CHAPTER 30

DISCOURSE IN PRODUCTION

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I. INTRODUCTION

Discourse is language use in the large. It is more than the use of sounds, words, or sentences. It is extended activities that are carried out by means of language. Originally, discourse was synonymous with conversation—the word *discourse* comes from Latin *discursus* "conversation." Nowadays, it also includes stories, novels, newspaper articles, speeches, lectures—any extended but circumscribed piece of language use created for a coherent purpose. In common parlance, the term discourse is reserved for the ongoing activity. But that activity comes packaged in bounded units, each with a clear entry and exit. So we will want to speak not merely of DISCOURSE as an activity but of DISCOURSES as discrete units of that activity. This chapter is about the production of discourses.

Many discourses are spontaneous, produced without detailed planning beforehand. These include everyday conversations and extemporaneous narratives. Other discourses are the carefully crafted products of unhurried writing, rewriting, and editing. These include novels, newspaper articles, letters, plays, prepared lectures, and radio news reports. The processes of creating these two types of discourse are quite different. In this chapter, I confine myself to extemporaneous discourses, for it is there that we see the processes of production in their most telling form.

A. Two Views of Discourse

What, then, is a discourse? It can be viewed as a product, as an object that gets produced by people speaking. This is a position that has evolved largely among linguists and philosophers. It can also be viewed as a process, what the people speaking actually do, a position that has been developed mostly by sociologists and anthropologists. These two views are different in what they imply about language use in discourse.

The first view, in its simplest form, is that a discourse is a text or sequence

of sentences that is coherent by virtue of its internal linguistic structure (Halliday & Hasan, 1976; van Dijk, 1972, 1977). Let me call this the TEXT VIEW of discourse. Here, for example, is a minimal discourse.

My sister hurt herself yesterday. She stepped on a rake.

What makes this a discourse is that the two sentences could form a coherent segment of a conversation or novel. A discourse, then, is a linguistic unit larger than a sentence and having one or more potential uses. It is analogous to a sentence rather than an utterance: It is a linguistic type that is divorced from any particular speaker, addressee, or circumstances in which it is actually used. This view evolved from the study of sentence grammars, so the goal is ordinarily to specify the linguistic properties that make discourses coherent and able to serve the purposes they serve.

The second view is that a discourse is a joint activity carried out by an ensemble of two or more people trying to accomplish things together (Atkinson & Heritage, 1984; Button & Lee, 1987; Goffman, 1971, 1981; C. Goodwin, 1981; Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson, 1974). Let me call this the JOINT ACTIVITY VIEW of discourse. The idea is that conversations, stories, and other discourses are not created by speakers acting autonomously. Rather, they are the emergent products of an ensemble of people working together. Even stories told by single narrators are the outcome of such a process (Sacks, 1974). According to these arguments, we cannot understand what a discourse is as a product without understanding how it was created by means of this process.

B. Product or Process?

The joint activity view has many advantages over the text view, at least for the study of spontaneous discourse. Consider the coherence of a discourse. According to the text view, this is a property of the text as a linguistic unit. Just as we can examine the internal structure of a sentence and decide whether or not it is grammatical, we can examine the internal structure of a discourse and decide whether or not it is coherent. But this is simply wrong. As we will discover, the coherence of a discourse, whether it is a conversation or a monologue, emerges from what the participants are trying to accomplish as they produce the utterances they do (Morgan & Sellner, 1980; Sacks et al., 1974). We should not look for linguistic properties that distinguish possible from impossible discourses, for there are none.

It is also wrong to view discourses as purely linguistic objects—texts are purely linguistic objects—for discourses include much more than the sentences uttered. They also encompass: gestures with the hands and face (Bavelas, 1990; Bavelas, Black, Chovil, Lemery, & Mullett, 1988; Bavelas, Black, Lemery, & Mullett, 1986; Bavelas, Chovil, Lawrie, & Wade, 1992; Chovil, 1991; C. Goodwin, 1981; M. H. Goodwin & Goodwin, 1986; Kendon, 1980, 1987; McNeill, 1985, 1992; McNeill & Levy, 1982; Schegloff, 1984); tone of voice representing anger, surprise, and amazement; nonsyntactic expressions such as *oh, yes, well,* and *okay*; metacommunicative comments such as *uh, um, like,* and *y'know*; and a wide range of pauses, repairs, interruptions, and overlapping speech that would not be considered part of a text (see later). These features are ubiquitous

in spontaneous discourses yet are excluded on principle from the text view of discourse—and most other product views as well. In contrast, they fall directly out of the joint activity view. Their presence in discourse is a mystery until we view discourse as a joint activity.

The text view has come down to us primarily as an account of written discourses—stories, essays, novels, descriptions, and contrived examples like the woman stepping on the rake. But the fundamental form of discourse—indeed the only universal, spontaneous form—is face-to-face conversation, and that is a very different beast indeed. A written discourse is to a face-to-face conversation as a stuffed grizzly bear is to a live one. We may learn a great deal from inspecting the lifeless remains in the corner of a museum. But to understand the real thing, we must seek it out in its natural habitat and study how it actually lives.

In this chapter, I view discourse primarily as a joint activity. My reasons are practical as well as theoretical, for most research on spontaneous production comes from investigators with this view.

II. DISCOURSE AS A JOINT ACTIVITY

People do not talk just to hear themselves speak. They talk with others to get things done. Think about conversations you initiate with others. You talk with a department store clerk to buy some shoes. You call up your sister to get a post address. You discuss with your spouse what groceries to shop for. You tell a colleague a joke to amuse her. What you and your partner do each time is carry out one or more joint tasks, joint enterprises, or what I will call JOINT PROJECTS: you buy shoes from the clerk; you get an address from your sister; you and your spouse decide what groceries to buy; and you amuse your colleague with a joke. These are not descriptions of texts or acts of speaking. They are descriptions of projects you achieve jointly with your partner by means of your talk. Discourses are ordinarily, perhaps always, initiated and carried out to complete such projects. The participants do not always finish the projects they start—for a variety of reasons—yet that is what they ordinarily try to do. One of the fundamental issues of discourse, then, is this: How is a discourse created by people initiating and carrying out joint projects?

To begin, let us consider a telephone conversation from a large corpus of British conversations (Svartvik & Quirk, 1980). In this transcription, a comma indicates the end of a tone unit, spaced dash and spaced period indicate long and short pauses respectively, colons indicate stretched vowels, and adjacent pairs of phrases in asterisks (e.g., **seminar** and **yes**) indicate overlapping speech (8.3d.230).[1]

[1] Unless otherwise noted, the other spontaneous examples in this chapter come from the Svartvik-Quirk corpus as well. Each is marked by text number (e.g., 8.3d) and beginning line (e.g., 230).

1. A. (rings)
2. B. *Benjamin Holloway,*
3. A. *this is Professor Dwight's secretary, from Polymania College,*
4. B. *ooh yes,* –
5. A. *uh:m . about the: lexicology *seminar,**
6. B. **yes**
7. A. *actually Professor Dwight says in fact they've only got two more m . uh:m sessions to go, because I didn't realize it it . finishes at Easter,*
8. B. *I see, yes, *uh:um**
9. A. **so* it . wouldn't really be .*
10. B. *much point, . *no,**
11. A. **no,* .* (laughs)
12. B. *OK right, thanks very much,*
13. A. *OK . *bye,**
14. B. **bye,**

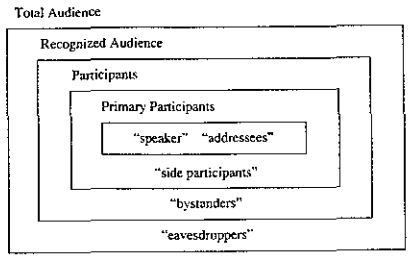
This is a brief but complete discourse between Alice, Professor Dwight's secretary, and Benjamin, Professor Dwight's student. Alice initiated the call to complete one major joint project—to give Benjamin a message from Professor Dwight—and they succeeded. Unremarkable as this conversation is, it illustrates four elements of all joint activities—personnel, accumulation of common ground, action sequences, and grounding.

A. Personnel

If a discourse is a joint activity, it needs personnel—at least two participants—and every discourse has them. The conversation here has two—Alice and Benjamin. Their PARTICIPATION ROLES, as I will call them, change from one action to the next. When Alice says *about the lexicology seminar* she is the speaker and he the addressee, yet when he says *yes* overlapping with *seminar*, he is the speaker and she the addressee. Participation roles are roles in particular joint actions.

Participation roles proliferate when there are more than two people (Clark & Carlson, 1982a; Clark & Schaefer, 1987b, 1992; Goffman, 1976). The first contrast is between PARTICIPANTS ("ratified participants," Goffman called them) and nonparticipants, or OVERHEARERS. The participants mutually believe they are engaged in the speaker's joint action at the moment, whereas overhearers do not. Participants divide into speakers, addressees, and SIDE PARTICIPANTS. The addressees are "those ratified participants who are addressed, that is, oriented to by the speaker in a manner to suggest that his words are particularly for them, and that some answer is therefore anticipated from them, more so than from the other ratified participants" (Goffman, 1976, p. 260). The other participants are side participants. Overhearers divide into two types. BYSTANDERS have access to what the speakers are saying, and their presence is fully recognized. EAVESDROPPERS have access to what the speakers are saying, but their presence is not fully recognized. Professor Dwight, for example, might eavesdrop on another line. These participation roles apply as much to written as to spoken discourses, but there they are nearly invisible, and they

are ignored in most analyses. We might picture participation roles in a set of concentric regions like this:



The participants in a discourse also have what I will call PERSONAL ROLES. Alice and Benjamin are, first of all, individuals with their own identities, beliefs, feelings, and desires. In this task, Alice and Benjamin also have professional identities. She is Professor Dwight's secretary, and he is Professor Dwight's student, and they are talking to each other in these roles. Notice that she identifies herself, not as "Alice Jones," but as "Professor Dwight's secretary, from Polymania College." In other calls she might identify herself as "Alice" or "Miss Jones." Personal roles also apply to written discourse, but are ignored in most analyses.

B. Accumulating Common Ground

The participants in a joint activity can succeed only by coordinating on their individual actions. This is so whether they are paddling a canoe, performing in a musical ensemble, playing tennis, shaking hands, waltzing, or conversing on the telephone. Failures of coordination regularly lead to breakdowns in the joint activity. But two people can only coordinate by making rather strong assumptions about each other. What are these assumptions, and how do they change in a discourse?

1. Common Ground

Two people take for granted, or presuppose, that they share certain knowledge, beliefs, and assumptions—and they each presuppose that they both presuppose this. The totality of these presuppositions is their COMMON GROUND (Stalnaker, 1978). It is the sum of their mutual knowledge, mutual beliefs, and mutual assumptions (Clark & Carlson, 1982b; Clark & Marshall, 1981; Lewis, 1969; Schiffer, 1972). Two people's common ground can be divided into two main parts. Their COMMUNAL common ground represents all the knowledge, beliefs, and assumptions they take to be universally held in the communities to which they mutually believe they belong. Their PERSONAL common ground, in contrast, represents all the mutual knowledge, beliefs, and assumptions they have inferred from personal experience with each other (Clark, 1993; Clark & Marshall, 1981).

Alice and Benjamin belong to a diverse set of cultural groups, systems, or networks that I will call cultural communities. Alice, for example, might view herself as a member of these communities: the British, the English, London residents, members of Polymania College, classical musicians, the Catholic church, and Arsenal soccer fans. Within each community, there are facts, beliefs, and assumptions that every member believes that almost everyone in that community takes for granted. She might assume all Londoners know where Piccadilly Circus, Regent's Park, and Soho are, what the Bakerloo Line, Madam Tussaud's, and the Tate are, and so on. So, once she and Benjamin reach the mutual belief that they are both Londoners, she can assume that all this information is part of their common ground. And that goes for universal information in all communities they establish comembership in (see Fussell & Krauss, 1989, 1991, 1992; Jameson, 1990; Krauss and Fussell, 1991). It is no accident that strangers often begin conversations by establishing the communities they belong to (*I'm from California—where are you from? I'm a psychologist—what do you do?*), for these can instantly create vast areas of common ground.

Alice and Benjamin's personal common ground is based instead on openly shared experiences. Some of these experiences are PERCEPTUAL. Once Alice and Benjamin have viewed or heard something together—for instance, they jointly saw a glass fall off a table or heard a telephone ring—they can assume that event is part of their common ground. Other joint experiences are CONVERSATIONAL. When Alice said to Benjamin *This is Professor Dwight's secretary, from Polymania College* and they established he had understood her, they could assume this information was also part of their common ground. Acts of communication are successful only when they add as intended to the participants' common ground.

2. *Adding to Common Ground*

Common ground is important to a discourse because it is the background, the context, for everything the participants jointly do and say in it (Clark & Carlson, 1981; Clark & Haviland, 1977; Gazdar, 1979; Lewis, 1969; Stalnaker, 1978). To see how, consider another joint activity, a chess game.

When two people meet to play chess, they each assume an initial common ground for the game. As communal common ground, they might presuppose the rules for chess, proper chess etiquette, each other's rankings, and other such information. As personal common ground—perhaps they have played each other before—they might assume mutual knowledge of each other's strategies, weaknesses, appearance, personal habits, and more. All this forms the initial context for the game. Once the game starts, the two of them add to their common ground with every move they make. White's first move adds to the initial common ground, creating a new common ground. Black's next move adds to the newly created common ground. And so on. Each move is taken with respect to the current common ground. For good chess players, this consists of more than the current state of the board. It represents the history of that game—how the board got that way. It includes their previous strategies, blunders, revealed weaknesses, and so on. The point is this: Common ground accumulates with every move, and each new move is taken, and interpreted, against the current common ground.

So it goes in discourse. When Alice and Benjamin opened their conversation, they too began with an initial common ground. Benjamin's first move, *Benjamin Holloway*, relied on a British convention for answering telephones by giving one's name, and Alice relied on the same common ground in interpreting that as his name. Next, when Alice said *This is Professor Dwight's secretary, from Polymania College*, she assumed as part of their common ground that Benjamin was acquainted with Professor Dwight from Polymania College. She would not have made this assumption of just anyone. She made it of the person who answered only after they established the mutual belief that he was Benjamin Holloway.

So every public move in a discourse is taken and interpreted against the current common ground of the participants. Their current common ground, however, has two parts. The DISCOURSE RECORD includes all the common ground they take to have accumulated in the discourse proper and what they have publicly accomplished in it. The rest is OFF THE RECORD. So what the participants do in a discourse is viewed both against the accumulating discourse record and against off-record common ground.

C. Action Sequences

The participants in a discourse work to complete overarching joint projects. These generally divide into smaller joint projects performed in sequence. Alice and Benjamin's conversation, for example, consists of three broad actions in sequence.

I. A and B open the conversation (lines 1–4)
II. A and B exchange information (lines 5–12)
III. A and B close the conversation (lines 13–14)

Each of these actions divides into further actions in sequence. Action I, for example, consists of these three actions.

Ia. A and B open the telephone channel (lines 1–2)
Ib. B identifies himself to A (line 2)
Ic. A identifies herself to B (lines 3–4)

Actions II and III divide in similar ways. All these actions are JOINT actions—A and B doing something together. Not only is the entire conversation a joint activity, but so are its parts.

Why are two actions taken in sequence? The commonest reason is that the second action is CONDITIONAL on the completion of the first. The second action must come second if common ground is to accumulate in an orderly way. This accounts for much of the sequencing in Alice and Benjamin's conversation. The two of them cannot exchange information until they have opened the conversation; they cannot close the conversation until they have opened it and carried out their main joint project—exchanging the information. And the same goes for many subactions. So these sequences are determined not by what Alice and Benjamin are trying to say, but by what they are jointly trying to do.

The most basic device for sequencing in conversation is the ADJACENCY

PAIR (Schegloff & Sacks, 1973). The prototype is the question–answer pair, as in this actual example (4.1.75):

A. *well has she brought you all your things then?*
B. *yes*

Adjacency pairs have two parts. a first pair part and a second pair part. The two parts belong to different types, here question and answer, and are produced by different speakers. The crucial property is CONDITIONAL RELEVANCE: Once A has produced the first pair part of one type (a question), it is conditionally relevant for B to produce a second pair part of the right type (an answer). Notice how the two parts must be in this order. B cannot know what type of response is appropriate until A has completed her utterance, revealing it to be a question that expects an answer of a certain type (*yes* or *no*). Adjacency pairs are inherently a sequencing device.

Adjacency pairs are really MINIMUM JOINT PROJECTS. What A is doing in asking B a question is PROJECTING a task for the two of them to complete—the exchange of information specified in her question. If he is willing and able, he will answer the question, not only taking up the proposed project, but completing it. That makes adjacency pairs ideal building blocks for dialogues. Many dialogues consist almost entirely of adjacency pairs. Alice and Benjamin's conversation is replete with them.

Adjacency pair	Example
Part 1. Summons	A. (rings)
Part 2. Response	B. *Benjamin Holloway*
Part 1. Assertion	A. *this is Professor Dwight's secretary, from Polymania College*
Part 2. Assent	B. *ooh yes –*
Part 1. Assertion	A. *uhm . about the lexicology *seminar**
	B. **yes**
	A. *actually Professor Dwight says in fact they've only got two more m . uhm sessions to go, because I didn't realize it it . finishes at Easter*
Part 2. Assent	B. *I see, yes*
Part 1. Assertion	A. *so it . wouldn't really be .*
	B. *much point,*
Part 2. Assent	B. *. no*
Part 1. Thanks	B. *thanks very much*
Part 2. Response	A. *OK .*
Part 1. Good-bye	A. **bye**
Part 2. Good-bye	B. **bye**

The pattern here suggests that overarching joint projects, like Alice and Benjamin's exchange of information, are accomplished through a sequence of minimum joint projects, and they are. But how? That is a question we will return to later.

D. Contributions

When Alice says she is Professor Dwight's secretary from Polymania College, it looks as if she is acting on her own. But she isn't. She is not making an assertion to just anyone. She is making it to Benjamin. To succeed, she must get Benjamin to attend to, identify, and understand her utterance precisely as she is issuing it. That alone requires joint actions.

Alice and Benjamin, however, must satisfy an even more stringent requirement. Recall that for a discourse to be orderly, the participants must keep track of their accumulating common ground. Now for Alice's assertion to get added to her and Benjamin's common ground, she and Benjamin must satisfy a GROUNDING CRITERION: They must reach the mutual belief that he has understood what she meant to a degree sufficient for current purposes (Clark & Schaefer, 1989; Clark & Wilkes-Gibbs, 1986). The process of reaching this criterion is called GROUNDING. During their conversation, Alice and Benjamin must ground each utterance. What emerges from the grounding of an utterance is what has been called a CONTRIBUTION.

Contributions normally have two phases: a PRESENTATION PHASE and an ACCEPTANCE PHASE. In the presentation phase, speakers present an utterance for their addresses to understand, and in the presentation phase, the addressees give the speakers evidence they have understood well enough for current purposes. Consider Amanda's attempt in 1 to ask her husband a question (5.9.518):

1. Amanda. *were you there when they erected the new signs?–*
2. Bertrand. *th–which new *signs**
3. Amanda. **litt*le notice boards, indicating where you had to go for everything*
4. Bertrand. *no,–that must have been in the year after me, you graduated*

In 1, Amanda presents the utterance *Were you there when they erected the new signs?* This is the presentation phase of her question. The problem is that Bertrand does not understand her reference to *the new signs*. So in 2, he initiates the acceptance phase by giving Amanda evidence that he understands everything except *the new signs*, which she therefore clarifies in 3. So only in 4 does he complete the acceptance phase. He does that by going on to the second pair part of the adjacency pair initiated by Amanda's question. With the answer *no* he implies that he has understood her question well enough to answer it—well enough for current purposes.

Addressees are expected to provide speakers not only with negative evidence when they haven't understood something, but with positive evidence when they believe they have.[2] Positive evidence has two common forms.

The first is the RELEVANT NEXT CONTRIBUTION. Let us return to three lines from Alice and Benjamin's conversation.

[2] Notice that addressees provide this evidence, but overhearers do not, and that should put overhearers at a disadvantage in understanding what speakers mean. Overhearers, in fact, understand less accurately than addressees (Schober & Clark, 1989).

2. B. *Benjamin Holloway*
3. A. *this is Professor Dwight's secretary, from Polymania College*
4. B. *ooh yes –*

In 2 Benjamin presents his name in order to identify himself. In the very next utterance Alice presents an utterance in order to identify herself as well. In doing this she provides two types of positive evidence that she has understood Benjamin's utterance. First, she passes up the opportunity to initiate a repair of his utterance ("Who?" "Bejamin who?"). And, second, she initiates a contribution that is the appropriate next contribution given her understanding of his utterance. Both signals imply she believes she has understood him well enough for current purposes. Benjamin in turn uses the same technique to imply that he has understood Alice's introduction: he goes on with *oh yes* to complete the adjacency pair she initiated.

The second common form of positive evidence is what has been called BACK CHANNEL RESPONSES (Yngve, 1970). Take these two lines from Alice and Benjamin's conversation.

5. A. *uh:m . about the: lexicology *seminar**
6. B. **yes**

In 5 Alice presents the first phrase of her message from Professor Dwight, and Benjamin accepts it as having been understood with a simple acknowledgement *yes*. With this response, he is claiming to have understood Alice's utterance so far and is telling her in effect "Go on." Acknowledgments like these are often called CONTINUERS (Schegloff, 1982). Note that Benjamin's *yes* is timed to overlap with the end of Alice's presentation. This is typical of acklowledgments. By making the *yes* overlap, he shows he is leaving the floor to Alice. Other acknowledgments include *uh huh, yeah*, and, in British English, *m*. In face-to-face conversation, they also include head nods, smiles, raised eyebrows, and frowns (Chovil, 1991).

Contributions can take an unlimited variety of forms, for utterances can be presented and accepted in an unlimited number of ways. One curious but common form of contribution is the COLLABORATIVE COMPLETION (Lerner, 1987; Wilkes-Gibbs, 1986). Consider three lines from Alice and Benjamin's conversation.

9. A. *so it . wouldn't really be .*
10. B. *much point, . *no**
11. A. **no** . (laughs)

In 9 Alice presents the beginning of a sentence (*so it wouldn't really be*) and pauses briefly as if she were searching for the right words to complete it delicately. Benjamin, perhaps to save her embarrassment, presents a possible completion *much point*. It gives Alice explicit evidence that he believes he has understood her entire assertion. Indeed, he immediately accepts the entire assertion, including his completion, by assenting to it with *no*. She in turn accepts both with an echoed *no* and a laugh.

So far, then, we have surveyed four elements of a discourse viewed as a joint activity. (a) Personnel: Every joint activity has participants as distinguished from nonparticipants—bystanders and eavesdroppers. The participants have personal roles both as individuals and as professional or societal agents.

(b) Common ground: At the beginning of a discourse, the participants assume an initial common ground, which they infer on the basis of shared cultural groups and prior joint experiences. Then, with each new public move, they add to that common ground. They produce and interpret each new utterance against their current common ground. (c) Joint actions: People participate in a discourse to carry out broad joint projects. They typically accomplish these projects through smaller joint projects completed in sequence. The minimal joint project is the adjacency pair, as in a question and answer. (d) Contributions: Minimal joint projects are themselves accomplished through contributions. One person presents an utterance, and all the participants ground it before preceeding on.

III. CREATING CONVERSATIONS

Conversations are not designed in the large. They emerge bit by bit as two or more people use language to try to accomplish certain things together. When people agree to a conversation initiated by another person, they generally do not know why the other person initiated it. They do not know what projects the other had in mind or whether they will agree to take them up if proposed. When Benjamin answered the telephone, he had no idea who was calling or why. That emerged only as he and Alice proceeded turn by turn. You can answer a telephone call not knowing it is a crank caller, but once you discover it is, you can refuse to proceed and terminate the conversation. You can refuse to continue any joint action in conversation.

Conversations, then, are LOCALLY MANAGED (Sacks et al., 1974). The actions people take in conversation are ordinarily parts of joint actions, and these must be agreed to moment by moment. Conversations emerge only as a result of this process. But if conversations are locally managed, how do the participants accomplish their global projects? This question has a surprising answer. It requires us to consider how turns are created and how larger units emerge as a result.

A. Turns

Conversations appear to proceed turn by turn—one person talking at a time. What are these turns, and where do they come from? Perhaps the most influential answer was offered by Sacks et al. (1974). In conversation, they argued, the participants speak in units that are potential turns—so-called TURN-CONSTRUCTIONAL UNITS. These range in size from a single word (e.g., Alice's *OK*) to clauses filled with many embedded clauses (e.g., Alices's *uh:m . about the: lexicology seminar actually Professor Dwight says in fact they've only got two more m . uh:m sessions to go, because I didn't realize it it . finishes at Easter*). The end of each turn-constructional unit is a TRANSITION-RELEVANCE PLACE—a point at which there may be a change in turns. The participants then follow a set of turn-allocation rules, to quote Sacks et al.:

> (1) For any turn, at the initial transition-relevance place of an initial turn-constructional unit:
>
> (a) If the turn-so-far is so constructed as to involve the use of a "current speaker selects next" technique, then the party so selected has the right and

is obliged to take next turn to speak; no others have such rights or obligations, and transfer occurs at that place.

(b) If the turn-so-far is so constructed as not to involve the use of a "current speaker selects next" technique, then self-selection for next speakership may, but need not, be instituted; first starter acquires rights to a turn, and transfer occurs at that place.

(c) If the turn-so-far is so constructed as not to involve the use of a "current speaker selects next" technique, then current speaker may, but need not continue, unless another self-selects.

(2) If, at the initial transition-relevance place of an initial turn-constructional unit, neither 1a nor 1b has operated, and, following the provision of 1c, current speaker has continued, then the rule-set a–c reapplies at next transition-relevance place, and recursively at each next transition-relevance place, until transfer is effected. (p. 704).

The result of these rules is an orderly sequence of turns.

As formidable as these rules look, they are quite straightforward. Suppose the current speaker is A in a conversation with B and C. If A produces the first part of an adjacency pair addressed to B (e.g., she asks B *well has she brought you all your things then?*), then A is using a "current speaker selects next" technique and selects B as the next speaker. From that moment on, B has the right and is obliged to take the next turn. The expectable thing for B to do, of course, is produce an appropriate second pair part (e.g., the answer *yes*). If, instead, A completes her turn without producing a first pair part, then the next turn goes to the person who speaks up first—B or C. If neither of them speaks, then she is free to extend her turn with another turn-constructional unit. And so on. These rules, Sacks et al. argued, account for many features of spontaneous conversation. They allow for the number of participants to vary, for what they say to vary, for turn size to vary, for turn order to vary, for conversation length to vary, and for many other such features.

In this model, turn-taking is governed by competition for the floor. The current speaker, say A, has the floor until the end of the current turn-constructional unit. At that point, unless A has addressed B or C with the first part of an adjacency pair (rule 1a), the floor goes to whoever speaks up first, A, B, or C (by rules 1b and 1c). If one of them wants to speak up first, they should try to PREDICT the end of A's turn, not merely REACT to it—as in an alternative model of turn-taking proposed by Duncan (1972, 1973). If they do, Sacks et al. argued, next speakers ought to time their next turn to begin at the end of the current turn with a minimum of gap, and they do. In one study, 34% of all speaker switches took less than 0.2 s from the end of one speaker's speech to the beginning of the next speaker's speech (Beattie & Barnard, 1979). That would be impossible if the next speakers were merely reacting to the end of the current turn. The next speaker should also occasionally mispredict the end of the current turn, and this happens too. In this example, B overlaps slightly with A, perhaps because A stretched the vowel in *size* (Sacks et al., 1974, p. 707).

A. *sixty two feet is pretty good si:*ze**
B. **oh*:: boy*

In the next example, Caller overlapped with Desk because she apparently did not foresee that Desk would add the vocative *Ma'am* to the end of the current turn-constructional unit (Sacks et al., ibid.).

Desk. *It is a stretcher patient *Ma'am**
Caller. **it's-* uh yes he is.*

This example also shows that Caller repaired the problem caused by the overlap and restarted her turn from the beginning. The Sacks et al. model accounts for precision timing in other phenomena as well.

The turn allocation rules, however, fail to account for a number of strategies that are common in conversation. Here are just a few.

1. Acknowledgments. Many acknowledgments, such as Benjamin's *yes* in line 6 of his telephone conversation with Alice, are timed to overlap with the ends of the units they acknowledge (see also C. Goodwin, 1986). The overlap is systematic and deliberate, which flies in the face of rules 1a–1c. Traditionally, these are therefore not considered turns. But if they are not, what are they, and how are they to be accounted for?
2. Collaborative completions. Recall that Alice's utterance in line 9, *so it . wouldn't really be . ,* got completed by Benjamin in line 10, *much point.* Here, Benjamin deliberately began speaking in the middle of a turn-constructional unit, contrary to rules 1a and 1b.
3. Recycled turn beginnings. Often, next speakers deliberately start their turns before the previous turn is complete in order to signal they want the next turn, as in this example (Schegloff, 1987, pp. 80–81).

   A: *Yeah my mother asked me. I says I dunno. I haven't heard from her. I didn't know what days you had *classes or anything.**
   B: **Yeah an I didn' know** ***I didn't know*** *when you were home or–I was gonna.*

   Not only does B start his turn early, but once A's turn is finished, he recycles the beginning of the turn in the clear (as highlighted) to make sure A has attended to it and heard it properly.
4. Invited interruptions. Current speakers sometimes invite addressees to interrupt as soon as they understand, whether or not it is at the end of a turn-constructional unit. Here is an example (Jefferson, 1973, p. 59).

   A. *I heard you were at the beach yesterday. What's her name, oh you know, the tall redhead that lives across the street from Larry? The one who drove him to work the day his car *was– **
   B. **Oh* Gina!*
   A. *'Yeah Gina. She said she saw you at the beach yesterday.*

   B interrupted A mid-utterance, and with A's consent and encouragement. A and B's collaborative strategy here goes counter to rules 1a–1c.
5. Strategic interruptions. Other times, next speakers interrupt current speakers mid-turn for other reasons they consider legitimate. Here is an example (1.9.83).

   A: *and as long as I'm in my own – little nit and nobody's telling me what to do*
   B: *yes*

A: *there doesn't really seem *anything**
B: **but how* long do you think it'll take them to finish?*

When B interrupts A with *but how long . . .* , he does so because he believes his question is more pressing at that moment than what A was saying. A may well agree. This too goes counter to rules 1a–1c.

6. Nonlinguistic actions. In face-to-face conversation, speakers use a variety of nonlinguistic signals that defy analysis into turns. Suppose you were talking to Calvin to confirm a story you had heard about him: *So you were at the theater? and Susan walked in and sat down beside you? and she didn't say anything?* Calvin could answer the first two parts by nodding animatedly over your questions and the third part by shaking his head. His gestures are equivalent to the second pair parts of adjacency pairs, to answering *yes, yes,* and *no* after each phrase. The problem is that they are not turns because they are entirely overlapping (see Brennan, 1990). This goes counter to the turn allocation rules, too.

B. Emergence of Turns

An alternative view of turns is that they are an emergent phenomenon (Brennan, 1990). Turns—when they do occur—have three main properties: (a) they consist of turn constructional units, (b) they are ordered, and (c) they are nonoverlapping. These properties, one can argue, derive from more basic properties of contributions and minimal joint projects.

Consider the requirement of nonoverlapping speech. To make a contribution, A must get B to attend to, identify, and understand the utterance she is presenting. If the utterance has any complexity, she cannot achieve this if her presentation overlaps with B's utterance. People cannot successfully attend to two complex tasks at once. So in several earlier examples, speakers repeated speech that had overlapped, as when Caller said **it's – * uh yes he is* and when B said **Yeah an I didn' know* I didn't know when . . .* Yet, when a presentation is simple enough, it can overlap and still be attended to and understood. This is standard with acknowledgments (*yes* and *uh huh*), head nods, and smiles. And as Alice and Benjamin's conversation illustrates, it is also common on the telephone to overlap the exchange of *bye*'s (see Clark & French, 1981).

Consider turn order. For two utterances not to overlap, they must be produced in one or the other order. What determines the order? Rule 1a is simply a statement of how adjacency pairs work. If A produces a first pair part of an adjacency pair, it is conditionally relevant for B immediately to produce a second pair part. That selects B as the next speaker. The order is required because B cannot usually know what the second part should be until A has completed the first part. Sometimes, however, B is able to perform the second part overlapping the first, as by nodding, and then rule 1a does not apply. Rules 1b and 1c arise when two presentations cannot be attended to, identified, understood, or taken up when they overlap, and when the participants still have joint projects to pursue.

Finally, consider turn constructional units. What constitutes such a unit is not specified within the rules of turn-taking per se. They are units of the contributions speakers are trying to make and of the joint projects they are trying to initiate or complete. They too are jointly determined. They will generally be phrases, clauses, or sentences, but they need not be, as in collaborative completions, invited interruptions, and other cases.

In short, the participants in a conversation will take turns when they have to in order to be understood or to know what to contribute. But they can often succeed with speech that overlaps and turn constructional units that are incomplete. In conversation, people's goal is not to follow certain rules of language. It is to succeed in the joint projects they undertake. Their local concern is not to create turns, but to complete their contributions and joint projects.

C. Pre-sequences

Whatever the status of turns, conversations are still managed locally and interactionally. The participants proceed contribution by contribution and by initiating and completing adjacency pairs or minimum joint projects. The puzzle is how they complete larger projects. How did Alice manage to give Benjamin the information she wanted to give him? Part of the solution lies in the use of special initiators to project the larger tasks. These special initiators are called PRE-SEQUENCES (Schegloff, 1980).

The idea is neatly illustrated with PRE-QUESTIONS. Consider this fragment of a British conversation (7.1d.1320).

Ann. ***oh there's one thing I wanted to ask you***
Betty. ***mhm–***
Ann. *in the village, they've got some of those . i– you're going to get to know, . what it is, but it doesn't matter really*
Betty. *mhm*
Ann. *u:m . those rings, that are buckles – –*
Betty. *that are buckles*
Ann. *yes, tha– they they're flat,*
Betty. *mhm*
Ann. *and you wrap them round,*
Betty. *oh yes I know*
Ann. *and, . you know, . *they're* a little belt .*
Betty. **m* m*
Ann. ***would you like one .***
Betty. ***oh I'd love one Ann –***

The first turn *oh there's one thing I wanted to ask you* is a pre-question. With it Ann asks Betty in effect whether she could ask her a question, and with *mhm,* Betty assents. But does Ann then ask the question? No. She launches into a series of preliminaries to the question—a description of a belt of interest—and asks her question *would you like one* only after that. What is going on here?

Pre-questions are devices for making conversational room to provide preliminaries to questions. As Schegloff put it, they are preliminaries to preliminaries. Ann presents her pre-question as a way of getting Betty to allow her to prepare Betty for the question proper. If she had been able to ask the question straight off, she wouldn't have needed the pre-question. So the pre-question

and its response constitute a device for Ann and Betty to agree to turn the floor over to Betty for as much space as she needs to get to the question. It projects a larger, encompassing joint task that consists of three parts: (a) a pre-question plus a response, (b) preliminaries to a question and answer, and (c) the question and answer.

A similar device is the PRE-ANNOUNCEMENT and its response, as illustrated here (4.1.790).

Kate. ***well d'you know what they got***
Luke. ***what –***
Kate. *they didn't get replies from . from most people, – hardly any replies at all – –* [continues]

With *well d'you know what they got?* Kate lets Luke know she has some potential news, and she projects two alternatives. If he already knows *what they got*, he can say "yes" or display the news, and they can go on from there. If he doesn't, he can say "no" and then she will tell him. He takes the second alternative and, instead of saying "no," he takes up her projected task directly and asks *What?* So Kate's pre-announcement is designed to get him to ask her for her news. With it she gets his agreement for her to take as much conversational room as she needs to tell the news.

Pre-sequences come in a variety of forms, serving a variety of purposes. They are used in making room for preliminaries to questions, for conditions to requests, for entire conversations, for stories, for taking leave, and for many other purposes. Here are just a few common pre-sequences.

Type of Pre-sequence	Example
Pre-question	A. *oh there's one thing I wanted to ask you*
Response	B. *mhm*
Pre-announcement	A. *well d'you know what they got*
Response	B. *what –*
Pre-invitation	A. *Are you doing anything tonight?*
Response	B. *No.*
Pre-request	A. *Do you have hot chocolate*
Response	B. *Yes, we do.*
Summons	A. *Hey, Molly*
Response	B. *Yes?*
Summons by telephone	A. (rings telephone)
Response	B. *Benjamin Holloway*
Pre-closing statement	A. *Well okay*
Response	B. *Okay*
Pre-narrative	A. *I acquired an absolutely magnificent sewing machine, by foul means, did I tell you about that?*
Response	B. *no*

Pre-sequences, then, create local adjacency pairs that project more extended joint tasks. They initiate the larger joint projects by establishing agreements by the participants to let them proceed. Pre-sequences are an ingenious solution to the problem of how to achieve global aims by local means.

D. Opening a Conversation

How do people create a conversation from nothing? When A (a woman) wants to talk to B (a man), she cannot proceed on her own. She must get B to join her in the activity that will turn out to be their conversation. To create a conversation, then, A and B must coordinate three things: (a) their ENTRY into that joint activity, (b) the BODY of that activity, and (c) their EXIT from it. Pre-sequences come in handy in all three phases. Let us look first at the entry.

People do not take deliberate actions without a reason, and that holds for conversations as well. When A initiates a conversation, she does so because she wants to accomplish something with B—give him a message, get information from him, invite him to a party. So in opening a conversation with B, she meets these requirements.

A1. A is willing and able to enter a conversation now.
A2. A is willing and able to enter a conversation now with B.
A3. A is willing and able to enter a conversation now with B to accomplish joint project P.

Note that 1 is presupposed by 2, and 2 by 3, so 1 can be satisfied without 2 or 3, and 2 without 3. Now when Alice calls Benjamin, she can be sure she meets A1–A3, but she can hardly be sure Benjamin meets B1–B3.

B1. B is willing and able to enter a conversation now.
B2. B is willing and able to enter a conversation now with A.
B3. B is willing and able to enter a conversation now with A to accomplish joint project P.

Maybe he cannot talk now (he is in the shower); maybe he does not want to talk to her (he is mad at her); maybe he cannot take up her proposed project (he has never heard of Professor Dwight's seminar).

A must therefore engineer B's entry into the conversation in steps. To establish A1 and B1, she rings B's telephone. She is willing and able to talk now, and if B is too, he will answer, knowing that whoever is calling is projecting a potential conversation, perhaps with him. The result is an adjacency pair, a summons and a response (Schegloff, 1968, 1979).

1. A. (rings B's telephone)
2. B. *Benjamin Holloway*

A's move shows her willingness to talk, and B's response shows his. This, of course, is a pre-sequence that projects a potential conversation between A and B.

To establish A2 and B2, A and B must be willing and able to proceed once they mutually know who they are talking to. Alice and Benjamin achieve that mutual knowledge in these turns.

2. B. *Benjamin Holloway*
3. A. *this is Professor Dwight's secretary, from Polymania College*
4. B. *ooh yes* –

Benjamin's opening response identifies him to the caller, and Alice's next turn identifies her to him. His identification is grounded by her going on, and hers is grounded by his assent *ooh yes*. His assent plus pause is also an invitation for her to proceed. So by line 4, A and B have established not only A1 and B1, but A2 and B2. Note that in establishing mutual knowledge of their identity, A and B also establish a vast network of personal and communal common ground, which is essential to everything else they do in the conversation. No wonder they establish their identities as early as possible.

Next, to establish A3 and B3, one of them, A or B, must propose the first main joint project the two of them are to carry out. Which one is to do this? Ordinarily, it is A. She would not have initiated the call without a reason—without a broad joint project in mind. Here is what Alice does.

5. A. *uh:m . about the: lexicology *seminar**
6. B. **yes**

With 5 she introduces the first topic, and with 6, Benjamin acknowledges it and shows a willingness to consider it further. With these moves, they have embarked on the body of the conversation, carrying out the main official business of the call.

Opening a telephone conversation, therefore, ordinarily meets requirements A1 through B3 in four steps.

Step 1. Common channel. A and B establish a common channel.
Step 2. Shared identity. A and B establish mutual knowledge of their identities, personal or professional.
Step 3. Joint willingness. A and B establish a joint willingness to talk to each other.
Step 4. First topic. A and B establish a commitment to consider a first joint project.

These steps are sometimes more elaborate, or problematic, than Alice and Benjamin's opening suggests. Here are two variations.

People often answer the telephone with a simple "hello," and that can greatly complicate steps 2 and 3 (Schegloff, 1968, 1979). Consider this example (Schegloff, 1986, p. 115).

B: (rings)
C: *Hello::,*
B: *H'llo, Clara?*
C: *Yeh,*
B: *Hi. Bernie.*
C: Hi *Bernie.*
B: *How're you.*
C: *I'm awright, how're you.*
B: *Okay:?*
C: *Good.*
B: *Laura there?* {first topic}

How do Clara and Bernie establish mutual knowledge of their identities? Bernie initially is forced to identify Clara from the voice sample in *Hello* and from the fact that she was a potential answerer of the telephone. They jointly establish her identity when Bernie guesses *H'llo, Clara?* and she confirms it with *yeh*. But who is he? All Clara has to go on is the voice sample in *H'llo, Clara?* and the fact that he guessed who she is. She does not seem to know (at least, she gives Bernie no evidence), and they cannot go on until she does. So Bernie says *Hi,* giving Clara another voice sample. Bernie's *Hi* seems entirely superfluous given he has already said "hello," but it is not superfluous as evidence of his identity. Clara still gives no evidence of recognition, so Bernie is finally forced to identify himself, *Bernie*. She returns with an enthusiastic *Hi Bernie*. This too would seem superfluous given she has already said "Hello," but it is used also to show her newfound recognition. In openings like these, then, people do not identify themselves until they have to. They give their partners the chance to recognize them first, and that gives their partners a feeling of personal achievement.[3]

In calls to "directory enquiries," the British counterpart to North American "information," the operator's first turn is nonstandard, and this can also lead to complications (Clark & Schaefer, 1987a). Here is a typical opening.

Customer: (rings)
Operator: *Directory Enquiries, for which town please?*
Customer: *In Cambridge.*
Operator: *What's the name of the people?*

In her very first turn, the operator not only identifies herself (*Directory Enquiries*) but also introduces the first topic (*for which town please?*), presupposing she knows why the customer is calling. This is odd, of course, because it is ordinarily the callers who expect to introduce the first topic. Indeed, some customers got confused, as in this call.

Customer: (rings)
Operator: *Directory Enquiries, for which town please?*
Customer: *Could you give me the phone number of um: Mrs. um: Smithson?*
Operator: *Yes, which town is this at please?*
Customer: *Huddleston.*
Operator: *Yes. And the name again?*
Customer: *Mrs. Smithson.*

In this call the customer introduced the first topic *Could you give me . . .* as if he had not even heard *For which town please?*

[3] In the Netherlands (and presumably elsewhere), the two participants normally identify themselves immediately, as in these translations (Houtkoop-Steenstra, 1986).

Caller: (rings)
Answerer: *With Mies Habots.*
Caller: *Hi, with Anneke de Groot.*

With Mies Habots is short for 'You are speaking with Mies Habots.'

Opening a conversation, then, is subject to many constraints. The main ones come from what the participants need to do to enter any joint activity. On the telephone, there are added constraints from conventions for answering the telephone, but even these appear to have evolved to satisfy the primary requirements for entry into joint activities.

E. Closing a Conversation

Closing a conversation is shaped by other requirements. A and B's main problem is that they have to leave the conversation together. If A left unilaterally, B might be offended, because he would think he was still in a conversation with A when he was not. To leave together, A and B must satisfy three requirements.

1. A and B mutually believe they have completed the last topic.
2. A and B mutually believe they are prepared to exit.
3. A and B mutually believe they are exiting now.

As in the opening, A and B satisfy these requirements in steps. Let us consider closing a telephone conversation (Schegloff & Sacks, 1973).

The first task is to agree that the last topic is complete. A may be ready to close a conversation when B is not, because he has another topic to bring up, or vice versa, so reaching that agreement is tricky. The characteristic solution, according to Schegloff and Sacks, is for one person, say A, to offer a PRE-CLOSING STATEMENT, like *yeah* or *okay*, to signal a readiness to close the conversation. If B has another topic to bring up, he can do it in response. If he does not, he can accept the statement with *yeah* or *okay*, and that opens up the closing section. So a pre-closing statement and its response constitute a pre-sequence: They project the closing of the conversation.

As illustration, consider the end of a conversation between a mother and a daughter, June and Daphie (7.3h.1012).

1. June. *yes*
2. Daphie. *thanks very much*
3. June. ***OK?***
4. Daphie. ***right,*** ***I'll see you this***
5. June. ***because*** *there how did you did you beat him?*
6. Daphie. *no, he beat me, four one* (. laughs)
7. June. *four one* .
8. Daphie. *yes, . I was doing quite well in one game, and then then I |– I lost*
9. June. *oh, how disgusting*
10. Daphie. *yes* .
11. June. ***OK,*** . ***right***
12. Daphie. ***right***
13. June. *see you tonight*
14. Daphie. *right, bye*
15. June. *bye love*
16. Both. (hang up telephones)

In 1 and 2, June and Daphie complete one topic (an exchange of information not shown here), and this is potentially the last topic. In 3, June seems to offer a pre-closing statement (*OK?*), and in 4, Daphie treats it as one when she accepts it (*right*) and begins the closing section (*I'll see you this evening*). Instead, June raises another topic—Daphie's squash game—and that takes precedence. Once this topic has run its course (5–10), June offers a second pre-closing statement (*OK . right*) which Daphie accepts (*right*), and the two of them enter the closing section proper (13–16).

Once the last topic is closed, the participants still have to prepare for their exit. If they are acquaintances, they may want to reassure each other that the upcoming break does not imply anything wrong with their relationship. The break is not permanent. They will resume contact in the future (Goffman, 1971). Here are five minor projects people often accomplish in taking leave, and in this order (Albert & Kessler, 1976, 1978).

1. Summarize the content of the conversation just completed.
2. Justify ending contact at this time.
3. Express pleasure about each other.
4. Indicate continuity of their relationship by planning for future contact either specifically or vaguely ("see you tonight").
5. Wish each other well ("bye").

The last two actions often get conventionalized as farewells. Action 4 is expressed in such phrases as *see you, auf Wiedersehen, tot ziens, au revoir,* and *hasta la vista,* and 5 in *good-bye, good evening, guten Abend, goede dag, bon soir, adieu, bon voyage, buenas noches, adios,* and *shalom.* With these actions, the participants reach the mutual belief that they are prepared to exit the conversation.

The final problem is to break contact together. On the telephone, that means hanging up the receivers. Now, if A hangs up before B, that may offend B because it ends the joint activity unilaterally. So A and B try to time their breaks to be simultaneous. They work up to saying "bye" together, at which moment they begin replacing their receivers. If they do this just right, neither of them hears the click of the other's receiver.

F. Making Room for Narratives

When A is talking to B, she cannot launch into a narrative on her own. She must get B to agree to dispense with their turn-by-turn talk for the moment and give her room to complete the narrative. The basic requirement is this.

NARRATIVE REQUIREMENT: The participants in a conversation mutually believe that they want A to tell a particular narrative now.

A and B must therefore agree that: (a) they both want A to tell the narrative; (b) they want this narrative in particular; and (c) they want it told now. How do they manage this?

Narratives can be introduced by either the prospective narrator or the prospective audience. The simplest method is for a member of the prospective audience to request a particular story now, as here (1.3.215).

Barbara. *how did you get on at your interview, . do tell us*

Annabel. *. oh – – God, what an experience, – – I don't know where to start, you know, it was just such a nightmare – –* [proceeds to give a 30 minute narrative]

Barbara proposes a particular joint project—that Annabel tell them now how she got on at her interview—and, in the second part of the adjacency pair, Annabel takes up the proposed project with a 30 minute narrative. But what if Barbara does not know Annabel has a particular story she wishes to tell now? Then Annabel must arrange for Barbara to want her to tell it now, as she actually does here (1.3.96).

Annabel. *I acquired an absolutely magnificent sewing machine, by foul means, did I tell you?*
Barbara. *no*
Annabel. *well when I was . doing freelance advertising* – [proceeds to give a 5 minute narrative]

In the initial adjacency pair, Annabel alludes to a story and asks Barbara if she has told it to her, and Barbara replies *no*. The two of them clearly take the adjacency pair to be more than a question and answer. They treat it as a PRE-NARRATIVE that licenses Annabel to tell her story, for she immediately launches into a 5 minute story.

How do pre-narratives work? The question was taken up in detail by Sacks (1974) for jokes. The cardinal rule for jokes, Sacks noted, is this: Don't tell people a joke they have already heard. So prospective joke tellers must check whether their audience has heard the joke they want to tell. They may do this by giving a brief précis of it, "Did you hear the joke about the President and his dog?" They must also check for the other requirements—does the audience want to hear the joke, and if so, now? What holds for jokes largely holds for any type of narrative, as illustrated by Annabel in her pre-narrative. She first gave a précis of her story, *I acquired an absolutely magnificent sewing machine, by foul means*—a blatant advertisement for the story—and then checked whether Barbara had heard it before, *did I tell you?* Only when Barbara said *no* did Annabel take them to be jointly committed to her telling the narrative now.

Where, then, do conversations come from? The evidence I have summarized suggests they are created by people trying to accomplish extended joint projects piece by piece. Conversations are a joint activity, so the participants have to establish agreement among themselves at each moment on what they are doing. That requires local management, and so the participants in a conversation appear to proceed turn by turn. On closer look, however, these turns are an emergent phenomenon. They arise as the participants try to contribute to the conversation, grounding what they say, and as they try to complete joint projects. To construct more extended joint projects, the participants often exploit such pre-sequences as pre-questions, pre-opening summons, pre-closing statements, and pre-narratives. They use local means to accomplish global aims.

CREATING NARRATIVES

Narratives seem different from conversations, because they seem to be produced by individuals speaking on their own. Once Annabel is asked *how did you get on at your interview, . do tell us,* she appears to hold forth by herself until she is finished. But appearances belie reality. Narratives rely just as heavily

on coordination among the participants as conversations do. It is simply that the coordination is hidden from view.

What needs to be coordinated? When Annabel tells about her job interview, she is engaged in a joint project: She is trying to get her addressees to experience vicariously selected parts of what she experienced at her interview, and that requires their joint commitment to a coordinated action. Her original experience was at turns hilarious, exasperating, disappointing, and nerve-racking, and she wants her addressees to understand how. At the center of such a joint project is a SITUATIONAL MODEL, a mental representation or model of the situation being described (e.g., Johnson-Laird, 1983; Miller, 1979; van Dijk & Kintsch, 1983). Annabel and her addressees jointly expect the addressees to create such a model of her job interview as she describes it and thereby to experience selected aspects of the situation as she herself experienced it.

What does it take to coordinate on situational models? Unfortunately, too little is known about what they are, what they contain, how they work. Yet a model of an individual situation S probably represents or presupposes at least these elements (Morrow & Clark, 1988).

1. An observer O, ordinarily the narrator, with a particular viewpoint on S
2. The spatial and temporal frame of reference determined by O's viewpoint
3. Individual objects, states, events, and processes located with respect to O's frame of reference
4. O's focus of attention within the frame of reference
5. O's experience of changes in the objects, states, events, and processes as S unfolds in time
6. Changes in O's viewpoint and focus of attention within the frame of reference

It is not easy for narrators and addressees to coordinate on these elements. How they manage relies in part on the way the narrators formulate their narratives. Let us see how.

A. Intonation Units

One of the most conspicuous features of spontaneous narratives is that they emerge in bursts of words about one clause long. Consider an excerpt from one of the "pear stories," narratives that Chafe (1980) and his colleagues recorded by asking people to describe what happened in a short film about pear-pickers. In this transcription, pauses are represented in seconds by the numbers in parentheses, slight breaks in tempo by double periods, and stretched vowels by dashes (Chafe, 1980, p. 28).

a. (1.15) *A—nd* (.1) *then a boy comes by,*
b. (.1) *on a bicycle,*
c. *the man is in the tree,*
d. (.9) *and the boy gets off the bicycle,*
e. *and . . looks at the man,*
f. *and then* (.9) *uh looks at the bushels,*
g. *and he . . starts to just take a few,*
h. *and then he decides to take the whole bushel.*

Each line represents a relatively clear unit of production. These units have been called tone groups (Halliday, 1967), tone units (Crystal, 1969; Crystal & Davy, 1975; Svartvik & Quirk, 1980), intonation groups (Cruttenden, 1986), intonation units (Chafe, 1992), information blocks (Grimes, 1975), idea units (Chafe, 1979, 1980), and lines (Gee, 1986). For convenience I will adopt the term INTONATION UNIT.

Intonation units, as the name implies, are defined by their intonation or prosody, roughly as follows.

1. Intonation. Each intonation unit is identified with a single prosodic contour that ends with a terminal contour.

Prosodic contours and terminal contours are not defined by any single property. According to Chafe (1992), an intonation unit may have one or more of these features: (a) pauses preceding and following the intonation unit; (b) acceleration at the beginning and deceleration at the end of the unit, often finishing with a lengthened word; (c) a decline in pitch level; (d) a falling pitch contour at the end; and (e) creaky voice at the end. In the pear stories, for example, 88% of the intonation units were preceded by pauses, which averaged about 1 s in length. In contrast, creaky voice appears to be found much less often.

Although intonation units are defined by prosody, they tend to have properties 2–6 as well (Chafe, 1979, 1980, 1992; Gee, 1986).

2. Focal accent. Each intonation unit tends to have a single focal accent—a point of highest perceived pitch or loudness—ordinarily at or near the end of the unit (see also Halliday, 1967).
3. Finite clauses. Intonation units tend to be single finite clauses, that is, clauses with finite verbs (verbs with tense). When they are not finite clauses, they are at least constituents, usually smaller than finite clauses. In the pear excerpt, five of the eight intonation units (a, c, d, g, and h) are finite clauses. Two more (e and f) are predicates with a single finite verb. The remaining intonation unit (b) is a prepositional phrase.
4. Entry problems. In narratives and other discourses where planning takes time, intonation units are sometimes interrupted at or near their beginnings with hesitations, repeats, or repairs. In the pear excerpt, there were pauses before three of the eight intonation units (a, b, and d). There were slight breaks in tempo after the first or second word of four intonation units (a, e, f, and g). And the first word was stretched in intonation unit a.
5. Length. The intonation units in Chafe's pear stories were six words long on average and lasted two seconds. They varied in length, of course, but less so than other units—like sentences. This appears typical for spontaneous narratives.
6. And. In narratives, intonation units often begin with *and* (*then*), *but*, or *so*. Five of the eight intonation units in the pear excerpt begin with *and*, three of these with *and then*. In Chafe's pear stories, about 40% of the intonation units began with *and*. This property is not surprising. Intonation units tend to be finite clauses, and in narratives, successive events tend to be described with finite clauses conjoined with *and*, *and then*, or *so*. This is a point we will return to.

These six properties suggest that intonation units are a basic unit of planning. To get intonation (Property 1) right, speakers need to plan the entire intonation unit in some detail. They need to plan its length to know how high a pitch to start on and when to decelerate. They need to plan whether or not it is a question to know which terminal contour to use. They need to plan what is new information to know where to place the focal accent (Property 2). Indeed, finite clauses and other constituents of about six words (Properties 3 and 5) are just the units, according to research on slips of the tongue, that speakers ordinarily formulate at one time (see Bock & Levelt, this volume). Finally, the entry problems (Property 4) suggest that in creating difficult narratives speakers take more time before each intonation unit to plan it and are often still formulating parts of it as they begin to produce it (see also Boomer, 1965; Ford, 1982; Ford & Holmes, 1978).

Intonation units are more than just units of linguistic formulation. They represent the way narrators think about what they are describing. Narrators appear to attend to one part or aspect of their situational models at a time and to express what they are attending to in a single intonation unit (Chafe, 1979, 1980). That would explain why intonation units tend to be single clauses. It would also explain why they each express "one new idea," a single increment of new information, in a constituent containing the focal accent, and why the rest of the intonation unit expresses given information (Chafe, 1992; Gee, 1986; Halliday, 1967). It is for these reasons that intonation units are sometimes called information blocks or idea units.

Idea units like these should be ideal for listeners trying to build their own situational models. With each new intonation unit, listeners are led to focus on a particular part of their evolving model and construct one new addition to it. In the pear excerpt, they build on it by first introducing a boy coming by, then putting him on a bicycle, then returning their attention to the man in the tree (mentioned earlier), then returning to the boy to create him getting off the bicycle, and so on. When narrators produce intonation units in an orderly way, listeners are able to form a smooth, piece by piece construction of the situational model they were intended to build.

Despite their appearance, intonation units are also shaped by the audience. Note first that intonation units are also the building blocks of conversations. Most turns consist of an integral number of intonation units, often just one, and these are the units that get grounded. The intonation units in narratives are no different. The audience takes active part in shaping them—accepting them as having been understood or forcing them to be reformulated or extended—by producing or withholding nods, smiles, and "uh huh"s (Bavelas et al., 1993; Chovil, 1991; C. Goodwin, 1981). In turns 30 words or longer in the Svartvik-Quirk corpus of British conversations, there was an explicit acknowledgment like "yeah" or "m" every 15 words (at the median), and they occurred at or near the ends of intonation units (Oreström, 1983). But what goes unrecorded on audiotape and in almost all transcripts are the many smiles and nods of acknowledgment. These should be especially prevalent in narratives because verbal acknowledgments get suppressed when there are two or more addressees and when narrators tell jokes or fictional stories. And in narratives, the audience can always interrupt to clear up mishearings or misunderstandings, and they often do (Polanyi, 1989; Sacks, 1974). Indeed, many narratives are created bit by bit through prompts from an audience, or by two narrators telling a story to a third person as a sort of duet (Falk, 1979; Polanyi, 1989; Tannen, 1984).

Narrators, then, appear to treat intonation units as presentation phases of assertive contributions to a discourse. They look for their audience to accept these presentations by nodding, smiling, saying "yeah" or "uh huh," showing continued interest, or acknowledging with some other signal. Narratives are just a special type of conversation. Like other conversations, they proceed contribution by contribution, each of which is completed through the joint actions of speaker and addressees. It is just that in narratives the turns are longer, and the methods of grounding are less obvious.

B. Sentences and Sections

Narrators create at least three units that are larger than the intonational unit. One is the SENTENCE (Chafe, 1979, 1980; cf. Gee's, 1986, STANZAS). In the pear excerpt, the sentence ends with a period, which marks an intonation that is heard as teminating a sentence. Most sentences consist of a series of intonation units (an average of four in Chafe's pear stories), but unlike intonation units, they vary enormously in length. Just as intonation units appear to describe a single focus of attention, sentences appear to describe a single center of interest (Chafe, 1980).

Sentences in turn combine to form larger units called NARRATIVE SECTIONS (Gee, 1986), which correspond roughly to paragraphs in written narratives (Chafe, 1979). Like intonation units, sections are defined in part by their prosody, as reflected in these two properties.

1. Constituency. Sections consist of intonation units.
2. Termination. Sections tend to end with a falling-pitch glide.

Yet sections appear to be created to deal with a single topic and perspective, as reflected in the next three properties (Gee, 1986).

3. Topic. Sections have a single large topic or theme.
4. Perspective. Sections reflect a single place, time, and set of characters.
5. Parallelism. The sentences of a section, and their intonation units, tend to fall into parallel structures or patterns.

It is as if narrators create sections as they focus their attention on successive pieces of a single scene, and when they change scenes, they terminate one section and start another.

Sections are yet another basic planning unit in narratives. The most striking evidence is the added hesitancy and indecision that narrators display at their entry.

6. Entry problems. Sections tend to begin with increased hesitations, repeats, and repairs, and with intonation units smaller than a finite clause.

In the following excerpt from another pear story, the narrator begins a new section in the third line, as judged by others reading a transcript with the problems edited out (Chafe, 1980, p. 44).

(.45) *And . . as he's holding onto the handlebars*
he t takes off with them.
(1.1) Um—(.7) then (.4) uh—(2.1) *a . . girl on a bicycle,*

(1.15) *comes riding towards him,*
. . in the opposite direction.

It took this narrator 6.25 s (the highlighted stretch of speech) to get from the end of the previous section to *a girl on a bicycle*, the first solid phrase of the next section. These planning difficulties are typical as narrators enter new sections that change the topic and require new perspectives (Chafe, 1979, 1980; Gee, 1986; Gee & Grosjean, 1984). New sections, one might say, begin at discontinuities in the experience being simulated.

The largest unit is the narrative as a whole, which consists of one or more sections. These units exhibit the usual entry problems for a section, but in exaggerated form, as in this start of a pear story (Chafe, 1979, p. 167).

(4.25) *Um . . it starts out . . there's a* (3.3) *well,*
(1.45) *the— landscape is like uh— a f— (2.35) sort of peasant landscape*
but it isn't really farmland,
it's like an orchard.
(.6) *it's a small orchard,*
(.65) *and— uh—* (.55) *it's green.*

As Chafe noted, this narrator had trouble deciding what to focus on first. She began with the first event (*it starts out*), switched to the first character (*there's a*), then fell back to the physical setting, which would be needed for her audience to build the proper situational model. She even had trouble deciding how to describe the setting—a farm but not really a farm, like an orchard, but a small one, a green one. She worked hard to start her addressees off on the right model.

C. Perspective

When you tell a 5-year-old, say Tommy, the story of Little Red Riding Hood, you want him to create a situational model of what happens to Hood on her way to her grandmother's house. You want him to view what happens from particular perspectives. In the first scenes, you might have him follow Hood as she puts bread and wine in a basket, sets out for grandmother's house, and meets a wolf. Later, you might have him follow the wolf as it goes to grandmother's house, locks her up, and takes her place. You must get Tommy to take first one perspective and then another.

Perspective is a complex notion with many subtypes. (1) SPATIAL PERSPECTIVE is the physical point of view an observer takes on an object. You would choose between "The wolf went into Grandmother's house" and "The wolf came into Grandmother's house" depending on whether you wanted Tommy to view the scene from outside or inside Grandmother's house. (2) TEMPORAL PERSPECTIVE is the view an observer takes on events in time. You would choose "The wolf was lying in Grandmother's bed" or "The wolf lay in Grandmother's bed" or even "The wolf is lying in Grandmother's bed" depending on how you wanted Tommy to conceive of the event at the moment. (3) FIGURE–GROUND is the observer's implicit focus of attention—what is taken to be figure and ground. You would choose between "There were beautiful flowers along the path" and "The path went through beautiful flowers" depending on which

you wanted Tommy to focus on—the flowers or the path. (4) CONCEPTUAL PERSPECTIVE is one's conceptual stance toward something—for example, whether you would refer to the wolf as "a wolf" or as "a polite stranger." All these subtypes of perspective, and others, are essential to coordinating on the construction of situational models (see, e.g., Schober, 1990, 1993).

One type of perspective that is special to narratives is FOREGROUND and BACKGROUND. The idea is that narrators divide what they say into two structures (Grimes, 1975; Hopper, 1979; Hopper & Thompson, 1980; Labov, 1972; Polanyi, 1989; Polanyi-Bowditch, 1976). They treat one set of events, which Labov called the NARRATIVE EVENTS, as the foundation of the narrative. These are the FOREGROUND of the narrative. Everything else is BACKGROUND.[4] In the pear excerpt, these are the narrative events.

a. (1.15) *A—nd* (.1) *then a boy comes by,*
d. (.9) *and the boy gets off the bicycle,*
e. *and . . looks at the man,*
f. *and then* (.9) *uh looks at the bushels,*
g. *and he . . starts to just take a few,*
h. *and then he decides to take the whole bushel.*

Narrative events establish the temporal basis of the narrative, so they are described in strict chronological order (except at the beginnings of flashbacks and flashforwards). In this excerpt, they are introduced by *and* or *and then*, which mark chronological order even more explicitly. The background is used, in contast, to comment on, situate, or otherwise evaluate the narrative events, as in these intonational units from the pear excerpt.

b. (.1) *on a bicycle,*
c. *the man is in the tree,*

These two elements situate the boy's coming by and the man in the tree, two pieces of information needed for the foreground.

Narrators distinguish foreground from background by their choice of construction. If they want to specify moments in time, they must describe elements that resemble clock ticks. They should choose PUNCTUAL events like coming by, getting off, looking, starting, and deciding, because these can be ordered chronologically. They should not choose durative or nonpunctual elements like being on a bicycle or in a tree or knowing or not finding something, which cannot be ordered chronologically. Indeed, as foreground narrators prefer events of the following types (Hopper & Thompson, 1980): (1) goal directed events; (2) punctual events (e.g., *hit* vs. *sleep*, or *take* vs. *have*); (3) volitional events (*look at* vs. *see*); (4) affirmative events (*find* vs. *not find*); and (5) real events in which an agent acts on a patient. Narrators have additional methods of marking such events as foregrounded. The common way in English is to express them in independent clauses (not subordinate clauses) and in the simple past or historical present tense (not in the progressive). Some languages, like French, reserve a special narrative past for these clauses.

[4] The terms FOREGROUND and BACKGROUND are not the most felicitous terms, since the foreground is often not as important to the narrative as the background. To add confusion, the foreground is sometimes called the backbone of the narrative; other times, it is called the skeleton (Labov, 1972).

Narrators therefore divide intonation units into foreground and background in order to coordinate with their audience on the construction of situational models. The audience keeps track of the main story line events by identifying the foreground of the narrative—the narrative clauses—and they elaborate, situate, and modify these events by identifying the background. If the narrators have done their job right—and most do—the audience should find it easy to identify which intonation units are which.

Narrators can get their audience to create an even more vivid situational model, as Schiffrin (1981) argued, by expressing the foreground not in the past tense but in the NARRATIVE PRESENT. Consider this narrative excerpt from a woman describing being trapped in a stalled car (Schiffrin, 1981, p. 48).

We just pulled into this lot
it was just in this lot
and all of a sudden the buzzer sounds
and all these guys hh come hh out
and we didn't know what t' do
cause we were stuck.
so we asked some guy
t' come over an' HELP us.
So he opens the car
and everyone gets out except me and my girlfriend.
We were in front
we just didn't feel like getting out.
And all of a sudden all these sparks start t' fly.

Most of the time the narrator expresses herself in the past tense. And yet, for certain intonation clauses (highlighted), she switches to the historical present. She does this, according to Schiffrin, as "a way of making a past event sound as if it were occurring at the moment of speaking—a way of making it more vivid" (p. 57). This way the narrator helps us represent the experience in a situational model as if it were happening right now.

Narrators choose their utterances, then, to get their audience to represent a situation from just the right perspective. That perspective helps the audience create the imaginary experience as the narrators are themselves creating it, with its sights, sounds, emotions, and actions.

D. Narrative Organization

Narratives come with an organization. This has been shown in literary and linguistic analyses of both written and spontaneous narratives. But where does the organization come from? Surely spontaneous narrators do not begin with a total plan, or outline, and then fill it in with the details. They seem rather to begin with certain goals, and what they say is determined by the moment-by-moment constraints they try to satisfy en route to those goals. The organization of narratives is not pre-planned. It emerges. Here we will examine only a few features that shape its emergence.

We have seen that narrators, to be effective, must enable their addressees to initiate, build on, and complete their mental representation of the situation being described. They must satisfy at least these two related requirements.

Connectedness. With each new intonation unit, narrators must enable their audience to add the intended increment to the situational model at just the right point.

With-respect-to-ness. Narrators must enable their audience to create each new element in a situation model with respect to other elements in the model.

As simple as these requirements look, they help shape the emergent organization of narratives. To see how, let us consider two types of narratives: narratives of personal experience, and narrative descriptions.

1. Narratives of Personal Experience

Spontaneous narratives of personal experience, according to a study by Labov (1972; cf. Polanyi, 1989), tend to divide into six parts.

1. Abstract (a brief summary of the whole story). An example is Annabel's *I acquired an absolutely magnificent sewing machine, by foul means.*

2. Orientation (a stage setting about the who, when, what, and where of the story). In some narratives, the orientation appears as an identifiable sentence or section, as from this teenager's story: *It was on Sunday and we didn't have nothin' to do after I—after we came from church. Then we ain't had nothing to do.* In other narratives, it is incorporated in the first intonation units of the complicating action, as in the highlighted pieces of Annabel's continuation.

well ***when I was . doing freelance advertising –***
the advertising agency
that I . sometimes did some work for .
rang me

3. Complicating action (what happened). Annabel continues with narrative clauses (highlighted) that raise the point to be resolved in her narrative.

and said um – we've got a client
who wants um – – a leaflet designed .
to go to s– uh instructions how to use a sewing machine
and I said I haven't used a sewing machine for years–
and uh he said well . go along and talk to them
and I went along and tal–
and I was quite honest about it
I said you know I . I haven't used one for years

She then continues with a series of intonation units describing what happened.

4. Evaluation ("the point of the narrative, its raison d'être: why it was told, what the narrator is getting at," Labov, 1972, p. 266). The evaluation is often not a separate section, but is expressed in background clauses set in among the complicating actions and the resolution. In Annabel's complicating action, the evaluation is expressed in the intonation units that are not highlighted—*who wants um – – a leaflet designed, . to go to s– uh instructions how to use a sewing machine* and *and I was quite honest about it.*

5. Result or resolution (how the complicating action got resolved). Annabel eventually completes her story by returning to her original point, how she *acquired an absolutely magnificent sewing machine, by foul means,* and adding a twist about her ignorance of sewing machines.

so I've got this fabulous machine
which I – in fact and in order to use it
I have to read my instruction booklet
cos it's so complicated

6. Coda (a signal that the narrative is finished). In Annabel's narrative, the resolution itself signals the end of the narrative.[5] In other narratives, there is a separate signal of completion, such as "And that's what happened." Codas "bring the narrator and the listener back to the point at which they entered the narrative" (Labov, 1972, p. 365).

These six divisions reflect, in part, narrators' attempts to satisfy the requirements of connectedness and with-respect-to-ness.

Before Annabel introduces her story, she and Barbara have a situational model of their here-and-now. To get Barbara into the story-world, she introduces it with respect to their here-and-now by means of the abstract. With *I acquired* she makes the story-world an actual world in her own past, and with *sewing machine* she introduces the central element of the story.

Before Annabel can describe any events in the story-world, she must situate it more precisely and populate it with the needed players and props. She does this in her orientation. With *when I was doing freelance advertising,* she specifies the past time more precisely, and with *the advertising agency that I sometimes did some work for,* she introduces the main protagonist. In effect, she and Barbara zoom in on a closer perspective of the story-world.

In the complicating action and evaluation, Annabel takes Barbara through the episode itself. She establishes its time course by the chronological order of her narrative clauses. She satisfies the requirement of with-respect-to-ness by relating the first event (*the advertising agency . . . rang*) to the background time (*when I was doing freelance advertising*), and then the second event to the first, and so on. With each new section, there is a new orientation, which gets related to the previous orientation. And so it goes. The complicating action cannot be resolved, of course, until it has been completed, so the resolution necessarily comes after the complicating action.

Once Annabel has led Barbara through the entire episode, the two of them must zoom out to view it as a whole and return to the situational model of the here-and-now. Annabel accomplishes this by describing her current situation (*I've got this fabulous machine,* etc.). Other narrators do it with codas ("And that's what happened").

Narrators are really guides. Starting from the here-and-now, they show you the story-world as a whole (with the abstract). Then they zoom in on that world, orient you to its features, and guide you from one narrative event to the next until you reach the resolving event. Then they zoom back out to the here-and-now. The six divisions emerge as they try to connect each new element to elements already in the model. The point is even clearer in narrative descriptions.

[5] In jokes, too, the resolution—the punch line—signals the end of the joke. It would be superfluous to add "And that's it."

2. Narrative Descriptions

In a study by Linde and Labov (1975), about a hundred New Yorkers were asked *Could you tell me the layout of your apartment*? Despite the many ways they could have described their apartments, most of them guided their interrogator on an imaginary tour, as in this example (p. 927).

> *You walked in the front door.*
> *There was a narrow hallway.*
> *To the left, the first door you came to was a tiny bedroom.*
> *Then there was a kitchen,*
> *and then bathroom,*
> *and then the main room was in the back, living room, I guess.*

Each tour was systematic. (a) It began at the front door. (b) When visitors came to a one-room branch, they looked into it but didn't enter. (c) When they came to a branch with rooms beyond the first room, they always entered. And (d) when they reached the end of a branch, and there were other branches to traverse, they jumped back instantaneously to the fork point where the other branches originated. Because of guidelines a, b, and c, the visitors saw every room, and because of guideline d, they didn't view a cul-de-sac twice, once going in and a second time going out. When people were asked, in other studies, to describe a single room, they took a similar tack (Ehrich & Koster, 1983; Ullmer-Ehrich, 1982). They generally led their addressees on gaze tours of each room.

With these apartment tours, the New Yorkers were about as explicit as they could be about creating situational models. They often made their addressees the tourist, the person from whose point of view the tour was being experienced, by having them do the walking (*you keep walking straight ahead* or *now if you turn right*) or the viewing (*you would find* or *you see a window*). These tactics satisfy the requirement of connectedness. With guideline a, the tourists tie the apartment-world to the front door, the single most prominent point they can relate to the here-and-now. And with guidelines b, c, and d, they relate everything back to the front door.

Recall that, with the requirement of with-respect-to-ness, narrators place things in their model with their choice of figure and ground. The main point in describing an apartment or a room is to say what is where. In the apartment tours, narrators located a path with respect to the front door and then located objects with respect to that path, as in *And on your left, you would find the master bedroom* or *In the corner stands a cabinet*. It was typical to mention the ground first (*your left* and *the cabinet*) and the figure second (*the master bedroom* and *a cabinet*) (Ehrich & Koster, 1983; Linde & Labov, 1975).

People's choices of figure and ground, however, are tightly constrained by their conception of with-respect-to-ness between objects. Consider an analysis of room descriptions by Shanon (1984). The contents of a room, he found, fit this hierarchy.

1. the room proper
2. parts of the room: the walls, floor, and ceiling
3. windows, doors
4. major pieces of furniture

5. objects with a definite place of their own
6. objects without a definite place of their own

At the top of the hierarchy are the permanent, highly predictable contents that can be taken as common ground, as part of people's general schema or frame for a room. At the bottom are the optional, movable, more particular objects that cannot be taken as common ground. This hierarchy was directly reflected in people's room descriptions. Objects not yet mentioned were more likely to be introduced with definite descriptions (like *the floor*) the higher they were in the hierarchy (cf. Brewer & Treyens, 1981). Conversely, objects not yet mentioned were more likely to be introduced in subordinate clauses (like *curtain* in *a closet that has a curtain across it*) the lower they were in the hierarchy. The same phenomena are manifest in apartment descriptions. Major but not minor rooms may be introduced with definite articles; and major rooms may be introduced as subjects of clauses, but minor rooms only in complements (Linde & Labov, 1975).

What this hierarchy reflects, really, is people's perspective on the room's contents: what they see with respect to what. In Shanon's study, objects at level 4 were virtually always described with respect to those at level 4 or above, and analogously at each other level. A chair was described as in front of a window; the window was not described as behind the chair. The hierarchy accounted for 97% of such descriptions. Presumably, these reflect the narrators' focus of attention in their situational models. The chair was represented with respect to the window, and not vice versa. Narrators try to get their audience to add objects that cannot be taken for granted with respect to those that can.

Narratives, then, emerge as people try to get others to build a model of a narrative-world. Narrators try to satisfy many constraints as they go along. Because people have a limited focus of attention, narrators and their audiences proceed one intonation unit at a time, grounding each one as they go along. Because people need to build situation models that are connected, narrators get their audiences to add each new element with respect to what they already have. They try to maintain consistent perspectives and to signal changes in perspective. It is these constraints that organize narrations into intonation units, sentences, sections, and whole narratives.

Narrating is a skill. Some people are good at it, and others not. It takes children years to learn how to tell a decent story, and some never get very good at it. You may know people who are fluent, articulate, and attentive to their audience and yet still unable to tell an effective story. What makes storytellers good, in the end, is their ability to draw us into their story world, to make us see and feel what is happening, to get us to join them in building a vivid situational model of that world. So far, we have only a glimpse of how storytellers do this.

V. CONCLUSION

This, then, has been a selective tour through the production of spontaneous discourse. We have looked particularly closely at two features of the landscape. The first is the social nature of discourse. Discourse is an activity carried out

by two or more participants working jointly, and that requires coordination at all levels of planning and execution. One result is that discourses are managed locally. Their global organization is only an emergent outcome of that process. The second feature is the purposive nature of discourse. People engage in a discourse not merely to use language, but to accomplish things. They want to buy shoes or get a lost address or arrange for a dinner party or trade gossip or teach a child improper fractions. Language is simply a tool for achieving these aims. Discourses are joint activities of people trying to accomplish goals beyond language, and the course they take is governed by the purpose and partnership of the participants.

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