Whose phonological fact?

Prosodic phrasing in multi-action turns

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1 Essentials of a model of talk-in-interaction

- A core topic in prosodic theory is the constituency of prosodic phrases.

- A model of talk in interaction needs to handle information at various levels:

  - social activities (such as *requests*, *complaints*, *invitations*, *narratives*)
  - generic requirements such turn-taking and topic management
  - the indexing of epistemic and deontic modalities, as well as non-linguistic information, such as social relations.

- Primacy of individual in phonological theory leads to the positing of stand-alone units which are not susceptible to the influence of e.g. incoming talk, repair by current speaker or other, nor the projection of an upcoming turn endings (and thus the possibility of speaker transition).

- The categories needed to describe many of the events of conversation relate to the fact that conversation (a) occurs in real time (b) is accomplished by two (or more) speakers.

- Garrod & Pickering (2004): dynamic model of dialogue which assumes *co-ordination* and *alignment* of speakers at all levels through priming. Evidence: repair mechanisms, recycling, construction of 'routines' (such as stylisation).

- Kempson, Meyer-Voll & Gabbay (2001): dynamic model syntax which allows simultaneous parsing and construction and allows for co-construction of utterances, and syntactic alignment between speakers.

2 Overview of turn-taking

2.1 Crucial ideas:

- turn
- turn constructional unit (TCU)
- transition relevance place (TRP)
- projectability
- co-ordination across levels: action, syntax, phonology…

2.2 Example: Vegtalk 02.01.04:1;4-5

```
1   P1      [ca[pe gooseberry jam
2   P2         [((laughter))
3   P1      now how posh is cape gooseberry jam
4   P2      [that is pretty wonderful][isn't it yes]=
5   M       [I kno:w                 ][how lovely  ]
6   P2      =yes
7   B       another one I did as well was uhm (.) cherries
8           and redcurrants together and that is glorious
9           (0.2)
10  P2      cherries and redcurrants mixed together
11  B       ye[s * * I had a glut] of redcurrants and living in
12  M         [oh very sensible  ]
13  B       Lincolnshire I'm able to buy cherries quite cheaply
14          from the side of the [road]
15  P2                           [yes ] of course
```

3 Data

- Multi-unit turns, containing two actions, [request] + [account]. The [account] justifies the making of the request.

- Data taken from 8 different corpora, c.21hr of recordings of unscripted speech.

- Auditory and acoustic phonetic analysis; transcriptions, inspection of f0 traces, amplitude envelope etc.

- Concurrent interactional analysis (e.g. Couper-Kuhlen & Ford 2004.)

4 [request] + [account] sequences

4.1 Overview

A [request] makes a response relevant from a coparticipant.

Fragment (1) 26. SO88 (II): Side 1: Call 4

```
1   S       Leslie said uh about this: da:nce
2   H       Ye:s
3   S   RQ  Yeah as far as I'm:: I know eh that's okay if you can
4       RQ  book us a couple of ticke[ts
5   H   RS                           [Yes I will Ski-I'll
6       RS  let you have them Skip. or: (.) uh I-I'll-I'll(p) (0.2)
7           pa:h- while we're popping by I'll pop 'em through the
8           letter box=
```

A [request] may be followed by an [account] even after the [request] has been granted:

Fragment (2) REQ25. SO88: Side 2: Call 9

```
1   L    RQ   =No:: No:: .hhh We:ll- (0.2) c-Could you (.) ask her
2   L    RQ   if she could ring again it's uhr-er- when she gets in,
3   J    RS   Ye:[s [Yea[h I'll
4   L    AC      [.h[hh [Only Gordon's just pho:ned and he wanted
5             to know how she wa:[s
6   J                            [Ye:h
```

4.2   [request] + [account] phrased separately

Format of these sequences:

```
A    [request]
B    [withholds a response]
A    [account for the request]
```

In these cases, the [account] is a responsive action to the lack of affiliative action by the recipient.

In this collection, *because* begins the turn following the withholding of a response to the request; crucially, the [request] itself is designed as a complete turn making a response from the co-participant relevant:

- [request] produced with intonational and temporal marking of completion (e.g. "final contour", slowing down)

- syntactic evidence of completion (e.g. construction of a 3-part list)

- no glottal closure to hold turn over a place of syntactic completion

- *because* produced with complete bilabial and/or velar closures; no lenition

Fragment (3) HGII

```
1   Hyl:    So I decided forget it I didn't wanna see it .hh Toda:y
2           there was a who::le (.) review on it in [the paper]
3   Nan:                                            [u-whe:re ]
4           (.)
5   Nan:    Oh real[ly I'm'nna go loo:k]
6   Hyl:           [In the View section]
7           (0.2)
8   Nan:    In the [Vie:w?
9   Hyl:           [.hh
10  Hyl:    Yeh- buh I don't want you to read it
11          (.)
12  Nan:    [O   ] k a  y,]
13  Hyl: →  [Plea]se don't]
                 <rall----->

14          (0.3)
15  Hyl: →  b[ecause-   ]
            bikʰɤz
```

```
16  Nan:      [See  I  do]n't know what it's a[bout you're n]ot gonna=
17  Hyl:                                      [Y e a h      ]
18  Nan:   tell [me? ]
19  Hyl:        [.p.k] becau:se there's one point in there where it
20         gives away s::omething th[at-]
21  Nan:                            [Oh:] rea[lly:?      ]
22  Hyl:                                     [i-is a sho]:cker and
23         I don't want y[ou to kno:w]
24  Nan:                 [okay  I  wo]n't
```

Fragment (4) MTRAC

```
1   Mar:   Oh it's nice to-u speak to somebody who got lucky
2          I- I actually feel that I got very lucky getting into the
3          position I am but I m- think I may have to go back to
4          schoo:l because the funds are .hhhhhhhh are running ou:t
5          (0.9)
6   Mar:   that I get a chance to do whatever I want to with uh:: .h
7   Ron:   Yeah exactly I a[gree
8   Mar:                   [a group of people'n there's nobody: (.)
9          nobody I have to talk to about it except myse:lf
10  Ron:   Ah:
11  Mar: → Hey you wouldn't be free Wednesday night would you?
           <all--------------->

12         (0.3)
13  Mar: → because we're rehearsing .hhhhh and uh::: hhh I just
           bɪkʰɨz

14         think the whole group would just love to have you come
15         do:wn
```

Fragment (5) CallHome en_6033

```
1   A:     she said there were some words like that .hhhh but it
2          is: (0.2) >if you want to< sa:y like a different language
3          (0.4)
4   A:     yeah=
5   B:     =hm=
6   A:     yeah
7          (0.2)
8   B:     .hhh[h well now tell me] ha-
9   A:         [I mean but you kn-]
10         (0.3)
11  A:     yeah (.) o-
12  B:  →  ha- ha- ((unintell.)) how's your mother
                                  <rall-->

13         (0.2)
14  B:  →  'cause I just- I just wrote you a Christmas card
15         Lu[cille and I put it] in the mail
16  A:      [oh you did        ]
```

Fragment (6) Kamunsky II

```
1   Sha:   Yeah it wou:ld
2   Ala:   If you wanna talk to him about it
3   Sha:   Hu:h
```

4

```
4              (0.4)
5   Ala:   Or whatever
6              (2.0)
7   Sha:   Oka::[:y
8   Ala: →        [Oh and if you can make it bring oh I don't know
                  <all---------->             <all---------->

9        →   a bag of potato chips or? tortilla chips or something
                                           <dim----------------->

10             (0.2)
11  ???:   .hh
12  Ala: →   'cause Karen's bringin' the chips and the potato chips
            kz
13             (0.7)
14  Ala:   eh the uh dip and the potato chips so if you wanna
15         bring some tortilla chips would be fi:ne
16  Sha:   .hh Okay
```

4.3   [request] + [account] or [projection of account] phrased together

Format of these sequences:

```
A     [request + account]
```

The [account] in these sequences displays an orientation to a potential problem with the granting of the request. The account is a pre-emptive move. It is done before the turn space is handed over to the co-participant.

The [request] is presented as disjunctive with prior talk: *well, now,* use of high pitch in turn onset to mark new topic.

In this collection, *because* is phrased with the prior clause containing the [request], and there are often clear signals of prosodic disjunction **after** *because*:

- *because* intonationally integrated with prior talk; no "final contour" before *because*
- lack of glottal stop or other break before *because*, but common after it
- temporal integration of *because* with prior; no slowing down before *because*; often a change in tempo after *because*
- any hitches come **after** projection of [account]
- segmental integration of *because* with prior: e.g. lenition, assimilation
- coparticipant does not deal with request immediately, though they may produce a minimal receipt

Fragment (7) CallHome en_4157

```
1   A      oh but he'll be worth the wait
2          believe me
3          I know how you feel fhhh
4   B      it's horrid
5   A      I know
6   B      and you don't know what to do
7          and like I can't seem to adjust to the family
8          thing
9              (0.4)
```

5

```
10  A         yeah well there's nothing you really can do
11  B         .hh I know
12  A         just
13            when you least suspect it
14            (0.4)
15  A         that's when it'll happen
16  B         yeah that's true
17            well believe me I haven't been looking or
18            waiting
19  A    →    now tell me about this guy because I know
                                      βəxəz  ʔaɪ
                                      <all-->  <l->
              <ff----------------------------------->

20            I remember now that you told me something

21            about him
22            (0.5)
23  B         it's the same one
24            believe it or not hehe
25  A         yeahuhuhuhuh
26  B         .hh he uhm was supposed to actually go back
27            to Spain in July but he extended it to October
```

Fragment (8) CallHome en_4705

```
1   A         oh this is great
2             (0.8)
3   B         well I mean it's great for me
4             I'm I'm using your phone[call] here
5   A                                 [uhuh]
6   A         well I'm delighted
7   B         oh great
8             (0.3)
9   A    →    .hh well ↑just tell me a little bit
                  <all--------------------------
                  <f----------------------------

10            about your apostolate 'cause you said to me
              <all----------------------->
              <f------------------->
                        əpɑ:seɪʔ˺      kəʒjy

11            in your in your letter now pray for
12            my apostolate too
                 əpɑ:stəleɪt

13            .h do you mean (0.2) with the girls
14  B         .hhhh well basically in the college
15  A         yeah
16  B         um: but- uh (0.5) I: w- there are a couple
17            of things that I wanted to be sure to
18            mention to you
```

Fragment (9) REQ33 SO88(II):2:4:2

```
1   L         right well he said to let you know that-
2             (0.2) to drop in any time=
```

```
3   D          =[yeh
4   L          =[eh heh heh heh he:h[h .hhh
5   D                               [well I'll
6              pop over the[n
7   L                      [yes
8              (.)
9   L          .hh o[kay
10      →      .hh ↑if you could (.) let  me have that book
                                    lɛʔt·ˈmiɦav  <all---->

11      →      u-so[me: (.) back sometime because I
                                sʌmtaˑemˑikɤzaɪ

12  (D          [yeah)
13      →      promised it to to: Harold
14             (0.5)
15  D          oh yea[h
16  L                [uh::: because he's looking up
17             colleges as well
18  D          yea[h
```

Fragment (10)   REQ38. Holt 1:1:3

```
1   Les:    .hh Oh by the wa:y Ann hasn::'u-sent
2           Gordon anything=
3   Mum:    =Yes she ha:s
4   Les:    Well it hasn't co:me
5   Mum:    Oh well probably get it t'morrow
6           (0.3)
7   Les:    Oh: yes=↑What is she sendin d'you know
8           (.)
9   Mum:    (Well guess)
10          (0.3)
11  Les:    Oh not one a'tho:se whi:te tee shirts=
12  Mum:    =Well I don't know what sort'v tee shirt
13          it is but it i:s
14  Les:    ↓Oh:: Mu::m::
15          (0.4)
16  Les:    It's just a waste of money
17          (1.8)
18  Les:    .h actually ?if you can drop the hint (.)
19      →   tell'er not tuh send any more because .h (0.7)
20      →   they ↑don't ↑wear them an'I: can't
21      →   give'm awa:y
22          (1.6)
23  Mum:    Can't give'm away
24  Les:    Well no:- Yuh see: um (0.4)
25          I can't give'm as presents to anybody:
26          (0.9)
27  Les:    Because they've got J.P. Five Hundred
28          written all over them
29  Mum:    Well it's a good adver:t
30          (0.5)
31  Les:    Yeh but ↑nob'ddy wants them uh huh huh .hh
32          (0.3)
33  Les:    eh-u- So: (.) if you ↓can drop her a hin:t
34          (0.6)
35  Mum:    We::ll (.) I'll try:hh
36  Les:    Ye:s
37          (1.2)
```

```
38  Les:    Oh ↓blo:w
39          (0.5)
40  Les:    Oh well never mi:nd
41          (0.5)
41  Les:    °(Okay)°
```

Fragment (11)   HOLT SO88:2:10:3

```
1   Dan:    And he better put- u-sharpen his pencils=
2           =write back (with um)
3           (0.2)
4   Les:    hheh heh he-[e
5   Dan:                [Have you got (.) his phone number=
                                        <acc--------
                                        <p----------

6           =because I was gonna ring him the other
             <all-------------->
             <p---------->
             bɪkʏz

7           night to see how he- (.) yo[u know
8   Les:                               [oh ye:s:
9           [okay I'll give it to you=
10  Dan:    [(      )
11  Dan:    =(   [    )
12  Les:        [are you ready .h[hhhhhhh
13  Dan:                        [Yeh
```

5   Phrasing and prosodic boundaries

5.1   Current explanations

Current explanations for phrasing—based on introspection and production (read) data—relate primarily to:

- syntactic units
- semantic units (e.g. "sense unit")
- processing considerations

Selkirk (1995: 567): "At present, the principles governing intonational phrasing are not well understood. Certain syntactic constructions — vocatives, appositives, parentheticals, preposed clauses, nonrestrictive relative clauses — are necessarily set off in separated IPs. In other cases… there are options in phrasing."

Frazier, Clifton & Carlson (2004:19): "The current results… suggest that a break is not prohibited not by any general constraint against breaking up syntactic constituents, but simply by constraints on phonological words/phrases as well as constraints favouring semantically coherent groups. Otherwise a break may freely occur…"

5.2   Taking action and interaction into account

In the data in Section 4.3, we find the following phrasings:

1. now tell me about this guy <u>because | I</u> know- I remember now that you told me something about him

2. well just tell me a little bit about your apostolate <u>`cause | you</u> said to me in your letter...

3. if you could let me have that book back sometime <u>because | I</u> promised it to to Harold

4. actually if you can drop the hint | tell her not to send any more <u>because | they</u> don't wear them...

5. have you got his phone number <u>because | I</u> was gonna ring him the other night to see how he you know

i.e. the phrasing is [request + because] | [account]. However, they could—in principle—have been designed as in Section 4.2, i.e. [request] | [because + account].

In many turns at talk, TCUs, Intonational Phrases, Sentences and Actions are coterminous:

```
[---TCU1----] [---TCU2----]
[----IP1----] [----IP2----]
[--action1--] [--action2--]
[----S1-----] [----S2-----]
```

However, in Section 4.3, boundaries are shifted so that they are not coterminous:

```
[----TCU1------] [---TCU2------]
[----IP1-------] [---IP2-------]
[action1] [action2------------]
[----S1-] [S2-----------------]
```

The effect of this is that TCU1 contains more than one (but less than two) actions and more than one (but less than two) sentences. TCU1 projects both more talk by the current speaker and, more precisely, the type of talk to come in relation to TCU1.

Thus prosodic boundaries can be manipulated by speakers to handle particular interactional exigencies.

6   Whose phonological fact?

Phonological phrasing is essential to the management of turn-taking and thus also essential to the accomplishment of the (social) actions being done by the talk in those turns. Where syntactic, pragmatic, and phonological boundaries are coterminous, transition from one speaker to another becomes relevant (Ford & Thompson 1996), and speakers thereby manage the building of sequences like request-grant, topic proffer-ratification, and offer-acceptance.

Speakers may manipulate the location of various kinds of boundaries so as to project more talk and thereby manage and regulate turn-taking and the activity sequences being constructed. In this paper, we identify one such practice. Others include:

- word searches and holding turns at places of 'maximum syntactic control', such as after (rather than before) prepositions (Schegloff 1996)

- abrupt joins between TCUs within a turn (Local & Walker 2004)

- 'closure pieces' which hold a turn when the end of a major syntactic constituent has already been reached (Local & Kelly 1986, Ogden 2001)

Implications for the Grammar:

1. The human production and processing mechanism must attend to the flow of talk in time.
2. The linguistic system must contain units which allow for the construction of orderliness in talk, including notions such as 'turn' and 'sequence'; these are inherently categories of talk-in-interaction.
3. It should therefore not be surprising if language has evolved so as to provide speakers with resources (which, crucially, are patterned, regular and recognisable) to handle a wider range of eventualities than can be elicited e.g. from read or intuited data.
4. It must allow for the concurrent construction and processing of talk in time along several parallel dimensions, including: sequence management, the management of turn-taking, syntax.
5. Prosodic phrasing is a resource used by speakers to solve such problems, and not merely a given of linguistic theory.

> …linguistic organisation and storage is based on experience with language where articulation, perception, meaning, and social import are all related intimately.
>
> Bybee (2001: 57)

> Interaction and talk-in-interaction are structured environments for action and cognition, and they shape both the constitution of the actions and utterances needing to be 'cognised' and the contingencies for solving them.
>
> Schegloff (1991: 168)

7   Acknowledgements

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