating action, we now turn, in the last section of the article, to the contributions that make up the body of this special issue.

Overview of the Articles in the Special Issue

The contributions in this special issue are forged by a singular focus on resistance as an interactional phenomenon achieved in and through social action. The seven empirical articles each analyze naturally occurring recorded episodes of social encounters from different contexts. They show that resistance manifests in different ways and for different aims – from the smallest features of talk, to larger sequences of action. The contributions cut across a range of environments, from healthcare encounters (Benwell & Rhys, 2023), crisis negotiations (Sikveland & Stokoe, 2023), "cold" calls (Humă & Stokoe, 2023), child-parent encounters (Flint & Rhys, 2023), police encounters (Raymond et al., 2023), undergraduate supervision meetings (West, 2023), to news interviews (Hepburn et al., 2023). Together they and we put forward a strong argument that resistance is an interactional achievement and the most effective way to study how resistance happens in the real-world is to use the most powerful approach to study social interaction: conversation analysis.

The first paper, by Bethan Benwell and Catrin Rhys's paper (2023/this issue) addresses resistance in healthcare complaint calls, analyzing how callers making a complaint orient to transitions to the projected next phase of the call as opportunities to resist the call's progress. In these transition spaces, callers can relaunch a prior phase in the call, for example, an earlier complaint narrative resisting the smooth progression of the overall call. However, Benwell and Rhys recommend that these transition spaces can also be sequential opportunities for alignment between caller and call handler and that call handlers can be

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trained to spot these spaces as opportunities for checking alignment, reassuring the caller and ultimately increasing the efficiency of the complaint call while also improving overall caller satisfaction.

Working on news interviews, Alexa Hepburn, Jonathan Potter and Marissa Caldwell (2023/this issue) investigate interviewers' use of turn-medial tag questions as a method for dealing with resistance from their interviewees. These tags are commonly used in news settings to help viewers by contextualizing interviewee answers and building a shared epistemic landscape between interlocutors. Turn-medial tags may also function to handle possible resistance or evasion by an interviewee – the interviewer can use a tag to project agreement against ostensible disagreement. In this way, as Hepburn, Potter and Caldwell demonstrate, the tag limits the opportunity for disagreement or qualification of a response by pinning the recipient to a position or claim.

The third contribution of this collection, by Rein Sikveland and Elizabeth Stokoe (2023/this issue), focuses on how police negotiators offer 'help' to suicidal persons in crisis and how there is resistance to these offers of help. Sikveland and Stokoe demonstrate that negotiators use formulations of help as a contrasting device in response to articulated resistance from the person in crisis. Disentangling the mismatch between benefactive stance and status (Clayman & Heritage, 2014), they show how while the negotiator offering help may display a benefactive stance (that their offer is genuine and relevant), this may not correspond to the benefactive status of the person making the offer. Put together, this brings into question existing recommendations, theories and models of crisis communication and is a step toward evidence-based crisis negotiation training.

The forth paper, by Marion West (2023/this issue), excavates resistance to advice in supervision meetings with undergraduate students. West explores how the student and supervisor negotiate and manage epistemic rights and obligations noting how the student

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unsuccessfully bases their resistance to the supervisor's advice in their own competence, and how later, when the student invokes a different authority, the supervisor relents. This study highlights the tension that can arise between supervisor expertise and student competence and importantly recommends that supervisors not discount student's experience or resistance but rather better tailor their advice. The overall import of West's paper resonates with both Flint and Rhys', and with Hepburn, Potter and Caldwell's papers that explore the relationship between resistance and the relative epistemic and deontic landscapes of interlocutors.

Natalie Flint and Catrin Rhys's paper (2023/this issue) like Benwell and Rhys' paper analyzes sequential resistance. Here they tackle resistance by a teenager to a parental threat. Like all of the papers in this special issue they systematically scrutinize how resistance plays out in an encounter. Showing interception as a form of resistance, that is rather than comply with, or even defy a parental threat (in this case, a consequence for not completing homework), the teenager draws on interactional resources of turn design, projectability and repair to anticipate and resist the trajectory of a sequence by halting the action-in-progress. Their paper adds to the rich tapestry of our understanding of resistance as being more complex than merely occurring in second or third position.

The penultimate contribution by Bogdana Humă and Elizabeth Stokoe (2023/this issue), similar to the Flint and Rhys, and Raymond, Chen and Whitehead papers takes aim at the (lack of) smooth progression of encounters, in their case, business-to-business sales "cold" calls. They describe two ways that those receiving a "cold" call, the prospects, can either "block" or "stall" the unfolding commercial encounter. Through blocking, prospects stop a salesperson's ongoing course of action, while also seeking to end the call and to pre-empt any subsequent pursuit of a sale. Through stalling, prospects either slow down or redirect the trajectory of the sale to a different (offline) medium. The paper highlights the

complexity of resistance in talk-in-interaction that operates simultaneously on different levels of the interaction.

In the seventh and final empirical article, Geoffrey Raymond, Jie Chen and Kevin Whitehead (2023/this issue) look at the institutional setting of police-citizen encounters. Their paper is similar in scope to both Flint and Rhys's paper and Benwell and Rhys's paper albeit with very different stakes at play. All of these papers examine resistance as a sequential phenomenon—scrutinizing how, through the sequential organization, opportunities arise for interlocutors to hamper the smooth progression of the interaction in order to achieve their own ends. The final paper by Raymond, Chen and Whitehead focuses on 'stand-offs' – these are moments between police officers attempting coercive authority of a citizen – to show how citizens respond in ways that counter and offer an alternative trajectory rather than provide the response occasioned by the police officer's first position turn. This results in a stand-off with the interaction 'frozen' as neither party can progress in their independent course of action. Like the other papers in this collection, the article concludes with an evidence-based recommendation for resolving the trouble of a stand-off, the authors' note that by completing one of the courses of action it can liberate both parties to possibly pursue the competing line of action.

The special issue is concluded with a discussion by Charles Antaki (2023/this issue) who offers reflections on each of the contributions. Antaki notes previous work on resistance from social psychology is limited with respect to accounting for real life encounters with real life consequences and connects this with our current state-of-the-art conceptualization of resistance as an interactional phenomenon. Drawing together each of the contributions Antaki places them on a *gradient of imposition* based on whose interests are (meant to be) served, from social encounters which feature low-entitlement demands (e.g. advising a student), to those which are more imposing (e.g. making a phone sale), and finally much more difficult

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resistance where interlocutors need manage an asymmetry in their relationship (e.g. a parent-child relationship). Bringing the special issue to a close, Antaki reminds readers of the impact of the collection – that close, detailed and technical analysis that each contribution undertakes – should draw the attention from scholars across the social sciences to see how resistance is carried out in reality.

Concluding remarks

In the beginning of this article we highlighted how, while asymmetrical alternatives, both cooperation and resistance represent constitutive aspects of human sociality that are made possible by the sequential infrastructure that underpins social interaction. We then proceeded by reviewing a vast body of conversation analytic work that has documented the linguistic, prosodic, sequential, and embodied resources we humans use to accomplish resistance. This review revealed several unexplored avenues for future empirical enquiries such as establishing how laughter and prosodic resources contribute to the accomplishment of resistance or mapping the relationship between resistance and dispreferred responsive actions. We look forward to future research that will continue to uncover and document new practices for resisting and their moral implications.

Notes

[1] For a full description of the definitory characteristics of adjacency pairs see Schegloff (2007).

[2] Reverse polarity questions are questions that "convey assertions opposite in polarity to the question" (Koshik, 2005, p. 2)

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