

MEANING IN INTERACTION: THE CASE OF *actually*

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One aspect of the relationship between meaning and interaction is explored here by taking the English particle *actually*, which is characterized by flexibility of syntactic position, and investigating its use in a range of interactional contexts. Syntactic alternatives in the form of clause-initial or clause-final placement are found to be selected by reference to interactional exigencies. The temporally situated, contingent accomplishment of utterances in turns and their component turn-constructional units shows the emergence of meaning across a conversational sequence; it reveals syntactic flexibility as both a resource to be exploited for interactional ends and a constraint on that interaction.\*

## 1. GRAMMAR AND INTERACTION.

The meaning of any single grammatical construction is interactionally contingent, built over interactional time in accordance with interactional actualities. Meaning lies not with the speaker nor the addressee nor the utterance alone . . . but rather with the interactional past, current and projected next moment. (Schegloff et al. 1996:40)

In their introduction to a collection of papers entitled *Interaction and Grammar* (Ochs et al. 1996), Schegloff, Ochs and Thompson set a powerful agenda for students of language use in proposing that the study of linguistic structures could be richly informed by consideration of their place in the wider context of social interaction. They develop a line of inquiry launched in the pages of *Language* in 1974 by Sacks et al. with their foundational paper on turntaking in conversation, a work that established the turn-at-talk as a primary unit of analysis for the study of talk-in-interaction.<sup>1</sup>

By identifying components of the turn—the turn-constructional units (henceforth TCUs; Sacks et al. 1974:702–4)—as sentential, clausal, phrasal, and lexical in type,<sup>2</sup> Sacks et al. anchored their work firmly at the intersection of grammar and interaction; however, the potential for work thus adumbrated remained largely unexploited until the studies in Ochs et al. 1996. In an introduction marking a significant reengagement of interactional research with grammatical considerations, Schegloff et al. claim that ‘an important dimension of linguistic structures is their moment-by-moment evolving INTERACTIONAL production’ (Schegloff et al. 1996:39, emphasis added).

In what follows I explore the theoretical and methodological implications of this claim by taking the turn and its component TCUs as the frame of reference in examining a single lexical item in English talk: *actually*. This choice is grounded in two related factors. First, previous treatments of *actually* are revealing of the two main analytical

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<sup>1</sup> The term TALK-IN-INTERACTION and its abbreviation, TALK, is that adopted by conversation analysts and is used here in preference to CONVERSATION, since not all the cases cited here emerged from ordinary, so-called mundane conversation but in different interactional contexts such as interviews and radio discussions. For this reason the term TURN-AT-TALK is used here, rather than, for example, CONVERSATIONAL TURN.

<sup>2</sup> Sacks et al. note that ‘unit types for English INCLUDE sentential, clausal, phrasal and lexical constructions’ (Sacks et al. 1974:702, emphasis added), which does not preclude other possible unit types. One type consists of nonlexical features such as response cries (Goffman 1981:116).

perspectives to which items of this type have traditionally been subject; second, and crucially, *actually* is characterized by a striking feature—flexibility of syntactic position—hitherto analytically neglected in studies of its use. This flexibility is a valuable resource for anyone seeking an analytical payoff for taking the TCU as the object of attention.<sup>3</sup>

After examining studies of the function of *actually* in either the sentence or utterance, I examine naturally occurring talk, analysis of which necessitates reference to the turn as the object of investigation. *Actually* is deployed in four different positions in the turn. Extended analysis of the distinctions in placement in British English data reveals that this syntactic flexibility is exploited by interactional exigencies.<sup>4</sup>

**2. *Actually*: SENTENCES, UTTERANCES AND TURNS-AT-TALK.** *Actually* has hitherto been characterized in both grammatical and pragmatic terms.<sup>5</sup> Grammatically identified as an adverbial emphazier, Quirk et al. propose that it ‘has a reinforcing effect on the truth value of the clause or part of the clause to which it applies’ (1985:583) and classify it with the other modal subjuncts *certainly*, *clearly*, *definitely*, *indeed*, *obviously*, *plainly*, *really*, *surely*, *for certain*, *for sure*, and *of course* as also functioning as a disjunct, clause-initially or -finally, commenting on the form or content of the clause and ‘expressing the comment that what is being said is true’ (1985:583).<sup>6</sup> Pragmatic characterizations range in emphasis and scope. Watts (1988) and Smith and Jucker (2000), proposing a RELEVANCE-theoretic account, focus on the modification of propositional attitudes achieved by *actually*. Goldberg (1982) and Lenk (1998) discuss *actually* as part of a group of discourse markers or particles for their role in achieving discourse

<sup>3</sup> As Schegloff proposes: ‘there are analytic results to be achieved by examining . . . talk by reference to the unit “TCU” which are not available by reference to “sentences” or “clauses”’ (1996:60).

<sup>4</sup> Restricting the data to British English is in the interests of consistency; the findings should not therefore be taken as representative of general English usage. Note, however, that Goodwin’s (1979) analysis of the interactive construction of a sentence in conversation—‘I gave up smoking cigarettes one week ago today actually’—uses American English data, and the use of *actually* in this context would seem to conform to the usage observed for British English in §3.1 here.

<sup>5</sup> The historical development of *actual* and its adverbial derivative *actually* is well documented as originating in the Late Latin *actualis*, formed from *actus*, ‘a doing, an act’. It is also possibly influenced by *actualiter*, ‘practically’ and the French *actuellement*, which in modern French usage retains the sense that has all but disappeared from contemporary conventional uses of *actually*, that meaning ‘as a present fact; at present, for the time being’ as in (albeit a fictional portrayal): ‘Where is he actually?’ ‘Heaven knows. Government House at Ottawa, I think’ (Evelyn Waugh, *Vile Bodies*, 50–51). Of present uses, the sense ‘in act or fact’ is recorded as early as the sixteenth century (Partridge 1965, Onions 1966) and Samuel Johnson defines it as meaning ‘in act; in effect; really’ (*Dictionary*) and today the prime emphasis is laid on its function as a marker of fact and truth, ‘. . . as opposed to *possibly*, *potentially*, *theoretically*, *ideally*; really, in reality’ (*Oxford English Dictionary*, 3rd edn., 1995). The OED. states that it is ‘not said of the objective reality of the thing asserted, but as the truthfulness of the assertion and its correspondence with the thing; hence added to vouch for statements which seem surprising, incredible, or exaggerated’ (1995:132).

<sup>6</sup> Prescriptivists have dismissed *actually*: in the Concise OED Fowler and Fowler classify it as one of those ‘meaningless words’ that are used ‘especially by the young’

not as significant terms, but rather, so far as they have any purpose at all, as aids of the same kind as are given in writing by punctuation, inverted commas and underlining . . . many people today seem to find it impossible to trust any assertion, however commonplace, to be believed without this warranty. (1965:356)

Partridge states that *actual* and *actually* are ‘usually unnecessary’ and claims that the frequent use of the latter ‘shows the speaker’s lack of confidence in his own credibility; he seems to need additional assurance that what he asserts is not a fabrication or a mere conjecture. He whose Yea is Yea and his Nay Nay has no need of (this) adverbial support’ (1965:267).

coherence. Aijmer (1986) compares written and spoken forms and Taglicht 2001 provides an analysis grounded in syntax and the scope of negation, as well as some of the intonational properties of *actually*. Of these, only Aijmer, Lenk, and Taglicht make an analytical distinction between the use of *actually* as a subjunct—what Lenk calls the ‘propositional use’ (1998:157), which in that position she identifies as ‘an intensifier’ (157)—and as a disjunct—what Lenk calls the ‘discourse marker’ (157) use, which she suggests functions as an ‘opinion marker’ (1998:160). Only Aijmer makes a further distinction between types of disjunct usage—either clause-initially or -finally. She claims that clause-initially, *actually* ‘functions as a signal or cue to the listener how two utterances are related to each other’ (1986:123) and that clause-finally ‘it expresses speakers’ incredulity and appeal to the listener’ (126). Structurally, she identifies ten possible syntactic positions for *actually*; in the constructed example below, it can be placed in any of the slots marked with an arrow.<sup>7</sup>

(1)

It was not as enjoyable as it might have been  
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10  
 ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑

(Adapted from Aijmer 1986:121)

Of course, not all of the positions outlined above are realized in talk with the same frequency; their availability, however, does testify to the relative freedom with which *actually*—and indeed other adverbial elements—can be positioned syntactically.

Previous studies have been concerned with assigning a meaning or function to *actu-*

<sup>7</sup> The notation adopted by Quirk et al. (1985:490) classifies these ten possibilities into three main positions: initial (position 1 in the example cited), medial (positions 2–9) and end (position 10). Depending on the particular combination of syntactic elements in any given case, the medial group is further divided into three—initial medial (at position 2), medial medial (at position 8) and end medial (position 9)—and the end group into two—the initial end, and end positions. Of course, the example cited represents only one possible syntactic configuration; it does not display, for example, the initial-end position (‘when end focus makes preferable an obligatory element in clause-final position, despite the presence of an adverbial’) (1985: 499), as in ‘she placed the book *actually* on the table’, nor does it show other possible realizations of the positions shown. The following is a simplified representation of Quirk et al.’s comprehensive account of adverbial positioning.

POSITION	EXPLICATION	EXAMPLE
INITIAL	Precedes any other clause element. In direct questions, is the position immediately before the operator or WH-element.	<i>Actually</i> , she put the book on the table. <i>Actually</i> , did she put the book on the table?
MEDIAL which can comprise:	The position immediately after the subject and (where there is one) the operator	I have <i>actually</i> stated this explicitly
INITIAL MEDIAL	The position between the subject and the operator and where the predication is negative	I <i>actually</i> have stated . . . I <i>actually</i> haven’t stated . . .
MEDIAL MEDIAL	Found in the context of a verb phrase with three or more auxiliaries	I must have <i>actually</i> been stating this explicitly
END MEDIAL	Position immediately before the main verb	I will have <i>actually</i> stated . . .
INITIAL END	Position when end focus makes preferable an obligatory element in clause-final position despite the presence of an adverbial	She put the book <i>actually</i> on the table
END	Position in the clause following all obligatory elements	She put the book on the table, <i>actually</i>

(Adapted from Quirk et al. 1985:490–500)

ally, and to that end have taken as their analytical domain the sentence (Watts, Aijmer) or the utterance (Goldberg, Lenk, Smith and Jucker, and Taglicht), with the result that the analysis has tended to focus solely on the *actually*-marked sentence or utterance.<sup>8</sup> Proposing a shift of analytical attention from the sentence (as a grammatical object) and the utterance ('the thing said' in generic, pretheoretical terms) to the turn and its component turn constructional units is to introduce into the analysis the interactional contingency that attends the production of *actually* in talk. It is to recognize that utterances, housed in turns-at-talk, are TEMPORALLY situated and 'IN THE FIRST INSTANCE contextually understood by reference to their placement and participation within sequences of actions' (Heritage & Atkinson 1984:5, emphasis in original). Once sequences and the turns within them, rather than isolated utterances, are at issue, the analytical salience of certain interactional considerations becomes apparent. These are revealed by the following extended fragment, showing *actually*—produced on each occasion by the same speaker—in a range of different positions in a turn-at-talk (arrowed).<sup>9</sup>

<sup>8</sup> In the wider domain, a number of alternatives have been proposed to the sentence and the utterance as the focus of inquiry. Work in construction grammar (see e.g., Lakoff 1987, Fillmore et al. 1988, Goldberg 1994, Lambrecht 1994), for example, has proposed that 'traditional constructions—i.e. form-meaning correspondences—are the basic units of language' (Goldberg 1994:6), and Chafe (1994) adopts the 'intonation unit' as the primary unit of analysis for discourse in his investigation of the relationship of language and consciousness. Although the current work shares with the construction grammarians and Chafe a methodological perspective that does not take the sentence or utterance as the basic unit of analysis, it differs quite markedly in other respects. My concern with the temporal contingency of interaction, focusing on the beginnings and ends of turns—in other words, the points of possible speaker transition—is not shared by Goldberg et al. and Chafe, whose focus is not therefore the kind of ordinary interaction sequence that constitutes the data here. Goldberg's concern, rather, is to argue for constructional polysemy, showing that 'an entirely lexically based approach to grammar is inadequate, and that lexically unfilled constructions must be recognized to exist independently of the particular lexical items which instantiate them' (1994:224); Chafe's to investigate discourse 'as a window to the mind' (1994:19), that is, as an expression of mental contents and processes. In contrast, my study is addressed to talk as a way of handling and managing, rather than in some sense 'reflecting' or 'expressing' notions of what speakers know. It thus aims to avoid the main—unresolvable—psychological conundrum of determining (apart from how they talk) what speakers and hearers know and assume each other to know.

<sup>9</sup> I recorded and transcribed the data fragments, except for those marked H (Holt), which were recorded by Elizabeth Holt and transcribed by Gail Jefferson, R (Rahman) which were transcribed by Gail Jefferson, or another source altogether (fragment 26), the source of which is marked. My thanks to Elizabeth Holt and Gail Jefferson for making these data available to me. Pseudonyms have been used, except where the data fragment is taken from a radio or television broadcast. The data are taken from approximately thirty hours of tape recordings of naturally occurring interaction. The transcripts are notated according to the system developed by Gail Jefferson, with the following conventions (adapted from Ochs et al. 1996:461–65).

Separate **left square brackets**, one above the other on two successive lines with utterances by different speakers, indicate a point of overlap onset. Separate **right square brackets**, one above the other on two successive lines with utterances by different speakers indicate a point at which two overlapping utterances both end, where one ends while the other continues, or simultaneous moments in overlaps which continue:

- (i) J So you'd like to go fir:s:[t [Well that's] [very] =  
L [Oh [fir:st or se]co:n: d ] =

**Equals signs** ordinarily come in pairs—one at the end of a line and another at the start of the next line or one shortly thereafter. They are used to indicate two things: (1) If the two lines of transcription connected by the signs are by the same speaker, then there was a single, continuous utterance with no break or pause, which was broken up in order to accommodate the placement of overlapping talk (ii).

- (ii) M If I've got to pa:rk, (.) in a tricky posi:tion [and I loo:k fit =  
A [Yep.  
M = enough and I think (0.3) .h I drive out and I think no way am I

(2) If the lines connected by the signs are by different speakers, then the second followed the first with no discernable silence between them, or was 'latched' to it (iii).

## (2) Disabled sticker

(C22:1. M = Mary, V = Vanessa, A = Adam. M has been suffering persistent back pain. Having a 'disabled sticker' makes it possible to park in otherwise restricted areas)

- 1M I'm taking cod liver oil tablets wi' ome:ga three at the minute.  
 2 (0.8)  
 3V Mmm. =  
 4M = I ↑keep (.) coming across women- ↓where I swim with the disabled  
 5 whose- (1) have a lot of back [and (shoulder) problems-  
 6V [OH: :, ↑ADam said  
 7 (2)  
 8A Me? =  
 9V = Would you qualify for a disabled (.) sticker on your car,  
 10 (1)  
 11M No,  
 12 (0.2)  
 13V [No,  
 14M [I wouldn't ask for it. (.) I think it's not fair.  
 15 (1.2)  
 16M I must say it is difficult for me to w(h)alk °s(h)ometimes°. =  
 17A = Well I think I- (.) I just wondered, I mean some people don't  
 18 want them because they feel it's somewhat, [you know, they =  
 19V [Hm.

- (iii) M So factually it is an idea you know, =  
 A = Well if it just saves you walk- when YOU're (.) NOT well.

**Numbers in parentheses** indicate silence, represented in tenths of a second. Silences may be marked either within turns or between them. A **dot in parentheses** indicates a micropause, ordinarily less than two-tenths of a second. These options are represented in (iv).

- (iv) V No::.  
 (0.7)  
 M Uh:: and sometimes I really (0.3) if I have to walk for a hundred  
 yards I think oh °go:d° (0.2) you know (.) [I can't do this . . .

**Punctuation marks** indicate intonation. The period indicates a falling, or final intonation contour, not necessarily the end of a sentence. A question mark indicates a rising intonation, not necessarily a question, and a comma indicates 'continuing' intonation, not necessarily a clause boundary. **Colons** indicate prolongation or stretching of the sound preceding them. The more colons, the longer the stretching. On the other hand, graphically stretching a word on the page by inserting blank spaces between the letters of the word does not indicate how it was pronounced; it is used to allow alignment with overlapping talk. Thus:

- (v) D No: Scottish as i:n .hhh li[ke Sc[ott I mean ]  
 G [hahh[I s e e :.]

A **hyphen** after a word or part of a word indicates a cut-off or self-interruption, often done with a glottal or dental stop. **Underlining** indicates some form of stress or emphasis, either by increased loudness or higher pitch. Especially loud talk relative to that which surrounds it may be indicated by **upper case**. The **degree signs** indicate that the talk between them is markedly softer than the talk around them. The **up or down arrows** mark particularly emphatic rises or falls in pitch. The combination of **greater-than** and **less-than** symbols indicates that the talk between them is compressed or rushed. Hearable aspiration is shown where it occurs in the talk by the letter *h*: the more *h* s, the more aspiration. If the aspiration is an inhalation it is preceded by a dot. A word or words enclosed by **pound sterling signs** indicate the word is articulated through a hearably smiling voice.

Words unclear and so **untranscribable** are indicated by hyphens in parentheses. A best guess at an **unclear** word is indicated by enclosing the word in parentheses. Nonlinguistic 'stage directions' are in italics, enclosed in parentheses. Creaky voice is indicated by enclosing the word in **asterisks**.

- 20A = don't- they don't- but [I mean my AUNtie's got one cos (I mean) =  
 21M [I ↑could perhaps-  
 22A = she's got M E: : and she can't walk very far, she- she's variable,  
 23 very variable (.) [and she's had one and of course it's a ↑boon =  
 24M [Well I'm very variable.  
 25A = for her and she's =  
 26M→ = Actually maybe I could, exCEpt that my doctor's- Doctor Baker's  
 27 off with a ba: :d back. =  
 28V = Ehheh [heh.  
 29A [°Heh°  
 30M He's been off for two weeks and doesn't know when he's coming  
 31 back.  
 32 (0.4)  
 33V °Go:sh°  
 34M I mean imagine being a doctor with a bad back.  
 35 (.)  
 36V Hm.  
 37M You know [(---of all things)  
 38V [(Can I have that please)  
 39 (.)  
 40A [Can I put those in the:re, will that be alright?  
 41M [U:hm,  
 42 (.)  
 43M Yes, fine, [thanks, yes, (plea:se).  
 44A [(You say you did save potato peelings).  
 45 (1)  
 46M→ So ↑actually it ↑is an idea you know, =  
 47A = Well if it just saves you [walk- when YOU're (.) NOT well.  
 48M [Yes.  
 49 (0.8)  
 50A And [YOU could [ALways not use it when you're WE: :LL, =  
 51M [Yes. [Exactly.  
 52M = And also the other [problem is,  
 53A [°if you didn't want to°.  
 54 (.)  
 55M If I've got to pa:rk, (.) in a tricky position [and I look fit =  
 56A [Yep.  
 57M = enough and I think (0.3) .h I drive out and I think no way am I  
 58 going to be able to reverse there, I'm not- can't get my ↑head  
 59 round there now, I can't [↑turn very well for a sta:rt.  
 60A [(No.)  
 61 (1)  
 62V No: :.  
 63 (0.7)  
 64M Uh: : and sometimes I really (0.3) if I have to walk for a hundred  
 65 yards I think oh °go:d° (0.2) you know (.) [I can't do this, I've =  
 66A [(That's sad)  
 67M = just won't bother, I'll go ho:me.

- 68A Hm.  
 69 (.)  
 70A Well that's- that's- (.) hm.  
 71M→ That's an idea [actually,  
 72A [I think- I THink people walk =  
 73M = O:hh =  
 74M→ = [Doctor Baker probably would (.) actually give me one cos he =  
 75A = [ (if they don't) need it.  
 76M = does: (.) know that I (.) .h you know had a .h (0.4) a pretty  
 77 rough go: :.  
 78 (6.7)

I shall return to this sequence later, but glossed broadly, it shows Mary addressing Vanessa's initial query in l. 9, 'would you qualify for a disabled sticker on your car?' and changing her position from the baldly direct 'no' in l. 11 to a concession that, in l. 74, her doctor probably would give her a sticker. In the course of the sequence there are four occurrences of *actually* subsequent to her initial 'no': at lines 26, 46, 71 and 74. These instantiations also conform, in varying degrees, to the existing literature on *actually*. That in l. 26, for example, may mark 'an objection (or self-correction)' (Lenk 1998:167); that in l. 71 is in some sense 'an opinion marker' (160) and all are variously implicated in 'negotiating implicit claims' between speakers (Smith & Jucker 2000: 232). However, in remaining analytically within the boundaries of either the sentence under consideration or the *actually*-marked utterance and its predecessor, existing studies cannot show what this fragment reveals: not only that there ARE four instantiations of the same lexical item in the sequence but also the relationship of their turns to each other as the sequence develops; characterizing that relationship is itself crucially dependent on seeing each instantiation as distinct with regard to its interactional implementation and as positioned according to the activity in progress. Without having some basis for distinguishing between instantiations, there is no means of distinguishing what *actually* might be doing in each case.

It is in considering the interactional contexts of *actually* that the turn-at-talk, and the position of that turn within a sequence, becomes the salient object of investigation. The lack of 'escape or time out' (Heritage & Atkinson 1984:6) from the interactional exigencies presented to a speaker by 'prior turn' renders particularly salient those places in a speaker's turn where transition to a next speaker may occur. In this regard, the four instantiations of *actually* are distinct with respect to their placement in the turn: in l. 26 it is turn initial, when Mary first explicitly concedes that maybe she could get a sticker; it is after a turn-initial conjunction at l. 46, when, after intervening business concerning her doctor's own bad back and the meal they are preparing, she returns to the topic in her allowance that getting the sticker 'is an idea' (by implication, of course, a good one); it is turn-final at l. 71, when she again concedes that it is 'an idea', and at l. 74, when she judges that her doctor would allow her to have one, it is turn-internal. Each of these different positions in the conversational turn is made possible, as we have seen, by the syntactic flexibility of the language; each, also, has a distinct implication for both turntaking and the activity being undertaken in each case. For instance, l. 26, 'actually maybe I could', interrupts the previous turn, with *actually* in turn-initial position serving to claim the subsequent turn. Placed thus, it is relatively invulnerable to incipient talk by a next speaker, that is to say, any next turn overlap of *actually* in this position would be hearable as competitive or interruptive. In this position, *actually* thus

allows for the launching of a new turn. The same goes for l. 46, where the turn, after a lapse, is claimed by Mary with a turn-initial *so* + *actually*. Turn-internal *actually* as shown in l. 74 is similarly relatively invulnerable to overlap, in not being placed at a point at which speaker transition becomes relevant. In turn-final position, though, *actually* is highly vulnerable to overlap; indeed, in l. 71, 'that's an idea actually', *actually* is overlapped in its entirety, and not subsequently challenged by the overlapped speaker, suggesting at least in this case that the next speaker deems the preceding turn in some sense sufficient prior to the production of *actually*. Placed thus, then, it appears that *actually* has less criterial part to play in whatever sense may ultimately be made of the turn as a whole than in its turn-initial instantiation. If *actually* is, turn-initially, potentially interruptive and turn-finally, potentially interruptible, then its vulnerability to overlap may be seen as potentially consequential for the uses to which it is put.

When we return to a more detailed consideration of this sequence it should be with some understanding of how the placement of *actually* in each turn, exploiting a flexibility of placement made possible by the grammar, is differentiated from other possible placements of the particle within the turn. That is, despite there being a range of syntactic positions *actually* could occupy, it is not that *actually* in each case is not in a different position within the turn, but that, given the position of the turn within its wider sequence, and the activities implemented by that sequence, *actually* CANNOT be placed anywhere else within its turn.

In focusing on the conversational turn, the analysis will thus be concerned with two of the possible placements of *actually*: the two most interactionally salient placements, at the crucial points of possible speaker transition. These points are at the possible beginnings and ends of TCUs. These units 'can constitute possibly complete turns; on their possible completion, transition to a next speaker becomes RELEVANT (although not necessarily accomplished)' (Schegloff 1996:55, emphasis in original; see Schegloff 1996 for a discussion of how speakers recognize possible TCU beginnings and ends). Thus in 2, Mary's l. 26 is heard as a violative interruption in not coming at a recognizable point of speaker transition; in contrast, her previous turn at l. 24, 'Well I'm very variable' does come at such a recognizable point, Adam's '... she's variable, very variable' to which it responds constituting AT THAT POINT the possible end of the turn. It of course follows that the beginnings and ends of turns are simultaneously the beginnings and ends of the TCUs that constitute those turns. It is not, of course, correspondingly the case that the beginnings and ends of TCUs are necessarily the beginnings and ends of the turns of which they are components, unless the turn under consideration constitutes a single TCU. It is for this reason that in the analysis that follows I refer not to turn-initial and -final but TCU-initial and -final uses of *actually*. I examine *actually* in three major types of sequential environment: informings, self-repair and topic movement.

With the TCU as the domain of inquiry it is necessary in the first place to stake out its scope. For this reason I start at its furthest boundary by examining TCU-final uses. We will then be in a position to compare such uses with TCU-initial uses in similar sequential environments.

**3. INFORMINGS.** A major sequential environment in which *actually* occurs is that which, following Heritage 1984, I generically term INFORMINGS. In what follows, information is marked as new in a variety of ways: for example, by virtue of being elicited by a question, or by virtue of its use to repair prior information. I examine the consequences for placement within the TCU in these contexts.



**3.1. INFORMINGS: TCU-FINAL USES.** To establish the sorts of contexts in and on which *actually* is deployed I first examine those cases in which the prior sequential context clearly makes an informing conditionally relevant by means of a question. Next are cases where informings are not specifically elicited by the preceding turn but still tightly constrained by it, since that predecessor contains an informational error that the *actually*-marked turn corrects by means of a counterinforming. Finally, I examine UNELICITED INFORMINGS whose occurrence is not constrained as in the previous two cases by interactional or informational exigencies.

QUESTION-ELICITED INFORMINGS.

Whether a question (for instance) prefers a 'yes' or 'no' response is a matter of its speaker's construction of it . . . the preference is built into the sequence.

(Schegloff 1988:453)

Schegloff's observation, following Sacks 1987, that first pair parts of adjacency pairs such as questions are constructed to prefer (for which may one loosely read 'project') either yes or no responses is central to the consideration of *actually* in informings that are elicited by questions. Such cases reveal a striking pattern of *actually*-marked TCUs as part of a negative answer to a question that is built to prefer yes. The instances in 3 and 4 are typical.<sup>10</sup>

(3) Third grandchild

(H:7&86-1-4:2. L = Lesley; G = Gwen)

1L An' the's just had a fortnigh with his mothe:r,

2G Ye:s?

3 (0.5)

4L An' he's going off to have a- a week with his siste:r

5 an' you know there's a third grandchi:ld do you?

6 (.)

7G Ah:::m (.) n:no I think I wz only aware of two

8→ actua [lly.

9L [Mm:: There's a third one,

10 (.)

11G Well with Hele:ne.

12 (0.7)

13L °I s'poze so:,°

(4) Blobs

(C:28:1:180. M = Mary; J = Julia; M and J are talking about their hair)

1J I just feel o::ld and do::w [dy,

2M [Oh I do know [the feeling, (thinking)

3J [Huh heh heh!

4M Well I had supposedly had highlights and lowlights: (0.9) a

5 fortnigh ago, (1) and I daren't look at the back, cos I know she

6 just got it with a thick brush and it's- (.) I'm sure it's blobs.

<sup>10</sup> Conversational fragments—some of which are quite extensive—are used here to show how the force and understanding of *actually* is situated within a stretch of talk. It has become standard in conversation analytic work to display several fragments of talk to convey the sense that the findings being illustrated are not idiosyncratic to particular episodes of interaction, but this of course is not easily reconciled with the constraints of space. Data fragments have therefore been limited where possible to one or two in illustration of major points; Clift 1999 offers an extended treatment of many of these.

- 7 (0.8)  
 8M Can you see some lighter blobs?  
 9 (1.2)  
 10J→ °No, it's alright actually. (0.2) Mm::, yeah, 'tis alri[ght].  
 11M [BUT (.) I  
 12 [have mi-  
 13J [I know what you mea:n, (.) so- sort of like- (>incredibly ch-<)  
 14 like a ch(h)ee:ta(h)h or-  
 15 (0.3)  
 16J [(something)]

In each case the question to which the *actually*-marked turn is a response is constructed to prefer a yes answer. Thus in 3 Lesley's query as to whether Gwen knows about 'a third grandchild' is built initially as an assertion, 'you know . . . ' (compare the more tentative 'do you know . . . ', built initially as a question) and so designed to elicit agreement. Similarly, in 4 Mary's complaint about the highlights and lowlights in her hair, 'I'm sure it's blobs' (l. 6) before her question projects a positive answer. Indeed, this is a fine instance of the distinction to be made between 'a personal desire or disposition to choose a particular course of action and the institutionalized preferences bearing on that choice' (Atkinson & Heritage 1984:53–54), for, although the construction of the question prefers a positive answer, as part of a more general self-deprecation, the question is more likely to receive a negative one (see Pomerantz 1984 on disagreements with prior self-deprecations as a major exception to the preference for agreement generally observed to be operating in talk).<sup>11</sup> Julia's (in the event somewhat evasive) negative answer, like the instance cited previously, takes the form 'no + alternative to projected answer + *actually*'.

A common feature of contexts in which a question strongly prefers one answer over others, perhaps by supplying a candidate answer, is a no response that avoids explicit contradiction. In this respect, SECOND pair parts can display an orientation to the dispreferred status of the action they are doing.<sup>12</sup> In fragments 5 and 6, 'no' is avoided in a response to a question that is heavily weighted in favor of another answer.

<sup>11</sup> Self-deprecations may be seen as potentially 'fishing' (Pomerantz 1980) for compliments. It may be the case that such self-deprecatory 'fishes' are generally built to prefer agreements, or, if questions, yes answers, with the result that the disagreements or no answers that respond to them are heard as all the more vehement. This remains to be empirically determined, but Pomerantz (1984:84) gives the following examples:

- (i) R: Did she get my card.  
 C: Yeah she gotcher card.  
 R: Did she t'ink it was terrible  
 C: No she thought it was very adohrable.  
 (ii) L: You're not bored (huh)?  
 S: Bored?=  
 S: =No. We're fascinated.

<sup>12</sup> The notion of 'preference' has been used in two differing ways in conversation analytic literature, as Schegloff (1988) points out: the first, which emphasizes the speaker's construction of a first action to prefer a particular second, is the one I refer to at the beginning of the section on question-elicited informings in 3.1; the second, emphasizing the manner in which second parts can be constructed to display 'the response they do "as a preferred" or "as a dispreferred"', rather than doing "the preferred or dispreferred response"' (Schegloff 1988:453, following Pomerantz 1984) is the one referred to here. The two are treated here as complementary, not contradictory. See the discussion of structure-based vs. practice-based uses of 'preference' in Schegloff 1988.

- (5) Help in the house  
 (C:7:1. M = Mary; G = Gus. M and G are talking about the possibility of G having picked up German as a child living in Germany)  
 1M but I don't- (d'you see-) did you have help in the hou:se? You  
 2 probably di:d.  
 3 (0.2)  
 4G→ ptk. uh:m (.) †not [very much actually, uhm::  
 5M [Germans probably-  
 6M Mm.  
 7G not- not around constantly anyway.=  
 8M =No.
- (6) Wizard of Oz  
 (H:10&88-1-09:3. L = Lesley; E = Ed)  
 1E (-----) an' I also started rehearsals today for the  
 2 Yeovil youth theater thing which is uh Wizard of O:z.  
 3 w[hich is (-----)] [(-----)-  
 4L [What- Oh is it,] Whe[n- when you doing that.  
 5 (0.5)  
 6E At-  
 7 (0.4)  
 8L Chr[istmas time  
 9E→ [It's the end a' the month actually,  
 10L .tch †Oh [:. [Great.  
 11E [(n[yeh-  
 12E Before the end of: uh November.  
 13L .pl †Oh:.  
 14E S[o well we've got to uh hha ha get along.  
 15L [Goo:d.

In 5, Mary proposes a candidate answer to her own question—'you probably did'—which is rejected, but only weakly, by the response, which displays characteristic signs of its dispreferred status, with delay, hesitation and mitigation. The TCU-final *actually* here marks the orientation to the projected alternative in the first pair part. Similarly in 6, Lesley, having asked when the production of the 'Wizard of Oz' is taking place, attempts a collaborative completion of Ed's turn initiated at l. 6 with a candidate guess, 'Christmas time'. While this is completed in overlap with Ed's response and it is therefore too late for Ed to respond with an explicit no, the guess, on completion, becomes available as a possibility to which Ed may orient. Ed's response as it is implicitly contradicts Lesley's proposal, and this is duly marked TCU-finally and turn-finally by *actually*.

In these cases, then, the eventual response comes in contrast to the questioner-nominated responses. Each response is tagged with a TCU-final *actually*, plus a subsequent account which either mitigates the dispreferred response (as in 5) or explains or elaborates on it (as in 6).

The fragments cited so far thus suggest that TCU-final *actually* marks a no answer that runs counter to the response projected in the prior turn. However, in the rarer cases in which a no answer is projected (in for example, a question of the form 'don't you . . .') and a positive answer given, *actually* similarly marks the response. In 7, the response to the question goes against that projected, a projection exhibited in the design of the questioning turn.

- (7) Bodwin's number  
 (H:C85-5-2:2. C = Carrie; L = Lesley)  
 1L Okay um .p.h ngYou †don't off hand know Bodwin's  
 2 number.  
 3 (0.6)  
 4C→ Yeah I've got it down here actually I've got (-----)  
 5 this morning I wz lucky.  
 6 (.)  
 7L Oh-:.  
 8C Ahh †hah So I didn' haf to ring her. (.) It's uhm (0.3)  
 9 fīve oh six one three.  
 10 (.)  
 11L Lovely thank you very much. = †S[ee you la:]ter. =

In 7, the *actually*-marked response displays a characteristic feature of dispreferred turns, a prefacing pause. However, in addition, this pattern of projected no response followed by *actually*-tagged yes response shows a striking feature lacking from the examples hitherto. Given what might be termed expressed pessimism in a first pair part, a TCU-final *actually* in a second pair part may as above serve to ground the relation between the parts in coincidence. Indeed, in a passing observation, Schegloff claims that this may be the case; in the course of commenting on a construction involving *in fact*,<sup>13</sup> he notes that the *in fact* construction with which he is concerned

(in common with many 'actually' and 'as a matter of fact' constructions) serves to relate the TCU which it initiates to its predecessor; this practice can be used to indicate that what follows has a contemporary relevance to the speaker other than that created by the question just asked, and that what it is about has a reality and 'facticity' independent of the circumstance prompting the talk which it introduces. Its effect is often to register a so-called 'coincidence'.

(Schegloff 1996:63)

What Schegloff claims for many *actually* constructions in the way of their 'contemporary relevance' and 'facticity' is of undeniable general pertinence to the cases discussed here. Thus, in the responses to the markedly pessimistic question in the fragment above, *actually* does relate its TCU to the one before, while, pivotlike, providing for a subsequent account that is elaborative of that relation. But the 'coincidental' nature of *actually* seems salient only in cases such as 7, where what one might call the negative polarity of a first pair part is subverted by the positive polarity of its second.

Thus far we have seen positive evidence from adjacency pair contexts to support a claim that *actually* in TCU-final position registers that its TCU is performing an action running counter to that projected by the first pair part. To substantiate such a claim it is necessary to provide negative evidence, from nonoccurrence in parallel contexts. An extended fragment (in 8) provides just such evidence. It is taken from an interview between a journalist and an ex-Ulster Freedom Fighter (UFF) volunteer during a television program on the Loyalist paramilitaries in Northern Ireland.

<sup>13</sup> My concern here being *actually*, I will not dwell on the possible distinctions between *actually* and *in fact*. It should become evident that apparent synonyms of *actually* are not ultimately implemented in the same range of activities; in topic movement, for example, it is conspicuously absent. Rather, *in fact* appears to be used for the purposes of upgrade, whereby a first element is followed by *in fact* which is itself followed by an upgrade of the first element. *In fact* is thus used more as a form of stepping stone from the first element to the upgrade (see Clift 1999:49–50). For a historical account of the development of *in fact*, see Schwenter & Traugott 2000.

- (8) A Catholic  
 (C40:1. The Loyalists, BBC2, 21.2.99. P = Peter Taylor, BBC journalist;  
 J = Jim Light, ex-UFF volunteer)
- 1P W:hat did you do.  
 2 (1.2)  
 [(0.8)]
- 3J Pk.: [ .hhh ] I went out: (1) with a group of other (0.5)  
 4 volunteers from the U F F, (1) Pk. (0.4) and (1.2) we picked  
 5 up a Catholic (2) and we took him away and: (0.4) we:: (0.8)  
 6 executed him.  
 7 (1.2)
- 8P Murdered him.  
 9J Yeah.  
 10P Shot him dead.  
 11J Yeas:  
 12 (0.4)
- 13P A Catholic?  
 14J Yes:: =  
 15P = Any Catholic?  
 16 (1.2)
- 17J Yes::.  
 18P Why was he:: (1) selected.  
 19 (0.6)
- 20J Pk. (0.2) He was selected (0.9) for no other reason (0.2) than  
 21 he was a Catholic.  
 22 (2.8)
- 23P No reason to believe he was involved in: (0.2)  
 24J No.  
 25 (.)
- 26P the republican movement?  
 27J °No°.
- 28P Just an- (.) innocent [ (1) ] seventeen year o:ld (0.4)  
 29 student.  
 30 (0.2)
- 31J Yeah.  
 32 (4.2)
- 33P Who pulled the trigger.  
 34 (1.2)
- 35J I: pulled the trigger.  
 36 (1)
- 37P You pulled the trigger. =  
 38J = I did, yes.  
 39 (2.2)
- 40P W:ith any hesitation?  
 41 (1.2)
- 42J Pk .hh  
 43 (2.2)
- 44J→ No: actually, no. I wouldn't say I w- I had any te- hesitation  
 45 at that time.

While this fragment deserves far closer analytical attention than the current study allows, for my purposes the following observations will have to suffice. As an interview, the sequence is constructed as a series of adjacency pairs hearable as question-answer pairs. While the interviewer's questions at lines 1, 18 and 33 are open ones, his other turns—also treated as questions by the interviewee<sup>14</sup>—are of the yes-no variety. These turns—at lines 8, 10, 13, 15, 28–29 and 37—project, and duly receive, yes answers, with only some hesitation at l. 16 and (minimally) at l. 30 to indicate the delicacy of the activity. Indeed, the last of these, 'you pulled the trigger', elicits the immediate and more committed and emphatic, quasi-judicial, 'I did, yes'.<sup>15</sup> Equally, the one question built to prefer a negative answer in l. 23 and l. 26 gets an early—indeed, interruptive—response at l. 24 reiterated in l. 27 upon the completion of the question. In contrast to these the interviewer's question at l. 40, 'with any hesitation?' elicits, in a savagely ironic inversion of what is reported, a hearable delay in lines 41–43 before the response. Given that the construction of the question 'with any hesitation?' projects a yes response<sup>16</sup> (compare 'any Catholic?—Yes' at ll. 15–17), the no response which is in fact delivered is—and is emphatically marked as—dispreferred. The *actually* that follows it marks the response, unlike those preceding it in the sequence—where of course it is absent—as going against the response projected by the preceding turn. But as a marker of dispreference, *actually* also has potential as a mitigator in such a position; the second no thus provides a buttress to the first, which has necessarily been undermined by virtue of its position. The subsequent elaboration in the same turn constitutes an account for the unequivocal nature of the response.

COUNTERINFORMINGS. Just as TCU-final *actually* is used to mark a second pair part that is counterpositional to that projected by the first pair part, so is it also regularly used to mark turns produced in response to, and in contrast with, a prior assertion. Again, the use of *actually* to propose a responsiveness to the oppositional character of its turn with regard to a prior is strongly implicated. Two simple cases—in which a fact asserted in the prior turn is corrected (in these cases, interruptively)—are shown in 9 and 10. The responses to the *actually*-marked turns again indicate the informing character of the prior turn, in these cases with a standard response to an informing, 'oh' (Heritage 1998), and repetition of a component of that prior turn but without its informing *actually*.

(9) Hong Kong

(C: 7:1:19. G = Gill, A = Alice)

1G Lee is a- a- um: (0.4) a Chīnese frie:nd, (0.9) um who was born

2 here (in Engla[nd] I believe an-

3A→ [No she was born in Hong Kōng actual[y

4G [Oh she was

5 born in Hong Kong, .hh †when did they come here,

6 (3)

<sup>14</sup> Of course, the turns at lines 8, 10, 28–29 and 37 do not have the syntactic form of questions, but that is another matter (see Schegloff 1984).

<sup>15</sup> Such structures present the speaker as accountable in institutional talk (e.g. courtrooms/wedding ceremonies), of which 8 of course is one, albeit somewhat less formal, instance. Their presence in so-called mundane conversation conveys some of this sense that the prior turn has demanded a forthright accountability.

<sup>16</sup> Even though, of course, the rhetorical thrust of the sequence up to that point (rather than that of the turn itself) prefers a 'no' response. The distinction between the response projected by a turn as opposed to that projected by a sequence here does much to account for the rhetorical power of the final turn in this fragment.

## (10) Vanessa

(C:33:1:7. DJ = Radio phone-in program host, V = caller)

1DJ yes okay Veronica, point taken. (.) I'm quite sure that u:hm

2 London [T-

3V→ [I'm £Vanessa actually£,

4DJ Oh Vanessa, £Van(h)essa sorry l(h)ove, £ u::hm .hh (.) no, I was just saying . . .

Equally, an *actually*-appended TCU may serve to rebut a claim that is not explicitly stated but exists at the level of presupposition.<sup>17</sup> Thus, in 11, Lesley's 'well eez always been called Skip actually' serves to counter Deena's implication, in 'eez called Skip now', that he might not have been at some time in the past; and in 12, Alice's claim that her and her sister's watches are 'not cheap' rebuts, in a classic 'po-faced' tease receipt (Drew 1987), the first part of Harriet's (heavily exaggerated) assertion.

## (11) Skip

(H:5&amp;88:2-4:1. L = Lesley, D = Deena)

1L [.t [.hhhh] And you ↑here's uh:: (.) Skip.

2D Oh:.

3L U[h Mark.

4D [(Is 'ee)

5D Oh eez called [Skip n[ow. (O:kay)

6L [.hhhh [Yeh- uWell eez always been called

7→ Skip actual[y

8D [Yeh but do [you call im Skip?

9L [.hhhhh

10 (.)

11L I try to. hheh [ha ha ha .h h h[If I c'n r]emembe[r

<sup>17</sup> Moreover, in the following fragment, *actually* serves to undercut the presupposition in a question. Gill's response implies that since the man to whom she had offered her sandwiches 'was a bit dazed', it is not possible to answer Mike's question as to whether he seemed to like them:

- (i) (C:8:1. G = Gill; M = Mike; A = Alice; H = Harriet. G has thanked M for making her some sandwiches for a trip with A)

1G £Alice's laughing cos I gave two of m(heh)ine to an old

2 b(h)o:y.£

3 (1.2)

4M Mhm? (.) [Mm,

5A [To a tramp.

6 (0.8)

7M Mhm,

8 (.)

9G I ate them and they were delicious and I had uhm:: (1.2) I

10 had two left I think, more left.

. . . (7 lines omitted concerning where this took place)

18 (1.2)

19M (Did) he seem to like it?

20 (0.8)

21G→ (h)We:ll I (thought) he was a bit dā:zed actually Mike. (0.4)

22 He was (really) weaving, (1) sort of- (0.4) (---) poor man, I

23 mean sort of wea:ving his way up to a tea place (1.2) and

24 trying to count his- literally twos and one pees,

25 (0.2)

26H °Oh god°.

27G looking as if he didn't know whether he was here or the:re.

## (12) Watches

(C:1:1. A = Alice, H = Harriet, G = Gill. A remarks on the coincidence of her and her sister, H, having bought the same type of watch)

- 1A I couldn't believe it about those watches.  
 2 (1)  
 3H What watches.  
 4 (0.4)  
 5A Our watches. I couldn't bel[ieve that.  
 6H [Yea::h.  
 7 (1.2)  
 8G Well, [they're cheap.  
 9A [We::ll,  
 10H [HHEHEHEHHEH  
 11A [HEHEHE (↑NO::!! ↑Don't [say they're cheap)  
 12H [He he he he, they're cheap,  
 13 they're n(haha)asty, [we've got- we've =  
 13G [Hehehheh  
 14H = both got appa[::lling ta:ste, what's s[o-  
 15G [Heh heh heh  
 16A [hh UH HU(N)H .hh NO  
 17→ they're [NOT ch:eap actually, ↑how much was you:rs:.  
 18G [Hyok hyok hyok hyok  
 19 (0.6)  
 20H Bout twenty pounds:?  
 21 (0.6)  
 22A O::h.

Thus TCU-final *actually* in these contexts may be said to be doing informational correction work addressed to a fact either stated or presupposed in a prior turn.

UNELICITED INFORMINGS. Consider now informings in general, which, at least at first glance, are not explicitly elicited like responses to questions, or grounded in counterinformings. But as fragments 13 and 14 show, *actually* still marks turns that serve to counter assertions made or positions taken, or indeed implied.

## (13) Raspberries

(C:11:1. H = Harriet, G = Gill, M = Mike, A = Alice, J = Jim)

- 1H Right, ↑what are we going to do with (.) raspberries, d'you  
 2 want them washed,  
 3 (0.9)  
 4G N(h)o::.  
 5 (0.3)  
 6M ↑Oh no::, [no.  
 7G [They don't need washing.  
 8H [(A mixture of-)  
 9M [Blow off any old (.) insects and things,  
 ...  
 ... (22 lines omitted concerning the delicacy of raspberries  
 and the fact that they go moldy quickly if washed)  
 ...  
 33J [Let's- Harriet- I- we'll take them out into  
 34 the back



- 35 (0.2)  
 36G Heh,  
 37J and run them under the garden hose.  
 38G Heh [heh heh.  
 39H [Heh hehheh  
 40G→ ↑We:’ve not bo[thered actually,  
 41J [At high pressure.  
 42G We’ve been eating them n[ow for about a month, and we haven’t =  
 43M [(Very easy to freeze them)  
 44G =been washing them.
- (14) Clock  
 (C:7:1. A = Alice, G = Gus, H = Harriet. A tells of a dentist who has made a clock out of wisdom teeth)  
 1A A dentist I know that’s got a clock in his house and (0.3) and  
 2 he’s got wisdom t(he)eeth by all the- (0.4) ↑th(hehe)ey’re  
 3 a (hehe)ll- .hh th(hehe)ey’re all the- (.) en I j[(heheh)ust =  
 4G [Cha:rming,  
 5A = think it’s [very-  
 6H [£fy(he)es::, ch[a:rming.  
 7G [Love[ly].  
 8A→ [It LOOKS good actually, cos  
 9 they’re all very clean obviously and it looks: (0.4) good.

In 13 Jim’s lighthearted proposal that they ‘run them (the raspberries) under the garden hose’ is countered by Gill’s observation that they have not bothered, tagged turn-finally by *actually*. As 14 also reveals, in this position *actually* serves to render its turn explicitly counterpositional with respect to its prior. These fragments also suggest that when *actually* marks a proposal or claim in strong opposition to that suggested by a prior or prior turns, a further elaborative account may be in order.<sup>18</sup> Thus in 13

<sup>18</sup> There are also cases where the newsworthiness of the *actually*-marked turn is alone sufficient to secure uptake; in the following case the TCU to which *actually* is appended occupies the entire turn, and, bearing as it does counterinformation, has the potential to be a topic in itself:

- (i) (C:15:1. Publishers’ meeting: J = Julian, P = Phil, C = Cath)  
 1J ptk. And (.) one of your con-versations too: was with  
 2 the:: (0.5) uhm the online databas:e (.) in Glasgow which you-  
 3 (you were) going to plug into.  
 4 (1)  
 5P ptk .hhh  
 6J [(°weren’t you°.)  
 7P ↑THAT- (1) I think them: (.) that’s not gonna come off.  
 8J Mhm, =  
 9P =I- I think that (0.8) that Saunders have stymied that  
 10→ actually.  
 11J Really?  
 12C Why:,  
 13 (1)  
 14P Well because (2) S P Headline is part of the Mansion gr[oup,  
 15J [Yes,  
 16 [right.  
 17C [Mhm.  
 18P and- Saunders have got to hear  
 19 (0.8)  
 20J Mm.  
 21P that we’re interested in the data.



## (16) Scottish

(H:U&88-1-9:6. G = Gordon, D = Dana. G and D are talking about their mutual friend Scott)

- 1G I think- (0.2) I may have met his dad (.) whe:n he came to pick  
 2 him up. after skiing. .hhh I may've jus' caught a gl:impse'v im  
 3 then.  
 4 (0.5)  
 5D [Yeah.  
 6G [.h h h h [In the Range Rover. =  
 7D [That's (possible).  
 8D =I've see:n (.) photographs of them,  
 9 (0.3)  
 10D→ .hhh A:nd his dad looks very Scottish actually,  
 11 (0.2)  
 12G Hu:h? Is he Scottish?  
 13 (0.5)  
 14D No: Scottish as i:n .hhh li[ke Sc[ott I mean]  
 15G [.hahh[I s e e :.]  
 16G Like Sco[tt.

In these two informings, the *actually*-marked TCU is the last or only TCU in its turn, rendering *actually* turn-final as well as TCU-final. In this position it is built potentially to elicit uptake, and in so doing realize its potential newsworthiness. This is, by means of repair, duly forthcoming in 16, but absent in 15, in which uptake is only secured after an elaborative account.

In some cases where the *actually*-marked TCU is the second TCU in a turn, that TCU is built to be hearably parenthetical. In such cases, *actually* may act as a kind of right-hand bracket, with its TCU projecting backwards to develop a topic already established in the first TCU rather than, as shown in previous cases, introducing one. The parenthetical sense with which *actually* invests its TCU in this position derives from the way the second TCU is built as an elaborative increment to the first.<sup>19</sup> Thus in the following three cases (17–19) an *actually*-marked turn consists of two or more TCUs. The first of these is a statement subsequently elaborated in the second, *actually*-marked TCU. The sense that this second is hearable as an increment to the first emerges from both coreferential features and intonation. So in 17, 'Father took off, 'ts a very sad story actually', in 18 'And Adam too, Adam's good actually' and in 19, 'I know, I've never forgotten it actually', the second TCU both contains a reference to something or someone to which the first refers and the intonation at the end of the first is such that the second is hearable as a continuation of it.

## (17) Sad story

(C:22:1. F = Flo, D = Doug. F has been telling D about a friend whose grown son lives with her)

- 1F I mean she i:rons his SH:i:rts every DA::y,

<sup>19</sup> In other cases where an *actually*-marked TCU is placed second in a turn, this parenthetical quality is absent because the second TCU is not hearably built to be an increment of the first. A case in point is the fragment presented in note 18; here, the form of the second TCU which begins 'I- I think that . . . '—a partial echo of the first—proposes it not as a continuation, but as a new start, with the intonation falling at the end of the first TCU as opposed to sounding 'continuing' as in the corresponding TCUs in fragments 17, 18 and 19.

2 (1)  
 3F Takes his clothes to the dry clea:ners, lets out the trou:sers,  
 4 (1.4)  
 5F But- um:  
 6 (0.4)  
 7D I- I- I reckon (0.4) not that I would ever wanted to but I can  
 8 understand how people get like that = IF you don't go away to  
 9 college for example if you ↑stay at ho:me, and [stay on:  
 10F (↑(If-)  
 11D (.) they just won't (fly off) I mean what- (.) unless you want  
 12 your independence or cherish it that much, you have to [cost=  
 13F [He =  
 14D = [everything ou::t, =  
 15F = [left boarding school,  
 16D = you have- (.) all the hassle [of cooking for yourself,  
 17F→ [Father took off, ('ts) a very  
 18 sad story actually.  
 19 (1)  
 20F A:nd Susan my friend moved up he:re,  
 21 (1)  
 (*Continues story*)

## (18) Tiramisu

(C:28:1:014. M = Mary, J = Julia. M has told J that her daughter had intended to cook lunch, but has been ill and M has refused her offer to cook)

1M And this was- couple of days ago, she was going to be (doing  
 2 [that).  
 3J [(Huh).  
 4M→ ↑And Adam too:, Adam's good actually, he's been working this  
 5 morning, .h he was going to do the- a tiramisu:.,  
 6 (0.1)  
 7J Yea[:s,  
 8M [Apparently which he does (fine) and she was going to do the  
 9 main course . . .

## (19) An insect

(C:1:1. G = Gill, A = Alice, H = Harriet, M = Mike)

1G Excuse me there's an a:nt. (.) ↑↑AAAA:::! (0.8) There's an  
 2 A:NT!  
 3 (0.4)  
 4A So:: what.  
 5 (0.4)  
 6G Well, catch it. =  
 7H = H::A HA HA! =  
 8M = I'll put him outside and let him run onto my- look he's on the  
 9 toaster and I'll put him outside nicely.  
 10 (1.4)  
 11M I'll brush him out. He may be somebody else's ant, you never  
 12 know.  
 13 (0.6)  
 14H Hehehe he.

- 15 (0.8)  
 16G Heh heh.  
 17 (0.2)  
 18M WELL I remember killing an insect in that- (.) train (.) [in =  
 19G [I =  
 20M = [India.  
 21G→ = [know, I:'ve never forgotten it ac[tually].  
 22A [In a what?  
 23 (0.6)  
 24H Killing an insect in a train in Indi [a,  
 25G [MmMMM.

The hearably parenthetical quality of the *actually*-marked TCU in these cases may be reinforced by the speaker's reversion, in the subsequent TCU(s), to the topical line of the first; the content of the *actually*-marked TCU is not topicalized. In 17, this is highlighted by the 'and' that starts that subsequent TCU, which continues the story started by 'Father took off' at l. 17, even after the second's pause which has given the addressee the opportunity—here passed up, possibly because it is heard as parenthetical—to respond to the informing. Thus the evaluative 'ts a very sad story *actually*' sounds somewhat displaced. In 18, Mary's 'Adam's good *actually*' is a parenthetical assessment of Adam's cooking, placed after her noting that Adam was also planning to do part of the meal. In this case, the following TCU, 'he's been working this morning', is itself parenthetically positioned as a possible account for why Adam did not in fact cook, and constitutes a disjunctive reversion to the general, nonevaluative statement. The subsequent TCU, providing the explanation of what he was going to do, continues what was initiated in the first TCU of the turn. A similar case is apparent in 19, where, given the clear potential for topicalization inherent in the preceding turn (with which the *actually*-marked TCU is, in the final TCU, spoken in overlap), the *actually*-speaker's entire turn is built to be parenthetical.

Another characteristic of the TCU-final placement of *actually* is evident in 19: the vulnerability of *actually* in this position to incipient talk by a next speaker. As in fragment 2, the *actually* in TCU-final position is overlapped, in this case midway through its production. Other fragments—namely 3, 9 and 11—show the realization of the potential for overlap with *actually* in this position. Such overlaps suggest that one possible role for *actually* in such cases is to create a possible interactional space for transition to a next speaker (for example, in contexts with tag questions and terms of address; see Sacks et al. 1974:717–18).

In sum, then, these TCU-final uses show *actually*-marked turns proposing a contrast between what they claim and a prior claim made, or thereby understood to have been made, by another party. These turns show speakers treating these *actually*-marked claims as potentially informative for that other party. Treating such claims as potentially informative must of course be distinguished from the indeterminable issue of whether they are so in fact. The concern here is the participants' hearable orientations to material AS informative. Of particular pertinence are Edwards's observations on 'how intersubjectivity is managed by specific words, at specific sequential junctures, and how these lexical particulars and junctures are performative' (1999:138). *Actually* placed TCU-finally is just such an example of performed intersubjectivity.

In adjacency pair sequences TCU-final *actually* is seen to register that the TCU to which it is appended is performing an action running counter to the expectations formu-

lated in the prior turn. In the question-elicited informings and counterinformings, a prior turn strongly constrains the *actually*-marked turn, either in informing as a second pair part or as a factual repair. Furthermore, the placement not just of *actually* in the TCU but also of the TCU itself within its turn can be seen to be consequential in the development of topic. In TCU-final position *actually* may also provide for transition to a next speaker, a characteristic revealed by those cases where *actually* is overlapped.

**3.2. INFORMINGS: TCU-INITIAL USES.** It is striking that although TCU-initial *actually* is also implicated in the production of informings, the activities that deploy *actually* in TCU-initial position are so markedly distinct from those in which it is deployed TCU-finally. For reasons that should become apparent, there were no instances of question-elicited TCU-initial *actually* to be found in the data under consideration.<sup>20</sup> Instead, TCU-initial *actually* takes on a markedly different characteristic from its TCU-final instantiation in the production of informings. And while it is also implicated in counterinformings these are, as we shall see, similarly constituted in somewhat different ways when accomplished TCU-initially.

A 'CHANGE OF MIND' TOKEN. In the context of informings, TCU-final *actually* is used to display the speaker's treatment of a TCU as potentially informative for the other party and as contrasting, either explicitly or implicitly, with what preceded it. An examination of TCU-initial uses yields the same basic characterization with two striking differences: (1) all instantiations were TURN-, as well as TCU-initial, and (2) when the *actually*-marked turn contrasts with information that has been explicitly formulated in a prior turn, that turn is the speaker's own. Turn-initially, *actually* seems to propose that what follows constitutes a revision of the speaker's prior turn, and as such is hearable as a 'change of mind'.

(20) I'm not

(H:U&88-1-4:1. G = Gordon, D = Dana)

1G How are you.

2 (0.5)

3D I'm okay

4G [.tplk

5 (.)

6G .pk Good,

7 (0.5)

8D→ Actually I'm no[t but (.) the(h)re we go:, =

9G [.hhh

10G = .hhhh eh[h]e:hh .hh But (.) yih (.) you are but you're

11 not. .hh[h (*sniff*) Hey listen I'm sorry about last =

12D [(Right)

13G = ni:ght, .hmhh

14D [Mm:,

15G [.km.tch I didn't think your mum would go (0.5) .pt.k

over the top, hh

(21) Painful

(H:X(C):1:1:1:1. L = Lesley; M = Mum)

1L My turn to ring I thin[k.

2M [That's ri:ght ye:s

<sup>20</sup> This is not of course to say that they do not or could not occur, but that they are, at best, considerably rarer than TCU-final uses, and that should they occur, they would exhibit strongly marked characteristics along the lines described here.

- 3L .hhh How's your han::d?  
 4 (.)  
 5M Uh:: ↑getting on quite we:ll,  
 6 (0.5)  
 7M→ ↑Actually it wz still so painf'I I went t'see the doctor  
 8 at th'beginning'v this wee:k a[n-  
 9L [Oh  
 10 (.)  
 11M He says it'll take ↑weeks.

The fragments in 20 and 21 are taken from the beginnings of telephone calls. In 20, Gordon's initial 'how are you' elicits a standard response from Dana (Sacks 1975:50), 'I'm okay': a response that itself elicits 'good', a hearable closing down of interactional preliminaries. In her next turn, however, Dana revises, and indeed, completely reverses her initial stance: turn-initial *actually* marks that revision. A parallel case is 21, in which Mum's first response to Lesley's inquiry about her hand ('getting on quite well') is revised in favor of an alternative, contrastive version which similarly is an accountable one, keeping that particular interactional business open (despite in 20, Dana's best efforts in l. 8—and temporary success, judging by lines 10–11—discussion of how she is resumed later on in the conversation). The conversation in 22 shows a similar case, although the revision is of something only inexplicitly formulated. As in 20 and 21, after a collaborative closing-down of some interactional business, the initiator of that closedown reopens the topic.

(22) Garlic tablets

- (H1:1:3. L = Lesley, M = Mum)  
 1L Uh didyuh get yer garlic tablets.  
 2M Yes I've got them,  
 3L Have yuh t- started tak[ing th'm  
 4M [I started taking th'm t'da:y  
 5L Oh well do:n[e  
 . . . (9 lines omitted concerning the type and name of the tablets)  
 15L 's I've got Kahtharine on: th'm tog: now,  
 16M Oh good nh hnh hnh huh .hh Ye:h- I'll let you kno:w.  
 17 h [nh  
 18L [Ye:s. .h [h  
 19M→ [Actually they made me ru:n.h  
 20 (0.3)  
 21L .hh Oh well u-I think you'll get used tuh that,  
 22M Yes.

Mum's 'I'll let you know' in l. 16 may be heard to initiate closing of the topic, proposing as it does that she is not yet in a position to reach a verdict on the garlic tablets (having only 'started taking them today', l. 4). However, after Lesley's closing acceptance 'yes' and in the middle of her audible outbreath—a clear topic-shift juncture (Drew & Holt 1998:510)—Mum reopens the topic with a revised version of her prior 'too early to tell' response, 'Actually they made me run', thus providing for further elaboration of it.

In all these cases, then, a topic is reopened by a speaker with an *actually*-prefaced turn AFTER that same speaker has initiated the closing down of that topic. Placed thus, *actually* is heard as registering a change of mind, undoing the commitment expressed

in the speaker's previous turn; the placement of *actually* turn-initially serves to link the speaker's prior and current turns, projecting back to the prior and offering the alternative version in the current turn. Given that in all these cases *actually* is placed turn-initially and not just TCU-initially, it is in this position hearable as relating to its prior, which in these cases means the whole of the previous turn.

Note, too, that it does not attempt to repair the prior. Repair serves to alter in some way a turn in progress or just delivered; yet such an option (in the form of, say, 'I mean + reformulation') is simply not possible in the environments cited here, because the *actually*-marked turn is in complete contrast to the speaker's previous turn. Nothing of the previous turn can be salvaged or amended; turn-initial *actually* thus serves to mark this reversal. Indeed, turn-initial *actually* can serve to display a revision of a prior stance even when that stance is not explicitly formulated. In such cases, *actually* serves to display that the proposal it prefixes is one that has just occurred to the speaker and constitutes an improvement on the state of affairs it revises.

## (23) Hint

(H1:1:3. L = Lesley, M = Mum. L has been complaining to M about the tee shirts sent to her children by a relative)

1L It's just a waste of money.

2 (1.8)

3L→ .h ACTually IF YOU can drop the hint (.) tell'er not tuh

4 send any more becuz .h (0.2) they don't wear them an'I:

5 can't give'm awa:y.

6 (1.6)

## (24) Bathroom

(C:1:2:42. G = Gill, A = Alice, H = Harriet, B = Bob. Roger is redecorating the bathroom. H and B are visiting G)

1G Can you get out of the †bathroom by nine thirty tomorrow

2 morning,

3 (0.7)

4A Mm,

5 (1.2)

6G so Roger can [get in there?

7H [We've got to decide when we're going to leave.

8 (0.8)

9G [(clears throat)

10B °pardon me?°

11 (1)

12H we've got to decide when we're going to leave [(as well)

13B [Yes.

14 (2.2)

15A→ Actually do you mind if I go and have a bath no::w, [cos um-

16G [No, do::.

17 (.) I haven't had: (.) w:ater on v:ery long,

18 (1.2)

19G I'm sure it's hot.

In 23, Lesley's complaint about the tee shirts Ann sends her children might be heard as terminating that piece of interactional business. 'It's just a waste of money', with its formulaic flavor, has the potential to be topic-terminating (Drew & Holt 1998:499). Her *actually*-prefaced turn in l. 3, however, keeps this particular topic alive by proposing



a remedial course of action. In 24, Alice's 'actually do you mind if I go and have a bath now' reopens the business initiated by Gill in l. 1 that gives rise, in l. 7, to another topic concerning Harriet and Bob. *Actually* links back over a number of turns, reopening the topic while drawing a contrast between what is proposed (having a bath 'now') and what was assumed then ('tomorrow morning').

These instances make a strong claim to a change of state (see Heritage 1984), in claiming that a thought or an idea which has just occurred to the speaker in some sense improves upon an earlier stated or unstated state of affairs. This is nowhere more clearly displayed than in Alice's emphatic 'Actually-actually' at l. 18 in 25, a suggestion which, though interruptive of Harriet's turn, claims strongly that the thought has just occurred to her and that it is a 'better idea' than she has hitherto thought of. In claiming that a thought has just occurred to the speaker, *actually* provides a warrant for the introduction of disjunctive material; in claiming a 'better idea' it serves to claim the turn, in this case interruptively.

## (25) Tulips

(C:28:1:310. A = Alice, G = Gill, J = Julia (G's friend), H = Harriet. A is taking a family photo during her mother, G's, birthday)

- 1A If Mum poses next to the flowers and the others (.) all  
 2 (.) gather rou[nd her?  
 3G [What I (--)-  
 4J [Uh heh heh [heh heh  
 5G [heh heh heh  
 6A (----)  
 7G I'll put the other [(fire) on (actually)  
 8A [(high pitched) †Come on, her  
 9 broo:d can (0.4) gather [round her  
 10G [AO::H,  
 11 (.)  
 12J Heh heh [heh  
 13A [Heh heh  
 14 (.)  
 15G †Come on Julia, (0.3) Uheh.  
 16 (.)  
 17H Well her broo:d's actual[ly eh-  
 18A→ [†Actually:- actually, if we're lucky  
 19 we can get the:: um (.) tulips in as wel[.  
 20H [Uheh heh heh heh  
 21 [heh  
 22J [Ye:s,  
 23H Heh heh .hh (.) [†NOthing artificial about this,  
 24G [Where are we going to sit,  
 25 (0.2)  
 26G H::uh huh huh huh huh

This use of TCU-initial *actually* to index a change of mind may be seen to contrast with those cases where *actually* is not placed precisely turn-initially but just after a TCU-initial conjunction. In such cases, although the *actually*-marked TCU is similarly used to counter a stance taken in a preceding turn, there is no claim made by *actually* that the thought has just occurred to the speaker. To the contrary, the conjunction prefacing *actually* characterizes the assertion being made as a conclusion arrived at some time before.

- (26) Milk  
 (Heritage V:1:8:1:R (from Jefferson 1992; D's dog's puppies have all died)  
 1D And then of course I had to take her over to the vet uh:m .hh  
 2 to have uh:m: e-injection to take the milk awa:[y.  
 3L [Ye:s I suppose  
 4 you ↑do:.  
 5D→ But (.) actually the milk wasn't too bad because of course it  
 6 hadn't been stimula[:ted.  
 7L [No:, No:, .hh
- (27) Go first  
 (H10&88-1-08:2. J = Joyce, L = Lesley. J and L are discussing who will  
 make the first presentation at an upcoming event)  
 1J So you'd like to go ↓fir:s::[t [Well that's] [very] =  
 2L [Oh[↑fir:st or se]co:n[: d ] =  
 3J = [ easily ] (-----)  
 4L = [O::R ↑TH]I:RD if you don't think it'll take that lo:ng,  
 5 but he'll come 'n fetch me a[bout  
 6J [Well there's only YOU an:d  
 7 um:: (.) \*e:::\* Joan Anderson isn't there [who's doing =  
 8L [hhhh  
 9J = he:rbs, .hh An:d I mean Lulu said that she: would (0.3)  
 10 \*n::\* you know; \*eh-e\* sh-e-she might [.hh (.) be  
 11L [iYes.  
 12L .hh[h I ↑don't think mine'll be l]o:ng at a:l  
 13J [(it's-) [( o n h i s t' r y )] (-----)  
 14L→ so .hh actually I don't think it will matter mu[ch:  
 15J [°No:°

These examples only reinforce how, in addition to claiming a contrast with what it prefaces, *actually* in turn-initial position registers very strongly that the speaker has just revised a prior stance of her own, whether implicitly or explicitly expressed.

COUNTERINFORMINGS. In marked contrast to those contexts in which TCU-final *actually* is used to counter a proposal made by another and those in which a speaker uses TCU-initial *actually* to mark a revision to a previous stance of her own, the use of TCU-initial *actually* to counter a claim or proposal of another is, as will be shown, strikingly rare and highly marked. Unlike the counterinformings discussed in §3.1, which reject ('no . . . actually') or provide a substitute for ('I'm Vanessa actually') the information in another's prior turn by placing *actually* TCU-finally, the following fragments show speakers prefacing an objection to another's prior by means of a turn-initial 'well'—a traditional marker of dispreference—prefacing *actually*.<sup>21</sup>

- (28) Chief examiner  
 (C:22. F = Flo, D = Doug. F has been visiting schools as an examiner; she tells the story of doing extra examining because of an incompetent exam coordinator)  
 1F Derek realized (.) forty minutes before he examined he had: no

<sup>21</sup> 'Well' will often be the apositional term signalling that what's coming is a 'disagreement'. One speaker takes a position, a next speaker says 'Well' and goes on to say something that stands as a disagreement with the other' (Sacks 1992a:736). See also Pomerantz 1984:72.



In the instances above, 'well' acts as a buffer to mark an orientation to the forthcoming dispreferred action. This differentiation in terms of placement made by speakers regarding WHOSE turn is being countered shows considerable sensitivity to the potentially confrontational characteristics of *actually*. Indeed, those instances of *actually* that are placed turn-initially in such environments support a view of *actually* as potentially highly confrontational. The following takes place during what has been a highly charged and combative radio discussion.

(30) Feminism's message

(C:30:1. Interview on BBC Radio 4 'Woman's Hour'. B = Beatrix Campbell, R = Ros Coward, J = Jenni Murray (interviewer). R has been arguing that the feminist movement has by and large achieved what it set out to do in the nineteen sixties and seventies; B begs to differ.)

- 1B This is partly, (0.2) to do with class. (0.2) Uh:m (.) an:d  
 2 the; (.) the presence, the large presence of .hh of women .hh  
 3 (.) within the working class, in what have bee- become really  
 4 relatively poor pariah sectors (.) of the labor market is very  
 5 significant. .h But across classes women are a:lways, (.)  
 6 irrespective of their (.) status as mothers (0.2) this research  
 7 shows, .h poorer than men. (.) In general. (0.6) An::d (.)  
 8 that's a startling and shocking statistic.  
 9 (.)  
 [ (0.4) ] [ (0.8) ]  
 10R→ [ .hhh ] Actually:: [ .hhh ] you know, I just c\*a:\*n't (.) see  
 11 this, you know, [that's what- I cannot see this version of =  
 12B [What.  
 13R = society, I see a different version of society. .hh I see a  
 14 version of society where .hh (0.6) you know, whe:re (.)  
 15 feminism's message has (.) b:y and large been accepted, (.)  
 16 actually..hh (0.4) That people take it for gra:nted that  
 17 they're going- you know, m:en and women are going to have equal  
 18 relationships, they sometimes can't (0.5) manage it, .h but  
 19 they take it for granted, .hh it's entered their unconscious  
 20J Would you Ros call yourself a feminist any more.  
 21 (0.8)  
 22R .hhhh Hehehe well am I: u(hh)m you know, am I a recovering  
 23 feminist I wonder . . .

The placement of *actually* in turn-initial position here indicates the strongly oppositional and confrontational stance being taken up with regard to the prior turn; this stance is reinforced by the emphatic assertion 'I just can't see this . . . I cannot see this . . . ' (which is itself responded to by the equally combative and interruptive 'What' in l. 12 by B). Even so, the production of *actually* in this position is buffered by characteristic features of dispreferred turns—pausing and audible inbreaths—both before and after, which thereby mark the delicacy of the action being prosecuted. The only context in which such dispreferred features are noticeably absent is that in which *actually* prefaces a counterclaim to the benefit of another.

(31) Swimming costume

(HU&88-1-9:7. G = Gordon, D = Dana. 'The Clothes Show' is a television program)

- 1G [t O:kay. .h I: sh- I sh'l leave you. .h to

- 2 get on with your hard studying. that I know I interrupted.  
 3 .hhhhhh rather [rudely  
 4D [(Oh yes.)  
 5G .hhhhh hu-Uh:m  
 6D→ Actually it wz Mother: saying (.) d'you think I'd look  
 7 right in this swimming costume .hh on the Clothes Show.  
 8 b't never m[i (h) n[d,  
 9G [e- [u-Wha'do you think.  
 10 (0.5)  
 11D Ah:m (0.2) n:No.hh!  
 12G No. heh [ .hhh.hhh  
 13D [(-----).  
 14 (0.6)  
 15D Well it's sorta luminous 'n (0.6) stretchy,

Dana responds to Gordon's suggestion that his call has interrupted her studying first with a minimal acknowledgment (l. 4) followed by an informing (l. 6) that contradicts his statement. Dana's correction of Gordon may therefore be heard as broadly in his interest, in that the activity interrupted (Mother commenting on a swimsuit on a TV program) is relatively frivolous in comparison to 'hard studying' with the result that the interruption is less grave than Gordon has proposed.

These two examples thus provide evidence to support the claim suggested by the cases of turn-initial 'well actually' earlier: that *actually* placed TCU-initially is potentially highly confrontational, unless (a) it is produced with additional features marking the strongly dispreferred status of the action being initiated or (b) the action being initiated is clearly broadly in the interests of or to the benefit of the other.

**3.3. SUMMARY: *actually* IN INFORMINGS.** The placement of *actually* either TCU-finally or -initially has been shown to be consequential for the type of activity being launched by the TCU it marks. In turn-final position, *actually* marks information as informative, whether it marks an answer as countering the response projected by the question, marks a counterinforming, or simply marks information as noteworthy. In each case, *actually* is, whether explicitly or not, presented as a revision of prior information, whether this is stated or simply an assumption attributed to another. So it is not simply that *actually* occurs in informings, but that the very presence of *actually* marks a TCU AS informing. In TCU-initial position, *actually* is heard overwhelmingly as revising a prior assertion of the speaker's own; it is heard as a change of mind token. Only in marked cases is TCU-initial *actually* used to address the prior turn of another speaker. For this reason it is possible to make a broad distinction between TCU-final uses as OTHER-directed and TCU-initial uses as SELF-directed. It is also the case that in TCU-final position *actually* is vulnerable to overlap in a way that it is not TCU-initially; indeed, in initial position it has the capacity—in some cases interruptively—to claim a turn. These apparent distinctions between the TCU-final and -initial placements of *actually* provide preliminary evidence that speakers are sensitive to the placement of *actually* to accomplish different activities in talk.

**4. SELF-REPAIR.** Schegloff et al. characterize repair as a procedure by which 'recurrent problems in speaking, hearing and understanding' are addressed (Schegloff et al. 1977:361). The preference for self-repair over other-repair in talk, which is reflected in both the organization of talk and the empirical distribution of types of repair, may be seen to be reflected in the interactional considerations relating to the placement of

*actually* in the TCU. The use of *actually* to propose new or contrastive information evidently implicates it in other-repair-type operations.<sup>23</sup> For this reason the current section focuses on one particular repair procedure at the first possible locus of repair—self-repair in the same TCU—and the placement of *actually* TCU-finally and then TCU-initially in order to determine whether its placement is consequential for the activity being undertaken.

**4.1. SELF REPAIR: TCU-FINAL USES.** Fragments 32–34 are typical of the self-repairs undertaken with *actually* in TCU-final position. In each a TCU is begun, only to be abandoned in order to insert material that seems not to follow on but to have its ‘natural’ place PRIOR to what was beginning to be said. The inserted TCU is appended by *actually*. After this, what was abandoned is resumed and the reporting continued.

(32) Ashram

(C:1:1. H = Harriet, A = Alice, G = Gill; this sequence occurs some turns after those in An insect (19). G explains how her husband killed an insect on a train in India, to the obvious consternation of their travelling companions)

1H What’s the- was Dad then cast to the outer reaches of hell, =

2A = Hunh heh heh heh. (.) .hh

3G No, it was my fault. We were travelling- we [were- we’d just =

4H [Heh heh heh.

5G→ = left the ashram *actually*, >and we were< travelling with some

6 Jain women

7 (0.4)

8H Hm.

9G Third class, very- °you know° very grotty . . .

(33) Group service

(H:2:1:1. L = Lesley, F = Foster. L has called F to check whether there will be Sunday school that week.)

1F T’s a group service’n the evening whi[ch is very suitable =

2L [Yes.

3F = f’youngsters.

4 (.)

5L Yes. = I js s-u thought I’d che:ck =

6F = M[m:.

7L [I:n case there wz a: misprin:[t. °(Again).°

8F [Yes no no we’re havin:g

9→ ehm: (0.4) w’l I’m away *actually* b’t uh: it’s just a group

10 Sundee,

11L Yes.

(34) Let things be

(C:6:1:2. G = Gill, H = Harriet, B = Bob. B, who is American, has given G, who is British, a book which discusses, in a joking way, differences between the Americans and the British. One of the claims in the book is that British people prefer the status quo whereas Americans are constantly

<sup>23</sup> These would include activities such as counterinformings. But counterforming constitutes a disagreement and is on the main line of the action trajectory of the interaction at that point; other-repair is off the main line of action. For counterinformings, see Heritage 1984; for other-repair, see Schegloff et al. 1977.

challenging it. G has told B how much she's enjoying the book, prompting the following anecdote)

- 1G = .h Actually twice recently, something's happened (0.4) [and =  
 2H [Mm.  
 3G = Mike said, (.) °what was it°, oh it was about uhm (1.5) oh,  
 4 †something to do with Alice or you, (1) and I said why doesn't  
 5 she T:RY::, (0.2) you see? And Mike said †w'l it's alrɛ:ght,  
 6 I mean you †know?ɛ  
 7H Hehehe =  
 8G→ = and I- he's got quite annoyed with me actually cos I  
 9 said [you're absolutely (.) personifying what's in this book, =  
 10? [(Yes yes)  
 11G = the sta[tus quo::  
 12H [Ye:s, LET THINGS BE:: =  
 13G = .h let things be::, =  
 14B Yeah,  
 15G = you know?

In 32, Gill starts her story, 'we were travelling', and then cuts off to restart twice, the second time to insert information 'we'd just left the ashram actually' which 'properly' (in this instance, chronologically) belongs before the story she has started to relate. Subsequent to this inserted information, the story is resumed with an exact repetition of its beginning, but this time it is set back into the original chronology of the story by means of 'and'. This resumption of the story gives the *actually*-marked TCU its parenthetical character, without which this TCU would appear disjunctive. In 33, an explanation of what will happen on Sunday in l. 8 is abandoned as Foster repairs an implication, attached to 'we', that he will be there in the *actually*-marked TCU; 'but' marks his reversion to the original point, of which he then produces an amended version. And in 34, we see a similar *actually*-marked insertion, once again displaced from the chronological order of events in the narrative. Gill is reporting an exchange between herself and Mike, which has taken the form 'Mike said . . . I said . . . Mike said'; instead of continuing, as might be predicted, 'I said', she cuts off at 'I' to add that he got 'quite annoyed' with her because of what she subsequently said. She then picks up the thread of the previous narrative, redoing the 'I' to restart 'I said'. The description here again does not follow the actual order of events, but this time what is inserted properly belongs AFTER, not before, the narrative resumed: Mike getting annoyed would be a consequence of what Gill said. It is also notable that although *actually* is in TCU-final position in these cases, the beginning of the next TCU is produced in such a manner as to interdict, in Schegloff's felicitous phrase (1996:57), the possibility of a next speaker starting to speak at the end of the *actually*-marked TCU. Thus *actually* in these cases is not turn-final, as well as TCU-final, and so overlap or interruption by next speaker—as seen in some of the informing contexts when *actually* was TCU-final—is less likely.

In all of these cases of self-repair where *actually* is placed in TCU-final position, then, the *actually*-appended TCU is produced as parenthetical; the speaker cuts off from what she or he has begun to say to insert a TCU that conveys information that hearably 'belongs' either before or after what was about to be said. The right-hand limit of this parenthesized information is marked by TCU-final *actually*. The impression that this inserted TCU is parenthetical is heightened by the resumption of the original thread, either by a redoing of the start or by a modified version of it.

**4.2. SELF-REPAIR: TCU-INITIAL USES.** In marked contrast to the deployment of *actually* in TCU-final position to accomplish self-repair, TCU-initial *actually* deployed in self-repairs serves to deflect the topic from a trajectory that is started and then abandoned. The two extended fragments that follow show how the activity *actually* initiates may be explicated only with reference to talk beginning some time before. In these, one or more TCUs is begun, and then abandoned; *actually* marks a restart, and the initiation of a new topical tack. That is, *actually* does not initiate an alternative, 'new' topic in itself, but launches a new line that can be heard as relating to that which has been abandoned—what Maynard (1980) defines as topic SHIFT, as opposed to complete topic CHANGE. In marking the beginning of a TCU that clearly does not repeat what had been started to be said, *actually* in this TCU-initial position is heard as a self-interruption marker, alerting the recipient that a revised TCU is to follow.

## (35) Bathroom wall

(C:1:1. G = Gill, A = Alice, M = Mike, H = Harriet. The bathroom wall has been stripped ready for redecorating; parts are crumbling off)

- 1G If- ↑when you wash your hai:r, (0.3) try not to: (0.6)  
 2A Why ↑[wh[at do I do no::w,  
 3G [swish::: (0.8) too much (0.2) of the wa::ll, (0.2)  
 4 off (.) into the ba:th,  
 5 (0.5)  
 6A ↑I ↑DO::N'::T:.  
 7 (0.4)  
 8G No I mean at the minute.  
 9 (0.8)  
 10A I ↑do:n't though. =  
 11G = Cos I just cleaned the bath, yet again.  
 12 (0.4)  
 13A Well ↑I cleaned the bath the other day and it's sti:ll uhm  
 14 coming off,  
 15 (0.1)  
 16G Well I kno:w, (0.2) but try not to swish the shower around the  
 17 walls.  
 18 (1)  
 19A You end up having a bath and coming out more dirty than you  
 20 went in. =  
 21G = (---) brown bits.  
 22 (0.8)  
 23A Yea::h.  
 24 (1.2)  
 25A Happened when I washed my face the other day anyway.  
 26 (1.4)  
 27G→ Well I've been up and reclea:ned- actually he's miraculous at  
 28 cleaning up.  
 29 (0.9)  
 30M Yes he [is.  
 31G [He cleans up better than anybody we've [ever ha:d.  
 32H [Really.



## (36) Busy June

(HU&88-2-2:5. L = Lesley, K = Kevin. Gordon is L's son, Katherine her daughter)

- 1L [hYe:s. Oh: shame.h .hhhh Gordon didn't pass his  
 2 test I'm afraid, h=  
 3K =Oh dear  
 4L .k.tch He's goin- (.) Well .hh u-he was hoping tih get  
 5 it (0.2) in: uh in the summer but u (.) they're getting  
 6 very booked up so I don't know if he'll even: get it in  
 7 the:n.h  
 8 (1.1)  
 9K Yes I: ah: no doubt he's back e(.)t uh  
 10 (0.5)  
 11L .hhhh Yes. We're going up- (.) we:ll- (.) we're get (0.2)  
 12→ actually it's g'nna be a †rather busy June, Katherine's  
 13 home f'three weeke:n:ds. As it happens people're coming  
 14 do:wn'n c'n bring'er down which is rather nice,  
 15 (1.2)  
 16L which e-aa::: so we're rather looking forward t'that,hh  
 17 (1.5)  
 18L hA[n:  
 19K [Yes indeg:[d (-----)

In both 35 and 36 the deflection from one topical trajectory to another serves to move the talk away from something troublesome or delicate. In 35 Gill's *actually*-marked TCU forms part of a response to Alice's challenging complaint in lines 19–20 over the state of the bathroom. This complaint itself follows from Alice's own apparent understanding of lines 1 and 3–4 as a complaint against her, and Gill's subsequent attempts, never fully accepted, to persuade her that she has misunderstood (l. 8), and to clarify what she originally said (lines 16–17). Gill's first response to the complaint is an apparent attempt, l. 21, through a hearably affiliative description, to sympathize. Judging by Alice's agreement in l. 23 and subsequent mitigation in l. 25, the attempt does indeed secure a partial backing down. But the initial projection adumbrated by this beginning of l. 27 is that Gill is meeting Alice's challenge ('well' here again signalling a potential upcoming objection to the prior turn) by detailing her own possible attempt to clean the bathroom. Given that Gill was beginning to say, in what clearly amounts to a counter move, and in what may be a reiteration of some of the substance of l. 11, 'well I've been up and recleaned' it is possible to conjecture that she is thereby 'reminded' that there was relatively little to do as 'he's miraculous at cleaning up'. The product of that reminder represents a shift away from the potential counter challenge toward a summary assessment designed to elicit agreement—which it duly gets, at least from Mike—and potential termination of the sequence. The *actually*-prefaced TCU serves to propose a new topical line, one taken up, if not by Alice, by two others present. Similarly, in 36, Lesley's assertion that 'it's gonna be a rather busy June' is positioned after she has abandoned three previous possible means of taking up Kevin's topic proffer. This proffer itself may be heard as Kevin's attempt to deflect talk away from the topic introduced by Lesley: her son not passing his driving test. Lesley's pursuit of this topic in lines 4–7 has been only minimally acknowledged by Kevin before he deflects the talk—in the same turn—to the issue of Gordon's whereabouts,

in a move inviting—and receiving—Lesley's collaboration. Once more the *actually*-marked TCU, steering the talk away from the topic of Gordon's failure, is the one taken up, although this time the speaker has to do more elaborative work (l. 16) due to lack of uptake (in l. 15 and then again in l. 17) to secure the recipient's orientation.

In sum, then, these cases show how *actually* placed TCU-initially in self-repairs serves to launch a new topical trajectory. One motivation for this shift is prior interactional trouble, whereby one hearably delicate or awkward activity is abandoned, with the speaker cutting off what she is about to say and interrupting with *actually* to introduce a topic that provides for greater affiliation.

**4.3. SUMMARY: *actually* IN SELF-REPAIR.** To say that *actually* is deployed in self-repair procedures gives only the broadest characterization of its use and underestimates the work it does, placed either TCU-finally or -initially. Placement is highly consequential for the activity being embarked upon and the subsequent progress of the talk. The distinctions in placement that were evident from the context of informings are just as stark in the case of self-repair.

Placed in TCU-final position, *actually* marks the outer limit of a TCU started upon the abandonment of a prior one; this consists of information that does not follow from that prior but appears to have its natural place either before or after the TCU that was beginning to be said. The resumption of the narrative thread upon completion of the *actually*-marked TCU gives that TCU a parenthetical quality. There are similarities in this respect with informings in which *actually* placed TCU-finally is heard as marking a parenthetical TCU. The parenthetical quality of these TCUs is heightened by the fact that they are not turn final and thus not vulnerable to a next speaker's incipient turn to the same degree as in some of the cases cited earlier.

In contrast, *actually* placed TCU-initially launches a new topical trajectory, which does not return to the original, abandoned line of talk. One motivation for this shift may be grounded, as we have seen, in prior interactional trouble. To see the emergence of a pattern in such cases, recall that in informings, *actually* in this position implicates that what will follow has just occurred to the speaker, and so may be regarded generically as a change-of-state token. This characteristic is also evident in the self-repairs discussed here: the change in the topical direction of the talk initiated by TCU-initial *actually* similarly has the flavor of something just brought to mind or remembered by the speaker.

**5. TOPIC MOVEMENT.** The last major environment to be examined here is TOPIC MOVEMENT, a category encompassing both TOPIC CHANGE, in which a turn hearably (i.e. by coreference and other linguistic elements of discourse cohesion)<sup>24</sup> launches a new line of talk, thereby also changing the activity embarked upon (see Schegloff 1990), and TOPIC SHIFT, which involves a move from one aspect of a topic to another 'in order to occasion a different set of mentionables' (Maynard 1980:271). Having seen how the placement of *actually* in the TCU is consequential to the trajectory of a topic in self-repair procedures, it now remains to be determined whether such distinctions hold in the context of topic movement. Marking shifts within and between topics exploits those contrastive characteristics displayed in the accomplishment of informings and repair.

<sup>24</sup> It is not my intention to focus on what constitutes topic; the analytical difficulties with such a notion are well known. Brown and Yule (1983:68–124) discuss this in some detail. For useful discussions of the notion in CA work, see Maynard 1980, Schegloff 1990, and Drew & Holt 1998.

**5.1. TOPIC MOVEMENT: TCU-FINAL USES.** Fragments 37 and 38 show typical instances of *actually* used in TCU-final position to mark a movement in topic.

(37) Phoning Scott

(H:U&88-1-8:3. G = Gordon, D = Dana. G has been telling a story about getting home in time for his music lesson at 5.30, having been driven back by a friend at speed. When approached for a ride, the friend was obviously reluctant to leave just then)

- 1G An' I said I've gotta be home by  
 2 five thirty (.) hh .hhh An' and iz face jus' dropped.  
 3 (0.5)  
 4D ↑Uh[h  
 5G [.tch.hhh An' I said ↑No.hh N(h)o (h)I'm  
 6 se(h)r(h)i(h)ous. (.) You drive me home no:w.  
 7 (.)  
 8G .hhhh  
 9 (0.2)  
 10G An'ee did.  
 11 (0.5)  
 12G .hh Uh hh(h)an' then: uh .hh An' I didn' feel guilty  
 13 about it at all.  
 14(D) [(<sup>o</sup>hn) =  
 15G =.tch.hhhhh ↓Which is proba'ly very bad of me .hhh I  
 16→ ↑thought I might (.) phone Scott tonight actually .t1  
 17 Cz uh[m  
 18D [Ye::h.  
 19G he c' p'obly do with a bit a'cheering up  
 20D [Ye:[h  
 21G [.hh[So I thought I'll (.) give im a bell, .t.hhh See  
 22 'o[w eez g]ett[in on,  
 23D [(Do a) ] [synchronized phoning  
 24G .hhhhh

(38) Popular television

(C:43:1. BBC Radio 4 'Start the Week'. S = Sue Wilson, TV producer, M = Melvyn Bragg, interviewer. S produces a TV drama series set in some science laboratories; she has just explained how the Cavendish laboratory at Cambridge organizes open days for school pupils)

- 1S [(h)And that's very good because (.) they  
 2 do that at the end of summer term so befo:re these youngsters  
 3 [in the fourth form have made their choi:ce, en the idea is =  
 4M [mm  
 5S =if you turn them on to the exci:t<sup>i</sup>ment of Physics perhaps  
 6 those g(h)irls .h will then make a decision to do Physics at A:  
 7 level. En then go o:n en do it,  
 8 (.)  
 9M I'm ↑very touched by your belief in the inpyu- in the  
 10 impro:ving (k) uh- possibilities of tele- popular television  
 11→ actual[ly,  
 12S [. .hh well I think the point is that you ↑CA:n't really

- 13 do it as a documentary, (I mean) first of all, television IS  
 14 the media isn't it . . .

In 37, Gordon's story about insisting on being driven home immediately, despite his friend's apparent inclination to stay where he is has hitherto received, and is currently getting, minimal uptake from Dana. His successive elaborations and even the self-deprecations in lines 12–13 and 15 failing to elicit responses, Gordon takes another tack by changing topic—'I thought I might phone Scott tonight actually'—a turn that does get a definite, if unelaborated, response. There is only the merest of buffers, a brief but audible inbreath, between the end of the prior and the beginning of the subsequent topics. The topic movement is a disjunctive one—in Maynard's terms, a change rather than a shift—the beginning of the *actually*-marked TCU marks a deflection away from the prior topic and onto a new one. This new trajectory is consolidated by topical elaboration by the speaker and subsequent take-up by the addressee, with no return to the prior topic. We see a similar topic change in 38, where there is no uptake of a prior turn. In contrast to 37, here it is the initiator of the topic shift from whom uptake is noticeably absent, possibly because, as the host of a radio discussion, control of topic and topical direction are ultimately his prerogative. In both cases *actually* is placed at the end of the TCU that introduces the change of topic.

We have already seen the sense that *actually* can give in informing contexts that the state of affairs being reported predates the occasioned reporting of it (compare, for example, *by the way* or *incidentally*). The same sense is evident in the context of topic change, where, given the contrastive characteristics of *actually*, its placement after the introduction of new topical material can make the topic proffered seem more relevant to current concerns than its predecessor. Fragments 39 and 40 are taken from near the beginnings of phone calls. Phone call beginnings provide for negotiation of the topic to be pursued. Reason-for-call (on the part of the caller) and activity-prior-to-call (on the part of the receiver)<sup>25</sup> are both potential topics early on. In 39 and 40 we see *actually*-speakers minimally responding to the prior turns (in 39, answering a 'how are you'-type question and in 40, acknowledging part of a story),<sup>26</sup> but thereafter initiating a different topic, reason-for-call in the first fragment and activity-prior-to-call in the second.

(39) Tomorrow

(R:II:1. I = Ida, J = Jenny)

1I Hello:::?

2 (.)

3J 'Lo Ida It's Jenn[y heahr.]

4I [↑ Hello ] J[enny[:?]

5J [ehh! [he:h hehh =

. . .

(13 lines omitted, during which J explains that she rang earlier but I was out; both discuss what they've been doing)

19I [How uz things. A'ri:gh[t?

20J [Ye:s fi:ne yes I'm ringin up about

<sup>25</sup> Depending on whether the number of rings is perceived by speakers to be too few or too many, activity-prior-to-call may be rendered accountable and vulnerable to topicalization in that position (Schegloff 1986).

<sup>26</sup> See Jefferson 1993 for discussion of topic shifts by speakers after having produced minimal acknowledgment tokens.

- 21→ tomorruh *actually*: en:d I'm d- I'll do coffee t'morrow  
 22 mörning.  
 23 (.)  
 24I It chee- Not Vera's.  
 25J (.h) the- Insteada Vera's.h
- (40) Church  
 (H:X(C)-1-2-7:1. L = Lesley; M = Mum)
- 1L .hhh ↑Oh: hello I've just bin watching the fi:lm on:  
 2 Channel Fou:r. Have you- are you seeing i[t  
 3M [What is it.  
 4 (0.4)  
 5L .hhh Oh it's a lovely film. i-It's-u it's about this  
 6 ma:n who's got to get rid'v a turke:y (0.3) .p.hhh an:d  
 7 eighty four pou:nds to a poor family f'Christmas:.  
 8M Oh: hnh-[hn  
 9L [An' he's having the most awful difficuly:  
 10 he [h heh  
 11M→ [Oh:. Yah. We've js c'm in fr'm chu:rch actua[lly  
 12L [Oh  
 13 have you:  
 14M Mm:.  
 15M [Oh:]

Moving on to a different topic after a how-are-you exchange, as in the first context, might be projectable, since that piece of interactional business is over. The topic change in 40, however, is more marked because the prior business has not come to a natural topic-change juncture. Lesley has clearly embarked on a description of the film which, judging by l. 9, she has not finished by the time Mum has responded in l. 11. Lesley's overlapping *oh*-marked response to Mum's announcement in l. 11 (talk about the church service is continued subsequently) confirms the change to a new topic. The effect of *actually* in these cases is to insist on the priority of the introduced topic—these are, after all, informings too—and accentuate its importance in relation to its prior.

*Actually* placed TCU-finally marks the outer limit of a TCU introduced to change from one topic to another in talk. In this position its contrastive quality serves to insist on the priority and relevance with regard to what it introduces vis-à-vis what preceded it.

**5.2. TOPIC MOVEMENT: TCU-INITIAL USES.** *Actually* in TCU-initial position signals a markedly different type of topic movement from *actually* placed turn- and TCU-finally. While TCU-final *actually* can mark the boundary of a TCU that shifts to a topic disjunctive with what preceded it, turn-initial *actually* suggests that what is being introduced has just come to mind, and, often, that the introduction of this new material was occasioned by something in the prior talk. In such cases, the topical shift concerns a change of emphasis within a topic, with *actually* serving both to register the coming change of topical direction and to signal the nature of the contribution as one that has just occurred to the speaker. Thus in 41, Mike has been talking about eighteenth-century upper-class women's practice of taking hot chocolate in church; Gus in response jokes about the possible choice of stimulant for men: 'chocolate laudanum snuff'. Alice's *actually*-marked question, coming after a joke sequence and addressed to the presence of women in the first place, changes the activity and signals an interruptive shift of

direction within the topic (judging by Mike's somewhat disengaged response, the shift fails to get taken up, and is abandoned in favor of a different tack in l. 18).

## (41) Chocolate

(C:7:2. M = Mike, G = Gus, H = Harriet, A = Alice)

- 1M and some would have their- their servants to (.) rush into  
 2 church during the- just before the se:rmon with their fix of  
 3 chocolate.  
 4 (2)  
 5G [that's right and then-  
 6M [(and nobody seemed) to object.  
 7G then a bit of lau:danum a:fterwards,  
 8 (1.5)  
 9G [huhhuhhuh  
 10M £that's right, yeah yeah that's [true yes.£  
 11G [then the men- the men had  
 12 chocolate (1) laudanum snuff::.  
 13H uhehheh  
 14 (1)  
 15A→ †ACTually why are the †la::dies there, cos I- †I (found most) -  
 16 (2)  
 17M I spose the men stu- [stuck to b]ee::r I don't know,  
 18A [†I don't know if this is just me, but I  
 19 think girls are more addicted to chocolate than (.) guys,

In 42, there is a similar shift, marked by *actually* not turn-initially, but TCU-initially, registering a shift away from the topical focus earlier in the speaker's own turn. *Actually* in this position serves, as in 41, to mark what follows as still relevant to the prior talk, but constituting a shift of direction.

## (42) The cat

(C:28:1. A = Adam, M = Mary, V = Vanessa)

- 1A cos we don't do anything- we've got cats at the fa:rm, but we  
 2 just leave them, I mean nobody- we wouldn't ever bother (t'let)  
 3 the cat- I think they'd be lucky if they got any- any to s[ee =  
 4M [O::h  
 5A a vet in their [life.  
 6M [A:h we had a cat at ho:me, cos we had a  
 7 grocer's shop and we used keep empty bis[cuit tins  
 8A [(Keep- yeah)  
 9 (0.8)  
 10M in a- in a (.) (stone) passage at the side of the house .hh and  
 11→ uhm .h ACTually the day the cat died my mother closed the  
 12 sho:p.  
 13 (0.5)  
 14V Hehehehe[he  
 15M [They had the [cat for (.) you know (.) I mean (.)  
 16A [O:h.  
 17M = ever since I could remem[ber.  
 18A [Right.  
 19 (1.2)

- 20A But that's just coincidental wasn't it?  
 21 (.)  
 22V †No no no she [was absolutely devastated.  
 23M [No no she was devastat(h)ed. (.) Heh [heh  
 24A [Oh she  
 25 (was), oh.

*Actually* signals a shift in the topical direction of the speaker's talk; in this case, from Mary's having had a cat to the cat's emotional importance to her mother. *Actually* marks off its incipient TCU as disjunctive in relation to its predecessor, if not to the overall prior topic. Thus the 'and' which follows after 'we had a grocer's shop . . . side of the house' is heard not as a conjunction linking the two TCUs logically but as being the last item in a TCU abandoned upon the production of *actually*—a logical link between the two being unsustainable. As with self-repairs with *actually* in TCU-initial position, in which turn beginnings may be abandoned in favor of an *actually*-prefaced turn, or those informings where *actually* suggests that the speaker has just thought of something, the *actually*-marked turn is hearable as proposing something more noteworthy than what has preceded it. Indeed the *actually*-marked TCU here is built to a rhetorical climax underlining the importance of the cat (which, in the event, is missed by its recipient, Adam, until clarified by Vanessa and Mary in lines 22 and 23).

When *actually* is turn-initial as well as TCU-initial, the character with which it invests its TCU—of an observation or anecdote that has just been triggered—suggests that something in the prior talk has served as the trigger. In the fragments 43–45, turn-initial *actually*, marking a shift in topical direction triggered by prior talk, serves to launch a story.

(43) Complicated lunch

(C:28:1. J = Julia, M = Mary. J has brought some books to M; she is now sorting through them. M's daughter Vanessa has been ill, which is why M has refused Vanessa's offer to cook lunch. This sequence immediately precedes the one in 18)

- 1J = (h)£I haven't bought any for a long ti- I've had a clear  
 2 ou:t,£ you (see) Jane Grigson English Food. (0.2) †That  
 3 Margaret Costa's is a classic, they've reprinted [it now.  
 4M [Oh well  
 5 Vanessa'd probably lo:ve that.  
 6 (0.4)  
 7M [I must te:l her that. She probably knø:ws [anyway. She's  
 8J [So:: [Yes, now.  
 9M = always reading books [on cookery.  
 10J [D'you want (.) uh- (.) does she just  
 11 read cookbooks,  
 12 (0.3)  
 13M She coo:ks.  
 14 (0.2)  
 15J Yea:s. (0.2) Yes, =  
 16M→ = Actually toda:y, she was (0.1) had a (0.8) co:mplicated lunch  
 17 packed, a- [uh- planned.  
 18J [Mm.  
 19 (0.4)

20M And I said firmly (0.2) n:o::  
 21 (0.1)  
 22J Uh huh.  
*(sequence continued and presented as 18)*

## (44) Girl in John Lewis

(C:28:1. J = Julia, M = Mary, C = Carrie. This sequence follows some turns after the one in 4. M has been complaining about highlights in her hair looking like 'blobs'. J is trying to think of the name of a good hair colorist she has heard of)

1M [You see, I want the very fine ones and mine  
 2 ju[st=  
 3J [Mm.  
 4M = does great lumps.  
 5 (0.4)  
 6M [I mean I've got lumps here, =  
 7C? [(Hehehe)  
 8J = Well that's- (0.6) you don't kn- uh- she's called Jo:::  
 9 somebody who's a: (.) she's (1.4) got a salon in London, she  
 10 does only coloring, and [she's-  
 11M [Really?  
 12J Oh yes:: (0.9) And she's [(said to----)  
 ...  
*(15 lines omitted, during which M's husband arrives, offering a drink, and then leaves)*

28J [No, (she) says you  
 29 shouldn't do: this (front). (.) She's- she's called Jo someone,  
 30 she's an ex[pert  
 31M [Does she have strands that sho:w,  
 32 (0.4)  
 33J Yea:[h.  
 34M→ [Actually: (.) a girl in John Lewis's was pinning up a  
 35 skirt for me: [recently,  
 36J [Ye:s,  
 37 (0.4)  
 38M I bought a s- a suit in the sa:le.  
 39 (0.8)  
 40M U:hm, (0.8) a:n:d, (0.3) I was looking down on her head, I mean  
 41 you know she was about twenty seven. (0.5) Fairish. .h She had  
 42 (.) thickish strands, but they °l(h)ooked (.) ma:g°nificent. =  
 43J = Ye:s, well that is the thing °Mary° . . .

## (45) Ice tray

(C:22:1. H = Harriet, G = Gill, M = Mike. H is preparing a meal; M has just poured G a drink. Talk eventually turns to the visit of G's friend Anne-Marie, who has two sons who had broken M's ice tray on a previous visit, and a daughter, Susanna, who had visited with her)

1H Can I use [this? or is it too (precious)  
 2G [I think I need some ICE [(.) in:  
 3M [pardon?



- 4H Can I use this [or is it too precious  
5M [Y:[ʔes (--)'ts a bit- bit small.  
6G [(.) Mike could I have some ice in the Noilly  
7 please  
8H Yes I'll- I'll do it  
9G→ [ACTually you would've=  
10M [You (might want) a knife.  
11G = had a fit.  
12 (1.5)  
13G [?] we had some fruit juice, and I- before I had time to say  
14 where the ice is, (0.5) Anne-Marie had found it ev course, and  
15 Susanna was trying to get the ice out, and I thought about you  
16 cuz the boys  
17 (2)  
18M [W1- they bust the last one  
19G [mucked something up  
20 (.)  
21G Yes I kno:w,  
22H hm hehehe [he  
23G [and Susanna said, being a girl and not a bo:y,  
24 trying- you know, I c'n do it sort of thing, she said ooh I'm  
25 afraid to do this I'm afraid of cracking it  
26 (.)  
27M mm  
28G I said w'l do be careful c'z it's one of Mike's jo::ys and  
29 he's- (.) had them cracked in the past=I didn't [say your =  
30M [and so they- =  
31G = brothers cracked them.  
32M = so they didn't.  
33 (2)  
34G She was very careful with it.

In all of the above, the *actually*-tagged turn launches an anecdote hearable as triggered by material in the prior talk (see Jefferson 1978:220 for an extended consideration of such triggered, locally occasioned stories in talk). Each of these TCUs introducing topically relevant material are what Sacks (1992a:761, 1992b:88–92) and Schegloff (1992:1330), following him, call TOUCHED-OFF utterances; *actually* in this TCU-initial position acts as a touch-off marker. While the relevance to the prior talk is often evident from the *actually*-tagged turn itself, as in 43 where reference to Vanessa having planned 'a complicated lunch' is clearly hearable as an elaboration of her claim in the preceding turn, 'she cooks', this is not always the case. As is apparent in both 44 and 45, the material introduced in the TCU appears unrelated. But the fact that *actually* introduces material hearable as related is evidenced by the addressees' orientation to the *actually*-marked turns as projecting more. Julia's response to Mary's turn 'actually a girl in John Lewis's was pinning up a skirt for me recently' (l. 36) is a continuer (Schegloff 1982:81), and she withholds any contribution until the end of Mary's story, 'they looked magnificent' (l. 43), whereupon her response is immediate. Similarly, in 45, Mike withholds any response (l. 12) from Gill's topic shift 'actually you would've had a fit' until the end of her turn (lls. 13–16), by which time she has introduced the story with

enough information for him to relate what she is saying to something related in the prior. 'I thought about you cos the boys . . . ', is followed by a two-second pause that invites completion, which Mike duly attempts at l. 18—one validated both by Gill's own completion and her response in l. 21.

The placement of *actually* TCU- and turn-initially in the accomplishment of topic shift thus invests the TCU it launches with a touched-off character, linking back in some way to and even triggered by prior talk. *Actually* announces its potential relevance, even if the TCU it launches does not make this explicit. What follows, whether a single turn or extended multiturn story, may be heard as a shift in the direction of the topic without being a complete topic change.

**5.3. SUMMARY: *actually* IN TOPIC MOVEMENT.** The differentiation of topic change from topic shift is, as we have seen, an important one in distinguishing TCU-final from TCU-initial uses of *actually*. In those cases where *actually* is placed in TCU-final position, the TCU it marks introduces material that is clearly topically disjunctive with prior talk. This disjunction is heightened by the sense with which *actually* invests its TCU—what is introduced is of more immediate relevance than the prior topic. In contrast, TCU-initial uses mark the introduction of touched-off material that may be heard as potentially topically relevant because of having been thus triggered. Such uses are thus heard to mark topic shifts—movement within a topic—rather than topic changes—movement from one topic to another.

**6. CONCLUSION.** The most general characterization of *actually* is as a marker of contrast and revision. But such a broad characterization cannot capture the subtleties of its use displayed so far. The placement of *actually* in the turn and its component TCUs is highly consequential for the activities being undertaken in the sequence to which its turn belongs. Its placement not only characterizes as a particular type of activity—informing, say, or repair—the turn which contains it but also the turn to which it is responsive. Drew and Holt remark that 'the components of a turn's construction—at whatever level of linguistic production—are connected with the activity which the turn is being designed to perform in the unfolding interactional sequence of which it is a part, and to the further development of which it contributes' (1998:497). A simple schematic representation of the main differences between TCU-final and TCU-initial uses as revealed in the data might look like Table 1.

ACTIVITY	TCU-FINAL	TCU-INITIAL
Informing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• counter-positional informing token, often question-elicited or as counterinforming</li> <li>• explicit marker of informing in dispreferred turns; as a second TCU in a turn may be hearably parenthetical and acts in this position as a right hand bracket</li> <li>• largely other-directed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• change-of-mind token; revision of own prior turn or touch-off marker</li> <li>• counterinformings buffered by delay/dispreference markers except when to other's benefit; confrontational use without such markers</li> <li>• largely self-directed</li> </ul>
Self-repair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• marks its TCU as a parenthetical self-correction, leaving trajectory of talk before and after unaltered</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• self-correction which changes trajectory of talk, often in response to talk marked as interactionally 'delicate'</li> </ul>
Topic movement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• marks disjunctive topic change from that TCU on</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• marks nondisjunctive topic shift; hearable as triggered by prior talk</li> </ul>

TABLE 1. TCU-final vs. TCU-initial *actually*.

The schema of course provides only the most general representation of observed usage; it is intended to be neither predictive nor prescriptive.<sup>27</sup> It does not discount the possibility of speakers making other choices altogether. The table does reveal a normative framework of orientations—suggested by strong empirical skewings—from which speakers make their own choices in response to interactional contingencies; significant divergences from normative usage would then be hearable as such. As Schegloff notes, ‘inversion and omission of components can be ways of doing things or ways of avoiding doing things’ (1992:1317). It is only by reference to these orientational patterns that such inversions and omissions can be identified. As such, the scheme provides a reference point for many of the issues crystallized in the fragment presented at the beginning as 2.

Recall that in this fragment there are four instantiations of *actually*, placed in different positions in the conversational turn. The sequence as a whole displays Mary’s change of mind from the moral certainty of her unadorned ‘no’ in l. 11,<sup>28</sup> and subsequent unpicking of this stance to her apparent willingness to entertain the idea of asking for a disabled sticker in l. 74. The transition from the no stance to the possible yes may be loosely charted in the placement of *actually*. The first occurrence, in l. 26, where *actually* is placed TCU- and turn-initially—‘actually maybe I could’—is the one that first explicitly marks Mary as having a change of mind. Subsequent occurrences, where the ‘idea’ is known to be held in common, are not (indeed, if they are to make the same claim, cannot be) turn-initial; only in this position is it possible to lay claim to such a change. The second occurrence, in l. 46, is duly prefaced by a turn-initial ‘so’ which, placed as it is after some topically intervening material, serves to link its turn back to the previous topic; as the second indication of a change of stance it cannot be the change of mind itself but indicates, by means of the turn-initial conjunction, that the idea has already been worked through: ‘so actually it is an idea you know’ (see, as a comparison, 27 in §3.2). Adam’s response to this second indication of a changing stance is to reiterate the fact that the sticker can be used when Mary feels she needs it, whereupon Mary’s response is to give an example of the mismatch between her ‘fit enough’ appearance and the reality of her restricted movement. Upon Adam’s response in l. 70—in which a response to Mary’s telling is aborted twice before a minimal response—Mary returns to the ‘idea’: ‘that’s an idea actually’. This is the third indication of the change of mind from the original no and second mention of the idea. The idea—more precisely, its worthiness to Mary—has by this stage been established for some time. In this position, *actually* marks the turn as informing, whereas what it marks

<sup>27</sup> While the current work aims to show meaning—in the words cited at the beginning—as interactionally contingent, it may be the case that this study provides material amenable to other analytical frameworks in semantics and pragmatics. A referee for *Language*, for example, proposes that the analysis offered here may provide evidence that the different uses of *actually* require a polysemous analysis, contra arguments for monosemy (such as those found, for example, in most work on relevance theory, e.g., Sperber & Wilson 1995, Blakemore 1992), or homonymy, based on different function (as in Fraser 1996). The same source suggests that the current work may illuminate the nature of the possible distinction between conceptual and procedural information as discussed in relevance theory—that is, ‘information about the representations to be manipulated, and information about how to manipulate them’ (Wilson & Sperber 1993:2), respectively. Among relevance theorists, attention has been focused on whether there is indeed such a distinction, and if so, whether these distinctions are discrete, as Wilson and Sperber claim, or can overlap, as argued, for example, by Nicolle (1998).

<sup>28</sup> Compare another possibility, in which Mary might have hearably entertained the idea, or treated it as a suggestion worth considering, perhaps with the information receipt and change of state token *oh* (Heritage 1984).

as informative has already been established. Placed turn-finally, as here, *actually* is a fine example of the performed intersubjectivity discussed in §3.1. The final *actually* in the fragment, turn-internally at l. 74, points to the range of possible turn-internal placements considered in §2 that lie beyond the current analytical focus on the point at which speaker transition may occur—the transition space—and so remain outside the scope of the current work. Suffice it to say that its placement seems to be governed by an orientation to its opposite; before ‘give’ here it serves to endorse ‘give’ rather than, say, ‘probably’ or ‘would’.

The analytical importance of the transition space has been highlighted by the turn-initial and turn-final instantiations of *actually* since both, as we have seen, are implicated forcefully in speaker transition. As noted at the beginning, the distinctions in placement make for differing vulnerability to overlap, and thus potentially interruption. At l. 26, Mary’s turn-initial *actually* interrupts Adam’s turn in progress; at l. 71, her turn-final *actually* is itself interrupted by Adam. With *actually* in the first case acting as a turn-claimer and in the second as a potential juncture for a next speaker to claim a turn, we see the realization of a general potential vulnerability to interruption in turn-final position and a potential for interruption in TCU-initial position. This differing vulnerability to interruption has of course considerable implications for what gets said and what gets overlapped, and therefore for the activity being prosecuted.

Given that in turn-final position, *actually* may be subject to incipient talk by a next speaker, I have suggested that a possible role for *actually* is to create a space for speaker transition to occur. Why then might a turn be constructed with *actually* in this position designed to be potentially overlapped? One reason might be found in the activities in which TCU-final *actually* has been implicated. Table 1 suggests that *actually* is largely other directed in informings; by this I mean its observed deployment in environments in which the *actually*-speaker’s turn is in potential conflict or contrast with that of another speaker’s prior turn. In these contexts, that which is oppositional is placed first, and *actually*, which explicitly marks the turn as such, is placed last—and may potentially get overlapped. At the outer limit of the TCU, overlap would further obscure that which marks the turn as contrastive. Similarly, in topic change, the disjunctive material is presented in advance of the marker that signals the change, so that even before *actually* is produced a next speaker is able to identify the activity in progress.

As noted earlier, the placement of *actually* in such environments and speakers’ observed reluctance to accomplish actions such as counterinforming with *actually* turn-initially, except in strongly confrontational circumstances, or where the action is clearly to the other’s benefit. The converse also holds: that *actually* placed turn- and TCU-initially generally implicates that something has just occurred to the speaker. In informings this is realized as a change of mind and for this reason it is, in this position and in this activity, characterized as largely self-directed. Given that the contradiction of another is accomplished either with *actually* TCU-finally or normally buffered by markers of dispreference such as ‘well’, lack of such markers when *actually* is placed turn-initially may be heard as a measure of the strength of the confrontation. In interactional terms, in turn- and TCU-initial position and thus potentially interruptive, *actually* may alert the recipient to upcoming material that is in some sense at odds with what preceded it: in the case of informings, a change of mind, and in the case of self-repair and topic shift, material disjunctive with what preceded it. In this position, marking what follows as just having occurred to the speaker, *actually* provides a warrant for the introduction of something disjunctive and interruptive. This may illuminate the marked absence of

*actually* turn-initially in the accomplishment of some activities where it is deployed turn- and TCU-finally, such as in responses to first pair parts.

In the paper on turntaking which has provided the conceptual coordinates for the current study, Sacks et al. proposed that ‘some aspects of the syntax of a sentence will be best understood by reference to the jobs that need to be done in a turn-in-a-series, turns being a fundamental place for the occurrence of sentences’ (1974:723). Thus the shift of analytical focus from sentences and utterances to the turn and its component TCUs has had a number of methodological consequences. First, it treats *actually* as an interactional object in its own right, and the shift in focus also allows for a widening of scope to encompass on the one hand a consideration of the sequence within which a given turn is placed, and on the other, the construction of the turn itself. An analysis of l. 71 in fragment 2, for example, cannot but be informed by what we know of its relationship to l. 9. And while the parenthetical qualities with which *actually* has been seen to invest its turn in certain positions are similarly identifiable by reference to what precedes and follows that turn, these qualities have also been seen to be a function of the relationships of the TCUs that constitute the turn to each other.<sup>29</sup>

Revealing how the effect of one particle—both as a pragmatic operator and as an organizer of discourse structure—is strongly conditioned by its placement has been made possible only by the incorporation of the indexical and temporal contingency of interaction into the analysis. Syntactic alternatives, here exemplified through flexibility of placement, are seen to be selected on the basis of interactional exigencies. Viewing utterances as contingently accomplished has revealed syntactic flexibility as both a resource to be exploited to interactional ends and a constraint on that interaction, and displayed something of the reflexive relationship between grammatical and interactional competence.

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<sup>29</sup> See Schegloff 1996 for a detailed consideration of the relationship between TCUs in a turn.

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