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Two Explorations of the Organization
of Overlapping Talk in Conversation

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Notes on Some Orderlinesses of Overlap Onset

and

On a Failed Hypothesis:

'Conjunctionals' as Overlap-Vulnerable

With an appended glossary of transcript symbols

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Introduction

This past year I have been working with great numbers of cases of overlapping talk. I have been interested in such materials for a long time and have been noticing evidence of their orderliness. But I had been looking at a few striking, indicative cases, rather than the mass of materials I recently set myself to come to terms with.

One immediate payoff of working with overlap en masse was this: While in the past I had noticed that not all overlap was a matter of 'people just not listening to each other', but quite to the contrary could, at least now and then, here and there, be a matter of fine-grained attention, I had no idea just how massively overlap is associated with just such attention.

With this report I will be attempting to provide a glimpse of the pervasive orderliness to be found in occurrences of overlap.

I am still in the preliminary stages of working with these materials and I do not have much to say about them. My main interest now is in showing that in the apparent chaos of overlapping talk one can begin to locate a series of 'fixed points' which collect and order an enormous amount of talk.

I will be focussing on three distinctive but deeply convergent 'types' or 'categories' of overlap onset. The names I am using to identify them are provisional and unstable, and I do not want to be making much of them as 'types' or 'categories'. Rather, my focus is on the phenomena, and on noticing their recurrence and lawfulness.

Some Overlap Onset 'Types'

Following are brief characterizations of each of the overlap onset 'types' I will be talking about.

Transitional. Roughly, a recipient/next speaker can be seen to be orienting to, monitoring for, and acting upon arrival of an utterance-in-progress at a state of syntactic completeness, and thus at a state of possible utterance completedness, and thus at a possible transition place; i.e., a place where speaker transition can, may, should occur.

Recognitional. Here a recipient/next speaker seems to be orienting, not so much to completeness as to adequacy. Roughly, although 'an utterance' has not been 'completed', that which is being said within and through it has been made perfectly available. And a next speaker apparently may, and recurrently does, start at that point.

Progressional. Roughly, a recipient/next speaker can be seen to be orienting to the 'forward movement' of an ongoing utterance, and acting upon the fact that at some point in it a problem arises in its progression towards completion and/or adequacy. Various types of dysfluency in the ongoing talk (what we speak of as 'hitches'), then, constitute a recurrent locus of next-speaker startings.

This report consists of a consideration of arrays of each of these 'types' of onset.

Transitional Onset

An enormous amount of overlap can be characterized as a byproduct of two activities: 1) A recipient starts to talk at possible completion of a turn in progress, while 2) the current speaker proceeds with further talk.

Looking at talk which might well be characterized as someone

starting-up 'interruptively'; i.e., in the midst of another's utterance, we find again and again that he has started up at a place which constitutes a perfectly good turn-ending.

Now there is some flexibility as to what "at" a possible turn-ending is, which is why we talk of a transition place instead of a transition point. But within that transition place there do appear to be specific points, and I am trying to track and indicate which point within the place is being used in any given case.

While the outside edges of the place are quite distinguishable, the points nearest to each other can be problematic. The result is that there is some instability in the transcripts. The talk clearly starts somewhere in the transition place, but just precisely where can shift from hearing to hearing. At one time it is heard just here, at another, just a bit earlier, yet again, back at the original point. Although there is this fine-grained instability, on a grosser level the transcripts are stable.

Here are three of the 'points' within the transition place, at which a next speaker may start up, and by starting up there collide with a current speaker's further talk.

Terminal Overlap. In the first place this phenomenon can be a matter, not of byproduct but of 'achieved' overlap. However, the projected overlap is utterly minimal and transitory. A next speaker starts up just at the final sound(s) of the last word of what constitutes a 'possibly complete utterance'. For example:

1. [Rah:A(a):4] ((British telephone))

Frank: °j's went f'r a cuupla pin_{[ts}°

Ken: He owes me eleven quiddih

2. [0:8B15(A):16] ((British face-to-face))

Andrea: th'fuhrst bit'v (.) income isn'tax_{[ed}.

Bette: No: that's right, mm:

3. [Fr:TC:I:1:17] ((American telephone))

Geri: That one week hadt^h be, the worst week in my, h (0.2) whole
academic li: fe.

Shirley: AH-HA-HA-HA-HA

4. [Friedell:29] ((American face-to-face))

Sandy: y-a:nd the five hundred a:v'rage.
(0.6)

Hank: No:, or a five hundred avera^gge.

Sandy: I think it's'n a::nd.

Now this phenomenon has a 'recognitional' aspect to it, although it might appear trivial. We can get a sense of this recognitional work by coming up with possible alternatives to the words which are just approaching completion (and bringing the utterance to possible completion). For example, in Fragment 1, an alternative might be "a couple of pin//eapples" or "a couple of pin//e trees", each of which is syntactically coherent but at complete odds with the prior context. For example, in Fragment 2, an alternative might be "isn't tax//i cabs are scarce", which would be syntactic gibberish.

So, although this phenomenon is so minimal and transitory, it exhibits a recipient/next-speaker's in-course parsing of a turn in progress, working with the repertoire of rules and procedures for the production of coherent, rational talk. They need not and do not await absolute termination to find - overwhelmingly correctly - what this word is, and where it is ending and - again overwhelmingly - with it, the utterance.

Further, this fleeting bit of overlap exhibits and invokes a principle - that of reasonable turn incursion. 'Terminal overlap' occurs at a point where a turn in progress is for all practical purposes completed; where what is being said is all over but for the final noises. There are

rather more substantial exhibits/invocations of the principle of reasonable turn incursion, and we will see some of them later in this report. For now, we will be proceeding forward across the transition place rather than backwards into the turn.

Terminal Overlap // Overlapped. We have looked at 'terminal overlap', which itself constitutes a minimal and fleeting, 'achieved' overlap of one utterance by another. But this projectedly minimal overlap may become quite more substantial as the new utterance finds itself in collision with a current speaker's further talk.

It is with this phenomenon that we begin to get into the sort of overlap I characterized as a byproduct of 'transition-place' onset by a recipient and further talk by the current speaker. For example:

5. [Rah:B:2:(14):10:R] ((British telephone))

Vera: they muucked intuh biscuits. They had (.) quite a lotta
 → biscuit [s'n ch e e ↓ : : : s e ,]
 Jenny: → Oh : : well thaht's it th en ye [s.
 Vera: → [h'a:nd e-she said
 that's enough fo:hr them.
 Jenny: → M-hm:: theh bonny ki:d s I m u s' s a y ,]
 Vera: → [They ahr: lovely ch il:dren

6. [SCC:DCD:10] ((British face-to-face))

Sokol: 'e phonedju up three toi:mes abaht this dit'n ey.
 (0.5)
 Bryant: → °Cahn't remembu [h (how many)°
 Sokol: → [No you cahn't remembuh buh ah'm tellin you.
 Bryant: → [o ()°

7. [SBL:2:1:8:R:6] ((American telephone))

Nora: I think maybe id be more pleas'n jus take'm up tih the:
 (0.3)
 Nora: → El Encah:nt [o er something (l'k that)]
 Bea: → [↑WHO DIDJU say i't w a : s

8. [Fr:USI:95:R:2] ((American face-to-face))

Vic: En it bothuhd m [e behind it b.ecuss] ah still think °of it.°
 Carol: → [°It ↓bo:thuhd'ju!°] °.↑ha:::°,°

I want to stress about this and other 'transition place' overlaps that at the point of overlap onset the recipient/now-starting next speaker is doing something perfectly proper, perfectly within his rights and obligations as a recipient/next speaker. He is not doing what we commonly understand to be 'interrupting' - roughly, starting up 'in the midst of' another's turn at talk, not letting the other finish.

On the other hand, the current speaker is also doing something perfectly proper. He is producing a single turn at talk which happens to have multiple components in it.

Thus, each, from his own, or the system's standpoint, is properly and rightfully taking or occupying a turn. Each has 'equal rights' to the turnspace.

This circumstance of each proceeding with perfect propriety and 'equal rights' appears to have consequences for subsequent activities. Roughly, although there is a general rule, 'do not interrupt' - which neither participant is violating - there appears to be no rule which provides for who should stop and who should proceed. The working out of this matter seems to be done along interactional/contextual guidelines rather than by following some simple rule for 'overlap resolution'.

Let us turn to the next 'point' within the transition place.

'Latched'-to-Possible-Completion Onset. This next point within the transition place is constituted by the perfect juxtaposition or 'latching' of a next turn to a turn just now completed. For example:

9. [NB:IV:4:R:19:R] ((American telephone))

Lottie: Ah wouldn'ev'n lẹ-ẹ- tell Bud I:'d jis go ahead'n have the party.

Emma: → 't Yah, =

Lottie: → =Tuh hell with im.

'Unmarked Next Position' Onset. My impression is that of all the transition-place points, this is the most frequently used. A recipient/next speaker does not start up in 'terminal overlap', nor 'latched' to the very point of possible completion, but permits just a bit of space between the end of a prior utterance and the start of his own.

In my transcripts this relationship is unmarked. That is, although my transcripts have symbols for other non-overlapping onsets such as the equal signs [=] which indicate a 'latch', as in Fragments 9 and 10, or the dot-in-parentheses [(.)] which indicates a tiny 'gap', a 'micropause' between two utterances (see, for example, the inter-utterance gap shown in Fragment 15 below), many next utterances simply start on a next line with no symbol. For example:

15. [JG:I(S):X:15:R] ((American telephone))

Tom: → Hello: Jas↑in
 Jason: → hHi: To↑:m
 Tom: → How'r you:.
 Jason: → I':m ↓GRE:A:T,=
 Tom: → =G00:d.
 (.)
 Jason: → How'r ↑you:.
 Tom: → Pretty ↓goo:d,
 Jason: → Hey we're havin a meetin:g Toosdee ni:ght,
 Tom: → Toosdee ni:ght?

16. [Rah:A:l:(5):1] ((British telephone))

Jessie: → Hello Redcuh five o'six one?
 Thomas: → Mum?
 (0.2)
 Jessie: → Ye:s?
 Thomas: → Me Thomas,
 Jessie: → Oh hello thehr what'r yih ↑doing.
 Thomas: → Ohn jis ringin tih say ah'm still ali:ve en ah'm still'eah.
 Jessie: → Yih still ali:ve'n yih still theah. Well thaht's very nice,
 en yih don'want any tea.
 Thomas: → No I got some I'ad curry.

With this 'unmarked next' positioning one doesn't get a sense of a next utterance being 'pushed up against' or into the prior, nor of its

being 'delayed'. It simply occurs next.

And I think a great deal of talk which may strongly present itself as 'interruptive' on first glance, turns out to be 'unmarked next' positioned. It strongly presents itself as 'interruptive' because it starts up after a current speaker has shown himself to be producing further talk. Thus, the next speaker is starting up 'in the midst' of another's talk.

I want to approach this phenomenon cautiously by initially focussing on innocuous cases, in which the overlapping talk is not the sort which might motivate one to become rule-violative. And in the first two fragments, the overlapped material, while it might well indicate that a current speaker is proceeding, does not constitute 'talk' as such. That is, we are parsing 'unmarked next' position across another's inbreath (the inbreath indicated by a series of 'h's with a prefixed dot ['hhh]).

17. [NB:II:2:R:15-16] ((American telephone))

Nancy: en Fowler, hadtuh physic'lly remove'im fr'm iz
 → office, h'hh [hhhhhhh
 Emma: → Ri:lly?<

18. [Rah:B:1:(13):8] ((British telephone))

Jessie: it's only venee:r thou:gh, 'hh, hh but it's: a beautiful.
 Ann: Ye:s.

In these two and the next three innocuous cases, what I want to be noticing is that the little space which a next speaker is providing for, between his own and a prior utterance, has become 'visible'. This is because the space is now occupied by sound. In the two above fragments, the space is occupied by nothing more than audible breathing.

But in the next three 'innocuous' fragments, the space is inhabited by a current speaker's actually producing further talk.

19. [NB:I:6:R:5] ((American telephone))

Lottie: so I fixed (.) lunch fer the:m en, so: Jee:ziz I wz really...
 Emma: nYeoh

20. [Her:I:3:2] ((British telephone))

Doreen: Uh I got rid'v the other one c'z there wz a big lump...
 Lisa: °Yes.°

21. [O:8B15(A):29] ((British face-to-face))

Bette: If it wz'n ohrd'nry day you'd be alri:ght.th 'z plenty
 Andrea: Ye:ah.

With the above five fragments we can get a sense of that little space which a next speaker might be providing for. We can also see that:
 1) that space can be inhabited by something a current speaker is doing, and/but 2) the next speaker is proceeding 'nevertheless'.

Staying for awhile with these 'innocuous' cases, I want to propose that they can best be treated as collisions between a current speaker proceeding with further talk and a recipient/next speaker producing what would otherwise come off as that 'unmarked next' position we saw in Fragments 15 and 16. Were it not for the sounds the current speaker is making, the data would go:

17.

Nancy: en Fowler, hadtuh physic'lly remove'im fr'm iz office,
 Emma: Ri:lly?<

18.

Jessie: it's only venee:r thou:gh,
 Ann: Ye:s.

19.

Lottie: so I fixed (.) lunch fer the:m
 Emma: nYeoh

20.

Doreen: Uh I got rid'v the other one
 Lisa: °Yes.°

21.

Bette: If it wz'n ohrd'nry day you'd be alri:ght.
 Andrea: Ye:ah.

What becomes interesting is that in Fragments 19-21 the recipient/

next speaker is starting up-his 'unmarked next' positioned acknowledgement at a point at which it is clearly unnecessary, uncalled for, etc.; that is, after the prior speaker has perfectly clearly launched a continuation.

I want to account for this phenomenon in the following way. Roughly, we might see that this provision of a little space between the two utterances is part of the recipient/next speaker's work.

It is not, then, a matter of a silence occurring, the recipient/next speaker understanding thereby that the prior turn is completed, and then starting to talk, as is sometimes argued. Rather, upcoming completion is projected as the talk in progress is unfolding, and the recipient/next speaker undertakes to produce this particular sequential configuration, with the inter-turn space as a projected part thereof.

What the recipient/next speaker is doing, then, might best be described as an action underway which consists of: 'permitting a bit of space and then starting to talk'.

And such an action underway might not have the recipient/next speaker in such an orientation as would have him listening for or attending to that small particle of sound inhabiting the little silence he is now providing for. He can be in a 'blind spot', as it were.

(In contrast to this 'blind spot' we will be seeing some materials in which, with sometimes very tiny bits of sound to work with, a recipient who is 'geared up' or 'primed', exhibits 'recognition'.)

With these considerations in mind, we can turn to the more substantial and problematic instances of 'Unmarked Next' Position // Overlapped.

22. [Rah:II:11:R] ((British telephone))

Jessie: B't eez a fenny ki:d 'hh=
 Ida: =Y::te,h
 Jessie: [Ee-]Ee wz se [o u, pset] k-'Ee [w- Yihkn] ow=
 Ida: [(sh'eeuh)] [(W ' 1)]
 Jessie: → =ee'd bean crying when I got back b't [I wz back befo] hr six.
 Ida: → [Haa-gh-d 'ee:]

23. [SCC:DCD:27] ((British face-to-face))

Sokol: 'hh Yohr sayin it's wea:r friction †Wuh do agh do: wolk rone
 → wem: (.) with me neck like that use the bewlt w-ezza]=
 Bryant: → [Wi:th with with]=
 Sokol: =whi [p wolk alon]g w [ih me ahms like tha:t?]
 Bryant: [With grea:t] [With great respec't'yoh] With great...

24. [SBL:3:3:R:5] ((American telephone))

Milly: Ah'aftuh figure my intrest en my (.) i-uh:: re†:ntals,
 Keith: Ya:h.
 (0.2)
 Milly: 'hhh, hh
 Keith: → [Butchu gotta lotta deductions on [those rentals]
 Milly: → [Yeh I have J] an's
 Keith: teeth en evry°th* [ing°]
 ['n d epreciation en evrything]

25. [GTS:I:1:40:R:4] ((American face-to-face))

Ken: I alwee [z have] gone
 Louise: → [I [N †U]: N I] S I : : : : :N I: [N †u:::] NUHSI]:N
 Roger: → [I C' N R' ME] MBER ABAHT< [†FOUR WE EKS i]

Looking at these, one might wonder if at least sometimes the talk which starts after continuation has been indicated might not well be hearing and countering rather than 'blind to' the continuation. And that may be so. The notion of 'recipient action underway' and its resulting blind spot is a 'systems' characterization of/account for a recurrent phenomenon. It may very well not at all account for any particular bit of behavior. It is perfectly possible that someone is in fact hearing the other starting to continue and making a move to 'interrupt' that continuation then and there.

But this 'motivated' positioning is otherwise accountable - as a 'transition-placed' onset rather than a 'mid-turn' onset. That is, starting just there may be characterized as a 'systems entitled and accountable blind spot', where, then, such an account is exploitable on any given occasion.

A 'systems' analysis of some data will be satisfied by identifying some bit of behavior as an instance of a 'transition place' onset (in that space with which one produces an 'unmarked next' turn) which happens to collide with a prior speaker's continuation.

An 'interactional'/'single instance' analysis might well discover that on this particular occasion, the systematic entitlement to talk at that point is being exploited to, in fact, 'interrupt' an utterance in progress.

Thus, at this outer edge of the transition space we find the possibility for an accountable intersection of a turn in progress. I want to return now to the inner edges of the transition space and take up the principle of reasonable turn incursion I mentioned by reference to 'terminal overlap'.

Staying for awhile with the phenomenon of 'terminal overlap' we can begin to track that principle of reasonable turn incursion a bit further back into the turn, or at least to see greater convergence between 'transitional' and 'recognitional' monitoring. That is, where perhaps we begin to see an orientation to the 'adequacy' of an utterance as well as (or above and beyond) its sheer approach to completion.

Pre-Terminal 'Gearing Up' (Inbreaths). Clearly enough part of the monitoring of a turn in progress involves a gearing up for the starting of a next turn. A lot of this work is unavailable to empirical observation.

But at least now and then bits of it become available in, for example, such 'pre-speech' activities as inbreaths.

26. [Rah:B:(13):2:R] ((British telephone))

Jessie: cuz she's nevuh fbean cah_[mpin]g.
Ann: _[.hhh]I't's smashing once you...

27. [Her:OII:2:4:1] ((British telephone))

Heath: This's Heather|ton:.
Steven: → Yes Heath_[ht]'n.
Heath: → _[.h]Steven look ah:: I'm I'm phonin:g uh on
behah:lf'v Doreen'n myse:lf we just hehrd abah:t poor um
(0.4) Sondra.

28. [Fr:TC:I:1:13] ((American telephone))

Geri: Wul maybe we'av six. But we don't have fi:ve.
Shirley: _[.hh]Whenju get out.

29. [NB:II:3:R:1] ((American telephone))

Lottie: Oh: God ah bet it's ho: :t.
Emma: _[.hh]Hunderd'n fiftee:n.h

Although the actual talk starts at the very last sound of the very last word, the inbreath - that bit of observable gearing up - starts slightly earlier. In Fragments 26 and 27 it starts still within the last word, and in Fragments 28 and 29 it starts simultaneously with the last word; that is, without actually having heard any part of it. And we will see these two activities manifest in actual talk in the following considerations.

Recognitional Terminal Overlap. Whereas in Fragments 26 and 27 a recipient/next speaker can be seen to be gearing up at some earlier point in an utterance but starting to talk at the very last sound, here we see a recipient/next speaker starting to talk at that earlier point.

30. [Rah:B:2:(14):1:R] ((British telephone))

Jessie: Oh::: Hahv they'av yih visitiz go_[ne then,]
Vera: _[Theh'v|go]:ne. Yes,

31. [SCC:DCD:30] ((British face-to-face))

Bryant: some'z we're neglighent (.) not on puhrpose b't we're still
 → LIa[ble.] We eccept completely th't if eh if this:...
 Sokol: → No bt woh I:'m s a y i n i s this.

32. [Fr:K:III:11:R] ((American telephone))

Alan: W'l b-] bring a change a'clothes yih c'n use the
 → ba:th r'm d'change,
 Mary: → Okhhay ghhood,

33. [G:91:MPES:5] ((American face-to-face))

Joann: We weren't crying we were lau:ghing.
 Pam: I know ut.

This phenomenon may be, in principle, different from the last-sound phenomenon. Here it is not so much a matter of hearing a word in progress and starting up upon its final sound, but of 'recognizing' what that word is, in the first place and acting upon that recognition; of placing one's talk upon recognition rather than upon imminent completion of the recognized object.

And in this regard I want to make an observation that holds across the various materials we have been looking at. While in Fragments 30, 32 and 33 the recipient/next speaker in various ways shows or claims attention to/understanding of the overlapped word, in Fragment 31 she does not. In Fragment 31 the recipient/next speaker may be working more with the feature that such a point in an utterance can constitute a reasonable transition place, than with the substance of the utterance.

This sort of dichotomy appears throughout the corpus. That is, we find at a same 'place', recipient/next speakers 'showing understanding' of the turn they are overlapping, and thus exhibiting its substantive adequacy, and we also find recipient/next speakers not attending the prior turn in that way, but rather, say, exploiting its status as 'for all practical

purposes completed'. In the former case, next speakers in effect propose that the current speaker has 'said an adequate thing'; in the latter, that the current speaker has 'reached an adequate place'.

The next phenomenon pushes this principled incursion further back into the turn. In Fragments 28 and 29 we saw a gearing up in independence of any hearing of the final word. In the following fragments we see talk produced in that manner.

Pre-Completor Onset. The base procedure here is the projection of the item which will bring a turn to completion, and starting up then and there, rather than waiting for that word to reach imminent completion, as is done with 'terminal overlap', or at least partial utterance, as is done with 'recognitional terminal overlap'.

Whereas with 'terminal overlap' the talk can be seen to be 'all over but for the last sound(s)', with 'pre-completor' onset the talk can be seen to be 'all over but for the last word(s)'. At such a point the 'thing' has been adequately said, the 'place' has been adequately arrived at, and a next turn reasonably starts then and there.

Classic cases are such 'nominals' as "...on Boxing//Day" and such 'idiomatics' as "...as far as I'm//concerned", and "...like banging your head against a//brick wall". (The double obliques [//] mark the point of overlap onset.) For the array here I'm showing instances of another subclass which I find especially charming: Post-Modifier Onset.

34. [Rah:B:1:(13):8:R] ((British telephone))

Jessie: we go to ↓Wetherall's 'n they're alwiz very chahr:ming en
 → very[obli:]ging in ↓th*ah.
 Ann: → Ye:s.

35. [NB:IV:15:1] ((American telephone))

Earl: Yeah go ahea:d that's it su::re. Su::re. (.) Su::re.=
 Bud: → =That other stuff's kinda bulging.
 Earl: → But u h look uh.'hh Bu:d yuh know
 that ring's gotta come offa the:re,

And again we can see recipients/next speakers 'working with' the prior turn, 'showing understanding' of the projected item, or 'taking off from' that turn, working with its 'for all practical purposes completeness', its having 'reached an adequate place', as in Fragments 35, 39, and the parenthesized arrows in Fragment 38.

With the following phenomenon we begin to get somewhat removed from 'transitional' onset with its orientation to 'completeness', and more strongly focussed on an utterance's 'adequacy', although, again, the two aspects can and do converge.

Recognitional Onset

I am subdividing this phenomenon into two 'types'. One, it seems to me, has more to do with the targetting of an item, word, etc. The other seems to have more to do with an attending to the general thrust, sense, etc., of the talk in progress. And in each array we see some rather drastic turn incursion.

A. 'Item'-Targetted Onset

40. [Her:OII:2:4:4] ((British telephone))

Steven: Ri:ght Heathiht' n.
 Heath: Alright Steven,
 (.)
 Steven: → A very ha,ppy New Ye,ar. (t'the-)
 Heath: → Thank yoh: e n a ha,ppy ().

41. [Rah:II:11:R] ((British telephone))

Jessie: °two pihleece cah:rs'd° stopped outsi:de.=
 Ida: =eeYe::s?
 Jessie: → h An'that whether he thow:t that I ed'n
 accidn't ohr something I don't kno:w.
 Ida: → I : : : k n e o: w

42. [SCC:DCD:37:R] ((British face-to-face))

Bryant: 'F yohr p'pared tih cahm to iss agai:n that is you say yohr
 too we're too deahr but 'hh if you've gohtta credit neote
 → ih weon't cost you anything anyw]ay.
 Sokol: → Wul owright the:n,
 Sokol: That's faiuh.

43. [Fr:TC:I:1:2-3] ((American telephone))

Shirley: Who w'yih ta:lking to.
(0.6)

Geri: Jis no:w?

Shirley: → 'hhhh No I called be-like between ele_{ven} en

Geri: → a:nybuddy. (b)Bo-oth Marla'n I slept'ntil about noo:n,
[I: wasn't talkeen tuh

44. [Fr:USI:23:R:4] ((American face-to-face))

Fred: Those w'r° Alex's tanks w'r'nt theh°

Vic: Pod'n me?

Fred: → °Wern't° Didn't they belong tuh A_{Alex?}

Vic: → [No:] Alex has no ta:nks

While, except for Fragment 44, a transition place has not been adequately reached, an item has been produced sufficiently for recognition and response, with the "ha..." of "happy New Year", the "ac..." of "accident", the "co..." of "cost", the "ele..." of "eleven", and the "A..." of "Alex's". These, often deeply turn incursive, onsets can be seen to be principalled and reasonable.

B. 'Thrust'-Projective Onset

45. [Rah:II:17-18:R] ((British telephone))

Jessie: Oh didche keep fi:t,

Ida: eeYhhe: [s,

Jessie: Didju:=

Jessie: → =u_{Aow} didyih [get law:n I] d a

Ida: → O h it's m:ah:veliss:.. It's mahrvelous

46. [SCC:DCD:11] ((British face-to-face))

Bryant: → With great respectch yoh dressmakih is it pohssible=

Sokol: → = [No: i t]

Bryant: th't th'trimming she's u:sed tuh make this dress withu is
u is a little vahlnerable tuh friction.

47. [NB:IV:11:R:2] ((American telephone))

Gladys: I: uh:m'hh heard th'pho:ne ah wz watching television u-by
(→) the time I got out he_{re i-i}t'd stopped tringing.

Emma: (→) Ye:ah.

Gladys: 'hhhhhh

Emma: [Yea:h w'l I let ih ring about ten times uh tuh well now

→ maybe ye_{r'n th'BA:}]Thtu!:b.

Gladys: → [No no:]

47. (ctd.)

Gladys: 'h No: [uh wih] th't elevi sion o:n yih know=
 Emma: [°ehhh°] henh he [°°M m h m°°] °hm°
 Gladys: =ha lf th'time yih do n't hear it.
 Emma: [Y e : : la : : h.]

48. [G:93:AD:7:R:13] ((American face-to-face))

Lenny: the o:ne:: twin's wife come right'n the plant one night'n
 → wannih know who in the hell the girl was thet'er husbin=
 Cal: → = [hmh] w'z spe [nnin th] e night with evry night after wo:rk.m- [heh]=
 Lenny: [hm - hm] [nhn]
 Cal: =hhuh hu- [u-huh]
 Cal: [mmhhh] [hhmm:::]
 (): [huh he:h]
 Lenny:

49. [Fr:USI:95:R:7] ((American face-to-face))

Joe: B't he wannid the] dawg dih bite iz wife.
 (0.5)
 (): [°ehhhh°]
 Joe: → [So the come] s ho:me one, night, the sonofa] bitch [bit hi:m.]
 Carol: → [heh heh heh] heh he h heh heh [bit hi:m,]
 (.)
 Carol: ah! ah!

In each of the above five fragments the recipient/next speaker starts up well before anything like a transition place has been reached, but where an understanding of at least the general thrust of the utterance can have been achieved.

And in these fragments the recipients/next speakers appear to be attending to the 'premature' and turn-incursive character of their talk. In Fragment 46 the response is aborted ("No it") and the question is permitted to proceed in the clear. In Fragments 45 and 47 the responses are treated as possibly overlap-impaired and are repeated, "Oh it's marvelous. It's marvelous", and "No no," which is taken up again upon completion of the overlapped utterance, "No...".

Fragments 48 and 49 involve a recipient producing turn-incursive laughter. While laughter may constitute a 'back channel response' and

may therefore occur as 'accompaniment' rather than 'competition', in Fragment 48 the laughter may be seen as deferential to the talk in progress. That is, its 'thrust-projective' component is minimal and 'closed', "hmh (.) hm-hm" (where the slightly escalated "hm-hm" may be attending the information available in "was spe//nding..."). Upon completion of the overlapped utterance, the laughter is escalated to "nhn hhuh h_y-_u-huh"; i.e., becomes louder and moves into 'open' position.

In Fragment 49 the laughter has a very different character, and the outcome is very different. Here, the laughter might be characterized as 'competitive' rather than 'deferential', and instead of 'appreciation' of what has been said in the overlapped talk, we find a co-production (or perhaps a co-opting) of the crucial component, "bit him".

In these cases, then, we may be seeing various indications of and attentions to the possibly 'interruptive' character of this particular type of turn-incursive onset. 'Thrust-projective' turn incursion may be principalled and reasonable, but it may also be, from the standpoint of the participants themselves, problematic. That is, there may be an empirically observable point at which the principle of reasonable turn incursion comes into conflict with the pervasive orientation to a completed turn at talk.

I will turn now to the third general type of monitoring procedure and its attendant onsettings.

Progressional ('Hitch') Onset

I will consider two 'types' of dysfluencies or 'hitches' which constitute locuses of recipient/next speaker onset. One is mid-utterance silence and 'silence fillers' such as 'uh'. The other is 'stuttering'.

A. Onset Upon Mid-Utterance Silence or Silence-Fillers. Earlier I mentioned, with regard to 'unmarked next'-positioned utterances, that it is sometimes argued that a recipient/next speaker uses a format like: 'Possibly Complete Utterance + Silence' to decide that it is now his turn to talk. Massively that does not seem to be the case. However, there is a circumstance in which something of that sort appears to be going on, and that is by reference to an as-yet-uncompleted utterance. Recurrently in such a circumstance we find recipients/next speakers working with such a format as: 'Uncompleted Utterance + Silence (or Silence Filler such as 'Uh')'. For example:

50. [Rah:II:3:R] ((British telephone))

Jessie: Su some- yihknow wuh-ee: whether anything w'l show up un:
 → the eks-ray'r not? that's eh::: 'hh=
 Ida: → =No: no well wi'll see woh:n't we now.

51. [O:8B15(A):12] ((British face-to-face))

Andrea: °Hm:° P'rahps it would be worthwhile then
 Bette: → I doh- I: don't belong to one but
 → (0.7)
 Andrea: → I don't know whether it (.) makes fer happiness tih join...

52. [SPC:X:3:9] ((American telephone))

Mrs. M.: Nah ah think he wz just appa:lled et the turn thet things
 hev taken yihknow.
 Klugman: → Oh yes::. Someti:mes uh:
 Mrs. M.: → [Cz this lih guy ul stand in the
railroad tre-uh track . . .

53. [GTS:I:2:19:R:9-10] ((American face-to-face))

Roger: Oh they pray ha:rder.
 (0.3)
 Ken: → eh^h heh he No: they jst
 → (0.2)
 Roger: → Their prayers'r ansuhd. (.) h^heh

In the following fragment we see a rather nice use of this format, for an ambiguously completed/uncompleted utterance.

54. [SBL:3:5:R:10] ((American telephone))

Milly: En I said I'd never heard Hunter so that w'd be most
interesting.=

Ginny: =It certainly could the=

Milly: =Y a h, she tol'me

Ginny: → =Et le ast tha:t one thet I heard was
→ (0.7)

Milly: → She tol'me he wz wonder_{[ful,}

Ginny: _{[Yah}

Fragment 54 is particularly nice data for this issue because the recipient/next speaker to the ambiguously completed/uncompleted utterance can be seen to be monitoring for a place to produce a 'recycle' of an utterance she had aborted in overlap. Such recycles tend to occur immediately upon completion of the overlapping utterance (data not shown). The substantial silence before the recycle is then specifiably problematic and may be accountable by reference to the ambiguous character of the overlapping utterance.

Most roughly, "At least tha:t one that I heard was" can be, and apparently is, using the prior "...most interesting"; i.e., is operating as a version of a 'pro-termed repeat'. However it can also be heard, and apparently is being heard by its recipient/next speaker (who has just dropped out of overlap to permit its completion in the clear) to be as yet uncompleted, with something like "...very interesting" yet to come. And it may well be the substantial silence following "...was" which provides for the recipient/next speaker to treat the ambiguous utterance as, after all, not as yet uncompleted, but a completed pro-termed repeat.

So: For utterances which are, or are possibly, as yet uncompleted, recipients/next speakers can and recurrently do work with silence or silence fillers to decide that speaker transition may/can/should occur.

And while we recurrently find concensus, as in Fragments 50-54, we also find this to be a locus of overlap as the prior speaker, having

produced a silence or silence filler, goes on to complete his utterance.

55. [Her:OI:3:9] ((British telephone))

Nan: It's a bit oow (.) ah::m (.) bit'v a risk thou:gh tuh (.)
 → presu:me thet uh:: [ih tis ficti]tious.
 Barnaby: → [We:ll [yes I] know!]

56. [SCC:DCD:18] ((British face-to-face))

Bryant: → I think thet (.) in youh:r
 → (0.7)
 Sokol: → Ah ('d say) i]t wss baou:t]
 Bryant: → [(commen')]t' th' c o h:rt this wz said.

57. [NB:IV:10:R:24] ((American telephone))

Emma: → He c'n make me so da:mn mad I c'd
 → (.)
 Lottie: → [uW'1 tha]t's a 'way with me[!:. too!*:.
 Emma: → [bop eem]°b*ut°]

58. [Fr:USI:28:R:1] ((American face-to-face))

Vic: Ah'm not sayin the: uh dih deh dat's where it's at ee:thuh
 → you know uh:!::: th's t a h: s 'n a l l ut ↓shit.
 Mike: → [De- ih]Diz only ONE KID HERE th't loo]ks
 like ↓you . . .

Akin to 'Transitional' Onset, then, Onset Upon Mid-Utterance

Silence or Silence-Fillers (such as 'Uh') may be seen to be occurring at a point where speaker transition may/can/should and recurrently does occur. In both cases, overlap occurs as a byproduct. The final locus of overlap onset I will be considering in this report seems to have a rather different character.

B. Onset Upon Mid-Utterance 'Stuttering'. Rather than the format: 'Uncompleted Utterance + Silence/Silence Filler' we find in many cases that at some point in an utterance a speaker produces the little recyclings or revisings we know as 'stutters' or 'stammers', and at that point a next speaker starts up.

Whereas we find a lot of concensus in the materials involving an

uncompleted utterance + silence/silence filler, we find very little consensus in the materials involving stuttering. In fact, out of some 33 instances, only 2 have the stuturer stopping the moment the recipient/next speaker starts up. And these two cases involve some rather touchy business, in which the stuttering may be serving as a 'device'.

59. [Her:I:6:5] ((British telephone))

Doreen: No well they fidget. Theh-: the^y
Helen: [Yes they do

In this case the problem is that Helen's dogs don't like her to trim their claws. Doreen, who raises and supplies dogs to her friends and neighbors, has a concern and some advice about not cutting into the quick. She is at this point doing delicate work towards finding out if Helen is indeed doing that, and advising her not to.

60. [Fr:USI:23:R:3-4] ((American face-to-face))

Mike: °You thave a tank I like to I: l-i:°
Vic: [Yeh I gotta faw:dy:...

And in this case Mike is working towards persuading Vic to sell at a low price - or perhaps give him - one of his many fishtanks.

In the remainder of cases the stuturer proceeds with further talk, perhaps eventually dropping out, as in Fragment 63, but for the most part proceeding on to completion as in Fragments 64-66. (In Fragment 66 the stuturer's subsequent activity in the first round is unavailable vis-a-vis proceeding to completion, but clearly that in the second round).

61. [Rah:C:1:(16):9] ((British telephone))

Jessie: I hahv (.) yihknow I've-I've Hoovered th'bedrooms'n things
Ida: [Mm:.

62. [Friedell:43] ((American face-to-face))

Sheila: → I mean'hh theh-u-they've linked up I W(h)anna Holdjur=
Hank: → [°°Yhhe::ah.°°
Sheila: =Ha::n' en,
Hank: Yeh.

63. [Rah:1:2:2] ((British telephone))

Fawcett: when diyou wan'tuh come in Munda:y?
 Jessie: → Ehm: well any d-eh w'l w' [l y e s I] 'm on,
 Fawcett: → Cause yer on hah]lf ter:rm . . .

64. [SCC:DCD:28] ((British face-to-face))

Bryant: b't it's bean braid ed'n treate_d in such a way=
 Sokol: [n N o : : .
 Bryant: → =thet it's it's [a it's a diffrent (trimming).]
 Sokol: → [N o : . It's n o h t vuln'ra] bwl eh tohll.

65. [NB:II:4:R:8] ((American telephone))

Nancy: → Oh'e wasn't going 'ee din'go fishi-eh-deh-e=
 Emma: → = [O h I CAN'T go]
 Nancy: → [gidn:'] go GO:L [fing then] huh?
 Emma: → [O h : : G'od I can't go inna boat fer a
 long time . . .

66. [GTS:I:2:46:R:1-2] ((American face-to-face))

Louise: → Howss e-howss: [Th ()°
 Roger: → [eh wantuh git me in the r:
 (.)
 Roger: 'h swing a'thing °henh°=
 Louise: [hhh
 Louise: → =How uh how [old wr you w'ny'] f i r s' went]
 Roger: → [Bah th'time ah'm nineteen 'm a
 (.)
 Roger: genuine neurotic. heh

While in Set A (Onset Upon Mid-Utterance Silence/Silence Fillers) one might see a systematic 'legitimacy' to a recipient/next speaker starting up upon a 'hitch' (i.e., there is a good chance that the 'faltering' speaker is relinquishing the turn altogether), such a rationale does not hold for this collection.

Now, Charles Goodwin, in his book "Conversational Organization: Interaction Between Speakers and Hearers" (Academic Press, 1981), proposes that various types of 'hitches' can be seen to draw an inattentive recipient's gaze, and that phenomenon is exploited by speakers to regain wandering attention. It is possible that a more general description is:

'Hitches' generate recipient activities. And not infrequently the activity engendered by a 'hitch' is the starting up of a recipient's talk, regardless of the (in)auspiciousness or interactional (im)propriety of starting at such a place.

In that regard Fragments 61 and 62 might be of particular interest. That is, these acknowledgement tokens which occur upon a speaker's starting to stutter would not seem to be the sort of thing a recipient would be urgently motivated to slot into the course of another's talk. Yet such items do recurrently crop up at 'hitches' (consisting of both stutters and silence/silence fillers). They might be seen to constitute particularly nice instances of 'neutral' materials 'drawn' by - in contrast to 'motivated' materials exploiting the occurrence of - a 'hitch'.

The addition of 'Hitch' Onset to the array of orderly onset types provides that in principle there is no point in an utterance which is proof from systematically-accountable (if not interactionally legitimate) overlap. The 'Transitional' Onsets cover utterance ends and post-possible-completion continuations. The 'Recognitional' Onsets cover mid-turn materials, and the 'Hitch' Onsets cover virtually everything, including utterance beginnings, as in Fragment 66.

Summary

In the foregoing considerations I have mentioned three distinctive but convergent orientations to talk in progress: Transitional (focussing on a turn's completeness), Recognitional (focussing on a delivery's adequacy), and Progressional (focussing on the talk's flow).

Each of these provides for places at which recipients/next speakers recurrently start to talk. And each of these onset places is a locus of overlap; either byproduct overlap, as with Transitional Onsets and those

Progressional Onsets which occur by reference to an uncompleted utterance + silence/silence filler, or first-order overlap of varying degrees of turn incursion, as with Recognitional Onsets, and those Progressional Onsets which occur by reference to stutters.

These variously generated onsets can be seen to be at least systematic, if not perfectly 'proper', reasonable, legitimate, rightful, etcetera. And with these orderlinesses a mass of overlapping talk is lifted from the realm of non-systematic, perhaps unaccountable, perhaps only interactionally-motivated/accountable 'interruption'.