

**ACCOUNTING FOR RECREATIONAL DRUG USE: THE LIVED PRACTICE
OF QUALITATIVE INTERVIEWS.**

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Abstract

The thesis uses (semi-)open-ended interviews with drug users and non-drug users to document the lived practices of qualitative interviewing and talk about drugs. It draws on Sacks and more contemporary work on conversation analysis and membership categorization to outline in detail ‘how qualitative interviews come off’ in and through talk-in-interaction. It also contextualises the interviewees’ topic talk, their talk-about-drugs. An (intimately) related concern, is to document some ideals about qualitative interviewing and talk about drugs as ideals-in-and-as-lived-practice.

Underlying all types of research interviews is the tension between an extra-local need to collect data on a topic and a here-and-now interactional event in which this data is collected in and through talk-in-interaction (Antaki and Rapley 1996, Mazeland and ten Have 1996/1998, Suchman and Jordan 1990). The thesis describes how interviewers and interviewees manage this tension, documenting (some of) the methods - the practical solutions – they routinely use “to get the job done”. Special reference is given to how interviewers locally produce themselves as ‘the sort of qualitative interviewers they are supposed to be’.

The research outlines how qualitative interviews are locally produced, with reference to the structural, sequential and topical organization. It focuses on (some of) the methods interviewers use explicitly to inform the interviewee that their questions are to be heard and understood as neutralistic and/or facilitatory. These methods include producing questions without preferred responses, question prefaces, specific lexical choices and tag-components. It also outlines (some of) the methods interviewees use to produce themselves as ‘morally adequate’ types-of-people in relation to topics in the talk.

This thesis seeks to unsettle some of the current research practices and theories in the academic ‘drug’ and ‘qualitative interviewing’ worlds. Chiefly, it shows how both speakers, the interviewee and interviewer, are essential to, in Silverman’s (1973) term, ‘bringing off the research instrument’.

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As is the tradition, I have to note that all the mistakes are mine and mine alone. However, as a logical extension of that tradition, so are all the “good bits”.

PART ONE - INTRODUCTION

We think in generalities but we live in detail

Alfred North Whitehead

Part One contains two introductory chapters. Chapter One outlines the broad theoretical, methodological and empirical contexts of this thesis. It shows how a focus on the lived practices of ‘qualitative interviews’, especially the work of interviewers, is relatively absent from contemporary debates in both the qualitative interviewing and drugs research communities. It also provides an outline of the thesis.

In Chapter Two, I offer a natural history of my research, with particular reference to the practical, methodological and theoretical issues that I have engaged with over the course of the research.

Talk about interviews

Interviewing is *the* central resource through which contemporary social science (and society) engages with issues that concern it (Atkinson and Silverman 1997). Notably, the status of interview 'data' has been at the centre of some debates surrounding academic theorising. Since the emergence of the classical social survey interview, the interview has been deconstructed and theorised and consequently emerged in various guises. Symbolic interactionism sought to 'open' the talk and obtain 'authentic' accounts. Feminist accounts (notably Oakley 1981) sought to 'unmask' and then 'de-centre the power balance'. Alongside this work emerged an interest in the interview itself as a topic of research (notably Cicourel 1964) and, following the linguistic turn, the gaze fell to interviewees moral (identity) work (e.g. Cuff 1993), narratives (e.g. Riessman 1990), poly-vocality (e.g. Holstein and Gubrium 1997a) and rhetoric and repertoires (e.g. Potter and Wetherell 1987).

Seale (1998), in his overview of qualitative interviewing, identifies the two major traditions on which the analysis of interviews has centred: interview data as a *resource* and interview data as a *topic*. I am aware that such a divide glosses over the myriad of approaches that these terms encapsulates, but, put simply, the story goes something like this:

* *Interview-data-as-resource*: the interview data collected is seen as (more or less) reflecting the interviewees' reality outside the interview.

* *Interview-data-as-topic*: the interview data collected is seen as (more or less) reflecting a reality jointly constructed by the interviewee and interviewer.

The data-as-resource approach has undergone considerable critique from those working

in constructionist traditions. Much of this critique stems from highlighting that:

‘[t]he interview is an artefact, a joint accomplishment of interviewer and respondent. As such, its relationship to any ‘real’ experience is not merely unknown but in some senses unknowable’ (Dingwall, 1997: 56)’

This leads to considerable analytic attention to interviewees talk as ‘accounts’, or ‘versions’, and opens up a window through which to view the various possible ways that the topic of the interview can be talked about. However, despite a notion of ‘joint accomplishment’ and the related idea of the ‘co-construction of accounts’, little detailed analytic attention has been given to *interviewers’ talk*. With a few notable exceptions, outlined below, the analysis of interview data has often become an analysis of some decontextualised-features-of-talk (or discourse/ identities/ narrative/ repertoires/ rhetoric). And, in this way, the local context of the talk - that these ‘features’ were produced in negotiation with an interviewer - becomes silenced.

The rest of the chapter introduces the broad theoretical, methodological and empirical contexts of the thesis. Initially, I document the theoretical approach of the thesis. I then situate my research in relation to some of the current empirical work on interviewing and (il)legal drugs. In the final substantive section, I offer a detailed outline of the thesis.

1.1 *The theoretical approach of the thesis*

This thesis uses (semi-)open-ended interviews with drug users and non-drug users to document the *lived practices* of qualitative interviewing and talk about drugs¹. It outlines in detail *how* qualitative interviews come off in and through talk-in-interaction. It also *contextualises* the interviewees’ topic talk, their talk-about-drugs. An (intimately) related

¹ I should note that I use the terms ‘qualitative interviews’ and ‘(semi-)open-ended interviews’ interchangeably through the thesis to refer to *both* semi-open-ended interviews (also known as semi-structured interviews) *and* open-ended interviews (also known as unstructured interviews). The data set contains twenty-eight interviews that are *labelled*, by those who conducted the interviews, as semi-structured interviews and one interview that is *labelled*, by the person who conducted the interview, as an open-ended interview. However, on listening to and analysing the tapes of these differently labelled interviews I cannot offer up a definitive distinction in the lived practices of the interviewing to warrant the distinct labels. The only difference emerges in that, with those labelled as semi-structured interviews, grammatically similar questions are produced both by the different interviewers and by the same interviewers over different interviews. I therefore use the terms ‘(semi-)open-ended interviews’

concern of this thesis, is to document some ideals about qualitative interviewing and talk about drugs, to document these *ideals-in-and-as-lived-practice*. The theoretical, and hence methodological, perspective advocated in this thesis stems from a reading of the work of the late Harvey Sacks. He asked analysts of social phenomena to ‘just try to come to terms with how it is that the thing comes off’ (1992, Fall 64: 11). No order of detail should be overlooked.

Sacks’ work has been developed into the now (separate) fields of conversation analysis [CA] (see ten Have 1999a, Hutchby and Wooffitt 1998) and membership categorisation analysis [MCA] (see Eglin and Hester 1992, Hester and Eglin 1997 and Lepper 2000)². This thesis uses the analytic sensitivities advocated in both these fields to think through ‘*how it is that the qualitative interview comes off*’. As all the interviews are focused on the topic of (il)legal drugs, and this topic-talk is reflexively bound to the interview practice, the thesis is also about ‘how it is that the qualitative interview about (il)legal drugs comes off’.

Let me position the *place* of this approach, the benefits and problematic of undertaking it. A ‘Sacksian’ perspective offers a sensitivity to the *immediately local context* of the interview, in that its focus is primarily on *how* the interviewee and interviewer produce the interaction as they do. It offers a sensitivity towards the local management of the interview-talk *with reference to both speakers*. It also offers a sensitivity to how identities are locally (re)produced, negotiated and mitigated.

It cannot and does not choose to directly focus on the ‘work’ beyond the space of the interview itself. It does not speak directly to the broader (institutional) networks or ideals rather it demonstrates how these networks or ideals are locally talked into being (or accomplished). In this way the analytic gaze is firmly centred on the work of the speakers and does not, *initially*, seek to import themes and issues raised other than those

and ‘qualitative interviews’ interchangeably through the thesis to *document the tension between the label, or ‘ideal’, and the lived practice*.

² As well influencing discursive psychology (see Edwards and Potter 1992).

found or pointed at in and through the interview talk³. Put simply, it always asks ‘how’ questions first, and then turns to ‘why’ and ‘what’ questions later (see Silverman and Gubrium 1994). This focus on ‘how’ leads to the analytic gaze falling on the collaborative and local mediation and construction of the interview and the speakers identities.

The topic of ‘how a qualitative interview comes off as it does’ is of special interest if we consider the ongoing debate, sparked by Schegloff (1997, 1998) and Wetherell (1998), that emerged in the pages of *Discourse and Society*. Wetherell (1998) cites an ‘interview’ (which she labels a ‘group discussion’) with ‘three young white middle-class men concerning an episode in one of the participant’s recent sexual history’ (387). She argues that if we *just* attend to the local context of the talk a lot of other important issues (e.g. sexuality and gender performance) are lost in the analysis. In a reply to Wetherell, Schegloff highlights that what is important, and what is missing from her account ‘is that the entire exchange appears to be *researcher-prompted*’ [author’s emphasis] (1998: 415). He goes on to note

‘These are not just ordinary ‘conversations’ among ‘members of this community’. How do the kids see it? Is the interaction from the outset between ‘interviewer’ and ‘subjects’? Between ‘adults’ and ‘kids’? Are sexuality and gender ideologies the known interest of the interviewer from the outset? What do the boys think Nigel (the interviewer) is doing there, talking to them? Asking these questions? ... The stances being articulated may be not so much ‘in this community, among these members’ as ‘in the presence of this researcher, in the face of these accusation -tinged interrogatories’

Rather than begin with gender ideologies, one might propose, the analysis *begin by addressing what the parties to the interaction understand themselves to be doing in it, what sort of interaction they show themselves to be collaboratively constructing. Each utterance could then be understood by reference to its place in that enterprise*’ [my emphasis] (ibid.: 415)

³ This analytic position is currently under debate in the pages of *Discourse and Society* (see Arminen 2000, Billig 1999 a, b, Kitzinger and Firth 1999, Schegloff 1997, 1998, 1999a, b, Speer and Potter 2000, Stokoe and Smithson 2001, Weatherall 2000 and Wetherell 1998). I will not, with this chapter, engage with this debate in much detail. However it should be obvious that my work demonstrates a close affinity to Schegloff’s arguments. See also the next chapter, section 2.2.3 - 2.2.4 (and the thesis as a whole) for a more explicit discussion of this debate.

He is advocating a sensitivity towards *situating the speakers talk* in the local context of the talk. This means that we seek to understand how the talk is locally constructed as whatever it is (i.e. as interview-talk-about-drugs).

1.2 *The context of the current empirical work*

Since Cicourel's (1964) 'proto-ethnomethodological' (cf. Lynch 1993) work on research interview *practices*, some work has begun to focus on the interactional nature of research interview talk. Of note is the work of Antaki and Rapley (1996), Baker (1984, 1997), Baruch (1981), Gilbert and Mulkay (1984), Hester and Francis (1994), Houtkoop-Steenstra (2000), Mazeland and ten Have (1996/98), Potter and Mulkay (1985) Suchman and Jordan (1990), Watson and Weinberg (1982), Webb and Stimson (1976) and Widdicombe and Wooffitt (1995). They all point to how interviewers are central in inciting the form and content of interview talk.

While these sources on research interview practice make an important point, they can gloss over the relevance of the *interviewer's work* in producing the talk. Underlying all types of research interviews is the tension between an extra-local need to collect data on a topic and a here-and-now interactional event in which this data is collected in and through talk-in-interaction (Antaki and Rapley 1996, Mazeland and ten Have 1996/1998, Suchman and Jordan 1990). How interviewers manage this tension has outcomes both for the specific interaction and the broader research project to which it contributes data.

The CA work on structured interviewing has begun to outline in detail the lived practices of structured interviewers' and how these reflexively produce and orientate to ideals-about-structured interviewing (see especially Houtkoop-Steenstra 2000 and Suchman and Jordan 1990). A small amount of empirical work has been undertaken on various discrete 'sequences' in unstructured interviews: Kelly (2001) on assessment sequences; Kelly (nd. a) and Roulston (2000) on complaint sequences; Mazeland and ten Have (1996/8) on formulation sequences; Kelly (nd. b) and Widdicombe and Wooffitt (1995) on opening sequences; Baker (1984, 1997), Mazeland and ten Have (1996/8) and Widdicombe and Wooffitt (1995) on question-answer sequences. This

thesis will add to this work, highlighting a broad range of lived practices of ‘qualitative’ interviewing with special reference to the work of interviewers’.

Within the canon of (il)legal drugs research that uses research interviews, the theorising about interview practices appears to stop with interactionism and feminism. This may be for some obvious reasons: drugs are a ‘real social problem’ and so should be understood by a theoretical framework that focuses on ‘the real’. However, as Sacks (1992) noted nearly forty years ago, albeit in reference to some anthropological work:

‘[t]he trouble with their work is that they’re using informants; that is, they’re asking questions of their subjects. That means that they’re studying the categories that Members use, to be sure, *except at this point they are not investigating their categories by attempting to find them in the activities in which they’re employed.* And that, of course, is what I’m attempting to do.’

[My emphasis] (Fall 64, 4: 11)

And that, of course, is also what I’m attempting to do in relation to the interviewees’ talk about drugs. A very few escape attempts from the realist approach to drugs research have been mounted and this thesis is also part of this movement (Davies 1993, 1998, Driscoll 2000, Giulianotti 1997, Glassner and Loughlin 1987, Krug 1989, Matveychuk 1996, Plant 1999, Plumridge and Chetwynd 1998, 1999, Reinerman 1996, Valverde 1998)⁴.

1.3 *An outline of the thesis*

In the next chapter, I offer a natural history of the research, with particular reference to theoretical and methodological issues.

In Part Two, I demonstrate how qualitative interview talk is locally and collaboratively produced. I focus on how interviewers work to initiate the talk and (selectively) follow-up specific topics in the interviewees’ talk. I also show how interviewees’ turns are multi-turn constructional unit (TCU) answers and how this offers interviewees the *possibility* to control the topical trajectory of their talk within their own turns of talk. Chapter Three outlines the turn-taking, sequence and structural organization of the interviews. Chapter Four shifts the focus to how sequence, topic and turn-taking

organization and identity work are inter-related. Both chapters, taken together, demonstrate how both speakers, the interviewee and interviewer, are essential to, in Silverman's (1973) term, 'bringing off the research instrument'.

With Part Three, the analytic focus shifts towards the interviewers' work. They have to attend to (among other things) the here-and-now interactional and interview contexts as well as the broader contexts of the research project and the interview methods literature. This part of the thesis documents how interviewers orientate to this range of (competing) contexts. Chapter Five focuses on question-prefacing in general and documents how this can be a way for interviewers to produce themselves as facilitative interviewers. Chapter Six outlines the various ways so-prefaced questions can work to produce interviewers as neutralistic and facilitative questioners. In Chapter Seven, we shift to a focus on the work embedded in interviewers' questions and at question-endings. Taken together, these methods document some of the practical solutions interviewers routinely employ in order to produce themselves as "the sort of persons they are supposed to be": qualitative interviewers.

In Part Four, I offer one chapter on interviewees' talk and identity work. I explore in detail a small sequence of talk in which the interviewee called Dan talks about his 'drug-free life'. I document some of the methods Dan draws on to construct himself as a specific type-of-person, a *morally adequate* type-of-person. This part of the thesis is centred on generating a sensitivity to the moral-identity work that interviewees can, and do, engage in interviews. Following the work of Baruch (1981) and the theoretical directives of Sacks (1992) and Schegloff (1997), the implication for interview research is that *before* 'we' make assertions about what people are 'saying', how they 'behave' or what they 'believe in', 'we' need to examine *how* both interviewers and interviewees manage their local identities.

With Part Five, we arrive at the conclusions of the thesis. I note that the empirical work demonstrates the general '*[s]ocial practices that are possible*' [author's emphasis] (Peräkylä 1997: 215), within (drugs) interview talk. Practitioners, be it those engaged in

⁴ I should note that only the work of Davies (1998), Glassner and Loughlin (1987) and Plumridge and

drugs interview talk or interview talk *per se* might want to juxtapose their practice, be it interviewing or theorising-about-interview-talk, with that described in the thesis.

1.4 *Some closing comments*

In and through the theoretical, and hence methodological, perspective undertaken in this thesis, I offer a detailed account of the lived practices of (semi-)open-ended interviewing.

This thesis seeks to unsettle some of the current research practices and theories in the academic ‘drug’ and ‘qualitative interviewing’ worlds. This work is in *no way* saying that current practice should cease, rather it is asking these communities to consider, at least in part, some of the questions this research will raise.

Prior to engaging with the lived practices of interviewing, the next chapter contextualises the thesis, offering a natural history of the research.

Chetwynd (1999) undertake (versions of) a ‘constructionist’ approach on drugs talk *in interviews*.

A Natural History of the Research

As noted in the prior chapter, the central question that this thesis is engaging with is:

how it is that the qualitative interview about (il)legal drugs comes off in and through talk-in-interaction.

This ‘research question’ presents a gloss that I feel deserves unpacking. This chapter will unpack this gloss through a (necessarily) brief and selective natural history of my research. I should note however, that this chapter is not written without a sense of irony on my behalf. I outlined in the introduction, that the thesis is concerned to document both the *lived practices* and *the ideals-in-and-as-lived-practices* of qualitative interviewing and talk about drugs. By this I mean, that interviewers’ and interviewees’ lived practices, their talk-in-interaction, *both document and reflexively (re)produce* some of the ideals-about-the-lived-practices of qualitative interviewing and drugs-talk that saturate contemporary interview methods and empirical discourse, governmental, legislative, media and therapeutic discourse and everyday interaction. My sense of irony emerges as I am now going to offer a version of the thesis that has less to do with documenting the ad hoc (strained, joyous and painful ...) lived practices of my research and, inevitably, more to do with a retrospective ‘idealised’ account¹.

2.1 In the beginning ...

If I was to construct a family tree of the influences on my thesis, the great, great, great, grandparents would be two journal articles: Shiner and Newburn’s (1997) interview study on teenage drug and non-drug users and Baruch’s (1981) interview study on parents of children with congenital illnesses. However, to cite these papers as just ‘distant relatives’, is to deny their continuing impact on my thesis. One way to understand this thesis, is to view it as an elaborate, extended and ongoing conversation with just these two articles. I will now offer a brief description of these articles and how they continue to be relevant to my work.

¹ I am not trying to claim that I could have done anything different or ‘better’.

2.1.1 *Doing being morally adequate whilst talking about drugs*

Shiner and Newburn (1997) want to discover if recreational drug use is seen as ‘normal’ by young people. This was in part, a reaction to the ‘normalisation debate’ that saturated, and still saturates, the contemporary debate on illegal drug use (see especially Parker, Aldridge and Measham 1998). Put simply, a considerable weight of academic and market research, as well as the related output from the media and pressure groups, argues that ‘young’ people no longer view illegal drug use as a deviant activity (e.g. Collin and Godferry 1997, Release 1997).

Shiner and Newburn (1997) conducted interviews with drug using and non-drug using 11-16 year olds. They treated the interview data they gained as a *resource*, a source of information (social fact) about activities and behaviour *outside* the interview setting. They offer quite a ‘typical’ methodological note:

‘It is possible that the school setting may have encouraged respondents to give what they thought were socially desirable answers ... thus reducing the validity of the interview data.’ (1997, 520).

Their concept of validity is concerned with bias, establishing trust and therefore the truthfulness of their data, the approach Silverman names as ‘interview-as-technique’ (1993). For Shiner and Newburn:

‘[g]iven that youth clubs, arguably, provide a more relaxed setting than schools and one in which young people feel more able to ‘be themselves’ this source of information was particularly useful. The school and youth-club based interviews were semi-structured. Although the interviewers had a series of questions they wanted to ask they did not ask them in any fixed order and, where appropriate, they probed areas as they were raised by respondents. *This approach was favoured on the grounds that it minimised the extent to which respondents had to express themselves in terms defined by the interviewers and encouraged them to raise issues that were important to them. It was thus particularly well suited to attempt to discover respondents’ own meanings and interpretations’* [my emphasis] (1997: 520)

So Shiner and Newburn wish to gain access to what Holstein and Gubrium (1997) have called ‘[t]he subject beyond the respondent’ in which subjects are conceived as ‘passive *vessels of answers* for experimental questions ... who, under ideal conditions, serve up authentic reports’ [authors’ emphasis] (116-117). As noted in the prior chapter,

constructionist approaches have seriously undermined such a stance on the role of the interviewees' subjectivity, highlighting that: the interviewee is *active* in meaning construction (e.g. Gilbert and Mulkey 1984, Potter and Mulkey 1985, Holstein and Gubrium 1997) and that the interviewees' subjectivity is *locally produced* sequentially in and through talk (e.g. Baker 1984, 1997, Widdicombe and Wooffitt 1995).

Shiner and Newburn were interested in establishing the 'meaning' of drug use, the way it is 'understood by the young' (1997: 519) *beyond* the space of the interview. The constructionist critique denies that interview data can be used to report on a reality beyond the interview and treats the interview itself as the central *topic* of analysis; interviews merely report upon, or express, their own structures (Silverman 1993). As the 'discursive turn' in the Academy highlighted, language is *performative*, it is never merely a *neutral* means of communication. In interviews, language is *not* a neutral carrier for information, the interview-talk itself is a form of social action and should be studied as such (cf. Cicourel 1964). Central to this analytic perspective is an awareness of the *accounting work* of interview talk, that speech-acts are *performative*, used to 'present the self' (c.f. Goffman 1959) in a morally adequate light.

However, Shiner and Newburn (1997) *do* show a concern for the *accounting work* of the drug using interviewees. Unfortunately, this focus was *only* on drug users and *not* non-drug users. They show that drug-using interviewees use, what they call following Matza (1964), 'neutralisation techniques' to 'claim that there were no really serious consequences from the drug(s) being used, and, by implication, that the user was making responsible and rational choices' (Shiner and Newburn 1997: 525). They offer examples in which drug users offer accounts which neutralise moral attacks against them, allowing themselves to retain membership of the wider 'moral' adult world. For non-users' talk, they offer no comment about the same moral forces that shape this talk. When non-users offer talk that makes 'positive connections' (ibid.: 521) between drug use and everyday activities they offer no detailed examples or commentary. Nor do they relate interviewees' answers to interviewers' questions and other actions.

2.1.2 *Accounting for actions*

Baruch, following Webb and Stimson (1976), shows us that interviewees

‘attend to the issue of their appearance as moral persons, competent members and adequate performers’ (Baruch 1981: 276).

If we understand that interview talk places *moral demands* on speakers, the ‘fact’ that the drug users in Shiner and Newburn’s sample *construct* moral talk is of no surprise. Equally that they achieve this through detailing ‘restrictive views, characteristic of the “adult world”’ (Shiner and Newburn 1997: 521) is of little surprise.

Baruch shows us that respondents in his study - parents of children with congenital illnesses - produce atrocity stories about the discovery of their child’s illness. They then work to answer the ‘unsaid’ question “How could you, as parents, have allowed that to happen to your child?” (1981: 276). The parents produce themselves as everyday, lay, people without special knowledge, who acted as any ‘reasonable lay person’ would do given the information at hand. They also ‘locate health professionals in a world quite distinct from that occupied by lay people.’ (1981: 282). The respondents construct two ‘realities’ - ‘lay’ and ‘medical’- and *moral adequacy is accomplished* via intersubjective appeals to the disjuncture between these realities; how could they be expected to have access to specialised ‘medical’ knowledge? So where does this leave Shiner and Newburn’s analysis?

If we understand that *accounting work* is central to interview-talk we should observe *how* this accounting work is accomplished. Shiner and Newburn do this, in part, pointing out that the only difference between non-users and users is that the latter generate ‘neutralisation techniques’. *But* as they treat the interview-as-resource their analysis leads them to some conclusions that are not analytically tenable². They conclude that ‘young people do not view drug use as an ‘unproblematic’ activity’ (526) as both users and non-users subscribe to a ‘restrictive set of [anti-drugs] views’ (Shiner and Newburn 1997: 525). Their qualitative data only shows us that *in interviews* young people do not *present* drug use as an ‘unproblematic’ activity. In other contexts,

² They initially treat their data as a *resource*, then switch to *topic* led concerns, then construct their conclusions from a *resource* perspective. They move from topic and resource concerns and make no concessions, written or analytic, to this movement.

notably outside the interview, interviewees (and interviewers) can, and surely do, produce talk-about-drugs with *alternative* moral trajectories.

2.1.3 *Respecifying interview-talk with drug and non-drug users*

Such a re-reading of Shiner and Newburn's work, through a pair of analytic spectacles provided by Baruch, documented for me how 'neutralisation' is a local-situational accomplishment and that in other spaces of interaction, such as talk-between-friends, other (and Other) presentations of self are *equally possible*.

Readers may feel that using 'talk-about-drugs' is quite an extreme example, and that "of course" people will work to account for such a topic, as it is inherently delicate. But we should note that topics of talk are never delicate or sensitive *per se*. As Silverman (1997) shows, in pre-test HIV counselling interviews, certain topics of talk may be locally produced by speakers as 'delicate topics' and that what is a 'delicate topic' at one point in the talk may later in the interview no longer be treated as delicate. As both Baruch (1981) and Cornwell (1988) note 'morally adequate' or 'public' accounts are products of local contingencies. Baruch highlights that the 'atrocious stories' given by parents often occur at early stages in their child's medical 'career' and at certain moments in the first interviews. Cornwell (1988), contra her 1984 work, notes that it is *not* 'simply' that public (i.e. morally adequate) accounts occur at the initial interviews and that private (i.e. 'personal/honest') accounts occur with later interviews. She suggests that this public/private distinction is less rigid and such accounting work may be a product of local interactional issues.

What both Baruch and Shiner and Newburn's work share, is a strong concern about the *moral work* in talk. Baruch goes further than Shiner and Newburn. He begins explicitly to connect this moral work to the specific interview context and the specific interview topic. I became very aware of how when you look at a piece of interview 'data' you should be aware that it was produced in a context and *that this context does 'work'* on the interviewees' (and interviewers') talk. Sometimes this work is about interviewees producing locally appropriate 'morally adequate answers'. In other contexts, other 'answers' will be given.

This 'insight' is still central to my work. Taken together, Baruch's concern for viewing interview talk as co-constructed and a specific-type-of-talk and Shiner and Newburn's understanding of the moral(ising) work of talk-about-drugs, begins to outline the theoretical and empirical trajectory of this thesis.

2.1.4 *Finding and losing and finding the interview context*

Prior to my PhD, this insight also led to me completing an MA thesis with the title '*Cocaine mister tape-recorder it's a monster*': *Accounting for drug use*.' (Rapley 1998). I interviewed one of my friends, a recreational poly-drug user who claimed to have cut down (and stopped using some) illegal drugs. My MA thesis focused on how this interviewee produced himself, through talk, as a 'morally adequate societal member'. It also highlighted how this identity was accomplished in and through interaction with me as the interviewer and thus how both speakers are co-implicated in the (moral) trajectory of the talk.

Part of the title of my MA thesis - '*Cocaine mister tape-recorder it's a monster*' - is a direct quote from the interviewee in which he locally produces the interview context *as relevant for his talk*. In this way, the interviewee was explicitly demonstrating a (moral) context of the talk. For me as the analyst, 'the problem of relevance' (Schegloff 1987, 1991, 1992b, 1997) was temporarily resolved. I say 'temporarily resolved' as this was only one utterance and as Fitzgerald (1999: 17) notes, echoing Schegloff, '*[o]ne utterance does not a context make*' [author's emphasis]. What was lacking from my MA thesis was a clear demonstration, other than my taken-for-granted knowledge, that this was for both speakers and at all points, an 'interview', rather than just a 'chat between friends' or a 'therapy session' or a combination of all these, or some thing else. In retrospect, the classic ethnomethodological (EM) question emerges: was I prioritising analysts' or participants' concerns?

In my MA thesis there was a clear demonstration of how speakers can talk about drugs, the sort of devices and methods that can be draw on - comparison with the 'common experience of everyday people', disjuncture with other 'deviant groups', documenting

self-control - to produce yourself as a 'morally-adequate drug user'. And this 'insight' was made possible through engaging with the work of Harvey Sacks and its contemporary development into CA.

I found that the devices and methods that the interviewee drew on saturated *all* drugs-talk, that they spoke to and emerged from the wider strategies available to all people involved in talk-about-drugs: academic, lay, media, political and therapeutic communities. The MA work became a way to view the 'discursive possibilities' available to all people talking about drugs to negotiate a sense of morality. The context (that this was - at certain points, for both speakers - interview talk) *had vanished*.

I applied for funding to continue my MA work, and to my surprise (and joy) I got it. The outline for the thesis was originally centred on understanding how people talk about drugs. However, I was increasingly aware that 'drugs talk' always takes place within a context, it is produced in and through a reaction to (or interaction with) something, and notably this 'talk' has an audience. Personally, I did not feel happy about decontextualising the talk, comparing and contrasting different moments of drugs talk without acknowledging it, *at least initially*, as drugs-talk-in-interaction. So, to understand talk-about-drugs I needed to find a 'space' in which talk-about-drugs was produced and be sensitive to how this 'space', or context, was intimately relevant to the trajectory of the talk. In the opening month of my PhD, various possibilities arose: news programmes, TV and radio chat shows, 'ethnographic work' and interviews. Interviews seemed a good place to start, in part due to my interest in the theoretical debate surrounding interviews, and most importantly, as I could obtain access to someone else's interview data³.

The data set I 'obtained' was a qualitative interview study with people who have attended or ran peer-led drugs education programmes. The interviews were originally used to evaluate their response to the peer-education programme. It consists of twenty-

³ As Silverman (2000) argues, within the canon of qualitative research there is very strong preference for using data that the researcher has *personally* gathered. This is part of an appeal to 'authenticity', what Silverman glosses as an 'emotionalist' perspective. This thesis, in part, documents the possibilities of engaging with secondary data.

eight audio-taped interviews, with twenty eight different interviewees, conducted by three different interviewers. The interviews last between half-an-hour and an hour. I also use the interview I conducted for my MA thesis as a further case. The thesis then became focused on ‘drug-talk-in-interviews’.

2.1.5 Sacks’ ‘simple’ maxim

Once I had secured access to the data, I remember talking to my supervisor, David Silverman, about what the specific analytic path my work could take. We both agreed that using Sacks’ insights on membership categorisation was the central way to think through the data and to begin to understand talk-about-drugs. We also agreed that “doing sequential work” on interviews would be “boring and unproductive” (!)⁴. This was for me, to say the least, somewhat of a disappointment. Despite an earlier period of shock and outrage towards it, I had become completely fascinated by Sacks’ work, and the more contemporary CA and MCA work, on talk-in-interaction.

I have a favourite Sacks’ quote - that is used repeatedly in the chapters - and is *the* central device/maxim/method/resource/tool I use when undertaking my analysis. It ‘simply’ says:

‘[j]ust try to come to terms with how it is that the thing comes off. ... Look to see how it is that persons go about producing what they do produce.’

(1992, Fall 64: 11).

Following the conventions outlined by Jefferson (see Appendix), I transcribed roughly five minutes of one interview at the point that the topic of drugs was introduced. I followed Sacks’ advice - ‘just’ come to terms with it - and I spent roughly a whole year working on this section of the interview doing *both* categorical *and* sequential work on the talk.

In that time, through working with that small sequence, I discovered lot of ‘things’. I want to offer a list of the noticings that became relevant over that time, that are retrospectively collected under three different headings:

⁴ I should note, we quickly changed our minds.

The interviewee's work - how they pursued a response, used maxims and tag components, the sing-song voice quality of maxims, positioned categories in connection to describing drugs, doing the documentary method on their own talk as a way of getting the interviewer to talk, worked to explicitly mark themselves as a specific type-of-person.

The interviewer's work - how they repeatedly used 'and', 'so' and 'tell me' question prefaces, how they repeatedly used contingent questions, the role of silence in producing multi-unit turns, the use (and absence) of response tokens.

Interviewee and Interviewer working together - the different question types and answers in relation to the organization of the qualitative interview, the role of pronoun choice, how both had specific home-bases in relation to pronoun choice (interviewer 'you [personally]', interviewee 'a lot of people'), how they often worked to gain multi-unit turns, the differential rights and responsibilities to own knowledge and to be an expert on experience, the work of self-repairs.

This is by no means exhaustive of the sorts of things that the interaction raised for me. Interestingly, most of these noticings are now part of the thesis.

These noticings arose both out of my engagement with the data and my ideas about them developed alongside the reading I was conducting. As the list documents, I was fascinated by what is traditionally known as 'sequential' *and* 'categorical' work, so I was reading texts that connected with both issues. I was very impressed by Watson (1997b) 'theoretical' paper where he outlined the 'silence' of talk about membership categorization in contemporary CA work: that if it is referenced at all, it is relegated to footnotes. However, after engaging with some of the texts that used, what has become known as membership categorization analysis (MCA), for example Jayussi (1984) and Hester and Eglin's (1997) edited collection, I found that such a focus can make analysis of categorisation very 'technical'. For me, three analyses became central to how I

would approach such work: Sacks' (1992 Winter 69, Lecture 8: 126-136) discussion of the 'Den Mother' story, Drew's (1992) paper 'Contested evidence in courtroom cross-examination: the case of a trial for rape' and Lawrence's (1996) [sorely neglected] paper 'Normalizing Stigmatised Practices: Achieving Co-Membership by "Doing Being Ordinary"'. All three, for me, "just get on with an excellent analysis". They draw on what is needed, from both sequential and categorical work, to '[j]ust try to come to terms with how it is that the thing comes off', without engaging in overly technicised or polemical discussions. And this is the path, I also (tried to) follow⁵.

I used the analysis of the five minute section for my upgrade. I wrote the following comments to my examiners in the introduction to my upgrade:

'The chapters represent my initial work at 'coming to terms' with just a very small part of my data set. ... I feel I have more than enough data in just this one section of the one interview and am already having to forego many areas of interest in order to make the work feasible. However, my future work will use the insights from this fine-grained analysis as a jumping of point, in order to compare and contrast (and destroy) some of my initial findings with additional data. If I want to engage in a debate with the 'drugs interview world' I feel I need to follow this path. Also, I feel a larger data set will aid me in challenging and therefore strengthening my arguments.'

I still think I only began to scratch the surface of the participants' work and I could have produced a PhD just on that section. However, over the eighteen months that followed my upgrade, by contrasting and comparing the analysis of that section with the repeated listening and analysis of the rest of the data-set, I definitely have destroyed, challenged and strengthened my initial arguments.

2.1.7 ... *in the end*.

As already noted, my greatest source of analytic guidance and constant inspiration is the work of Sacks and those that follow the path(s) that he uncovered. I will now offer a brief demonstration of the analytic mentality that a Sacksian perspective can generate. I will then highlight some of the theoretical and methodological debates that I have engaged with over the period of researching this work.

⁵ Among the many texts I have engaged with, six other writers have also inspired me: C. Kitzinger, C. Goodwin, Jayussi, Maynard, Silverman and Schegloff.

2.2 A brief demonstration

In order to demonstrate the sort of sensitivity a Sacksian perspective advocates consider extract 2.1a below. It is taken from an interview with a teenager to evaluate some drug-education exercises. In the research report we may be told “interviewees often talked about their drugs use unprompted”.

Extract 2.1a

Ben: There is a lot of people that actually do soft drugs.
I don't actually do them at the moment, I did
up to about a year ago.

‘Traditionally’ you often see this sort of transcription. Now look again at the same extract. This time I have transcribed it following some the conventions of CA detailing the ‘majority’ of the features of the talk.

Extract 2.1b (IR = Interviewer, Ben = Interviewee)

1 IR: °>so when you say the s:fter drugs° °°what does
2 that mean.<°°
3 Ben: Well= ↑herm. (2.0) °tch° I suppos:e. (1.0) if we-
4 >talkin about< drink and smoking as well.
5 (.) but er, (.) sort of cannabis:: lik:e.
6 (1.4) ←
7 Ben: there is:: a lot of people that actually do that. I,=>I
8 don't actually do tha at the moment=I did,< °.hhh°
9 up to about a year ago I think- (.) that was the sort
10 of >peak,< for (.) our age group °an[d e v]eryone°
11 IR: [(mm.)°]
12 Ben: (who/that) was into it.
13 IR: and how often were you °using (it),°=

At this stage, I am just going to note one thing: Ben *only* elaborates on his drug use after he receives no response from the interviewer (IR). The gap in the talk (arrowed) does a lot of work. The interviewer's silence is vital in producing both the content and form of Ben's ‘answer’. Or, put differently, IR's non-action (his silence) *is an action*

(cf. Poland and Pederson 1998, Potter and Wetherell 1995) that has important consequences for the trajectory of Ben's answer.

As the interviews were transcribed in this way, I began to see them as spaces of *finely co-ordinated interactional work in which both speakers' talk is central to producing the interview*. This kind of CA transcription, and the theoretical standpoint that it emerged from, offered me specific pair of academic spectacles to see, understand and document the world of the interview through. However, such transcription practices have been critiqued from various analytic positions (e.g. O'Connell and Kowal 1995, Poland and Pederson 1998). Of note, are those from within the canon of CA/EM work. It is these critiques to which I will now turn.

2.2.1 *Transcription as sorcery?*

Goode (1994) in reference to video data talks about "video sorcery". He notes that, 'The same piece of tape can serve as the evidence for several different meaning structures, even diametrically opposing ones' (159). He conducted an experiment, telling two different groups of students two different ways to 'understand' the same interaction on a video tape they watched. The students saw what he told them to see. In a related vein, Watson (1997 a, b) notes how the categorical identifications on transcripts, for example the category-identification on the transcript above - IR = Interviewer - 'works to select and privilege one sociological characterization of ... exchanges over other potential characterizations' (1997a: 84).

Fundamentally, both Goode and Watson are concerned that the analysis of lived practices, that recording and transcription can be central for, should be centred on the participants' concerns over those of the analyst (see Schegloff 1991, 1992, 1997 for a related argument). For them, along with many others⁶, the analysis of participants' lived practices is in danger of being 'lost'. For them, I am in danger of my transcripts

⁶ Two related 'camps' are central in this debate. Those who follow Garfinkel's 'work studies' programme (for example Bogen 1992, Hak 1999, Livingston 1987, Lynch 1993, Lynch and Bogen 1994) and those following MCA, who critique 'formal/foundational CA' or the 'institutional talk programme' (for example Fitzgerald 1999, Hester and Eglin 1997)

becoming reified and my analysis becoming centred on an abstract discussion of topics that are, supposedly, driven by my concerns as a ‘professional analyst’.

For me, transcripts are only, to borrow Spiegelberg’s phrase, “aids for the sluggish imagination” (cited in Garfinkel, 1967: 39). The transcript is only a translation and it is, in part, a rhetorical tool in and through which I can demonstrate the lived practices of the speakers. In and through repeated *listening* to the tapes, I began to ‘hear’ the lived practices of interviewing. Goode (1994) does note

‘this unnaturalness - this vantage point created through a recorded event that allows the researcher repeatedly to view and hear recorded aspects of a lived order - lets the researcher discover features of the everyday orderliness that may not be conscious to those involved in its production, or even consciously recognized by those observing in real time. ... Video tape data *would appear to* ... destroy the unremarkability and mundanity of everyday events and leave in its stead an unfamiliar and new world with previously unnoticed features.’

[My emphasis] (156)

For Goode, recordings only allow access to the ‘*the syntactic of a lived order*, the what came first, second, and third of the event.’ [author’s emphasis] (156). For the analyst of such data, the meanings of the interaction for the participants are lost.

Contra Goode, I would argue, the tapes gave me access to, at the very least, *some of the fundamental features*, methods, moves, resources, routines ... that the speakers themselves attend to and make relevant in and through their lived practice. Let us take, for example, the work of the ‘silence’ in Extract 2.1b above. Ben orientates his talk to this ‘gap’ in their talk at line 6. In receiving no verbal uptake from IR at 6, *he* topic-shades (Schegloff and Sacks 1973), *he* elaborates on his personal drug-use. Not only for me as the analyst, but primarily *for Ben and IR*, this silence is meaningful for *their* interaction. I am concerned to work with and demonstrate, the *participants’* concerns, what *they* attend to, ‘what *they* demonstrably orient to as relevant (as best [I] can establish it, to be sure)’ [authors’ emphasis] (Schegloff 1999b: 579).

I should also note, that, as the data-set is based on audio-tapes, I only have access to verbal lived practices of the participants⁷. In an ideal world, I would have worked on a video-based data-set, I would have extensive fieldnotes (as I would have conducted some ethnographic work) and I may also have chosen to be the interviewer. However, I obtained someone else's data-set for thoroughly pragmatic and contingent reasons: it was available and I wanted to spend as much time focusing on data as was possible⁸. Equally, I am aware that many other (senior) researchers who undertake interview studies do not participate in the interviews. They often only get access to, and base their analysis on, audio-tapes, or just 'clean' transcripts, of the interviews. My situation then, is congruent with many others conducting interview studies. However, *how* I've chosen to study the interviews is not congruent with the majority of current empirical practice. Hopefully, in and through producing a detailed and textured description of some of the lived practices of interviewing I will unsettle some current assumptions about the practices and analysis of interviews.

My discussion of the critiques of transcription practices alongside my discussion in the introduction of the Wetherell-Schegloff debate (section 1.1) has begun to document some of the debates within and around CA/EM/MCA work⁹. Whilst writing this thesis I have been amazed by the (personalised) arguments and in-fighting on the topic of 'how to do CA/EM/MCA work'. A lot of time, energy and words is spent on arguing that someone else's approach is "nearly right but, then again, absolutely wrong". I want to now offer a very brief tour of one of these debates - how an analysis grounded in participants' concerns can and should be conducted - as this has been central for me to think through, and question, how I analyse my data¹⁰.

⁷ Although, as one of the interviews in the data set was conducted by me, I do have access here to ethnographic detail through my field notes (and memories).

⁸ Equally, in retrospect, if I had worked on artefacts, body work, gaze, gesture and talk, spending a year on five minutes would probably have seemed like an overly ambitious project (!).

⁹ Other debates, including the 'place' of membership category work, the utility of drawing on Goffman's work on 'footings' and the 'problems' of analysing quasi-institutional talk are discussed throughout the body of the thesis in direct reference to my empirical work.

¹⁰ I want to underline that I am not just providing a literature review. The 'debates' discussed in this, and the prior, chapter have been central to the natural, or rather, *intellectual* history of my work.

2.2.2 *Some fundamental(ist) debates on theory and method*

Sacks, along with Schegloff and Jefferson (1974), set out, in their seminal paper, to show how ordinary conversation actively produces orderly social interaction. Heritage (1984) highlights three fundamental assumptions of their approach:

Talk is structurally organised. Interaction exhibits grossly observable, stable and organised patterns which participants actively attend to; these features are independent of psychological particulars.

Talk is sequential. Talk-in-interaction is both context-shaping and context-renewing; ‘the context of a next action is repeatedly renewed with every current action’ (242) and the ‘next action’ is (usually) produced in response to the prior talk. Thus talk produces the talk that follows it and reflects the past talk.

All talk is structurally organised and sequential. These features are not merely found in the general actions of speakers but also within the ‘minutiae’ of the interaction, so all levels of detail are crucial in producing the interaction as it is. Thus the analysis of talk-in-interaction is based on what participants do, what they themselves are attending within their talk and is not based on *a priori* assumptions of what the analyst thinks ‘should be’ going on.

The central project of such a theoretical trajectory is to demonstrate ‘how particular conversational outcomes happen (or do not happen)’ (Gubrium and Holstein 1997: 56). As Jayussi (1991) clearly documents, in and through the sequential organization of ordinary conversation we can view how the conceptual, practical and moral orders are reflexively embedded in one another. She notes that:

‘what conversation analysts are doing is revealing the practical organisation, the interactional character, of specific discourse moves/actions. ... What is further the case, is that these practical/interactional possibilities, grounded as they are in our knowledge of the concepts that animate them, *are also and at*

the same time grounded in, and constitutive of, a moral order bound up with those self-same concepts and the practices that enable them. ... The fact that questions expect answers is not taken, by members, to be simply a free floating generalisation of some kind that one can take or leave - rather it is taken as a matter of *moral and practical consequence*' [author's emphasis] (243)

The central tenet of such work, is that, to document this practico-moral order, *the analysis must be grounded on what participants do and what outcomes they achieve.*

Few working within, or around, the field of talk-in-interaction would argue with the above assumptions. However, the point of departure emerges with the specifics of how an analysis grounded only in participants concerns can and should be conducted. One of the main areas of debate, highlighted by the critiques of Billig (1999a, 1999b) and Wetherell (1998) argues that CA work neglects, and cannot talk to, the broader concerns that participants bring to their interactions. It avoids *further* social analysis and critique, and is naive in limiting itself to participants' categories only. This critique questions whether a 'conversation analytic framework' adequately accounts for, or attends to, the lived practices of the participants. In order to make this often highly abstracted and theoretical debate visible, I will discuss it in relation to Extract 2.1b (section 2.2, above).

2.2.3 *The missing 'broader contexts'*

In his editorial to the Billig-Schegloff-Wetherell debate, Van Dijk (1999) glosses the relevant positions:

'Unlike card-carrying conversation analysts, critical discourse analysts are not afraid to make use of their social knowledge that being black, being a woman, being young or being the boss will most likely be evident from the way people write and talk. In other words, they assume that discourse may reproduce social inequality.

Of course, and this is the major point CA makes, such an approach should not merely presuppose (even plausible) contextualisation, but 'prove' it by attending to the details of what social members actually say and do. If not, contextualisation is pointless because of its discursive irrelevance' (460)

The problem, with reference to Extract 2.1b, is the 'fact' that Ben is 17, a teenager, a school boy, an 'A' level student, white, male, able-bodied, asthmatic, British, a drug-user, an ex-drug user or any other identities relevant to the interaction? Similarly,

which of IR's multiple-identities are relevant: his age, his educational level, his gender, his job, his 'role' as questioner, his 'role' as interviewer ... ? Or is it that, at certain moments in the interaction, specific identities, or social structures, are (produced as) relevant for the participants for the specific moment of the interaction?

For example, in and through Ben saying 'I don't actually do tha at the moment=I did,< °.hhh° up to about a year ago I think-' (7-9) he produces himself as an 'ex-drug user'. And this is a specific-type of ex-drug user - an 'ex-softer drug user'. Note how he *previously* produced the category 'softer drugs' to include both 'cannabis:: lik:e.' (5) illegal drugs and legal drugs 'drink and smoking' (4) and that 'a lot of people' (7) are softer drug users. Also note how he *then* makes his identity as an 'ex-softer drug user' relevant in connection to his age - 'that was the sort of >peak,< for (.) our age group °an[d e v]eryone°' (9-10). Ben produces specific identities as relevant, at specific moments in his talk¹¹. As Schegloff notes:

'Rather than a cascading set of communities of relevance from which an investigation can choose the most inviting on whatever grounds invitingness is based, there is a single - *albeit shifting* - community of relevance, which challenges the inquirer to show that the observation being registered and the analytic line being taken is resonant with *the orientations of the people who matter the most - the ones who engaged in that conduct, and on whose understanding of its relevances the actual trajectory of the interaction was built*' [my emphasis] (1999c: 579)

This is the position I have adopted throughout this thesis.

Such a 'Schegloffian' position is not without its critics from 'within' the canon of 'CA'.

For instance, Arminen (2000) argues that

'the recovery of embodied meaning of interactional practices may depend on *an analyst's ability to recognize the participants' situated competencies that have informed their activities*' [my emphasis] (44).

He shows how a self-repair - 'in a way this pe:rsn kept me sober cause he just **couldn't-** (1.0) **didn't** want to drink himself' (43) - ascribes a specific identity to the person being spoken about. The repair from 'being unable to drink' to 'being unwilling

¹¹ For further analysis of this extract see section 4.5.

to drink' ascribes the person being spoken about with an Alcoholic Anonymous (AA) identity - someone who every day *volunteers* not to drink. For him, without the specific taken-for-granted cultural competence of AA's 'voluntary' ethos, the significance of the self-repair may remain unnoticed. I would also note, the self-repair reflexively produces the speaker as a competent user of AA discourse, documents a specific moral order, and reflexively documents the context of the interaction, that this was an AA meeting. The self-repair, a generic feature of talk-in-interaction, is also, a site-specific feature of the talk-in-interaction. It begins to demonstrate the procedural relevance (Schegloff 1987, 1991, 1992b, 1997) of the context: that this is an AA meeting is actually relevant to participants at this point.

Importantly, Arminen (2000), unlike Billig (1999 a, b) is not arguing that adopting the participants' orientation is a rhetorical trope, rather he documents some of the *possible* problematics of this position. For me, how I come to understand certain moments in the lived practices of participants talk-in-interaction, can *at some moments* depend on my ability, as a culturally competent member of a specific community. I became very aware of this - at its most fundamental level - at two moments over the course of the research. Both moments highlighted my position as a native-English speaker and the taken-for-granted knowledge that this provides. On one occasion I was in a membership category data session with someone working with transcripts that were based on a Finnish-to-English translation. We kept exploring various paths that the transcript appeared to make relevant, only to be told that "actually, in Finnish, the inferences aren't really like that". Similarly, whilst in Finland, in data-session working with audio-tapes of my data and other discussions, I became aware that I had to translate and explain some of the drug terminology, drug and non-drug 'slang' and specific sayings that the participant used¹².

¹² However, this was not without its benefits, as an 'alien' perspective allows for and highlights what otherwise can remain as taken-for-granted. For example, someone in the data-session asked whether saying '°>I mean my-° (.) to be honest:.' was a 'strange' thing to say. Well for me it is. The strangeness emerges from its very routineness. It enabled me to think in more detail about the contextual information work that speakers so routinely engage in: we [as co-speakers] routinely *explicitly inform others how to hear* what we are saying. See Chapter Five, Six and Seven for a detailed discussion of how interviewers' explicitly produce contextual information.

This position, acknowledging the role of my cultural competence, does not in any way deny that attending to participants orientations *is the central task of my analysis* ¹³.

The point is to show (and argue) how participants orientate to - how they make relevant in and through their interaction – ‘what is [and is not] looming relevant for us (as competent members of the society or as professional social scientists)’ (Schegloff 1991: 65). It does highlight some of the possible problematics you could encounter if the research was on talk-in-interaction in contexts where specialist or technical talk or routines are practised. In such cases, I agree with Lynch (1993) when he argues that analysts should gain, at the least, ‘vulgar competence’ of the research site. In respect to my data-set, I have ‘vulgar competence’ of both qualitative interviewing (the procedures, methods and resources) and of drugs talk and slang.

2.2.4 *Vernacular vs. analytic concerns*

Billig (1999a) also raised another critique of CA work: that, although CA claims to study the participants in their own terms, they are *not* written about using their own terms. For example, in my commentaries of Extract 2.1b, I have used the words ‘gap’, ‘no response’, ‘non-action’, ‘pause’, ‘receiving no verbal uptake’ and ‘silence’ to refer to the 1.4 second ‘silence’ in the talk, marked on line 6 of the transcript. I have also talked about Ben ‘topic-shading’ - to describe Ben’s move from talking about the definition of the term softer drugs to talking about people of his age, and his own, use of softer drugs.

For Billig, using categories like topic-shading or non-action, is an analytic imposition that obscures that I am ‘actually’ imposing categories, that I am no longer attending to the participants’ orientations. Schegloff (1999a) dismisses this critique as a ‘minor’ point. To paraphrase him: participants ‘do not talk *of* topic-shading, they *exhibit* it in the selection of their words, reference terms, topics, etc.:’. However, Billig’s critique,

¹³ The contemporary work on the existential categories (cf. Lynch 2000) of ‘gender’ (Firth and Kitinger 1998, Kitinger 2000a, Speer 1999, Stokoe 2000, Stokoe and Smithson 2001, Weatherall 2000) and ‘race’ (Rawls 2000) also argues that analysts should attend to participants’ orientations. Some of the work on gender (notably Stokoe and Smithson 2001) argues for a broader perspective than a ‘Schegloffian’ one, a stance that uses CA ‘[a]s a starting point’ (239) but also seeks to ‘go beyond describing data in participants’ own terms.’(232) .

echoes the more 'extensive' critiques of Livingston (1986), Lynch (1993) and Lynch and Bogen (1994). They routinely argue that 'latter day CA' studies are fundamentally problematic as they have become 'technical', 'professionalised', and 'scientised' accounts that systematically lose the lived work of speakers.

Lynch (1993) argues that CA, under Sacks, *began as* a natural history of ordinary language. Sacks 'attempted to review ordinary linguistic competencies for a kind of "therapeutic" respecification of previous scholastic treatments of action and reasoning' (217). For Lynch, such a programme became professionalised as the 'ordinary objects' of everyday actions - 'ordinary methods of opening and closing conversations, negotiating the transfer of turns, and correcting and avoiding errors and misunderstandings' (218) - were transformed into 'positive "facts" for conversation' (235). These "facts" include such features as defining conversation as a 'speech-exchange systems' with its 'turn-constructive units' and 'turn-allocation techniques', and 'adjacency pairs'. For Lynch,

'[b]y distinguishing the analytic competencies of members of the conversation-analytic community from the vernacular competency of ordinary conversationalists described, conversation analysts have segregated their technical reports from the communal practices they describe. (245)

In reading such critiques of CA, I feel that 'I must be' some kind of robot¹⁴ who 'only' applies pre-programmed, technicised, formal, understandings to talk. Even Kitzinger's (2000b) work on the resistance of idioms - although very sympathetic to CA - offers up a version of *some* CA analysts as just following blindly the past work: "I see an idiomatic expression therefore it is attracting affiliation"¹⁵.

In contrast to the mechanistic descriptions of CA practice, Schegloff argues

' 'formal' analytic resources are like an inventory of tools, materials and know-how from which practising research analysts can draw for their analytic undertakings because practising *interactants* draw on them in concertedly constructing and grasping what transpires in interaction'
[author's emphasis] (1999c 415).

¹⁴ Or maybe a cyborg (part-human, part-CA-machine).

¹⁵ She also notes that 'we [CA analysts] run the risk of treating conversational devices as mechanistically and inexorably driving conversation along preordained tracks' (2000b: 148). She highlights this 'position' in order to 'offer a corrective to that tendency' (ibid.).

For me, the point of any analysis is to try to come to terms with what those in the interaction are doing. As *they* draw on a constellation of generic and specific ‘tools, materials and know-how’ to co-construct their talk, *I* also draw on a constellation of ‘tools, materials and know-how’. Fundamentally, I draw on their talk-in-interaction, but this is also in negotiation with the ‘formal’ CA canon, the broader talk-in-interaction canon, the MCA and EM canons, the academic literature I have studied and flirted with, ‘stuff’ I have done and seen as well as my know-how as a ‘competent’ speaker. As Kitzinger notes:

‘analysts cannot simply rely on a “bank” of prior knowledge about what devices normatively achieve, but need to interrogate the conversational uptake of particular devices on each occasion of use’ (2000b: 147)

So, in analysing participants’ talk, the focus is always centred on the participants’ orientations.

2.5 And so (nearly) to the lived practices

In this chapter I have documented some of the central practical, theoretical and methodological concerns with which I have engaged. The work of Baruch (1981) and Shiner and Newburn (1997) allowed me to begin to explore my data-set. Their work highlighted, for me, the need and centrality of some empirical work that takes seriously both *how* interviews are inherently co-constructed by interviewers and interviewees and *how* talk-about-drugs-in-interviews can produce specific trajectories of ‘drugs talk’. In following a Sacksian perspective, ‘taking seriously’ these interrelated topics means attending to how the participants themselves produce their lived practices of interviewing and drugs talk.

I am aware that my natural history has not offered a detailed account of conversation analysis, or membership categorization analysis, in terms of an explicit methodological-theoretical outline. Detailed descriptions of both the theory and practice of these approaches are available¹⁶. For me, rather than demonstrating the (adequacy of the) method in the abstract, *I would rather show the method-in-action*. The empirical

¹⁶ For general accounts in reference to CA see ten Have 1999a, Hutchby and Wooffitt 1999, and in reference to MCA see Eglin and Hester 1992, Hester and Eglin 1997 and Lepper 2000.

chapters of the thesis, and the theoretical discussions within them, adequately demonstrate my approach and the commitments I have made to following a Sacksian perspective.

The next chapter introduces the structural and turn-taking organization of (semi-)open-ended interviews. It documents the central methods of interviewers and interviewees lived practices. The rest of the thesis is concerned to focus on some of these methods in detail. The aim of this thesis is to both offer ‘a “therapeutic” respecification (in Lynch’s sense) of previous scholastic treatments’ on both qualitative interviewing and drug-interview-talk *and* to offer some lived methods, or “facts”, that those participating in interviews orientate to in and through their lived practice. A corollary of this, is that I will also demonstrate how some ideals about qualitative interviewing and talk-about-drugs are locally produced as ideals-in-and-as-lived practice.

Before, we engage with the empirical part of the thesis, I want to leave the final word on the topic of the theoretical and methodological debates I have engaged with, to Sacks.

‘So, the work I’m doing is about talk. It’s about the details of talk. In some sense it’s about how conversation works. The work tends to change, and let me just say a little about what I plan to do here. I have a bunch of stuff and I want to see whether an order for it exists. Not that I want to try to order it, *but I want to try to see whether there’s some order to it.*

[my emphasis] (1992, Fall 67: 622)

PART TWO - THE QUALITATIVE RESEARCH INTERVIEW

Any setting organizes its activities to make its properties as an organized environment of practical activities detectable, countable, recordable, reportable, tell-a-story-aboutable, analyzable – in short, accountable.

Harold Garfinkel

In Part Two, I demonstrate how qualitative interview talk is locally and collaboratively produced. I focus on how interviewers work to initiate the talk and (selectively) follow-up specific topics in the interviewees' talk. I also show how interviewees' turns are multi-TCU answers and how this offers interviewees the *possibility* to control the topical trajectory of their talk within their own turns of talk. Chapter Three outlines the turn-taking, sequence and structural organization of the interviews. Chapter Four shifts the focus to how sequence, topic and turn-taking organization and identity work are inter-related. Both chapters, taken together, demonstrate how both speakers, the interviewee and interviewer, are essential to, in Silverman's (1973) term, 'bringing off the research instrument'.

The art(fulness) of qualitative interviewing: the turn-taking, sequence and structural organization.

This chapter shows how the interviewee *and* the interviewer collaboratively produce the talk. It consists of a close analysis of transcribed data excerpts from (semi-)open-ended interviews. Initially, I discuss how Peräkylä and Silverman's (1991a) work on the 'interview communication format' can aid in our understanding of the talk. I then highlight the 'methods' (in Garfinkel's sense) in and through which the talk 'comes off as it does'. These methods include: the interviewers' use of topic-shifting questions to establish and maintain the overarching topical trajectory; the interviewers' use of follow-up questions to establish detailed and comprehensive talk; the interviewees' 'answers' being responsive to the interviewers' questions *and* silence *and* response tokens, as well as a product of the interviewees rushing through possible turn-transition points and other floor holding devices. Through a focus on formulation sequences, I also demonstrate that the main activity of the interaction is to produce 'detailed' and 'comprehensive' talk on "this-or-that" topic.

In my next chapter, I will build on this work, showing in more detail how interviewers 'facilitate' interviewees in accomplishing 'detailed' and 'comprehensive' talk. I will show how this process of facilitation allows the interviewees the *possibility* to construct their identity in relation to the topic of talk in whatever way they desire. I show how the qualitative interview can facilitate interviewees constructing, what I call, 'morally adequate' topically-aligned identities.

The following empirical chapters, and the thesis as a whole, are centred on generating an awareness that *both* speakers part in the talk is essential to 'how it comes off' and showing that this awareness should equally be centred on the identities they locally accomplish in *and* through their talk. The implication for qualitative interview research is that an awareness (and analysis) of the *both speakers* lived practices is central.

Since Cicourel's (1964) groundbreaking work, a small number of studies, discussed below, have highlighted the interactional nature of interview talk. My work seeks to add more empirical evidence to this debate and expand on some of the insights of this work.

Let us initially focus on how the interviewer and interviewee locally collaborate to produce the talk.

3.1 The organization of a qualitative interview

As the thesis documents some of the lived practices in and through which qualitative interviews are 'organized', I initially focus on some of the mundane organizational activities: how turns of talk are 'allocated' (turn-taking organization), the 'courses of action' accomplished in and through these turns (sequence organization) and how specific courses of action are 'organized' over the whole interaction (structural organization). Let us view a 'proto-typical' stretch of talk in order to demonstrate some organizational properties of qualitative interviews¹:

Extract 3.1

- 1 Ben: cause er, (0.4) a lot of people have different
2 views, >and things=I think,< discuss:ion. is
3 the best way rather than, (1.1) wo:rk sheets
4 °and things like that, <I don't think yeah.>°
5 (0.2)
6 IR: °(s-) >coming back to the cards then< what
7 did you think of the exercise, with the° °°cards.°°=
8 Ben: =I thought that was good, (0.2) cause erm,
9 (1.4) (tt) I- did find a few things out
10 tha-°t°, (0.3) I didn't know before, (0.4)
11 but er:m, (1.0) °sort of like. (0.9) some of

¹ A considerable part of the analysis and argument in this chapter is undertaken in and through a discussion of Extract 3.1. This is *not* to say I am engaging in a version of single-case analysis (cf. Schegloff 1987 and Chapter Eight). Rather, it is a reflection of 'the relative non-exhaustibility of what one might be able to dig out and use from what at first glance is relatively uninteresting' (Sacks 1992, Spring 1967: 549) *as well as* '[t]he idea being, then, to come back to the singular things we observe in a singular sequence, with some rules that handle those singular features, and also necessarily handle lots of other events as well, other than this fragment' (Sacks 1992, Spring 1971: 339). And what the extract documents (among other things), are the 'rules', methods, norms, procedures, routines... that are the bedrock of the lived practices of '(semi-)open-ended interviewing' in my data-set.

- 12 the effects: and er.° (0.4)
- 13 IR: °>(could y-) tell me,< can you tell me what sort of things,°
- 14 Ben: er::°(h)°m. (1.9) I can't actu(huh)ally re(heh)me(hh)mber
 ((continues))

We can clearly see that IR's turns are made up of questions, 6-7 and 13. Ben's turns, 8-12 and 14 onwards, are answers to those questions. This pattern of interviewer aligned as questioner and interviewee aligned as answerer is a massively observable feature of the data-set. This same feature can be found within other conversation analytic material, notably the research on interviews, whether, news interviews (Heritage 1985, Clayman 1988, Greatbatch 1988, Heritage and Greatbatch 1991, Heritage and Roth 1995), job interviews (Button 1987/1992), psychiatric intake interviews (Bergmann 1992), 'quality of life' interviews (Antaki and Rapley 1996) qualitative research interview (Mazeland and ten Have 1996/8, Watson and Weinberg 1982, Widdicombe and Wooffitt 1995) and structured research interviews (Houtkoop-Steenstra 2000, Suchman and Jordon 1990) and also in various sequences of court room interaction (Atkinson 1992, Atkinson and Drew 1979, Drew 1992), doctor-patient interaction (Frankel 1984, ten Have 1999b, Heath 1986) teacher-pupil interaction (Mehan 1979), counsellor-client interaction (Peräkylä 1995, Silverman 1997). Also within everyday/ordinary conversation such a feature is grossly observable (Sacks 1992).

Within the space of the qualitative interview, as Extract 3.1 above shows, as well as the other research on interviews, one speaker aligned as questioner and the other aligned as answerer, is *the* stable format, or home-base (cf. Peräkylä and Silverman 1991a) of the participants. This may appear as a relatively unremarkable feature to highlight, but it cannot be stressed enough that is *the* foundational feature of the talk that makes it

observable-reportable as an interview, for both participants and analyst². I should note that in ‘everyday talk’ such a method, the chaining of questions and answers, is a highly visible and regular phenomenon. However when *only* one speaker is *consistently* the questioner this *may* be treated as ‘strange’, as accountable, by the speakers³. Of course, within ‘institutional talk’ such a feature may also be accounted for. Heritage and Sorjonen (1994) note that in health visitor-client interaction prior to the form-filling stage of the interaction (which is accomplished through an extended question-answer chain), the health visitor prefaces this activity with a description of ‘what-is-to-come’. Within HIV counselling, counsellors regularly produce prospective and retrospective justifications for asking questions (and follow-up questions) about clients’ behaviour (Silverman 1997).

Despite this, the method of one speaker aligned solely as questioner and the other as answerer, is the home-base (cf. Peräkylä and Silverman 1991a) for these speakers and as such should be the home-base from which an analysis of these interactions is built.

3.1.1 *The interview communication format*

Peräkylä and Silverman (1991a) have shown how two distinct ‘communication formats’, the *interview format* (hereafter IW) and the *information delivery format* (hereafter ID),

² Yet this understanding of the interview glosses over a myriad of work that gets done when the speakers produce talk hearable as ‘questions’ and ‘answers’. For example in my data-set, interviewees routinely work to produce themselves as ‘locally appropriate morally-adequate types-of-answerers’ and interviewers routinely work to produce themselves as both ‘neutral and facilitatory types-of-questioners’. This identity-work comes off in and through their answers and questions, as well as other actions, such as responses tokens and silence. Also such a gloss only refers to ‘traditional’ versions of qualitative interviewing. Some types of active interviewing, for example Douglas’s (1985) ‘Creative Interviewing’, or Ellis’s (1991) interviews carried out under the rubric of an ‘emotional sociology’, advocate mutual self-disclosure by interviewer and interviewee. In these cases, interviewers can routinely produce talk that is not even minimally a question. However, the actual ‘lived practise’ may be different from what is ‘advocated’.

³ Garfinkel’s (1967) classic demonstrations exemplify this point. In producing the taken-for-granted-as-strange through repeated requests for specification the ‘requester’ is held accountable. I also have a personal experience that nicely demonstrates the point I am raising. On my way to an appointment, for which I was late, I walked past a shop and noticed a friend I had not seen for a long period of time. I entered the shop and started to talk to him, this involved a series of ‘rapid fire’ questions *from me* on what he “had been up to”. Part way through the conversation the shop assistant interrupted and said to me (something like) “easy mate, this ain’t an interrogation room/police station”. Whatever the exact words were, this example shows how another speaker, in this case the overhearing audience, may make someone solely adopting the role of *questioner* accountable.

‘cover most of the talk done’ (629) in AIDS counselling⁴. In IW the counsellor is aligned as a ‘questioner’ and a patient is aligned as a ‘answerer’. Peräkylä and Silverman note that

‘The basic structure of the IW appears to be a very simple chain of questions and answers. The participants often produce long sequences of interaction where [counsellors] act exclusively as questioners and [patients] correspondingly as answerers. The production of these appears very unproblematic.’ (630)

In the ID the counsellor is aligned as speaker (offering large packages of information) and the patient is aligned as recipient (often only producing acknowledgement tokens).

They note that

‘The two stable formats have at least two features in common regarding the local identities they allocate to the participants. First, in both of them the [counsellor] is in an *initiator* role and the [patient] in a *responsive* one (cf. Greatbatch 1988). The [counsellors] initiate the actions that project the adequate next action by the [patients]. This also entails control of the topical focusing and the opening and the closing of the consultation. Second, in both stable formats, the counsellor is allocated a *knowledgeable* identity. In information delivery, this is realized in the production of specialist knowledge; and in interview, it means a warrant to ask questions and sometimes to evaluate answers’ [authors’ emphasis] (638)

This broad description of the practice of the interview communication format documents, as may be expected through the title it is given, the lived practices of participants in my data-set⁵. The counsellor/interviewer *initiates* the talk, controls topical focus and opens and closes the talk. As the authors point out, although the interviewer may lack knowledge⁶ about the interviewee’s experiences on ‘this or that topic’ that the questions raise, the interviewer’s role as knowledgeable is situated in and through the series of questions they ask, the act of asking the questions and ‘rarely’ offering surprise or reaction to the answers through change of state tokens (cf. Heritage 1984, Atkinson 1992).

⁴ See also Peräkylä 1995, Silverman 1997, Taylor 1999 in reference to various ‘formats’ in AIDS counselling and ten Have 1999b in reference to formats in GP-patient consultations.

⁵ A possible future area of analysis is a detailed focus on the difference between the qualitative interview and counselling and/or other talk that occurs in the interview communication format.

⁶ This is *not* in reference to any psychological state but instead a ‘lack of knowledge’ that is demonstrated in and through the talk.

Similar findings, about the centrality of question and answer chains, have been established within the research on the news interview (Greatbatch 1988, Heritage and Greatbatch 1991). From this literature the ‘communication format’ is glossed as ‘turn-type pre-allocation’. This is identical to the IW format discussed by Peräkylä and Silverman (1991a), in that question-answer adjacency pairs are chained and after each answer the interviewer can produce a further question. Heritage and Greatbatch tell us that:

‘[c]ompliance with these procedures is, in part, what distinguishes a radio or TV “interview” from a “discussion”. Similarly, in the ways that the participants adhere to these procedures, they constitute themselves - for one another and for the news audience - as [interviewer] and [interviewee] respectively. We stress that the terms “question” and “answer” only minimally characterise the data. ... [Utterances] overwhelmingly remain packaged within turns that remain minimally recognizable as questions and answers.’

(1991, 98)

As such, the IW is portrayed as ‘stable’ within the news interview as well. A similar narrative exists within the CA literature on the structured research interview (Suchman and Jordan 1990, Houtkoop-Steenstra 2000).

The IW seems a powerful ‘format’ that is at the centre of many institutional activities; it also offers us, as analysts, a framework from which to explore further the question ‘how it is that the thing comes off as it does’. Such a cursory understanding of the format directs our attention to the centrality of both ‘question’ and ‘answer’ turn-types (and the identities questioner and answerer) as well as the relationship between them. An analysis of the talk, even at this gross level, demonstrates that it is *collaboratively produced* and as such an awareness of how this collaboration ‘comes off’ is central.

With few exceptions, outlined below, little analytic attention has been given to the detailed ways that interview-talk is locally and collaboratively produced. Some approaches focus on the construction of accounts (e.g. Wetherell 1998), others talk about the *co*-construction of accounts but with little of the actual analytic attention, or the level of transcription detail needed to document this, being given (e.g. Holstein and Gubrium 1995, 1997a).

Over 30 years after Cicourel's (1964) work, CA and EM has started to focus on qualitative interviewing, offering a distinctly local approach to answer the question 'how is it that the interview comes off?'. Baker (1984, 1997) has focused on how the categories that interviewers implicitly invoke in their questions are central to producing interviewees' talk, the categories they invoke and identities they speak from. Watson and Weinberg (1982) show how interviewees and interviewers *collaborate in* producing the interviewees' identities and biographies as 'male homosexual'. Widdicombe and Wooffitt (1995) continue this vein of work, studying semi-structured interviews with members of youth subcultures. They document how interviewers' opening questions - "tell me something about yourself ..." - are responded to by interviewees as 'invitations' to describe themselves as members of a specific subcultural category - "I am a Goth". They also show the methods interviewees draw on to resist categorising themselves in terms of a subcultural identity - "I dunno I hate those sort of questions".

Mazeland and ten Have (1996/8) have shown how an interview is a negotiation between the extra-local research agenda and the local in situ interaction, documenting what they call 'the essential tension' in interviews. In a similar vein, Hester and Francis (1994) offer an insightful 'radically local' understanding of one interview. They document the mundane work in the interview, how it is locally managed and practically accomplished. They note that the 'talk is produced with minimum interactional involvement on the part of the interviewer. ... [T]he only rule the interviewer seems to follow is one which could be characterised as "let the subject talk" ' (692).

As I noted in Chapter One, while these sources make an important point they can gloss over the relevance of the *interviewer's work* in producing the talk. Underlying all research interviews is the tension between an extra-local need to collect data on a topic and a here-and-now interactional event in which this data is collected in and through talk-in-interaction (Suchman and Jordan 1990, Antaki and Rapley 1996, Mazeland and ten Have 1996/1998,). A detailed description of how qualitative interviewers manage this tension - the practical solutions they draw - is still in an embryonic stage in the current CA/EM literature. Following this, it is not by 'chance' that a primary focus of the thesis is on interviewers' lived practices.

However, in most ‘interview based’ journal articles, *only* the interviewees’ talk is given (cf. Silverman 1998). More importantly in this type of work the analysis focuses on the interviewees’ talk on “this or that” *topic*, whether the focus be on what is said or the how it is said.

I feel we should not see the topics raised in the talk as somehow ‘distanced’ from the local context of its production (Silverman 1993). These topics are talked into being in and through *interaction*.

As the interview format shows, the topical trajectory is a product, in part at least, of interviewers’ questions. This is especially clear as the interviewers are positioned, within the interview format, as the *initiators* of talk and thus the topics of talk. It is to this issue, how the interviewers initiate talk, to which I will now turn.

3.2 ‘Doing questions’

Above, I have said that the vast majority of interviewers’ turns consist of questions, yet these turns, despite all being ‘questions’ have differing relationships to the surrounding talk. I have identified two types of question which can be glossed as: ‘topic-shifting’ or ‘topically-disjunctive’ questions and ‘follow-up’ questions. These two question types, and their *sequential relationship*, are a central resource through which the *topical* trajectory of the talk is produced and maintained. Let us return to Extract 3.1 to exemplify the work they do:

Extract 3.1

- 1 Ben: cause er, (0.4) a lot of people have different
2 views, >and things=I think,< discuss:ion. is
3 the best way rather than, (1.1) wo:rk sheets
4 °and things like that, <I don’t think yeah.>°
5 (0.2)
6 IR: °(s-) >coming back to the cards then< what ←a
7 did you think of the exercise, with the° °°cards.°°=
8 Ben: =I thought that was good, (0.2) cause erm, ←b

- 9 (1.4) (tt) I- did find a few things out
 10 tha-°t°, (0.3) I didn't know before, (0.4)
 11 but er:m, (1.0) °sort of like. (0.9) some of
 12 the effects: and er.° (0.4)
 13 IR: °>(could y-) tell me,< can you tell me what sort of things,° ←c
 14 Ben: er.:°(h)°m. (1.9) I can't actu(huh)ally re(heh)me(hh)mber
 ((continues))

At arrow 'a' IR produces a 'retrospective topicaliser' a question that is topically disjunctive from Ben's previous talk. This topic change is *clearly marked* by IR through the question preface '°(s-) >coming back to the cards then<'. This preface works to highlight the work that is about to occur, the work of topic change⁷. The preface to the question hearably produces the question as topically-disjunctive⁸. Ben then produces a 'newsworthy event report' (arrow b), which takes the form of an multi-unit turn answer. At arrow 'c' IR produces a further question, that 'topicalizes' an issue introduced in Ben's prior report.

Button and Casey (1984) highlight how a similar sequence - [introduce fresh topic-newsworthy event report-topicaliser] can operate in everyday/ordinary talk. In ordinary talk, topic change frequently occurs without any such 'boundary work' - '°(s-) >coming back to the cards then<' - occurring (Sacks 1987). Peräkylä (1995) has shown that, in AIDS counselling, such clear 'boundary work' for the generation of new topics is usually undertaken in a similar fashion to Extract 3.1 above. He notes that in ordinary conversation the 'role'⁹ of topic elicitor is not pre-specified, whereas in AIDS counselling, and in this data-set, *topic initiation is massively the role of counsellors and interviewers respectively*.

⁷ For a detailed analysis of the work of question prefacing, see Chapters Five and Six.

⁸ When I use the phrase 'hearably produced' I mean to emphasise that rather than the action I am reporting on being implicit, the action that is being undertaken is being explicitly *shown to be done* by the speaker through the action itself. By this I mean the speaker is making the action visibly reflexive or visibly accountable. A comparable analogy may be when someone says something like 'it was huge' and at the same time they stretch their arms out wide to emphasise, or make clear, the point being made. When I say hearably produced I mean to say that the 'arm-stretch' is done through verbal means.

⁹ or discourse identity (cf. Zimmerman 1998) or turn-generated category (cf. Watson 1994).

Let us view some other examples of topically-disjunctive questions:

Extract 3.2

1 ((tape switched on))
2 IR: °(this is er de de) just stick it there (0.4)
3 so it can pick you up,°
4 (0.3)
5 **okay >to start off with<** if you just wanna (.) tell me a bit ←
6 about yourself, and what your doing at sixth form ←
7 °.hh° and what your, interested in. ←
8 gwen: er:m::: (0.3) I'm do:ing:: (.) psychology:: (.) english language:
9 >and sociology a levels:,<
10 IR: oh, right.
11 (0.5)
12 gwen: er::m. (0.2) >because I'm quite interested as I want to
13 get into psy.<chol,ogy:.

Extract 3.3

24 dan: °er english lit theatre studies
25 and sociology [()°
26 IR: [oh, right. all a levels.
27 dan: °yeah a levels° °°()°°
28 IR: °o:kay.°
29 dan: °()°
30 IR: **o:kay. er:m: (0.4) >o:kay. so thin:<king, (0.5)** ←
31 **specifically about the peer=ed group,** [can you tell ←
32 dan: [°mm.°
33 IR: me:, er:m: ho:w you first heard about it and ←
34 °when that was:° ←
35 dan: er:m. (0.7) when I first heard about it it was mentioned

Extract 3.4

1 Ben: illeg:al at our ag::e- it's: (1.0) <not so.> (0.5)
2 >I don't know.< you: >f::<eel more comfortable
3 with it. °°an:d.°° (0.2)
4 IR: °>c'n? we-<=**jus kinda, go back to the session,** ←
5 **again.=** ←
6 Ben: =hm:::=

7 IR: =do you think-, were=they- were they what ←
8 you expected?° ←
9 (.)
10 Ben: °c.hhh° ↑ER::[M:] (1.2) no? not

Extract 3.5

1 Jill: age,=they should do a lot of them.
2 (0.3)
3 IR: °o:kay, >is there anything else you want to say,<° ←
4 Jill: no;=that's it,
5 IR: °o:kay. then.° can you just er:m:, (.) ←
6 ()
7 ((tape turned off))

All these topic-shifting questions (arrowed) have a preface (shown in bold) to the questioning component. And this is a grossly observable feature throughout the dataset, the massive majority of questions that seek to produce topically-disjunctive talk are prefaced.

The prefaces all work to forecast that ‘something’ is occurring. The prefaces in Extract 3.1 (arrow a), 3.2, 3.3 and 3.4 all work to *mark explicitly* that the context from which the topic of the question is formed is *not* from the interviewees’ immediately prior talk. These question prefaces all work to ‘give instructions as to how the action of [the speaker’s] utterance is to be appreciated’ (Sacks 1992, Winter 1969, 8:135). They provide contextual information, that this question is not following-up the topic of the immediately prior talk. With Extract 3.5, unlike the other prefaces that ‘unequivocally’ mark a new topical trajectory, the preface ‘o:kay,’ works to acknowledge the prior talk and forecast a *possible* topic-transition (cf. Beach 1993, 1995) but does not offer *any further* contextual information.

All these questions work to provide some form of *account* - either explicitly (Extracts 3.1-3.4) or implicitly (Extract 3.5) - for the fact that the interviewer is drawing on some other source of ‘talk’ for the question. These sources include talk from an earlier sequence (Extract 3.1 arrow a, 4) and new, previously undiscussed, areas (Extract 3.2,

3.3, 3.5). Note that with Extract 3.5, that despite the family resemblance to the other questions ‘something else is going on’. This question offers a different ‘frame of relevance’ for the-sort-of-things-that-should-be-included-in-the-answer. At this point, I only want to note that, compared with the other questions, the interviewee is ‘relatively free’ to introduce the specific topic¹⁰.

All these questions do similar work - initiating topically-disjunctive talk - but they do differ quite considerably in relation to how they orientate to the interviewees’ prior topic-talk. It is this relationship to the prior topic-talk that I will now turn to.

3.2.1 *Topic Initiators*

Peräkylä (1995) has done some detailed work on topic-shifting in AIDS counselling. He found three distinct types of topic-initial elicitors:

* *retrospective topic initial elicitor (TIE)* ‘[which] make relevant a description of the past events or the present state of life of the client as an answer’ (ibid. 243).

* *open-topic TIE* ‘[which] do not specify the temporal (or other) character of the sought-after matter’ (ibid. 245).

* *distress-relevant TIE* ‘[which] conveys indirectly to the client an invitation to disclose his or her fears’ (ibid. 251).

He also identifies another question type, a question that ‘*retrieve[s] themes that were mentioned or absent in clients’ earlier talk*’ [authors emphasis] (257). These questions are similar to TIEs in that they are ‘fresh first acts’, but they differ in that 1) they use the clients previous talk (*not* immediately prior but in the same encounter) as resource for question and 2) the counsellor is more ‘active’ in defining the question.

¹⁰ Such questions are discussed in detail below, in section 3.6, ‘The closing questions’.

Using Peräkylä's work, let me offer a typology for the topically-disjunctive questions in my data-set. Initially I would like to gloss these questions as 'not-following-up-the-immediately-prior-talk', by this I mean that *all* these questions *do not* use the interviewees' immediately prior talk as a resource for the topical focus of the question, they are all *fresh first acts*. We can then further divide the questions into categories:

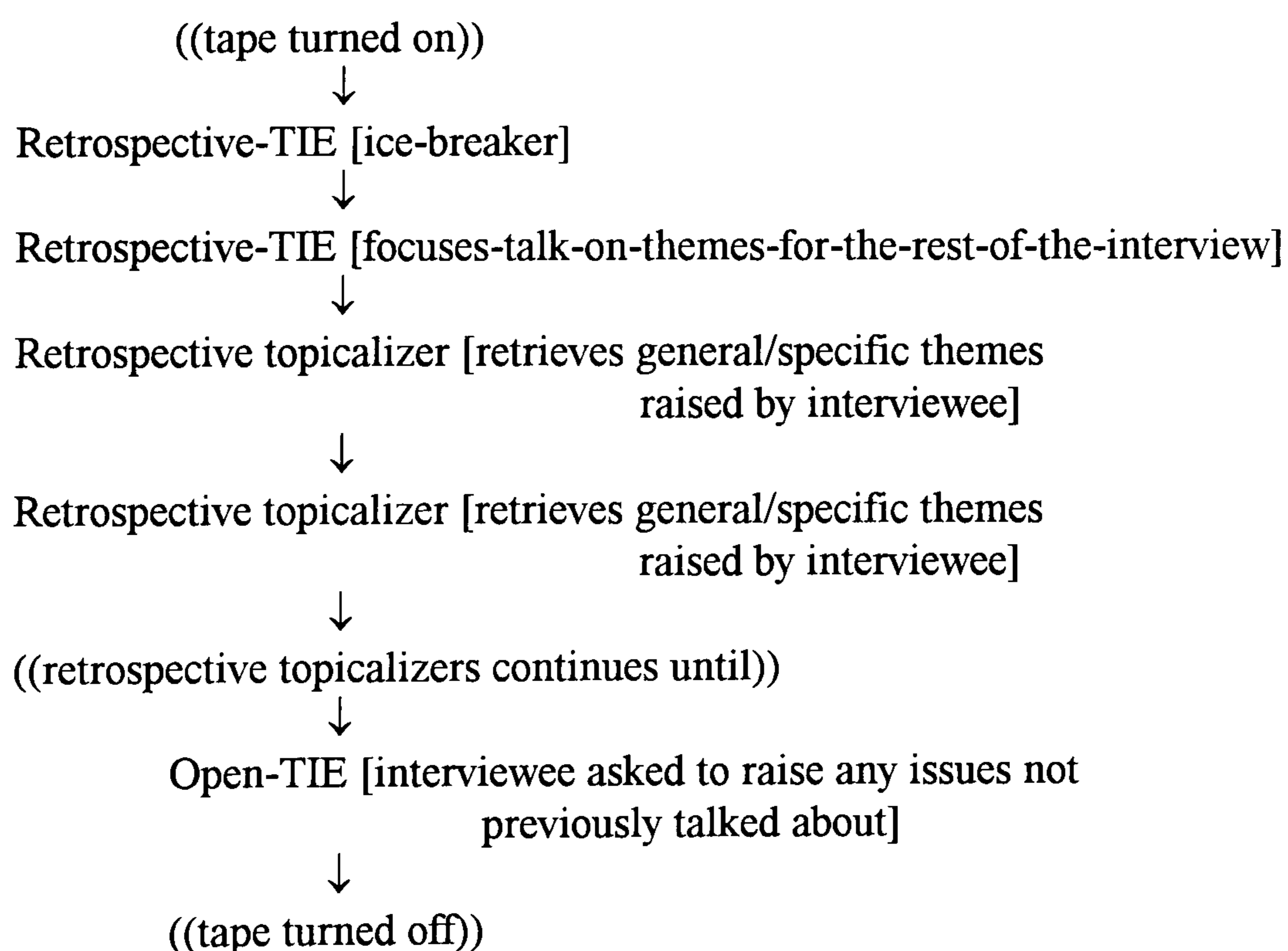
**Retrospective-TIEs*: specifies a previously undiscussed theme of talk (see Extract 3.2, 3.3)

**Retrospective topicaliser*: retrieves theme mentioned from interviewees talk (see Extract 3.1, arrow a, 3.4)

**Open-TIEs*: does not specify the theme of the talk (see Extract 3.5 and 3.15, 3.16 below)

This typology begins to make more sense if we position where in the transcript such questions occur. Please view Figure 3.1 in relation to Extracts 3.2-3.5, as they are also presented in the sequential order they routinely appear in an interview.

Figure 3.1: *The trajectory of the interviewer's topic initiating questions within a 'typical' interview.*



The retrospective-TIEs occur at the beginning of the talk. They work to specify the ‘introductory’ topical areas, the first question focuses the talk on introductory issues ‘to start off with’ (in some senses working as an ‘ice-breaker’). The interviewer’s next retrospective-TIE, when the speakers are engaged in ‘thin: <king, (0.5) specifically’, does not talk up any themes that the interviewee has mentioned in any of the prior talk. The discussion of this topic, ‘the peer-ed group’, is the reason why the interviews are being conducted, the ‘institutional mandate’. A retrospective-topicaliser, a question that re-topicalises a general/specific theme the interviewee has introduced in earlier (but not the immediately prior talk) follows: ‘go back to the session, again.’. These retrospective-topicalisers continue until at some point, the interviewer produces an open-TIE, which allows the interviewee to talk on any theme that they would like to raise. After the interviewee has raised ‘this or that issue’ the interview is closed.

I should note that, as the heading to the diagram highlights, such a description is an ideal-type configuration for what is inherently a *lived practice*. Interestingly, very similar ‘taxonomies’ can be found in the methodological literature on “how to do interviewing” albeit not in diagrammatic form (see for example Ackroyd and Hughes 1992, Mason 1996, Smith 1995).

Elsewhere, deviations from this format do occur. In two interviews, no open-TIE is produced hence such an action is clearly optional to the format. In one interview no ‘ice-breaker question’ is produced and ‘background information’ is collected at the end of the interview. However, I should note that this deviant case can be accounted for by what Peräkylä (1997) has called ‘ambulatory events’. The interviewer and interviewee were friends, so prior to the tape being switched on about a half-hour of ‘ice-breaking talk’ had occurred. The ‘background information’ was collected at the end of the interview and is explicitly marked as “something-that-should-have-occurred-at-the-start”. The interviewer claims forgetfulness and then ask for the information. Despite this deviation from the trajectory, so that the question is produced as tag-component of the interview, it is marked that it *should ordinarily* have come at the start.

3.2.2 Discussion

This trajectory of questions builds on the interview format (IW) described by Peräkylä and Silverman (1991a). This method of topic-shifting questions being used to move across distinct topical areas of the talk is not unique to qualitative interviews, yet it is one feature, or method, that produces this talk *as* (semi-)open-ended interview talk. In ordinary talk, such a method could be used but *may* be treated as strange if it is the *only* way that distinct topical transition occurs.

In various moments of institutional talk such a method - topic shifting - is often found, we need only think of the closed, or structured interview where topic change occurs rapidly from question to question. Yet, in structured interviews the questions are not always prefaced, as the work of topic shifting is not *explicitly and repeatedly* attended in the talk, although it may be explicitly orientated to in the talk prior to the questioning stage commencing (Houtkoop-Steenstra 2000) or, in and through, such methods as ‘and’-prefacing questions (see Heritage and Sorjonen 1994 in relation to a form-filling in health-visitor/client interaction). Although, in structured interviews the same trajectory of topically-disjunctive questions may occur, there may be an ice-breaker question, followed by a focusing question etc. To take another example, in AIDS counselling, especially family therapy (Peräkylä 1995) a similar trajectory and prefacing-style work can be found.

Clearly this trajectory and prefacing work is not unique to qualitative interviewing. It is one method through which (semi)open-ended interviewing is produced. The other methods which the rest of this chapter (and the thesis as whole) seeks to describe, taken collectively, are (some of) the methods that makes the talk *distinct as* qualitative interview talk. The next method through which the talk ‘comes off as it does’ is the follow-up question and this is *the* fundamental method for the talk to come off.

3.2.3 The follow-up question

In order to understand further the role of the topic-shifting question we need to understand the talk that occurs between these questions. Let us return to Extract 3.1.

Extract 3.1

- 1 Ben: cause er, (0.4) a lot of people have different
2 views, >and things=I think,< discuss:ion. is
3 the best way rather than, (1.1) wo:rk sheets
4 °and things like that, <I don't think yeah.>°
5 (0.2)
- 6 IR: °(s-) >coming back to the cards then< what
7 did you think of the exercise, with the° °°cards.°°=
8 Ben: =I thought that was good, (0.2) cause erm,
9 (1.4) (tt) I- did find a few things out
10 tha-°t°, (0.3) I didn't know before, (0.4)
11 but er:m, (1.0) °sort of like. (0.9) some of
12 the effects: and er.° (0.4)
- 13 IR: °>(could y-) tell me,< can you tell me what sort of things,° ←
- 14 Ben: er::°(h)°m. (1.9) I can't actu(huh)ally re(heh)me(hh)mber
((continues))

As noted above, the IR's question at 6-7 is a 'retrospective topicaliser', a question that retrieves a theme that was mentioned in the prior talk (but not the immediately prior talk). Ben answers this question. IR with his question at 13 asks Ben to specify part of his immediately prior answer. This question acts as a request for clarification/elaboration/more information/specification. This question *follows-up*, or is *contingent on* the talk immediately prior to it. Heritage and Sorjonen offer a definition of what they gloss as 'contingent queries'. They tell us that:

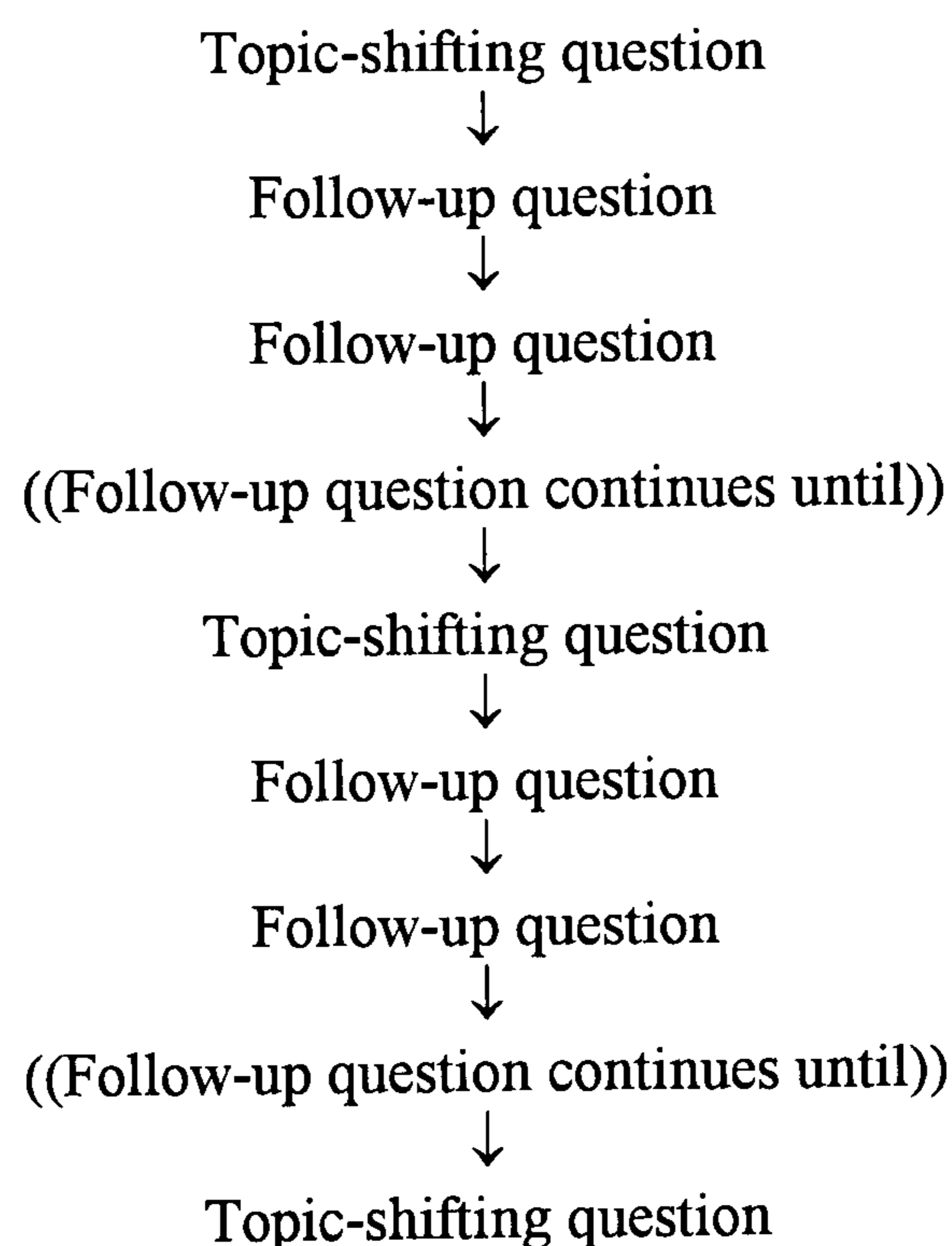
'Contingent inquiries emerge in environments in which there is (i) some "unexpected" or "problematic" response to the prior question, where (ii) the inquiry sustains the topical focus of the preceding question/answer sequence; it thereby (iii) treats the prior response as embodying some problem that needs to be dealt with, and (iv) it is recognizably produced as ad hoc or contingent in character, rather than as "anticipated" or "prefigured" ' (ibid. 1994: 11).

The follow-up question in Extract 3.1 (arrowed) is used to follow-up a response that offers limited-informational-content(-for-the-purposes-of-this-interaction). This question can be given the gloss of 'a request for information' and fundamentally work as 'a request for *more* information on "some thing" mentioned by Ben'.

As Annsi Peräkylä (personal communication) noted, the question is only “problematic” in a ‘weak’ sense. A follow-up question is not orientating to the inadequacy of the prior talk in terms of its hearability as an ‘answer’ to some prior question, rather that the answer needs some specification.

The follow-up question is *the* question most used by the interviewer. With one interview, I decided to ‘count the countable’¹¹, and 77 out of 87 questions the interviewer asked were follow-up questions. The other ten questions all opened up new areas of talk, they all worked to introduce a ‘fresh’ topic to the interview. I didn’t carry on the counting over the other interviews in the data set, so I have no other figures to offer. However, after analysing roughly 30 interviews this pattern - that the vast majority of interviewers’ talk is made up of follow-up questions - *still holds*. Their role within the talk and the overall trajectory of the talk is expressed in Figure 3.2:

Figure 3.2: *A gloss of the relationship between interviewers topic-shifting questions and follow-up questions*



As this diagram seeks to show, the focus of interviewers’ questioning turns (and therefore their talk as a whole, as the majority of their turns are questions) is the follow-up question. In this way, the main activity of the interviewers work within these qualitative interviews is *an orientation to the topical trajectory of interviewees’*

¹¹ cf. Silverman (1993).

utterances. This is *the* fundamental difference between qualitative and fixed-choice interviewing. This observation is further reinforced if we look (briefly) at the different styles of follow-up question that interviewers adopt.

I have identified two main types of follow-up question: prefaced and non-prefaced. I will focus on the prefaced follow-up question first.

3.2.4 *The prefaced follow-up question*

We enter the talk part way through Ben's response to the follow-up question in Extract 3.1.

Extract 3.6

- 24 Ben: erm
25 (1.2)
26 Ben: .hh I mean a lot of people have sort of experienced
27 the <s:ofter drugs:.>
28 (.)
29 Ben: °and things like that,° (.) so they do know a fair
30 bit about them.
31 IR: °>so when you say the s:ofter drugs° °°what does ←
32 that mean.<°° ←
33 Ben: Well= ↑herm. (2.0) °tch° I suppos:e. (1.0) if we
34 >talkin about< drink and smoking as well.
35 (.) but er, (.) sort of cannabis:: lik:e.

IR produces a turn (arrowed) hearable - and attended to (33-35) - as a follow-up question that works to stay on-topic and that seeks a clarification/elaboration on a specific part of Ben's previous answer, namely what he means by the term '<s:ofter drugs:.>' (27).

Note that IR's follow-up question is prefaced. Through the 'so when you say'-preface the question is *hearably produced*¹² as contingent on Ben's talk. Note how IR produces the question: '°>so when you say the s:ofter drugs° °°what does that mean.<°°'. The whole preface prior to the question component works to produce the question as connected to, or the

¹² See footnote 8.

product of, Ben's talk. And this is used to align Ben to the topic of the question. The 'so when you say'-preface is *not needed* for the question to 'survive' or be hearable-treatable as a question about the meaning of the term 'softer drugs'.

The '°>so' *forecasts* follow-up talk, then 'when you say' *forecasts* reported speech and thus marks that IR is *doing* follow-up talk. The topical focus of the question is then produced, 's:ofter drugs°' and marks that IR is *doing* reported speech. Note how IR mirrors the sound stretch on the 's:ofter' that Ben produced when he first introduced this utterance at 27. IR then produces the question-delivery component [QDC] (cf. Heritage and Greatbatch 1991), '°°what does that mean.<°°'. The preface and QDC work together to produce the question as 'understandable'. The preface also attends to the way that IR's question topicalises talk prior to Ben's last TCU, as in, IR does not target the formulation 'so they do know a fair bit about them'(29-30).

What makes the turn, and especially the prefacing work so 'beautiful' is the identity work that it does. IR's talk produces him in the identity of 'questioner'. And tied to this are (massive number of) various associated identities, for example: interrogator, information-gatherer, interviewer, interested co-party, invitation-offerer, co-conversationalist, empathetic-questioner, friend, adversary The prefacing works to downgrade the question as a product of a more 'adversarial or bureaucratic' identity and hearably upgrade the question as a product of a more 'facilitatory' identity. The 'so when you say'-preface works to say '*I'm not responsible/accountable for introducing this topic, in fact you are as you introduced it*'¹³. So this pragmatic optional utterance works to demonstrate and highlight for Ben that IR is following Ben's talk, listening closely and trying to work with Ben's topic-talk.

The specific work that question-prefacing can do is documented in detail in Chapters Five and Six. However, I simply want to note that a prefaced follow-up question is a follow-up question that has a pragmatic, optional, utterance prior to the QDC. The preface is *not essential* for the question to be heard as a question. As the above example demonstrated, prefacing does *work* for interviewers', it works to downgrade the

relevancy of some identities associated with ‘questioner’ and upgrade others. Essentially it can provide a more ‘facilitatory (and/or neutralistic) edge’. Irrespective of the particular role of the preface, we should note that IR’s turn works to promote a *detailed and comprehensive answer*.

The other main type of follow-up question is the ‘non-prefaced follow-up question’. This works in an identical way to the follow-up question described above, yet it does not have the pragmatic, optional utterances prior to the QDC¹⁴.

3.2.5 The ‘plain’ follow-up question

In Extract 3.7 below, the arrow shows the follow-up question. Prior to the talk, Ian has been asked whether he thought the peer-educators had “had experiences with drugs”. We join the talk part way through his answer.

Extract 3.7

- 1 Ian: >and they probably know the effects,
2 and all that.=you know, .hh but I don't
3 think, I don't think you could=have
4 actually. been there==done that.=I don't
5 think they've actually,<
6 IR: what makes you say th^oa:t.^o= ←
7 Ian: =>I don't know,=it's jus more like
8 erm:,< (1.8) it makes you feel like=more
9 like an organis:ation, whose helping
10 <pe::op::le,> (1.1) ed,uca:::>te:,< (0.4) on
11 drugs:.
12 (0.5)

At 6, IR produces a follow-up question that complies with Heritage and Sorjonen’s (1994) definition of a contingent query. It sustains the topical focus, treats the prior

¹³ See also Buttny (1997, 1999) and Holt (1996, 2000) in relation to ‘doing reported speech’ and downgrading ‘responsibility’ and ‘accountability’ for introducing the topic of the reported speech.

¹⁴ This is, somewhat, of a simplification as a very small number of the prefaced follow-up questions do not always contain optional utterances. By this I mean the question would not survive as an intelligible question without these utterances. For example the question delivery component (shown in bold) of the

response as ‘problematic’ and is produced as ad hoc, in that it cannot be said to be prefigured. The question works to topicalise Ian’s prior talk, what makes him ‘say’ peer-educators have not ‘actually. been there=done that.’ (4), the indexical ‘that.’ referring to ‘drugs’. Ian then works to provide an account for his prior ‘thoughts’.

The arrowed follow-up question in Extract 3.7 works as ‘a request for (more) information’, and unlike the follow-up questions described above it is *not* prefaced. Let us briefly view another example. Prior to this extract, Dan has been asked “whether he thinks his friendship would change if he discovered that one of his friends took drugs”.

Extract 3.8

- 1 dan: (>I that<) I feel it would chan:ge (.)
 2 I mean not the friendship, °<but>° but
 3 certainly, >certain aspects when you think
 4 about certain things< and (.) when >you
 5 know things come up in discussion like
 6 this<=it would er. (0.6) °something that >I
 7 wouldn’t say is. [er, <°]
 8 IR: >[how w]ould it< change: what ←
 9 would it change ←
 10 dan: oh↑ I think you’d=er you’d you know
 11 >certain things (on) the dis:<cussions: and

Again, this question is clearly contingent on Dan’s prior talk, it makes relevant a *detailed* elaboration of Dan’s prior talk. It topicalises and makes ‘problematic’ Dan’s descriptions of the ‘chan:ge (.)’ (1) that would take place if he discovered a friend took drugs. Note how Dan provides euphemistic descriptions of the changes (cf. Bergmann 1992): that it would not change the friendship *only* ‘certain aspects ... certain things< ... things’ (3- 5). And note that, *despite* IR’s question seeking detailed talk on this topic,

turn ‘>so can you tell me about< kinda, **how you did it, and** (.) where °you did it°’ would have to be changed to ‘how **did you do** it and where **did you do** it’ if the preface were removed.

Dan continues to produce a euphemistic description ‘you know >certain things’ (10-11)¹⁵. With these question, as compared to that in Extract 3.6, the facilitatory edge (and its related identities) is slightly downgraded and the identity of ‘bureaucratic information-gatherer’ and ‘adversarial interviewer’ are upgraded.

Within the data-set, there is a weighting towards ‘prefaced’ follow-up questions over ‘non-prefaced’ follow-up questions. However, as I have not undertaken a systematic count this remains highly speculative. Given that prefacing can be an economical way to produce a question as ‘less blunt’ why are prefaces not used *all* the time? The question should be, given that the interview ‘comes off’ through both preface and non-prefaced follow-up questions [the ‘answer’ to the ‘*how* question’], *what* is the local function of this combination of questions used in these interactions? Do these question styles do similar or dissimilar work? I began to think through these questions, and the work of interviewers more generally, in Chapters Five, Six and Seven.

3.2.6 *Summary*

I have tried to develop a framework through which we can understand how the interview format works within the ‘qualitative interview’. The speakers co-operatively align themselves as questioner and answerer. The ‘questioner’, or interviewer, turns are predominately made up of turns that can ‘minimally’ be called questions. These questions are either topically disjunctive (they ‘talk up’ a topic not mentioned in the immediately prior talk) or are contingent on the prior talk. The topic-shifting questions introduce topics of talk on which the interviewer ‘would like’ the interviewee to focus. The follow-up questions, that make up the majority of interviewers’ questioning-turns, then provide the possibility to gain *very detailed and comprehensive talk* on that topic. They constantly seek ‘to unpack’ the prior talk, and allow a multiple number of issues that the interviewee raises to be explored and/or followed up.

¹⁵ Following Silverman (1997), in and through *continuing* not to ‘unpack’ his own euphemistic descriptions Dan is ‘leaving it up to’ (73) IR to do the naming work. IR does produce some candidate descriptions with his next question (data not shown). Like Maynard’s (1991) perspective display sequence, rather than self-initiating his specific ‘take’ in relation to this topic, Dan only comments on and ties his ‘moralising-about-possible-drug-taking-friends’ to descriptions that IR introduced.

This finding echoes a ‘brief aside’ that Watson and Weinberg’s (1982) make in relation to their qualitative interview data. They note that:

‘The interviewer, through his questions, had *a measure of* control over the alternation between advancing the narrative and introducing ‘background’ or ‘scenic’ features. In short, the interviewer’s line of questioning *often took on* the format of an invited story where the interviewer, the story-recipient, *in various ways* sets the relevancies of the story and where the respondent, as the teller, has *in many respects* to tell the story which the recipient wishes to hear. The line of questioning serves to maintain throughout the story *that margin of* recipient control which is not found in volunteered (teller-initiated) stories.’ [My emphasis] (62).

As their hedges, shown in italics, document, the control over the topical trajectory is not clear-cut but ‘subtly’ negotiated in and through *both* speakers talk.

3.2.7 A (re)specification

The notion of emphasizing the local *collaborative* production of talk needs to be refined in the light of the above work. Interviewers are the questioners, the initiators of the talk. Yet the interviewers are both the *initiators* and *(selectively)-responsive-to-the-interviewees-in-the-majority-of-their-initiations*. Let me demonstrate this through a example from the data:

Extract 3.9

- 1 Ben: .hh I mean a lot of people have sort of experienced
2 the <s:ofter drugs:.>
3 (.)
4 Ben: °and things like that,° (.) so they do know a fair
5 bit about them.
6 IR: °>so when you say the s:ofter drugs° °°what does
7 that mean.<°°
8 Ben: Well= ↑herm. (2.0) °tch° I suppos:e. (1.0) if we-
9 >talkin about< drink and smoking as well.
10 (.) but er, (.) sort of cannabis:: lik:e.
11 (1.4)
12 Ben: there is:: a lot of people that actually do that. I,= >I
13 don’t actually do tha at the moment=I did,< °.hh°
14 up to about a year ago I think- (.) that was the sort
15 of >peak,< for (.) our age group °an[d e v]eryone°

- 16 IR: [°(mm.)°]
 17 Ben: (who/that) was into it.
 18 IR: °and how often were you° °°using (it),°°=
 19 Ben: =tch er:m (0.3) probably:, (1.1)
 20 once or twice a wee:k.

Ben's answer at 1-5 is *responsive* to IR's prior question (not shown on the transcript) *and* IR's non-uptake of talk at the turn-transitional relevant place [TRP] (3). IR's question at 6-7 *initiates* more talk from Ben. Ben's answer at 8-17 is *responsive* to IR's prior question *and* IR's non-uptake of talk at the turn-TRP (11) *and* IR's response token at 16. Again at 18 IR *initiates* more talk and at 19 Ben is *responsive* to this.

Obviously this typology of their respective roles is too simplistic. Clearly in this example, (as with the other talk), with IR's follow-up questions his initiation is responsive to Ben's topic-talk. The talk is co-operatively produced as IR is both the *initiator* of the talk and is *responsive-to-the-interviewee-in-his-initiations*.

3.2.8 Interviewers as 'initiators'

Interviewers can be seen to *initiate* both the *topical* trajectory and the *sequential* trajectory of the talk. Importantly interviewers initiate the topical trajectory of the talk in all but one question. The question in which they do not 'direct-the-broad-topical-agenda' of the talk is, in my data, the final question of the interaction¹⁶. Interviewers initiate the sequential trajectory of the interaction through the majority of their turns being a first-part pair of an adjacency pair. As Sacks (1992)¹⁷, has pointed out, adjacency pairs are very powerful devices. They are relatively ordered – 'there is something that goes first and something that goes second.' (Sacks 1992, Spring 72, 1: 521) - and discriminatively related, a first part 'demands' an appropriate second part. Also what is of interest is that, the speaker of the first-part pair may work to expand the sequence or produce a new sequence (Schegloff 1990). In Heritage's (1984b) terms, they hold a 'third turn option', for example they may offer an evaluation of the response or another question. By producing another question the question-answer sequence

¹⁶ See below for a discussion of this in section 3.4, 'The closing questions'.

¹⁷ See also Schegloff and Sacks (1973) and Heritage (1984b).

continues on, as such the speakers can create a *chain* of question-answer adjacency pairs, as is the case in this interview¹⁸.

3.2.9 Interviewers as 'responsive-to-the-interviewees-in-their-initiations'

Interviewers are *sequentially* responsive to interviewees in their (the interviewers') initiations. What is vitally important in understanding these interactions is that interviewers are massively *topically responsive* to interviewees in their (the interviewers') initiations. This is demonstrated in and through the way that the vast majority of the interviewers' talk *follows-up*, or is *contingent on* the interviewees talk. Both IR's questions in Extract 3.9, above, follow-up 'something' that Ben has raised earlier in his talk, be it in the immediately prior turn in the majority of the cases, or, at some earlier point in the talk. This may appear as relatively unremarkable yet it is central to how it is the thing comes off. Interviewers ask a question, interviewees offer an answer, interviewers offer a question that concerns some feature of the prior answer, interviewees offer an answer to this question, interviewees offer a question that concerns some feature of the prior answer ... and so the pattern continues.

The combination of producing topic-shifting questions and then following these with (repeated) follow-up questions is the central way in which these interviews comes off.

This combination of methods, used in this specific way, is a very powerful resource through which to gain 'detailed' and 'comprehensive' talk. A similar configuration of methods can be seen in both AIDS counselling as well as the news interview. A question to ask, to which I return in section 3.7, is: what makes this space specifically qualitative interview talk?

Let us now view *how* interviewees' answers come off, the methods that are employed in 'doing answering'.

¹⁸ Equally the speakers continually locally (re)produce themselves as a member of one of the identities of 'questioner' and 'answerer' (and reflexively the identities of 'interviewer' and 'interviewee'). These are locally (re)produced omni-relevant categories (Sacks 1992, Spring 67, Lecture 14) within this interaction. However, with insertion sequences the speakers *temporarily* adopt the opposite 'mirror' roles. Also in one interview the interviewer says that the interviewees talk "mirrors his own experiences". A question and answer sequence emerges with *the interviewee temporarily adopting the role of interviewer*. This activity is soon closed, with the interviewer again adopting the identity of interviewer, and this is explicitly marked by the interviewer as a deviation, or 'breach' of the format.

3.3 'Doing Answers'

I have highlighted that interviewees' in the IW format adopts the identity of answerer: interviewees are *responsive* to interviewers' initiations. Let us view an interviewee's response. Prior to IR's question Emma has reported that she goes to 'a sort of churchy, group. ... I go to it because< it's- it's- mai-=mostly socially based. and s[tuff'.

Extract 3.10

- 1 IR: [>and what kinda of] things: do you do
2 there.<
- 3 emma: Well: We Hav SOcial, (.) >weeks every ni:ght,
4 where we watch a video,= °get a pizz:a,< go for
5 cinema, >in brow:n,°=.h< and other times
6 >were talking about .Hh< it STARted OFF.
7 talking about >all God and, what you believed
8 and stuff.=but now< they actual-=do, >the
9 leaders, realised that a lot of people,< .h
10 you know >were a bit unsure about their
11 faith,< and stuff=so,=
- 12 IR: =<°ri:ght.°>
- 13 emma: it's more about how to (.) find your faith
14 >and stuff=so I go to that on monday.<
15 .hhh ((nasal sniff)) erm, I've got choir here.
16 (0.3)
- 17 emma: I play, the flute but not in any, (0.5) °bands
18 cause I () cause it's getting bor,ing.
19 (.)
- 20 emma: .h er: I li°ke <go:ing:. (.) out to other people's
21 home[->=>I don't lik]e going to the
- 22 IR: [(i s t h a t)]
23 pub much cause I'm under age.<=and I
24 can't be bothered with it.
- 25 IR: °yeah:°
- 26 emma: basic:ally. I don't like wi?ne and stuff
27 like that.
28 .h so: usually, >go out to a ()
29 to get everybody out, and stay out there.

30 (0.2)
 31 emma: m:t ((mouth sound)) .h=er:::m. sometimes
 32 I do waitressing with my °best friend Jonathan.°
 33 (0.3)
 34 emma: °.hh we usually get a bit pissed after that,
 35 cause we get free drinks=cause it's #in=a,°
 36 .h=in a, rugby club.# ((smiley voice))
 37 IR: °huh, hu[h, he.°]

Clearly, Emma's answer is a multi-turn, elaborated answer, which is a massively observable feature of interviewees' answers. With the first turn (3-11, 13-14), Emma employs various methods to hold the floor. With the first part of the turn (3-5) she produces a list of things she does. This comes off in and through the pitch work and the rhythm of the talk (Jefferson 1990). Note the slightly-rising, or continuing intonation at the end off each part of the list: ' video, ... pizz:a,... cinema, ...brow:n,°'. She then 'talks through', or 'rushes through' the possible TRP that emerges after the utterance '>in brow:n,°=.h<' (5). Schegloff describes a rush through as:

' a practice in which a speaker, approaching a possible completion of a turn-constructural unit, speeds up the pace of the talk, withholds a dropping pitch or intake of breath, and phrases the talk to bridge what would otherwise be the juncture at the end of a unit. Instead, the speaker 'rushes through' the juncture without inbreath, reaches a point well into a next unit (e.g. next sentence), and there stops for a bit, for an inbreath, etc. (Schegloff 1973)' (1981: 76)

Let me offer a few examples of this practice to be found in the above extract:

'>in brow:n,°=.h< and other times' (5)

'it's more about how to (.) find your faith >and stuff=so I go to that on monday.<' (13, 14)

'people's home[->=>I don't lik]e' (21)

The parts of talk shown in bold show the point at which talk is latched to the final utterance of a hearably complete turn. Within the examples 'brow:n,' 'and stuff' and 'home[-' are the final utterances of these hearably complete turns. Note that prior to 'brow:n,' Emma speeds up the pace of the talk and the utterance has a slightly rising

intonation, which work to suppress transition relevance and to project more talk¹⁹ (see Atkinson 1984a, Lerner 1996). With the first example, this claim to hold the floor is followed by a rapid in-breath and the connective ‘and’ that forecasts more talk on this issue. With the second example, Emma speeds up the pace of the talk and the topic elaborator ‘so’ is latched to the prior utterance, forecasting more (elaboratory) talk. With the last example, IR’s action of producing the start of a possible questioning turn ‘[(is that)]’(22) in overlap with Emma’s talk marks that he heard this as a possible TRP. Note how Emma cuts short the last part of the utterance ‘home[-’ and ‘jump starts’ her next turn, through latching and speeding up the talk that follows. This occurs just as IR begins to produce his talk. These examples demonstrate how a current speaker can work to ‘keep off’ another speaker from a turn of talk, and in the final example keep off a speaker who is verbally trying to take the floor.

The above examples are ‘proto-typical’ of how interviewees work to hold the floor, ‘rushing through’ possible turn-transitional relevance places. These rush throughs’, described in part above, include instances or combinations of the following ‘methods’: stretching the last utterance of a hearably complete TCU, slightly rising or upward intonation/pitch on the hearably last utterance, cutting short the hearably last utterance, latching talk to the hearably last utterance, or producing the hearably last utterances at a faster volume to the surrounding talk. In these ways, interviewees (and interviewers) *self-initiate* multi-unit turns.

Returning our gaze to Emma’s first turn note how, after a repair in her talk, ‘>were talking about .Hh< it STARted Off. talking about >’ (6-7) she re-starts with utterance ‘STARted Off’. This again works to hold the floor through introducing a temporal element to the talk. This piece of contextual information (cf. Sacks 1992) highlights that this will be an extended piece of talk, in that introducing a ‘beginning’ to the talk she should therefore, properly, produce something hearable as an ‘end’. She forecasts a hearable ‘end’ with the utterance ‘=but *now*’ (8), note also the contrast marker prior to the temporal descriptor. This action of doing contrast can work to do rhetorical or argumentative work (Atkinson 1984, Smith 1978) and in so doing work to gain uptake from other

¹⁹ Similarly, slightly falling intonation can mark terminal relevance, marking the end of a current

speakers²⁰. IR attends to the work of this device, as he produces some talk, a response token ‘=<°ri:ght.°>’ (12) which is latched to Emma’s talk and produced just after a possible TRP.

IR’s response token does some work on Emma’s talk. Note how the first turn (3-11, 13-14) is hearably produced as a ‘complete’ answer. This occurs *after* IR’s response token ‘=<°ri:ght.°>’(12). Emma works to close her talk, she produces the formulation ‘=so I go to that on monday.<’ (cf. Garfinkel and Sacks 1970, Heritage 1985 and Heritage and Watson 1979, 1980). This works to close the talk, as she works to do the upshot of the prior talk and thus produce a hearably complete answer to IR’s question at 1-2. This turn is produced as grammatically, intonationally and pragmatically ‘complete’, what Ford and Thompson (1996) refer to as a ‘complex TRP’. This work to close the talk, is in part, a product of IR’s response token. IR’s utterance *acknowledges* the prior talk, *and* marks that ‘further talk on this topic is unnecessary, as I understand’. Note also that both the intonational contour, rising-falling, and sequential position add a further layer of relevancies. The contour adds a layer of, what Gardner (1997) calls, ‘weak agreement’ and the sequential positioning - that the utterance is latched to a continuing contour ‘so,=’(11) that projects upshot talk - work to mark that further explanation is not necessary.

Emma then produces an extended sniff, a ‘doing thinking token’ (15) and produces *further* talk ‘I’ve got choir here.’ (15) which is again produced as a complex-TCU and hence ‘complete’. A gap in the talk is produced (16) and then she continues to produce further talk. IR does not take a turn of talk at the TRP - after ‘monday.<’ and at 16 - so Emma continues to talk. Sacks notes that a multi-turn utterance can occur when

‘a currently-completing speaker, finding no one’s starting, may make it his [sic] business to keep off silence by going on, and then may turn out to produce much

speakers turn at talk.

²⁰ See also Jefferson (1986) “at first I thought” device, Wooffitt’s (1992) ‘at-first-I-thought-but-then-I-realized’ device and Hutchby’s (1996) ‘A but B’ device.

more than a sentence²¹ in his utterance though he did not have that as is project'
(1992: Spring 70, 2: 225).

IR's silence works to promote *more talk* from Emma.

When Emma gets no uptake from IR after her answer being produced as complete at 14, notice that with her next TCU (15) she does not clarify/elaborate on/specify her prior answer which is method available to 'pursue a response' (cf. Pomerantz 1984a). Her answer 'I've got choir here.' (15) is not hearable as an answer to IR's immediately prior question (1-2), rather it is an answer to IR's prior question, 'what=you:, like, to=do:;, >out of, school.<' (not shown in transcript), which initiated this sequence of talk. In pursuing a response from IR, she does not produce her prior talk as 'problematic', as IR has already acknowledged and worked to close this topical trajectory, in and through the response token (12). She elaborates on her prior talk, the topical trajectory that is the 'back-drop' to this whole sequence of talk so far: what she does in her free-time.

As noted above, a TRP is produced at 16, the (0.3) pause, and Emma continues to talk, 'keeping off the silence', clarifying/elaborating/specifying on her prior talk. In this case she produces a further activity she does in her free-time. Other 'silences' appear in the talk, 19, 30 and 33 which also work to promote further talk. In this way the silences are locally produced as Emma's 'silences'. In technical terms, the pause [gap] is transformed into 'the speakers pause' [an intra-turn pause] (Sacks 1992, Sacks et al 1974). So we can see how part of Emma's 'answer' is produced in *response to IR's non-uptake of turns of talk at TRPs*.

In summation, I have identified two methods through which multi-turn answers are produced²². They are:

- 1) '*self*'-initiated, through rush throughs, contrast devices, list construction.
- 2) '*other*'-initiated, through questions, response tokens, the other speakers silence.

²¹ Rather than use the word 'sentence', which is used in Sacks' early lectures, to describe a unit of talk, conversation analysts' now use the word 'turn'. As Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson (1974) pointed out a turn can be a single utterance, a grammatically complete sentence or part thereof, or a number of sentences.

²² See the next chapter for a more detailed discussion of the work of 'doing answers'.

As Extract 3.11, below shows, such methods are routinely combined to produce a multi-turn answer. This extract is taken from the talk that follows on from Extract 3.1:

Extract 3.11 ((continuation of Extract 3.1))

- 13 IR: °>(could y-) tell me,< can you tell me what sort of things,°
14 Ben: er::°(h)°m. (1.9) I can't actu(huh)ally re(heh)me(hh)mber
15 at the °mo(h)men-°=but er, (1.7) >I think it was to do
16 with< er, (0.3) h:eroin=and >things like that cause,<
17 (0.2) I think a- at our age the. (.) harder drugs: (.)
18 erm (0.2) the things that we don't know about,=
19 IR: =°m[m.]°
20 Ben: [a n]d >most of us,< don't wanna to know about.
21 .hh andt (0.4) it's it=is:: interesting <knowing a
22 bit more about it °and everything.°>
23 (0.3)
24 Ben: erm
25 (1.2)
26 Ben: .hh I mean a lot of people have sort of experienced
27 the <s:offer drugs:.>
28 (.)
29 Ben: °and things like that,° (.) so they do know a fair
30 bit about them.
31 IR: °>so when you say the s:offer drugs° °°what does
32 that mean.<°°

Again Ben's talk is an elaborated and extended multi-turn answer. Ben's answer is prefaced by a 'claim of forgetfulness' (cf. Goodwin 1987, Beach and Metzinger 1997) and then the answer is produced as 'cautious', '>I think it was to do with< er,' (15-16) as Ben produces himself as 'doing searching'. Ben then 'rushes through' the TRPs in his first turn of talk (14-22).

After the utterance '°mo(h)men-°' (15), a TRP could emerge. At this point, the turn is hearable as complete, with the fall in volume marking a close on the topic and rights to the floor [speakership] (Goldberg 1978, Ford and Thompson 1996). This final utterance is cut short and a contrast marker 'but' is latched to this utterance. This

contrast marker highlights that more talk is to follow, the increase in volume also works to (re)claim the floor. At this point, Ben has ‘rushed through’ a possible TRP, the pause that follows, (1.7) at 15, is clearly ‘his pause’. Later in the same turn, Ben again works to ‘hold the floor’. At 16, the utterance ‘>things like that’ could mark the end of his talk but Ben produces the topic elaborator, ‘cause,’ which again works to hold the floor, keeping off IR’s turn at talk.

Ben’s first turn of talk (14-22) works to hold the floor. IR does produce the response token ‘=°m[m.]°’(19) prior to a hearable TRP. How is it that IR produces some talk here? Ben’s turn prior to this, ‘the things that we don’t know about,’ (18) is produced with a definite rhythmic contour and comes off in the style of an idiomatic expression, a ‘maxim’, or ‘account apparently appropriate modifier’[A3N] (see Sacks 1992 Fall 64: 23-23 and 104). An A3N is a device that can work to render any further account on an issue as redundant, they can have a ‘terminal relevance’ (Drew and Holt 1988, although see Kitzinger 2000) and can work to gain an affiliative response.

Ben’s A3N does achieve uptake from IR, although IR’s utterance only does acknowledgement, it does not claim agreement. Note the falling contour, the minimalness of the utterance and the low volume all work to produce this as saying ‘I understand, further talk on that topic is not necessary’(cf. Gardner 1997). This may explain, in part, why Ben’s next turn (21-22) does not elaborate on the topic of his prior talk - the things he learnt about - rather it topicalises the talk in his prior answer (See section 3.1, Extract 3.1, 3.8-3.12). We saw a similar shift in the topical trajectory in Extract 3.10, again *after* a response token from the interviewer.

As we saw with Extract 3.10 interviewees can hold the floor, in part, through interviewers’ work, their silence. At the end of Ben’s first turn of talk, a similar pattern emerges. TRPs emerge (23, 25, 28), IR does not offer a verbal turn at talk, and Ben continues to talk, ‘keeping off the silence’. As such, in this example, both the ‘methods’ (other- and self-initiated) are central to ‘how the talk comes off as it does’.

3.4 Summary of the interactions

I have documented some of the lived organizational work of qualitative interviews: how the participants organize their activities. The interviewers are solely responsible for, and orientated to as, opening (and closing) the interaction, opening, closing and re-opening task-orientations. They are massively aligned as ‘questioners’ and the interviewees are aligned as ‘answerers’. Interviewers are responsible for, and orientated to as, initiating and progressing (expanding) various question/answer sequences. The questions promote talk in “this or that” direction. The answers are responsive to these questions as well as to interviewers’ non-uptake of talk (silence) and their response tokens.

Interestingly, silence and response tokens can be said to be ‘third-turn options’ (cf. Heritage 1984b) or work to expand the sequence (cf. Schegloff 1990). They can be, in some senses, a way of ‘doing repair’, that is repairing the trajectory of the talk. By ‘repair’ I mean to stress that silence and response tokens can act as a request for clarification/elaboration/more information/specification or promote topic-shading (cf. Schegloff and Sacks 1973)²³. Whereas follow-up questions and most topic-shifting questions *specify the explicit topical trajectory of the talk*, silence and response tokens do not achieve this, but they do seem to *promote* some further talk.

Within this data-set, follow-up questions are *the* central resource through which interviewers verbally interact. The majority of interviewers’ turns do the work of promoting talk in “this or that” direction, promoting talk that is contingent on the interviewees’ talk either through follow-up questions or through non-uptake at TRPs or response tokens. When interviewers disattend to the activity of the interaction, producing a question that is not contingent, they make their talk accountable (hence the prefacing utterances of topic-shifting questions). So the activity of this specific quasi-conversational space, the activity within this version of the IW is gaining *detailed and comprehensive talk* on “this-or-that” topic.

²³ See the next chapter, section 4.3.3-4.3.4, for a detailed discussion of topic-shading in connection to both IR’s questions, response tokens and ‘silence’.

In order to highlight this point, let me present some very brief moments when interviewers do some ‘other-work’ albeit intimately related to that described above. I am going to offer up two moments in an interview that allow us to reflect on what is occurring in the rest of the talk, namely: formulation sequences and closing questions.

3.5 Formulation Sequences

Mazeland and ten Have (1998) have shown that co-operative formulations are a central resource used by interviewers in their research interviews data, both to summarise prior talk and or/themes and ‘to establish a shared sense of what the answer really means’ (12). The research on the news interview has found that within the ‘hostile’ or ‘adversarial’ news interview *non-co-operative* formulations are used by interviewees (Heritage 1985)²⁴. Mazeland and ten Have (1996/98) note that research interviews, share with ordinary conversation, a *preference for agreement* (cf. Pomerantz 1978, 1984b and Sacks 1987). Similarly this preference for agreement can be found within my data.

Let us view a moment when IR formulates Ben’s prior answer. IR’s formulation is of the whole of a ‘topically distinct sequence of talk’. By this I mean IR is summarising all the talk that has occurred since the last topic-shifting question, approximately five minutes of talk, which was initiated through the retrospective topicaliser in Extract 3.1 (see section 3.1, lines 6-7).

Extract 3.12

- 1 to with> [° << m:y li:fe. >> °]
 2 IR: [°>so can I just kinda re]:flect. back
 3 to,< too see if I’ve kinda,
 4 >understo[od you=so it sounds like] you-,
 5 Ben: [° y e a : h, s u r : e , °]
 6 IR: .hh kind=of-, (0.9) you- (.) you=had a time
 7 of kinda using, °< (.) °°canni:bis.=
 8 Ben: =>mm:.<=
 9 IR: =°°an-, >maybe experimenting with a bit

²⁴ Similarly non-co-operative formulations are regularly found within cross-examinations in judicial settings (Atkinson and Drew 1979, Drew 1992).

10 of, sp<::eed,=
 11 Ben: =>yeah:.<
 12 IR: ah::, (0.4) you had a::,°° °>couple of bad
 13 experiences: with can[nibis] which
 14 Ben: [yeap,]
 15 IR: has made you a=bit< wa::r[y::.
 16 Ben: [>?yea:p.<=
 17 IR: =>of taking that.< and <#maybe, drugs,
 18 in, general,#((rhythmic))>=
 19 Ben: =>?yeah,<
 20 IR: and (.) #>but thats all: kinda coincided
 21 with the time when.< >>you and your mates
 22 have started going out to pubs
 23 any:w[ay.=so with kin]da<< # ((race commentator))
 24 Ben: [? y e a : : p .]
 25 IR: >alcohol,< become[s, more impor:tant.]
 26 Ben: [yea:h , definate .]
 27 IR: would, that be, a fair. reflec[tion,°]
 28 Ben: [that':]:s yea:h,
 29 definatly.=cause er, (0.4)
 30 IR: .hh= ((sniff))
 31 Ben: =I was quite hap:py. when we started going

Now this is a very nice demonstration of a co-operative formulation, in which both parties are working to *document co-operation*. IR *requests* the opportunity to produce a formulation, ‘[°>so can I just kinda re]:flect. back to,< too see if I’ve kinda, >understo[od you=’ (2-4), which Ben *accepts* in overlap. So, immediately we have a preferred response. Note that this acceptance is not just ‘° y e a : h,’ which would be satisfactory, but it has the additional component ‘s u r : e , °’ (5), which further upgrades the acceptance.

IR produces the formulation, which goes over multiple-TCUs. Note how Ben continually produces acknowledgement tokens either in overlap or at TRPs. In this way Ben is producing each separate TCU, each part of the overall formulation, as discrete formulations in and of themselves. This is not a necessary act for the talk to survive as ‘a formulation’. Ben is producing each separate ‘feature’ of the overall formulation as a

‘fresh’ first part-pair of the adjacency pair formulation-decision. In this way, Ben is doing strong agreement.

Ben does not ‘just’ produce acknowledgement tokens. Note how they are all produced as different through: *lexical choice* - ‘^o y e a : h , s u r : e , ^o’ (5), ‘=>mm:.<=’ (8), ‘=>yeah:.<’ (11) ‘[yeap,]’ (14) - *intonational contour* – falling (8, 11), rising (5, 14, 19,) , rising-falling (16, 24, 26, 28-29) – as well as through *pace* and *sound stretching*. Ben marks through these diverse methods each response as doing strong agreement, in part, through the ‘unique-so-far’ quality of each token. Each token comes off as ‘a fresh (second-pair part) act’, that works to reflexively (re)produce IR’s talk as ‘discrete’ formulation sequences. In turn, this reflexively produce Ben as doing strong-animated agreement. IR’s first TCU can be seen to work in a similar way to a story preface, a way to gain the floor and make the necessity for any further talk, after the request for producing the story is gained, redundant until the ‘climax’, or ‘end’ of the story is produced (cf. Sacks 1992). The ‘end’ of the formulation is forecast at 27 when IR requests a decision on the whole of the formulation sequence: ‘would, that be, a fair. reflec[tion,^o’.

Note that IR’s formulation is saturated with downgrades (cf. Edwards 2000): ‘it sounds like’, ‘kind=of’, ‘kinda’, ‘>maybe’, ‘a=bit’, ‘maybe,’ ‘kinda’ and ‘kin]da’. In this way IR is *not* producing himself as ‘the authority on the talk that has occurred’ and is *doing uncertainty* (cf. Beach and Metzinger 1997). Ben is produced as the authority on his own experience *and* the talk that has just occurred. This activity reinforces the ‘ideal’ that the interview talk itself is to be understood as the sole product of *Ben’s* talk, IR is ‘just’ a neutral participant²⁵.

Note the upgraded acknowledgement token, ‘yea:h , definate.’ (26) that marks both Ben’s agreement and an attempt to gain the floor as he works to demonstrate that he feels that this ‘summary’ is complete. At 27 IR co-operates with this, and closes the formulation and Ben recycles (to completion) his prior upgraded acknowledgement token (28-29) and then elaborates on the topic of alcohol becoming more important.

²⁵ Note that IR uses the utterances ‘re:flect.’ (2), and ‘reflection,’ (27). These words carry the idea that IR is just a sounding board, or mirror. Ben’s utterances, therefore, are produced as reflecting directly his ‘own lived experiences’.

Extract 3.12 shows how a preference for agreement, as with everyday talk, is a central feature of this sequence in the interaction. As was noted above, this preference for agreement is rarely locally produced in ‘adversarial’ news interviews and cross-examinations in courtrooms, in these spaces disagreement is often used as resource by the speakers. What makes this ‘interview talk’ distinct from ‘everyday talk’ is that this preference for agreement is hearably produced²⁶. By this I mean the preference for agreement is not only implicit through the talk, it is *explicitly* shown to be done in and through ‘doing a formulation’. In this way, this method allows interviewers to locally produce themselves as *facilitating* talk that is accurate and detailed - also the central ‘role’ of follow-up questions.

I want to focus briefly on another example of a formulation sequence, which is a cooperative formulation, *but does not have the same high level of marked agreement*. Equally this other example summarises *all* of the interview talk, rather than just one topically disjunctive sequence of talk as with the above example.

Extract 3.13

- 1 Carl: about it, it has more effects:.
 2 (2.6)
 3 IR: can I=jus-, kinda=of- (.) reflect back to you
 4 >what I think you-, you’ve said to help,<
 5 °to kinda (the opinion) and you can tell if-
 6 if I’m right or if I’m wrong,° >.hh from what
 7 you say it sounds lik<e, erm:., (0.2) you’ve-
 8 >you’ve tried a few, drugs<=that your kinda
 9 interested in.=°the effects. to see if whether
 10 or not,° ((loud sound starts)) (0.4) er::m, (1.0)
 11 and you s::-=>you had tw<o:, ex:periences=that,
 12 >maybe you would describe as nega’ive<=you
 13 felt ill:, and out of control, >.h and that you (.)
 14 for now got to a postion=where=you, didn’t think
 15 you were<=gonna::, try much anymore=anyway.
 16 Carl: °yeah.°
 17 IR: and that, (0.2) the session through giving you,
 18 >a bit more information=°or knowledge as it

²⁶ See footnote 8.

19 where, has may be^o re:in. forced, < @some of
20 those decisions.@= ((clearly said))
21 Carl: =yeah,
22 IR: would that be a fair, (0.3) <sum:mary,> of
23 wh-=what it's done.=>.h< rather than having
24 any dramatic im:pact, (0.2) <that changed
25 views:.>
26 (0.3)
27 IR: <totally as:, (.) as kinda of (that)
28 rein:forced.=basic[a l l y .]>
29 Carl: [mm, hm.]
30 (1.1)
31 IR: yeah? does that=sound reason[able,]
32 Carl: [mm:]=hm,
33 ((even louder noises start))
34 IR: °yeah,° o:kh::ay, (.) is there anything else
35 that you want to say, about the sess:ion.
36 (0.7)
37 Carl: °°u::m,°° (1.2) °°(no.

IR requests the opportunity to produce a formulation (3-6). Although no verbal acceptance is produced by Carl, IR does not go in search of this 'acceptance'.

However, IR's TCU '°to kinda (the opinion) and you can tell if- if I'm right or if I'm wrong,° >.hh' (5-6) is hearable as an elaboration, or tag-component of the prior request. In and through this IR may be 'pursuing a response' (cf. Pomerantz 1984a).

Again, the formulation takes multiple-TCUs, however Carl only produces, minimal response tokens (16, 21, 29, 32). The first token '°yeah.°'(16) is produced at a quiet volume and comes after IR works to animate the talk 'try much anymore=anyway.'(15) through stress and rhythm. The second token '=yeah,' (21) is latched and comes, again, after IR works to animate the talk, 're:in. forced, < @some of those decisions.@=' (19-20) through pitch, clarity and stress, as 'closing talk'. Note that IR then *explicitly* marks the formulation as 'closed' through producing the second-pair part of the formulation-decision adjacency pair as the relevant next action for Carl: 'would that be a fair, (0.3) <sum:mary,> of wh-=what it's done.=' (22-23). Carl could produce a response either in

overlap with IR's talk or IR's in-breath (23) but he does not produce any verbal response so IR continues to pursue a response. IR elaborates on his prior talk, 'rather' (23) connects back to prior topic and then marks his talk as closing talk through the reduced pace (24-25).

At 26, a 'gap' in the talk is produced and transformed into IR's pause as he re-starts the topic of his prior turn (27-28). Note he produces it, again, as a 'natural continuation'. Carl then produces a *minimal* response token 'mm, hm.' (29) in overlap, which ends *as* IR's talk does. A further 'gap' is produced (30) and IR, *again*, pursues a response, this time in the form an understanding check 'yeah?' followed by a question 'does that=sound reason[able,]'. Carl responds in overlap but *again* this is a minimal response token. However this time IR does not pursue a response, rather he introduces a new topic (34-35).

Note that IR works very hard to 'get *marked* agreement' from Carl about his formulation. He works 'hard' in two ways. First, as we saw in Extract 3.12, his talk is saturated with downgrades 'from what you say it sounds lik<e,' (6-7), 'that, >maybe you would describe as nega'ive<' (11-12) that documents that he is 'doing uncertainty' (cf. Beach and Metzinger 1997). Carl is marked as the authority on his own experience *and* the talk that has just occurred in the prior interaction. Second, as the above discussion noted, IR works hard to pursue a response, but not *any* response, a response that 'does strong, marked agreement/confirmation'.

After the formulation sequence, in *both* extracts, the interviewers *explicitly seek confirmation* - 'would, that be, a fair. reflec[tion,°]' (Ex. 3.12: 27), 'would that be a fair, (0.3) <sum:mary,> ... does that=sound reason[able,]' (Ex. 3.13: 22, 31) - and this is *irrespective* of whether the interviewees were doing 'marked' *or* 'minimal' uptake. Interviewers work 'hard' to be orientated to as 'checking(-and-only-seeking)-the-interviewees'-version'.

3.5.1 Summary

The co-operative formulation, although produced through a 'questioning-TCU' represents a 'modified version' of the main activity within the rest of the talk. Again

the interviewer is the initiator of the talk, yet this talk represents a slight modification of the prior identities. The activity of this sequence - *clearly and explicitly* ‘checking’ (both through the formulation talk *and* the closing ‘decision’ adjacency pair) that the interviewer has ‘understood’ the interviewee’s prior talk - seems to highlight two things. First, that the implicit activity of the interviewer within the rest of the talk is that of *initiating and promoting detailed and comprehensive talk on “this-or-that” topic*. And second, that interviewers *only work to ‘understand’ what interviewees are saying* and that all the talk is to be heard and understood *solely as a product of the interviewees’ actions*.

I have identified a further method through which the implicit ‘ideals’ of the interaction are made clear: the closing question. Prior to viewing this, I will offer a brief discussion of closing questions in another site, that of AIDS counselling.

3.6 The closing questions

Peräkylä and Silverman (1991a) note two main departures from the stable communication formats in AIDS counselling. These are ‘1) question initiated by the patient and 2) conversational contributions from the patient’ (634). I wish to focus on the first of their departures. The questions initiated by the patient either occur when a counsellor offers a ‘question time’, an opportunity for the patient to ask questions or patients volunteer questions, i.e. they are not initiated by the counsellor²⁷. Within my data-set I have not, as yet, found a similar pattern of departures from the IW, although I do have examples of insertion sequences of the kind that can occur in ‘everyday’ talk (see Sacks 1992)²⁸.

²⁷ These questions initiated by the patient can be insertion sequences (Sacks 1992) through which the patient clarifies a prior question and on receiving the answer goes on to answer the prior question.

²⁸ I also have one interview where the interviewee asks the interviewer questions that are *not* understanding checks or requests for clarification. They are about the interviewers ‘personal’ relationship to some of the topics of talk. Extract 3.A documents one of these ‘breaches’:

Extract 3.A

1	hal:	draw or (like)=>I mean, have you
2		smoked draw.<
3		(0.5)
4	IR:	°we’ll talk about that afterwards.°
5	hal:	no. I’m asking you °now.°=
6	IR:	=°no lets talk about
7		that[afterwards°]

This, in part, could be a product of the difference between an AIDS counselling session and an interview, in that in an AIDS counselling session patients may seek information about issues raised in the discussion or voice concerns about future situations that may occur within or outside the clinical setting.

A further departure from the format occurs when counsellors offer a ‘question time’.

This represents a ‘sanctioned’ departure, as in Extract 3.14 below:

Extract 3.14 (Peräkylä and Silverman 1991a: 634)

- 1 C: er: Is there anything you want to ask?
2 (0.2)
3 C: ([)
4 P: [er: Well (it's just a---- a theoretical
5 question actually wu---) (0.2)
6 straightforward kissing and things like
7 that would [that
8 C: [That's fi:ne.
9 P: That's [fine.
10 C: [Yea:h.

The authors note that the question at 1 marks a departure from the format, the question simultaneously allows a space for P (the patient) to ask a question and (re)produces ‘an expectation that outside the ‘question time’, questions usually do not appear’ (635).

They also note that question time is further produced as a ‘marginal activity’ as it either is produced at the *close of a topic* or at the *close of the consultation*.

In Extract 3.15, below, we find that *at the end of the interview* IR offers the following sequence of talk. Note that this extract follows on from the talk in Extract 3.13:

In this, and other moments when Hal ‘breaches’ the interview, IR tells Hal that such answers will be given ‘afterwards’. This ‘afterwards’ is orientated to as: *after this interview*. The interviewer marks that during the interview-itself he is not available to answer ‘personal’ questions relating to the topic of the talk (although see footnote 18 for an exception to this ‘ideal’).

Extract 3.15

- 1 IR: °yeah,° o:k_h:ay, (.) is there anything else
2 that you want to say, about the sess:ion.
3 (0.7)
- 4 Carl: °°u::m,°° (1.2) °°(no.
5)°° °it's (especially) something
6 different. than working as group,°
- 7 IR: °yeah.°
- 8 Carl: °than one to one.°
- 9 IR: °°uh, huh.°°
10 (0.3)
- 11 Carl: °that's what I did before.°
12 °°()°°
- 13 IR: mm::.
- 14 Carl: and °°()°°
15 °and away aswell,°
- 16 IR: °yea:h,°
17 (
- 18 Carl: °I thought that was quite good, so I
19 was quite impressed. when they said
20 that.°
- 21 IR: °yeah.°
- 22 Carl: °talk to someone about it, and you can
23 so I just put my name down. and jus
24 said° °°I'll do it°°
- 25 IR: °°o:kay.°° °u:m,° (2.8) did you go,=because
26 it was, you knew worry or::
27 (.)
- 28 Carl: °I jus go-° I actually went °() I'm
29 interested in it. cause=I- thought it's
30 something different.°
31 (0.4)
- 32 IR: >.h is there anything else you want to=say,<
33 (0.3)
- 34 (IR): £°°decision,°°£
35 (0.3)
- 36 Carl: £°no-,°£
- 37 IR: °>o:kay.<°

38 (1.2)
39 ((tape switched off))

IR's open-topic initial elicitors at 1-2 and 32 are of great interest. IR is still the initiator, in the sense of he is asking the question, *but* Carl is given the 'identity' of initiating the theme or topical trajectory. In both questions, note the utterance 'anything else'. In the first question (1-2), the topical-trajectory is, in part, pointed to by IR through the utterance 'about the sess:ion.' and this is a relatively broad canvas 'to do topic talk on' compared to the prior questions in the interaction. Carl then provides the topic, a comparison between his experience in a peer-education session and 'what [he] did before.' (11) in another type of drug-session. This stretch of talk comes off in a similar way to that described above, in section 3.3, in that Carl elaborates on the talk, in part through IR's response tokens (e.g. 7, 9) and in part through IR's follow-up question (25-26).

IR then produces the open-topic initial elicitor '>.h is there anything else you want to-=say,<' (32) that does not suggest any specific or general topical trajectory, although I take that the talk should be, at the very least, somehow connected to this interactional context. A 'gap' in the talk (33) is transformed into an intra-turn pause as IR produces the light-hearted utterance '°°decision,°°' (34) which Carl responds to as light hearted (36); note the 'smiley voice' character of both speakers talk. IR then works to acknowledge the prior talk and close the talk, this closure is complete as the tape is turned off. Note that IR's utterance at 34, has already forecast that the talk is closure-implicative, as he shifts from 'neutralistic monitor' to 'friendly/jokester co-conversationalist'.

Let us view another 'typical' closing sequence:

Extract 3.16

1 emma: <and hope that the knowledge= 'll continue to s::tay
2 in my memory,>=and I'll be able to use it.
3 IR: >°°okay..°°<=is there anything else you wanna sa:y, that
4 I=haven't as::'ed you or um:::, (.)°<anything that you
5 wanna> (0.3) kinda back up more <(wiz,)>°
6 (.)
7 emma: °I°=don't, think so.

8 IR: °okay:° °°well thanks for that.°° ((sound of movement))
 9 emma: ?you're ?welcome,
 10 (0.6) ((sound of movement))
 11 IR: °°turn this off:, °°
 12 ((tape switched off))

With this sequence the interviewee declines to offer further talk (7). IR then thanks the interviewee (8), and the interviewee provides a 'no-problem' response (9) and then the tape-recorder is invoked (11) and then is switched off. These actions are typical of 'methods' used to work to close the talk, although 'thanking' and verbally invoking the tape-recorder is not always present (e.g. Extract 3.5)²⁹.

These closing questions do not allow a departure from the format in sequential terms but allow for a departure from the format in terms of '*direct control*' of the topic trajectory. These open-questions work to highlight interviewers' topical control that is implicit within their other questions, follow-up and topic-shifting, in the rest of the interaction.

3.6.1 Discussion

Both the above methods - formulation sequences and closing questions offer us a space to reflect on what is going on in the rest of the talk. They both represent moments that are, to borrow a term from Schegloff and Sacks (1973), "differently focused but related" to the other work going on in the talk.

* When interviewers produce a formulation this establishes the work implicit within the rest of the talk – *the interviewers are seeking detailed and comprehensive talk*. It equally shows us how interviewers locally produces themselves as *a neutral participant in the talk*. Interviewers' produces their identity in the interaction as 'gatherers-of-information-that-the-interviewees-have-supplied' and that they are concerned to gain an authentic-account of the interviewees talk³⁰. In producing a formulation interviewers can be seen as *explicitly* 'doing responder/member-validation'.

²⁹ I should note that with two interviews (conducted by the same interviewer) no open-TIE is produced, rather the final questions, are marked as the final question – '>>just to finish up,' – and are both connected to topic of : 'if=you were in charge, of the proj:ect, next yea[r what=w]ould you change about

As such, this ‘ideal’ about qualitative research³¹ is locally produced as an *ideal-in-and-as-lived-practice*. Interviewers also hearably (reflexively) produce themselves as ‘trying-to-be-attentive-listeners’. Implicit within the talk, and demonstrated in the downgrades, is that the interviewees are ‘clearly-the-expert-on-their-own-talk-experience’, they “own their own experience and talk” (cf. Peräkylä 1995, Peräkylä and Silverman 1991b, Sacks 1992, Sharrock 1974).

* The closing questions demonstrate that prior to this point interviewers have been closely guiding the topical trajectory of the talk. The final open-question reflexively shows that interviewers have *topical control*.

3.7 Conclusion

I have shown how qualitative interview talk is *locally collaboratively* produced. Both speakers are essential to, in Silverman’s (1973) term, ‘bringing off the research instrument’.

I have identified an array of methods which combine to produce the talk as it is, these include: one speaker ‘solely’ aligned as ‘questioner’, one speaker ‘solely’ aligned as ‘answerer’, topic-shifting questions (of various typologies), follow-up questions (both prefaced and non-prefaced), contrast devices, formulations, list construction, response tokens, rush throughs, silence³². These methods are by no way exclusive to this space, they are *generic* to talk-in-interaction. Yet what makes this space distinct is this specific configuration of methods as well as the specific adaptation of the individual methods.

it, [°or d]o different.°’. The close of the talk comes-off through the interviewer ‘doing appreciation’ and then the methods described above – [thanks-no problem-turn off tape] – are produced.

³⁰ This ‘neutralistic’ stance (cf. Heritage and Greatbatch 1991) or ‘neutralism’ is also demonstrated in the prefacing work of follow-up questions and other features of the talk. See section 3.3, ‘Doing Answers’, and all the following empirical chapters.

³¹ See Kirk and Miller (1986) for an outline of respondent/member validation in qualitative research *per se* and Bloor (1978) for a critical commentary on this ideal. See May (1993: 100) for a brief (theoretical) discussion of what he calls ‘reflecting back’ in interviews. Interestingly, Bloor’s (1978) work can be read as exploring the possibilities and problematics of this ideal-in-and-as-lived-practice, he offers a “therapeutic respecification” of previous theoretical treatments.

³² This list is by no means exhaustive. I note the absence of any (detailed) work on openings, insertion sequences, account apparently appropriate negatifiers, poetics to name but a few issues as well as any, as yet, unanalysed methods. As this data is from audio-tapes I also note the absence of non-verbal methods. The next chapter will deal in detail with the topical and the concomitant identity work.

Within counselling and the news interview *all* the methods described above are used. However, in these other spaces we find ‘slight adaptations’ of the methods described above. For example, in family therapy based AIDS counselling, described by Peräkylä (1995), topic-shifting and follow-up questions are used to produce ‘circular questioning’. In the ‘drop-in-centre’ HIV counselling we find another communication format being used, that of ‘information delivery’ (Silverman 1997). In adversarial news interviews we find ‘non-co-operative formulations’ (Heritage 1985). To other spaces within the ‘interview genre’ we find other configurations, in GP consultations we find other communication formats, the ‘discussion format’ and the ‘physical examination’ or ‘test format’ (ten Have 1999b). In both the structured interview (cf. Suchman and Jordan 1990, Houtkoop-Steenstra 2000) and the job interview (cf. Button 1987/92) ‘a lack of’ follow-up questions.³³

So the answer to what makes this talk distinctly qualitative interview talk is quite interesting in its apparent elusiveness and subtlety. I have yet to find a method ‘distinct to’ qualitative interviewing. The possibly distinct feature, that was repeatedly highlighted above, is that *the* central activity of the interaction is to produce *detailed* and *comprehensive talk* on *one of the speakers experiences/feelings/knowledge/opinions* of “this or that” topic.

Note that word ‘talk’ is in bold in the prior formulation/gloss on the activity of this interaction. I could have used the word ‘answers’ or ‘data’, yet both these terms fall short of the point I am trying to make (and could achieve different readings of my work). The interviewer does ask ‘questions’ that produce ‘answers’ from the interviewee. As was pointed out above, the interviewer *initiates* these answers and these answers are always *responsive* to the interviewer’s questions and silence. In this way the answers are never just produced as ‘context-free answers’ but they are produced

³³ This discussion fails to talk of identities that are produced in and through the talk, and as such produce it for the participants as a distinct space of qualitative interview talk. This will be raised in the following chapters.

in and through the (inter)action of *talk* itself³⁴. To call the process ‘a way to gain detailed and comprehensive answers’ denies, and silences, the co-authored nature of the talk. Similarly, calling the process ‘a way to gain detailed and comprehensive *data*’, abstracts the responses from the very (local) context of their production (see also Mazeland and ten Have 1996/9 for a similar argument).

This emphasis on seeing the interview as *locally, collaboratively* produced in and through *talk* is essential. This was also demonstrated through the analysis of formulations and the closing questions. These two moments in the talk demonstrate a paradox within qualitative interview talk.

Interviewers’ work to locally produce themselves as neutral (yet attentive, and facilitative) participants but they never attain this neutrality in the course of the interaction as they control the trajectory of the talk (and the interaction as a whole). This paradox highlights an important issue: that there is a difference between ‘*doing* neutral’ and ‘*being* neutral’. Heritage and Greatbatch (1991) highlight this in reference to the news interview when they say that interviewers engage in ‘*neutralistic*’ conduct. Interviewers locally produce themselves as neutral in and through

‘(1) avoid[ing] the assertion of opinions on their own behalf, and (2) refrain[ing] from direct or overt affiliation with (or disaffiliation from) the expressed statements of [interviewees]’ (114)

If they do not maintain this *neutralistic stance* they are routinely held accountable by either the present speakers or the overhearing audience. What is important to note is that interviewers ‘*doing* neutrality’ in such a manner does not in any way mean that they are ‘*being* neutral’ in any conventional sense.

I also note that, in and through the act of producing themselves as facilitative *and* neutral, interviewers are actively trying to defend against being heard as a member of the identity ‘interrogator’. This categorisation, especially as the talk is ‘talk about

³⁴ Sacks (1992) makes a similar point in reference to stories (see also Goffman 1981 and Schegloff 1999c in relation to the lecture and seminar respectively). One speaker - the storyteller - may be doing *all* the talking, and as such could be said to be solely responsible for the talk. Yet the story can *only* be produced through the listeners not taking a turn-at-talk (other than response tokens) while the storyteller is talking.

drugs', is not something that interviewers want to be seen/heard as. The act of repeatedly asking another speaker to clarify some part of their prior talk *could* become problematic. Interviewers could be held accountable. As such, the combination of methods, outlined above, especially the prefaced follow-up questions, work to demonstrate that interviewers are '*not* doing interrogation'. This issue will be a central theme in the next chapter.

Regarding the 'closing questions', I noted that this reflexively demonstrates that interviewers have *topical control*. However this notion needs to be problematised. It is too deterministic. As I noted above, the interviewer is *both* the initiator and is (selectively-)responsive to the interviewee. In this way, topical control lays *in part with the interviewee*. The topics the interviewees introduce in their answers *may* be taken up by the interviewers in the following TCU. Also as the interviewees' turns are multi-TCU they offer the interviewee the *possibility* to control the topical trajectory of their talk within their own turns of talk (see also Watson and Weinberg 1982). It is this issue of the possibility of topical control (for both speakers) to which I will turn in the next chapter.

Topics in the talk: establishing identities

4.1 Introduction

In one of Sacks' published lectures he offers the following very interesting noticing:

‘[A] given object might turn out to be put together in terms of several types of organization; in part by means of adjacency pairs and in part in some other types of organizational terms, like overall structural terms or topical organizational terms. And one wants to establish the way in which a series of different types of organizations operate in a given fragment’ (1992, Spring 1972, 5: 562)

In the previous chapter, I demonstrated *how* the talk is locally collaboratively produced. That analysis was centred on documenting the turn-taking, sequence and structural organization of the talk. This chapter will ask the question ‘how is it that open-ended interview comes-off’ by focusing on one of those other ‘types of organization’, that of *topical* organization.

In the prior chapter, I noted that interviewers appear to have overall control of the topical trajectory of the interaction. The interviewers both open and close the interaction and control the broad areas of topic talk. I also noted that the interviewers not only initiate topics but, by producing follow-up questions, are also (selectively-)responsive to the interviewees' talk. In this way, topical control lays *in part with the interviewees*. I noted that the topics the interviewees introduce in their answers *may* be taken up by the interviewers in the follow-up questions. Also, as the interviewees' turns are multi-TCU answers, they offer the interviewees the *possibility* to control the topical trajectory of their talk within their own turns of talk. This chapter aims to outline the *how* this ‘topic’ work comes off as a *local* collaborative accomplishment.

Initially, I will discuss how these multi-TCU or elaborated answers come off, demonstrating the methods through which they are locally accomplished. This discussion will involve an analysis of how closely these ‘elaborations’ answer the questions that produced them. It will also involve highlighting the way that ‘doing elaboration’ is central to the way interviewees introduce and build on various topics and concomitantly central to making relevant various identities in relation to these topics. I

will then go onto consider the relationship between identity, sequence, topic and turn-taking for both the interviewees and interviewers.

This discussion of the ‘inter-relationship’ of identity, sequence, topic and turn-taking is made possible through using, in combination, insights from *CA and MCA*. Schegloff (1992a) has criticised some parts of Sacks’ work on membership categorization for its inherent ‘promiscuity’. I will directly address this critique in the conclusion of this chapter.

4.2 An initial discussion of topical organization

In Extract 4.1, the initial question I would like to consider is how does Ben’s answer *topically* relate to IR’s question.

Extract 4.1

- 1 IR: °(s-) >coming back to the cards then< what
2 did you think of the exercise, with the° °°cards.°°=
3 Ben: =I thought that was good, (0.2) cause erm,
4 (1.4) (tt) I- did find a few things out
5 tha-°t°, (0.3) I didn’t know before, (0.4)
6 but er:m, (1.0) °sort of like. (0.9) some of
7 the effects: and er.° (0.4)
8 IR: °>(could y-) tell me,< can you tell me what sort of things,°

Within this extract Ben offers an *elaborated*, multi-TCU, answer to IR’s initial question. The question asks what does Ben ‘think’ about an experience he has had. Ben replies that experience was ‘good,’ (3), then elaborates on why this was good (3-5). At 6 he offers further, more ‘detailed’ elaboration, through an example. The first part of his answer (3) is grammatically and pragmatically hearable as a ‘complete’ answer to the question. However, note the rising intonation on the utterance ‘good,’ which works to mark that further-talk-is-coming. Ben works to hold the floor over the 0.2 second gap in the talk. Similar work comes at 5, ‘before, (0.4)’, as Ben again works to hold the floor.

We should note three things about Ben’s answer in the extract above:

1. This elaboration is *self-initiated* through Ben forecasting more talk, through intonation, at possible TRPs (3, 5).
2. Ben's talk is *directly relevant to*, or closely tied to, answering the question the IR produced.
3. Through his talk, Ben makes relevant (or hearable) a range of non-inclusive, and thus competing, *topically-aligned identities* (cf. Lawrence 1996), or category incumbencies in relation to the topic of drugs. Ben says he only found 'a few things out that I didn't know before,' (4-5) from the cards exercise. The 'exercise with the cards' refers to a game that those in the session had to play: you are given cards with different drug effects (and dangers) and have to match them to specific drugs. Ben says he found a *few* things out that he didn't know before. He does not produce himself as a 'drug expert', someone who has knowledge of *all* drugs. However, he notes he only found out about 'some of the effects:' (11-12) so he *must* have *some* knowledge of the effects of drugs. Various questions emerge: Where did he gain this knowledge? Has he used drugs? Does he know drug users? Is he interested in gaining drugs knowledge?

Clearly, in this extract, Ben does elaboration. This action of 'doing elaboration' [doing multi-TCU answers] is a central feature of interviewees' talk *throughout* the data-set. In the prior chapter, I focused on this with reference to the fact that interviewees' turns are massively multi-TCUs turns. I now want to focus more clearly on how this elaboration comes off, demonstrating the methods through which it is achieved. The above example of elaboration could be glossed as '*on-topic elaboration*'. A (slightly) unpacked version of this gloss would be 'an-elaborated-*self-initiated*-answer-that-is-closely-fitted-to-answering-the-question'.

4.3 'Doing elaboration'

I have identified three 'methods' through which elaboration is produced. These are: 'on-topic elaboration', 'elaboration-through-topic-shading' and 'elaboration-through-storytelling'. Note that these all can be self- or other-initiated. I will demonstrate each of these in turn.

4.3.1 'Doing on-topic elaboration (other-initiated)'

Ben's talk, in Extract 4.1, focuses on the topics of 'what he thought of the exercise', producing 'mentionables' [an evaluation of the experience, a knowledge gain, an example of that knowledge gain] that are closely related to the question. The talk in Extract 4.1 was clearly *self-initiated(on-topic elaboration)*. Compare this 'action' to the answer given in Extract 4.2 below. At 1, IR closes the prior talk and then at 2-5 introduces a new topic of talk.

Extract 4.2

- 1 IR: °[that]'s quite normal.°
2 .hh erm::. (0.7) >could you tell me what you
3 thi<n::k erm::, (.)°wh- what your definition of
4 peer education would be.
5 how would you (.) de[scribe it] to somebody,°
6 fran: [hhhhh.]
7 fran: er:m::. (1.1) <teaching from your own
8 experiences:=and (0.3) °what you kn:ow.>
9 (.)
10 fran: c-=>jus<° (1.1) yea:h, I suppose
11 experience really,=jus- (.) giving your
12 experiences to others.=an- .hh (1.4)
13 <learning together.>
14 IR: <°mm[: : .]°>
15 fran: [instea]d of >trying to<=teach:.
16 (0.5)
17 fran: tryna- (0.4) °you=know° a non
18 judgemental ty[p e of] attitude.=an-
19 IR: [°mm:hm.°]
20 fran: .hh a relaxed situation.=not-, (.) teacher
21 and student.
22 IR: °°>mm:hm.<°°
23 (0.3)
24 fran: °you=know.°
25 IR: °°mm:.°°
26 fran: is that- all right,
27 [h u h h u h he he he he

28 IR: [£↑yea(h)h, that's fi(h)ne, no
 29 fran: [h e h e h e h e h e .h h h h h
 30 IR: [come a(h)way from the ().£ ((very smiley voice))
 31 fran: hhuhh
 32 IR: @that's=cool.@ ((strange voice)) .h I was jus
 33 trying,=to==go back to, <why they where
 34 like you said it was, do with, experience>

IR's question (2-4) makes the topic of Fran's 'definition of peer education'. IR then produces a tag-question, how would Fran 'de[scribe it] to somebody,' (5), providing the 'gist' (cf. Heritage and Watson 1979) of the prior question and simultaneously suggesting a candidate way to 'think through' answering the question. This formulation of the prior topic of the question comes off through Fran's non-uptake of the question after the question-delivery component 'wh- what your definition of peer education would be.' (3-4). Fran then makes such a reading relevant as she produces an extended exhalation (6) in overlap with IR's formulation thus marking that she understood the prior question and that her (verbal) delay was a product of 'this-being-a-hard-question-to-answer'. She then provides an answer (7-8) which is both her definition and description of peer education. This TCU is produced as grammatically, intonationally and pragmatically complete and a complex-TRP (Ford and Thompson 1996) emerges. Fran produces her talk as a 'complete answer' to the question. A 'gap' in the talk emerges (9) and Fran then re-takes the floor elaborating on her prior answer.

Fran's answer at 10-13 elaborates on her prior TCU, which is one of the methods Pomerantz (1984a) identifies used to 'pursue a response'. Again, Fran's TCU is produced as complete and, again, a complex-TRP emerges. At this point IR *does* produce a response, she produces a response token (14) which acknowledges the prior talk but does not mark agreement. Fran, in overlap, elaborates on her prior answer (15) by producing a tag-component which is, again produced as complete and again, a complex-TRP emerges. A further gap in the talk emerges (16) and Fran, again, elaborates on her prior answer (17-18, 20-21). Note that all of Fran's talk so-far has been *on-topic* with IR's question. IR produces further response tokens (19, 22) which all

work just to acknowledge the prior talk, IR does not give a ‘clue’ to Fran that her answer so-far is ‘satisfactory’¹.

A further gap in the talk is produced (23) then Fran offers an intersubjective appeal [IA] (Baruch 1981), ‘°you=know.°’ (24), which, like elaboration, can work to pursue a response. IR again produces a ‘weak’ acknowledgement token, note the very low volume and falling intonation. Fran then pursues a response, through producing a question, ‘is that-all right,’ (26), that topicalises the ‘adequacy’ of her prior topical talk. Fran begins to laugh (27, 29) and IR offers an answer, in overlap with Fran’s laughter, that is also scattered with laughter (28, 30). The laughter and the talk of both speakers simultaneously attend to and produce an account for Fran’s action at 26: that she had tried ‘all available options’ to produce her answer as a ‘complete answer’ to the question and yet still IR had not responded ‘appropriately’. At 32, IR again attends to Fran’s prior action, in and through producing another answer ‘@that’s=cool.@ ((strange voice))’ to Fran’s question. She then produces what may be the start of an account (shown in bold) but is transformed into that start of a question ‘.h I was **jus trying,**=to=-go back to,’ (32-33) which topicalises some Fran’s talk prior to this sequence.

1. This elaboration is *other-initiated* through IR’s non-uptake of talk at TRPs (9, 16, 23) and response tokens working to acknowledge the prior talk and offering the speaker a space to continue (14, 22, 25).
2. Fran’s talk is *directly relevant to*, or closely tied to, answering the question IR produced and with her turn at 26 Fran explicitly orientates to the ‘topical content’ of her prior talk as the topic of the interaction.
3. Note the identity work of Fran as she works to produce herself as an *adequate member* of the identity ‘answerer’. Fran works ‘hard’ to pursue a response from IR: through the exhalation marking that she heard and understood the question but the delay in her answer is the product of this being a ‘tough question’ (6), through on-topic elaborations (10-13, 15, 17-18, 20-21), through producing intersubjective appeals (17, 24) and through producing herself as a ‘questioner’ (26). And producing herself as an

¹ Note also the minimalness of the response tokens (14, 19, 22) so far, they are all produced at a low volume and all have a falling intonation. In this sense, IR is doing a ‘weak’ version of acknowledgement (Gardner 1997) and in turn documents why Fran continues to ‘pursue a response’ from IR.

adequate member of the identity ‘answerer’ is intimately connected to her *topically-aligned identity*: what sort of person would Fran be if she *couldn’t adequately describe or define* an activity (peer-education) that she has been trained in, and practised at, for the last year?

4.3.2 ‘Doing on-topic elaboration (self-initiated)’

Both Ben’s and Fran’s elaborated answers, Extract 4.1 and 4.2 respectively, are clearly both on-topic, they both work to develop and clarify the topic of their talk and this topical development does *identity work* for both speakers. As noted above, Ben’s elaboration was self-initiated and Fran’s was other-initiated. I want to offer another example of self-initiated on-topic elaboration, partly to outline *in detail* the sort of topically-aligned identity work that interviewees’ can engage in. The talk follows directly on from that of Extract 4.1:

Extract 4.3 [continues from Extract 4.1]

- 13 IR: °>(could y-) tell me,< can you tell me what sort of things,°
14 Ben: er::°(h)°m. (1.9) I can’t actu(huh)ally re(heh)me(hh)mber
15 at the °mo(h)men-°=but er, (1.7) >I think it was to do
16 with< er, (0.3) h:eroin=and >things like that cause,<
17 (0.2) I think a- at our age the. (.) harder drugs: (.)
18 erm (0.2) the things that we don’t know about,=
19 IR: =°m[m.]°
20 Ben: [a n]d >most of us,< don’t wana to know about.
21 ((continues with answer))

Ben ‘answers’ IR’s question with his talk at 15-18, 20. Prior to this, Ben offers a ‘claim of forgetfulness’ (cf. Greatbatch 1987, Beach and Metzinger 1997) and then ‘cautiously’ produces his answer, note the pause and then the utterance ‘>I think’ (15). Ben’s answer produces ‘heroin’ as something he did not know about before. In this way he produces an ‘answer’ to IR’s question. He then elaborates on this answer, producing heroin as a member of the category ‘harder drugs’², a category that he establishes people of his age do not have, and most do not want to have, knowledge of. In this way he explains, or

² Heroin is produced as the ‘maximal’ (cf. Drew 1992) descriptor, the essential category, or piece of information, that can be used as a resource for IR to define what the other things that are part of the same category.

elaborates on, why he personally does not have any knowledge of harder drugs. Note that this talk (17-18, 20) is hearably produced as an elaboration of his prior talk through the utterance ‘cause,< (0.2) I think’(16-17).

Again I want to note three things, about the talk at 14-16:

1. This elaboration is *self-initiated*, as Ben rushes-through the possible turn-transitional relevant places (15, 16).
2. Ben’s talk is *directly relevant to*, or closely tied to, answering the question that IR produced.
3. Through his talk Ben, again, makes relevant (or hearable) and builds on the prior *topically-aligned identities*, or category incumbencies outlined with reference to Extract 4.1. He now produces himself as a member of the category: ‘someone-who-does-not-have-a-lot-of-knowledge-of-harder-drugs’.

Ben marks that the knowledge he gained with the cards exercise, knowledge of ‘h:eroin and >things like that’, is the sort of knowledge that ‘*most-people-of-his-age-just-don’t-have*’. Note that the pronoun ‘our’(17) does some ‘lovely’ work for Ben. Through it, he produces himself as a member of a collective, not just any collective *but a large and diverse group*: ‘people-of-my-age’. Whether he is referring *just* to people who are 16, or *just* to teenagers, or *just* to people at his stage-of-life, is both debatable and reasonably irrelevant for current purposes. What it does do, is produce what he is saying, as *something-that-most-people-of-his-age-would-say*. In so doing, it produces him as *just* everyday, normal, ordinary and routine. His knowledge of drugs is just the same as others of his age, he only has an everyday, normal, ordinary and routine relationship to it. As he goes onto to document, knowledge of ‘harder drugs’: is something that ‘we don’t know about’ and ‘most of us don’t wana to know about’ (18, 20). Again note the pronoun choice, Ben is not presenting his specific perspective on the topic but rather is speaking as a member of much larger group.

Ben works to mark that his knowledge and relationship to ‘harder drugs’, his immediate ‘here and now’ topically-aligned identity, should be seen as the-same-as others of his age,

it is *not* extra-ordinary (or extraordinary)³. And in part this comes off through him ‘arguing’ that it is not just him who says this, rather most-people-his-age would say this. Ben’s immediate ‘here and now’ answer is the product of a ‘lived consensus’ freely available *outside* the environment of this specific interaction.

4.3.3 ‘Doing-elaboration-through-topic-shading (other initiated)’

The extract below continues from Extract 4.3, however in this section of the talk Ben’s answer is not ‘directly’ connected to the initial question IR produced at 13 (Extract 4.3).

Extract 4.4 [continues from Extract 4.3]

- 18 erm (0.2) the things that we don’t know about,=
 19 IR: =°m[m.]°
 20 Ben: [a n]d >most of us,< don’t wana to know about.
 21 .hh andt (0.4) it’s it=is:: interesting <knowing a
 22 bit more about it °and everything.°>
 23 (0.3)
 24 Ben: erm
 25 (1.2)
 26 Ben: .hh I mean a lot of people have sort of experienced
 27 the <s:offer drugs:.>
 28 (.)
 29 Ben: °and things like that,° (.) so they do know a fair
 30 bit about them.
 31 IR: °>so when you say the s:offer drugs° °°what does
 32 that mean.<°°
 33 Ben: Well= ↑herm. (2.0) °tch° I suppos:e. (1.0) if we-

At 19 Ben receives uptake from IR and then continues to provide an answer. Rather than elaborating on his ‘lack of knowledge of harder drugs’, Ben *returns to* the topic of evaluating the experience that he introduced in his prior answer at 3-7 (Extract 4.1).

Ben is working to develop the topic he introduced in his prior answer, moving from a

³ Equally note that Ben uses the softener (cf. Edwards 2000) ‘most of us’ (20). He is not to be heard as a member of some ‘small’ non-everyday, non-normal, non-ordinary, non-routine group who have knowledge of harder drugs. Again, he works to distance himself from any extra-ordinary relationship to drugs.

focus on ‘knowledge-he-gained’ to an evaluation of the ‘experience-of-the-knowledge-he-has-gained’.

Ben receives no verbal uptake (23), produces the utterance ‘erm’ (24), which works to produce Ben as ‘doing searching for something to say’. Ben still receives no verbal uptake (25) and at 26 produces a turn that represents a ‘topic shade’. By topic shading I mean ‘the fitting of differently *focused* but related talk to some last utterance in the topic’s development’ [My emphasis] (Schegloff and Sacks 1973: 305). This topic shade or subtopical shift (cf. Lawrence 1996), is in part, the product of IR’s non-uptake of talk at 23 and 25. He has shifted from an ‘evaluation’ to a new, related, topic: ‘experiences-with-soft-drugs’. This turn reflects back on, or elaborates on, Ben’s prior talk at 17-18, 20 (Extract 4.3). Note that this turn is started with the utterance ‘I mean’ (26), an utterance that may foreshadow repair. What follows it may be a ‘turn around’ on the prior talk or may work to clarify the prior talk. In either case, Ben would be following the strategy outlined by Pomerantz (1984a), as to how, when no uptake is forthcoming, you can work to ‘pursue a response’. Ben does this by using the documentary method of interpretation (cf. Garfinkel 1967) on his own talk, clarifying his prior answer at 17-18, 20 (Extract 4.3) and thereby, producing one of the possible upshots of the talk.

So Ben’s answer at 26-27 is the upshot (Heritage and Watson 1979) of his prior talk, hence a clarification-through-elaboration of his prior talk, but not his immediately prior talk. At 17-18, 20 (Extract 4.3) he introduced the idea that ‘people of his age’ (he clearly includes himself in this category as through the pronoun ‘at our age’) do not know about the ‘harder drugs:’. A *possible* implicit categorisation within this description is that they *do know about* softer drugs⁴. A further categorisation is *also* possible, that they gained this knowledge through *being* drug users. Both these possible categorisations, or hearings, are now made explicit within and through this turn. Yet note that, rather than saying ‘at our age’ as in the prior turn, Ben uses the pro-term ‘a lot of people’ (26). Implicit within this is an understanding that Ben is still talking about people of his age, yet his

⁴ Softer drugs are the other part-pair of the relational pair (cf. Sacks 1992) softer drugs/harder drugs. Equally, they stand in a positioned relationship to each other, they are positioned categories (cf. Sacks 1992).

relationship to this group, whether he is one of these ‘soft-drug-takers’, is more ambiguous (given that the description might imply that he is a ‘soft-drug-taker’).

A further possible turn-transitional relevant place emerges (28) and Ben ‘keep[s] off [the] silence by going on’ (Sacks 1992: Spring 70, 2: 225). At 29 Ben produces what Jefferson (1990) calls a ‘generalised completer’ which can work to say ‘there are many more nameables which will not, and need not, be specified’ (68). Ben then produces the upshot of his prior talk, that these soft-drug-users ‘do know a fair bit about them.’ (29-30)⁵. Note, also, that Ben now describes these users as ‘they’ (29). This again produces Ben’s topically-aligned identity as ambiguous, who does the ‘they’ refer to? ⁶. Does it ‘just’ refer to the prior pro-term ‘a lot of people’ (26)’ which is the routine ‘transparent’ hearing and therefore Ben is working to distance himself further from this group of people? Or, is Ben to be included in this group? IR then produces a question (31-32), a question that topicalises the utterance ‘softer drugs’.

Within the sequence of talk from 18-30 I would like to note three things:

1. Ben’s elaborated answer is *other-initiated* through IR’s non-uptake of talk at TRP’s.
2. Rather than all of Ben’s talk being *directly* relevant to, or closely tied to, answering the question that IR produced, the relationship of answer to question is less ‘direct’. This is because Ben *topic shades* over TCU’s, introducing a related, but differently focused topic.
3. Through his talk Ben, again, makes relevant (or hearable) and builds on the prior *topically-aligned identities*, or category incumbencies. These topically-aligned identities are often produced as ambiguous through the shift in pro-term choice.

4.3.4 ‘Doing elaboration through topic-shading (self-initiated)’

Prior to this extract Ben has been talking about a bad experience he has had with cannabis.

⁵ This is hearably produced as the upshot through the utterance ‘so’.

⁶ Sacks notes that utterances like ‘they’ are ‘this-or-that’ devices, they are ‘systematically ambiguous’ and that they build ‘richness into a compact form’ (1992, Fall 65, 6: 165). See Chapter Eight for specific reference to the identity work they can achieve.

Extract 4.5

- 1 IR: °>I mean<° ha- has that put you off? (.)
- 2 Ben: [<°yea:h.°>]
- 3 IR: [taking dr]ugs. or,
- 4 Ben: yeah,=definetly. >.hh<
- 5 I=m[e a n ,]
- 6 IR: >[can you tell m]e more,<
- 7 (.)
- 8 Ben: well:, (0.5) ch ((throat sound)) cause er,
- 9 I tried it ag:ain. the next week,=@and
- 10 exactly the same thing, happened
- 11 to me.@ ((rhythmic)) so I thought that
- 12 I must have an analle-=allergy to it.
- 13 >or something like that. .hh< so::,
- 14 I realised that er::m. (0.8) it wasn't worth
- 15 it. I wasn't gonna, (.) muck up my life or
- 16 anything.=keep on doing it, >.h< er:m.
- 17 @and I actually, (0.5) in some ways,@ ((clear, slight
- 18 rise in volume)) influenced a lot of my
- 19 friends to stop it.= °be°cause, (0.6) er:m.
- 20 (0.5) >well sort of-< me and my other
- 21 friend that we. (.) °go out,° (.) go out and
- 22 get people together=°and everything.°
- 23 >and I stopped doing it<=and e- they
- 24 thought oo::,=yeah::. °might as well stop
- 25 doing it.°=I'm not sure whether it was cause
- 26 of me, .h but.(.) I have, - had it since in
- 27 <v:ery> small quantities like just a, (.) drag=or
- 28 something, and (0.3) I- >wont take any
- 29 more,< and a lot of my friends can't
- 30 understand why, and I've told them,
- 31 and they think.=well it's not going to
- 32 happen again.=but, .hh @I'm pretty convinced
- 33 it probably would,
- 34 [h a p p e n a g a i n .]@ ((rhythmic))
- 35 IR: >[what what would your frien]ds do then<

At 1-5 IR's question takes time to emerge because of Ben's early agreement. The focus of the question is on whether Ben's bad experience has 'put [him] off ... taking dr]ugs.'(1-3). Ben answers this question through an example of his experience (8-11) and his personal thoughts, 'so I thought that ... I realised that', in connection to this (11-16). Then Ben produces a topic shade. With his prior talk at 8-13 Ben was offering his reaction to the experience - 'I realised that er::m. (0.8) it wasn't worth it.' (14-16). Then at 17-18 he begins to offer his friends reaction to it - '@and I actually, (0.5) in some ways,@ ((clear, slight rise in volume)) influenced a lot of my friends to stop it.='. In this way he uses the resource of 'reactions to it' as a way to slightly alter the topical focus of the talk. The talk that follows, not only covers the effect the experience has had on him, but also that he elaborates on how this has had an influence on some of his friends.

Ben's elaboration on how this has had an influence on some of his friends, 'oo::,=yeah:: °might as well stop doing it.°'(24-25), is ambiguous as to whether it is direct reported speech, or reported thought. Whatever its status I want to note, following Holt (2000), the exaggerated prosody, 'oo::,=yeah::', documents the shift in identity to 'report maker'. Doing reported speech works to invoke both *objectivity* to the reported talk (Holt 1996) and *direct* reported speech works to *distance* the speaker from the action: the reporters 'position themselves as merely the animators but not the sources'(Buttny 1997: 501) of the report. In and through producing the *direct* reported speech/thought, Ben works to document, *show* rather *tell* (Sternberg 1982, cited in Holt 1996), his *positive* influence on his friends. Ben also works to soften this claim '=I'm not sure whether it was cause of me,' (25-26) downgrading his 'absolute' certainty of the prior claim whilst simultaneously upgrading its rhetorical-interactional strength (cf. Edwards 2000) . Ben works

to produce himself as having a *positive* effect on some of his friends, as they have also given up (possibly) solely through his actions⁷.

In this extract:

1. Ben's elaborated answer is *self-initiated*.
2. Ben *topic shades* over TCU's, introducing related, but differently focused topics. Ben has shifted the topical trajectory away from that which IR's question introduced.
3. Through his talk Ben produces a locally appropriate 'morally adequate' topically-aligned identity, that despite Ben's 'immoral status' as a (possible) ex-user through his actions *some of his friends* have stopped 'doing drugs'.

4.3.5 'Doing elaboration-through-storytelling'

The sequence of talk that follows is quite extended but it nicely demonstrates the central role that storytelling can have within interviewees' talk and the kind of identity work that interviewees' can accomplish through it⁸. Before we view the story, I want to briefly focus on the talk prior to it.

Extract 4.6

- 1 IR: so you know you said when the- the
2 sessions had stopped.
3 lez: yea:h,
4 IR: how did you find out that they'd stopped.
5 hh huh huh
6 lez: >I think I just-< (.) I dun=[↑]know
7 they >d- d- jus- hap-< I- >we
8 haven't been-< (.) Jill said don't
9 come next week.

⁷ There is other identity work occurring in this extract. Notably Ben's relationship to the category 'ex-drug user' is produced as ambiguous in that he says 'but.(.) I have, - had it since in <v:ery> small quantities like just a, (.) drag=or something, and (0.3) I- >wont take any more,<' (26-29). Note the emphasis on '<v:ery>' and the description after this quote that seeks to promote this as a 'rare-occurrence-of-minimal-note'. Also note that Ben describes two groups of his friends, 'ex-users' and 'current-more-than-a-drag-users'. We could ask, is Ben 'easily led' by this second group, and therefore in danger of becoming a user again? Or is it that he has 'stayed strong' despite this second group's influence? See Chapter Eight (and Rapley 1998) for a detailed and comprehensive account of interviewees' identity work in relation to the category 'drugs'.

⁸ See also Extract 4.5 above and 4.14 below.

10 (.)
 11 lez: an-=
 12 IR: =↓oh right,=
 13 lez: =>that was it,< ((stabbed out))
 14 IR: so you haven't seen her for
 15 tha[t]
 16 lez: [I.] haven't seen her, f- for=mon:t:h.=or
 17 two
 18 IR: mm hm.=
 19 lez: it might even be two months
 20 IR: <yea::h:, o:k[a y>]
 21 lez: [>.hh h]h<
 22 IR: >so do=you think there any other reasons<
 23 apart. from::, kind=ov the sessions=stopping,= ((continues))

Prior to this sequence Lez has said that 'its kin:da of bin **falling apart** the peer-led drugs thing ... towards the end. ... <a::nd I do:n't rea:lly> know why.' (not shown in transcript). IR topicalises this with her question at (1-2, 4-5) although the question focuses only on part of the programmes collapse: specifically 'how' did Lez 'find out' (4) the weekly training 'sessions' (2) with the peer-educators had stopped⁹. Lez then attempts to offer an answer (6-8), which comes off through repair and claims of insufficient knowledge (cf. Beach and Metzinger 1997). He then indirectly casts the peer-education trainer (Jill) as responsible 'Jill said don't come next week.' (8-9) the upshot being that *her words* were the key factor to the session stopping. IR receipts this as news (12) Lez confirms this (13) and IR works to request further clarification through an upshot formulation (14-15) and reflexively documents her understanding of the prior talk. Lez confirms this (16-17, 19) producing the second-pair part of the adjacency pair formulation-decision and IR receipts this (20) which works to acknowledge the prior talk, close the prior talk and gain the floor. At 22-23 IR begins to produce a question that topic-shifts from 'the sessions=stopping,=' to 'other reasons'.

⁹ Note that this is produced as a 'laughable situation' in and through IR's tag-laughter at 5 and this could be attending to Lez's prior talk (data not shown): that he has already told IR that 'he found out through others on the course' and that his prior talk comes off in and through a smiley voice.

I want to note two things in reference to the above talk. Firstly, prior to the extract Lez has marked that the peer-education program was falling apart ‘towards the end’ (not shown on transcript) and then claims that he is *not sure why*. In the talk above, in and through producing *indirect* reported speech ‘Jill said don’t come next week.’ (8-9) Lez works to produce this as an *objective* report (Holt 1996) and implicates Jill as solely *accountable* or *responsible* (Buttny 1997). Jill, the peer-education trainer, is indirectly cast as *responsible for* the collapse of *part of* the program. She may be responsible for the collapse of *all of* the program. Secondly, IR, rather than solely position herself as a ‘report elicitor’, which Heritage (1985) notes is a central feature of ‘doing neutrality’ in news interviewers talk, produces herself as ‘*report recipient*’ (12). However, she only acknowledges the prior information as news, she does not produce an *assessment* of it. Thus she retains a neutralistic stance. IR then topic-shifts (22-23) to search for *other* possible reasons, which could include reasons ‘other than Jill’.

Let us view how the talk continues:

Extract 4.7 (continuation of Extract 4.6)

- 22 IR: >so do=you think there any other reasons<
 23 apart. from::, kind=ov the sessions=stopping,=
 24 >was it-?< (0.3)
 25 Lez: .hh=[Ah-
 26 IR: [was it hanging together before. tha:t,=or
 27 was th[a t]
 28 lez: [>it wa]s-< it was ha::nging together=it started
 29 off brilliantl:y, [and c]arried on
 30 IR: [mm:.]
 31 Lez: brilliantly:::=un:til:::, (0.5) >yeah, it carried on
 32 brilliant=because everyone got on.=and were

IR’s question at 22-24, 26-27 is a request for elaboration/more information/specification on the topic of the collapse of the peer-education program. It is responded to as a request for Lez’s ‘collapse story’. In this way, the question is reflexively orientated to as an other-provided story preface pre-providing a mandate for Lez to talk at length¹⁰. Note

¹⁰ See Sacks (1992, Spring 1970, 2: 225) on the role of story prefaces. He notes how they are often *self-produced*. A speaker will request ‘the right to produce more-than-a-sentence[TCU]-long coherent bit of talk’ (ibid.) the other speaker will then reject or accept the other speakers claim on the floor.

that IR asks ‘was it hanging together before.’ (26), which is something that Lez has *already said* was the case, Lez already noted that only ‘towards the end’ (not shown on transcript) did the collapse happen.

Lez produces a story, ‘it started off brilliantly, [and c]arried on brilliantly::=un:til::,’ (28-29, 31). Through introducing a temporal element, he highlights that this will be an extended piece of talk. By introducing a ‘beginning’ [started], the talk should, therefore, properly, have a ‘middle’ [c]arried on] and an ‘end’ [un:til::,]. Also prior to this ‘end’ being established, IR *does not have to* offer any talk as she is produced in the identity ‘story-recipient’. Note that she does produce a response token (30). Through this she acknowledges the talk but does not ‘do assessment’.

Lez not only produces a story but it is produced as a *highly tellable* story in and through the categorical ‘brilliantly,’ (29)¹¹. Now this is a relatively extreme formulation and it sets up a puzzle. The puzzle is: “how can something start off as brilliant (and carry on as brilliant) and end up as falling apart?”. The upshot of the story, the solution to the puzzle, is forecast through the contrast device ‘=un:til::,’ (31), note also the ‘dramatic pause’ that follows. However the solution *does not* immediately follow, rather Lez elaborates on why it ‘it carried on brilliant’ providing evidence for his categorisation: ‘=because everyone got on.’ (32). In fact, it takes about 70 lines of transcript for Lez to produce *multiple* solutions to his puzzle. Lez gives a lot of ‘other reasons’, with a lot of contextual information as to how to understand these reasons about ‘why the program collapsed’. This is made possible in and through the action of telling his story. Let us view how two of these reasons come off and the sort of identity work that this does for Lez.

Extract 4.8 (continuation of Extract 4.7)

31 lez: brilliantly::=un:til::, (0.5) >yeah, it carried on
32 brilliant=because everyone got on.=and were
33 all enjoying ourselves, <=with=it, .hh <b:u_t,
34 the sec:ond we: actually started h::aving to

¹¹ As Anssi Peräkylä (personal communication) noted, all stories are regularly produced as tellable, otherwise they may not be warranted.

35 do sessions:.> (0.5) >I think it was al:most,<
 36 (.) we did a session in here with
 37 tea:chers:, [and li]ke from
 38 IR: [m::m:.]
 39 lez: then=on:, (0.3) it=was.=like, @w(h)ere
 40 ac(hh)tually, doing something now,@
 41 ((not laughter))
 42 I=dunno maybe it became real w:ork or
 43 something.=but-.hh >no it was always
 44 work that was enjoyable.=but I think
 45 doing the sessions, was a bit
 46 daun:ting,=.hh and there were a lot
 47 of-< (0.6) @Jill went on:.. all the time,@ ((very clearly
 48 said, imitating a posh accent)) about ho:w she
 49 definitely wasn't our teacher. or
 50 anything=an-, .h how-, (.) she wasn't
 51 this, [and we wouldn't ha]ve to be
 52 IR: [(°° < m ::: m, > °°)]

Lez offers two reasons 'everyone got on.= ... all enjoying ourselves' (32, 33) as to why the program 'carried on brilliant'. He then produces a second contrast device '<b:ut,' (34) some scenic details and a temporal progression in the story - 'the sec:ond we: actually started h::aving to do sessions:.>' (34-35) - which all forecast that a solution will emerge and the story will close. Instead, Lez produces *another* 'dramatic' pause and then forecasts further clarification through the utterances '>I think it was al:most,<' (35). In this case, the talk that follows is to be heard as Lez's 'subjective thoughts', *his candidate reason*. Rather than producing the 'reason' Lez offers an example, 'the session with the teachers'(36-37). This example is produced as *the* 'turning point': 'and li]ke from then=on:, (0.3) it=was.=like, @w(h)ere ac(hh)tually, doing something now,@' (37, 39-40).

The talk '@w(h)ere ac(hh)tually, doing something now,@'(39-40) noticeably changes in pitch and slightly rises in volume: the tone could be described as a 'voice of realisation'. Lez's is doing *direct* reported speech (Holt 1996), in this case it could be directly reporting the groups collective thought, Lez's own thought, or something that Lez or another member of his group 'actually' said. As Holt notes '[d]irect reported speech

frequently is employed to recall utterances that are the focus of a telling' (2000: 430). This 'event' is produced as *the* turning point and the group's reaction to the event, that it was a 'shock', is produced as an objective account in and through Lez working to 'show' the reaction rather than just 'tell' (cf. Holt 1996, Buttny 1997). So, Lez has produced a possible solution to the puzzle 'why did something that started off brilliantly collapse?': the reality of doing the actual peer-education session was a shock. In this case, those hearably accountable/blameable for the 'collapse' is *not Jill* (as was previously produced as the candidate reason, Extract 4.6: 8-9) but *the group members*.

Lez then clarifies his prior talk reported speech/thought, providing a candidate gist: 'it became real work' (42). Note how this is doubly produced as 'only' hearable as a *possible* candidate reason through the preface 'I=dunno maybe' (42). Lez then produces a contrast device, then re-specifies his prior talk as *incorrect* '>no it was always work that was enjoyable.' (43-44) and then provides *another* candidate gist for the group's reaction, the session was 'daun:ting' (46). Lez clearly marks that the group is *not* to be heard as *lazy or workshy*.

At this point in the talk, Lez has 'answered' IR's question; remember she asked for 'any other reasons< apart. from::, kind=ov the sessions=stopping' (Extract 4.7: 22-23). Lez has provided *another* reason, other than Jill: that the group found the reality of giving session 'a bit dauh:ting' (45-46). Note how this solution to the puzzle - why the programme collapsed - comes off through an elaborated answer, where Lez works to clearly document how this solution is to be heard. It is not that the group *did not want to work* (which is a possible predicate of his 'turning point' reported speech/thought at 39-40) rather, they, like anyone else finding themselves in the same position, were 'a bit' overwhelmed.

With this second candidate solution to the puzzle, unlike the first, Jill is *not* cast as, even in part, responsible. But note how Lez topic-shifts onto the topic of 'Jill' (47), immediately after a stretch of talk that produces the group as accountable/blameable. This shift is not forecast, rather it comes off through a repair in the trajectory of the talk. Lez begins to produce connected talk, 'daun:ting,=.hh and their where a lot' (46) that may

have elaborated on his prior ‘daunting’ categorical. He then produces a cut-off ‘of-<’ (47), pauses, and shifts in tone/pitch, speed *and* topic: ‘@Jill went on:.. all the time,@’. Drawing on Sacks’ consistency rule (1992 Spring 1966, 1(R): 246), could this apparent topical-shift be connected to, or relevant to the prior talk? By this I mean, is ‘Jill going on all the time’ hearable as directly relevant to the ‘daunting feeling’ of the sessions or is this shift providing another reason for the collapse? Lez then expands on this (48-51), providing evidence about what ‘Jill-went-on-about-all-the-time’.

Let us view how his ‘evidence’ continues:

Extract 4.9 (continuation of Extract 4.8)

47 of-< (0.6) @Jill went on:.. all the time,@ ((very clearly
48 said, imitating a posh accent)) about ho:w she
49 definitely wasn’t our teacher. or
50 anything=an-, .h how-, (.) she wasn’t
51 this, [and we wouldn’t ha]ve to be
52 IR: [(^{oo} < m : : : m, > ^{oo})]
53 Lez: teachers, .h< and, (.) although she had
54 the sort of set- I think she had a very
55 set idea,=of how it should b- how
56 the peer-led drugs things should be.
57 >how the classes should run and how
58 the whole scheme should work,=.hh<
59 an:d all our sugges:tions:, (1.2) >.hh<
60 a lot of them were carried out but-
61 (0.5) >everything< had to go through
62 Ji:ll.=.h and I think eventually @we
63 ended up getting a ↑bit- annoyed
64 with ↑[h:er]@ ((gentile mocking tone))
65 IR: [.hh] rig:ht.=
66 Lez: =not- not- @no we always liked her
67 an still do,=but-@ (0.5)

68 I=dunno there where just loads
 69 of==there were quite a few-
 70 disagreement=>but we have got all
 71 of our ideas:, as it-,< ((continues))

This whole stretch of talk expands on the topic of the groups working relationship to Jill. It provides evidence for ‘how-she-went-on-all-the-time’ that ‘she had a very set idea,’ (54-55) and that ‘>everything< had to go through Ji:ll.’ (61-62). Her actions are cast as responsible for the group ‘getting a [↑]bit- annoyed with [↑][h:er]’(63). Note that they *only* ‘eventually ... ended up’ (62-63) like this, they are not cast as initially feeling this, and that it is *not* that they didn’t like her both then and now (66). Lez works to show that he understands both sides of the argument. His talk is not to be heard as partisan, or biased. He is ‘just’ outlining ‘there were quite a few- disagreement=>’ (69-70)

Jill’s actions are placed centre-stage in how these disagreements emerged, and thus, *again* she is indirectly cast as accountable/blameable for the collapse. Prior to this we saw how the group was cast as accountable/blameable, as they found the sessions ‘daunting,’ (Extract 8: 46). Retrospectively we can say that the topic-shift at 47, that initiated this stretch of talk, was not to be heard as *directly related* to the ‘daunting feeling’, however it is *implicit* that the groups ‘disagreements with’ Jill (and she is cast as the key figure in promoting them) over how the sessions should be run *could lead to* and *compound* the groups ‘daunting feeling’.

As the talk continues (see Extract 4.12 below) after a brief insertion sequence Lez expands the topic of disagreements and then produces another reason for the collapse, although this time the group is cast as accountable/blameable. IR then topicalises, through a follow-up question, the topic of the ‘disagreement’.

4.3.5.1 Summary

With his collapse story (31-71) Lez stays *on-topic*. He only topic-shifts in the sense of offering different reasons to answer the question at 22-24. What is important to note is that IR’s question, at 22-24, was relatively open: Lez could have ‘taken’ his answer in

any of large variety of directions. In this sense, Lez had the ‘freedom’¹² or was ‘facilitated in’ pursuing various topically lines, through the open question. IR’s question seems to retrospectively work as a ‘story preface’ as Lez produces the answer to her question as a ‘story-that-will-be-told-over-various-temporal-parts’, and this was established in and through his initial turns [‘it started of brilliantly, [and c]arried on brilliantly:::=un:til:::,’ (28-29, 31)] and other temporal descriptors [‘the sec:ond’ (34) ‘from then=on:,’ (37, 39) ‘eventually ... ended up’ (62-63)]. Lez develops his story over multiple turns. In this way he was ‘free’ to introduce what topical area he chooses and importantly produce his topically-aligned identity without (too much) negotiation.

Within this sequence of talk

1. Lez’s elaborated answer is *self-initiated*, although it is notably ‘promoted’ through the initial question. He works to produce a ‘story’, in and through producing a temporal trajectory to the talk.
2. Lez stays *on-topic*, in that he answers the question, although the question was ‘open’ and therefore allowed for the possibility of multiple trajectories. He does *topic shade*, introducing related, but differently focused topics, yet all these topics work to answer the initial question.
3. Through his talk Lez makes various topically-aligned identities relevant. He is in somewhat of a contradictory situation: he has to account for the collapse of something he was a part of yet not produce himself as too partisan or biased. As Cuff (1993) notes in relation to descriptions of ‘unit troubles’ (a description of some troubled event that the describer was a member of):

‘both tellers and hearers might take it that in such matters as unit troubles, there may be available other versions of what has happened and that *attention in the account to this possibility assists in hearing it as morally adequate*’
[My emphasis] (42).

¹² As the scare quotes should have inferred, I use the term freedom advisedly. Lez is ‘free’ to produce talk on “this or that topic” but within the overall remit of interview, in that the talk should be, in part, relevant to the topic at hand. Although I also note, I have not demonstrated this through any examples. This ‘freedom’ is however double-edged for *both* speakers. In producing a topic of talk interviewees are aware that they *may* be made accountable for what they say, as Lez’s talk above demonstrates (note how he attends to the hearable predicates of his talk, to construct himself as ‘being able to see both sides’ cf. Cuff 1993 and Silverman 1997: 78-84). For interviewers, interviewees’ ‘freedom’ may mean that interviewees go off topic and so interviewers have to work to return the talk to a ‘suitable’ topic. I will return to these points below.

Lez produces two ‘factions’ as responsible for the collapse: the peer-trainer (Jill) and the group. If his story is ‘directly critical’ of the group, then he, as a member of that group, is chargeable with “some personal blame for the collapse”. If his story is hearable as ‘directly critical’ of Jill, he is chargeable with “blaming her for the groups own problems”. He works to be heard as a ‘neutral’ or ‘evenhanded’ reporter on the topic of the collapse by giving both sides of the story, although Jill is indirectly placed centre-stage as the key protagonist in the collapse.

4.4 A discussion of ‘doing elaborated answers’

Interviewees’ answers cover various related, but differently focused, topics. In this way, interviewees produce a broad range of themes around a topic or ‘mentionables’ (cf. Lawrence 1996) through the course of action of ‘doing elaborated answers’. This action of ‘doing elaboration’ is a central feature of interviewees’ talk. Elaboration can be:

1: *other-initiated* [through interviewers’ silence at turn-TRPs and response tokens] and *self-initiated* [through rush-throughs, storytelling, contrast devices].

2: *on-topic* [in that the topic of the elaboration relates directly to the question] and *subtopical* [in that the topic of the elaboration is connected but differently related to the question]

3: central to interviewees introducing and building on various topics. Concomitantly, it is central to making relevant various identities in relation to the specific topics in their answers.

A central concern in my analysis of the above extracts was to demonstrate that the *specific topical organization* - producing elaborated on-topic and subtopical talk - *was central to the interviewees’ identity work*. The analysis also demonstrated, following Sacks’ work, that in producing a topic-of-talk in the specific way you do *you reflexively produce an identity in relation to that topic-talk*. This is what the term ‘topically-aligned identity’, used above, refers to. To use more Sacksian terminology, in and through your topic-talk you present yourself as a member of ‘this or that’ category.

Some of the identities outlined above included, ‘answerer’, ‘drug user(s)’, ‘evenhanded storyteller’, ‘peer-educator’ and ‘positive-influencer-of-friends-drug use’. What is vitally important to note is that this identity work, or membership category work, is not static, but something that is constantly being produced and re-produced over the course of the talk. By this I mean, identities are repeatedly (re)introduced, sustained, challenged and abandoned over and within the turns of talk.

In the previous chapter, I emphasised how the sequence, structural and turn-taking organization of qualitative interview talk is locally and collaboratively accomplished. As the analysis of the above extracts demonstrated, the topic organization and the topic-talk and identity work that comes of in and through that organization, are *also* locally collaboratively accomplished.

This is most clearly demonstrated when interviewees’ talk is other-initiated, through interviewers’ silence at turn-TRPs. Within the interviews, as a whole, there is a mutual orientation to *multi-turn answers*, produced through interviewers’ ‘silence’ and response tokens at turn-TRPs and interviewees working to hold the floor. This is also found in Lawrence’s (1996) work on a transcript of a radio interview.

Lawrence (1996) notes that such an interview style can be ‘*interactionally facilitative*’ in that the interviewers’ non-uptake of talk at possible TRPs allows for interviewees to produce their own ‘agenda’. By this he means that interviewees can ‘more freely’ engage in subtopical and topical shifts *within* their turns of talk as compared to ordinary conversation where such movement, given the preference for single-TCUs (Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson 1974), is less common. In this way, rather than topical *shifting*, and more generally topical work *per se*, being jointly negotiated by the parties present *over* their turns of talk, interviewees can promote topics *within* their own turns of talk.

Interviewees in Lawrence’s ‘facilitative’ news interviews can draw on resources both from interviewers’ questions and within their own talk to shift the ‘topical trajectory’ of the radio-show. In this way, interviewers’ non-uptake of talk at TRPs allows interviewees to control the topic of talk *and* their topically-aligned identities. These news interviews are ‘facilitative’ in that the interviewees have some ‘freedom’ with which to

produce themselves ‘in the best light’ i.e. a locally appropriate *morally adequate light* in relation to the topic of talk.

The talk under analysis in this thesis can also be classed as ‘*interactionally facilitative*’, in that interviewers’ non-uptake of talk at TRPs allows interviewees the *possibility* of controlling (in part) the topical organization. This is demonstrated in the extracts above through interviewees ‘doing elaboration’ and therefore introducing a wide range of variously related topics. By enabling interviewees to produce multi-TCU answers, interviewers enable interviewees to mention a lot of different things. In this way interviewees are ‘helped’ to produce ‘detailed’ and ‘comprehensive’ answers¹³. When interviewers do ask a question, they take *some part* of the interviewees’ prior answer and topicalise this. This then forms the (initial) topical focus of interviewees’ next answer^{14 15}.

The interviewers gain from this organization, in that the topical focus of the talk *may* move beyond that which they initiated with their initial question¹⁶. This is demonstrated above, where IR’s initial question (Extract 4.3: 10) is concerned with gaining an understanding of Ben’s experience with the cards exercise, whereas his next question (Extract 4.4: 31-32) moves on to Ben’s understanding of the term ‘softer drugs’.

Through this organization, both parties have some degree of control over the direction of the talk. Interviewees have the ‘freedom’ to mention a lot of things¹⁷, yet it is the interviewers, with their follow-up questions, that (temporarily) (re)focuses the trajectory of these ‘mentionables’. What is important to note is that this ‘freedom’, or ‘facilitative interviewing style’ is produced in and through the specific sequence and turn-taking organization but has huge impacts on *the topical organization of the talk*. In and through the turn-taking organization (the orientation for interviewees to ‘do multi-turn

¹³ As was noted in the previous chapter this is *the* central activity of the interaction.

¹⁴ Although as previously noted in the prior chapter, topic-shifting questions clearly work to introduce a *new* topic of talk, as in, ‘different from’ the immediately prior talk.

¹⁵ This is a ‘fundamental’ difference between ‘structured’ and ‘qualitative’ interviews.

¹⁶ However, this is double-edged, as the topical focus of the talk may move beyond the topical focus of the interview as a whole. In this case the interviewer would have to work to return the talk to a ‘suitable-topic-for-the-immediate-purposes-of-the-interaction’.

¹⁷ As well as control, in part, their ‘identity’.

talk’) and the sequence organization (the orientation for interviewees to ‘do elaborated-answers’) the specific topical organization - ‘doing elaborated on-topic and subtopical talk’ - comes off. As the analysis showed, the specific inter-relationship of these ‘organizational practices’ had massive implications for the topics that interviewees’ answers covered and concomitantly this has massive implications for their identity work. It is to this issue, of ‘identity work’, to which I will now turn ¹⁸.

4.5 ‘Doing identity work’

I want to look in detail at an extract that demonstrates some important themes within the talk concerning identity work. The talk below continues from that in Extract 4.4 (section 4.3.3), above.

Extract 4.10 [continues from Extract 4.4]

- 26 Ben: .hh I mean a lot of people have sort of experienced
 27 the <s:offer drugs:>
 28 (.)
 29 Ben: °and things like that,° (.) so they do know a fair
 30 bit about them.
 31 IR: °>so when you say the s:offer drugs° °°what does
 32 that mean.<°°
 33 Ben: Well= ↑herm. (2.0) °tch° I suppos:e. (1.0) if we-
 34 >talkin about< drink and smoking as well.
 35 (.) but er, (.) sort of cannabis:: lik:e.
 36 (1.4)
 37 Ben: there is:: a lot of people that actually do that. I,= >I
 38 don’t actually do tha at the moment=I did,< °.hh°
 39 up to about a year ago I think- (.) that was the sort
 40 of >peak,< for (.) our age group °an[d e v]eryone°
 41 IR: [°(mm.)°]
 42 Ben: (who/that) was into it.
 43 IR: °and how often were you° °°using (it),°°=
 44 Ben: =tch er:m (0.3) probably:, (1.1)
 45 once or twice a wee:k.
 46 (.)

¹⁸ The above analysis, and the work to follow, goes some way to problematise Schegloff’s charge of the ‘promiscuity’ inherent in *some parts* of Sacks’ membership category work. As noted above, I will deal more directly with Schegloff’s critique in the conclusion of this chapter.

47 Ben: which: (0.2) it was: (0.5) °yeah.° (is)
48 fairly, often.

IR asks Ben to define the meaning of the term ‘softer drugs’ that Ben used in his prior answer. Ben responds with the utterances ‘Well= ↑herm’ that produces Ben as ‘doing searching’. A two second gap appears, that is clearly his pause, and then he offers a subjectivity marker¹⁹ ‘I suppos:e,’ that hearably produces the talk that follows this as a candidate response. After a further pause, Ben produces a proposal ‘if we- >talkin about< drink and smoking’. The two members (‘drink and smoking’) of the category ‘softer drugs’ are to be heard as possible additions to (‘as well.’) the categorisation the follows. A micro-pause, a contrast marker, a hesitation, further micro pause and then a softener (‘(.) but er, (.) sort of’) are produced. Then the ‘answer’ is produced: softer drugs are members of the category of drugs which are ‘cannabis:: lik:e.’ (35). So far, Ben’s ‘answer’ is directly *on-topic* with IR’s question.

A gap in the talk emerges (36) which is transformed into an intra-turn pause (Sacks et al. 1974). Ben now *topic shades*, moving from the topic ‘members-of-the-category-softer-drugs’ to the topic ‘people’s-use-of-softer-drugs’ (37). Ben then topic shades again to the topic of ‘his-personal-use-of-softer-drugs’ (37-39). A further topic shade occurs on the topic of ‘the-peak-time-of-his-age-groups-use-of-softer-drugs’ (39-40, 42). IR then produces a question (43), using as a resource for the trajectory of the question a topic Ben raised whilst topic shading. Clearly all these answers, in 36-40, 42, are *not* directly ‘on-topic’ in relation to IR’s prior question, they represent a subtopical shift in focus. How is it that this subtopical shift comes off as it does?

The initial ‘answer’ at 33-35 is produced as candidate, with no response from IR, Ben has no verbal confirmation or disconfirmation as to whether such an answer is ‘appropriate’. So Ben, rather than pursuing a response through clarification of prior answer, moves onto a related topic. In this way Ben does *not* attempt to deal directly with any ‘possible problem’ (Pomerantz 1984a), instead he returns to a topic he raised in answer to IR’s previous question. At 26-27, in Extract 4.4 (section 4.3.3), Ben talked about ‘a lot of

¹⁹ Lawrence (1996). See also Beach and Metzinger (1997).

people experiencing softer drugs'. At 37 he repeats this point, producing this part of his 'answer' as a post-expansion of his prior talk.

The move from 'individual description' to description based in and through his experience and/or knowledge as 'a member of a collective' seems to be a common feature of interviewees' talk. In this example, this is hearably produced in and through Ben's pronoun choice as he shifts from his individual thoughts (33-35) to 'a lot of people' (37) and from his individual action (37-39) to 'our' action (40). As was mentioned above, pronoun choice is a central resource for interviewees' to construct locally appropriate 'morally adequate' topically-aligned identities as well as ambiguity about these identities.

Ben's topic shading may, in part, be a product of him, on receiving no uptake from IR, 'retreating to the safety' of his home-base, that of 'impersonal talk', i.e. talk in which Ben is not solely talking about his personal, individual, experiences but rather talking as a member of a collective²⁰. Another issue may also be important in 'how it is that the thing comes off'. Note how at 37 the TCU is produced as grammatically, intonationally and pragmatically complete and a complex-TRP (Ford and Thompson 1996) emerges. What follows this is a stretch of talk produced at faster pace to the surrounding talk, in which Ben rushes through the next two TRPs. What makes this stretch of talk of interest is not just the rapid topic-shading that is occurring but the actual topics of the talk itself.

Sacks says something very interesting about topic transition:

'Now, ... if you have some topic which you can see is not connected to what is now being talked about, then you can find something that is connected to them both, use that first. ... And utterances can be built in such formats, starting with something connected to the prior topic, then, the second part using something else which is connected to the first part of the utterance, not to the prior topic. So there is a routine stepwise movement, which is to say that any next utterance is built in such a way to

²⁰ The term 'home base' was introduced in the prior chapter in reference to the how interviewees' home base is that of 'questioner' and interviewees' of 'answerer'. These are the identities that the speakers' repeatedly align themselves to. They are made relevant through the *type of turn* they produce. With reference to this example, Ben's home base is not generated in and through a turn-type, instead it is generated in and through the *his relationship to the topic of the talk*.

be the topic of the last. That then becomes a thing which can also be used to make [topical] jumps.’ (1992, Winter 71: 300)

In this quote, Sacks is clearly talking about stepwise topical movement, moving from topic X to the unrelated topic Z, via topic Y which is related to them both. In Extract 4.10 above, all the talk is related but differently focused. Despite this, Sacks understanding may still be relevant here.

Prior to this ‘answer’, one of Ben’s *possible* topically-aligned identities has been that of ‘user-of-drugs’ [see Extracts 4.1, 4.3 and 4.4]. Is the topical shift Ben engages in at 37-38 produced in response to the possible implicit hearing that he is now a ‘user-of-drugs’, part of the group ‘a-lot-of-people’, and that Ben wants to say explicitly that he is not? One way to achieve this would be to produce the statement “I’m not a user” *immediately* after his description of the members of the category ‘softer drugs’. By doing this *immediately* after his answer at 33-35 would reflexively position IR’s prior question at 31-32 as implying that IR’s question was ‘actually fishing’ for this information. Alternatively, Ben, by producing it immediately after 33-35, may appear as though he was ‘desperate’ to clear up the ‘obvious’ ambiguity, or even ‘covering up’ and thus ‘lying’. Instead, after a gap in talk, he searches for something to say, returns to his home-base, repeats something he said earlier and then proceeds to *firmly* establish his topically-aligned identity.

As Ben produces the disclaimer ‘I’m not a current user’ (‘I,= >I don’t actually do tha at the moment’ 37-38) he avoids both producing IR as ‘fishing-for-this-information’ and himself as ‘desperate-to-deny’. In this way, Ben works *against* the relevance of the standardised relational pair interrogator-suspect (SRP). I have previously noted, in the prior chapter, that interviewer’ work against the categorisation ‘interrogator’, in part, through the prefaces to their follow-up questions. Also interviewers’ ‘silence’ also works to deny this categorisation as they “do not press interviewees for responses”. This SRP, interrogator-suspect, is central to *both* speakers’ talk, as they both work *against* positioning themselves (and, therefore, reflexively the other speaker) within one of these categorisations.

Ben's pronoun choice is, also key in constructing an (ordinary) identity of 'ex-drug user' within a broader identity, that of, 'being-a-soft-drug-user-(which-a-lot-of-people-use)-at-the-height-of-activity-for-his-age-group'. We can therefore re-position this activity - of being a drug user – as an everyday, ordinary, normal, routine feature of people of his age. Also we can position this within the membership categorization device (MCD) 'stage of life', or more importantly the category *teenager*, as such this action 'using-drugs' is hearable as "something that you grow out of", and Ben tells us that he has moved on.

However we read this topical shading, the important issue is that it does occur. It is made possible through *both* other- and self-initiation. Not only does Ben offer an elaborated (and possibly a 'detailed' and 'comprehensive') answer but this answer is also 'topically rich'. By 'topically rich' I mean to emphasise the broad, yet, related range of topics or mentionables that Ben produces. Through this Ben gains the conversational space in which to construct his topically-aligned identity and IR gains a bunch of mentionables from which to form his next question (and the research report).

4.5.1 *Summary*

Throughout this extract, and the ones above, I have identified the ways that interviewees 'do elaboration' and therefore 'gain the space' to construct their own, and reflexively interviewers', identities. This identity work is achieved in and through producing themselves in relation to the topics of the talk as a member, ex-member, and non-member of various categories of people. This identity work is not static, but something that is constantly being established, maintained and negotiated over the course of the talk. Notably Ben worked to construct a locally appropriate 'morally adequate' identity in which the categorisation of 'drug-user' is no longer applicable. Even when the categorisation of 'drug-user' is applicable, Ben works to modify this category to that of 'soft-drug user (which a lot of people are) *and* who is now an ex-user *and* only used at the peak moment for people of his age group'. In this way Ben works against making any categorisation of 'drug-*addict*' relevant²¹.

²¹ For a detailed discussion of identity work in relation to the category 'drugs', including a discussion of the role of proterms, see Chapter Eight.

Importantly, *the 'facilitative interviewing' style enables interviewees to construct their identities, relatively 'freely'*. Some of the interviewees' talk is on-topic, whilst some of their other talk is connected, but differently related. I have only one example of an *interviewee* invoking a topically-disjunctive talk and this is only a brief breach in the 'normal flow' of the interview²². Interviewees massively orientate to the interaction *as an interview*, where 'radical' topic shifts by interviewees are not what interviewees do - "they should answer the questions".

Let us now consider what topics *interviewers* topicalise with their questions and the concomitant identity work they engage in, in relation to constructing their own identity and reflexively categorising the interviewees.

4.6 'Doing interviewer': The relationship between questions and the answers prior to them.

In the above extracts, I noted that topic shading is both self- and other-initiated within a single speaker's turn of talk. There is also another related 'method' - topic shading that is initiated *over* two speakers' turns of talk. Let us briefly view this in action by returning to Extract 4.10 analysed above.

²² Hal shifts both the topic of the talk 'his personal drug use' *and* his identity 'answerer/interviewee' to the topic of 'playing pool' and the identity 'questioner/inviter'.

Extract 4.A

- 1 IR: and how much do=you=use.
 2 (0.6)
 3 hal: depends.
 4 (0.3)
 5 IR: on what.
 6 (2.0)
 7 **B b b b B=**
 8 ((loud noise - sound of pool ball hitting table))
 9 hal: =how much money have you got?
 10 IR: °(, .)°
 11 (0.8)
 12 hal: >come on we've finished now.< so were play
 13 a game of pool,
 14 IR: five minutes yeah,
 15 (0.2)
 16 hal: ahh.
 17 IR: so um: (.) have you used anything else ° a part ((continues))

Note how, even as he does shift topic and identity, he invokes the interview as being completed (12), as a sanction for the 'non-interviewee' talk (and activities) that he is engaged in.

Extract 4.11 [also seen as Extract 4.10]

- 26 Ben: .hh I mean a lot of people have sort of experienced
27 the <s:ofter drugs:.>
28 (.)
29 Ben: °and things like that,° (.) so they do know a fair
30 bit about them.
31 IR: °>so when you say the s:ofter drugs° °°what does
32 that mean.<°°
33 Ben: Well= ↑herm. (2.0) °tch° I suppos:e. (1.0) if we-
34 >talkin about< drink and smoking as well.
35 (.) but er, (.) sort of cannabis:: lik:e.
36 (1.4)
37 Ben: there is:: a lot of people that actually do that. I,= >I
38 don't actually do tha at the moment=I did,< °.hh°
39 up to about a year ago I think- (.) that was the sort
40 of >peak,< for (.) our age group °an[d e v]eryone°
41 IR: [°(mm.)°]
42 Ben: (who/that) was into it.
43 IR: °and how often were you° °°using (it),°°=
44 Ben: =tch er:m (0.3) probably:, (1.1)
45 once or twice a wee:k.
46 (.)
47 Ben: which: (0.2) it was: (0.5) °yeah.° (is)
48 fairly, often.

Within this extract topic shading occurs both *within* and *over* the their turns of talk.

Topic shading *within* turns of talk occurs at 33-35 → 36 [other-initiated] and 37 → 38-40, 42 [self-initiated]. Topic shading also occurs *over* turns at talk. IR initiates a shift from the topic of Ben's prior talk 'people's-and-his-personal-use-of-softer-drugs' (37-40, 42) to the topic of 'the-frequency-of-the-use-of-softer-drugs' (43). This subtopical shift occurs *between* the speakers' turns of talk and not within Ben's talk. This highlights something I was trying to identify in the prior chapter: that interviewers both initiate the topical trajectory of the talk, but they are also responsive-to-interviewees in their initiations of the topical trajectory.

Ben's topic shift onto the topic of 'use-of-softer-drugs', was utilised by IR, as his question at 43 uses the topic of 'usage' as a resource for his question. Note the way that IR takes some theme from Ben's prior talk and topicalises this. At a gross level, this relationship, that interviewers' questions follow-up interviewees' prior talk, has been identified and explored in the prior chapter. I noted that the 'vast' majority of interviewers' questions follow-up the interviewees' prior talk. When they are *not* following-up the interviewees' prior talk they are hearably produced, or marked, as 'not following-up'. By this I mean, they are verbally attended to as different from the 'routine-practice-of-this-specific-interactional-milieu'. What I wish to understand at this point is the specific *topical* relationship between the 'answer' and the 'question-that-follows-this-answer' and the concomitant identity work.

What 'part' of the interviewees' answer do interviewers' topicalise with their follow-up questions? Do these follow-up questions, in talking up some topic of the interviewees' also do identity work? Let us return to Lez's 'collapse story' (see section 4.3.5) to a point, not analysed above, where Lez works to close the story. I want to focus on IR's question at 23-26 which asks Lez to clarify/elaborate/offer-more-information on his prior talk.

Extract 4.12

- 1 Lez: .hh I think those two both disagreed=a
2 bit, with us::,
3 (0.4)
4 Lez: as to [how to it should >(be ru-)<]
5 IR: [>disagree, with what you we<]re,
6 Lez: ↑yeah disagreed with us as a group,=>as
7 well .hh [what should we] run:.,=an- (.)
8 IR: [m m::: h m:::,]
9 Lez: so that we [kind=ov.] (0.4) .hhh ((sniff))
10 IR: [°mm:::°]
11 Lez: (0.5) we were kinda le::ft,=>we- I don't
12 know we jus kind=ov::,< (0.4) °°ho:::w?°°
13 .hhh I can't =a-= I jus can't explain any
14 more than that, but=
15 IR: =[no:::]
16 Lez: =[.hh w]e:-, (1.2) >>and the were.<<

17 I- I- dunno maybe we >av(hhhuh)ail<
 18 maybe we even took over and that's
 19 why:, .h (hh)Jill's. not involved with
 20 anything any more,=b[u t -]
 21 IR: [>>m]m: hm.<<
 22 (0.2)
 23 IR: what where the main difference between
 24 your ideas. as a group,=>about how how it
 25 should be run.< and Jill's, ideas.=do you
 26 think.
 27 (0.3)
 28 Lez: .hhh m:::- I think it was mainly about

We have seen the talk that led to this moment in section (4.3.5), where we focused on how Lez produced an elaborated answer through storytelling. We re-join the talk slightly later in the interaction. At 1-2 Lez notes that the two peer education trainers 'both **disagreed**=a bit, with' the group of trainee peer-educators. Lez begins to provide clarification (4) which IR in overlap also begins to request (5). Lez then goes onto provide clarification, the disagreement was with the 'group,' and what the sessions group should run. At 9 and 11-14 Lez works to *begin to* close the topic and his turn at talk. He returns to the topic that initially produced this sequence, that one of the peer-education trainers 'said don't come next week.' (Extract 4.6: 8-9) by producing a formulation of the gist of this: that they 'were kinda le::ft,'(11). He explicitly forecasts the closure of his topic-talk 'I jus can't explain any more than that, but-' as well as forecasting more (contrasting) talk. He then offers a further candidate and 'uncertain' solution as to why the trainer stopped the sessions (17-20), IR receipts this in overlap and then she produces a follow-up question.

The question asks what where the 'main difference'[s] (23) between the group and Jill. Specifically it topicalises Lez's talk at 6-7, where he notes that trainers '**disagreed**' on the running of the sessions²³. Interestingly, with her question at 23-26, IR does not use the word 'disagreed', rather this is re-formulated with a more 'neutralistic' descriptor. Lez is asked to 'think.' (26) about the 'main difference' (23) in the two sides 'ideas' (24). Note

also that, IR produces a relatively ‘open’ question, in that the topic of talk is not specifically targeted unlike her question at 5 (see also Extract 4.11: 43). IR produces an open and *neutralistic* question. The latched tag component, ‘=do you think.’, works to laminate a further layer of relevancies. It works to produce the question as ‘facilitatory’. IR is seeking Lez’s perspective, his ‘thoughts’ on the ‘difference of ideas’ and as such she works to produce herself as a facilitator, ‘merely’ asking (and helping) Lez to think through what happened²⁴.

With this example, what is important to note is that IR’s follow-up question (23-26) promotes further topical elaboration on *a topic that the interviewee first introduced*. The question topicalises the talk occurring in the prior answer and *not* the immediately prior TCU. Compare that to IR’s question (31) in the extract below, where IR topicalises a theme introduced in the immediately prior TCU:

Extract 4.13

- 1 hal: but lik:e (.) I=mean (1.2) Draw, and that
2 >I mean like a< (0.9) a- (.) real,ly big drug
3 is it,
4 (0.2)
5 IR: °I don’t kno[w°
6 hal: [>if you come to t’ink about it<
7 it’s: a class b drug ain’t draw=
8 IR: =mm. mm.
9 hal: yeah ain’t, it=
10 IR: =>it depends,<
11 (0.4)
12 IR: oils, a class a.
13 (1.2)
14 IR: °(in) other forms (of it)°
15 (2.4)
16 hal: °oh. yeah,° ((surprise))
17 IR: °°mm.°°
18 hal: ££that’s the stuff what you get out of
19 (0.2) ((rustling sound))

²³ This topic initially (and implicitly) emerged in Extract 4.9: 47-64, and is explicitly marked when Lez says ‘there where quite a few disagreement=’ (Extract 4.9: 69-70).

20 the tu:be in the Bong man,££
 21 (0.2)
 22 IR: °°mm.°°=
 23 hal: =££you stick=it=in a rizzla, it gives you a
 24 b[ad, buzz=££
 25 IR: [°mm.° =that's class a
 26 hal: £is=it?£
 27 IR: °mm.°
 28 hal: @i've taken, some (strange)@=
 29 IR: =hehehheh
 30 hal: °ah::,[that's good.°
 31 IR: [.h =hehe £that's good,
 32 >.hh< what's good about that,£
 33 (.)
 34 hal: >oh, it's just-,< (0.4) not many people have
 35 taken that have they, eh:,=£(maybe) I took a
 36 class a drug,£

At 1-3, Hal produces a candidate formulation that 'Draw, ((cannabis)) and that ' is not a 'a- (.) real,ly big drug' ²⁵. IR attends to this question with the neutralistic response '°I don't kno[w°' (5). Hal then pursues a response (Pomerantz 1984a) through re-formulating his prior categorical 'real,ly big drug' into the legal category 'class b drug'. IR acknowledges this (8) providing a neutral, but relatively weak, assessment. Hal then pursues an agreement (9) and IR then produces a dispreferred response (10-14), which marks (partial) disagreement with Hal's formulation that 'it's: a class b drug ain't draw'. Through his talk at 10-14, IR produces himself as a 'knowledgeable-expert' on the legal status of drugs. Hal, after a considerable delay (15) receipts this (16) and IR again produces a weak assessment (17) that both produces Hal's prior talk as an 'understanding check' and IR as 'knowledgeable'.

At 18-20 and 23-24 Hal produces the talk in, what I can only describe as, a 'tone of excited discovery'. He is describing in *detail* how cannabis oil can be made and

²⁴ See Chapter Seven for a more detailed analysis of questions that include the lexical formulation 'do you think'.

reflexively (implicitly) marking that he has had some of this: ‘it gives you a b[ad, buzz=’.

Although, at this moment, it is ambiguous as to whether the pronoun refers specifically to Hal his *voice quality* ‘marks’ that he possibly *has used oil*. IR then produces a (weak) acknowledgement token ‘°mm.°’ (25) and then upgrades this with the utterance ‘=that’s class a’ (25) which acts as a confirmation of Hal’s prior description. Hal then requests further confirmation (26) which IR again receipts as ‘correct’ through a weak assessment token (27).

At 28, Hal marks that he has ‘taken oil’ and this comes off through an ‘excited smiley voice’ quality. IR then responds to this through laughter (29) and Hal produces an assessment of his prior ‘realization’ (30), which comes off, through tone and volume, as an *aside*. At 30 Hal’s ‘°ah::,[that’s good.°’ is *either* marking that taking oil or taking a class A drug is ‘good’. IR then continues to laugh and repeats Hal’s prior assessment with a *smiley voice* quality (31) and then topicalises Hal’s assessment (32). This request for specification is *also* produced with a smiley voice. The whole of IR’s turn (31-32) comes off through a smiley/laughter filled voice, even though he shifts from ‘laughing *news-recipient*’ to ‘laughing-*questioner*’. Hal then answers IR’s question; note the slight delay (33), downgrading preface ‘>oh, it’s just-<’ and downgrade ‘(maybe)’ and the answer-component produced with a smiley voice ‘I took a class a drug,£’ (34-36). These features combined attend to (and make relevant) the *extra-ordinary* position that Hal is adopting in relation to taking a class A drug: that for him it is a good thing whereas the ‘ordinary consensus’, be it ‘legal’ or ‘everyday’ does not see it as good²⁶.

In this example unlike the prior extract, IR’s question at 32 clearly topicalises through the repeat of the utterance ‘good’, a topic that Hal produced in his *immediately prior* TCU. I want to note that up until his TCU at 29 IR had worked very hard to produce himself as a

²⁵ Note, the similarities between the categorizations ‘cannabis:: lik:e.’ (Extract 4.11: 35) and ‘Draw, and that’ (1). With both categorizations cannabis is produced as *the* maximal descriptor (Drew 1992) of the related categories ‘softer drugs’ (Extract 4.11) and (the euphemistic) ‘not really big drugs’ (Extract 4.13).

²⁶ And later in the talk (data not shown), after IR pursues further elaboration Hal’s makes this reading very relevant as he notes that he is ‘kidding, ... >jus:-< .hh (0.3) jus. (0.4) hh=having a laugh man, ain’t you got no sense of humour,’. After IR repeatedly pursues *further* elaboration, Hal goes on to: mark that this is an everyday activity ‘ah:, (.) I mean everyones taken <°oil. and that.°>’; to question whether it is really a class A drug; that he will not take it again and then ‘breaks the frame’ of the interview by saying ‘<you tell me> (.) I’ll ask you a few questions °in a minute°’. Hal does a lot of work to ‘explain’ his

'neutral' participant in the talk. At 5 he declined to offer an answer to Hal's question, through claiming insufficient knowledge (Beach and Metzinger 1997). He only produces (weak) assessment/acknowledgement tokens (8, 17, 22, 25, 27) and does not work to do '(strong) assessment or agreement with' Hal's talk. At 10-14 and 25 he produces himself as someone with expert knowledge of the drugs and legal classification and reflexively as a 'neutral' information-deliverer. At all these points IR is clearly '*working with*' and '*following up*' on Hal's talk, but as 'neutralistic facilitator'. Compare this to IR's actions at 29, 31-32: is it that at these moments, especially 29, that IR's veil of neutrality has dropped?

At 29, IR's laughter comes off as a response to Hal's verbally stylised – excited/smiley voiced - description of his behaviour. He is attending to Hal's prior response as chuckleable-talk, in so doing he is marking a distance from the identity 'interrogator' and its concomitant identity 'suspect'. At 31, in response to Hal's assessment IR continues to laugh and, as noted above, goes onto repeat the prior talk and produce a follow-up question all in and through a *smiley voice*. This works to produce IR as the type-of-person who does *not* sit in judgement of what Hal says, but is *trying to understand* Hal's point of view. In this way, throughout this extract we can see that IR is working to produce himself as 'merely a *neutral* (and hence *non-judgmental/inquisitorial*) participant' in the talk²⁷.

The follow-up question in the above example explicitly directs Hal's response along a single topical trajectory, unlike the Extract 4.12 where the trajectory was more 'open'. Equally in this example, IR is collaborating to promote the subtopical trajectory of the talk (cannabis oil) that he *initiated* in and through his topic shading at 10-14. Hal then topic-shaded again at 30, to the topic 'taking-cannabis-oil-is-good', which I again want to note is produced by Hal, through volume and tone, as an 'aside'. Earlier, I introduced the idea that topic-shading is both self- and other-initiated and noted that these phenomena are occurring *within* interviewees' turns of talk. Extracts 4.4, 4.5, 4.10 and 4.13 demonstrate that topic-shading, when initiated within interviewees' turns, *can then*

initial comment at 29 and in so doing draws on (and reflexively construct) various 'locally appropriate morally adequate reasons'.

be used as a resource by interviewers to promote further talk. In this example, IR's question (32) is *responsive to* Hal's topic-shading and makes relevant or accountable a piece of talk that was 'just' produced as an 'aside'. At other points in the talk (10-14), IR *directly initiated* the topic-shading. By '*directly initiates*' I mean to emphasise the difference between interviewers' silence and response tokens at TRPs, which can *indirectly* alter the trajectory of the talk, and interviewers taking a turn of talk which *directly* alters the trajectory of the talk. Let me offer an example of this in action, where the interviewer's question promotes a topical-shift.

Extract 4.14

- 1 IR: [>so can you tell me about<] kinda,
 2 how you did it, °an[d (.) where you did it.]°
 3 Ben: [.h h h w e l l ,]
 4 (.) hherm: (0.3) .hh it was sort of:: ((wavey voice))
 5 we started off by:, (.) <°lik:e erm::°> (0.5) getting it
 6 through people=and, we-, upto yeah,=about a
 7 year ago. (0.2) nobody had really experien°ced it
 8 that much.°=.hh andt er:: (0.9) tch so everyone
 9 was curious about it, (.) >to begin with< nobody
 10 really wanted to try it °but then they did =and°
 11 (.) we'd start=off. (0.3) li(h)ke er:m. (1.3) well
 12 most of the time we were in, (.) like parks: @around
 13 our ar(h)ea:@ ((strained voice)) =sor-=of
 14 (0.2) in little. (.) >hiding places. an bush<es, and
 15 things:=°it was jus,t° .h roll a few spliffs: and
 16 °everything.° and have that, >.h< but er,
 17 (0.4) as it sort of progress::ed:. (0.7) >it sort
 18 of.< (0.4) peoples::,=houses: when their parents
 19 weren't the°re and everything.°=.h erm, (0.3) we
 20 tried different wa:ys:.=
 21 IR: =mm:hm.
 22 (0.2)
 23 Ben: >dunno,< it was more experiment:ind.
 24 (0.3)

²⁷ Also, as was noted in the prior chapter, IR clearly works to establish a *detailed and comprehensive* answer.

- 25 IR: so where did that stop, then.
- 26 Ben: .hh er::m (1.9) °eherm° (0.7) >it must have bin<
 27 last sum:mer, and:, (.) @I think it was, (.) discovering

IR's question (25) clearly topic-shades. Prior to this question Ben has offered his story on his and his peers use of cannabis. Ben offered up a story told through multiple temporal narrative structures ('we started off by ... upto yeah,=about a year ago ... >to begin with< ... °but then they ... we'd start=off ... as it sort of progress::ed:'). After minimal uptake from IR, Ben (23) produces an upshot formulation of his prior talk, a gloss of the main theme of the story which *he* would like to emphasise. The formulation works to sum up the talk, pointing to the 'implicit' themes, and also works to represent an 'end' to the story. IR's question at 25 introduces another aspect of the topic: where did Ben's 'experiment' stop.

IR's question seeks to promote more talk on this topic. His question asks for the (temporal) focus of Ben's talk to be shifted yet the topic remains closely related. An interviewer is again produced as '*seeking a detailed and comprehensive response from the interviewee*'.

Once again, an interviewer produces himself as a neutral participant, someone who is '*working with*' the interviewee's talk, and is therefore not 'wholly responsible' for the topic of the question. This identity is further compounded through the question preface 'so'. As noted in the prior chapter, the 'so'-preface can work to say 'I'm not responsible for introducing this topic, in fact you are'. This pragmatic optional utterance works to *demonstrate* and *highlight* for Ben that IR is both following Ben's talk and working with Ben's talk²⁸.

4.6.1 Summary

Clearly this work on interviewers' questions in relation to interviewees' talk needs a more thorough analysis. All the chapters that follow attend to this feature, although they do not always make this a central focus of the analysis. However, I want to note that the

²⁸ This identity work, along with the work on question prefaces, is discussed in detail Chapters Five, Six and Seven.

data analysed so far shows that interviewers work *topically* with interviewees. Previously, I have shown that interviewers' questions routinely follow-up interviewees' talk and are sometimes hearably produced as following-up interviewees' talk (through pragmatic question prefaces). I can now say that they are *topically* contingent in the following ways:

A: they work to promote a topic that interviewees have been talking on.

In this way, they seek to promote *directly* referentially continuous talk.

B: they work to promote a topic that is absent from the interviewees' talk but on a closely related topic. In this way they seek to promote referentially continuous *but differently focused* talk.

Through the above gloss, we might assume that the majority of topical 'control', or the direction of the topical trajectory of the talk, seems to lie with the interviewees as the interviewers are *responding to* the interviewees talk²⁹. This would be, in part, a misleading conclusion. A silence in the work above is that I have not highlighted enough how interviewers choose only *some part* of the interviewees' talk to topicalise. The issue of *what* part may be important. However, it is shown above that *what* is made the topical focus of the interviewers' questions (and *when* they are asked) is important for the identity work of the speakers. The interviewers hearably produces themselves - through their talk, response tokens and non-uptake of talk at TRPs - as '*allowing interviewees a space to talk*', '*following up*' and '*working with*' topics that interviewees have introduced. In this way, interviewers are not only 'doing facilitative interviewing' through their non-uptake at TRP, but they are locally *hearably* producing themselves as '*neutralistic facilitative (non-judgmental/inquisitorial) interviewers*' through their talk. And this identity is in contrast to the identity 'interrogator' and the reflexive categorization of interviewees as 'suspects'.

4.7 Conclusion

As noted in Chapter Two, Geoffrey Baruch, following Webb and Stimson (1976), shows us that in qualitative interviews interviewees:

'attend to the issue of their appearance as moral persons, competent members and adequate performers' (Baruch 1981: 276).

For him, interview talk, at certain moments, places *moral demands* on speakers. This ‘pressure’ seems to exerting its force in the interview talk analysed above.

We have observed interviewees working to ‘appear as moral persons’ in relation to the topic of talk, in short, borrowing a term from Sacks (1984), ‘doing being ordinary’. I would also suggest, and in part Baruch also demonstrates this, that qualitative interview talk places demands on *interviewers*. Interviewers have to appear ‘as moral persons’ as they must respond to and work with the interviewees’ talk. Interviewers also have to produce themselves as ‘moral *and neutral* persons’³⁰. This may be especially difficult when the topic of the talk is produced as ‘delicate’. As Converse and Schuman succinctly put it, albeit in reference to standardized interviews,

‘The interviewer is charged with the responsibility of conducting *inquiry* in something in the manner of a *conversation*. The product of the encounter is supposed to be good “hard” data – the stuff of codes and numbers and computer analysis. The process is supposed to be at least somewhat “soft” – the stuff of a pleasant conversation’
(1974: 22) [cited in Suchman and Jordon 1990]

For interviewers, the demands of the talk are also centred around issues of appearing engaged, responsive and interested without pressing ‘too hard’, *without transforming the interview into an interrogation*.

Interviewers clearly try hard to work-against the identity ‘interrogator’ and, as we shall see in the next three chapters, they move towards establishing themselves within the identity ‘neutral facilitator’. Interviewers do ‘facilitative interviewing’. In reference to interviewees’ talk, we saw how they are ‘given’ the space - the ‘freedom’ - to control the topical trajectory of their talk. Yet this trajectory is always a product of negotiation, either with the interviewers’ silence, response tokens or follow-up questions. The interviewees’ ‘freedom’ is always temporary, *yet it allows them to do a lot of work*. It allows interviewees to construct a relatively ‘rich’ and ‘textured’ *identity* in relation to the topic of the talk in and through producing a ‘rich’ and ‘textured’ *response*. And it is a

²⁹ Note that this refers to the talk *between* the topic-shifting questions. See the previous chapter for a definition of these.

³⁰ And sometimes, as Silverman (1997: 78-84) has shown in the ‘interviewing stage’ in HIV counselling, ‘interviewers’ do also locally produce themselves as ‘moral and *partisan*’.

response that is rich (read ‘detailed’) and textured (read ‘comprehensive’) that interviewers, and the research projects that the interviews are undertaken for, seek.

It seems important that interviewees *do* answer the questions and that they *do not* engage in (radical) topic-shifting. In this way, they are attending to the local contingencies of the talk, the local relevancies of the specific interview context. It is for interviewers to invoke ‘radical’ topic-shifts and interestingly, as we saw in section 3.2, these do not seem to be achieved through a stepwise movement. Interviewers are ‘alone’ in introducing ‘fresh topics’ and they ‘just’ briefly mark them as such: as different from the prior talk in and through prefacing work. This reflexively produces this conversational environment as having its ‘own rules or rituals’.

Some have called interviews ‘conversations with a purpose’ (Burgess 1984) but they are this and so much more. They *do have* a purpose and *this is* made conversational but this does not tell us the whole story. Hopefully the above work in this and the prior chapter has shown that, an awareness of the locally accomplished nature of a qualitative interview is both a viable and a worthwhile procedure. I suggest that a focus on identity work and sequence, turn-taking and topic organization can provide an analytic perspective which highlights some of the important organizational practices of (semi)open-ended interview talk.

This work shows that topics-of-talk are generated and negotiated in and through *interaction*. In the majority of work that uses qualitative interview data, this sense of interaction, that these ‘topics’ were produced in negotiation with an interviewer, is often lost, or relegated to a methodological note. Notably, with few exceptions (see especially Baker 1984, 1997, Hester and Francis 1994, Mazeland and ten Have 1996/8, Watson and Weinberg 1982, Widdicombe and Wooffitt 1995), *only* interviewees talk is taken as ‘the data’ and any awareness of the interviewers work in ‘inciting-these-specific-topics’ is routinely lost along with the (moral) identity work of the speakers. The next part of the thesis is concerned to document in detail interviewers’ work.

I wish to raise a final, theoretical, issue that this chapter makes relevant: the inter-relationship of sequential and categorical matters. This issue addresses the wider

concerns of the place of MCA within CA as whole and specifically the study of ‘quasi-institutional talk’.

4.8 Schegloff’s promiscuity

In his introduction/memoir to Sacks’ *Lectures on Conversation*, Schegloff makes the following comment:

‘In my view, Sacks abandoned the use of ‘category-bound activities’ because of an incipient ‘promiscuous’ use of them, i.e., an unelaborated invocation of some vernacularly based assertion (i.e., that some activity is bound to some category) as an element of an account on the investigator’s authority, without deriving from it any analytic pay-off other than the claimed account for the data which motivated its introduction in the first place’ (1992a : xlii)

For Schegloff the ‘promiscuity’ inherent in using the ‘device’ category-bound activity (CBA) is that it belongs to a typology of work that is centred on highlighting *analysts’ concerns*. As he says prior to the above quote:

‘... Sacks sometimes asserts a claimed category-bound activity without carrying through a test or deriving a further finding ... but there can be little doubt that the principle is basic - commonsense knowledge cannot properly be invoked as itself providing an account, rather than providing the elements of something to be accounted for.’ (1992a : xlii)

For Schegloff, we need to centre our analysis on the *co-participants concerns*. For me, membership category work that focuses on talk-in-interaction should *always* be centred on, to use Schegloff’s words, ‘the co-participants understanding as [the] initial point of departure’ (ibid.: xliii). As the work of this and the prior chapter has sought to demonstrate, highlighting that some activity/experience/knowledge/motive/rights and responsibilities is bound to some category is far from a ‘promiscuous’ activity, in fact, participants routinely do it themselves³¹.

My work in this and the prior chapter has drawn on *both* CA and MCA. Rather than solely relying on the ‘sequential’ insights of CA to establish the identity work of the co-

³¹ See, for example Extract 4.4. At 26-27, Ben produces the category ‘people-who-have-experienced-softer-drugs’. At 29-30 he introduces the CBA ‘knowledge-of-softer-drugs’. In a “common sense” reading we may want to say that ‘experience *must lead to* knowledge’. Schegloff’s point is that from the category (26-27) a large variety of CBAs are made *possible*, this could include the opposite CBA ‘a lack of knowledge of softer drugs’ as the experience could have only been ‘fleeting’. Schegloff is alluding to the way that we must orientate to the how the *speakers* elaborate category work.

participants I have used the ‘categorical’ insights of membership category work *to aid in* demonstrating the identity work of the speakers. Watson (1997b) has noted that much ‘traditional’ CA implicitly relies on, or relegates to footnotes, the category-work of participants. He goes on to argue for a ‘policy respecifying the analysis of talk’ (ibid.: 39). This involves an analysis that demonstrates and attends to how categorical *and* sequential work are intimately bound.

I have not followed this path in order to ‘respecify’ CAs gaze. Rather this approach is used because it is very helpful *in analysing these specific quasi-institutional interactions*. It has aided me in following Sacks’ path, to ‘[j]ust try to come to terms with how it is that the thing comes off’ (1992, Fall 64: 11). It has also aided me in attending to Schegloff’s (1987, 1991, 1992b, 1997, 1998, 1999a and b) appeals to *demonstrate context*, in this case to begin to demonstrate that the talk is ‘(semi-)open-ended interview talk’. Schegloff argues that it is not enough to just label *a priori* a piece of talk as being “this or that” in character.

‘For the events of human conduct, we are dealing with sentient beings who themselves orient to their context under some formulation or formulations; who grasp their own conduct and that of others under the jurisdictions of some relevancies and not others; who orient to some of the identities they separately and collectively embody and, at any given moment, not others. And because it is the orientations, meanings, interpretations, understanding, etc. of the *participants* in some sociocultural event on which the course of the event is predicated - and especially if it is constructed interactionally over time, it is *those* characterizations which are privileged in the *constitution of socio-interactional reality*, and therefore have a prima facie claim to being privileged in efforts to *understand it*.’ [Authors emphasis] (1997: 166-167).

Analytic work should, for *at least* the jumping off point, privilege the participants’ relevancies³².

³² David Silverman (personal communication) asked the following questions: Can analysis then go beyond these relevancies? If so, under what constraints? This is a difficult question but I *may* answer it like this. Consider this extract of talk:

- A: I’m going out.
B: okay
A: ((whilst leaving the room))
Your manning the phone or personning it
I don’t know what you do these days
((talk ends))

Fundamentally, Schegloff's notion of promiscuity is not only concerned with CBAs. For him, promiscuity is adopting as the *initial* frame of 'analytic relevance' a pre-determined given, that this talk *must be* moral, *must be* asymmetrical, *must be* interview talk. Rather, he is promoting an analytic sensitivity (or sensibility) centred on participants concerns. My work with categories/identities, not to mention sequence, structural, topic and turn-taking concerns, is firmly grounded in 'what *they* demonstrably orient to as relevant (as best [I] can establish it, to be sure)' [Authors emphasis] (Schegloff 1999b: 579). And this is far from a promiscuous activity.

I would attend to this as 'political-correctness-in-action' (or possibly 'irony-in-action'). The self-repair of 'manning' to 'personning' demonstrates how speakers locally attend to politically correct discourse. This could lead to a discussion of how people come to embody discourses and may not solely focus on 'politically correct discourse'. The point is this discussion would have been rooted, at least initially in participants relevancies.

Now, let me offer you some (selective) background information on A and B. A is B's mother. B is a male student of sociology. Does my initial reading change if I offer this context of the talk? Is gender, education (or cultural capital), age or familial ties important? It is tempting to infer that this talk is centred on at least some of these issues, especially if we consider the work of 'you' in A's final utterance; does this refer to 'you = everyone' or is this directed at B [you = just B, you = the younger generation, you = students, you = the politically correct ...]. I believe this background information is not essential to understanding the talk and by incorporating this would produce results that may not be relevant to the speakers in this specific interactional moment. It *may be* that conversations that A and B have had in the past has led to A producing this talk and that it is 'highly recipient designed', or that B is an avid listener of 'Women's Hour'... . What is important is that this repair does occur and that it is self-produced and equally that it shows us how speakers 'self-monitor' their talk with respect to 'broader' socio-cultural contingencies/networks.

PART THREE - DOING BEING AN INTERVIEWER

Good qualitative interviewing is hard, creative work. It is a much more complex and exhausting task to plan and carry out a qualitative interview than, for example, to develop and use a structured questionnaire for asking a set of predetermined questions. In that sense the informal and conversational style of this form of interviewing belies a much more rigorous set of activities.

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Interviewers have to attend to (among other things) the here-and-now interactional and interview contexts as well as the broader contexts of the research project and the interview methods literature. This part of the thesis documents how interviewers orientate to this range of (competing) contexts. Chapter Five focuses on question-prefacing in general and documents how this can be a way for interviewers to produce themselves as facilitative interviewers. Chapter Six outlines various ways so-prefaced questions can work to produce interviewers as neutralistic and facilitative questioners. In Chapter Seven, we shift to a focus on the work embedded in interviewers' questions and at question-endings. Taken together, these methods document some of the practical solutions interviewers routinely employ in order to produce themselves as "the sort of persons they are supposed to be" - qualitative interviewers.

Question prefacing

5.1 Introduction

Compare the interview transcripts and analysis in earlier chapters with some ‘typical’ guidelines on interviewing¹:

‘[T]he interviewer starts with the most general possible question and hopes that this will be sufficient to enable the respondent to talk about the subject. If the respondent has difficulty ... then the interviewers can move to the prompt which is more specific. Hopefully this will be enough to get the participant talking. ... It is likely that a successful interview will include questions and answers at both general and specific levels and will move between the two fairly seamlessly.’

(Smith 1995: 15)

I should note Smith’s ‘pointers’ and ‘tips’ (ibid. 13, 17) are written in connection to ‘semi-structured’ interviewing but they equally hold for qualitative interviews in this data-set. Similarly, Mason (1996) advocates that qualitative interviewers’ ‘social task is to orchestrate an interaction which moves easily and painlessly between topics and questions’ (45).

We saw how interviewers produced both topic-shifting and follow-up questions, documenting Smith’s ‘general’ and ‘specific’ typology of questions and Mason’s ‘easy’ and ‘painless’ movement *in-and-as-lived-practice*. In Chapter Three, I highlighted how the combination of producing a topic-shifting question and following-up the interviewees’ answers with questions is *the* central way in which (semi-)open-ended interviews come off. Put simply, the topic-shifting questions introduce topics of talk on which the interviewer would like the interviewee to focus. The follow-up questions then provide the possibility of gaining *very detailed and comprehensive talk* on those specific topics. They constantly seek ‘to unpack’ the prior talk and allow a multiple number of issues, or ‘mentionables’, that the interviewee raises to be explored and/or followed up.

The methodological rationale of, or, the ‘ideal about’, qualitative interviews - that they allow a rich, deep and textured picture - is locally produced in and through the ‘simple’

¹ For other examples, see Ackroyd and Hughes (1992), Berg (1998), Burgess (1984).

method of producing topic-initiating and follow-up questions. Those large number of ‘mentionables’ produced through this method then become *resources* for the research project. As I noted in Chapter Four, what often remains silent is that those ‘mentionables’ are produced and negotiated *in and through* interaction. For Smith (1995) this is a specific style of interaction:

‘Good interview technique therefore involves *a gentle nudge* from the interviewer rather than being too explicit. ... The interviewer’s role in a semi-structured interview is to *facilitate and guide*, rather than dictate exactly what will happen during the encounter’ [my emphasis] (ibid. 16)

For Mason (1996) the interviewer should ‘*help the flow* of the interview interaction - the “conversation with a purpose” - rather than impede it.’ [my emphasis] (45). And we saw how interviewers locally produced these methodological prescriptions: ‘allowing interviewees a space to talk’, ‘following up’ and ‘working with’ topics that interviewees have introduced.

The first two empirical chapters began to document how interviewers can work to produce themselves as both *facilitative* and *neutralistic* interviewers, not only in and through their follow-up questions, but explicitly through the prefaces to their questions as well as through response tokens and silence at TRPs.

The focus in this chapter, and the two that follow, will shift to outline some of the methods interviewers use to *mark explicitly that their talk is to be heard and understood as neutralistic and/or facilitatory*. These methods include producing questions without preferred responses, question prefaces, specific lexical choices and tag-components. This chapter will outline the work of question-prefacing by focusing on a range of pragmatic prefaces that interviewers routinely produce. One of the outcomes of the analysis, is that we can begin to see how, in and through their lived practice, interviewers orientate to and (re)produce *ideals about* qualitative interview practice(s)².

² I should note, that these are not the ‘ideals’ about qualitative interviewing as advocated by various ‘feminist’ (e.g. Oakley 1981, Stanley and Wise 1983) and ‘emotionalist’ (Douglas’s 1985, Ellis 1991) methodological discussions. They argue for a facilitative, co-operative and engaged (*i.e. non-neutral*) relationship between interviewer and interviewee.

5.1.1 *Organization of the chapter*

Initially, I will return to an issue I raised in Chapter Three - that interviewers routinely preface their follow-up questions with optional, or pragmatic, utterances. Through a comparison between a prefaced and a non-prefaced follow-up question, I show how this pragmatic, or optional, prefacing work can explicitly inform the interviewee 'how to read what they are being told' (Sacks 1992, Spring 1970, 7: 274). I call such recipient design work, *contextual information work*. Drawing on an analysis that Sacks makes of 'laughter-prefaced talk' I show that providing contextual information is a generic feature of talk-in-interaction. I then document how this generic feature is used in this context for specific identity work. Question-prefacing is one method interviewers draw on, not only to mark explicitly how the 'action of their question' is to be understood and attended to, but also to mark explicitly their identity in relation to the talk.

I analyse the question-prefaces '*and*' and '*can you*' to show the variety of contextual information work that they can do. I show how such prefacing work downgrades the questions being heard as a product of a more 'adversarial, interrogational or bureaucratic agenda' and explicitly upgrades the questions as a product of a more *facilitatory agenda*. I will then offer a deviant case in which the interviewer hearably produces the question as emerging from a 'bureaucratic-agenda'. This deviant case documents how one of the interviewer's central tasks is to *avoid* the interview becoming adversarial or interrogational. In Chapter Six, I focus on the most used preface, '*so*', and explore in detail some of the 'work' that just one preface can do in different sequential environments. Chapter Seven then looks at the contextual information work embedded in questioning-TCU and found at TCU-endings.

5.2 **An example of the work of question-prefacing**

As I noted in Chapters Three and Four, follow-up questions *implicitly* demonstrate that the interviewer is 'listening closely', 'working with the interviewee's talk' and 'trying to understand'. However, in and through their question-prefaces, interviewers routinely *hearably produce* or *mark explicitly* this feature of their follow-up questions³. Heritage and Sefi (1992) offer us a way to begin to understand this difference. They make

³ See Section 3.2.4, for an initial discussion of this work.

reference to ‘marked’ and ‘unmarked acknowledgement tokens’ in advice sequences. Marked acknowledgement is a response to advice ‘in ways that acknowledge its character as advice and informativeness’ (ibid. 391). Unmarked acknowledgement is a response to advice ‘in ways that avoid acknowledging it as informative and that avoid overtly accepting it’ (391 ibid.). To develop this idea in this context, the notion of a ‘marked’, or hearably produced, feature of talk is that *its character is explicitly acknowledged* whereas with an ‘unmarked’ feature of talk *its character is not overtly displayed or attended to*.⁴

Let us view two extracts of talk that demonstrate the contrast between marked and unmarked follow-up questions:

Extract 5.1

- 1 dan: .h the only time we would go to a member
 2 of staff is, (0.5) <is if: they> said something
 3 that- (0.4) was er:m, (infringing) on child
 4 protection areas.
 5 IR: so what kind of thing might that be, ←
 6 dan: well, to use an extreme example >one I use
 7 in lesson=if your parents are tying you dow<n::

Extract 5.2

- 1 Carl: that=actually, (.) put me off.
 2 using drugs, more.
 3 I think.
 4 IR: °how did it do that,° ←
 5 (0.9)
 6 Carl: >simply because there’s< more infor:mation,
 7 about it, it has more effects:.
 8 (2.6)
 9 IR: can I=jus-, kinda=of- (.) reflect back to you

⁴ As Anssi Peräkylä (personal communication) noted, within linguistics a related, although differently focused, distinction between unmarked and marked categories of language is used. I am not drawing specifically on that literature. See Levinson (1983: 333) for a brief discussion of the linguistic concept of ‘markedness’.

In both the extracts, the questioner produces a follow-up question (arrowed), a question that works to re-open and re-direct the (topical) activity of the talk. The question in Extract 5.1 is a marked follow-up question, in Extract 5.2 it is unmarked. In Extract 5.1, the question could have been produced, and been understandable as a follow-up question, without the ‘so’ utterance. The ‘so’ preface is optional or pragmatic.

The ‘so’ prospectively marks for the other speaker the *character of the question to follow it*. By this I mean the ‘so’ works to say ‘the-talk-that-follows-is-connected-to-something-prior’. The preface marks explicitly the character of the talk that follows it is ‘follow-up talk’, that the question is following-up the prior talk. Compare this to the question in Extract 5.2. Clearly both questions are following up the prior talk, although one *is marked as such* with the optional preface ‘so’.

With both IRs’ questions the speakers are following-up the prior talk. This follow-up feature of the question is implicit in IR’s question in Extract 5.2. By implicit, I do not mean to say that the question’s follow-up feature is somehow ‘hidden’ or needs to be searched for by the other speaker, rather, I mean that its character *as a* follow-up question is not *overtly* displayed. In IR’s question in Extract 5.1, this follow-up feature is *explicitly* done, the so-preface marks, or hearably produces, the talk after it as follow-up talk. With the so-preface, IR *explicitly* demonstrates to the other speaker that the topic of the question is the upshot of their prior answer. In this way, the topic of the question is not solely produced as the ‘responsibility’ of the questioner as he marks that he is ‘merely’ following what the answerer has said.

Anssi Peräkylä (personal communication) notes that features *other than prefacing* work produce questions as ‘questions-promoting-follow-up-talk’. For example, in both cases the utterance ‘that’ works to produce the questions as follow-up questions. I am not trying to claim that a so-preface works alone in, or is central in, producing a question as a follow-up question. I am highlighting that working to display/forecast/hearably produce/mark explicitly the question for what it is, *laminates a further set of*

interactional relevancies onto the question⁵. As I note below, the work that prefacing can do ‘itself’ is intimately related to other features of the turn including: lexical choice, turn design and sequence organization.

The difference between marked and unmarked questions is subtle. Marked questions can *work to display the question for what it is*. Sacks shows how story-prefaces do very similar work:

‘There are ways to begin [a story], which inform a hearer - *and intendedly inform a hearer* - how to listen so as to find when it will have ended, in such a way that when it will have ended they can signal that they see it has ended, in a way that is related to the way it began. ... The beginning clues you into *what sort of sort of things you should watch for* so as to recognise the end, and also *what sort of thing you should announce* having recognised the end ’ [My emphasis]

(Sacks 1992, Spring 1968, April 24; 766)

In this way, be it a story-preface, a ‘pre-beginning’ (ibid.), or a question-preface, the preface works to *explicitly (or intendedly) inform the hearer as to how their talk that follows is to be heard*.

Now with the question-preface ‘so’ in Extract 5.1, we find some work done by just one word. And Sacks has also noted that ‘single’ pre-positioned words can do a lot of work. I now want to turn to his discussion of this issue to highlight the ways that prefacing not only informs the hearer about the talk that follows, and how to respond, but is also central to *constructing the speakers identity in relation to the talk*.

5.3 Prefacing as a means to explicitly produce ‘conversational responsibilities and identities’

I will focus in detail on one of Sacks’ analyses of the positioning of laughter in talk. His discussion of this highlights some of the generic work prefacing can do for speakers, namely that prefaces can:

⁵ The most explicit version of this type of work could be a preface that went something like “**To follow-up on what you’ve just said, what kind of things might that be?**”.

- * 'fix', 'guide' or 'specify' the meaning of the talk that follows them.
- * 'forecast' how the talk that follows is to be responded to.
- * 'construct' specific identities.

Below is an extended extract taken from Sacks' (1992) work. The talk begins where Agnes is asking about a house that Portia recently visited.

' Agnes: I bet it's a dream, with the swimming pool enclosed huh?

Portia: Oh God, we hehh! we swam in the nude Sunday night until
about two o'clock

Now what I take it that "hehh!" is doing, and what I take it a bunch of "hehh"s are doing is something like this: Something is about to be reported which the teller takes it that the hearer should know what the teller's attitude towards it is. The kind of event being reported could be specifically equivocal as to whether it is something awful, embarrassing, serious, non-serious, etc. And there are ways for the teller to let the recipient know which the teller thinks it is, so as to guide the recipient in figuring out things about the teller's participation. So, for example, in the report about swimming in the nude, by using "hehh!" before reporting it she's saying "I took it lightly." Where it could be read as a kind of obscene event, it is rather to be treated as something light-hearted. It was funny. Where it perhaps could be important for the teller to have the recipient know or believe that the teller thought it was that sort of thing.' (Spring 1970, 7: 275)

The talk and the analysis that follows clearly shows us how just a single utterance placed in a pre-positioned slot does a lot of work for *both* speakers.

Now in this sequence of talk Portia is producing a report. Note how Sacks tells us that the event reported could be 'specifically equivocal' and that Portia works to 'guide' Agnes as to how to hear what she thought about it. So in this way, the 'hehh!' does a lot of work for Portia:

- * It '*fixes*' or '*guides*' how the report is to be heard, as a 'report-of-something-funny-and-not-as-a-report-of-something-obscene-or-embarrassing-or-serious-etc.'. In this way it produces the talk that follows *as a specific kind of talk*. It also produces her talk as a 'tellable-story'.

* In *forecasting* that the talk that follows is to be heard as chuckleable-talk it makes relevant that the preferred response *is to attend to it as* chuckleable-talk. Having recognised that the talk has finished, the preference is that Agnes should then produce something hearable as ‘doing chuckleability’⁶.

* In forecasting the talk as ‘chuckleable-talk’ Portia has constructed a *specific* topically-aligned identity in relation to the talk that follows. She has produced herself as ‘someone-who-finds-swimming-in-the-nude-as-unproblematic’⁷. The preface works to *explicitly* deny the relevance of other possible topically-aligned identities/categorisations.

And what makes this action of prefacing quite interesting is its ‘simplicity’ or *economy*⁸, in this case it was it but a single laughter token. Also note the inter-penetration of sequential *and* identity work that the preface invokes.

Speakers can mark their talk ‘to be heard in a specific way’ through many different methods which are *generic* to talk-in-interaction, these include:

* Speed, pitch and tonal qualities. For examples of this see the work on reported speech (Buttny 1997, 1998, Holt 1996, 2000)

* Sequence organization. For examples see Schegloff’s (1980) on pre-sequences and Sacks’ (1992, Winter 69, Lecture 8: 126-136) work on a tag-component.

⁶ The preface makes relevant specific identities e.g. chuckleable-story-teller, chuckleable-story-recipient with related CBA’s (funny-story, laughter).

⁷ She produces this as unproblematic *in reference to this specific speaker at this specific moment*, it is not produced as unproblematic per se.

⁸ Sacks makes reference to ‘the economy rule’ (1992 Spring 1966, 1(R): 246) and the ‘economy’ of the turn-taking system (Sacks et al. 1974: 696). I am using this concept in a ‘related-but-less-specific-way’ than either of Sacks understandings. I am using the metaphor ‘economy’ to outline the large amount of ‘work’ that can come off in and through a very ‘simple’ action.

* Turn design. For examples of this in relation to lexical choice see the work on news interviews by Clayman (1988), Myers (2000) and Roth (1998) and in relation to turn design itself in news interviews see Raymond (2000).

In relation to this work, by marking your talk, through *a preface* [a pre-positioned utterance], you are providing, following Sacks, what can be glossed as *contextual information*.

‘I think there are some reasons why these kind of context information designed for the listener are used, and that is, to keep them attentive to how to read what they’re being told.’ (1992, Spring 1970: 274) (cf. Buttny 1998)

Prefaces can produce ‘contextual information’ that *forecasts* the talk that follows it is a *specific kind of talk*, *forecasts* how the talk is to be responded to and, through both factors, *constructs specific identities* in relation to the talk.

With the points raised above in mind, I will now go onto discuss the specific work that different prefaces to questions can do. I am initially going to focus on the work of *can you*-prefaces to topic-initiating and follow-up questions. I will then look at *and*-prefaced questions, drawing on Heritage and Sorjonen’s (1994) work on *and*-prefacing of topically disjunctive questions. I will then focus on a deviant case which outlines one of the central tasks of interviewers.

With all the pragmatic, optional, prefacing work, I will highlight how they construct the questioners as *specific-types-of-interviewers*. As noted above, Chapter Six that follows, will focus in detail on the most frequently used preface, the *so*-preface.

5.4 Can you-prefaces

A ‘can you’-preface, is used prior to both topic-initiating and follow-up questions and does very similar work irrespective of the type-of-question that follows it. Chiefly, they forecast the talk that follows it is to be heard as *an invitation to produce an account*.

The interviewers produce themselves as interviewers who are ‘merely’ inviting interviewees to talk on a specific topic, rather than directing the talk.

5.4.1 *Can you-prefaces to topic-shifting questions*

Let us view two examples of this preface prior to a topic-shifting question.

Extract 5.3

- 1 IR: >[is th]at righ[t ,]<
2 emma: [lo]we- sixth.
3 IR: >.hh ?o:kay.< erm. (0.3) **can- you** tell me
4 ?whe:::n, you:, first,=hear:d. about the °peer
5 education project.°
6 (.)
7 emma: °.hhh° (0.2) oo::? @ it must have bin. (0.3)
8 in the end of year eleven. >because< (.)
9 mis:ter bur:ser said >something< in assembly.

Extract 5.4

- 1 IR: oh that's good,
2 fran: °ye[a::h.]°
3 IR: °[that]'s quite normal.°
4 .hh erm::: (0.7) >**could you** tell me what you
5 thi<n::k erm:, (.)°wh- what your definition of
6 peer education would be.
7 how would you (.) de[scribe it] to somebody,°
8 fran: [hhhhh.]
9 fran: er:m:. (1.1) <teaching from your own
10 experiences:=and (0.3) °what you kn:ow.>

In both extracts, the IRs' questions are topically-disjunctive with the interviewees' prior talk and seek to initiate a new topic of talk. With both extracts an elaborated, multi-TCU, answer is produced by the interviewees. Unlike the so-preface in Extract 5.1, 'can- you' and the related 'could you', does *not* do the work of documenting 'a connection to the interviewees prior talk', rather it marks explicitly their question as *an invitation to talk on this new topic*.

Both questions come off through the turn-design 'tell me + WH-question'. Without the 'can/could you' preface, the questions are hearable as directives to talk about a specific topic. In and through saying to someone 'tell me' the speaker is requesting an account, with an account being the preferred response. The preface 'can/could you' laminates a

further layer of interactional relevancies onto the action of asking this question⁹. With the preface the interviewer *is inviting* the interviewee to provide an account of the topic. The IRs' are inviting an account rather than requesting or demanding one. This attends to the way that they are not talking-up the immediately prior talk. The preface works to say '*Can we now focus on this new issue in detail?*'. The interviewers are not asking permission to shift topics. Acceptance or refusal is not the relevant next act for the interviewees. Instead, they are producing a directive to provide an account of this fresh topic *in the form of* an invitation.

'Can you' prefacing work routinely occurs with topic-shifting questions and is also found in Davies (1997) semi-open interview study with drug users. By way of comparison, let us look briefly at two extracts from his study. In Extracts 5.5 and 5.6 below, both the questions at line 1 come after the ice-breaking sequence, what Davies calls, 'initial pleasantries' (92). Note that, I refers to the interviewer and S the interviewee.

Extract 5.5 (Davies, 1997: 111)

- 1 I. So can you tell me what drugs you use at the moment?
 2 S. ... speed, acid, cannabis, eh, just drink ..., that's about it.
 3 I. So what makes you decide what you're going to buy?

Extract 5.6 (Davies, 1997: 117)

- 1 I. Can you tell me what it is you've been taking?
 2 S. Well, I started at the age of seventeen and I was drinking all my
 3 pocket money - whisky and at the time it was heavy beer ... the
 4 heavy beer was (?) ... you were skint, mostly from Sunday to
 5 Friday and it started again. I don't know exactly at what age I
 6 became an alcoholic, I think it would be maybe about fifteen
 7 years ago. I didn't know I was an alcoholic ...
 8 I. What do you mean by alcoholic?

⁹ Note also with Extract 5.4 the other optional prefacing work of 'what you thi<n:k' (4-5). This piece of contextual information directs Fran to only offer her 'personal thoughts'. Also note the optional tag 'how would you (.) de[scribe it] to somebody,' (7). I will outline the work these and similar utterances do in Chapter Seven.

With both Extracts 5.5 and 5.6 the interviewees produce an elaborated answer. In Extract 5.5, the interviewee explicitly attends to the prior question as inviting a detailed and comprehensive account. His 'that's about it.' (2) retrospectively marks that the prior talk was a complete list of the drugs he uses at the moment. In Extract 5.6, the interviewee provides an elaborated account (2-7), in and through which he answers the interviewer's question - he has taken whisky and heavy beer - as well as provide additional information about his history as an alcoholic.

In Extract 5.5 the optional preface 'so can you' is prior to a tell me + WH-question, in Extract 5.6 all the preface 'Can you tell me' is optional. As with Extracts 5.3 and 5.4, both questions could have been produced without the prefacing work, so what does it attend to or make relevant? The preface marks a shift to the agenda-driven stage of the interaction and hearably produces the question as an 'invitation to' provide an account. The interviewers work to produce themselves as inviting, rather than directing, interviewees to offer their experience.

The question in Extracts 5.3-5.6 are all topic-shifting questions. Marking explicitly this topic shift as an invitation to speak is a way to attend to the action of invoking topically disjunctive talk: it softens or informalises what is hearable as a formal, agenda-driven, action as a relatively *informal* action.

5.4.2 *Can you-prefaces to follow-up questions*

'Can you' is also used as a preface to follow-up questions, both on-topic and topic-shading, and does very similar work. Let us view two of these questions in action.

Extract 5.7

- 1 IR: °and how often were you° °°using (it),°°=
 2 Ben: =tch er:m (0.3) probably:, (1.1)
 3 once or twice a wee:k.
 4 (.)
 5 Ben: which: (0.2) it was: (0.5) °yeah.° (is)
 6 fairly, often.
 7 >and it w- we didn't do in,< (.) very large
 8 quantities:..=it was, (.) more °>a sort of<° (1.0)

9 @get happy, get ca:ned, a bit.=>but not.<
 10 (.) complete[l y m a s h e d ° (u p) °]@((rhythmic))
 11 IR: [>so can you tell me about<] kinda,
 12 how you did it, °an[d (.) where you did it.]°
 13 Ben: [.h h h w e l l ,]
 14 (.) hherm: (0.3) .hh it was sort of:.
 15 we started off by:, (.) <°lik:e erm::°> (0.5) getting it
 16 through people=and, we-, upto yeah,=about a

Extract 5.8

1 IR: so um: (.) have used anything else °a part
 2 from draw or any other drugs ()°=
 3 hal: =weed. whizz.
 4 (0.6)
 5 IR: o,kay. **can you** tell me about the times
 6 you've used those.
 7 (0.6)
 8 hal: from going out ((bang)) in it, when you're
 9 goin-. like-=say your going to a pa:rtly,

With Extract 5.7, IR's question at (11-12) is produced in overlap. This question does not seek to work with the upshot of Ben's talk but instead works to promote a subtopical shift (cf. Lawrence 1996). IR's question seeks to promote an answer surrounding the rituals, techniques and spaces of Ben's drug use. This is a related, but differently focused, topic to Ben's prior talk which was on 'his level of usage'.

The question is prefaced with the utterance 'so can you' (11). This works to attend to the overlap with Ben's talk and the subtopical shift. To produce the question without the preface might be hearable as 'blunt' and the preface works to *soften* the impact of both talking in overlap *and* the topic-shade. Note the utterance 'kinda' which also works in informalise, or soften the question (cf. Edwards 2000).

The preface *and* question works to say '*I am interested in what you've said, I have been listening, and can we now focus on this related issue in detail*'. It works to produce IR as helping Ben to offer a detailed account of his drug-experiences and to downgrade IR

being heard as ‘interrogating’ Ben. The so-preface forecasts connected talk, ‘can you’ then marks this as an invitation and ‘tell me about’ requests an account and the talk that follows directs the topic of that account. Ben then produces an elaborated, multi-TCU, answer.

The preface ‘can you’ does not stand alone, the work it does is intimately tied to the talk that surrounds it. It does some work to informalise the action of asking this specific question at this specific point, by producing the question as an invitation to produce an account. We can see this at work in Extract 5.8. At 1-2, IR produces a follow-up question and Hal answers this (3) and a gap (4) follows. Through his non-uptake of talk at 4, IR ‘provides Hal with the space’ to elaborate on his prior answer. Then IR marks through ‘o,kay.’(5) that he has heard and understood Hal’s prior answer as complete and that he is seeking to gain the floor (cf. Beach 1993, 1995). He then produces a further follow-up question (5-6), which asks Hal to elaborate on - ‘tell me about’ - his prior answer, Hal then begins to provide a detailed account (8-9).

As with the other examples, the preface ‘can you’ hearably produces the request for detail as *an invitation* to offer a detailed account, it softens or informalises the directive. In this extract, it works to downgrade IR’s question (5-6) being hearable as marking Hal as an ‘uncooperative-interviewee’. IR’s pursuit of detail (5-6) is *not* to be heard as marking that something was ‘missing from’ the prior talk, that Hal’s prior answer was inadequate. IR is not holding Hal accountable, rather the question and the prefacing work to say ‘*I heard and understood what you said and can we now focus on this in detail?*’. Again, he is helping Hal to talk about his drug-experiences.

5.4.3 Summary

Irrespective of whether the question is topic-shifting, topic-shading or on-topic, a ‘can you’-preface marks explicitly the question as *an invitation to talk on a specific topic*. In and through producing the request for detailed talk as an ‘invitation to offer a detailed account’, it softens or informalises the directive.

* With topic-shifting questions, producing the question as an invitation to explore a new topic is one method available to attend to the action of invoking topically-disjunctive talk¹⁰. The preface works to say ‘can we now focus on this *new* issue in detail?’ and it produces what is hearable as a formal, agenda-driven, action in a softened way.

* With both topic-shading and on-topic follow-up questions the preface works to say ‘can we now focus on this issue in detail?’. It works explicitly to produce the interviewers as ‘doing being facilitative’ whilst they are being directional.

In and through inviting the interviewees to talk about specific topics the interviewers highlight that they are helping interviewees to talk. And the majority of these prefaces are produced prior to topic-shifting questions. ‘Can you’-prefacing works to say “My job is to make it easy for you to tell your account” and this laminates a further layer of interactional relevancies onto the interviewers action of asking the question. Such identity work is clearly useful when you are introducing a ‘fresh’ topic of talk, when your asking that question highlights that this is agenda-driven talk. The next preface I will focus on is the *and*-preface and, in this data-set, it is only produced prior to follow-up questions.

5.5 And-prefacing

An and-prefaced follow-up question marks explicitly the question as a *routine-next question when talking about this specific topic*. It forecasts the talk that follows it is connected to something prior, either the prior topical trajectory established by the interviewee’s answer, or, the prior topical-trajectory established by the interviewee’s and interviewer’s question and answer sequence(s). It also forecast that the talk is to be responded to as routine-next talk; the question is not driven by a ‘bureaucratic’ or ‘interrogational’ agenda.

¹⁰ I have not produced a detailed analysis of the prefacing work prior to topic shifting questions but for an introduction to this work see Section 3.2-3.2.2. However, some of the other methods include, prefacing the topic shifting questions with talk that clearly delineates it from the prior talk - ‘Well just for a bit of background’, ‘The training you had in Smalltown’ ‘So then think about when you came back into the school to do the sessions you did’ - as well as the interviewers orientating to a specific interest in the topic - ‘One thing that interests me’ or ‘One of the sort of key things we haven’t focused on’.

As Heritage and Sorjonen note,

‘[A]cross all the purposes that *and*-prefacing may be deployed to accomplish, whether local or more general, its fundamental task is to invoke the sense that the question it prefaces are either routine, or agenda-based parts of some larger course of action. What this invocation may achieve in situ will, of course, vary with the activity context in which *and*-prefacing is deployed, and hence with the nature of the routine or the agenda that is understood to be invoked.’

[authors’ emphasis] (24)

They highlight how *and*-prefacing questions are generic feature of talk-in-interaction but the work they do is tied to the specific context. In the context of qualitative interviewing, it hearably produces the interviewer in the identity ‘facilitative-interviewer’ and reflexively marks that the interviewee’s ‘job’ is to provide detailed answers.

5.5.1 *An example of and-prefaced questions*

We enter the talk as Dan replies to IR’s question, which asked whether the peer-educator training course was announced to the students:

Extract 5.9

- 1 dan: =>that was announcements yeah thats right< he
2 announced °it in a (0.2) year eleven assembly
3 (really)°
4 (0.2)
5 IR: **an-** Could anybody go forward for [it
6 dan: [>Yeah he
7 said er< take any (.) sort of nominations but they
8 would be checking with teachers: (0.4) #erm group
9 tutor:s so forth and and just see if they thought you were
10 right for the:, (0.2)
11 IR: o°kay:.°=
12 dan: =°course.°#=
13 IR: =**and** >do you know< what kinds of tingst (0.4) they would
14 have considered to be right or wrong for the
15 course [and was tha]t clear, or not.

16 dan: [e r m : :] >well I think< attitude
 17 as well erm people who were there who >you know< # wanted
 18 to learn and wanted to t- get something out of it and people
 19 who who wanted to be able to, (0.3) deal with er (0.3) the-
 20 the sessions >who wouldn't be< # shy of speaking or, ((continues))

IR's questions at 5 and 13-15 are both follow-up questions and both *could* have been produced without the prefaces (shown in bold in the transcript) and still retain their intelligibility as questions with identical topical focuses. However, the questions come off with the prefaces 'an-' (5), '=and' (13) and these optional, pragmatic, feature do work for IR¹¹.

At 1-3 Dan produces an answer to the prior question, a gap in the talk follows (4). IR then produces the connective 'an-' (5) followed by a topic-shading question. This and-preface works to produce hearably, or mark explicitly, the talk that follows *as connected to* some part of the prior talk. Dan at 6-10 provides an answer to this question, he then pauses at 10, possibly doing a word search. IR, rather than providing a solution to the word search, marks through the response token 'o°kay:°=' (11) that he has heard and understood the prior answer as complete and works to gain the floor (cf. Beach 1993, 1995). Dan then offers his solution to the word search (12) and produces a complex TRP which intonationally, pragmatically and grammatically marks the turn as complete (Ford and Thompson 1996).

IR produces another and-preface (13) followed by another topic-shading question (13-15). IR's questions are both marked as turns, in some way, connected to some part of the prior talk. IR's questioning TCU (13-15) comes off, and is marked by Dan through overlap (16), as having two, connected, questioning parts. Dan then goes on to provide an answer (16-20) to IR's question¹².

¹¹ The tag 'or not.' (10) is also an optional, pragmatic feature and I will outline the work this does in Chapter Seven.

¹² Note, how through the preface to his talk '>well **I think**< attitude' (16) Dan marks how 'his response is to be heard'. These are only to be heard as his thoughts or speculations, those who decided who should go on the course, the 'they' (13) of IR's question, are the people who own this knowledge. Dan is marking that the talk that follows is to be heard, and attended to, as *only* his speculations (cf. Peräkylä

5.5.2 A discussion of the work of 'and'-prefacing

In Extract 5.9 above, through the and-prefacing, IR is clearly marking for Dan that he is following-on from something prior: the talk after the prefaces are forecast as a connecting to something prior. In this case, the talk that follows are questions, so the questions are forecast and marked as questions that are *connected to* some part of the prior talk. As Heritage and Sorjonen (1994) note, in the context of the information-collection phase of a health visitor-client interaction,

‘and-prefacing across a series of questions invokes in and of itself, an orientation to the questions as routine or agenda-based.’ [authors’ emphasis] (14)

In their data, the speakers are engaged in a routine form-filling exercise, which involves health visitors asking a series of topically-disjunctive questions. The ‘and’-preface works to say ‘I’m not responsible for this question, the question is a product of the activity, the form-filling exercise, we are both involved in’¹³. In their data, the and-prefacing attends to, in part, the way that the questions rapidly topic-shift.

What I want to note is that such and-prefacing, in the context of Dan and IR’s interaction, produces the question as hearable as a *routine-next* question. The and-prefaced questions in Extract 5.9, unlike the majority of Heritage and Sorjonen’s and-prefaced questions, are *not* topically-disjunctive, rather they are follow-up questions. As noted in the prior chapters, follow-up questions make up the majority of interviewers’ questioning-turns and implicitly produce the interviewers as ‘*just*’ following-up and working with the interviewees’ prior talk. And-prefaces hearably produce this action, they explicitly mark the question that follows as ‘*just a continuation of the prior topic talk*’ (the prior question and answer sequence) and ‘just a continuation of the activity of gaining Dan’s perspective on this specific topic’.

Through these and-prefaces, IR is marking that he is *merely helping to* gain Dan’s perspective. The next-question is something that is just routine to ask when discussing this specific topic (given the prior question and answer sequence), it is *not* to be heard

and Silverman 1991b, Peräkylä 1995, Sharrock 1974). Remember that, IR asked Dan ‘>do you know<’ (13). So Dan demonstrates how he does *not* own this knowledge and was not *entitled to* own this and so marks that this information, about ‘attitude’ being an important quality, was not explicitly made available to him.

solely as the product of a broader agenda - that this is an interview - driving this interaction.

In Extract 5.9, and-prefacing is used to mark explicitly that the questions are hearable as a product of the *local, here-and-now, question and answer sequence*. In this sense, they produce the questions as ‘routine, or agenda-based parts of [the] larger course of action’ (Heritage and Sorjonen 1994: 24) of *discussing this particular topic*. By contrast, in Heritage and Sorjonen’s health visitor interactions, and-prefacing works to hearably produce the questions as ‘routine, or agenda-based parts of [the] larger course of action’ of filling in the form. In this way, throughout this phase of the interaction, including when asking a ‘sensitive’ question, the health-visitor works to occupy the identity of bureaucratic-questioner¹⁴, and this helps to emphasise that in the other phases of the interaction they talking as ‘helpers’ and ‘befrienders’.

With the above discussion in mind, let us return to Dan and IR’s interaction. For ease of analysis, I have reproduced the extract below.

Extract 5.9

- 1 dan: =>that was announcements yeah thats right< he
2 announced °it in a (0.2) year eleven assembly
3 (really)°
4 (0.2)
5 IR: **an-** Could anybody go forward for [it
6 dan: [>Yeah he
7 said er< take any (.) sort of nominations but they
8 would be checking with teachers: (0.4) #erm group
9 tutor:s so forth and and just see if they thought you were
10 right for the:, (0.2)
11 IR: o°kay:.°=
12 dan: =°course.°# =
13 IR: =**and** >do you know< what kinds of tingst (0.4) they would
14 have considered to be right or wrong for the
15 course [and was tha]t clear, or not.
16 dan: [e r m : :] >well I think< attitude

¹³ They also note how the form, rather than the Health Visitor, is to be heard as ‘responsible for’ the questions.

17 as well erm people who were there who >you know< # wanted
18 to learn and wanted to t- get something out of it and people
19 who who wanted to be able to, (0.3) deal with er (0.3) the-
20 the sessions >who wouldn't be< # shy of speaking or, ((continues))

In the above talk, IR does *not* work to produce his questions so as to be heard as a product of 'routine, or agenda-based parts of [the] larger course of action' *of the interview they are both engaged in*. He is *not* working to produce himself in the identity of 'bureaucratic-questioner'. He is *not* working to mark that the only reason he is asking this specific question is because "he has to" as the interview schedule demands this. Rather, IR works to be heard in the identity *facilitative-interviewer*, a questioner interested and motivated by the *local, here-and-now, agenda of the topic talk in which they are both engaged*. And this particular topic was first introduced with the topic-initiating question "so thinking specifically about the peer ed group, can you tell me how you first heard about it and when that was" (data not shown) which orientates Dan to attend to the talk that follows as connected to the topic of the peer-education group. IR's and-prefaces connect both to IR's prior questions on this specific topic *and* Dan's answers on this specific topic.

In and through both the and-prefaces *and* the follow-up questions, IR works to produce himself as a *facilitative-interviewer*. He marks that he is interested in helping Dan to talk *in detail* about his experiences as a member of a peer-education group. Without the and-prefaces such an identity is still relevant as in and through producing the follow-up question IR produces himself as both 'following up' and 'working with' Dan's talk. With these pragmatic, optional utterances IR *hearably produces, or marks explicitly*, himself as a 'facilitator'¹⁵.

The and-preface at 13 also attends to the way that IR works to forecast a turn, through 'o°kay:°='(11), prior to Dan 'closing' his turn at 12. It is at a pre-possible completion of Dan's TCU that IR works to forecast that he wants the floor in and through marking

¹⁴ and interestingly, they often explicitly distance themselves from this categorization.

¹⁵ Similarly, through the pragmatic, or optional, utterance 'I think' (16) Dan marks explicitly the talk that follows is only to be heard as his subjective thoughts, at this point he is merely a 'speculative answerer'.

that he has heard and understood the prior answer as complete. As IR begins his turn at 13, the and-preface retrospectively marks his prior closure-implicative response at 11 to be heard as IR ‘just’ trying to continue the prior topic of questioning. The preface also marks, in alignment with his prior response ‘o°kay:.°=’(11), that IR had no-problems with Dan’s prior talk (cf. Houtkoop-Steenstra 2000). IR was not to be heard as *uninterested* or *not* following closely, rather he was listening closely and wanted to ask this next question now, as the question is (intimately) connected to their prior talk on this topic. Again, IR is working to be heard as *helping* Dan to offer a detailed account of his story and reflexively producing him as the sort of interviewee that is able to offer a detailed account.

5.5.3 *And-prefacing as a way to document a connection with the interviewees’ topic-talk*

The above discussion of and-prefacing showed how it can work to mark a connection between the interviewer’s question and the local here-and-now agenda of *both* speakers “talk on this topic”. It can also serve to mark a connection to the local here-and-now agenda *of the prior answer, the interviewees’ topic-talk*. In the examples below, we see how this method can work to mark that the interviewer is not ‘interrupting’ the interviewees talk or ‘interrogating’ the interviewee on a specific topic. Let us view this work in action.

Extract 5.10

- 1 IR: uhuh. so is that what you found then.
 2 adam: erm (0.9) no I that’s sort of me going over the top erm for myself (0.5) its:
 3 (1.5) you know just happens and found dope (1.7) er:m (1.7) the first time I
 4 smo:ked spli[↑]ff, I knew about it and people I know had talked about it and
 5 it was this sort of thing going on er among- amongst the crowd
 6 IR: umhuh
 7 adam: you know erm (1.3) but didn’t intrigue me just was I suppose [↑]no I
 8 su’pose it intrigued in a way that I knew there was this thing that was.
 9 illegal. I knew what drugs: meant.
 10 IR: uhuh=
 11 adam: =erm (0.8) but (0.7) I didn’t know much about it and then,
 12 IR: **and** how old were you then.
 13 adam: thirteen
 14 IR: uhuh

15 adam: and er (1.9) ((inhaled cigarette)) a guy the firs- the first time I
16 smoked gear was er someone took me er a guy an older guy

Extract 5.11

1 IR: °>so when you say the s:offer drugs° °°what does
2 that mean.<°°
3 Ben: Well= ↑herm. (2.0) °tch° I suppos:e. (1.0) if we-
4 >talkin about< drink and smoking as well.
5 (.) but er, (.) sort of cannabis:: lik:e.
6 (1.4)
7 Ben: there is:: a lot of people that actually do that. I,= >I
8 don't actually do tha at the moment=I did,< °.hh°
9 up to about a year ago I think- (.) that was the sort
10 of >peak,< for (.) our age group °an[d e v]eryone°
11 IR: [°(mm.)°]
12 Ben: (who/that) was into it.
13 IR: °**and** how often were you° °°using (it),°°=
14 Ben: =tch er:m (0.3) probably:, (1.1)
15 once or twice a wee:k.
16 (.)
17 Ben: which: (0.2) it was: (0.5) °yeah.° (is)
18 fairly, often.

In both these extracts the 'and' at the TCU-beginnings (shown in bold) forecasts that the question that follows will be a continuation of something prior. In both cases, the question that follows is a follow-up question. As such, these questions are hearably produced as a continuation of the prior talk, they are both hearably produced as routine-next questions and this is how both the interviewees attend to them.

With Extract 5.10, IR requests specification (12) about how old Adam was when he had these experiences that he is describing with his prior answer. This question comes off prior to a TRP, and 'interrupts' Adam's talk about his first experiences with drugs. Adam offer's an answer (13) to IR's question, IR receipts this (14) and Adam backlinks, or skip-connects (Sacks 1992, Spring 1971, April 9: 349), his talk, in and through an and-prefaced answer, and continues to talk about his first experiences with drugs (15-

16). The question is hearably produced as, and attended to by Adam as, something that is just routine to ask in relation to Adam's prior talk.

IR's and-preface provides a reason for IR taking the floor prior to a TRP, in that IR's talk will be connected to something prior, in and through forecasting the talk that follows as routine-next talk. IR's question at 12 could be asking Adam about his immediately prior talk (11) - "how old were you when you *didn't know much about spliff*" - or the topic - "how old were you when *you first smoked spliff*" - which was introduced at 3-4. What is important to note is that, the question is not connected to any specific topic in Adam's prior answer, but orientates to the overarching activity of Adam's topic-talk about his experiences surrounding "spliff". The preface hearably produces the question as a product of the *local here-and-now agenda* of Adams prior answer, his prior activity of 'doing topic-talk'.

With Extract 5.11, related work occurs. IR's question at 1-2 asks Ben to define the meaning of the term 's:offer drugs'. He provides an answer to this (3-5), then topic-shades to people's use of softer drugs (7), his personal use of softer drugs (7-9) and then re-specifies the context of how personal use is to be understood (9-10, 12)¹⁶. IR receipts this in overlap (11) and then at a TRP produces an and-prefaced contingent question (13).

IR's question at 13 does not topicalise Ben's immediately prior talk, 'his-age-group's-use', but works to topic shade to 'his-frequency-of-use-of-softer-drugs'. This subtopical shift connects to the topic that is present in Ben's talk, that of 'people's-and-his-use-of-softer-drugs'. The and-preface forecasts the question as connected to some part of the prior talk and, in so doing, marks explicitly the subtopical shift as just a routine-next action. Through this, IR is marking that he is *merely helping to* gain details of Ben's experiences. So the question is hearably produced as something that is just routine to

¹⁶ This re-specification at 9-10, 12 is what Sacks (1992, Winter 1969, 8: 127) would call an 'identification reformulation'. It marks explicitly that his prior soft drug use occurred at a certain stage of life, when it was a (relatively) ordinary feature of people at that stage of life, hence he should be treated as (relatively) ordinary. See Chapter Eight, especially section 8.4.3, for a detailed discussion of how producing yourself as an ordinary type-of-person can implicitly produce you as a locally appropriate morally-adequate type of person.

ask when discussing this specific topic, it is *not* to be heard as the product of ‘IR interrogating Ben about his drug use’. Inherent in IR ‘offsetting’ the identity ‘interrogator’ is the way the question is produced at a lower volume to the prior talk and this feature further compounds its non-accusatory tone. Ben then latches his talk to IR’s and answers the question (14-15) and then provides an assessment of how his prior answer is to be understood (17-18).

5.5.4 Summary

By producing and-prefaced follow-up questions the interviewers work to hearably produce themselves as *facilitative-interviewers*. Their questions are marked explicitly as connected to something in prior talk, they are produced *as routine-next questions*. The preface hearably produces the question as a product of the *local, here-and-now, agenda of the prior topic-talk*. And that local here-and-now agenda is produced either by ‘*the interviewees’ prior answer*’ or ‘*the interviewees’ and interviewers’ prior question and answer sequence(s)*’.

In and through and-prefaced follow-up question, the interviewers mark that they are interested, they are listening closely and that they are trying to understand. They hearably produce themselves as aiding, or facilitating, the interviewees giving a detailed account of their own experiences or thoughts. This helps to emphasise that they are *not* ‘interrogating’ the interviewees and that they are *not* ‘bureaucratic-questioners’ only driven by the interview schedule.

As with most things, there are exceptions to the work outlined above. At a few moments in the data-set interviewers do work to hearably produce themselves as ‘bureaucratic-questioners’, and mark explicitly that their questions are driven by an institutional agenda. It is to one of these ‘deviant’ cases, to which I shall now turn.

5.6 A deviant case: prefacing as a means to produce yourself explicitly as a ‘bureaucratic-questioner’

This thesis has documented how interviewers massively work to produce themselves as *facilitative-types-of-interviewers*. As I have repeatedly noted, such identity work

documents a methodological discussion in the literature. However, contra this literature, producing yourself as ‘being *unhelpful*’ can do a lot of work for interviewers (and interviewees). The discussion of the Extract 5.12, below, documents how marking yourself as a specific type of ‘questioner’ (one driven by “bureaucratic demands”) is used as a resource by interviewers to get their ‘job’ done.

Prior to the extract below, IR asked what made Mel say “that drugs workers have probably taken drugs”. As part of her answer, she offered a list of reasons about why she thinks drug workers who have taken drugs are in a strong position to help to educate others about drug use. We enter the talk at the end of her answer.

Extract 5.12

- 1 mel: m- make people b- believe there is another
2 way o:ut,=not just drugs, >you know=because
3 obviously they are illegal,< they are dangerous:.
4 IR: mm::.
5 mel: you know.
6 IR: **I’m- I’m just pushing on this because this is**
7 **one of the kinda=key areas,**
8 **that we’re, [>.hh °a bit more interes]ted in.°<=**
9 mel: [R i g h t. I s e e]
10 IR: =so sa:y er:m, you h:ad (0.3) say Jo::hn, and Bob.=
11 mel: =>yea-<=
12 IR: =say they’d n:ever taken drugs=
13 >I don’t know what they told y[ou
14 mel: [>right<
15 IR: and I don’t know wha- what [they said]
16 mel: [well, yeah.]
17 IR sa:y they never had.
18 mel: yeah.=
19 IR: =erm. (1.0) how do you think
20 you’d react °>and stuff<.°
21 (.)
22 mel: er::m.
23 IR: do you think you would have seen them
24 differently=

25 mel: =yea definatey.
26 I think- .hhh (0.4) @ I would be happy that
27 they were there, and you=know and happy
28 they were to tell us some things about it. @
29 but (0.4) again I think without the experience:
30 without the actual knowledge of having taken it.

With the preface at 6-8, IR orientates to two identities: his individual actions as an 'interviewer' *and* his actions as 'an-institutional-member-of-a-team'. Initially he says 'I'm- I'm just pushing on this' (6), this forecasts that the talk that follows could be orientated to as emerging from the identity 'adversarial/interrogational/irritating-interviewer'. It also reflexively casts his prior talk on this topic could also have been hearable as emerging from the identity 'adversarial/interrogating/irritating-interviewer'. He then provides a reason for this actions: 'because this is one of the kinda=key areas, we're,' (6-8). The pronoun 'we' hearably produces him as a speaking a member of a collective, his forthcoming (and prior) talk is hearable as driven by his 'role' as an institutional actor. Note also that this is a '=key' area for that team. Mel acknowledges and accepts (9) IR's reason, in overlap prior to a TRP. IR expands on his reason '>.hh °a bit more interes]ted in.°<=' (8) and then begins to produce a hypothetical question (10).

In and through his prefacing work, IR *initially* hearably produces himself as a questioner who could be orientated to as 'adversarial, interrogational or irritating' (a questioner who impedes the flow of the talk by continually 'pushing' the same point) he then *respecifies* that his action is only to be understood as product of him being a 'bureaucratic-questioner': an interviewer driven by specific institutional team-goals. Throughout the thesis I have tried to highlight that interviewers 'work hard' to avoid these identities. There are two, related, reason for IR introducing the two identities that are routinely avoided by interviewers.

* First, the topic of talk - Mel's views on the relative importance of drug workers having taken drugs - has been *the* central topic of the prior eight question-answer sequences.

* Second, note IR's utterance 'mm::' (4). This response token acknowledges the prior talk but comes off as a *very* weak acknowledgement. It sounds as though he is saying "I've heard what you said, I understand, but that doesn't really give me sort of information I was interested in". This is how Mel responds to it, she produces an intersubjective appeal 'you know.' (5) thereby pursuing a 'stronger' acknowledgement.

IR's response to Mel, 'I'm- I'm just pushing on this' (6) orientates both to her reading of his prior weak acknowledgement as hearable as 'seeking-more-information' and that his prior eight questions have repeatedly 'sought-more-information' on this topic.

IR hearably produces himself, at this *specific moment*, as 'pushing' Mel: that he is going to be, and reflexively was being, '*adversarial*', '*interrogational*' or '*irritating*' in the sense that he is '*covering-the-same-ground-again*'. His questioning is *only* to be understood as a product of him fulfilling his bureaucratic-task. He is 'pushing' Mel for a specific reason, it is not that he feels what she has said is inadequate, insincere or invalid, or that he has not been listening, it is just that this is an important area that 'they' - the researchers - are interested in. He is only doing his job and in and through hearably producing himself as a bureaucratic-questioner, he marks that he is in fact *still being* a neutralistic-interviewer.

After the preface, IR produces a hypothetical scenario¹⁷ (10, 12, 17) which is layered with contextual information marking it as a hypothetical proposal (13, 15). Mel acknowledges both the scenario (11, 18) and its hypothetical status (14, 16). IR then produces a question (19-20) and following Mel's hesitation marker (22), produces a tag question which offers a candidate answer (23-24). Mel then produces an answer (25-30).

Mel's answer comes off through a sing-song rhythm (the talk between '@' signs) and marks it as something that she has "said a lot before". She then produces a contrast

¹⁷ This shares a family resemblance to both Kinnell and Maynard's (1996) 'Proposal of the situation' questions and Peräkylä (1995) hypothetical 'circular questions' which are both found in HIV and AIDS counselling.

marker 'but' (29), pauses and re-marks the talk that follows as something she said before ('again' 29). Through both the sing-song rhythm and the utterance 'again' (and the stress on 'ag'), Mel clearly marks that she is repeating information from her prior answers, that the talk she offers is *not* 'news' to IR. She documents that, for her, IR's prior questioning obtained all the information on this topic that she could possibly offer, and reflexively marks that, for her, his prior question *was hearable as 'covering-the-same-ground-again'*. When Mel's answer to this question comes to a close (not shown on transcript) IR does switch to a fresh topic.

As David Silverman (personal communication) noted, IR, in and through his prefacing work, had prepared the ground for Mel's 'reading'. They collaboratively produce this as a specific type of adversarial/interrogational/irritating moment - repeatedly 'pushing' the same topic - and this collaboration is used as a resource by *both* speakers. There are two local functions of the 'covering-the-same-ground-again'-questioner identity: it 'excuses' what IR is doing now and offers Mel the resources to say 'I am repeating myself'.

5.6.1 Discussion

The IR in this extract did not work to produce himself in the *home-base* of qualitative interviewers, as a 'facilitative and neutralistic' interviewer. Instead he produces himself as speaking from the identity of a 'bureaucratic and neutral' interviewer. IR's shift, away from his home-base identity, is a product of him *attending to* Mel's (possible) orientation to him as 'pushing' her. Or, to put it another way, as the possibility emerges that he is not being orientated to as a 'facilitator' - someone who is helping, or making it easy for, Mel to tell her story - he *prefers temporarily* to produce himself as a 'bureaucratic-interviewer' rather than have the interview become an adversarial/interrogational/irritating encounter¹⁸.

¹⁸ This connects to Cuff's (1993) observations on how members can attend to their accounts being heard as 'partisan'. One solution, as outlined in Section 4.3.5.1, is that speakers do 'pre-emptive work', *in their own account* they highlight "the other side of the story". IR's preface does similar 'pre-emptive work', it highlights prior to Mel (explicitly) doing so, a possible reading of the interaction. It documents, to paraphrase Schegloff, Jefferson and Sacks (1977), a preference for self-correction in the organization of *identity work* for qualitative interviews.

IR does identification reformulation (Sacks 1992, Winter 1969, 8), by shifting from ‘facilitative-questioner’ to ‘unfacilitative-questioner’ to ‘unfacilitative-questioner-driven-by-bureaucratic-demands’. He is temporarily ‘using’ a type of adversarial/interrogating/irritating-questioner identity as a resource both to attend to the here-and-now (possible) interactional troubles and to get the specific information that the broader research context (possibly) requires from him. This reformulated adversarial/interrogating/irritating-questioner identity enables IR to ‘push’ Mel and enables Mel to say that “we are covering the same ground *again*”.

As the above work on prefaces in this chapter and the work on interviewers’ questions throughout the thesis shows, being identified as ‘facilitatory and neutral’ is preferable to being identified as being ‘adversarial, bureaucratic, interrogational or irritating’. For IR in Extract 5.12, being identified as ‘bureaucratic and neutral’ is more preferable to being identified as being ‘adversarial, interrogational or irritating’. This deviant case documents one of the central responsibilities of interviewers in this data-set: *you should work to avoid the interviewee attending to the interaction as an adversarial, interrogational or irritating encounter.*

5.7 Discussion and Conclusion

Question prefaces can work to display the question for what it is: they inform the interviewee about the talk that follows, and how to respond to it, as well as constructing both speakers’ identities in relation to the talk. As the work on both ‘*can you*’ and ‘*and*’ prefaces has shown, question prefacing can be an *economical way*¹⁹ to inform the interviewee that their questions are to be heard as *facilitatory*.

‘Can you’ prefaces forecast that the talk that follows it is to be heard as *an invitation to produce an account*. As prefaces to topic-shifting questions, they work to say ‘Can we now focus on this new issue in detail?’. However, the interviewers are not asking permission to shift topics; acceptance or refusal is not the relevant next act for the interviewees. Instead, they are producing a directive to provide an account on this fresh topic *in the form of* an invitation. It softens or informalises what is hearable as a formal,

¹⁹ See footnote 8 for a description of how the metaphor ‘economy’ is being used.

agenda-driven, action as a relatively informal action. With follow-up questions the preface works to say ‘can we now focus on this issue in detail?’. They work explicitly to produce the interviewers as ‘doing being facilitative’ whilst they are being directional.

Drawing loosely on a device Silverman (1997) describes in AIDS counselling (the advice-as-information sequence) in this context, we could call the ‘can you’ prefaced questions ‘directive-as-invitation’ sequences. It is not that interviewees in this data-set orientate to the ‘can you’ prefaced questions *as* invitations. The status as an invitation, that acceptance or rejection is the relevant next action, is very rarely orientated to (in this data-set). However such a label - *directive-as-invitation* - highlights how the interviewers ‘package’ the talk.

Can you- prefacing works to say “My job is to *make it easy for you* to tell your account” and this laminates a further layer of ‘facilitatory’ interactional relevancies onto the interviewers action of asking that specific question. Similarly, and-prefaced follow-up questions, hearably produce the interviewer in the identity ‘facilitative-interviewer’ and mark that the interviewees role is to provide detailed answers.

Both ‘can you’ and ‘and’ prefaces to follow-up questions hearably produce the question as a product of the *local, here-and-now, agenda of the prior topic-talk*. And that local here-and-now agenda is produced either by ‘the interviewees prior answer’ or ‘the interviewees and interviewers prior question and answer sequence(s)’. As such, they forecast that the talk is to be responded to as routine-next talk and that the question is not driven by a bureaucratic or interrogational agenda. This contextual information work, in this case ‘and’ and ‘can you’ prefacing, documents how interviewers locally produce in-and-as-their-lived-practice ideals about qualitative interviewing.

Let me return to a quote that I used in the introduction to this chapter:

‘Good interview technique therefore involves *a gentle nudge* from the interviewer rather than being too explicit. ... The interviewer’s role in a semi-structured interview is to *facilitate and guide*, rather than dictate exactly what will happen during the encounter’ [my emphasis] (Smith 1995: 16)

In his methodological prescription to semi-structured interviewing, Smith outlines a way of 'behaving' that we can see the interviewers explicitly orientating to in and through their prefacing work. A practical solution to 'doing facilitating, guiding and gentling nudging' over 'dictating' is to explicitly produce your talk as '*doing an invitation*' over a 'direction', as '*doing a continuation of the prior activity of our/the interviewees talk*' over a 'agenda-led question', 'interruption' or 'interrogation'.

A large number of methodological texts actually offer examples of questions. For example in reference to follow-up questions, which are routinely called 'probes' or 'probing questions' we find advice like:

'As the informants speak, you should be attentive to what is mentioned and also to what is not mentioned but which you feel might be important. If something has been mentioned about which you want to know more, you can ask, "You mentioned _____; could you tell me more about that?" For things not mentioned, you might ask, "Did _____?" or "Was _____ a consequence?"' (Lofland and Lofland 1984: 56, cited in Berg 1993: 67).

And

'A major goal of the interview is to gather relevant replies to the questions asked. Accordingly, an interviewer must be quick to recognise whether an answer is adequate given the question's objective, and must be ready to probe further or encourage the respondent to elaborate or reformulate an answer should it be required. This might amount to a simple, 'Yes, I see' or 'That's interesting', but may require a more standard probe of the kind, 'Could you be a little more specific about that, please?' or 'What do you mean by that exactly?' These must be offered in a friendly and reassuring way without threatening the respondent or implying that he or she is a fool.' (Ackroyd and Hughes 1992: 112).

Now these are 'lovely' descriptions, in that they offer, what Livingston (1987) calls, 'technical access' to the lived practices of interviewing. These are not just ideals about qualitative interviewing, they are written, and can be read, as ideals-to-give-people-technical-competence-in-their-(future)-lived-practice-of-qualitative-interviewing.

All I want to note, at this stage, is the way ‘Could you ...?’ holds a kind of canonical status in these texts with reference to follow-up questions²⁰. And we saw how ‘can you’-prefaces were routinely used in this data-set for *both* topic-shifting and follow-up questions. We also saw how ‘and’-prefacing is used for follow-up questions and the next chapter documents how ‘so’ prefaces are used. In this data-set, the interviewers’ ‘common-sense skills’ - their practical solutions, their situated competencies - appear to be so much more ‘flexible’ than the above portraits allow for (and possibly could *ever* allow for). Such methodological prescriptions only begin to ‘scratch the surface’ of interviewers’ (and interviewees’) lived practices. However, as this chapter has sought to highlight, interviewers, in-and-as their lived practice, bring to life either explicitly or implicitly, such prescriptions.

As noted in the introduction, for Mason (1996) the interviewer should ‘help the flow of the interview interaction ... rather than impede it.’(45). The deviant case documented how interviewers are sensitive to the possibility that they are ‘impeding’ the talk. The ‘facilitatory’ identity was *temporarily* shifted to the identity of ‘bureaucratic-questioner’. What remained however, was a *neutralistic* identity. As this example, and the prior chapters, show, ‘doing being neutral’ is massively orientated to by interviewers (and reflexively by interviewees) as a home-base identity.

The prefacing work of ‘*can you*’, ‘*and*’ and the ‘deviant’ case also reflexively documents one of interviewers’ central tasks: they are working to promote detailed, comprehensive *and truthful* accounts. As the interview-methods literature routinely advocates²¹ this should be undertaken in a friendly, conversational, non-threatening and non-judgmental style. Hence, interviewers should *avoid* being orientated to as ‘unhelpful’ and *avoid* the interview becoming an adversarial, interrogational or irritating encounter²². One way to achieve this task is to produce talk which ‘aids’, ‘helps’, or ‘makes it easy for’ the

²⁰ See sections 7.1, 7.4 and 9.2 for a detailed discussion of methodological prescriptions.

²¹ See, for example, all the above references, as well as Collins (1998), Fontana and Frey (1994) and May (1993).

²² For example, when interviewing people with ‘divergent’ or ‘oppositional’ views to her own, Luff (1999) does not talk about *arguing against her interviewees* talk. Her account documents something much broader within the methodological/theoretical canon of interviewing: that by *not co-operating* with interviewees’ talk (i.e. arguing against their talk, or ‘doing being adversarial’) you cannot gain ‘valid knowledge’.

interviewees to offer their own account on the topics of the interview. As was shown in the prior chapters, topic-initiating and follow-up questions are very suitable methods to achieve this task. As this chapter shows, some question-prefaces can work *explicitly* to produce the interviewees as ‘facilitators’ and so enable them to promote answers of the type they are meant to be - detailed, comprehensive and truthful.

Prefacing works to hearably produce, or mark explicitly, the question for what it is, and so laminates a further set of interactional relevancies onto the action of asking this specific question at this specific moment. The next chapter focuses on the preface that is used most frequently by interviewees: the ‘so’-preface. And this preface is also central to producing the interviewees as both ‘neutralistic *and* facilitatory’.

So-prefaced questions: some initial observations.

6.1 Introduction

As I noted in the prior chapters, follow-up questions without prefaces do the work of demonstrating ‘listening’ and ‘displaying understanding’, a relevancy for participants in (nearly) all forms of talk. However, with a ‘so’-preface this feature is hearably produced or marked. So-prefaced questions can *explicitly mark that the talk is following-up something prior*.

‘So’ and ‘and’ prefacing have massive ‘family resemblances’ in this data-set¹. Chiefly, what they share is that both prefaces can work explicitly to document the question that follows as ‘just a continuation of the prior activity of the talk: the local, *here-and-now*, agenda of the prior topic-talk’. And-prefacing can produce the questions as ‘*routine*, or *agenda-based* parts of [the] larger course of action’ [my emphasis] (Heritage and Sorjonen 1994: 24). So-prefacing can produce the questions as a ‘*natural continuation*’ of the larger course of action, ‘*just following-up*’ something. With both prefaces, that larger course of action is either

the *interviewees*’ immediately prior answer: the interviewees’
topic-talk,

or

the *interviewees*’ and *interviewers*’ immediately prior question
and answer sequence(s): their discussion of this particular topic.

However, unlike and-prefacing in this data-set², so-prefacing is also used to mark questions as ‘parts of [the] larger course of action’ of the *broader* interaction in which they are both involved (the *interview* itself).

Initially, I briefly outline the work of so-preface questions that work, in a similar way to and-prefacing, to mark the topics of the questions as following-up the immediate, here-

¹ For a detailed discussion of and-prefacing see the prior chapter, sections 5.5 - 5.5.4.

² but similar to Heritage and Sorjonen’s (1994) findings on and-prefacing in the ‘form-filling’ stage of health visitor-client interactions.

and-now interactional context. I then shift the focus to so-prefaced questions that orientate to the broader context as ‘responsible for’ the topic of the question. I also begin to show how so-prefacing can be only one ‘facet’ of the contextual information work that produce the questions as they are. In the final sections, I use two detailed analysis to highlight how *constellations* of contextual information prefacing work, including ‘so *you said*’-prefacing, can come off. Chapter Seven, then focuses on contextual information embedded in interviewers’ questions and at question-endings.

The discussion of marking the question as a specific type of question and the concomitant identity work will be related to some of the CA work on HIV counselling (Silverman 1997) health visitor-client interaction (Heritage and Sefi 1992, Heritage and Sorjonen 1994) and news interviews (Clayman 1988, 1992, Lawrence 1996). I will again show how the idea of a news-interviewer ‘doing being facilitative *and* neutral’ (Lawrence 1996) is central to understanding interviewers’ ‘work’ in qualitative interviews.

6.2 So-prefaced questions: ‘just’ following-up the local, here-and-now, agenda.

As noted above, the majority of so-prefaced questions are used to mark the question explicitly as ‘routine, or agenda-based parts’ of either the *interviewee*’s immediately prior answer or the *interviewee*’s *and interviewer*’s immediately prior question and answer sequence(s). Let us see this work in action.

The two extracts below are ‘proto-typical’ examples, although you should note that this term is only used as an analytic gloss ³.

Extract 6.1

- 1 adam: erm (1.0) I think (.) you know (0.8) I was. I was, quite ha- quite content
2 or quite er (0.4) confident of the drugs that were in me [all the] different
3 IR: [°uh hm°]
4 adam: types that I had taken that day=

³ For other examples of so prefaced questions see: Extracts 3.1, 3. 3, 3.6; 4.6, 4.14, 4.A; 5.1, 5.5, 5.7, 5.8; 7.2, 7.5, 7.6, 7.12, 7.15; 8.1. Also see Extract 3.12, for a so-prefaced formulation sequence and Extract 5.10, for a ‘so’ embedded in a question.

5 IR: =so what what were °what were all these [things°] ←
6 adam: [er I s]moked dope, (0.2) I'd
7 drunk beer, and cider, I'd taken acid (0.9) er:::m (1.1) I th:ink I'd ha- I'd
8 ha- °I'd just had I'd sort of touched ° a piece of speed (kind of) (1.0)
9 and erm (1.2) I'd snorted cocaine,

Extract 6.2

1 dan: us >but everybody was be saying oh, well
2 they they're d- doing this and they're saying
3 this and it's completely unrelated and nobody
4 is going to listen to us and that's the situation
5 we really didn't want.< ((pitch falls throughout talk))
6 IR: °o:kay.° .h so why- why did you encourage ←
7 people not to::: talk about their own
8 experiences
9 dan: personal experiences um::, (0.2) it's not↑
10 a- an area that- (0.2) bringing people saying
11 these things becaus:e, (0.4) er:::m=you know
12 teenagers can be very unkind to each other .hh

With both these extracts, the arrowed questions *topicalise* some aspects of the prior talk. In Extracts 6.1, IR produces the utterance 'the drugs that were in me [all the] different types that I had taken that day' (2,4) as a gloss he wants 'unpacked'. In Extract 6.2, IR topic-shades, from Dan's prior talk, '**peer-educators** not talking about personal drug experiences' to '**people [students]** not talking about personal experiences'.

In both cases the 'so'-preface is clearly pragmatic, it is not essential for the question to be prefaced for it to be understood and treated as a question. This optional preface works to *explicitly forecast* that the question is following-up on the prior talk.

In Extract 6.1, Adam talks of 'different types' (2, 4) of drugs he had taken. IR latches his question at the TRP and asks Adam to unpack his prior talk. The 'so'-preface marks the question as a 'natural continuation' of the prior talk. Unlike and-prefacing, it does not work to produce the topic of the question as *routine* given the prior talk. The so-preface seems to be a more 'informal' or 'softer' way to promote follow-up talk on this

topic. Adam then overlaps his answer (6) demonstrating that the question is understandable prior to its grammatical completion. He goes on to produce a detailed list. This overlap demonstrates, following Sacks (1992), 'my mind is with you' (cf. Silverman 1997: 133).

With Extract 6.2, Dan's last utterance 'and that's the situation we really didn't want.' (4-5) is the 'upshot' of his prior talk, it works to 'conclude' his argument. IR then produces the utterance '°o:kay.°' (6) which works to mark a possible shift from the prior talk. IR's so-prefaced question topicalises 'people [students] not talking about 'their own experiences' (7-8). Dan repeats (and expands on) the topical focus of the question 'personal experiences' (9) and produces a rising intonational 'doing thinking token' 'um:;' (9) followed by a pause and then goes onto answer the question. This (expanded) repeat and 'doing thinking token' work to hold the floor, and produce Dan as 'doing-thinking-about-how-to-answer-the-question'.

The 'so'-prefaced follow-up question can work to 'unpack' the interviewees' immediately prior answer, the interviewees' topic-talk (Extract 6.1), or the interviewees' and interviewers' immediately prior question and answer sequence(s), their discussion of this particular topic (Extract 6.2). The preface forecasts that the question is, and hence works to produce the topic as, '*just a natural continuation of the prior topic talk*'.

Note how the interviewees' first utterances after the questions (Extract 6.1: 7, 6.2: 9) are produced with minimal delay. Interviewees *may* be treated as accountable, say through a repeat, or re-specification, of the question, if they did not respond. This is relevant not only as the question is the first-part of an adjacency pair, it is sequentially implicative, but also as the question is about *their* prior talk, they 'own' these experiences and they 'should' be knowledgeable about this.

6.2.1 Discussion.

In the 'proto-typical' extracts so far analysed, the interviewers produce themselves as wanting 'detailed/textured' and 'comprehensive/rich' answers. This identity is produced in and through the questions' status as follow-up questions. The 'so'-preface

works to mark or hearably produce these questions (and hence the identity made relevant through them) as a product of the *here-and-now-talk*. The interviewers produce themselves as ‘questioners’, not for the sake of a ‘bureaucratic-agenda’ and not as ‘interrogators’ but as ‘*people-who-want-to-understand*’. The so-preface is central to marking that the ‘answers’ being gained *are not (solely) part of an institutional action but a product of their immediate here-and-now ‘talk’*. However, I should note that something produced as not ‘*solely* a part of an institutional action’ does not deny or silence the institutional context, rather it suggests that this institutional task can best be achieved in and through a non-confrontational and non-interrogational way.

Note that counsellors (cf. Peräkylä 1995, Silverman 1997) and facilitative radio-interviewers (cf. Lawrence 1996) are also concerned to construct themselves as ‘*people-who-want-to-understand*’ rather than as ‘interrogators’ or ‘information gatherers’. Like counsellors and facilitative news interviewers, but *unlike co-conversationalists*, this understanding is not demonstrated through second-stories but routinely established in and through follow-up questions or co-operative formulation sequences. In this way we can begin to see another element of what Heritage (1997) calls the ‘fingerprint of institutionality’.

Forecasting and marking a question as following-up, as a product of the other speaker’s talk, also constructs the answerer as having certain responsibilities. These responsibilities are *in addition to* the rights and responsibilities made relevant by producing the first part of an adjacency pair. In marking that the question is a follow-up question, a product of the here-and-now talk, the ‘answerer’ is positioned as ‘being able to talk on the topic *as they have mentioned it*’. In both the above extracts, the answer either overlaps the questioning turn or is produced with minimal delay. These answering turns may not immediately ‘give the answer’ (see Extract 6.2), but the ‘answerer’ works to hold the floor, to demonstrate they are ‘doing thinking’.

A so-prefaced question can provide the following contextual information with its related conversational rights and responsibilities:

- * It forecasts that the talk that follows is a specific kind of talk, namely ‘follow-up talk’ and marks that talk as a ‘natural continuation’ of the prior talk, as a product of the ‘here and now’ contingencies of the interaction.
- * It works to say ‘I’m not responsible for the topic of this question, in fact you are, as you introduced this topic and it is of interest to me at this stage and I would like you to provide me with more detail’^{4 5}.
- * It reflexively constructs the interviewer as some one who is ‘seeking a detailed account’, that they have been ‘listening closely’, that they are ‘trying to understand’ and that they are ‘working with the other speaker’. It therefore off-sets the identities of ‘interrogator’ or ‘bureaucratic-information gatherer’.
- * In this way the interviewer is ‘doing being a qualitative interviewer’, they are doing their institutional task, gaining detailed talk, but in a ‘facilitative’ way.
- * As the interviewee’s talk is forecast as the resource for the question it produces the interviewee as (partly) responsible for the topic of the question. They are therefore constructed as being able to talk further about that topic.
- * In and through producing detailed and elaborated talk (and ‘doing thinking tokens’), the interviewee can reflexively construct themselves as a ‘thoughtful’ interviewee, responsive to the questions of the interviewer.

The so-preface, in the extracts analysed so far, works to position the interviewers’ search-for-detail as, in part, a product of the here-and-now contingencies of the talk. This re-direction is positioned as a part of *the natural flow of the talk*. In a similar way to both ‘can you’ and ‘and’-prefacing, ‘so’-prefacing seems to ‘soften’ or ‘informalise’ the act of producing *this* question at *this* specific moment. However, with ‘can you’-prefaces, IR works to soften a directive and with ‘and’-prefacing the topic of the

⁴ To draw an analogy from Goffman’s (1981) work, the ‘questioner’ is not the principal/author of the topic of the talk but ‘merely’ the animator.

⁵ I would like to thank Simon Allistone (personal communication) for part of this formulation.

question is produced as a routine-next topic given the prior topic. So-prefacing can add a further layer of 'softness' or 'informality' compared to the other prefaces.

6.3 So-prefaced questions: 'just' following the broader agenda of the interview.

As already noted, the so-prefaced question can work to produce the interviewer as 'not responsible' for the topic of the question and to produce the talk in a more 'faciliative' frame. In the above extracts, and the majority of so-prefaced questions in the data-set, the local, here-and-now, activity, is produced as 'responsible for' the questions. In Extracts 6.3, 6.4 and 6.5 below, the *broader* interaction they are both involved, the *interview* itself, is cast as 'responsible for' the question. As such, so-prefacing can produce *the activity they are both involved in - the interview - as (partly) 'responsible for' the topic of the question.* Let us now briefly view this in action.

Extract 6.3

1 IR: and how much do=you=use.
2 (0.6)
3 hal: depends.
4 (0.3)
5 IR: on what.
6 (2.0)
7 B b b b b B=
8 ((load noise - sound of pool ball hitting table))
9 hal: =how much money have you got?
10 IR: °(, .)°
11 (0.8)
12 hal: >come on we've finished now.< so we'll play
13 a game of pool,
14 IR: five minutes yeah,
15 (0.2)
16 hal: ahh.
17 IR: so um: (.) have you used anything else ° a part ←
18 from draw or any other drugs ()°=
19 hal: =weed. whizz.

Extract 6.4

- 1 fran: [most=of]=the leaflets are pretty shit in that.
2 IR: °right°
3 ((for 4 seconds both speakers laugh in overlap,
4 includes untranscribable talk scattered with laughter))
5 IR: >it'll go ↑beep<
6 ((for 2 seconds laughter in overlap continues))
7 fran: .hhh hh.
8 IR: er:m. so:: (1.2) was that good because it was ←
9 someone who kinda been involved with it
10 fran: °y[eah, yeah,] definatly >cause [I thin]k<
11 IR: [or was that.] [()]
12 (0.3)
13 fran: kinda of >he was°< telling us about it researching.

Extract 6.5

- 1 dan: °yeah a-levels° °°()°°
2 IR: okay, erm: (0.4) >okay. so thin:<king, (0.5) specifically ←
3 about the peer=ed group, [can you tell
4 dan: [°mm,°
5 IR: me:, erm how you first heard about it and
6 °when that was.°
7 dan: er:m (0.7) when I first heard about it it was mentioned

These extracts (6.3, 6.4 and 6.5) share two common features: they are so-prefaced questions which work to promote talk that is topically-disjunctive from the immediately prior talk. However they represent a different ‘activity’. In Extracts 6.3 and 6.4, the questions work to ‘*return* to the activity at hand’, the activity of the interviewing, after a ‘breach’ in the interaction. In Extract 6.5, the question works to ‘introduce a *new* activity’, a ‘fresh’ topic of talk.

With Extract 6.3 and 6.4, the topic of the talk has shifted from ‘interview-talk’ to the interview context itself as an explicit topic of talk. In Extract 6.3, Hal works to close the interview (7-13) by ‘inviting’ IR to play pool. In Extract 6.4, Mel and IR both laugh (3-7) at Mel’s use of the utterance ‘pretty shit’ (1). In both cases, the speakers (temporarily) have shifted from the identities of ‘interviewer’ and ‘interviewee’. The

so-prefaced questions (arrowed) work to re-invoke these identities and re-open the topic of the prior talk. The so-prefaces both forecast 'follow-up' talk and are used as resources to mark the shifts in the trajectory of the talk - back to the activity of the interaction, doing interview-talk - *and* a shift in their concomitant identities. Both interviewees orientate to the return to 'interview-talk' and produce answer with minimal delay (Extract 6.3: 19; 6.4: 10, 13)⁶.

With Extract 6.5, the question is topically-disjunctive. This question comes very near the start of the interview. The prior talk has been centred on Dan's 'social' and 'school' life, and in this sequence they were doing 'ice-breaker talk'. IR's question (2-3, 5-6) works to introduce a new topical area 'the peer-ed group' (3) something that has not been discussed in the prior *recorded* talk. I take it that, as the reason for this interview is centred on Dan's activity 'as a peer-educator', this topic would have been talked about in prior communications (verbal or textual) and that both parties 'know' that this is the 'underlying reason for the talk'. At this point in the taped talk, this 'underlying reason' *is made relevant by the speakers* and importantly is produced *as the reason for the shift in the topic*. Note that IR says 'so thin: <king, (0.5) specifically' (2). The category-modifier 'specifically' says not only 'now-produce-detailed-specific-talk' but also invokes the talk that follows as being connected to the 'specific reason' for the interaction, 'talking-about-the-peer-ed-group'.

6.3.1 Discussion

With these extracts the *broader* activity of the interaction they are involved in - *the interview context* - is cast as 'responsible for' of the specific shifts in topics (and identities). This comes off, in part, in and through the so-prefaces. They work hearably to produce a connection with something prior, in Extract 6.3 and 6.4, the talk prior to the 'breach' and concomitant shift in identities and in Extract 6.5, the 'underlying reason' for the interaction, talk-about-peer-education. The so-preface laminates a further layer of interactional relevancies of asking these specific questions. It works to say '*I'm not solely responsible for the topic of this question, the question is a*

⁶ I should note that although Hal latches his answer to IR's question, it is very much a 'minimal' answer (and is orientated to as such by IR [data not given]). Hal works, in some way, to document his 'resistance to a return to the interview'.

product of the broader activity, the interview, we are both involved in and which it is part of my job to facilitate’.

I want to stress that the so-preface is only *one part* of the contextual information work that produce the questions as they are. This is most clearly seen in Extract 6.5, where the interviewers question is layered with prefacing work. I now want to consider Extract 6.5 in more detail, with special reference to the different ‘layers’ of the contextual information work in the question.

6.3.2 *An economy to prefacing work: a case (re)considered*

In Extract 6.5, the question is prefaced by ‘okay, erm: (0.4) >okay. so’(2). The first ‘okay,’ works to acknowledge the prior talk *and* forecast a possible shift in both speaker incipency and topic. Note the upward intonation which works to produce the utterance as ‘doing acknowledgement’. IR produces a ‘doing thinking token’ (‘erm:’ 2) which works to further claim the floor. The pause is produced as his pause, then he produces some talk at a faster pace than the prior talk, which works to say ‘the-floor-is-now-mine’. The second ‘okay.’ utterance is intonationally ‘distinct’ from the first. It slightly falls away, and comes off as if it is ‘said to himself’ and it clearly forecasts that a new activity is underway. This reflexively produces the prior talk and silence as him ‘doing-thinking-what-question-to-ask’. This intonation on the second ‘okay’ and the speed of the talk mark that he is doing-*something-else-other-than-receipting-the-prior-talk*’, as well as (re)claiming the floor as his. IR then produces a so-preface, *but only after* all this other prefacing work.

The so-preface forecasts that the talk to follow will be connected talk and that it is connected to some ‘thing’. Note that it comes *after* a group of utterances ‘okay, erm: (0.4) >okay. so’(2) that worked to signal a possible shift in topic. The “something” in this case is the ‘underlying-reason-for-the-interview’, and this is marked in and through the utterance ‘>okay. so thin:<king, (0.5) specifically about the peer=ed group,’ (2-3) as this is then produced as a preface in and of itself. Note how Dan reflexively produces this *as a preface*, through his utterance ‘[°mm,°’(4) which works to say ‘I have heard what you are saying, I understand, please continue’. This is a ‘lovely’ way to co-operatively mark the

prior talk as prefatory.

Following the preface, IR does not immediately produce the question delivery component instead he produces another preface ‘can you tell me:, erm how’ (3, 5) and only then does he produce a ‘WH-question’. This second prefacing utterance, further, reflexively marks the prior talk as working to align the hearer as to ‘how to understand the talk and respond to this’. Following the analysis in the last chapter the ‘can you’ preface works to “can we now focus on this *new* issue in detail?”. Dan produces an answer with minimal delay. He works to mark he is attending to the question (but-not-as-yet-ready-to-answer-it) by producing a ‘doing thinking token’ (7) at the TRP and as noted above, this is ‘legitimate’ interviewee work. The pause that follows is his pause. With his answer he repeats the utterances IR used in producing the question delivery component. This repetition clearly marks Dan as working ‘specifically/unambiguously/unequivocally’ to answer the prior question.

Importantly, the so-preface in Extract 6.5 is only *one part* in an extended/elaborated prefacing sequence that IR undertakes. Its role is to inform the other speaker explicitly that ‘I’m not responsible for this talk, neither are you, in fact the activity *we* are both engaged in is, as this is the reason why *we* are here’. Without the ‘so’ the utterance ‘thin:<king, (0.5) specifically’ is hearable as a ‘directive’, *with* the so-preface the (possible) harshness of this ‘directive’ is reduced. It works to ‘soften’ how the talk that follows it is to heard, it marks the directive as the ‘upshot’ of the activity in which they are engaged. The specific work of the so-preface is quite ‘subtle’, especially as it is embedded in a lot of other prefacing work.

I want to briefly note that in most of the above extracts, and with so-prefacing in general in this data-set, a ‘simple’ so-prefaced question (a question produced without a lot of ‘other prefacing’ work) is the routine. In this way, they appear to get a lot of work done, they are *economical* and ‘come off’ without ‘a lot of other work’⁷. However in Extract 6.5, we have prefaces to prefaces, preliminaries to preliminaries [pre-pre’s]

⁷ See footnote one for other examples of so prefaced questions in the thesis.

(Schegloff 1980) through which IR works to account for his actions. This explicit ‘forecasting’ or ‘leading up to’ work that is produced in and through the pre-pre’s marks that something ‘delicate’ is going on. By ‘delicate’ I mean delicate-for-the-purposes-of-this-specific-interaction-at-this-specific-moment. Despite the fact that IR is invoking a ‘radical *topic* shift’ in this case the ‘delicacy’ is not centred on the *specific* topic of the talk but rather on *sequential* issues: that the next turn invokes *a* new (disjunctive) topic. What I want to note through this brief discussion is that at some moments, so-prefacing is simply not enough, that it can be *un*-economical without other work ‘alongside-it’. I will return to this idea below and in the conclusion.

Taken as a whole, the extended/elaborated prefacing in Extract 6.5 works to attend to the ‘radical’ topic change, the shift in focus onto the ‘business-of-the-interview’. It works, in part, to provide a warrant for the shift in topic as well as how the question is to be heard and attended to.

The action in the Extract 6.5, above, is important as it demonstrates, following Sacks, the way contextual information can work to ‘fix’ meaning to an action and attend to the possible difficulties hearers can have of ‘why this action now?’. At some points, a so-prefaced question, without *other* prefacing work, is ‘not enough’, it is ‘un-economical’ for the here-and-now interactional context.

I want now to offer an example that demonstrates the ‘strengths’ of a specific version of so-prefacing, a ‘*so you said*’-preface. This can *doubly* forecast and mark interviewers’ questions as ‘merely’, or ‘just’, a product of the here-and-now. In the example below, this feature of producing-the-question-as-a-product-of-the-here-and-now-talk ‘comes off’ despite (or because of) the institutional context of the interaction becoming opaque.

6.4 The ‘invisible’ becomes ‘visible’ or the ‘unsaid’ is ‘said’

Prior to this sequence, the talk had centred on whether Dan, his friends or ‘acquaintances’ have used illegal drugs. On finding that none of them have, we enter the talk when IR asks what he might do if he found out one of them did (1-2).

Extract 6.6

- 1 IR: °<o:kay.>° and would you be tempted
2 to distance yourself >from them at
3 all= [()]<
4 dan: =I [don't think distance no, °I just=think°
5 I'd probably be er °just a little more (0.4)
6 thinking about what I said a(huh) ((hiccup?))
7 bit more°
8 IR: °right.° °°okay.°° ((very, very, very quiet))
9 °.h[h e:]rm, (0.8) o:kay:: (0.3)
10 dan: [hhh]
11 IR: er.m::,°=°°talked about that bit°°
12 ((as if said to himself)) (0.4)
13 oKay:: the du- du- (0.6) so==you've-, said-
14 that yu-, yu- you REG,istered. that your were
15 interested then what was the next, (0.2)
16 thing, that. happened,
17 dan: well the nex:, the next stage is they
18 e::rm, (0.2) >well we went through< and

We enter the talk with an ‘°<o:kay.>°’ (1), through which IR shifts from the prior talk and moves to an and-prefaced contingent question. These combined features work to say ‘I heard what you’ve said and I understand this and now I want to ask you this related question’⁸. Dan latches his talk (4), denying the relevance of the ‘idea that-he-would-distance-himself-from-a-drug-user’ and works to downgrade such a categorisation. IR receipts this with a very ‘intonationally flat’ (and slightly falling) acknowledgement token ‘°right.°’ (8) which works to close the topic. He then produces, as the transcript notes, a very, very, very quiet rising-falling ‘°°okay.°°’ (8). This is *almost* inaudible⁹.

Now what sort of work does a barely audible ‘okay’ do? It is either working to close the prior talk and signal a shift in the topical trajectory of the talk or IR is attending to

⁸ Interestingly, as noted in the prior chapter, and-prefacing can produce the question as a routine-next action in connection to the prior talk. In this example, IR produces the prior talk as responsible for the topic of the question *but does not personalise this*; think of how the question could ‘come off’ differently if IR had asked ‘so would you be tempted’, which produces the question as following on from *your* talk.

Dan's hiccups. I feel it is the first as it does not have the 'animated' quality that a 'are-you-all-right' okay would have if it were to be heard as attending to the hiccups. The '°right.° °°okay.°°' (8) work together, 'right' acknowledging the prior talk and the 'okay' working to claim the floor for IR. However, the volume of the talk may introduce another possibility. Is IR 'talking to himself'? Is this, following Goffman (1959), backstage work played out frontstage? I will return to this idea below.

IR then takes an inbreath (9), this is overlapped by Dan with a outbreath (10) which could be connected to Dan's hiccups. IR overlaps Dan's outbreath with the utterance '°e::rm,°' (9). In doing so, he produces himself as 'doing thinking'. The pause that follows this is hearable as his pause as he has worked, in part, to claim the floor. The second '°:kay:::' (9) is clearly audible compared to the first but still reasonably quiet. The fact that is audible and clearly produced suggests that IR is marking that he has the floor and that the prior sequence is 'closed'.

The pause that follows the second '°:kay:::' (9) is now clearly IR's pause and what follows this is of great interest. Firstly, IR produces the utterance '°erm::,°'(11). This sounds distinct from the first 'erm', in some ways less 'doing thinking for a *co-participant*'. Note that the first 'erm' was produced, in part, to claim the floor, IR already has the floor now. This utterance is latched to a stretch of talk that is even quieter than the already quiet talk.

Note the utterance '°erm::,°=°°talked about that bit°°' (11-12). As reported on the transcript, it sounds as though this is "said to himself". The very low volume seems to make this relevant. From the initial latched '°erm::,°=', the tone also seems to drop down slightly, as if the utterance is 'falling away'.

Now, this is the point where we can say that backstage-work-enters-the-frontstage¹⁰. By this I mean the utterance invokes an *agenda*. It makes hearable what is otherwise

⁹ I have listened to this sequence again, and again, and again ... and only after that could I make out the work going on. I thought a gap in talk had occurred, and then, maybe IR was taking a very long inbreath.

¹⁰ However this is a difficult point to address, compare '°erm::,°=' (11) with the initial '°e::rm,°' (9). Through the initial 'erm' IR produces himself as 'doing thinking', and this is specifically produced for

left 'unsaid' - that there is some form of structure to the talk. We should also ask, why this utterance now?

Part of the clue is in the volume and tone of the talk. IR is 'doing talking to myself', self-directed talk rather than for a co-participant. The lexical choice, tone and volume all point to IR physically looking down at a topic guide. The utterance positions him as 'doing searching'. In the absence of any video or ethnographic data, I should point out that I know that IR did have a topic-guide with him in the interviews. Through his verbal action he could be accounting for his physical action.

If we look to what occurs after this utterance, the claim can be strengthened. An intra-turn pause is produced after the talk (12) and this is clearly his pause, then he produces the utterance 'oKay:.' (13). Note the increase in volume, the emphasis on the 'K' sound and the rising-falling contour. These all work to highlight that a *shift* from the prior activity is occurring. This shift is with reference to the prior actions, possibly looking at the form, and forecasts that 'I-am-now-ready-to-ask-you-a-question'. The prior talk is also reflexively positioned as 'doing some work other than directly addressing you', that what went before was an aside, as IR now works to clearly address Dan.

IR starts to produce a question 'the du- du-' (13), this fails to come off, he pauses and then he repairs his talk. He restarts with the utterance 'so-=you've-, said- that yu-', (13-14), a 'so you've said'-preface. The 'so' is 'abruptly' produced, slightly stabbed out and bleeds into a rising intonation 'you've' which is also slightly cut off, this is followed by 'said- that yu-' which matches the rhythm of 'so you've'. When transcribed, this appears quite harsh yet has a certain rhythmic quality, especially as both parts mirror each other. IR hesitates again 'yu-' (14) produces the third 'you' (14) cleanly and emphasises the first part of 'REG,istered.' (14), the talk that follows this is produced smoothly and his pitch and rhythm settle. The question delivery component 'what was the

a *co-participant*, its role is to clearly demonstrate to the other speaker 'that I am in the process of thinking'. The utterance '°erm::,°=°°talked about that bit°°' also produces IR as 'doing thinking', yet this is *not* specifically produced for a *co-participant*, but its role is to clearly demonstrate to the other speaker 'that-I-am-in-the-process-of-thinking'. So, both utterances work to make backstage work 'visible', however '°e::rm,°' (9) is produced as 'frontstage work' and '°erm::,°=°°talked about that bit°°' (11-12) is produced as 'backstage work'.

next, (0.2) thing, that. happened,' (15-16), is produced very smoothly, the intonation on the words emphasises, and works to produce, a 'questioning tone'. Dan then, 'unproblematically', produces an answer to this question.

Now there are two things I want to highlight about this extract. First, through the utterance 'erm::, talked about that bit' (11-12), IR demonstrates, or makes relevant to the co-participant, *that there are a set of issues that this interview will cover*. He demonstrates, and marks, that this talk, is in part 'agenda-led'. So an institutional agenda is hearably (and quite possibly visually) orientated too. The context of the talk, the unsaid, is said. He also marks that one topic is now 'closed'.

Second, when IR does return to the task at hand, and what went before is re-positioned as an aside, he attempts one way of opening the talk 'the du- du-' (13). This fails, so he re-starts with the utterance 'so=you've-, said- that yu-', (13-14). The so-preface invokes the question that follows it as connecting to the prior talk, this connection is *doubly* produced with the utterance 'you've-, said-'. The talk and the question are forecast as a product of the here-and-now context, the talk that went before, and not the institutional agenda (which I take the topic guide represents). The prefacing work marks the question as a product of the here-and-now context, marks it as 'just connected' to Dan's talk¹¹. Interestingly, when one questioning format fails he adopts a 'so you've said'-preface. This is a 'stronger' version of so-prefacing, that doubly and clearly documents that the question is 'just' driven by the interviewees prior topic-talk.

This is an important extract (hence my detailed analysis) as it makes the taken-for-granted visible to us, and most obviously, to Dan. It does leave me with the question of how much at other points in the interaction is either the topic guide or the tape-recorder visually attended to during the talk but not attended to verbally. The context of the talk, as an interview, is very explicitly orientated to and it is interesting that when it does emerge in the interaction it is quickly 'pushed away'. It is 'pushed away' in and through forecasting the talk as a product of the 'here-and-now' contingencies of the interaction.

¹¹ Although, as Anssi Peräkylä (personal communication) has pointed out, it could also be 'doing connectedness' between Dan's prior talk *and* an agenda-item on IR's topic-guide.

This feature of so-prefacing, producing the talk as ‘just’ follow-up talk, can also work to ‘off-set’ some of the possible interactional problems made relevant by producing a ‘provocative’ question. It is to this issue, so-prefacing as a method to enable possibly ‘delicate’ or ‘provocative’ topics of talk to be topicalised to which I will now turn.

6.5 So prefaces and ‘delicate topics’

Prior to this sequence, IR has asked the question ‘so can you tell me why why did you put yourself forward at that stage’. I will gloss Dan’s reply as ‘I enjoy learning things’, ‘I like to teach’, ‘I come from a medical family and we discuss drugs’ and ‘it is something that interests me’¹². IR’s question at 1 (below) is contingent on this, note the utterance ‘any other particular interest’ (1).

Extract 6.7

- 1 IR: okay=was there any other particular interest in the
 2 fact that it was drugs >I mean< is that something
 3 that is meaningful to you: pa[rticularly or not=
 4 dan: [°well-°
 5 =>yeah, well it=is I mean cause >>it’s everywhere
 6 I think is mean- its got to be meaningful t- t- to
 7 you know<< a greater< or lesser. extent >to everyone<
 8 [because there is so]: much of it aro:und, and:
 9 IR: [°< r i g h t . >°]
 10 dan: er, you know it’s good to know things as well
 11 °I think its er° simply because its >you know< its so much=
 12 IR: =°mm:°
 13 dan: °you know in the news° °°and everything it’s er-°°
 14 (0.4)
 15 IR: so you saY it’[s it’s so much around [>and then you
 16 dan: [() [°↑mm:°<
 17 IR: talk about news=.hh but (.) do you get the impression
 18 it’s so much around< from. (1.2) things like tv and
 19 newspaper [which may be outside your
 20 dan: [mm.
 21 IR: direct (0.3) experienc[e >or is that something that .h
 22 dan: [mm.

- 23 IR: is also your aware of< in your life as with your friends=
 24 dan: =yeah.=
 25 IR: =and going out [>(and such,)<]
 26 dan: [↑ e r m : : ,] >well its I- I think its probably
 27 more around b- by< the media and so forth but I mean a- .h >as
 28 well just discussion as well< I mean erm m- mid way

IR's follow-up question at 1 'asks' Dan whether the category 'drugs' could be relevant to his interest in becoming a peer-educator. Dan overlaps IR's talk, demonstrating that he understands the question and that 'further talk is unnecessary'. Also note that his talk is produced at a fast pace and then is produced at an *even* faster pace than this.

Dan is clearly doing some 'character work' here, constructing himself as a member of the group 'everyone' (7). IR receipts this position at 9 and Dan continues to talk, documenting why drugs are 'meaningful to everyone'¹³. He then switches to another reason why it's meaningful to him, because 'it's good to know things as well'(10) and documents *his* feelings ('I think', 12) why this knowledge is good: 'simply because its its so much ... in the news' (12-13). Dan's final utterance '°°and everything it's er-°°' (13) is produced at a *very* low volume. A gap in the talk occurs (14) and IR produces a 'so you say'-prefaced question.

The initial question I want to ask is 'how is it that the 'so you say'-prefaced question comes off?'. Initially, there is a gap in the talk prior to the question, that is transformed into an inter-turn pause. Prior to this gap, Dan's talk had dropped in volume, firstly with the utterance '°you know in the news°' (13) and then drops even lower with the generalised completer (Jefferson 1990) '°°and everything' (13). Note that this staggered drop in volume, along with the generalised completer, is hearable as working to close the talk as Dan is doing 'nothing further to add'. However, the utterance 'it's er-°°' *forecasts* the possibility of more talk. Dan does not produce any further talk, so a gap in the talk comes off. IR then, and *only after giving Dan some space to talk*, produces a question. The gap in the talk occurs in and through Dan *forecasting the*

¹² For a detailed discussion of this question and answer sequence see Chapter Eight.

¹³ Note where IR places his response token (9), straight after 'everyone', this 'licenses' Dan's prior character work.

possibility of further talk but not producing any. In this way, IR works to offer Dan the ‘space’ to speak (and thereby is ‘doing qualitative interviewer’).

As IR takes the floor, the initial utterance ‘so you saY it’[s so much’(15) is produced quite ‘forcefully’ with a noticeable increase in volume, especially compared to Dan’s prior talk. Dan produces an untranscribable utterance (16) in overlap with the ‘it’[s’ (15). This may be an attempt to complete the talk he has forecast, but it is abandoned as IR clearly has the floor.

Again, as with Extract 6.6, IR’s question (15) is doubly marked as contingent, both through the ‘so’-preface and the utterance ‘you saY’, both work to forecast the talk as follow-up talk. The utterance ‘you saY’ clearly forecasts the question that follows as connected to some ‘thing’ Dan has uttered. This ‘thing’ is then named ‘it’s so much around’ (15), the ‘it’s’ referring to ‘drugs’. Dan acknowledges the formulation of his prior talk (16)

The question-preface, ‘so you saY it’[s it’s so much around’ makes relevant that IR is doing follow-up talk, that he is *merely*-following-up some thing that Dan has said (and in this example the ‘thing’ is made explicit)¹⁴. The talk that follows, and therefore the question as a whole, should be heard within the context of this utterance and it is connected, in some way, to this specific ‘issue’.

Now this issue (‘that-drugs-is-so-much-around’) is produced *at this moment* as ‘delicate’. Note how both IR’s and Dan’s prior talk produced the category ‘drugs’ as delicate. IR does this through his repair work (the qualification [2] and downgrade [3]) and Dan does this through the speed of his talk and his work to show that this category is relevant to the MCD *all* people (4-8, 10-11, 13). IR’s question follows-up not only something he produced as delicate but that also was attended to by Dan as delicate. With the question-preface at 15, IR is clearly positioning something Dan said ‘as responsible for’ the question that will follow. So, to paraphrase Sacks, the preface works to ‘inform Dan what he should do when the question is over’ or alternatively ‘to

keep Dan attentive to how to read the question.’ (1992, Spring 1970: 274). *Dan should read this question as a product of his talk.* And Dan does read this preface in a certain way, he produces an acknowledgement token, *he acknowledges that this is what he has said.* In so doing, he is making his position clear, he is ‘reinforcing’ that being in the category ‘interested in drugs’ is the same as being in the MCD ‘everyone’ as ‘it’s so much around’. Note that this overlap is produced prior to any question-delivery component being produced. Dan is saying ‘my mind is with’ in and through doing agreement, but he is also saying ‘my mind is with on this specific point and all future points you raise are, as yet, *awaiting* my agreement’.

Both speakers are ‘doing treading carefully’. IR is working to make *very explicit* (note the double preface ‘so you saY’) that the talk that follows is just following on from the prior talk *and* that he is not ‘solely’ responsible for the talk, namely the question, that will emerge. Dan is documenting his agreement with IR’s understanding of his talk, and marking that this, and possibly not anything that follows from this, is relevant to him.

Dan’s response token (16) overlaps with IR producing the connective ‘[>and’ (15). Note that this is produced at a faster pace than the prior talk. IR is rushing through a possible TRP, he is working to hold the floor. He produces the utterance ‘then you talk about news’ (15-17), which again works to document that he is following-up Dan’s talk. IR then latches his inbreath to the prior utterance ‘news’, which works to hold of any other claim to the floor. He then produces the contrast utterance ‘but (.)’ (17), which is followed by a micro-pause. Prior to this, IR’s has been producing ‘co-operative formulations’ (cf. Heritage 1985) of Dan’s talk, the ‘but’ forecasts that the talk may no longer be ‘wholly-in-alignment’ with Dan’s prior talk. And this reflexively produces what went before as ‘setting the scene’ (the contextual information) for what is to follow¹⁵.

¹⁴ It is also hearable as possibly forecasting a ‘challenge’ to Dan’s prior talk. I will return to this possible reading below.

¹⁵ Such work, ‘so you say X and then you say Y **but** ...’ can be hearable as argumentative/interrogational work (c.f. Atkinson and Drew 1979, Hutchby 1996). As I outline below, *in this context* it is produced and orientated to as ‘a search for deeper insight’ and *not* a challenge to the veracity of Dan’s prior talk. See also my discussion of Hutchby’s work on talk-radio interaction below.

Following the contrast utterance ‘but’ IR *begins* to produce a question. Note the slight pause, ‘but (.) do’ (17), prior to the interrogative ‘do’ in the question. This adds emphasis and marks what follows it, the question-component, as a ‘fresh’ act. The first part of the question is as follows: ‘do you get the impression it’s so much around< from. (1.2) things like tv and newspaper’ (17-19). Note that IR’s talk slows down with the utterance ‘from.’ this emphasises that word. The intonational contour also adds emphasis, with ‘fr’ stressed with a slightly rising contour and then the ‘m.’ falling. The, relatively long, pause after this adds further emphasis and produces IR as ‘doing thinking what to say’, or more specifically forecasting what is to come as ‘doing *carefully*-thinking what to say’. IR then partially repeats some ‘thing’ both he *and* Dan has said, he produces the utterance ‘news’ (13 *and* 17) as a gloss, and unpacks it as ‘things like tv and newspaper’(19). Dan now produces a response token, the utterance ‘[mm.’ (20). IR goes on to say ‘which maybe outside your direct (0.3) experienc[e’ (19,21). This utterance adds to the question and qualifies it in an important way. It forecasts a contrast, note the contrasting categories ‘*outside* your direct experience’-‘*inside* your direct experience’. Dan then receipts the talk (22).

The utterance ‘or is that something that .h is also your aware of< in your life as with your friends=
=and going o[ut >(and such,)<’ (21, 23, 25) is the point at which IR is no longer repeating (either exactly or through unpacking a ‘gloss’) some ‘thing’ that Dan has said. With the prior talk, IR has been ‘doing a co-operative recycle’ (cf. Heritage and Watson 1979) of Dan’s prior talk and hearably marking that ‘something-else-is-to-come’. The next talk is in contrast to the prior talk, both in that it is no longer mirroring Dan’s talk *and* that it produced *as* contrasting talk. This has been forecast in the prior talk, through the utterance ‘but’ (17), and made *possibly* relevant through the introduction of one part of the SRP outside-inside ‘your direct (0.3) experienc[e’ and is now forecast *again* through the utterance ‘or’ (21). What the whole question has been ‘leading up to’ has now arrived.

The point of the ‘question’ is now produced, and it asks ‘is that something that .h is also your aware of< in your life as with your friends and going out [>(and such,)<]’ (21,23,25). The key utterance in this question is the first ‘that’, and this refers to (or is an index for) the term ‘*drugs*’. I want to note, *that at no point in the question does IR ever explicitly produce*

the term drugs. This way he is doing a lot of pre-delicate work. I want to produce a gloss of the arrowed part of the question: it works to ask the question ‘*do you or your friends do drugs?*’, and this gloss is what the *whole* of IR’s multi-TCU has been leading up to¹⁶.

A lot of work, connected to constructing the question as ‘how it’s to be heard’, as in ‘this-is-not-a-personal-accusation’, has gone on. We had a huge ‘build-up’ section, what Schegloff (1980) calls a pre-pre sequence, that was *jointly constructed* as a preliminary to preliminary talk. IR, also, worked to explicitly mark the talk as ‘follow-up talk’. Then, what was forecast, ‘delicate-(drugs)-talk’, was produced as a question.

Dan latches a response token to part of IR’s ‘delicate question’. He produces the utterance ‘=yeah.=’ (24). Now this does some ‘lovely’ work, note the falling intonational contour of the utterance. It works to say ‘I’ve heard what you have said and I *acknowledge* it, further talk *by you* is unnecessary’. Dan goes on to make this reading relevant, he overlaps with IR’s talk and produces the utterance ‘↑erm::,’ (26), which marks that ‘he-wants-the-floor’. Dan’s talk that follows (26-28) then works to account for his answer not being in agreement with the second option provided in IR’s

¹⁶ Note that my gloss covers-up a lot of the work that IR does:

(1) The question is, in some ways, produced in a ‘confused’ way. In part, the perturbation in the question wording could document that IR is having trouble in ‘finding-a-suitable-wording-for-a delicate-question’.

(2) IR asks Dan is he ‘aware of’ (23) drugs in his and his friends life. Note the pitch work on this utterance, which draws attention to it. Being aware of is ‘less active’ than ‘having-knowledge-of’.

(3) It is produced with a certain rhythm, or beat, and this beat is only made relevant *after* the utterance ‘is that something that .h is also your aware of<’, after IR’s talk slows. Below, each utterance is put on a separate line, to re-present each beat:

in your life
as with your friends
and going out
[>(and such,)<]

The rhythmic quality produce the talk as ‘a-list-of-things-I-am-used-to-asking-people’, in this way IR produces the talk as ‘something-he-says-a-lot’, as routine. IR is ‘doing don’t take this personally’.

(4) Note the range of MCD’s that IR invokes where Dan might have been ‘aware of’ drugs. By offering a list of *possibilities* of membership to the category ‘awareness of drugs’, IR is not making any one more relevant than the others. He is *not* fixing Dan as a member of any one category, he is *not* sitting in judgement, he is ‘merely’ asking a question.

talk¹⁷. Dan is attending to the prior talk as having a preference for the answer ‘yes-I-have-had-direct-experience-of-drugs’. He produces a ‘dispreferred response’, in that the action of answering the question ‘have you had direct experience of drugs’ is delayed over a large sequence of talk (data not shown) and prefaced. Note, however, that Dan’s answer *is* contiguous (cf. Sacks 1987) with IR’s talk, in fact he works to gain the floor prior to a hearable TRP. In this way, he is doing early disagreement but in a mitigated way.

In this extract, we see how ‘a delicate topic’ is *locally* and *jointly* constructed (cf. Silverman and Peräkylä 1991 b). IR works to produce himself as ‘neutral participant’, especially through the way he works to show how the question, and the talk that follows, is a product of the *here-and-now* talk. Yet his role of ‘*just* doing following-up talk’ is unsettled when the topic being introduced is produced as ‘delicate/sensitive talk’. He attends to this, in part, by producing part of the question in a rhythmic way (with maxim like qualities).

The contextual information, provided by the ‘so you say’-preface and the co-operative recycle of Dan’s talk provide the detail that IR ‘did-not-personally-author-the-question’. The ‘so you say’-preface and formulation are central resources which attends to the potential breach of social solidarity. By producing the question as the upshot of Dan’s talk and *therefore producing Dan as the ‘author’*, the ‘so’-preface works to position IR as *just* following-up Dan’s talk. What is interesting to note is that, in a similar way to the question in Extract 6.5, this question has multiple parts. The so-prefaced part of the question [‘so you saY it’[s it’s so much around [>and then you talk about news=.hh’] does not ‘come off’ as the question delivery component rather what follows is produced as and attended to as question delivery component. The actual ‘question’ comes off as a ‘but’-prefaced question that works to say the talk that follows is a ‘natural/routine/normal

¹⁷ He produces the utterance ‘well its’ (26), which works to preface what follows as an explanation, he then produces a qualification ‘I- I think’, which prefaced the talk as his perspective (and importantly he *owns* this perspective, he is the authority). The utterance ‘probably more around b- by< the media’(27), works to produce what IR suggested before as ‘not-applicable-to-him’. Note the utterance ‘probably’, which mitigates what follows and the emphasis on ‘more’, which emphasises his position in relation to the account that follows.

continuation from, if not in total alignment with, the prior talk'. It works to 'pursue a *more detailed* response' from Dan, one that is centred on IR clearly 'trying to understand' his experience.

Following Hutchby's (1996) work on talk-radio interaction, IR's question could be labelled a 'You say (X), but what about (Y)?' question, where '(X) and (Y) represent, respectively, the attributed claim and the competing version through which the *fault in that claim is identified*' [my emphasis] (60). The question does follow the outline Hutchby offers for this type of 'procedure'. However, he documents how this procedure is used in the ' "pursuit of controversy" ... the practice by which hosts routinely attend to callers' talk as potentially arguable and seek to define callers' claims and assertions as arguable actions, and so to locate, in the details of their talk, resources for opposition' (60). In the present context, qualitative interviews, interviewers *explicitly avoid* 'doing being controversial and/or sceptical'. As the analysis above shows, despite this question being hearable, following Hutchby, as 'oppositional', it does not 'come off' in this way. IR clearly works to downgrade the interrogational/oppositional 'edge' of the question (note how the question is cautiously produced) and, importantly, *Dan does not attend to the question as 'argumentative' or 'interrogational'*.

Again we can see how 'delicacy' is locally produced in and through the '*layers*' of prefacing work. Most of the so-prefaced question in the data-set 'come off' with 'just' a so-preface. The preface can do a lot of work for the speaker, in a similar way to Agnes 'hehh'-preface (see prior chapter, section 5.3), it is a very 'economical' device. However, as shown above in Extracts 6.5, 6.6 and 6.7, at certain moments it becomes only part of broader prefacing work. In Extract 6.7, and the *majority* of the other so-prefaced questions, the interviewer produces the question as 'I'm *just* working with what you just told me' and therefore that they are 'doing being a neutral monitor of the talk'. This works to produce interviewers as they are supposed to be: *neutral yet attentive participants*. It can also work to offset some of the possible interactional problems made relevant by producing such 'provocative' or 'delicate' questions.

6.6 Summary

This chapter has documented how so-prefacing can work to *forecast* that the talk that follows is a specific kind of talk, namely '*follow-up talk*' and mark the topic of the question as a '*natural continuation*' of the prior topic-talk (as a product of the '*here-and-now*' contingencies of the interaction). In and through this action of 'forecasting' interviewers as *not* solely produced as 'responsible for' the topic of the question, they are merely 'following-up' some 'thing' in the prior talk. Through the preface, the interviewers are *marking* that they are interested in understanding what the speaker is saying and that they are trying to 'listen carefully'. The 'so' preface marks, or hearably produces, this and works to 'soften' the impact of the question. In this way, the 'questioners' are 'doing qualitative interviews' and, thereby, doing an institutional task (gaining detailed talk) in a '*facilitative*' way. Without a preface, and the contextual information that it provides, the questions may be hearable as more 'agenda-led', 'confrontational', 'interrogational' or seeking to promote a 'confession'.

I want to stress how so-prefacing can produce *another party (other than the interviewer) as responsible for the topic of the question*. Routinely, so-prefacing produces 'the interviewee's prior answer' or 'the interviewee's and interviewer's prior question and answer sequence(s)' as responsible for the topic of the question. The interviewers are not produced as *solely* responsible for the questions. A small number of so-prefaced questions can produce the *broader activity - the interview context - they are both engaged* as the responsible for the topic of the question. Both actions produce interviewers as *relatively* 'neutral' in introducing the specific topical trajectory that their questions promote.

This action, of producing another party as responsible for the talk is quite common, although with the examples below this work *is a lot more explicit*. Let us view some moments of this in action.

Extract 6.8 [Heritage and Sorjonen 1994: 12]

- 1 HV: Uh:m (0.5) ..hh now fi:rst th' particulars they want ←
2 to know th' baby's father's a:ge. ←
3 (2.0)
4 G: He will b[e,
5 M: [He will (.) nineteen

Extract 6.9 [Silverman 1997: 155]

- 1 C: er: I have to ask you this have you ever injected ←
2 drugs. ←
3 P: No.
4 C: Because they're the sort of highest ris:k (.)

In both of these examples the questioners (HV, C) invoke the agenda of the talk, the activity they are both involved in, as responsible for topic of this specific question.

Extract 6.8 is taken from health-visitor/client interaction. HV is announcing that they must begin to complete a form: 'now fi:rst th' particulars' (1). Note how HV says 'they want to know'(1). Through this, HV *explicitly distances* herself from being responsible for the questions on the form, it is 'they', the 'absent-institutional-agents', who are responsible. Sometimes HVs upgrade this distance: 'These details (.) **I don't know why they want to know** but father's a:ge.' (Heritage and Sorjonen 1994: 23). In this way, HVs invoke the agenda of the talk, the activity they are both involved in (form filling), as responsible for the questions.

Heritage and Sorjonen note that, by *not* producing themselves as the 'author' of the questions, HVs

'can underscore that ... [they] are "doing bureaucracy" rather than "establishing a helpful relationship" ... [They] can separate themselves from the bureaucratic aspects of their visits, and thereby seek to emphasise that the more affiliative relationship with the mother as a "helper" and "befriender" is central to their purposes in the encounter' (1994: 23).

So why do they do this? Put simply¹⁸, many mothers believe that the visit is connected to monitoring them for ‘surveillance and control purposes’. The health-visitors are caught in a dilemma, they are orientated to (and produce themselves) as ‘baby-experts’ rather than the more facilitative identity of ‘helper’ or ‘befriender’. In and through distancing themselves from a ‘bureaucratic’ identity, they can produce themselves in the ‘light in which they would prefer to be seen’.

With Extract 6.9, taken from HIV counsellor-patient interaction, we have related but differently focused work. Now this question is clearly locally produced as ‘topically delicate’. Note the preface ‘I have to ask you this’ (1). This not only forecasts, and reflexively marks, the question as ‘delicate’ but works to invoke a specific (institutional) identity for C. What sort of person ‘has to’ ask questions? It could be anyone, but the answerer could hold them accountable by replying “you don’t have to”. The hearer is probably going to find a reason ‘why they *have* to’, and one possible reason is that the ‘questioner’ is doing an institutional task, that ‘asking questions is part of their job’ or it could be that that person is ‘just plain nosey’.

I take it that, in this case, the preface works to say ‘I would not normally ask such a question and I am only asking it now as this is *part of my job*’¹⁹. Note the follow-up talk that works to further account (‘Because’: 4) for ‘why this question now’. In this example, this question is a product of C’s identity (information-gatherer) and this identity is a product of the activity they are both engaged. Now, with Extract 6.9, the ‘authorship’ is not as explicit as with Extract 6.8. This is in part a product of the personal pronoun ‘I’ (1) being used. If C had used ‘we’, which is a regular practice in HIV counselling (Silverman 1997), the locally produced institutional incumbency would have been a lot more ‘visible’ as the questioner would have explicitly produced themselves as ‘speaking-on-behalf-of-the-institution’.

Hootkoup-Steenstra (2000) notes that similar practices go on in structured interviewing, with interviewers producing utterances like “According to me they should have asked X

¹⁸ See Heritage and Sefi 1992 for a more detailed and comprehensive account.

¹⁹ Especially as this talk is probably embedded in a broader series of questions making up the ‘history-taking’ phase of the counselling interaction.

but instead they asked Y” and “I’m sorry I have to ask this” prior to ‘problematic’ questions. She calls speakers producing the *activity* as responsible for the talk, the ‘information delivery footing’. Clearly, for ‘counsellors’, ‘health-visitors’ and ‘structured interviewers’ such prefacing strategies, which work to document or mark their ‘relationship’ to the talk, attend to some of the interactional ‘delicacies’ made relevant in and through ‘doing their institutional task’²⁰.

6.7 Conclusion: Prefaces and Footings

The above analysis and discussion in this chapter and the prior chapter has drawn, in part, on Goffman’s (1979/1981) notion of ‘footings’, specifically how ‘speakers’ can adopt a variety of ‘production formats’ (hereafter, following Levinson’s (1988) development of this work, ‘production *roles*’). Goffman notes that a ‘speaker’ can adopt various production roles, or ‘footings’, which produces the speaker in a specific relationship to the utterance. Speakers can produce themselves as (and reflexively be produced as), *animators* [the person who *verbalises* the words], *authors* [the person who *composes* the words] and *principals* [the person whose *position the words express*]. As the above work, in both this and the prior chapter, has shown, the qualitative interviewer, in and through prefacing, can work to mark that they are *just* the ‘animator’ of the talk and that they *did not* compose the talk and *is not* expressing their own position in relation to the talk.

Clayman’s (1988, 1992) work shows that adopting the ‘animator footing’ is central to how news interviewers ‘display neutrality’. He notes that news interviewers ‘shift footings [to animator] at specific junctures as a way of adopting a locally neutralistic posture. ... [F]ooting is an orientated-to resource for achieving this posture’ (1992: 169). The extract below clearly demonstrates this:

²⁰ Bergmann’s (1992) work on psychiatric-intake-interview talk also demonstrates how marking the ‘authorship’ of the talk can do a lot of work for speakers.

Extract 6.10 [Clayman 1988: 483]

- IR: Reverend Boesak lemme a pick up a point the ambassador made. ←1
What assurances can you give us that talks between moderates in that
country will take place when it seems that any black leader who is willing
to talk to the government is branded
as the ambassador said a collaborator ←2
and is then punished.
- IE: The ambassador has it wrong. It's not the people ... ←3

Note how IR prefaces the question (arrow 1). This clearly marks both that the question is following-up some prior talk and that IR is not to be 'heard as' the 'author' of the question. IR then works to renew this production role (arrow 2), again marking that he is 'merely' the animator. IE then orientates-to the production role that IR has established (arrow 3). Note how IE marks that the 'target' of his answer - and therefore the person responsible for the content and opinions embedded in the question - as 'The ambassador' and not IR.

Clayman, in his 1992 paper, notes the following points, in relation to news interviewers' production roles and the local production of neutrality:

1. 'Footings shifts [to animator] tend to be restricted to relatively controversial opinion statements' (169).
2. 'Footings shifts [to animator] are renewed during specific controversial words.' (170).
3. 'IRs execute self-repair to shift footings [to animator]' (171).
4. 'IRs avoid affiliating with or disaffiliating from the statements they report.' (173)

In the qualitative interview context, 'and', 'can you', and 'so'-prefaced utterances can also work to mark the footing of the speaker as 'merely' the animator and therefore *neutralistic*. I have shown in this chapter, and in the prior chapters, that qualitative interviewers, in my data, avoid 'affiliating with or disaffiliating from the statements they report'. Qualitative interviewers not only deny 'authorship', they also refrain from endorsing or rejecting the views as they routinely work to produce the *other-present-speaker* as 'principal'.

Equally, in this chapter (Extract 6.6: 13) we have seen an interviewer ‘self-repair to shift footings’ to an animator, in and through a so-preface, after marking that the talk ‘has an agenda’. However, unlike news interview talk, this footing shift to animator is *not only* ‘restricted to relatively controversial’ talk and it *not only* ‘renewed during specific controversial words’, *it occurs routinely throughout the talk*. When ‘relatively controversial’ questions, be they sequentially ‘delicate’ [see Extract 6.5] or topically ‘delicate’ [see Extract 6.6 and 6.7], are produced, the interviewer does *some further* prefacing work.

Importantly, Clayman (1988, 1992) also shows that news interviewees do not ‘ordinarily’ orientate-to the interviewers’ questions as expressing their personal opinions. Similarly in qualitative interviews, I have no data (as yet) where interviewees attend to interviewers’ questions ‘as being an expression of’ interviewers’ ‘personal opinions’. Qualitative interviewees do not work to produce interviewers as personally responsible for the topic of the questions.

I want to stress that qualitative interviewers routinely construct themselves as ‘merely’ the ‘animators’, in and through prefacing, and importantly, in contrast to news interviews, this appears to be *relatively independent of* how ‘controversial’ the question is. Rather than see the ‘locally neutralistic posture’ of animator as occurring at ‘specific junctures’, this is something that is routinely orientated-to *throughout* qualitative interview talk and is relatively independent of whether the talk is ‘controversial’. So, a question emerges: why do qualitative interviewers *routinely* produce themselves as ‘animators’?

One of the ways to think through this is to look again at the work on news interviews and the related work on talk-radio. Greatbatch (1992) notes, of the ‘basic tasks and constraints’ in news interviewing the ‘most obvious’ is to for news interviewers to ‘elicit information or opinion from newsmakers, experts or other persons.’(269). News interviewers routinely engage in ‘oppositional’ talk and this activity is a central way, if not *the* central way, to produce this ‘information and opinion’. Similarly, in talk-radio, Hutchby (1996) documents how radio-presenters talk is centred on ‘the pursuit of

controversy' (see also Fitzgerald 1999). As Clayman (1988) notes, footing shifts is one of the methods which,

'enable interviewers to perform *the complex task of being interactionally "adversarial" while remaining officially "neutral"*, that is, to introduce viewpoints that contradict those of the interviewees, not as a matter of personal expression, but as a way of further soliciting interviewees' own views. It is by means of these procedures *that interviewers can sustain the accountability of their conduct* before a large and diverse array of critical observers.' [my emphasis] (490).

However, as noted in Chapter Four, Lawrence's (1996) work on a news interview identifies a complement to these journalistic practices: '*being interactionally facilitative while remaining officially neutral*' [my emphasis] (209).

When 'doing being a facilitative interviewer' the speaker does not promote talk through 'oppositional', or 'non-cooperative', questions or formulations. Rather, talk is promoted in and through

'(a) the production of cooperative but neutralistic questions and (b) the suppression of transition relevance at key points in the [interviewee's] answering activity' (Lawrence 1996: 201).

In Chapters Three and Four, I documented how qualitative interviewers routinely 'suppress' talk at TRP in the interviewees' answers. I noted that, this facilitates interviewees (temporarily) controlling the topical trajectory of the talk and facilitates (temporarily) producing themselves 'in the best light'. I also noted that, in and through producing follow-up questions, qualitative interviewers' produce themselves as 'following up' and 'working with' the interviewees and hence as both cooperative *and* neutral.

Prefacing, be it 'and' 'can you' or 'so', is a *very economical* way to *mark*, or hearably produce, both neutrality *and* facilitation/cooperation. As noted repeatedly above, when 'controversial' or 'delicate' talk does emerge *other* prefacing work is also employed and it is employed not only to invoke the interviewers 'neutrality' *but also* to avoid the speaker being heard as 'adversarial' or 'interrogational'. Prefacing can add a facilitatory or cooperative edge. In this way, it attends to, *and documents*, the

‘fundamental paradox’ of research interviewing: that the interviewer is supposed to undertake an institutional task in a conversational way (cf. Converse and Schuman 1974, Mazeland and ten Have 1996/1998).

One of the methods that qualitative interviewers routinely draw on to attend to this ‘demand’ is prefacing, since it locally produces the speakers as ‘doing being *facilitative* and *neutralistic*’. The next chapter begins to outline some of the other methods that interviewers can draw on to attend to this ‘paradox’. The focus shifts towards the methods embedded in questions and question-endings that interviewers can use to produce themselves as ‘facilitative and neutralistic interviewers’.

Non-preface features of question design

7.1 Introduction

In his 'guide' to semi-structured interviewing, Smith (1995) informs us that

'Questions should be neutral rather than value-laden or leading.' (13)

He offers an example of 'good' interview technique in respect to neutrality:

Bad: Do you agree that the prime minister is doing a bad job?

Better: What do you think of the prime minister's record in office so far?

[Author's emphasis] (13).

Now this example may appear relatively unremarkable or trivial; it is but one small moment in Smith's discussion of the theory and practice of interviewing. However, it actually contains a lot of information for us (the readers) to produce ourselves as "the sort of interviewers we are supposed to be" if we want to follow Smith's (and others e.g. Ackroyd and Hughes 1991, Mason 1996) advice on how to be *neutral* interviewers. For me, its apparent simplicity disguises the high degree of 'technical access' (cf. Livingston 1987) it offers to a further set of qualitative interviewers' lived practices.

In Smith's example, we have three, intimately related, themes that I want to highlight:

1. The 'better' question is an open-question, in the sense that it does not provide much guidance as to what a relevant response might be. It only asks what the interviewee 'thinks' about 'the prime minister's record'. To use Smith's terms, it is not a *value-laden* question as it does not provide a candidate response (it does not ask if the prime ministers record is excellent/poor/good/bad/indifferent).
2. In some ways both questions are *leading*. The 'bad' question guides the interviewee to talk about whether the prime minister is 'doing a bad job'. It also produces the response 'yes, he is doing a bad job' as the preferred response. The 'better' question also guides

the interviewees talk (i.e. it should be talk about the ‘prime minister’s *record*’). The preference is not for talk about whether the prime minister is sexy/young or tall/short or hardworking/lazy

3. Both questions also *lead* the interviewee to offer talk on their ‘thoughts’. The questions ask ‘do you agree’ and ‘what do you think’. The preference is for *personal-individual thought* talk, they are not asked a question such as ‘Speaking on behalf of unemployed people ...’¹.

How these themes - producing non-leading questions and promoting talk that is centred on interviewees personal-individual thoughts - are locally produced by interviewers and interviewees is the central concern of this chapter. Unlike the prior two chapters, the focus is not on question-prefaces but the contextual information work embedded in questioning-TCU and at TCU-endings. This chapter can be read as showing how Smith’s directive on ‘good interview technique’ is realised (and challenged) in and through interviewers’ lived practices.

7.1 Organization of the chapter

Initially, I focus on the questions that are produced with a ‘do you think ...?’ lexical formulation. The interviewers’ directives for detail are not to be heard as a product of them interrogating the interviewees or that the interviewees’ prior talk was in some way unsatisfactory. They produce themselves as interviewers who are *interested in promoting interviewees’ personal-thoughts* on the topic. I then show how the related methods, ‘Do you think X?’ and ‘Do you think X or Y?’ formula questions, produce leading questions as relatively ‘non-leading’. The facilitatory edge of the questions - that interviewers produce themselves as ‘helping’ interviewees to offer details about their individual thoughts - in part, offsets the possible challenge that “they put words into people’s mouths”.

¹ Equally, the interviewee is not categorized as a certain type of interviewee in and through which the answer could be heard as emerging. For example, they do not ask “Speaking as a unmarried mother ...” (see Holstein and Gubrium 1995, 1997a for examples of such interviewer practices and how interviewees often preface their answers by invoking an identity). I should note that what identity the ‘you’ refers to will be negotiated in and through the prior and following talk.

I then document how interviewers provide contextual information, focusing on both turn design and lexical choice at TCU-endings. Rather than ask the question in the form “was it X?” interviewers routinely ask “was it X or Y?”. The interviewers work to ‘offset’ any hearable preference embedded in the questioning turn by providing at least two alternative, non-equivalent candidate ways to answer the question. In and through attending to the preference organization of questions, by providing “was it X *or* Y?” formula questions, interviewers can produce non-leading questions, hearably producing themselves as ‘*neutralistic-questioners*’. Contextual information at TCU-endings does not only work explicitly to mark interviewers as neutralistic but, as I show below, it serves to underline their other, related, roles of ‘*facilitators*’ and ‘*interested-interviewers*’.

7.2 ‘Do you think ...?’ formula questions

In the specific context of the (semi-)open research interview, questions produced with a ‘do you think’ lexical formulation are yet *another* method in and through which interviewers can hearably produce themselves as ‘*facilitative-interviewers*’². This section shows how the related methods - ‘Do you think ...?’ ‘Do you think X?’ and ‘Do you think X or Y?’ formula questions - are also used by interviewers to produce themselves as both (relatively) neutralistic and interested-interviewers.

7.2.1 Some initial observations on ‘do you think’ formula questions

In the extracts below, we have a topic-shifting question (Extract 7.1) and a follow-up question (Extract 7.2). In these examples, the questions have optional, or pragmatic prefaces. What is of specific interest here is the question delivery components. The IRs’ questions are both produced with a ‘*did you think ...?*’ lexical formulation.

² The other methods have included specific configurations of: topic-shifting and follow-up questions, silence at TRPs, response tokens, question-prefaces and what part of the interviewees topic-talk is (or is not) topicalised by their questions.

Extract 7.1

- 1 Ben: cause er, (0.4) a lot of people have different
2 views, >and things=I think,< discuss:ion. is
3 the best way rather than, (1.1) wo:rk sheets
4 °and things like that, <I don't think yeah.>°
5 (0.2)
6 IR: °(s-) >coming back to the cards then< what
7 **did you think** of the exercise, with the° °°cards.°°=
8 Ben: =I thought that was good, (0.2) cause erm,
9 (1.4) (tt) I- did find a few things out
10 tha-°t°, (0.3) I didn't know before, (0.4)

Extract 7.2

- 1 emma: >and=you hardly get comments an all<
2 you get them from the ↓lo:wer school.
3 IR: mm hm.
4 emma: °when you walk past people but° °°(you just
5)°°
6 IR: .hh so what **did you think** of. the, training=generally,
7 emma: tch I [thought i]t was good.=er::m (.)
8 IR: [°()°]
9 emma: <I thought (.) the way it was done> like,
10 the way we were all in a circle

With Extract 7.1, IR could have asked something like “Was the exercise with the cards good (bad/useful/helpful/boring ...)?”, thereby offering a candidate understanding³ [that it was ‘good’] that would make relevant agreement or disagreement as part of Ben’s answer. Instead, IR’s question (6-7), enables Ben to produce his own understanding of the cards exercise without any direction as to the *specific* descriptives that Ben should work with. However, Ben *is directed*, in and through the lexical formulation ‘what did you think’ (6-7), to produce an answer that is embedded with references to his *personal thoughts* on this topic.

³ (Heritage and Watson 1980). Note that this candidate understanding/formulation would be produced *in the form of a question*, it would not be a formulation per se.

Ben orientates to IR's directive, both explicitly - through his optional, or pragmatic, preface 'I thought'(8) - and implicitly - through his answer being a description that references his personal thoughts and experience. Similarly, with Extract 7.2, IR's question (6) does not offer any candidate understanding, it only explicitly directs Emma to produce an answer with reference to her thoughts on the topic of the 'training'. Again, in and through her answer, she orientates to IR's directive. This is made most explicit through the optional, or pragmatic, prefaces to both her TCU's: 'I [thought]'(7) and 'I think-'(9).

I want to gloss IRs' questions under the term '*do you think ...?*' *formula questions*.

Such question can come off in various ways: in the examples above we have 'what did you think' and 'how do you think'; below we will also see examples including 'do you feel', 'do you know', 'do you see', 'do you see yourself', 'do you think' and 'do you ever think'.

A 'do you think' lexical formulation *explicitly produces* the question as a question-about-the-interviewee's-personal-thoughts/feelings/knowledges⁴. It *explicitly forecasts* that the preferred way to answer the question is for interviewees to produce talk that references their personal thoughts/feelings/knowledges on the topic. Interviewees *orientate* to the preference through providing talk on the topic with reference to their own thoughts/feelings/knowledges. They also routinely *explicitly orientate* to the preference in and through producing answers with prefaces such as 'I thought', 'I think' and 'I feel'.

Peräkylä (1995)⁵ also found 'do you think ...?' questions routinely used. Let us view two of them in action in the counselling setting.

⁴ I am not saying that 'you' *must* be orientated to as 'me-personally'. It can be orientated to, or produced as 'me-as-a-member-of-a-broader-collective'. The specific work of 'you' is the product of the local interactional context.

⁵ See also Peräkylä and Silverman (1991b).

Extract 7.3 (Peräkylä 1995: 117) [C: counsellor and P: patient]

- 1 C: **What d'you think's** upsetting your wife so much
2 Mister Wood?=As far as you understand it.
3 (0.5)
4 P: The pressure

Extract 7.4 (Peräkylä 1995: 110) [C: counsellor and BF: boyfriend]

- 1 C: What are some of things that you think Edward might
2 have to do.=He says he doesn't know where to go from
3 here maybe: and awaiting results and things.
4 (0.6)
5 C: **What d'you think's** worrying him
6 (0.4)
7 BF: Uh::m hhhhhh I think it's just fear of the unknown

Both Cs' questions are what Peräkylä calls 'qualified' questions that embed 'invitations to produce' descriptions 'in references to the producer's own experience' (1995: 116). The preferred response to these questions, as with Extracts 7.1-7.2, is answers that are grounded in the speakers personal thoughts on this specific issue. With Extract 7.3 this preference is doubly produced, as C's tag 'As far as you understand it.' (2) explicitly marks that P *only* has limited access (cf. Pomerantz 1980) to his wife's thoughts. In Extract 7.4, BF through the pragmatic preface 'Uh::m hhhhhh I think' (7), explicitly marks both that this is a difficult question to answer - as he does not have direct access to Edward's thoughts - and that his talk is only to be heard as his personal thoughts (to which he is entitled to have direct access). Note that this work is not essential; in Extract 7.3, P does not do any prefacing work, although the gap (3) could be orientate to his difficulty in talking on behalf of his wife.

7.2.2 *The generic, institutional and site-specific work of 'do you think ...?' formula questions*

Importantly, *irrespective of the specific local context* 'do you think ...?' formula questions are a generic method that can produce a questioner as a specific-type-of-questioner. They can hearably produce a questioner as *interested in seeking the other speaker's (individual) perspective* and are *interested in promoting the other speaker's (personal) thoughts* on the topic. In asking 'do you think ...?' formula questions, they are not trying to establish "the facts of the case" and they are not merely asking the other speaker to think through what happened. They are *helping or inviting* them to explore their own thoughts on the topics. The work such a question can do is intimately related to the local context(s) of the talk⁶.

In the context of both AIDS counselling and qualitative interviews, as well as phases of question-driven talk in institutional 'service encounters' more generally, 'do you think ...?' formula questions are routinely used by questioners (e.g. Maynard 1991 in reference to clinical settings). This is perhaps unsurprising, as in many service-encounters one of the central tasks can be to gain 'clients' personal, individual, experiences/feelings/knowledges/perspectives/ thoughts on specific topics. An economical method to achieve this goal is to *explicitly invite* them to produce talk with reference to their own experience. This can be used both as a means to invite speakers to think about hypothetical scenarios and past experiences. These 'do you think ...?' formula questions are economical ways to provide contextual information that produces the question as a specific kind of question, forecasts the *preferred way* that question is to be responded to (as my-thought talk) and, through both factors, construct specific identities in relation to the question.

In the specific context of the qualitative interview, such 'do you think' formula questions are yet *another* method which hearably produces the interviewers as '*facilitative interviewers*'. Their central function is that they *work explicitly to produce the interviewers as helping the interviewees to produce detailed and comprehensive answers with specific reference to their personal thoughts*. The interviewers

invitations for detail are not to be heard as a product of them interrogating the interviewees or that the interviewees' prior talk was in some way unsatisfactory. The questions are a product of them being interviewers who are *interested in promoting interviewees' personal-thoughts* on the topic.⁷

This lexical formulation is centred on explicitly marking that the interviewers are interested in interviewees *as individuals*. The interviewee's personal, individual experiences/feelings/ knowledges/perspectives/thoughts are 'valuable' to interviewers. This feature is implicit throughout the interaction but in and through such 'do you think ...?' formula questions this is explicitly orientated to. Although the pronoun 'you' is ambiguous (cf. Sacks 1992, Watson 1987) as to whether it refers to 'you-as-an-individual' or 'you-as-a-member-of-a-collective' [e.g. peer-educators, students at peer-education sessions] it is massively orientated to by interviewees as referring to me-personally⁸.

The interviewers' lexical formulations and the interviewees' attending to questions as asking 'me-personally', explicitly orientates to:

* *The specific here-and-now local interactional context*: that the questioners' search for detail, is a product of them 'seeking to understand' the other speakers' individual experiences.

* *The specific here-and-now interview context*: that the interviewers, in asking these questions, are 'merely' facilitating the interviewees to talk in detail about their individual experiences.

* *The broader interview context*: that interviews should collect data on a topic with specific reference to individual experiences.

* *The broader social context*: that speakers are 'fully' entitled to own their own experiences but 'less' entitled to own others' experiences (cf. Peräkylä 1995, Peräkylä and Silverman 1991b, Sharrock 1974).

⁶ However, the 'helping' or 'inviting' can be orientated to in a multiple number of ways. For example, such a question can be the first-part of a perspective-display sequence (Maynard 1991).

⁷ In Peräkylä's (1995) AIDS counselling interactions such contextual information work by both speakers is central to the local contexts of both family/partnership and counselling.

⁸ See Extract 7.11 below, when the interviewee initially answers a 'do you think ..?' formula question in terms of collective experience ('our') and then shifts to her personal, individual experience.

'Do you think' questions have another, related, function. They produce interviewers as '*neutral-interviewers*'. In reference to Extract 7.1 and 7.2, I noted that the interviewers do not offer any candidate understandings. They both produce open-ended questions in which no single type of answer is explicitly marked as the preferred way to answer the questions. The only preference is that the answer should be hearable as an answer to this question and that it should be made with reference to their own individual experience. In this sense, the interviewers are producing non-leading, neutral, questions. This attends to the broader context of "good research interview practice", that interviewers should allow 'interviewees to talk about the subject in terms of their own 'frames of reference' '(May 1993: 94) and not overtly direct the talk. As we will see below, 'do you think ...?' formula questions can also work to produce what is as a leading question with a preferred response, as a *relatively* non-leading question.

I will initially outline how such questions can work to produce a question as both helping to seek detail and 'relatively non-leading'. I will then show how such a lexical formulation is used alongside other methods to produce the question as non-leading. The other section of the paper will focus on contextual information at TCU-endings.

7.2.3 'Do you think X?' as method to produce a leading question as relatively non-leading

Imagine an interviewer who wants to find out whether the interviewee thought an experience that they have just been talking about was a 'good experience'. They could produce a formulation "so it was good for you.", ask a closed-ended question "so was it good for you?" or an open-ended question "so what did you think of the experience?". The first two versions produce one of two actions as the relevant next-action: with the formulation, confirmation or disconfirmation, and with the closed question, agreement or disagreement⁹. Such actions are not equivalent actions (see Heritage 1984, Pomerantz 1984b, Sacks 1984), in that to agree, given the preference for agreement that underlines these interactions, makes agreement the preferred response.

⁹ Confirmation and disconfirmation is a subclass of agreement and disagreement (Heritage and Watson 1980).

The formulation and closed-ended question are ‘leading questions’ so, ideally, the interviewer - following the methodological prescriptions of good interviewing - should ask the open-ended, non-leading question (e.g. Ackroyd and Hughes 1991, Mason 1996, Smith 1995). However, by asking the open-ended question, the interviewee may never speak about the experience in terms of whether it was a ‘good’ or ‘bad’ thing. As has been noted throughout the thesis, interviewers have a dilemma, or a paradox: they need to gain specific information but this information should be produced with minimal intervention from them¹⁰.

Let us view an example from the data-set to begin to outline a further solution that interviewers employ in an attempt to ‘solve’ this dilemma.

Extract 7.5

- 1 though you do appreciate that it’s not
 2 necessarily a very nice thing, .hh er:m.
 3 so you can say >you know< don’t (.)
 4 drink and drive [or] don’t (.)
 5 IR: >°mm.°<
 6 dan: drive too quickly or >wh- you know
 7 (any[thing]<
 8 IR: [>so do you think it gives you a
 9 close<ness to the e[xperience]
 10 dan: [I I think:]:=er:m. >yeah,
 11 you certainly feel that< you’ve seen it and
 12 you know=you’ve seen something happen so
 13 you feel you can dis- you know discuss it

At 8-9, IR’s follow-up question is produced as a ‘do you think X?’ question. The question could have been produced as “so it gives you a closeness to the experience” and promoted a similar topical-trajectory. In this case, IR’s ‘do you think’ (8) is an optional or pragmatic feature of the talk. It hearably produces IR’s talk *as a question about* what Dan thinks. Without ‘do you think’ IR’s talk is produced as a gist formulation (Heritage and Watson 1980) of what Dan thinks. Dan marks agreement

¹⁰ In fact, the majority of this thesis is concerned to outline the practical solutions interviewers employ to ‘solve’ this and other dilemmas.

with IR's talk, 'yeah, you certainly feel that' (10-11) upgrading his agreement in and through providing an elaborated answer centred on his 'personal-feelings'.

If IR were to produce his talk at 8-9 as a formulation he could be orientated to by the interviewee (and those analysing the tape) as 'explicitly leading' the trajectory of talk. As he produced his talk *in the form of* a question - a question that explicitly asked Dan to 'think' about the relevance of this understanding - IR is not leading the talk, he is only asking whether Dan 'thinks' he would agree. Both versions produce agreement/disagreement as the relevant next action, but with 'do you think' IR marks himself as a 'questioner'. In so doing, he hearably produces himself as a (relatively) neutral-interviewer¹¹. IR works to say '*I'm only asking you to think about whether or not my understanding of what you've said is accurate*'. As noted above, 'do you think' also produces IR as a facilitative-interviewer, so it also works to say: 'I'm only asking you because I'm *interested* in understanding your personal thoughts on this topic'.

So, this solution to one of the interviewers' dilemmas - needing to gain specific information but with minimal intervention - is to produce formulations *in the form of* questions.

Let us view another extract from the data-set to outline the specific work of 'do you think' as an optional, pragmatic feature of question delivery components.

Extract 7.6

- 1 >I'm interested in that anyway cause I
2 want to be a policewoman.< .hhh er:m
3 so I watched you know tv documentaries
4 and stuff=but not at school, there wasn't that
5 much at all.,
6 IR: so **did you- did you think** of=erm,°you=said
7 =that Mr. Brown did stuff°=[was h]e::
8 emma: [mm:.]
9 IR: **for=you=personally** was he: a credible source
10 of information=about drugs,

¹¹ Following Heritage's (1985) work on formulations in news interviews, another layer of neutrality is laminated on to his talk as IR's question does not offer any comment or assessment on Dan's prior talk.

11 emma er::m. (.) >I wou-< I don't think I'd say
12 credible.=>I mean< I took in the information and
13 you know I- I obviously >if I had come into
14 contact with ecstasy I wouldn't have used it<
15 IR: mm.
16 emma: but (.) I wouldn't have taken it as: all the
17 information about it- >because=I mean it was
18 like< one forty minute lesson.
19 IR: right. so **do you think** he knows, what he is
20 tal:king about, °when it comes to drugs°.
21 emma I ↑think, he knows what he's talking about
22 as in, he's only talking about so much,=he's
23 talking about a limited amount of information,=.hh
24 which he knows about from (.) boo:ks and (.)
25 cou:rses and stuff.
26 IR: yeah,
27 emma: but I don't think he knows, much much about
28 drugs on, the=whole.

At 1-5, Emma offers talk on 'her knowledge of drugs'. At 6 IR begins a question, 'so did you- did you think of=erm,' then abandons this question format and re-starts the talk producing some contextual information about how to hear the question that follows: '°you=said =that Mr. Brown did stuff°'(6-7)¹². IR then re-starts the question '[was h]e:.' (7) produces further pragmatic contextual information 'for=you=personally' (9) and then produces the question-delivery component (9-10). Emma produces a dispreferred format response, in that she delays her response, qualifies it 'I don't think I'd say credible.'(11-12) and then produces an elaborated account '=>I mean< ... ' (12-14, 16-18). IR receipts her account 'right.' (19) and asks a follow-up question, shifting from whether Mr Brown was a credible source of information to the topic of whether 'he knows, what he is tal:king about,' (19-20). Again, she produces a dispreferred format response, qualifying her answer ['I ↑think,' (21) 'I don't think' (27) 'on, the=whole.' (28)] accounting for her answer (19-25) and delaying her disagreement (27-28).

¹² This is, in part, a product of IR's question not topicalising the immediately prior topic-talk.

IR's questions could have been produced as "Was Mr. Brown a credible source of information about drugs?" and "So he knows what he is talking about when it comes to drugs". Unlike the questions in Extract 7.1-7.4, both questions direct Emma as to the specific topic of her answer and they both have non-equivalent next-actions: agreement/disagreement and confirmation/disconfirmation. Both are produced with pragmatic, optional lexical formulations: 'for=you=personally' (9) and 'do you think' (19). These pieces of contextual information do related work. The utterance 'for=you=personally' does similar work to the 'do you think ...?' formula questions in Extract 7.1 and 7.2, in that it *explicitly directs* Emma to offer her personal, individual, thoughts on Mr. Brown's credibility. With the question at 19-20, as with Extract 7.5 above, IR's 'do you think' (19) explicitly produces the formulation - that Mr. Brown knows what he is talking about when it comes to drugs - *in the form of* a question.

What they both share is that they are both versions of 'do you think X?' formula questions, with X being a candidate understanding. They explicitly forecast questioner-preferred answers (Sacks 1992, Spring 1971, May 24th: 414) by both specifying a particular type of answer and indicating that the answer should be talked about with specific reference to her personal thoughts. Although the questions are both hearable as having a preference for directing a specific answer - agreement - and therefore leading, non-neutral questions, this leading quality is *downgraded* in and through them being explicitly produced as questions-promoting-her-personal-thoughts.

Such 'do you think X?' formula question work is also a routine feature in Davies (1997) semi-open interview study with drug users.

Extract 7.7 (Davies 1997:122)

- 1 S: Well I'm starting to feel that bit better ... you know what I mean,
2 better ... I used to be borrowing money, now this time I'm lending
3 it out. I have money to give somebody a lend of it.
4 I: **Do you see yourself** as in control of your drinking?
5 S: Eh, I don't know. I can walk by a pub and go into a pub. I'd like
6 to be able to take a pint, but it wouldnae be a pint, it would end
7 up going on to more and more.

...

((9 lines omitted))

- ...
- 17 S: No ... (?) ... in the past. I could have just one, two or three and go
 18 up the road.
- 19 I: How **do you see it?** **Do you see it as an illness?**
- 20 S: I think it's an illness ... you're addicted ... it's an addiction ain't
 21 it? You feeling bad ... (something) ... it's more like a medicine.

Both follow-up questions (4, 19) have candidate understandings – ‘in control of your drinking’, ‘an illness’ – embedded in them. They both explicitly invite the interviewee to offer talk with reference to how they *personally-see* their situation in relation to this specific understanding. The interviewee explicitly orientates to this invitation by producing the talk as personal-knowledge talk ‘I don't know’ (5), a personal-story (5-18) and personal-thought talk ‘I think’(20). Note how with the question at 19, the interviewer initially produces an open ‘do you think ...?’ formula question then produces a closed ‘do you think X?’ formula question.

In Extracts 7.5-7.7, the facilitatory edge of the questions - that interviewers produce themselves as ‘helping’ interviewees to offer details about their individual thoughts - in part, offsets the possible challenge that “they put words into people’s mouths”. This challenge, is not something that is *just* an orientation to the local here-and-know context. Rather, interviewers attend to the (extra-local) interview methods literature: ‘Questions should be neutral rather than value-laden or leading.’ (Smith 1995:13)¹³.

¹³ Interviewers also use ‘do you think X?’ formula leading questions as a way to pursue a response when none is forthcoming (see also Peräkylä: 1995). We have already seen this extract in Chapter Five.

Extract 5.12

- 1 mel: yeah.=
 2 IR: =erm. (1.0) how **do you think**
 3 you'd react °>and stuff<.°
 4 (.)
 5 mel: er::m.
 6 IR: **do you think** you would have seen them
 7 differently=
 8 mel: =yea definitely.
 9 I think- .hhh (0.4) £ I would be happy that
 10 they were there, and you=know and happy

At 2-4 IR produces an open ‘do you think’ formula question. He receives little uptake and then produces ‘do you think’ formula question (6-7) with a candidate answer. Mel then agrees with the candidate answer (8) and produces an account (9-10). IR’s leading question (6-7) works to pursue a response (cf. Pomerantz 1980 a) from Mel and this is explicitly produced in terms of a pursuit of her personal-thoughts.

‘Do you think X?’ formula questions are practical solutions that enable interviewers to invite the interviewee to talk on a specific topic, to produce a specific type of answer, but explicitly produce this question as motivated by a search for the interviewees personal thoughts. As such, the interviewer is ‘doing being relatively neutralistic’, in and through hearably producing their talk *in the form of* a facilitative question¹⁴. There is another, related method, that interviewers draw on to produce a question as neutral yet promoting a specific type of answer with reference to personal experiences. It is this method to which I will now turn.

7.2.4 ‘Do you think X or Y?’ as method to produce a non-leading question

This next method combines ‘do you think X?’ leading questions with tag utterances (or incremental-TCUs). Rather than the interviewer producing a ‘do you think X?’ question, the addition of a tag utterance (or incremental-TCU) produces two alternative candidate understandings, so the question comes off as ‘do you think X or Y?’. In this way, interviewers produce themselves as facilitating the promotion of detailed and comprehensive talk with specific reference to personal experiences, *as well as* promoting a specific trajectory of talk. In this way, they produce themselves as ‘non-leading, neutralistic questioners’. Let us now view this work in action.

We have seen Extract 7.8, below, in Section 5.5, where I focused on the ‘and’-preface. I now want to focus on the lexical formulation ‘>do you know<’ (8) and the tag-utterances ‘or wrong’ (9) and ‘or not.’ (10). We enter the talk as Dan replies to IR’s question, which asked ‘an- Could anybody go forward for’ the peer-educator training course:

Extract 7.8

- 1 dan: [>Yeah he
 2 said er< take any (.) sort of nominations but they
 3 would be checking with teachers: (0.4) £erm group
 4 tutor:s so forth and and just see if they thought you were
 5 right for the:, (0.2)

¹⁴ However, I am not saying interviewers never use formulations but that there is a preference for ‘asking questions’ over producing formulations. Formulations are infrequently used as requests for clarification (e.g. Extract 4.6). As I noted in Section 3.5, formulations are primarily used to establish ‘detailed-agreement’, to summarise the prior talk and/or themes and to hearably produce interviewers as ‘working-hard-to-understand’. Below, in Extract 7.10, we also see a formulation used to attend to an interviewee’s ‘worries’, to demonstrate that interviewee’s answer is an adequate-type of answer.

6 IR: o°kay: .°=
7 dan: =°course.°£=
8 IR: =and >do you know< what kinds of tingst (0.4) they would
9 have considered to be right or wrong for the
10 course [and was tha]t clear, or not.
11 dan: [e r m : :] >well I think< attitude
12 as well erm people who were there who >you know< £wanted
13 to learn and wanted to t- get something out of it and people
14 who who wanted to be able to, (0.3) deal with er (0.3) the-
15 the sessions >who wouldn't be<£ shy of speaking or, ((continues))

IR's question at 8-10 is a 'do you know' follow-up question, that follows up on the prior topic of the qualities considered suitable for inclusion on the course. The question *could* have been produced without the tag utterances 'or wrong' (9) and 'or not.' (10), and still retain its intelligibility as a question with an identical topical focus. Both the tags and the 'do you know' lexical formula do work for IR.

IR's questioning TCU (8-10) is produced in and through a 'do you know' lexical formulation that explicitly directs Dan to offer talk with specific reference to his personal knowledge. The question comes off, and is marked by Dan through overlap (11), as having two, connected, questioning parts. The first part of the question asks about the things 'considered **right or wrong** for the course', the second part is contingent on this and asks whether 'was tha]t **clear, or not.**' (10). Note how both questions are produced with two, contrasting, candidate understandings. Through the '*X or Y*' format, IR produces the questions without preferred responses and as such as a *non-leading* questions. Both features, the lexical formulation and tags, produce IR as a facilitative and neutralistic question¹⁵. This has an implication for IR's identity in relation to the action of asking this question - he is to be heard as occupying the identity of 'facilitative-neutralistic-questioner'.

¹⁵ Also, to answer this question Dan has to provide a (minimal) account, a plain "yes" or "no" may not suffice. For example, would a "yes"-period refer to "yes it was clear" or "yes it wasn't made clear". For his answer to be 'understandable' he would have to provide an expanded, more than one utterance, answer. In this way, IR invokes a 'elaborated-answer'.

Note how IR has ‘offset’ the question having a preferred response *prior to* any signs of an up-and-coming dispreferred response from Dan. Such a practice is also routine in structured interviewing and is written in interviewers’ scripts (Houtkoop-Steenstra 2000). There is, however, another generic practice available to speakers:

Extract 7.9 (Sacks 1987: 64)

- 1 A: They have a good cook there?
- 2 ((pause))
- 3 Nothing special
- 4 B: No, everybody takes their turns.

As Sacks (1987, 1992) has shown, speakers routinely, on hearing an up-and-coming disagreement (2) to talk that has a preferred response (1), can work to repair the possible interactional troubles by offering a second, alternative (or downgraded), candidate-response (3)¹⁶. Both methods - a speaker ‘repairing’ the preference organization *prior to* and *after* hearing up-and-coming dispreference - are generic to talk-in-interaction. However, the way qualitative (and structured) interviewers *routinely* ‘detoxify’ the preference prior to any response by interviewees again shows an orientation to (and reflexively produces) the ideals about research interviewing: ‘Questions should be neutral rather than value-laden or leading.’ (Smith 1995:13)’.

In Extract 7.8 line 11, Dan then goes on to provide an answer to IR’s question. Note, how, through the preface to his talk ‘>well I think< attitude’ (11), he explicitly orientates to IR’s ‘do you know’ lexical formulation. These are only to be heard as his thoughts, his speculations, rather than something ‘he-knows-for-sure’. Now this provides an answer to all of IR’s question. The question asks about whether Dan knew what qualities were considered ‘right or wrong’ and whether this was ‘made clear’. With this initial part of the answer he offers one of the qualities, ‘attitude’, and explicitly marks through ‘I think’ (11) that this was not something that was ‘clear’, that he does not ‘know-this-for-sure’. If it was made clear, he could have said something like “well *they talked about* having a

¹⁶ See also Davidson (1984) and Pomerantz (1984a b).

certain attitude as well”, instead he marks the that quality ‘attitude’ is only to be heard and treated as his personal, subjective, opinion and not something that was clearly, or explicitly, stated by those running the course.

Let us view another example of a ‘do you think X or Y?’ formula questions¹⁷. With this example, IR produces a multi-TCU question with *multiple* candidate understandings.

Extract 7.10

- 1 IR: and maybe you could give then inform^oation=
2 fran: =yea[:h::.]
3 IR: [abo]ut where to get stuff,^o
4 fran: ^o<yea::h::.>^o
5 (1.6)
6 IR: **do you think**=er::m, (.) if it was in a school
7 situation they’d ^ohave.=that, (.) and someone
8 said that:.=**do you think** that would work
9 diff:erently. .h or >**do you feel**< that you’d have
10 to tell a teacher=**or tell jenny**=**or**
11 **somehin**[g, ^oor what^o]
12 fran: [oh. wa::ll.] our- (problem) as: the
13 student, ^o>you have to tell,<^o= bu-=[aerm::,]=.h
14 IR: [yea:h,]
15 fran: b=if::: (0.2) ^othey (aren’t,) ^oit wouldn’t really
16 be different in that way but=
17 IR: =>^oright.^o<=
18 fran: =learning in,=the school, and in,=the pro:ject.
19 you’d have had to:, (.) >been with a teacher=so
20 that might have made them:.
21 IR: ^om::m::.^o
22 fran: think<=that I wo:uld have told them.=
23 IR: =>^om::m::.^o<=
24 fran: =but they wouldn’t hav=the sa::me. trust
25 element,=I don’t think.

Before we can engage with Extract 7.10, I need to offer some background (contextual)

¹⁷ Again, in Davies (1997) study, such ‘do you think X or Y?’ formula questions are also routinely used.

information. The talk prior to this extract has been centred on what advice Fran would offer someone who came to her with ‘problem-drug-use’. Fran produced a list of advice she would give and marked that her list could be inadequate and so implicitly produced herself as a possible member of the category ‘inadequate peer-educator’. IR then produced some cooperative upshot formulations (Heritage 1985) which implicitly worked to produce Fran’s list as adequate, and Fran herself, as an adequate advice-giver/peer-educator.

We enter the talk with IR producing another cooperative upshot formulation of Fran’s prior talk (1, 3). Fran confirms this understanding (2, 4) and the sequence closes. A gap in the talk is produced at 5, which could be IR working to pursue an elaborated response from Fran. As no further talk is produced by Fran, IR then asks a follow-up question. IR’s question at 6-11 is a topic shading follow-up question that re-opens the prior sequence. The prior talk was centred on what advice Fran would give to someone who came to her in peer-education session that took place in a youth club. The focus on this question shades to whether that advice ‘would work differently.’ (8-9) in a peer-education session that took place in a ‘school situation’ (6-7).

From the start of the question, IR forecasts that this question is only concerned with Fran’s personal-thoughts. The whole question, in and through, the first ‘do you think=er::m,’ (6) and second ‘=do you think’ (8) and the related ‘>do you feel<’ (9) is explicitly produced as a ‘question-*only-to-be-orientated-to-as-seeking-Fran’s-personal-perspective*’. The question is also produced with multiple candidate understandings of the action Fran could take in this situation. She initially asks Fran whether ‘that would work differently.’ (8-9) then she offers her an alternative way ‘or’ (9) to answer this question - ‘>do you feel< that you’d have to tell a teacher’ (9-10). IR then offers *more* alternative ways to answer what is already produced as an alternative question - ‘=or tell jenny=or somethin[g, °or what°]’ (10-11)’ - with ‘°or what°’ being the most open-ended of all.

Fran answers the question in overlap, and despite IR’s work to explicitly forecast personal-individualised talk Fran talks as a ‘member-of-a-collective’. Fran answers with ‘[oh. wa::ll.] our- (problem) as: the student, °>you have to tell,<°’ (12-13). Fran is

speaking about and on behalf of all the peer-educators and that when working in a school they¹⁸ ‘have to tell,^{<°}. It is not, following IR’s question, that ‘she *feels* that she would have to tell’, she is marking that she *knows* that she would have to tell. This is a ‘(problem)’ not only for her personally but for all the peer-educators. Fran then goes on to explain that if they weren’t school students this would not be a problem. She explains that working in school’s means a teacher would be present and school students may not trust her as an ‘advice-giver’. Note how she explicitly marks information as her personal-thoughts in and through the tag ‘=I don’t think.’ (25).

So how is it that IR produces a question with layers of contextual information work as well as producing multiple candidate understandings? How is it that Fran does not immediately produce a personal-individualised answer? The answer to these questions is both connected to the immediately prior talk and the broader context.

I noted that in the talk prior to this extract, Fran marked her possible inadequacy as an ‘advice-giver’ and that IR worked to produce her as an ‘adequate advice-giver’. Both IR’s question and Fran’s answer continue to orientate to Fran’s adequacy as an ‘advice-giver’ *and* hence her adequacy as a ‘peer-educator’ by the following methods:

1) In and through the ‘do you think/feel’ lexical formulations, IR not only forecasts how the question is to be orientated to but explicitly produces the question as *just* motivated by a search for the Fran’s personal thoughts. IR explicitly marks that she is facilitating Fran to think out loud about this topic. The question is not to be heard as a ‘test’ of the adequacy of her advice-giving qualities rather it is a product of IR ‘seeking to understand’ what Fran thinks.

2) In and through producing a ‘do you think *X or Y or Z or What?*’ question - instead of producing an open-ended ‘do you think?’ question (e.g. Extract 7.1 and 7.2), or, a closed-ended ‘do you think X?’ question (e.g. Extract 7.5, 7.6) or, even a leading ‘do you think X or Y?’ question

¹⁸ As I take it that the ‘^o>you’ (13) is her speaking as member of the team of peer-educators and she

(e.g. Extract 7.7) - IR is offering Fran multiple possible ways to answer the question. This does produce IR as a neutral-interviewer, but more importantly in this context, enables her to help Fran to offer a 'detailed-answer'. By providing a detailed answer Fran can produce herself as an 'adequate advice-giver'.

3) Fran does not immediately offer her personal thoughts or feelings on the question, instead she offers a 'fact', something *they* 'have to' do. She not only speaks on behalf of the group of peer-educators but speaks as someone *who can speak on behalf of them*. She produces herself as a 'knowledgeable peer-educator'. As she reflects on the problem of peer-education in school situations, she also produces herself as the type-of-person who is a 'sensitive/reflexive peer-educator'. By producing herself as both knowledgeable and sensitive/reflexive, she also identifies herself as someone who would be, despite the prior talk, an 'adequate advice-giver'.

This extract demonstrates both how the 'do you think X or Y?' formula questions *not only* orientate to the broader interview context (that interviews should collect data on a topic with specific reference to individual experiences and that they should do this in a neutral and facilitative way) *and* orientate to the specific here-and-now interview context (as they are economical ways to gain specific trajectories of detailed and comprehensive talk with specific reference to interviewees experiences) *but simultaneously* such methods can also orientate to and work to repair local here-and-now interactional 'troubles'.

7.2.5 Summary

With Extracts 7.1-7.8 and 7.10 in and through the 'do you think ...?' lexical formulation interviewers work to *explicitly produce* the questions as a questions-about-the-interviewees'-personal-thoughts/feelings/knowledges. Interviewees *orientate* to this preference through providing talk on the topic with reference to their own thoughts/feelings/knowledges. They also routinely *explicitly orientate* to the preference

made this categorization relevant in and through her preface 'our problem' (12).

in and through producing answers with prefaces such as ‘I thought’, ‘I think’ and ‘I feel’. The central function of ‘do you think ...?’ in this context, is that it works to produce interviewees as ‘helping interviewees to produce detailed and comprehensive answers *with specific reference to their personal thoughts*’. This feature is implicit throughout the interaction but is explicitly orientated to in and through such ‘do you think ...?’ formula questions.

In some of these extracts, the interviewers also produce non-leading, neutral, questions. This can come off either through producing an open-ended question ‘Do you think?’ (Extracts 7.1-7.2) or a question with alternative, non-equivalent, candidate understandings ‘Do you think X or Y (or Z)’ (Extracts 7.8, 7.10). We also saw how interviewers can produce a leading question ‘Do you think X?’ *in the form of a facilitative question* (Extracts 7.5-7.7), producing the question as *relatively* ‘neutral’ (as the question is motivated by a search for the interviewees personal thoughts).

Overall, ‘do you think ...?’ formula questions can be an economical method through which interviewers produce themselves as:

- * facilitating the promotion of detailed and comprehensive talk with specific reference to personal experiences.
- * promoting a specific trajectory of talk.
- * constituting non-leading, (relatively) neutralistic questioners.

All these features attend to the broader context of “good research interview practice”, that interviewers should allow ‘interviewees to talk about the subject in terms of their own ‘frames of reference’ ’(May 1993: 94) whilst *simultaneously* gathering detailed and comprehensive information that is relevant to the project *and* which is based on the personal/individual-experience of the interviewees.

I will now turn to another group of practical solutions to the ‘dilemma(s)’ of qualitative interviewing. These are to be found at the ‘endings’ of interviewers’ questioning-TCU.

7.3 Contextual information at TCU-endings

The discussion of the extracts above already highlighted some of the ways available to interviewers to produce themselves as specific-types of interviewers: neutralistic and facilitatory. We will now view some other examples of interviewers providing contextual information, focusing on both turn design and lexical choice at TCU-endings. The following sections detail three ways TCU-endings are used as a spaces to provide contextual information which produce the interviewer as a member of three, related, identities, those of: ‘neutralistic-interviewer’, ‘facilitative-interviewer’ and ‘interested-interviewer’.

7.3.1 *Explicitly orientating to preference organization as means to produce a non-leading question.*

With Extract 7.8 and 7.10 we saw how interviewers, with the utterances such as ‘right or wrong’, ‘[and was tha]t clear, or not’, ‘=or tell jenny=or somethin[g, °or what°]’ produced neutralistic, non-leading questions. I noted that in and through these tags (and incremental-TCUs) the questions do not have a preferred response. Such work, offsetting a question having a preferred response, is a relatively common action in the data and comes off in a similar way to that of Extracts 7.8 and 7.10. It comes off through (an attempt at) providing at least two alternative, non-equivalent, candidate ways to answer the question. Rather than ask the question in the form “was it X?” interviewers routinely ask “was it *X or Y*?”.

Before we view some examples, I want to note that a method such as asking ‘was it X or Y?’ questions is generic to talk-in-interaction¹⁹. As Arminen notes,

‘even if there are similar kinds of interactional practices both in mundane and institutional settings, these ‘similar’ practices do gain distinct meanings through the reflexive tie to the context and the institutional identities it makes relevant’ (2000: 449).

¹⁹ Although, (as yet) I can find no transcribed examples in ‘everyday conversation’ other than ‘or Y’ being produced after (possible) up-and-coming-disagreement. The only example is the proto-typical “Are we staying or going?” that seems ‘wedded to’ couples-talk when deciding whether it is time to leave a specific occasion. My initial observation is that this method appears when the couple in question are divided between two options, it works to (but often fails to) detoxify and orientate the (possible) forthcoming troubles.

As Houtkoop-Steenstra (2000) shows, telephone survey-interviewers routinely produce questions without a preferred response. Producing ‘was it X or Y?’ format questions is “good practice” in methodology texts of (nearly) all types of research interviewing: it is found in telephone survey-interviewers scripts; it is explicitly orientated to by face-to-face survey-interviewers use of cards-with-lists-of-candidate-answers; it is on self-completion questionnaires tick-box-lists-of-candidate-answers²⁰. All styles of research interviewers, *much more consistently* than those engaged in ‘ordinary’ conversation or other moments of institutional-talk, *orientate to producing questions without a preferred response prior to any interactional ‘troubles’ arising*. As Extracts 7.8 and 7.10, above, and Extracts 7.11-7.12, below, show, this methodological concern is also central to *and drives* some of (semi-)open interviewers actual-lived practices. Let us now view some examples of this in action.

Extract 7.11

- 1 IR: >did you know they were talk- they’d
2 talk to you about drugs,<
3 hal: na.h, jus come in li:ke I mean, (0.2)
4 john brown knew and um john doe
5 °knew°
6 IR: right.
7 (0.8)
8 IR: jus to give me their full
9 names: .h[h he]eh so you
10 hal: £[yea::h,]£ ((smiley/cheeky voice))
11 IR: know er::m, (0.4) when you when you
12 found out it was about drugs
13 ehumph ((cough)) were their any
14 particular drugs that you were interested
15 in finding out about or were you **not**
16 **particularly interested in >any.< (.)**
17 **ones you just thought °oh, well,°**
18 (1.4)

²⁰ It is also orientated to by questionnaires/interviewers-scripts that are designed with a preferred response question that then have the same question with a non-equivalent preference in a later question. Although this is chiefly designed to ‘catch the tick-with-out-thinking’ interviewees, it also reflexively documents the central theme of ‘neutralising’ preference organization.

19 hal: <tup> >oh nothing really< jus find out
20 about drugs in it what they do to you
21 and that

With Extract 7.11, we can see IR attend to the preference organization embedded in his question (9, 11-17). IR's question is produced with two non-equivalent candidate ways to answer the question. At 1-2 IR produces a 'do you think' formula follow-up question, in this case 'did you know'. Hal replies and in so doing provides the full names of two other on the course. At 8, IR makes Hal's action accountable, albeit as a joke, and Hal documents, through his 'cheekily produced' response at 10 that this was a deliberate, motivated, action²¹. IR laughs, in overlap with Hal's response, then through the preface 'so you know er::m,' (9, 11) forecasts 'follow-up talk'. The 'so' is used as a resource to mark the shift in both the trajectory of the talk and their concomitant identities²². IR re-produces himself in the identity of 'facilitative-interviewer', he is working to 'explore' Hal's experience.

IR produces a follow-up question (11-17) which asks about whether Hal was 'interested' in learning about 'any particular drugs' (13-15). He then produces a second, non-equivalent, candidate reason, that Hal was 'not particularly interested in >any.<' (15-16), after a micro-pause he expands on the possible reason (17). Note that this second candidate reason is marked as alternative in and through the utterance 'or' (15) and the emphasis on 'not' (15).

After a gap in the talk (18) Hal answers '>oh nothing really<' (19), whether this refers to "I had no (particular) interest" or "I had no (particular) thoughts" is unclear. He then accounts for his prior answer, he wanted to 'find out about drugs ... what they do to you and that' (19-21). He marks that he had no particular interest or thoughts in specific drugs. Note the mitigator 'jus' (19) and the intersubjective appeal 'in it' (20). Hal is marking agreement with IR's second candidate reason yet this agreement comes off through a dispreferred response format, in that the answer is delayed, mitigated and accounted for.

²¹ Prior to this, data not shown, Hal offered the first names of the other course members and then says '°oh shit I said their name° °°on the tape°°', making the context of the interaction, that it is a tape-recorded interview explicitly relevant. At this point, Hal is again, making the context explicitly relevant.

The account is ‘necessary’, in that given two candidate reasons, a speaker has to offer an account in order to document with which of the two reasons he is in agreement. Hal’s account also reflexively documents that IR had ‘reasonable grounds’ to suggest two alternatives.

The mitigator ‘jus’ (19) marks explicitly that Hal *only* had a general interest. He is not to be heard as someone ‘enthusiastic-to-learn-about-specific-drugs’, if he did have a specific interest this could be heard as a predicate of an interest in *taking* that specific drug or that he currently *uses* that drug. However, this still does not account for the delay. The gap in the talk at 18 could be a product of IR’s ‘oh, well,’ (17) not being heard by Hal as a TRP, as it is hearable as a turn-beginning forecasting further talk. Hal works to be heard as finding this topic, drugs, ‘of no special interest’. In this way, he is not to be heard as an ‘enthusiastic seeker of (specific) drugs-knowledge’.

Let us view another example, although in this the interviewee works to mark agreement with the ‘first’ candidate understanding prior to ‘second’ being produced.

Extract 7.12

- 1 fran: .hhh hh.
2 IR: er:m. so:: (1.2) was that good because it was
3 someone who kinda been involved with it
4 fran: °y[eah, yeah,] definitely >cause [I thin]k<
5 IR: [or was **that.**] [()]
6 (0.3)
7 fran: kinda of >he was°< telling us about it researching.
8 and (.h) all the (.) pr- what the police were allowed to do

In Extract 7.12, prior to the talk given, Fran and IR have been talking on the topic of lectures by drug-experts given on a peer-educator training course²³. Fran then produces some talk that both speakers laugh about and at line 1 her laughter is coming to an end. At 2, after some delay, IR re-produces herself in the identity of ‘interviewer’ through re-opening the topic of the lectures. IR then produces a question, which offers a candidate understanding, ‘because it was someone who kinda been involved with it’ (2-3), on the topic of

²² See also Extracts 6.3.

²³ See Extract 6.4.

what was ‘good’ about the lecture. Fran then agrees with IR’s candidate understanding ‘°y[eah, yeah,]’(4). Note that she is doing ‘early agreement’, in the sense that IR has not produced her turn as an intonationally complete turn and as such is producing a preferred response. IR then marks, through talking in overlap with Fran, that more talk was to come (‘or was that.’: 5). However, IR abandons this, note the falling intonation after ‘that.’ (5) and Fran then upgrades her agreement, ‘definitely’ (4).

Given the local context, it is very likely that IR’s abandoned utterance ‘or was that.’ (5) is the start of an alternative, non-equivalent, candidate understanding such as “or was that not really important” or “or was that because he was an excellent/funny speaker”. As Fran produces early agreement, and hence does strong agreement with IR’s first candidate understanding, IR abandons the action of producing a second alternative version. However it is worth noting that IR *does* ‘attempt’ such a move and this attempt is produced just after Fran has taken the floor²⁴.

Extract 7.12 above, documents how interviewers routinely orientate to *not being* heard as producing a leading question but in this case this orientation is abandoned as the interviewee works to do early agreement²⁵. This orientation is another of the methods that interviewers work with to produce themselves as ‘neutral’ participants in the interaction. With Extract 7.8, 7.10-7.11 we can see this preference for neutral questions in action, and with all these examples at least two candidate understandings are produced.

7.3.1.1 *Summary*

With these extracts the interviewers work to offset any hearable preference embedded in the questioning turn. In Extract 7.12, this action is only attempted, although not to completion, Extract 7.11 it is produced as part of the question. In all the cases, Extract 7.8, 7.10-7.12 pieces of contextual information work to produce the interviewers as certain types-of-persons. In and through attending to the preference organization of

²⁴ As David Silverman (personal communication) noted, such a move in ‘ordinary talk’ - attempting to produce a second candidate understanding despite an early agreement - may have the default reading of “I’m not interrogating you”.

²⁵ Such a feature of beginning to produce a second alternative candidate understanding but then ‘abandoning’ this action is common when interviewees begin to produce an answer in overlap.

questions, by providing “was it X *or* Y?” formula questions, interviewers can produce non-leading question, hearably producing themselves as ‘neutralistic-questioners’. As noted above, unlike ‘everyday talk’, this routinely occurs *prior to* dispreference markers.

However, I should note that such work can also attend to other local interactional issues, notably, interviewees either producing answers that offer ‘disagreement’, ‘limited detail’ or producing ‘no answer’ through silence. For example, focus on IR’s questioning TCU that come after Hal’s answer at 5.

Extract 7.13

- 1 IR: where did you learn that idea from.
2 (0.2)
3 IR: is that jus something you think for yourself,
4 hal: whuuh ((whistling-through-teeth sound))
5 °I couldn’t tell°
6 (0.7)
7 IR: **you haven’t heard that suggested anywhere**
8 **that that would be a good thing to do**
9 (1.3)
10 IR: **or do you just think that you came up >with**
11 **it °yourself.<°**
12 (1.2)
13 hal: just came up with it, my,self

IR’s question (1, 3) has the candidate understanding ‘you came up with the idea alone’. After Hal’s ‘pass’ response (5), IR goes in search of an answer through producing a second, non-equivocal, candidate understanding, ‘someone else came up with the idea’ (7-8). IR receives no (verbal) response and re-produces the first candidate understanding (10-11). Hal then, after a further gap, produces an answer.

In this case, unlike Extracts 7.8, 7.10-7.12, providing two candidate understanding, is not *solely* the product of IR attending to issues of ‘doing being neutral’, but rather a way to *pursue an answer* when none is forthcoming (cf. Extract 7.9, Pomerantz 1984a b, Sacks 1987). Extract 7.13 documents a more generic feature of such ‘was it X or Y’ questions: that the second candidate understanding is produced after talk or silence that forecasts a (possible) up-and-coming trouble. In such cases, the ‘second version’

comes as other-initiated self-repair. With Extracts 7.8, 7.10-7.12, and in research interview-talk as whole, producing two ‘versions’ *prior to any ‘troubles’* is routine practice. Such work documents the ‘ideal’ of ‘professional neutrality’ that is the basis of research interviewing²⁶.

7.3.2 *Some other uses of contextual information at TCU-endings*

Contextual information at TCU-endings not only works explicitly to mark interviewers as neutralistic-interviewers. It also works to produce them in their other, related roles, of *facilitators* and *interested-interviewers*.

Extract 7.14, below, was seen previously in Section 4.3.5. I outlined there how IR’s question (8-11) is produced as a ‘no-fault’ question, in which IR does not offer a judgement or cast doubt on Lez’s prior talk. I noted how by producing an open, hence neutralistic, question she does not attend to ambiguities in Lez’s account (in that he provides multiple versions of ‘what went on’).

We join the talk as Lez offers yet another reason why the peer-education training session’s are no longer running (1-5). He forecasts more talk with the contrast marker ‘=b[u t -]’ (5) and IR produces a response token in overlap which comes off at a very fast pace. A gap emerges (7), in part a response to the ‘abruptness’ of the prior token and then at 8-11, IR produces a no-fault, and neutralistic, question. What is of interest is the TCU-ending, ‘=do you think.’.

Extract 7.14

- 1 Lez: =[.hh w]e:-, (1.2) >>and the were.<<
 2 I- I- dunno maybe we >av(hhhuh)ail<
 3 maybe we even took over and that’s
 4 why:, .h (hh)Jill’s. not involved with
 5 anything any more,=b[u t -]
 6 IR: [>>m]m: hm.<<
 7 (0.2)
 8 IR: what where the main difference between
 9 your ideas. as a group,=>about how how it

²⁶ The feminist (Oakley 1981) and emotionalist (Douglas 1985) critiques of research interviewer neutrality, in and through arguing against it, also document the centrality of this practice.

10 should be run.< and Jill's, ideas.=do you
11 **think.**
12 (0.3)
13 Lez: .hhh m:::- I think it was mainly about

At 10, with the falling intonation on 'ideas.', a complex TRP emerges. IR then latches the utterance '=do you think.' to her question. In Section 7.2, above, I outlined the work of 'do you think ...?' formula questions, but, in this example, this lexical formulation is produced as a tag-component. With this example, the tag is an optional, pragmatic, component; it is not essential for the prior question to come off as a question. The question-delivery component, prior to the tag, asks Lez to talk about the main differences of ideas between the two groups. The tag explicitly directs him to offer 'his thoughts': yet what else can Lez offer other than his thoughts on this topic? Isn't that all he is entitled to offer? He can offer his personal thoughts, which he owns and is entitled to knowledge of, and he could also offer 'what he thinks others thought' about the situation, be it the other group members or Jill's. So why is the tag produced, what work does it do?

As noted above, the question-delivery component is already produced as a open, non-judgmental question and this latched tag works to laminate a further layer of relevancies. Through the utterance 'I think'(13), Lez forecasts that the answer to follow is only to be heard as 'his thoughts', he marks explicitly that he is orientating to the format through which IR wanted him to answer the question. Rather than just offering Lez a way to understand and answer the question, the tag does some other work for IR. Through producing the tag, IR is marking explicitly that she is someone *interested in seeking Lez's perspective*, she is *interested in promoting his thoughts* on the topic. In asking this question, she is not merely asking Lez to think through what happened, she is *helping* him to explore his own thoughts on this topic. The tag works to produce an already neutralistic question as 'facilitatory' and as such works to produce her in the identity of 'neutralistic and facilitatory-questioner'²⁷.

²⁷ 'Do you think' as a tag to a question is also found in Davies (1997: 113, 121) study and does similar work.

We can see related work in Extract 7.15, below, and again this piece of contextual information (shown in bold) is an optional, pragmatic, feature of the talk. Prior to this extract they have been talking about how Ken first learnt about the peer-education sessions.

Extract 7.15

- 1 ken: so thats kinda how. I knew about, it but=>oh
2 yeah, learnin differen way no s:o=it's
3 easier for me to learn<
4 (IR): (°°okay.°°)
5 (0.3)
6 IR: >so=kinda ov:,< (.) >you've said about ho-
7 how you got involved wh-< why why, would
8 you get involved in it,
9 (0.3)
10 IR: °.hh **I'm kinda inte<rested>**.°
11 (0.4)
12 ken: well first John really, you
13 see. .hh ↑>well.< ur, he
14 wouldn't tell me much but jus
15 curiosity got me ((continues))

At 1-3, Ken works to close the prior topic-talk. Note how he marks this talk as upshot talk through the so-prefaces. IR then produces a follow-up question that topic shades from *how* Ken got involved to *why* he got involved. IR's preface 'so' (6) forecasts follow-up talk and 'you've said about ho- how you got involved' (6-7) marks explicitly that he is doing follow-up talk. IR then produces the question delivery component 'wh-< why why, would you get involved in it,' (7-8). IR could have just produced the question-delivery component without the prior talk. The prefacing work aligns Ken to the topic shade, that he is not targeting Ken's last TCU on the topic of 'his-ability-to-learn'. This prefacing work also hearably produces the question that follows as connected to Ken's prior talk. This marks that IR's interest in Ken's *motivation* for getting 'involved' is, in part, a product of Ken's prior topic-talk, IR is not solely responsible for introducing this specific question. Why does IR produce this preface?

In and through asking ‘why, would’ Ken ‘get involved’ in the peer-education sessions, it is also hearable that IR is asking the related question “why would you get involved in *learning about drugs*”. There are possible reasons for why someone would want to learn about drugs: they may use drugs; they may want to use them; they may use, or want to use, them and want information on how to use them safely; they may want information about them to help friends stop using; they may want information to avoid drugs and drug users; they may be interested in learning, irrespective of the topic What I want to note is that such a question is hearable as a ‘delicate’ question, and through the prefacing work and perturbation, ‘wh-< why why,’ (7), IR marks it as delicate²⁸.

The preface to the question-delivery component works to mark explicitly for Ken that IR is following up Ken’s talk, listening to what he has been saying and trying to work with his topic-talk. It produces IR as a ‘facilitative-interviewer’, he is merely promoting, or helping Ken to talk about his experiences. The question is not to be heard as a part of IR’s ‘interrogation’ of Ken, rather it is just a continuation of the prior talk, and IR is just ‘interviewing’ Ken about his experiences.

A gap in the talk emerges (9) and then IR works to pursue a response from Ken (10). In this case, he does not re-ask the question, clarify the question or even ask another unrelated question. Instead, he marks explicitly his motivation for asking the question. In telling Ken why he asked the question, he produces himself as a certain type-of-questioner, someone who is ‘kinda inte<rested>.’ (10) in Ken’s experience. He could have said, “we’re interested”, or “I have to ask that”, both possible versions hearably produce the prior question as a emerging from IR’s identity of (institutional) ‘information-gatherer’ or ‘bureaucratic-questioner’. Instead, IR hearably produces himself as someone who is an ‘*interested*-questioner’; whether this is hearable as a ‘personal’ interest or an interest motivated by his ‘institutional incumbency’ is unclear. I take it that at the very least, IR’s identity reformulation (cf. Sacks 1992, Winter 69 Lecture 8) hearably produces him in the identity of *interested-interviewer*, if not even ‘interested co-party’.

²⁸ Ken’s non-uptake of talk at 9 and 11 and IR’s increment at 11 also marks this a ‘delicate-talk’.

IR's contextual information '°.hh I'm kinda inte<rested>.' (10) downgrades the prior question as an interrogation about Ken's motivations. Note how this utterance is both produced at a lower volume to his prior talk and slows in pace at the end. It does not come off in and through a 'sarcastic' or 'accusatory' tone. Nor does it explicitly make Ken's non-uptake of talk - his lack of an answer - a predicate of him "having something to hide". Rather, it pursues a response by marking that there is no hidden agenda in asking this question. The question is just a product of IR's general, non-specific, interest in this topic, as he says, he is only 'kinda inte<rested>.'

After a further gap Ken provides an answer (12-15): initially someone else, 'john' [the course leader], got him interested. John tempted him, 'he wouldn't tell me much', and then his 'curiosity' took over. Note that it was 'jus curiosity', there was no other motivating factor, he definitely didn't have an immediate interest or desire to learn about drugs.

7.3.2.1 *Summary*

In Extract 7.14 and 7.15, the interviewers produce contextual information that both offers the interviewees a way to understand and answer the question and produces them as a certain type-of-questioner. Through producing the tag in Extract 7.14 and the incremental-turn in Extract 7.15, the interviewers mark explicitly that they are interested in seeking the interviewees' perspectives, they are interested in promoting the interviewees' thoughts on the specific topics. In Extract 7.14, through the tag, IR is not merely asking Lez to think through what happened, she hearably produces herself as 'helping him' to explore his own thoughts on this topic. In Extract 7.15, through the incremental-turn, IR marks explicitly his motivation for asking the prior question, downgrading the relevancy of his question being heard as emerging from an 'interrogational' or 'bureaucratic-agenda'.

Both the interviewers' increments to their talk hearably produce them in the related identities of 'facilitative-interviewer' (Extract 7.14) and 'interested-interviewer' (Extract 7.15). However, as was detailed in the analysis of both these extracts, other parts of their TCU do related identity-work. In Extract 7.14 the question-delivery component produces the question as a no-fault, neutralistic question, hence the IR is a 'neutralistic-

interviewer'. In Extract 7.15, the preface forecasts the question-delivery component that follows as following-up the prior topic, it hearably produces IR as a 'facilitative-interviewer', who is merely promoting, or making it easy for Ken to talk about his experiences in detail.

7.4 Discussion and Conclusion

Interviewers need to gain specific information but, according to the normative textbooks, this information should be produced with minimal intervention from them. As Smith (1995) notes

'A strategy often employed [by interviewers]... is to try to encourage a person to speak about the topic with as little prompting from the interviewer as possible. This point can be seen as a development of the requirement to ask neutral rather than leading questions. *One might say that you are attempting to get as close as possible to what your respondent thinks about the topic, without being led too much by your questions.*' [my emphasis] (15)

And the methods outlined in this chapter - 'do you think ... ?' questions and 'was it X or Y' questions and the other tags utterances - as well as the methods outlined in the prior two chapters ('and' 'can you' and 'so'-prefaced questions - along with the other methods documented in all the prior chapters - the sequential and lexical features of interviewers talk) show how interviewers can work to 'solve' this dilemma.

Throughout this chapter I have tried to highlight that the methods described are generic to talk-in-interaction. For example, attending to preference organization of questions is a 'freely' available interactional method. In this respect, Pomerantz outlines an issue *any* 'information-seeker' is confronted with:

'An information-seeker has options as to how much and how little guidance to give a recipient with respect to what information is relevant and appropriate. When interactants incorporate Candidate Answers in their inquiries, they give the co-interactants *models* of the types of answers that would satisfy their purposes. In providing a model, an interactant instructs a co-interactant as to just what kind of information is being sought.'

[author's emphasis](1988: 366, cited in Garcia 2000: 333)

As we saw with the interviewers 'do you think X?', 'do you think X or Y?' and 'was it

X or Y?’ questions, among other things, work to incorporate ‘Candidate Answers’, to instruct the interviewees²⁹. Pomerantz allows us to see how these methods are generic to ‘information-seekers’. As Smith’s example of ‘bad’ and ‘better’ questions (see Section 7.1.) and the interviewers’ questions throughout the thesis show, ‘how much and how little guidance’ to give is a *massive* concern in qualitative (and structured) interviewing. This is of little surprise as qualitative interviewers are ‘information-seekers’ *par excellence*. However, as noted above, rather than just provide one candidate understanding, interviewers *routinely, prior to* any interactional troubles, provide (at least) two candidate understandings. When they do provide a single candidate understanding they routinely produce ‘do you think X’ questions, explicitly marking the question as motivated by a search for the interviewees’ personal-thoughts on the topic of ‘X’. Such orientations document how interviewers are concerned to produce themselves as ‘*neutralistic-information-seekers*’.

Similarly, producing ‘do you think ...?’ questions is a generic feature of talk. As I noted above, such questions work to *help or invite* the recipient to explore their own ‘perspective/thoughts’ on a topic. As Maynard (1992) notes:

‘The reply to a perspective-display invitation [can] be followed by further questions or other topicalisers that permit the recipient to talk at length on some topic.

The questioner, never announcing any independent information or perspective, appears to “interview” a recipient and provide for that person to do extended topical talk’ (335)

Maynard highlights how ‘do you think ...?’ questions are a generic resource available for perspective-seekers to get extended topic-talk from another speaker without having to provide their own perspective. This is another method that interviewers routinely draw on. Note, however, how the interviewees very rarely work to ask interviewers “what do you think?” and interviewers very rarely say “what they think”. They are not just ‘perspective-seekers’, they are ‘*perspective-seekers-who-never-offer-their-own-perspective-or-offer-any-comment-on-the-perspectives-they-gain*’.

²⁹ As noted in Chapters Five, Six and Seven this ‘contextual information’ work not only instructs recipient ‘as to just what kind of information is being sought’ but also reflexively informs them about what type of information-seeker the ‘questioner’ is.

We can now begin to see how the lived practice of qualitative interviewing presented in this chapter draws on methods generic to talk-in-interaction. In fact, *all the methods* described throughout the thesis are generic interactional resources. It is the specific constellation of these methods and the specific orientation to them by *both* speakers that produces the talk for them (and us) as qualitative interview talk.

It is appropriate to end this chapter by commenting on a ‘methodological maxim’ that can be found in interview methods texts books. Mason notes:

‘[a]t any one time you may be: listening to what the interviewee(s) is or are currently saying and trying to interpret what they mean; trying to work out whether what they are saying has any bearing on ‘what you really want to know’; trying to think in a new and creative ways about ‘what you really want to know’; trying to pick up on any changes in your interviewees’ demeanour and interpret these ...’ (1996: 45).

Her list continues at some length and highlights in detail the multiple-tasks to which an interviewer can (and does) have to orientate, at one-and-the-same-time. As I noted above, interview methods texts work to provide detailed ‘technical access’ (cf. Livingston 1987) to the ‘how-to’ of qualitative interviewing. In so doing, they make the lived practices of qualitative interviewing ‘strange’ and available for others to learn about; and this is exactly one of the ‘things’ that the above chapters have tried to do. However, unlike these chapters, they also add a proviso: qualitative interviewing is both ‘strange and *difficult*’.

Fundamentally, in and through, explicitly or implicitly, talking about interviews *as* social interactions, interview methods texts are *studies of* social interaction-in-interviews (cf. Cicourel 1964). Moreover, they routinely take some *members’ lived interviewing practices* and produce them as *members’ lived interviewing problems and/or troubles*. For them as ‘onlookers’, the interviewees’ and interviewers’ routine practices are ‘massively complex’ (which they surely are). However, to argue that engaging in these routine practices is difficult/problematic/troublesome ignores the ‘massive complexity’ of *all* social interaction.

Qualitative interviews are *not* a ‘unique’ site of social interaction. Cicourel (1964) notes, through a reading of the methodological writings on interview practice, that, in interviewing:

‘[w]e find that continuous situational imputations, strategies, and the like occur which influence how actors [interviewee/interviewer] treat each other and manage their presence before each other’ (87)

He then notes, possibly not without irony, ‘*Now, these are precisely the conditions found in everyday life*’ [my emphasis] (ibid.). So, to argue that interviewing is inherently ‘difficult’ seems to produce interviewers (and interviewees) as interactional ‘dopes’ (cf. Garfinkel 1967).

Paradoxically, qualitative interviews are, *in some senses*, ‘unique’ sites of social interaction. As this thesis shows, interviewers and interviewees in, through and as their lived practice ‘draw on’ a specific constellation of everyday, generic, interactional methods to locally produce their social interactions as ‘qualitative-research-interviews’. Clearly, the methods literature does (begin to) identify interviews as ‘unique’ sites and often comments on how “some ethnos are interested in that sort of thing” (e.g. May 1993). However, they rarely advocate that the speakers interactional ‘work’ should be studied (for notable exceptions see Silverman [1993] and Potter and Wetherell [1995]). The next chapter shifts the focus on to one interviewee’s talk, showing in detail his ‘hard’ work.

PART FOUR - DOING BEING AN INTERVIEWEE

Joe said little, apart from telling us that “everybody” at his leafy-suburb school smoked dope. Really everybody? He qualified that figure to 90% of his friends and contemporaries.

Isobel Luxley

Part Three focused on how qualitative interviewers, through the way they employ various methods - orientating to preference organisation, question prefacing, specific lexical choices embedded in questions and as tag-components - produce themselves as specific types-of-people. It explored in detail how interviewers routinely locally produce themselves as ‘facilitatory and neutralistic interviewers’. In Part Four, rather than just focusing on one method at a time, I explore how a *range of* methods come together to ‘do’ specific identity work for interviewees.

Part Four uses a single case to focus on the various methods an interviewee uses to produce himself as a specific type-of-person in relation to the topics of the talk. I show how this moral-identity work is a product of the interaction between both speakers and, importantly, the locally produced moral context of the talk. Both speakers are intimately engaged in negotiating the interviewee’s (and interviewer’s) specific relationship to the topics of the interview. This highlights how ‘interview data’ is never just a neutral window on the interviewees’ lives and experiences.

Morally adequate talk about drugs: a single-case

8.1 Introduction

This chapter documents some of the methods available to speakers to produce themselves as certain ‘types-of-people’. I explore in detail a small sequence of talk in which the interviewee called Dan talks about his ‘drug-free life’. I document some of the methods Dan draws on to construct himself as a specific type-of-person - a *morally adequate* type-of-person.

This chapter should be read as a single-case analysis (cf. Schegloff 1987). The reason I undertook this approach, as compared to analysing a collection of cases, was that consonant with the aims of this thesis, I wanted to explore *in detail* ‘how an interview comes off as it does’. Or, to be more precise, how a specific moment in an interview (two question-answer adjacency pairs) documents how an interview can, at certain moments, be spaces in which moral work *is central to* how the talk comes off. This single-case is used to document how an analysis of interview-talk can be *sensitive* to the local context of the talk. As Frith and Kitzinger (1997) note, echoing Schegloff’s work (1997, 1998),

‘Extracts from talk are [often] assumed to ‘speak for themselves’. But ... data extracts are [often] decontextualised and interpreted as if they were produced in a neutral and disinterested way by research participants anxious only to report on their lives as accurately and faithfully as possible. This leaves out the crucial fact that talk is always occasioned and produced in a context, in interaction with others - and that participants are orientating towards the questions, concerns, assumptions, interpretations and judgements of others in producing their talk. When social scientists make the methodological leap from what people ‘say’ to what they ‘believe’ or how they ‘behave’ they obscure the *social* function of talk and obscure its role *as talk-in-interaction*.’
[authors’ emphasis] (317)

My analysis highlights just one of those ‘social functions of talk’, that research interviewees can be concerned to produce themselves, in and through talk, as *morally adequate*.

The analysis should be read in connection with Chapter Four. In that chapter, I was concerned to document how interviewers - through follow-up questions, response tokens and silence at turn-TRPs, - and interviewees - through rush-throughs, on-topic elaboration, story-telling and topic-shading - work to produce 'detailed' and 'comprehensive' talk. I noted that this constellation of 'methods' allows interviewees the possibility to produce themselves in the 'best light', a locally appropriate morally adequate light¹. This chapter is less concerned to document the inter-relationship of identity, sequence, turn-taking and topic. Instead, the focus is more centred on the specific 'category and identity work' that interviewees can engage in to produce themselves as specific types-of-people: morally adequate types-of-people.

8.1.2 *Organization of the chapter*

Initially, I focus on how this interviewee, Dan, responds to a question about his 'motivation' for becoming a drug peer-educator. I document how Dan works to categorise his motivation, the range of categories he invokes and how he works to explicate the predicates of them. I show the methods - producing himself as a member of specific MCDs, marking the specific predicates of those MCDs, producing himself as specific type-of-member of a positioned category, using the properties of maximal descriptors and generalised completers - which Dan uses to mark that he only has locally appropriate 'morally adequate' motivations for becoming a 'drug peer-educator'. In doing so, he works to negate that he is a seeker of drugs-knowledge because he does, or intends to 'take-drugs'. The analysis draws, in part, on Sacks' (1984) classic work 'On doing "being ordinary"' and Baruch's (1981) analysis of how interviewees work to produce themselves as morally adequate.

I then explore how Dan produces himself - through extreme case formulations (cf. Pomerantz 1986) and accounting for how-they-are-to-be-heard - as an *everyday*, ordinary, rational, responsible and morally adequate type-of-person. Following Lawrence (1996), I note how one of the fundamental ways to document your moral

¹ But this is not necessarily what interviewees do 'do', they may work to construct themselves in a morally *inadequate* light. However, this is generally only a temporary moment, often used to document 'how they have changed' (see Doherty [forthcoming], Rapley [1998]). In the conclusion of this chapter, I will begin to consider the work of interviews and 'moral adequacy'.

adequacy is to demonstrate how you, or the topics you are speaking about, are ‘ordinary’.

Through a detailed discussion of extreme case formulations, drawing on Edwards’ (2000) Pomerantz’s (1986), and Sacks’ (1992) work, I mark how they can be an economical method of producing the identity of a speaker as ‘morally adequate’. In the conclusion, I will begin to outline *why it is important* that ‘we’ are aware of how interviewees’ talk can be (at some moments) not just about ‘giving information’ but can also be about ‘doing being morally adequate’.

This part of the thesis is centred on generating a sensitivity to the moral, identity work that interviewees can, and do, produce in interviews. Following the work of Baruch (1981) and others and the theoretical directives of Sacks (1992) and Schegloff (1997), the implication for interview research is that *before* ‘we’ make assertions about what people are ‘saying’, how they ‘behave’ or what they ‘believe in’, ‘we’ need to examine *how* both interviewers and interviewees manage their local identities.

8.2 Introducing the data

The talk under analysis in this chapter is taken from an interview with a drug peer-educator. Before I engage in an analysis of the talk I want to note, following Watson (1997ab), that in this opening sentence I have already set up a specific way to read the talk that follows. Note that two major categorisations that the analysis could (and actually does) make relevant *are presented as* pre-determined – ‘interview’ and ‘drug peer-educator’. As the prior chapters have tried to document, such categorisations are not fixed, or givens, rather they are *locally accomplished in situ*; they are produced, negotiated and made relevant *in and through* the talk. I also want to note that both speakers come to the interaction with an understanding that the talk will be centred, and understood as, at *least initially*, an ‘interview-about-Dan’s-experience-of-being-a-drug-peer-education’. However this gloss or candidate understanding, is just that: a description that offers no real detail on the lived practices of the interaction. My ‘job’ as an analyst is to document *how* the interaction ‘comes off’ for the speakers, how they produce it - where the ‘it’ is an ‘interview’ or the identity ‘drug peer-educator’ or the other, multiple, categories the talk can and does invoke.

8.3 Documenting a relationship to drug peer-education

The extract below is of interest as it is the first moment in the interview that the category ‘*drug* peer-educator’ and, importantly for this chapter, ‘*drugs*’ are made relevant in and through the talk. Prior to IR’s question (1-2, Extract 8.1 below), the talk has been centred around how Dan first got knowledge of, and became involved in, ‘*peer-educating*’. There has been no specific mention of ‘*drug* peer-education’ prior to this extract. However, prior to the sequence below, IR does ask Dan ‘=and >do you know< what kinds of things (0.4) they would have considered to be right or wrong for the course [and was that] clear, or not.’ (not shown in transcript). This question seeks to understand what qualities Dan thinks that the course organisers thought were relevant to becoming a (drug) peer-educator. Dan makes relevant the predicates of wanting-to-learn, being-able-to-teach, make-it-interesting-and-do-it-well, that he glosses as ‘attitude’. He, therefore, clearly makes relevant the qualities of the MCD (peer-)educator over any predicates connected to *drug* peer-education.

Let us now focus on the talk in the extract below. I initially want to note that, IR’s question is an ‘open question’, it is up to Dan to offer the detail as to why he put himself forward for the position of a drug peer-educator. Dan offers an initial reason, that ‘it is the sort of thing erm: (0.4) I like to do’ (arrow 1) this is then reflexively produced as a gloss as he lists three specific factors (arrows 1a, 1b and 1c). Following IR’s response token ‘=yeah.’ (12) Dan works to close the talk with the formulation ‘°and it is something it did interest me really°’ (arrow 2). What I want to focus on in this extract is *how* Dan works to categorise his motivation for going on the course, the categories he invokes and the way he works to explicate them.

Extract 8.1

- 1 IR: °°<(all right). (.) okay.°°>=> .h< so can you tell me why why did you
2 put yourself forward at that stage,
3 dan: erm:, phh Well,=it is the sort of thing erm:. (0.4) I like to do ←1
4 and I do= I enjoy you know (.) learning things I didn't ←1a
5 know before and=then you know teaching it its ←1b
6 °>things that I do you know° I teach a lot of other things
7 as well as drama< and so forth so um .hh quite used to doing
8 °it°. =and I come from a medical family so er:, (0.3) ←1c
9 [>you know drugs and so forth< we do
10 IR: [mm:.
11 dan: it we discuss quite a lot °and er°
12 IR: =yeah.
13 dan: °and it is something it doe- did interest me really° ←2
14 IR: okay=was there any other particular interest in the
15 fact that it was drugs >I mean< is that something
16 that is meaningful to you: pa[r]ticularly or not=

After his initial gloss of his motivation, that this is the ‘sort of thing he *likes to do*’ (arrow 1), he works to unpack the gloss. He first marks that ‘I enjoy you know (.) **learning** things I didn’t know before’ (4-5). Dan produces himself as someone who, in general, irrespective of the topic, note the utterance ‘things’(4), actively enjoys learning. He produces himself as a ‘seeker of new-knowledge’, which is a ‘praiseworthy’ MCD to be in. I should note the notion of what is a ‘praiseworthy’ or, following Baruch (1981), a ‘morally *adequate*’, MCD is a locally negotiated understanding². Compare this to producing yourself as a ‘seeker of *drugs* knowledge’, with its *possible* negative or

² I feel a possible tension in the analysis emerges, as at some points I take ‘as read’ that a category is morally adequate without demonstrating this *in detail*. In this way, I am doing what Schegloff (1992) criticises some MCD work for. As noted in chapter 4, Schegloff warns us that

‘there can be little doubt that the principle is basic - commonsense knowledge cannot properly be invoked as itself providing an account, rather than providing the elements of something to be accounted for.’ (1992a : xlii).

As the analysis unfolds, I hope that what may first ‘appear as’ an unexplicated use of commonsense knowledge will be recast as ‘grounded in’ the speakers’ actions.

morally inadequate predicates³. Dan then marks that he also enjoys ‘teaching what he’s learnt’ (arrow 1b), another ‘praiseworthy’ activity. Then, at arrow 1c, he does some ‘lovely’ category work, he implicitly marks why the topic of the peer-education, drugs, is relevant to him: he ‘come[s] from a **medical family**’

8.3.1 *Negotiating the categories of a question and delaying the ‘delicate’*

Before I consider in detail the work in this final categorisation (arrow 1c), I want to briefly focus on the talk prior to this. Note that IR’s question only asks why Dan put himself ‘forward’ (2)⁴. With this ‘open’ question two identities are implicitly made relevant. The question is hearable as both “why did you put yourself forward to become an *educator*?” and “why did you put yourself forward to become a *drug-educator*?”. Dan’s answer makes *both* of these possible hearings relevant. Note also, that both MCD’s have specific predicates centred on the type-of-person that would put themselves forward for such roles. For the MCD ‘educators’ the type-of-person is hearable as doing-it-out-of-a-sense-of-goodwill or for-future-career-prospects or is-patronising, they may feel-superior-to-others. With the MCD ‘drug-educators’, the type-of-person may be still hearable as doing-it-from-a-general-interest-in-education but is also hearable as having a specific ‘(illegitimate) stake’ in learning about drugs⁵. In answering the question, Dan attends to, and reflexively makes relevant, these candidate reasons and their implicit categorisations.

The initial candidate reason ‘it is the sort of thing erm: (0.4) I like to do’ (arrow 1) marks that their was *nothing* special or extra-ordinary about putting himself forward for this. Putting himself forward for ‘things’ – irrespective of the topic – is to be heard as an *everyday* feature of Dan’s life. Dan then works to mark that he likes to ‘learn things’ (arrow 1a). Note that, he produces himself in the positioned category teacher/pupil. Sacks (1992: Spring 1967, Lecture 13) shows us that one member of a positioned

³ The reason ‘possible’ in the prior sentence is in italics is to mark that what is morally adequate or inadequate is a product of local, *in situ*, negotiation (see Silverman 1994 and 1997 for a discussion of the local construction of ‘delicacy’).

⁴ As Anssi Peräkylä (personal communication) noted, this question seeks Dan’s *personal-inner* motives. This is in contrast to a prior question that asked ‘=and >do you know< what kinds of tingst (0.4) they would have considered to be right or wrong for the course [and was tha]t clear, or not.’ (not shown on transcript) which seeks the *course organisers* motives.

⁵ See below, section 8.3.3, for a consideration of the category work centred around ‘*drug-educator*’.

category can be said to be ‘higher’ or ‘lower’ than another. Dan marks himself as a ‘learner’ and therefore in a subordinate position to the ‘teacher’. In this way, Dan works to produce himself as ‘someone-willing-to-listen-and-learn’ and this nicely contrasts with one of the possible predicate of type-of-educator. Would someone who ‘likes to learn’ be the sort of educator that ‘is patronising’? Dan produces himself as the type-of-educator that does it out of ‘goodwill’ and reinforces this with his further talk as he notes that he teaches ‘a lot of other things’ (6). Note especially that, Dan works to say not only ‘I like teaching’ but ‘I like to learn *and then* teach those things I have newly learnt about’. So, Dan marks himself, his motivations, as emerging from him being a ‘humble’ seeker-of-knowledge and reflexively a ‘humble’ teacher-of-knowledge. Both of these *inner* motivations are what he previously positioned (data not given) as the qualities that the course organisers were seeking⁶. He then goes on to mark a specific relationship to the category ‘drugs’.

Note how Dan initially answers the question with the utterance ‘erm phh Well,=it is the sort of thing erm.. (0.4) I like to do’ (1). Silverman notes that in HIV counselling interviews ‘P[atients] produce a minimal amount of potentially delicate items at a first turn after a question, leaving it up to the recipient to decide whether to treat it as a gloss which needs unpacking.’(1997, 76). Routinely, patients in HIV counselling interviews start with ‘generally available’ information and then move onto more ‘personal’ or ‘delicate’ information (and this move is often prompted by the counsellor). Similarly Dan’s answer follows this pattern, albeit that in this case Dan works to unpack his own gloss. His answer (3-9, 11, 13) moves from the highly general (arrow 1), to the more specific (arrow 1a and 1b) and then on to the ‘delicate’ (arrow 1c). In this case, Dan delays the personal, his ‘personal’ *relationship* to the category drugs. It is upon this ‘delicate’ topicalisation, drugs, that we will now focus.

8.3.2 *Documenting a relationship to drug peer-education*

Dan offers up a third motivation which explains why he put himself forward: that he ‘come[s] from a **medical family**’ (arrow 1c). We have a puzzle: why that now? Why produce yourself as belonging to the MCD medical-families? One possible solution is:

⁶ Also, he does not produce himself as particularly ‘altruistic’ rather just as ‘outgoing’.

by producing yourself as part of this MCD, one of the possible predicates is ‘knowledge of, and access to, *drugs*’. Dan goes onto mark the predicates of why he produced himself as part of this specific MCD, he says ‘you know drugs and so forth< we do it we discuss quite a lot’ (9-11).

I want to note two inter-related issues. Firstly, as noted above, this is the first time (since the tape has been switched on) that the category ‘drugs’ has been produced. At no other point has such a category been made relevant either explicitly or implicitly⁷. Note also, the utterance that follows this ‘and so forth’. Following Jefferson (1990), such an utterance can be seen as a member of a group of utterances called ‘generalised completers’, which can work to say ‘there are many more nameables which will not, and need not, be specified’ (ibid.: 68). As such ‘drugs’ is produced as *the* maximal (Drew 1992) descriptor, the essential category, or piece of information, that can be used as a resource by the other speaker to define what the other things that are part of the same category are. It may be interesting to consider what these other things that ‘they’ discuss *could be* and what in fact ‘drugs’ specifically refers to. However, such work leads us into the realm of speculation. Does ‘they’ refer to: drugs and *illegal activities*? drugs and *crime*? drugs and *youth*? drugs and *medicine*? drugs and *other medical issues*?... . Does ‘drugs’ refer to: *illegal* drugs? *legal* drugs? *illegal and legal* drugs?

Clearly ‘drugs’ is produced *as just one* of the things they discuss together. If Dan had said, ‘drugs we discuss quite a lot’, he would be hearably producing drugs as *the* topic of talk for them. And this could raise morally *inadequate* identity issues around

⁷ In retrospect, we (the analysts) could say, IR may have been alluding to the category ‘drugs’ with the question “and >do you know< what kinds of tingst (0.4) they would have considered to be right or wrong for the course [and was tha]t clear, or not” [data not shown], earlier in the talk. Although Dan *does not make relevant* ‘prior drug use or knowledge’ as something ‘they’ considered ‘right or wrong’. As Dan did not produce ‘drugs’ as a relevant category this idea is not that analytically sustainable and merely remains a highly contentious ‘idea’.

how it is that *only* ‘drugs’ is a routine feature of their talk [has Dan got an (il)legal drug problem?]. By producing the topic ‘drugs’, through the generalised completer, as just one of the *many* mentionables certain categorisation are made ‘less’ hearably relevant⁸.

This maximal descriptor is produced, in part, *in overlap with* IR’s acknowledgement token. Note the intersubjective appeal [IA] ‘you know’, which works to say this-goes-without-saying and the way that the utterance ‘comes off’ at a faster pace than the surrounding talk. All these features combine to produce the utterance ‘>you know drugs and so forth<’ as *the* ‘obvious’ or ‘natural’ upshot of the prior talk.

Secondly, I want to focus on the utterance ‘medical family’. Through this utterance Dan documents why the topic ‘drugs’ is relevant-in-his-life, that he has some knowledge of it, in and through, a *medical* and *familial* perspective. People from the medical field, (who have medical families) have legitimate and institutionalised, access to legal drugs and (il)legal drugs-knowledge talk. In that sense the ‘drugs talk’ that emerges within the discussion has the predicates of ‘reasoned, informed, knowledgeable’ ..., it will certainly not be primarily the stuff of ‘myths, rumour and hearsay’. Discussing drugs in a ‘familial’ context, compared to say, with friends, adds an additional layer of respectability. As David Silverman noted (personal communication) what sort of person talks about such a subject with their parents? It is hearable both as someone who is a member of the MCD ‘mature’ as well as someone who is a ‘young-fogey’, someone who-cannot-relate-to-young-people⁹. Also note that Dan produces himself as the ‘subordinate’ in a positioned category, in this case parent-child. Again, in alignment with his prior talk at arrow 1a, he produces himself as a ‘learner’. So, engaging in talk-about-drugs as an incumbent of the MCD ‘family’ produces the ‘drugs talk’ as occurring in a ‘caring and responsible environment’.

⁸ All I want to note is that ‘drugs and so forth’ is *produced as* and *attended to* by IR as adequate. I also want to note that throughout my data the category ‘drug(s)’ is routinely produced as ‘an-inadequate-gloss-that-needs-to-be-unpacked’ (Rapley 1998). For example see Extract 4.10.

⁹ And interestingly when speaking to the person who conducted the interview they also (unprompted) described Dan as a ‘young fogey ... a William Hague’ (!). This noticing of ‘young fogey’ is downgraded by the transcription process in that only a small part of interaction is presented, yet I would submit more strongly underlies the interaction when viewed as a whole.

This ‘respectability’, in turn, is further made relevant through the contrast between the MCD ‘family’ and the activity ‘drugs’. As Sacks notes,

‘So it seems plain enough the people monitor the scenes they are in for their storyable characteristics. And yet the awesome, overwhelming fact is that they come away with *no* storyable characteristics. ... But there is a job of being an ordinary person, and that job includes attending to the world, yourself, others, objects, so as to see how it is a usual scene. And when offering what transpired, you present it in its usual fashion: “Nothing much,” and whatever variants of banal characterizations you might happen to use; that is, there is no particular difference between saying “Nothing much” and “It was outta sight” ’ [author’s emphasis] (1984: 417)

The ‘people’ who Sacks refers to are not just the speakers but the hearers as well. I take it that IR, and us, can hear the situation of ‘dan-sitting-round-with-his-family-and-discussing-drugs’ in various ways. We could hear it as ‘discussing-legal-drugs’, ‘discussing-illegal-drugs’, ‘discussing-why-drugs-are-bad’, ‘debating-the-pros-and-cons’, ‘discussing-Dan’s-drug-problem’, ‘talking-about-their-individual-drug-experiences’ or as ‘Dan’s-parents-decided-to-discuss-drugs-with-Dan-as-they-were-worried-he-wasn’t-actually-taking-enough-of-them’. I take it that, *at the very least*, the last gloss is not ‘ordinarily’ available to hearers, that this is something that would have to be ‘worked at’ to be heard as relevant. So, for a family to discuss drugs something is ‘going on’ for this activity to be relevant to the family.

Drugs is not ‘ordinarily’ a predicate of the MCD family, although *discussing* drugs is ‘ordinarily’ hearable as a predicate of a specific type of family, one that is ‘open-and-willing-to-discuss-difficult-issues’. It is also relevant as a predicate of the type of family a ‘young fogey’ comes from, such matters as the ‘decline-of-young-people’s-moral-standards’ is hearable as relevant talk. This is also made relevant as this is not ‘any’ family but a ‘*medical* family’. Not only are they discussing ‘difficult’ issues, but (at least) one of the parties in the discussion is a legitimate *expert* on the topic. The MCD ‘medical family’, does in fact, make the category ‘drugs discussion’ *ordinary*. To explain this, I want to turn to Sacks work on ‘doing being ordinary’ and Baruch’s (1981) ‘continuation’ of this work.

8.3.3 'Ordinariness' and moral adequacy

Sacks makes the brilliant observation that:

'A kind of remarkable thing is how, in ordinary conversation, people, in reporting on some event, report what we might see to be, not what happened, but the ordinariness of what happened. The reports do not so much give attributes of the scene, activity, participants, *but announce the event's ordinariness, its usualness*' [my emphasis] (1984: 414).

By Dan producing 'discussing drugs' as a predicate of him being part of the MCD 'medical family' he works to 'announce the event's ordinariness, its usualness'. And Sacks notes:

'What ever you may think about what it is to be an ordinary person in the world, an initial shift is not to think of "an ordinary person" as some person, but as somebody having as one's job, as one's constant preoccupation, doing "being ordinary." It is not that somebody *is* ordinary; it is perhaps that that is what one's business is, and it takes work, as any other business does.' [author's emphasis] (ibid.)

I want to stress that Dan, and this chapter, is concerned to document the *job, work or business* of 'doing being ordinary'. Now this has special significance if we bear in mind Baruch's (1981) understanding of interviews. As noted in section 2.1.2 1, he shows us that interviewees

'attend to the issue of their appearance as moral persons, competent members and adequate performers' (276).

He demonstrates how *interviews* can place 'moral demands' on interviewees, that they routinely work to produce themselves as *morally adequate*. One of the fundamental ways to document your 'moral adequacy' is to demonstrate how you, or the topics you are speaking about, are 'ordinary' (cf. Lawrence 1996). This is precisely the work Dan does in this extract.

Dan's talk at 9-11 attends to, and makes relevant, some of the possible predicates of 'putting-yourself-forward-to-become-a-drug-peer-educator'. Why would someone be interested in gaining drugs knowledge? Is it because they already 'do' drugs and want more information to do them safely, more effectively? Is it because they are 'thinking about' doing them and want more information? Or, is it that they 'purely' want more information, not to use drugs, but to understand why others use them or to help other users?

There are other, possible, formulations but I feel these three are sufficient for the present purposes. Through Dan producing himself as a member of the MCD ‘medical families’ he works to *negate* the reading that he is a seeker-of-drugs-knowledge because he does, intends to, or is thinking about using drugs or because he is on a ‘crusade’ to save people from ‘the evils of drugs’. He works to produce himself as a *possible* member of the MCD ‘non-users’, as he marks that an ‘interest in’ drugs has ‘entered his life’ through *legitimate* and *ordinary* way, through both a medical *and* familial context¹⁰. Note that he does not connect drug use to any *other* part of his life, be it ‘friends’, ‘school’ or ‘strangers’.

In producing his ‘motivation’, Dan makes relevant that IR’s question hearably implied that ‘one-of-the-reasons-for-putting-yourself-forward-for-peer-education-could-be-a-“personal-stake”-in-drugs’. Note when and where IR does produce some response to Dan’s talk. The first is produced after Dan’s utterance ‘so er., (0.3)’ (9). This utterance projects more talk through the rising intonation, and specifically projects elaboration of the prior topic through the utterance ‘so’. At this point in the talk, IR produces a continuer. Dan explain his prior talk (9, 11) and then IR produces an ‘upgraded’ acknowledger. Dan then works to close the talk by producing a formulation of the prior talk, that ‘it [peer-education and/or drugs] is something it doe- did interest’ him (arrow 2)¹¹.

IR acknowledges and closes the prior talk with the utterance ‘okay’ (14) (cf. Beach 1993, 1995) and produces a follow-up question ‘was there **any other** particular interest’ (14)¹². The question topicalises ‘drugs’ and works to understand if *any other* factors about drugs, other than Dan coming from a ‘medical family’, were relevant to his interest in becoming a *drug* peer-educator. IR then qualifies this with the utterance ‘>I mean<’ (15)

¹⁰ And also, as Pirjo Nikander (personal communication) noted, coming from a ‘medical family’ reflexively constructs Dan as (potentially) from a middle-class, hence ‘respectable’ family and that he is both (potentially) well-educated and bright. These potential MCDs could all lead to hearing that drug use is not something relevant to this type-of-person.

¹¹ Note the ambiguity in the utterance ‘it’, does it refer to peer-education, drug peer-education or drugs? Also, note the self-repair from ‘does’ to ‘did’. The interest is first produced in the present and then repaired to the *past* tense. This ‘interest’, whatever ‘it’ is, has now been ‘satisfied’. A ‘continuing’ interest might mean that Dan wanted to know about drugs for more ‘personal’ reasons.

¹² Note also how IR ‘recycles’ Dan’s terminology; Dan had produced the utterance ‘interest’ in his prior talk (13). In this way, combined with the utterance ‘any other’, IR *marks* that Dan is ‘responsible for’ the topic of this question and, importantly, ‘responsible for’ introducing the topic of ‘drugs’. Note also

and thus qualifies how the question is to be treated. IR asks if drugs are ‘meaningful to you:’ (16) - note the emphasis on ‘you:’. Does the ‘you’ refer to ‘Dan alone’ or ‘Dan and others’?¹³ I feel that the emphasis and the sequential context of the question produce the ‘you’ as ‘Dan in particular’ and this is how Dan attends to it (see Extract 8.2 below). The downgrade ‘pa[rticularly or not]’ (16) works to ‘offset’ any hearable preference embedded in the question¹⁴.

IR’s question works to topicalise the category ‘drugs’ and promote talk on *any possible further* ‘relationship’ that Dan has to this category. This is in contrast to IR’s prior ‘open’ question (1-2), that allowed Dan to mention ‘anything’ that was relevant. Remember that, IR, at 10, first produced a response to Dan’s talk when he had implicitly invoked the category ‘drugs’, through the MCD ‘medical families’, and as soon as this category emerges he works to acknowledge the prior talk. IR’s response tokens, combined with the question that follows Dan’s talk, marks this topic, ‘*drugs*’, as an ‘important-issue-to-IR’, even though he produces the question as a natural continuation of Dan’s talk. Note that IR does not topicalise the other ‘motivational’ factors Dan invokes (arrow 1a and 1b). In a sense, it reflexively asks *why* Dan produced himself and his motivation for drug peer-education, as a member of the MCD ‘medical families’. Dan works to document *his distance from* the possibly ‘morally *inadequate*’ motivation for seeking knowledge about drugs, *prior to* this topic being explicitly mentioned.

8.3.4 Summary

Dan works to mark his motivation for becoming a ‘drug peer-educator’. He moves initially from distancing himself from having *any* specific interest in the role [it’s just the sort of thing he does] to motivations produced as ‘generally available reasons’ specifically connected to the job [he likes learning/teaching] to motivations produced as more ‘personal’ or ‘delicate reasons’ [he comes from a medical family]. All these reasons have predicates centred on the ‘type-of-person’ that has such ‘motivations’.

that IR produces the question in the same tense as Dan, the past tense, which echoes Dan’s ‘doe-did’ (13) repair work.

¹³ Sacks notes that utterances like ‘you’ are ‘this-or-that’ devices, they are ‘systematically ambiguous’ and that they build ‘richness into a compact form’ (1992, Fall 65, 6: 165).

¹⁴ As noted in section 7.3.1, it produces IR as a neutralistic, non-leading, questioner.

Dan works to mark himself as a specific type-of-person, the type-of-person whose motivation for becoming a drug peer-educator is *not* a product of him being a drug user, or having contact with other drug users.

By marking himself as the type-of-person who is interested in learning and teaching *irrespective of the topic* the ‘fact’ that he will be gaining knowledge about the specific topic of ‘drugs’ is produced as being of *only* minor importance. He then works to hearably produce himself as a *possible* member of the MCD ‘non-drug users’, as he marks that any ‘interest in’ drugs that has ‘entered his life’ has *only* entered through *legitimate* and *ordinary* ways, through both a medical and familial context. He does not connect ‘an interest in drugs’ to any *other* part of his life, be it ‘friends’, ‘school’ or ‘strangers’ or a desire to ‘help’ drug-users.

Through certain methods - producing himself as a member of specific MCDs, marking the specific predicates of those MCDs, producing himself as specific type-of-member of a positioned category, using the properties of maximal descriptors and generalised completers - Dan works to negate that he is ‘a seeker of drugs knowledge because he does, intends to, or is thinking about *using* drugs’. All this work comes off as an answer to IR’s ‘open and non-leading question’.

The talk under analysis demonstrates how interviewers’ questions can place ‘moral demands’ on interviewees and that interviewees can work to produce themselves as *morally adequate* (cf. Baruch 1981, Baker 1984, 1997, Cuff 1993, Firth and Kitinger 1998). One of the fundamental ways to document your ‘moral adequacy’ is to demonstrate how you, or the topics you are speaking about, are ‘ordinary’ (cf. Sacks 1984, Lawrence 1996).

In the talk above, Dan worked to announce, through marking himself as a specific type-of-person, his motivation as ‘just’ everyday/ordinary/normal/routine. In the talk that follows, we will see how Dan continues to produce himself, through extreme case formulations, as ‘just’ an ordinary *and* morally adequate type-of-person.

8.4 Dancing-in-a-round-about-way

In the talk that follows Extract 8.1, what I can only call, a ‘dance’, occurs between IR and Dan. IR works to ask, in a roundabout way, “Dan, do you take drugs?” and Dan works to say, in a roundabout way, “No, I don’t take drugs”. Neither speaker *explicitly* says what they are *implicitly* saying. What does emerge is a lot of moral-identity work by both speakers. We have seen the opening steps of this dance in Extract 8.1 above. Dan works to construct himself as ‘having knowledge of drugs through *legitimate* and *ordinary* channels’. IR works to mark an interest in this topic, ‘drugs’, and that this interest was invoked ‘by Dan himself’.

The talk that follows has been analysed in section 6.5, from the perspective of IR’s moral-identity work. Dan’s whole answer is working to account for his answer not being in agreement with IR’s question. Dan is attending to the prior talk as having a preference for the answers ‘yes-drugs-is-meaningful-to-me-*personally*’ or ‘no-drugs-is-not-meaningful-to-me-*personally*’. Note how IR produces an increment to his own question, that ‘neutralises’ the preferences of the question, through the tag utterance ‘pa[rticularly or not’ (16)¹⁵. Dan produces a dispreferred response, in that he works to say ‘drugs-is-meaningful-to-*everyone*’. The answer is typical of a dispreferred response (Pomerantz 1984b), in that the action of answering the question is delayed, qualified and accounted for. However, Dan’s answer *is* contiguous (cf. Sacks 1987) with IR’s talk, in fact he works to gain the floor prior to a hearable complex-TRP (17)¹⁶. In this way he is doing early disagreement, but in a mitigated way.

Let us focus on the details of how Dan’s answer comes off.

Extract 8.2 [continuation of Extract 8.1]

- 14 IR: okay=was there any other particular interest in the
15 fact that it was drugs >I mean< is that something
16 that is meaningful to you: pa[rticularly or not=
17 dan: [°well-°

¹⁵ Note also how the utterance ‘or not’ could be attending to how Dan’s talk in overlap (°well-°, 17) is hearable as forecasting disagreement with IR’s talk.

¹⁶ Dan overlaps with the tag-component of IR’s question and so marks that he has heard the question as complete and that further-explanation-is-unnecessary. The utterance ‘°well-°’ (17) is produced at a quieter volume to the surrounding talk and is ‘cut short’, Dan does not try to ‘take’ the floor but signals that he is ‘ready-to’ answer the question.

18 =>yeah, well it=is I mean cause >>it's everywhere
 19 I think is mean- its got to be meaningful t- t- to
 20 you know<< a greater< or lesser. extent >to everyone<
 21 [because there is so]: much of it aro:und, and:
 22 IR: [°< r i g h t . >°]
 23 dan: er, you know it's good to know things as well
 24 °I think its er° simply because its >you know< its so much=
 25 IR: =°mm:°
 26 dan: °you know in the news° °°and everything it's er-°°
 27 (0.4)
 28 IR: so you saY it'[s it's so much around [>and then you

Dan's talk in overlap, '°well-°'(17), works to say that he is 'ready-to' answer the question. IR 'completes' his question with the tag-utterance, 'pa[rticularly or not]', and then Dan latches his talk producing the utterance 'yeah,' (19). This utterance, 'yeah,' is not so much 'doing agreement with' the prior talk, but rather marking that 'I have heard and understood the prior question'. Dan then works to preface and account for his answer with the utterance 'well it=is I mean cause'(18). 'Well', 'I mean' and 'cause' *all work* to forecast that an account-will-follow, and reflexively produce the answer in a dispreferred response format. Dan then produces the utterance that marks *why* his talk is in 'disagreement with' IR's increment to his question.

I want to gloss the initial part of Dan's answer (18), as it contains two indexicals that attend to two different 'categories' (the glosses are unpacked in the square brackets).

Dan says:

'yeah well [drugs are meaningful to me personally] I mean
 cause [drugs are] everywhere'.

Now this is a really 'nice' piece of identity work. I want to produce another gloss to document the sort of work Dan is doing:

'[drugs are meaningful to me personally not because I am a member of any specific category (that have as their predicates drugs use, knowledge or experience), but rather they are meaningful to me personally as this 'meaningfulness' is "*freely available*" (as drugs are everywhere)]'.

Remember, that in the question that promotes this talk IR asked if drugs are 'meaningful to you:' (16) and he works to stress, through pitch, the idea of them having some sort of

meaningfulness and that this could be *personal* to Dan. I noted that the pro-term ‘you:’ can refer to Dan-alone or Dan-and-others. Dan works to mark that this you-ness does not refer to ‘me-alone’ or ‘me-and-a-*specific*-group-of-others [friends, people-of-his-age-group, people-from-the-same-town ...]’ but rather ‘me-*and-people*’.

Dan uses an extreme-case formulation [ECF](cf. Pomerantz 1986) ‘drugs are *everywhere*’ to produce himself in a morally adequate light. Of course, drugs are not ‘literally’ everywhere, when we walk down our street we do not ‘trip and fall’ due to ‘piles of’ drugs. As Edwards (2000) notes,

‘ECFs are factually brittle, in that an extreme or universalizing statement (“I know nothing,” “nobody comes here,” “you always say that”) *risks* easy refutation by a single exception, invites being taken nonliterally, and may be treated as an index of the speakers attitude (subjectivity) rather than a straightforward description of the world’ [my emphasis] (352).

Speakers can, and do, attend to the ‘extreme’ nature of the case as resource to ‘undermine’ the argument that the formulation works to sustain. Edwards (ibid.) also notes how speakers who produce the ECF sometimes work to ‘soften’, or mitigate, the ‘extreme’ formulation as a way to ‘defend’ the legitimacy of the claim¹⁷. Dan goes on to undertake a *related practice*, he accounts for how it is he made this specific ‘extreme’ claim.

Dan goes onto account for his ECF, by marking that this is *his* perspective. Note the personal pronoun work in the utterance ‘I think’ (19), which marks his subjective entitlement to this perspective, that the prior talk is to be heard *only* as *his* understanding and *only* as *his* knowledge, it is not ‘a fact’ (cf. Beach and Metzinger 1997). He then goes onto repair his talk ‘is mean- its got to be meaningful’, upgrading from merely *thinking*

¹⁷ ‘Softening’ work may be both self- or other-initiated. For example speakers may ‘self-repair’ within their turn [‘his *ca::rpets* are (.) braa- virtually bran’ n[ew’ (ibid.: 10)] or ‘repair’ may come off through the following sequential pattern:

Extract 8.A (very simplified transcript, Edwards 2000: 9)

A: he’d never listen to how I felt ... he’d laugh ... [ECF]

B: I didn’t laugh at everything [challenge]

A: Yehh but most things [softener]

I should note that Edwards found relatively few ‘softeners’ in his data set. He notes that ‘ECFs may not *require* softening, insofar as they may *already* be hearably nonliteral, performative or indexical of investment - that is, offered and received as something other than accountably accurate proposals about the world’ [authors emphasis](ibid.: 369).

drugs are meaningful to they have ‘got to be’. Now this is considerable upgrade, it reproduces the extreme nature of his claim¹⁸. Note the speed of Dan’s talk at this point. When he first takes the floor, his talk is clearly faster than the surrounding talk, it then speeds up (note the double ‘>>’) to a very, very, fast pace and this, in part, reflected in the way he ‘stumbles’ on producing the utterance ‘to’, ‘t-t-to’ (19). I will return to the specific work this pace does below.

Dan continues to account for his ECF, firstly with an intersubjective appeal [IA] (cf. Baruch 1981) ‘you know’ (20), which follows his ‘verbal stumble’. Baruch (1981) shows that interviewees’ utterances like “you know” are IAs that implicitly ask the interviewer to see the ‘commonsense’ of their talk (cf. Schutz 1962, 1964, 1966), to share in the reality they are trying to establish. In part, this IA works to attend to the prior stumble, as well as the ‘commonsense’ within the prior talk and the talk that will follow. The talk then slows slightly prior to *another* mitigator of the ECF, he produces the modifier ‘a greater< or lesser. extent’ (20). He then completes the ECF, with the utterance ‘everyone<’. Note that this completeness is jointly produced, as IR produces a response ‘[°< r i g h t . >°]’ (22) *immediately* after this utterance, in overlap with Dan’s talk.

8.4.1 *Marking ‘Extreme Commonsense’*

I want to focus on this ECF, not only on the category work that it invokes but also how it comes off via poetic and pace work. Initially, let us view a gloss of the answer, without all the fine transcription detail:

‘yeah, well [drugs are meaningful to me personally] I mean because [drugs are] *everywhere*, I think [drugs have] got to be meaningful to a greater or lesser extent to *everyone*’.

Above, I noted that in producing drugs as ‘everywhere’ Dan works to mark, through an ECF, that drugs are meaningful to him as the meaningfulness is ‘*freely available*’ (as drugs-are-everywhere). He then works on this ECF to document/account for ‘how’ this is so. As they are *everywhere* they are meaningful to *everyone*.

¹⁸ Although the extreme nature of this case is ‘slightly’ mitigated as it is still possible to hear this as a product of ‘his thoughts’ through the prior utterance ‘I think’, it is just that his *thoughts* are extreme in nature.

Sacks (1992, Fall 64, Lecture 3)¹⁹ looks at a similar utterance - ‘*Everyone does, don’t they?*’ - which comes off as a response to an earlier question ‘Do you have a gun at home?’. Now, he notes:

‘Where persons are engaged in trying to get an account from somebody, there’s an object that the person who’s being questioned can slip in. This is one of them. And what it does is, it cuts off the basis for the search for an account. ... What I called it was, ‘account apparently appropriate, negativer.’ Or A3N. So, for example, having a gun is something for which an account is apparently appropriate. The search goes for an account, this thing goes in, and now an account is no longer to be sought.

... [T]his one in particular ... seems to be a ‘general purpose A3N.’ By that I mean, it doesn’t much matter what it is that you’re seeking an account about, you can use this one, ‘everybody does.’ (ibid.: 23-24)

Sacks’ highlights how an utterance such as ‘everyone’ can work to produce the talk *as* commonsense talk. The ‘commonsense-ness’, or ‘normal-ness’, of an A3N (which is a specific type of ECF), can work to offset any *further* accounting work by virtue of its extreme nature²⁰.

Dan clearly works to document that the meaningfulness of drugs is something that is ‘freely available’ to the MCD ‘all people’. And it is *not only* ‘freely available’, it has ‘got to be ... to... a greater< or lesser. extent’ meaningful to ‘everyone’. Note how Dan both upgrades *and* softens his claim which ‘nicely’ attends to the possibility of a challenge whilst still retaining its full rhetorical strength. As Edwards (2000) notes, ‘although a nonextreme generalization [a softened claim] is logically and semantically weaker than an ECF, it can be rhetorically and interactionally stronger’ (354). With Dan’s claim he retains *both* features, he upgrades the logical-semantic nature of the talk whilst attending to the rhetorical-interactional features of making an extreme claim. The way this comes off is through clearly marking the talk *as* common-sense talk: *of course, it’s obvious that*²¹, all people do not share an ‘equity in the meaningfulness of drugs’ but they have *all got to have*, by virtue of them being members of society, a relationship to it.

¹⁹ See also Edwards’ (2000) and Pomerantz’s (1986) analysis of this sequence of talk.

²⁰ I should note that Sacks is not claiming that A3N’s *must* work in this way. Edwards (2000) and Pomerantz (1986) show how, in the example cited by Sacks, the questioner works to pursue an account and the answerer ‘softens’ the extreme nature of their talk with the utterance ‘But I mean *a lot of people* have guns. It’s not *unusual*.’.

²¹ Pun intended

Dan marks that his relationship to drugs is product of *him* being a member of the MCD 'everyone'. In this way, he is documenting that the meaningfulness of drugs is, commonsensically, *only* a product of him '*doing being an ordinary/ normal/ routine/ everyday person*'.

Closely following Dan's utterance 'everyone', IR produces the response token '[°< r i g h t . >°]' (22). Baruch (1981) points out that interviewers' response tokens are a central moment in interview talk. He notes that such response tokens can 'act as a confirmation of [a respondents] appeal to the shared nature [of the respondents] reality' (1981: 280). Through such response tokens, moral adequacy is *accomplished*, both speakers are implicated accepting and thus condoning the talk that is produced. Notwithstanding Baruch's excellent work, his gloss 'response token' needs unsettling. As contemporary work on 'response tokens' has now shown (see especially Beach 1993, 1995, Drummond and Hopper 1993abc, Jefferson 1993, Gardner 1997) how response tokens 'come off' is a product of their local sequential placement as well as the specific grammatical and intonational form. Centrally for this paper, whether they work to do 'acknowledging, agreeing or both' (Drummond and Hopper 1993c: 207) is key to whether moral adequacy is accomplished.

IR's response token '[°< r i g h t . >°]' (22), in reference to its grammatical form appears to work to *acknowledge* the prior talk. And this reading is sustained, as the falling intonational contour of utterance also marks *acknowledgement*²². The token also comes off at a contrasting pace to Dan's talk. It is produced in a slow, almost 'measured', pace which produces IR as a 'neutral, considered, listener' and reflexively attends to the 'frantic-ness' of Dan's prior talk. In turn, this works to mark that IR is *not* 'sitting-in-judgement-of-Dan's-talk' and could reflexively mark that Dan's prior talk was hearable as Dan 'doing defensiveness'. Also note that it does not come off at a intonational TRP, although it is produced at a pragmatic and grammatical TRP. Following Gardner (1997), although his work is in specific reference to a falling contour 'mm.', the token could work to mark 'acknowledgement of *problem-free receipt* of the prior utterance' [my emphasis] (132); but it does not appear to mark *agreement with* and

therefore a ‘confirmation of’ the shared reality of the appeal. This is possibly not surprising, given that, if IR were to ‘do assessment’ he would no longer produce himself within his ‘home-base’ of a neutralistic facilitatory interviewer.

What is also interesting to consider is: how is it that IR produced the response token where he did? Note the poetic or sound relationship (Sacks 1992, Winter 71, Feb 19) as well as the grammatical relationship between the utterances ‘*everywhere*’ and ‘*everyone*’²³. This may work to invoke receipt from IR. Another factor is the pace or speed of Dan’s talk. To understand the role of this we need to turn, very briefly, to Atkinson’s (1984ab) work on political speeches. Atkinson notes that with three-part lists (an economical way to gain applause), the first two list-parts are produced with rising intonation and the third, final-part, is produced with falling intonation on the last syllable. As he notes ‘In packaging applaudable messages, orators are thus able to use intonational shifts to communicate to the audience whether they are proposing to carry on or to come to a close’ (1984a: 63).

In this extract, rather than the intonation, the speed/pace of the talk marks the ‘applaudable point’. Note that Dan begins the turn with his talk faster than the prior talk, he then speeds up again, prior to the first part of the softener (‘greater’) slows down slightly, slows again for the second part of the softener (marking the utterance ‘lesser.’ *as lesser*) and then *just prior* to the utterance ‘to everyone’ speeds up again. This appears to mark that the ECF as complete, *and this how IR attends to it*, but also adds *rhetorical emphasis* to Dan’s category work.²⁴

²² Compare this to a rising contoured ‘right’, where this would mark heightened involvement, possibly marking ‘newsworthiness’.

²³ Also, note that near the end of Dan’s turn he produces the utterance ‘*everything*’(25).

²⁴ David Silverman (personal communication) notes that, with the exception of the utterance ‘greater< or lesser. extent’ (20) that the talk comes off as ‘commonsense talk’. The poetics of the talk is freely available, non-technical talk, *ordinary* talk. The utterance ‘greater< or lesser. extent’ is of interest as this is possibly hearable as doing different work, maybe taken from a more ‘specialised’ or ‘scientised’ vocabulary. However, note the tag-component of IR’s question, ‘particularly or not’ (16). In some ways, Dan’s softener mirrors this utterance, especially as in *both* cases the ‘either-or’ device follows a variation of the utterance “meaningful to you” (16, 20).

IR's acknowledgement token (22) works to receipt the prior talk and possibly says 'further talk on that topic is unnecessary'. However, Dan does not immediately attend to it as working to close his topic-talk, rather he continues to produce a *further* account, 'because' (21), for the ECF. He again marks the freely available nature of the category 'meaningfulness of drugs' by explaining that it's meaningful to everyone 'because there is so: much of it aro:und,'. By producing the oblique reference (cf. Peyrot 1987), 'aro:und', Dan 'nicely' and 'economically' re-marks the ordinariness of his, *and everybody else's*, relationship to drugs. Note the modifier 'so: much', with the sound-stretch on the 'so', that upgrades the everywhere-ness of drugs being 'aro:und,'. The sound stretch on the 'o:' and the slight rise in intonation at the end of 'd,' produce the utterance in a rounded way, adding stress both to the word and, importantly, the concomitant category work. Dan then works to topic-shade. He says 'and: er, you know it's good to know things as well °I think its er° simply because its >you know< its so much= °you know in the news° °°and everything it's er-°°' (21, 23-24,26). He moves from the topic 'drugs-are-meaningful-because-they-are-everywhere' to the different, but related, topic 'its-good-to-know-about-drugs-as-they-are-in-the-news'. The connection between the two topics is that 'the meaningfulness of drugs is *freely available*', this free availability is made relevant through the oblique reference of their 'everywhere-ness' and the specific category of 'the news'. Note specifically, that both of these access points 'to the meaningfulness of drugs' are available to 'all-people-just-carrying-on-in-their-everyday/ordinary/mundane/routine-lives'. Before I discuss *why* Dan routinely documents his 'ordinariness' I want to briefly explore *how* this topic-shade 'comes off'.

8.4.2 *Marking what is obviously 'obvious'*

Dan's topic-shade is, in part, possibly a product of IR's acknowledgement token (22). As noted above, this token works to acknowledge the prior talk and importantly 'this-is-not-an-interrogation'. After completing the prior ECF, note the emphasis on 'aro:und,', Dan projects more talk with the utterance 'and: er,' (21, 23). He then produces an IA 'you know' that works to forecast and mark that the talk that follows will be hearable as commonsense. He says 'it's good to know things as well' (23), and I take that the 'things' refers to drugs²⁵. We are left with a puzzle: why is it *good* to know about drugs?. To

²⁵ Note also the utterance 'as well', which produces this topic-talk as separate from and *additional to* the prior talk.

use them better? To discover if you want to use them? Or, to be informed, to help others?

Dan begins to provide a solution to this puzzle, ‘°I think its er° simply because’ (24). He marks what follows as ‘his’ personal opinion, something he is entitled to, and then produces the IA ‘simply’, again invoking that his talk, the account that will follow, is *just* commonsense. He then produces *another* IA, ‘>you know<’ (24), at a faster pace to the surrounding talk, again *re*-marking this talk as ‘commonsense’. He starts to produce the account, initially with the modifier, ‘so much=’ which works to add emphasis to the talk that follows. The modifier upgrades or intensifies how we are to hear the talk that follows. Interestingly, IR then produces a response token, ‘=°mm:. °’(25) which latches to Dan’s prior talk. In part, this token could be produced to mark, for Dan, that IR ‘understands-what-Dan-is-trying-to-say’, and it comes at a point where Dan has some ‘difficulties’ in progressing towards where he has started to go. Dan produces another IA ‘you know’, after IR’s response token, which re-marks the commonsense of his case. He now produces the reason *why* it is ‘good’ to know about drugs: it is ‘simply because’ drugs are ‘so much (.)°in the news° °°and everything’ (26).

Dan appears to work to close his turn by marking that his talk is coming to an end. The maximal (Drew 1992) descriptor ‘°in the news°’ is produced at a quieter volume to the prior talk. The generalised completer (Jefferson 1990) ‘and everything’ is produced at an even lower volume, it is ‘barely’ audible. This ‘two’ stage drop in the ‘volume’ of the talk, along with the generalised completer, forecasts a shift in speaker incipency and works to say ‘I have nothing further to add’. However, Dan then forecasts the possibility of some more talk with the utterance ‘it’s er-’ (26), although note that the doing thinking token, ‘er-’, is cut short. A pause (27) then follows and this is due to the conflicting actions of the very low volume of Dan’s talk and his potential floor holding tag-utterance. After a 0.4 second pause (27) IR begins a follow-up question which can be glossed as asking “Dan, do you or your friends do drugs?” (data not shown, see section 6.5). The question comes off through IR topicalising Dan’s ECF of ‘drugs are so much in news’.

So how is it that Dan produces a softened-ECF with ‘the news’ as its topical focus? As noted above, documenting that drugs are ‘so much (.)°in the news°’ does some ‘nice’ moral-identity work. The ‘news’ is something that people from the MCD ‘*everybody*’ have access to. So Dan is, again, documenting that his interest in drugs is *only* a product of him ‘*doing being an ordinary/normal/routine/everyday person*’.

However, if we think through this softened-ECF with a ‘critical’ edge, as co-speakers can and do do (cf. Edwards 2000), just because drugs are in the news why is it good to know about them? A lot of ‘stuff’ is in the news, is it good to know about it *all*?²⁶. We need to consider the work this softened-ECF is doing *in this context*: what is it arguing for or against? Related to that: why is Dan repeatedly marking that what he says *as* common sense? Or better still: how is it that ‘doing being a *common sense* type-of-person’ and ‘doing being a *ordinary* type-of-person’ is made relevant throughout this sequence of talk?

8.4.3 *Marking yourself as a common sense/everyday/normal/ordinary/routine type of person.*

In order to think through this we need to return to Baruch’s (1981) work. He notes how interviews can be understood as:

‘a vehicle for making the [respondents] appear rational and sensible...respondents attend to the issue of their appearance as moral persons’ (1981: 275-276).

One of the ways to document that you are ‘rational, responsible and sensible’ type-of-person is to produce yourself as a ‘common sense’ and ‘ordinary’ type-of-person. Dan achieves this, initially by marking that putting himself forward for ‘things’ – irrespective of the topic – is to be heard as an *everyday* feature of his life and by marking that he likes learning new things and enjoys teaching²⁷. He then marks that a possibly morally *inadequate*, non-commonsense, non-ordinary, ‘thing’ about him [that he has drugs

²⁶ And one possible ‘solution’ is to see that both ECFs’ are working together. The first produces drugs as ‘so much around’. The second works to say that ‘I paid special attention to the subject, not only because it’s everywhere, but because it so much in the news, the topic obviously deserved special attention’. This is especially relevant if we think through how Dan is attending to his ‘suitability’ for the role of becoming a peer-educator. Does a good (potential) educator ignore the world-at-large, especially the things at the centre of media debate? Remember also that, Dan has already highlighted how he ‘enjoys learning things *and then* teaching what he has learnt’.

²⁷ He also marks that he does not have a general ‘compulsion’ to help-others *or* a specific ‘crusade’ to fight-against-drugs (with all the ‘goody-goody’ implications such compulsions might suggest).

knowledge] is gained from legitimate, morally adequate sources [medical and familial] where he is both in a subordinate, *passive* role, as a ‘learner’, as well as possibly a ‘young fogey’. In this way, he marks himself as *not being* an *active* drug-user. He then works to mark, through two elaborated-ECFs, that drugs are meaningful to him, by way of the ‘fact’ that they are meaningful to everyone [their everywhere, so much around, so much in the news]. In sum, Dan works to produce himself as a ‘morally adequate’ person.

Lawrence (1996), following Sacks (1984), highlights that ‘doing being *ordinary*’ (or in Dan’s case ‘doing being *everyday*’) is central to ‘doing being morally adequate’.

‘The ordinariness of any reported scene is a momentary, candidate achievement that may be ratified or resisted by the reporter’s co-participants. When reporters and recipients are members of the same community and moral order, the former may reasonably expect the latter to ratify the usualness of reported matters. This expectation may not hold in the special circumstance in which the reporter and/or reported matters are seen as offending the moral order. In that case, those activities that an offender would describe and orient to as “ordinary” would not be readily accepted as such by recipients. However, insofar as the reporter can *reposition the offending matter* in the ordinary, mundane world of recipients, a report works to normalize what recipients otherwise would treat as stigmatized activities. This variant of “doing being ordinary” does not reaffirm the moral order of the community but *tacitly argues for the legitimacy of stigmatized activities by highlighting their mundane, taken-for-granted aspects*. Thus, offenders may foreground as newsworthy what is a taken-for-granted background feature of news reports, namely, that the reported matters evidence the reporter’s access to the usual, mundane, and ordinary.’ [my emphasis] (182).

When a speaker is talking-up a ‘stigmatized practice’, to normalise that practice and achieve ‘morally adequate co-membership of a community’, they can foreground the *routine/mundane/usual/normal/ordinary* features of that practice. This is a routine practice within the data set as a whole, especially for drug-users’, topicalising ‘current use’ and ex-users’ topicalising ‘past-use’ (see Rapley 1998 for a detailed discussion of this method). However as is shown above, Dan, a ‘*non-user*’, although this is not made explicit in the talk as yet analysed, works to foreground *routine/mundane/usual/normal/ordinary/everyday* features of his ‘non-use’.

Is it that Dan is producing his non-use as a stigmatized practice? Is this why he foregrounds the *everyday* features of his non-use? Or is it, rather that he is working *to be heard as* a ‘non-user’? Is it that, as soon as the category ‘drugs’ is produced in talk ‘people’ feel they have to document their relationship to it, that drugs is *inherently* a moral category? As soon as IR asks his second question ‘is drugs meaningful to you’ (14-16), Dan ‘verbally falls over himself’ to distance himself from having any individual/personal connection to drugs. The sheer speed at which the talk is produced documents his ‘panic’ at being possibly categorised as having *any* individual/personal connection to drugs. However, this does not produce ‘drugs’ as a inherently moral category, rather it merely demonstrates how some category can be *locally produced* as a moral issue.

8.5 A discussion on extreme-case formulations and the ‘moral (p)art’ of interviewing.

Pomerantz tells us something very interesting about ECFs. She notes that ECFs can be ‘used in legitimizing claims ... interactants use extreme case formulations when they *anticipate or expect* co-interactants to *undermine their claims* and when they are in *adversarial situations*’ [my emphasis] (1986: 222). So, is Dan anticipating or expecting that his answer will be undermined? Is he in an adversarial situation?

As the prior chapters have tried to document, interviewers’ (and interviewees’) work very hard to produce the talk as *non-adversarial*, and one of the ways that they do that is by *not* undermining interviewees’ talk. However, saying this, Dan is, *at this moment in the talk*, locally producing the talk as ‘defensively-designed’ talk. This is clearly not a hostile cross-examination or a police-interrogation, rather IR’s question opens up a topic that Dan attends to as *very, very* sensitive or delicate²⁸. He is documenting how interviews can, *at certain moments*, come off as ‘*heavily delicate*’ events for the speakers. Following this, he is documenting, the related point, that interviews, *can at certain moments*, be spaces in which *moral work is central*, especially if we see ECFs as a one method available to members for ‘doing moral work’, in this case doing being

²⁸ Remember the ‘frantic’ pace of part of Dan’s answer (18-20) and IR’s ‘neutral, considered’ response to this (22). Both features reflexively work to position Dan as ‘doing being defensive’ and/or ‘doing being panicky’.

morally adequate. It is not that Dan is ‘expecting *all* his claims to be undermined’ or that this interview is *consistently* an ‘adversarial’ situation, *but that at this point in the talk*, IR’s question (14-16) has ‘opened up a space’ heard by Dan as very delicate. Dan uses the ECFs to, in part, produce the talk, at this moment, as ‘*heavily*’ *delicate talk*. The ECFs also do some other, related, work for Dan. Pomerantz (1986) notes two other ways that ECFs come off. They can work to ‘propose a phenomenon is ‘in the object’ or *objective* rather than a product of the interaction or the circumstances’ [my emphasis] (ibid.: 220). They also can work to ‘propose that some behaviour is not wrong, or is right, by virtue of its status as frequently occurring or *commonly done*’ [my emphasis] (ibid.: 220). We have already seen this last feature in action, with the discussion of the utterance ‘everyone’ and Sacks work on A3Ns.

In reference to the utterance ‘everyone has to lie’, Sacks (1992, Spring 1967, Lecture 8) makes a distinction between the ways ‘everyone’ can get used in talk. He contrasts its use ‘summatively’ with its use as a ‘categorical’. To use it summatively:

‘whatever singular individuals ‘everyone’ might encompass, it has to be true for each of them for it to be true about ‘everyone’ ’(ibid.: 550)

With this sense of the utterance, speakers can, and do, work to attend to the accuracy of the ‘inclusiveness’. Sacks goes on to note:

‘Alternatively there are things like the usual *categorical* terms - ‘males,’ ‘females,’ ‘Democrats,’ etc.- for which one can say “Democrats do X,” and if some Democrats don’t, it doesn’t affect the intended correctness of the term. It’s not that a Member would go about complaining about a statement made with the categorical, in terms of ‘I can show you one of them who isn’t that way,’ and then everybody would figure that they’d have to remove the remark or apologise for it, etc.²⁹ Instead, there’s some other way that those terms are controlled’ [authors emphasis] (ibid.: 550).

One of the way these *usual* categorials get controlled is membership involves specific predicates in contrast to other (e.g. male = not-having female biological characteristics, Democrat = not-voting Republican). Whereas the categorical use of ‘everyone’

‘is perhaps *that* categorical usage that *doesn’t* have as its members, *specific reference to a restriction to some other categorical*. For example, ‘everyone’

²⁹ As my personal (argumentative) experience documents, if you do (repeatedly) orientate to some other speakers use of ‘everyone’, or other ECFs, as problematic - “*everyone, really?*” - you end up apologising for your use of it. You can be charged as being “utterly pedantic” (cf. Garfinkel’s breach experiments).

doesn't mean all 'males' were there or all 'females' were there or all Jews or all Negroes [sic.] were there or all whites [sic.] were there, etc. But there's a categorial, e.g., 'everyone', that says whoever should have been there was there, and they are not restricted to one of those categories. So you *could* use it if there's some collection known as a group which doesn't have a group name.'

[my emphasis] (ibid.: 551)

You *could* also use it, in the sense Dan does, as do a lot of the other interviewees, as we all do routinely, to refer to 'society-at-large'. In this sense, producing yourself as a member of the category 'everyone' [all people/everybody/society-at-large] is *the* MCD *par excellence*. It is 'freely available' to *all* speakers to produce the subject of the talk *as* freely available, as routine, mundane, common sense ... ordinary.

So, through producing the ECFs, Dan works to both mark the talk as 'heavily' delicate talk (and defend against a possible challenge) *as well as* produce his talk as just commonsense (and so mark that he is merely an ordinary, non-drug using, person). As noted above ECFs can have a further quality, of producing something as 'objective' or 'factual'. Again, this quality of ECFs is made relevant in Dan's talk, as he works to produce his claim, that 'drugs are meaningful to everyone' as a fact - 'there is so]: much of it aro:und,' - in this case a 'common-sense-fact-of-life'.

Edwards (2000) notes that ECFs can work both to objectify *and* subjectify a claim. He notes that:

'Given that ECFs are used for insisting on, highlighting, or emphasizing a point, they are simultaneously available to be treated as signalling a speaker's investment in that point. ... Therefore, ECFs do not have automatic rhetorical effects. Rather it is the participants' *active business to produce and manage the commonsense basis of their descriptions and assessments.*' [my emphasis] (ibid.: 364)

This feature is *also* relevant in Dan's use of ECFs, not only through the way that he hears the question as 'adversarial' but that his account (his active business) works to *deny* any 'personal', non-routine/non-everyday/non-ordinary relationship to drugs. Note especially how the first ECF comes off. The sheer pace of the talk marks the talk as frantically produced and signalling Dan as 'doing-panicking-that-he-could-be-*personally*-connected-to-drug-use(rs)'. Note how IR's response token, ['< r i g h t . >°]' (22), reflexively attends to Dan's talk *as* 'defensively-designed' talk, in that it works to mark

that IR is not ‘sitting in judgement’ and not an ‘interrogator’. ECFs can be a very economical way to get a lot of identity work done. All the features of ECFs - attending to possible ‘accusations’, producing the talk as objective, signalling a speakers subjective position and normalizing the topic of the talk - are made relevant in Dan’s talk. In part, their relevance comes off through the way Dan works *to account for* the ECFs. Included in this was the way he both worked to ‘soften’ *and* ‘upgrade’ his claim as well as produce it as ‘just’ commonsense talk through IAs. He does not *just* say ‘drugs are everywhere’, he works to clearly document/mark, through contextual information, *how* the ECFs are to be heard. The ECFs work, themselves, as contextual information, documenting/marking *how* Dan is to be heard as a certain type-of-person: that he is not a type-of-person who has *any* non-everyday/non-ordinary/non-routine investment in the meaningfulness of drugs.

8.6 In Conclusion: ‘Doing being morally adequate’

This chapter has been concerned to document how an interviewee works to produce himself as a ‘non-drug user’. This categorisation ‘came off’ through Dan using some of the following methods: ECFs (and accounting for how the ECFs are to be heard), generalised completers, IAs, maximal descriptors, pace, poetics, producing himself as a member of specific MCDs, marking the specific predicates of those MCDs, producing himself as specific type-of-member of a positioned category. We saw how Dan worked with these methods to document that any connection to the category ‘drugs’ is *only* a product of him ‘doing being an ordinary/normal/routine/everyday person’. As noted above ‘doing being ordinary’ can be central to ‘doing being morally adequate’ (cf. Sacks [1984], Lawrence [1996])³⁰.

Through an analysis of a single-case, I have tried to document *how* interviewees talk can, at some moments, be *as much about* constructing a morally adequate identity *as it is about* providing information on some topic. To document *why* such an ‘understanding’ is important, I want to re-produce part of the Firth and Kitzinger’s (1997) argument that

³⁰ As Becker’s (1963) work on jazz musicians and marihuana users highlights, in certain contexts ‘doing being ordinary’ (square/straight) can produce you as morally *inadequate*.

I offered at the beginning of the chapter

‘Extracts from talk are [often] assumed to ‘speak for themselves’. But ... data extracts are [often] decontextualised and interpreted as if they were produced in *a neutral and disinterested way by research participants anxious only to report on their lives as accurately and faithfully as possible.*’ [my emphasis] (317)

As the discursive turn in the Academy highlighted, language is *performative*, it is never merely a *neutral* means of communication. Following the empirical work of Baker (1984, 1997) Baruch (1981), Cuff (1993), Gilbert and Mulkay (1984), Hester and Francis (1994), Mazeland and ten Have (1996/8), Potter and Mulkay (1985), Watson and Weinberg (1982), Widdicombe and Wooffitt (1995), when we look at a piece of interview ‘data’ we should be aware that it was produced in a context and that this context does ‘work’ on interviewees’ talk. I have been concerned to show that sometimes this ‘work’ is about interviewees producing locally appropriate ‘*morally adequate answers*’. In other contexts, other ‘answers’ will be given. To analyse interview data as ‘data’ rather than as *talk-in-interaction* obscures the moral-identity work that interviewees can, and do, engage in.

PART FIVE - CONCLUSIONS

All social life is essentially practical. All mysteries which mislead theory to mysticism find their rational solution in human practice and in the comprehension of this practice.

Karl Marx

This final part of the thesis is focused on three main academic communities: drugs researchers who use qualitative-interviews, qualitative-interview researchers and CA/EM/MCA researchers. It compares some of the ‘ideals’ that emerge from these communities with the ‘lived practices’ that are found in this thesis. The closing section engages with the thesis itself.

Some “therapeutic” respecifications

9.1 A conversation with ‘drugs qualitative interview talk’

Part of the title of this thesis is ‘*Accounting for recreational drug use*’, so a question emerges: how does my work account for recreational drug-use? I have shown how interviewees and interviewers (among other things) ‘work’ to talk-about-drugs. I have shown, especially in Chapter Eight, how this comes off as work: that it is inherently interactional work. The accounts of ‘recreational drug-use’, be it accounts of drugs-in-general, specific-drugs, past-use, current-use or complete-abstinence, are produced and negotiated in, through and as *practico-moral, here-and-now, interactional work*. Such an approach is absent from the current recreational drugs-use literature¹.

The current research that focuses on recreational drug-use from qualitative interview sources can be glossed as emerging from two specific methodological/theoretical trajectories:

* *interview-data-as-resource*

(e.g. Becker 1963, Boys, Fountain, Marsden, Griffiths, Stillwell and Strang 2000, Plant 1975)

* *interview-data-as-resource-and-topic*

(Davies 1997, Glassner and Loughlin 1987, Shiner and Newburn 1997)

From the ‘realist’ perspective, interviewees’ talk is used as a resource where anonymity, confidentiality, an informal atmosphere and triangulation is often used to attend to the problems of ‘reliability’ and ‘validity’. A problem of versions (c.f. Cuff 1993) - in this case, how closely the interview-talk mirrors life beyond the interview - is routinely

¹ By recreational drug-use I mean distance this work from two distinct but related trajectories of contemporary drug research. I am highlighting that I have not focused on drug-users engaged in any ‘therapeutic regime’ or who use ‘hard’ drugs. A lot of work on drug-use has, for obvious pragmatic reasons, focused on a population of “(medicalised) *problem* drug-users” and “*treated* drug-users” (e.g. Christo 1999, Green, Ward and Day 1999) and “*hard* drug-users” [crack and heroin] (e.g. Agar 1973). None of the interviewees were under the ‘gaze’ of any medical agencies in connection to their drug-use and only one reported past-use of ‘crack’.

relegated to the methodology section and/or footnotes. As noted in Chapters One and Two this approach has undergone considerable critique², although little of this critique has emerged from, or, is directed at, the academic drug community. An exception to this can be found with Glassner and Loughlin's (1987) pioneering study, where they sought to combine a sensitivity to *what* is said with *how* it is said.

Glassner and Loughlin (1987), along with Shiner and Newburn (1997) and Davies (1997) all attempt to combine questions of 'topic' and 'resource'. For Glassner and Loughlin (1987), this is an explicit strategy³. Their work focuses on both the 'cultural narratives' about drugs whilst simultaneously positioning these as 'factual statements'. As they note:

'[I]f a subject says she uses marijuana because her friends do, we take this as *two* findings. She has made use of a culturally prevalent way of understanding and talking about these topics, and we now have evidence that marijuana-smoking is part of peer-gatherings. To examine the former we might look through her discussions for the sources and nature of this frame of explanation; to examine the latter we might try to distinguish the occasions upon which she uses drugs alone rather than in groups, or a series of interactions through which her friends' use comes to affect her own' [authors' emphasis] (35).

Similarly, Shiner and Newburn's (1997) use a 'bifocal' strategy - they became aware of how drug users in their interview sample used 'neutralisation techniques' when talking about their personal drug-use - however, theirs is only an implicit strategy. They never question *how* non-drug using interviewees talk is produced. They never talk about how (and why) these non-users produce talk that is (in part) *positive* about drug-use.

However, despite their 'subtle realism', the mainstay of both Glassner and Loughlin's (1987) and Shiner and Newburn's (1997) analysis *and* conclusions lies firmly within the realist 'tradition' with its concerns for 'rapport', 'shared language', 'triangulation', 'trust' and 'truth'^{4 5}.

² e.g. Dingwall (1997), Gilbert and Mulkay (1984), Holstein and Gubrium (1995, 1997a).

³ Their method shares family resemblances with the strategies of 'subtle realism' (Hammersley 1992) 'analytic bridging' (Miller 1997) and 'analytic bracketing' (Gubrium and Holstein 1997b).

⁴ Interestingly, Davies (1997) (re)positions discourse analysis to offer a 'functional-discursive' model of drugs talk. He wants to '*distinguish between discourses which are primarily (but not exclusively) performative, and those which are primarily (but not exclusively) informative.*' [author's emphasis] (5). He maps six different 'drugs discourses' which he then offers as *predictive* of the drug-users actual lived drug-biography.

⁵ Below, I discuss the value of Glassner and Loughlin's (1987) focus on 'cultural narratives'.

Consequently, we are left without any studies of recreational drug-use that focus on the interview-talk as a 'topic' in its own right. However, one study, by Plumridge and Chetwynd (1999), uses such a constructionist approach to think through interviews with *injecting* drug-users. They identify the different discourses - 'heroic individualism', 'sensual hedonism', 'damaged by pain', 'addictive personality' - that their interviewees draw on. They begin to highlight how the interviews are not (merely) reality reports but are complex, mediated, 'representations' (338). In line with the arguments in this thesis, for them, any transparent connection between self-identity work in the interviews and actual injecting-behaviour remains highly problematic⁶.

With the exception of Plumridge and Chetwynd (1998, 1999), in all the current work on recreational drug-use, despite an orientation to some version of 'context' - be it through a concern with 'rapport', the interviewer's 'role', 'narratives', 'neutralisation techniques', 'discourses' - the *highly local context* of the talk (that the talk was produced in and through an interview) and the concomitant *moral-identity* work, remains (relatively) silent⁷. By contrast, this thesis has highlighted how three issues can be addressed in qualitative drugs-interview-talk:

- * A sensitivity to the *accounting* or *moral-identity work* of interviewees' drugs-talk.
- * An attempt to understand this accounting work in direct relation to the *local context* of its production.
- * An awareness *and analysis of interviewers' talk* in producing both the form and content of drugs-interview-talk.

⁶ See also Plumridge and Chetwynd (1998) on the *moral-identity* work of injecting drug-users when they talk about their needle-sharing practices in interview-contexts.

⁷ Plumridge and Chetwynd's (1998, 1999) 'discourse analytic' approach is not without problems. Their broad focus on 'discourses' often glosses over how these 'discourses' are challenged, negotiated and rejected or sustained on a turn-by-turn basis.

In seriously considering ‘how qualitative drugs interviews come off’, I showed how a focus on the actual lived practice of the interview is both possible and feasible. Seeing these interviews as specific types-of-interaction highlights the interactional, or social, nature of the interview. And it cannot be stressed enough *that the interviewer is a central and active participant in the interaction.*

We saw how the ‘data’ gained in the interviews begins to emerge as just one possible version, a version that is *contingent on a specific local interactional context.* The interviewers worked (very hard) to produce themselves as ‘facilitative and neutralistic’ and the interviewees orientated to them as this type-of-interviewer. Had the interviewers in the data-set locally produced themselves as ‘co-operative and self-disclosing’ through talking about their own experience of drug-use, a radically different topical trajectory may have been produced. Equally, if they had ‘interrogated’ the interviewees about their use of drugs, alternative (moral) versions of their ‘thoughts about drugs’ may have been produced.

As this thesis, alongside CA/EM/MCA research in general, has established: talk is context-sensitive, it orientates to and reflexively produces the ‘here-and-now’ interactional context. However, the *lived practice* of interviewees (and interviewers) here-and-now drugs talk also reflexively documents some of the broader *ideals-about-drugs.* Following Glassner and Loughlin (1987), the interview data does also offer us some of the ‘culturally prevalent way[s] of understanding and talking about’ drugs. I want to briefly outline this in action, to show the possible problematics and potentials of this.

9.1.1 *Moving from the ‘here-and-now’ to ‘broader’ contexts*

Provided below are three ‘quotes’ from various sources:

Extract 9.1

‘[Taking drugs] is something as ordinary and unremarkable as their parents regard taking or offering a cup of coffee.’

Extract 9.2

‘[O]ne can of beer it’s like one spliff’

Extract 9.3

‘Drugs is like getting up and having a cup of tea in the morning.’

The thesis has offered three, interrelated, ways of analysing and thinking through these ‘quotes’. The talk in these extracts all, simultaneously, orientates to:

- * *the site-specific, here-and-now, local context of their production.*
- * *the broader social context of talk-about-drugs.*
- * *the broader social context of talk/texts.*

Each utterance is recipient-designed for specific audiences. Extract 9.1 (Zimmerman and Weider (nd.) cited in Mehan [1975: 15]) is produced in a ‘academic research report’ and is a gloss/formulation of the studies findings. It works both to ‘sum-up’ the ‘data’ and persuade the readers that drug-use for those in the sample is not a question of ‘ignorance’ or ‘moral inadequacy’ but, for them, just a ordinary part of their ‘everyday’ life. Extract 9.2 (Adam, this data-set), is part of an extended question-answer sequence from a qualitative-interview where the interviewee is talking about ‘his past problem with marijuana’. It is used to show how, by understanding ‘beer’ and ‘spliff’ as equal, he began to ‘realise’ he had a ‘problem’ and how he then overcame this. Extract 9.3 (Noel Gallagher cited in New Musical Express, 29 January 1997) is from a ‘media-interview’ and ‘sums-up’ a broader sequence of the prior talk and, again, shows how drug-use is ‘ordinary’ and (no-longer) to be seen as ‘deviant’.

All these stretches of talk emerge from, and do, very site-specific practico-moral work. Among other things they locally produce: a research report’s ‘findings’, a research-interviewee as ‘now-in-control-of-his-drug-use’, a media-interviewee as ‘concerned-by-the-current-drug-legislation’⁸. They *also* all document how illegal drug-use can be, and is, routinely compared to legal, everyday practices. Such a comparison is a large resource in the ‘cultural narratives/discourses’ surrounding drug-use. It is available to argue explicitly (Extracts 9.1 and 9.3) and implicitly (Extract 9.2) that drug-use ‘*is not*,

⁸ They are also used: in the context of this thesis to locally produce ‘a-(re)specification-of-(drugs)-interview-data’; by Mehan to ‘show-one-of-the-underlying-tenets-of-EM’; by the NME ‘to-sell-newspapers’

and should not be seen as, a deviant/morally inadequate activity. Simultaneously, it shows how saying that any ‘deviant’ activity is the-same-as any ‘everyday’ activity can be used to downgrade the ‘deviant’ sense of such activity (c.f. Lawrence 1996). It also marks how speakers can, and do, use ‘comparisons’ as part of talk-in-interaction, especially in argumentative contexts (c.f. Hutchby 1996).

My overall argument is that, talk-about-drugs should be understood, at least initially, in direct relation to the *context* in and through which it is produced. In the case of this research, it should be viewed as specific kind of drugs-talk: drugs-interview-talk. The qualitative interview offers a site to view how people locally produce talk-about-a-topic-*in-interviews*. As Mazeland and ten Have (1996/8) note, interviewees’

‘statements can be seen as *part of an overall stance* that the interviewee is trying to bring across. But one should also take the details of the local interactional context - the ‘sequential environment’ - into account. *It is in response to that environment, which is continuously rebuilt during the interview, that interview statements have been designed and should be analyzed*’ [my emphasis] (1998: 32)

So, with my data-set, interviewers’ and interviewees’ drugs-talk offer us access to: drugs-talk-in-a-specific-sequential-context and (some of) the ways people-talk-about-drugs-in-facilitative-and-neutralistic-qualitative-interviews.

Once the site-specific practico-moral work has been documented, you can *then* also gain a textured picture of how ‘drugs’ gets understood and spoken about, the ‘culturally prevalent way of understanding and talking’ *that are available to people* to talk about ‘drugs’⁹. This can be contrasted with the *other possible ways* that drugs-talk is produced, be it in the context of government reports, newspapers, friend-friend talk or post-interview talk¹⁰.

⁹ Glassner and Loughlin (1987) focus on ‘drugs cultural narratives’ without orientating to the site-specific work of that drugs-talk.

¹⁰ When interviews end and, importantly, the tape-recorder is turned off, it is remarkable how different and *often contrasting* ‘versions’ or ‘accounts’ get produced. Such post-interview talk is not somehow more ‘authentic’. It does different work which emerges from *and* reflexively creates a different context. It can often construct interviewees as a different type-of-person, that with prior talk ‘I-was-speaking-as-an-interviewee’. Importantly, it documents that the prior talk was, at some points, *interview-talk* - it was the product of a *specific interactional context*.

Such an argument - (initially) understanding the drugs-talk in direct relation to the specific context in and through which it is produced - draws on Sacks' understanding of interview-data. In the first chapter (section 1.2) I noted how Sacks, albeit in reference to some anthropological work, tells us that:

'[t]he trouble with their work is that they're using informants; that is, they're asking questions of their subjects. That means that they're studying the categories that Members use, to be sure, *except at this point they are not investigating their categories by attempting to find them in the activities in which they're employed.*'

[My emphasis] (Fall 64, 4: 11)

This approach has been echoed by the empirical work of Baker (1984, 1997), Baruch (1981), Cuff (1993), Gilbert and Mulkay (1984), Firth and Kitzinger (1998), Potter and Mulkay (1985), Mazeland and ten Have (1996/8), Watson and Weinberg (1982), Widdicombe and Wooffitt (1995) and the theoretical directives of Schegloff (1998) as well as Garfinkel and Weider's (1992) more general appeal for examining 'haecceities'. As Hester and Francis (1994) summarise it '[t]he 'products' of sociological interviewing cannot be divorced from the circumstantial detail of their production' (679). However, I would argue, that the 'products' should not *initially* be 'divorced' from their site-specific interactional context. Contra some of the above authors, once this has been established, I see no problems in *then* moving beyond the local context (and moving beyond some of the methodological commitments of CA/EM/MCA) to see the talk as one of the culturally prevalent ways of understanding and talking that 'Members use' to talk-about-drugs¹¹.

This 'second stage' - seeing the site-specific drugs-talk as an example of a culturally prevalent way of understanding and talking about drugs - is in line with the contemporary Foucauldian/Critical (Discourse) Analysis work on drugs of Davies (1993), Driscoll (2000), Giulianotti (1997), Krug (1989), Matveychuk (1996), Plant (1999), Reinerman (1996) and Valverde (1998). They all follow similar trajectories,

¹¹ See also Widdicombe and Wooffitt (1995) who argue, following Watson and Weinberg (1982), that '[w]hile interviews, however informal, are unlikely to be common features of everyday life, and therefore they are not mundane, ... they nevertheless function to elicit the kinds of discursive practices which are a feature of everyday communication' (Widdicombe and Wooffitt 1995: 211). They use interview-talk to show *how* people can work to 'do' (subcultural) identity-work. In section 9.3.1, I will return to their study and outline some (possible) problems with their work. See also Silverman and Gubrium (1994) on the 'timing' of analysts asking 'how' and 'why' questions.

drawing on a wide range of ‘texts’ to map the ‘history’ and/or ‘present conditions’ of contemporary drug ‘discourses’ and ‘practices’. They all work to highlight the paradox, fragility and contingency of current ideas and practices. However, unlike them, I would advocate *initially* documenting the drugs-talk in respect to the specific context and *then* moving onto compare and contrast the different discourses at a broader level¹².

9.1.2 *Some practical implications*

Although I have drawn on the insights and transcription practices of CA/EM/MCA, I am not advocating that such an approach must be adopted when analysing qualitative drug-interviews. *Whatever the chosen analytic stance* on the interview data, an awareness and sensitivity to *how* interviewees and interviewers collaboratively produce the drugs-talk will open up *alternative, often silent, trajectories* of thinking through and analysing the interview data gathered. These new, alternative trajectories will be centred on the work in which the interviewees *and interviewers* engage (cf. Schegloff 1997, Firth and Kitzinger 1998). Equally, the interviewees’ and interviewers’ *moral-identity* work should be viewed as central to the interaction. As such, both areas should be central in the *analysis* and the related *presentation* of the data.

Whatever analytic stance is adopted, extracts from interviews should always be presented in the context in which they occurred, with the interviewer’s question that prompted that talk as well the talk that follows being offered (Mazeland and ten Have 1996/8). In this way, readers can view how the talk is co-constructed in the course of the research and, thereby, judge the reliability of the analysis.

Interviewees’ drugs-talk speaks to *and* emerges from the wider strategies and repertoires available to, and used by, *all* people. A focus on drugs-interview-talk as locally accomplished does not deny that interviewees drugs-talk is reflexively situated in the wider cultural arena (cf. Silverman 1993). The ways of speaking that are available to talk (and texts) that are engaged in talk-about-drugs, or other topics, can be highlighted as well as both speakers negotiations with the broader (moral) social context.

¹² See Valverde (1998) for an excellent Foucauldian version of this approach in relation to alcohol.

The above discussion was orientated to those analysing qualitative-*drugs*-interview-talk but can also be read as talking to *anyone* analysing qualitative-interviews. I will now shift the focus to this broader academic community and discuss the relationship between the ‘lived practices’ and the ‘analysis’ of interviews.

9.2 A conversation with ‘interview talk’

Two themes emerge from any cursory review of the academic literature on qualitative-interviews. Such literature is centred on:

- 1) The (appropriate) conduct of those who are interviewers.
- 2) The (appropriate) conduct of those who analyse interviews.

These themes are routinely orientated to in both empirical ‘this-is-what-we-did’ papers and methodological ‘this-how-to-do-it’ papers. The prior section of the conclusion can be read as a offering a(nother) description of ‘how-to’ analyse qualitative-interview data. However, in showing ‘how-to’ analyse the data, I advocated that this analysis should be grounded in ‘what-actually-happens-in-interviews’: the turn-by-turn lived practice of interviews.

I am not suggesting that qualitative-interview methods literature *ignores* the turn-by-turn lived practice of interviews. In some ways, it celebrates this practice. In section 7.4, I noted how interview methods prescriptions often have an ‘interviewing-is-difficult’ quality. For example, Mason asks prospective interviewers to practice ‘a challenging set of tasks’ (46). These include:

‘listening - *really* listening - to what people say. Most people need a great deal of practice in this.

...

[R]emembering what people have said to you, and indeed what you have already asked them.

...

[A]chieving a good balance between talking and listening. ... [I]t is important to be aware of what you are doing, and of the implications of it.

...

[O]bserving, picking up verbal and non-verbal cues about the social situation, and the mood of your interviewee(s).’ [author’s emphasis] (ibid.)

As she then notes ‘You can practice them in everyday social situations, or with your peers, colleagues, or advisers’ (ibid.).

My initial comment is: isn’t this what we do in everyday life (to varying levels of success) all the time? We don’t need to ‘practice’ them, *we do practice them everyday*, to borrow a phrase from Garfinkel, there is “no time out” from such a set of tasks. However, Mason is by no means alone in her argument. Ackroyd and Hughes (1992) argue that ‘[i]nterviewing is not an easy matter. It can often be a harrowing and frustrating experience and needs skill and experience’ (110). Berg (1998) notes ‘[p]eople ... do not become expert interviewers immediately after reading books on interviewing. Interviewing requires practice.’ (86). So the question is: how is it these prescriptions come off as they do?

As noted in Section 7.4, the beginnings of a solution to this puzzle may be found in how interviewing is a specific configuration of generic methods to talk-in-interaction. The point is that interviewers are ‘asked to’ (by ideals about interviewing) and ‘do’ (in and as their lived practice) draw *very selectively* from the generic set of interactional resources ordinarily available to them as ‘competent’ speakers. According to the textbooks you should remain ‘attentive’ and ‘interested’, work to build up ‘rapport’, avoid being ‘interrogational’ and ‘adversarial’ whilst simultaneously only being facilitative and, above all, *neutral*. Although, this may appear to be a lot to ask interviewers, the thesis has shown, and above all, their interactions show, they seem to bring these and other challenges off with considerable ease. For them, it appears to be “just another day at the office”.

Following Cicourel (1964), maybe part of the solution to the ‘this-takes-a-lot-of-hard-work’ quality of the methodological prescriptions is that they are, in their own way, *actually looking at interviews as interactions*. Maybe, they are amazed (as I am) at the phenomenal amount of interactional work it takes for interviews to happen. However, as CA/EM/MCA (among other perspectives) has highlighted, interviews are

by no means the only space where such a phenomenal level of interactional work goes on: there is “no time out” from this work, *whatever the context*.

The ‘how-to’ literature takes the local interactional practices of interviewers and interviewees and (re)produces them as ‘interviewers *problems and/or troubles*’ and simultaneously (re)produces them as ‘methodological maxims on the (appropriate) conduct of interviewers’. It is the interviewers that are ‘charged’ with being primarily responsible for the trajectory of the interaction, yet, paradoxically, their interactional work is routinely downgraded in discussions of ‘how-to’ *analyse* the data.

9.2.1. *Rapport and (abandoning) neutrality*

Such literature also discusses two ‘ideals-about-lived-practice’ that can be glossed as: *rapport* and *neutrality*. *Rapport*, is something that should be worked ‘at/up’.

Interviewers, whatever prescriptions they follow, must work to establish ‘a suitably relaxed and encouraging relationship. ... The interviewer must communicate trust, reassurance and, even, likeableness’ (Ackroyd and Hughes 1992: 108). This is one gloss of the ‘ideal’ that all interview methods texts share. As the data showed, the interviewers in this study worked to locally produce themselves as *facilitative-interviewers*, types-of-people who ‘listen’, who are ‘thoughtful’, who are trying to ‘understand’. I take it that this is doing ‘rapport’ work. Equally, in showing how interviewers *worked against* being orientated to (and where very rarely orientated to by interviewees) as ‘adversarial’, ‘bureaucratic’ or ‘interrogational’ types-of-people reflexively documents their ‘rapport’ work.

The second ideal is ‘neutrality’. Within some methods texts this is held as an *essential* practice¹³, within others it is labelled as *bad* practice. The ‘early’ feminist critiques of interview neutrality (e.g. Oakley 1981, Stanley and Wise 1983) and Douglas’s (1985) appeal for ‘creative interviewing’ advocated a *co-operative, engaged* relationship between interviewer and interviewee in which abandoning neutrality - in the form of ‘mutual self-disclosure’ - is no longer frowned upon. Such a narrative of *non-neutral*

¹³ e.g. Ackroyd and Hughes 1991, Mason 1996, Smith 1995.

interviewing has entered many of the contemporary methodology texts on interviewing. For example, in the conclusion of Fontana and Frey's (1994) 'brief journey ... through the world of interviewing' they argue:

'as we treat the other as human being, we can no longer remain objective, faceless interviewers, but become human beings and must disclose ourselves, learning about ourselves as we try to learn about the other' (373-374).

Similarly, Collins (1998) reflecting on his own practice argues:

'As the interviewer I am not, I cannot be, merely a passive observer in all this, even though it is primarily the interviewee's life which is under scrutiny. ... As I take less seriously the manuals' advice to maintain a lofty silence, I am increasingly moved to contribute my own stories, to hold them up for contrast or comparison with those of the interviewee' (7)

So, two strands emerge, one argues for 'facilitative and neutral' interviewing the other 'facilitative and self-disclosing' interviewing.

The critiques of interviewer 'neutrality' make some important points. '*Being* neutral' is a mythological (and methodological) interviewer stance. This mythology/methodology of interviewer neutrality has the fundamental effect of 'silencing', and in some cases totally banishing, the *very active work* of the interviewer in producing the talk as it is. As I have shown throughout the thesis, interviewers in this data-set are never 'neutral' in any traditional sense. However, they do work to locally produce themselves as *neutralistic* (cf. Heritage and Greatbatch 1991), they are massively '*doing* being neutral'. Most importantly, the interviewees orientate to them *as* neutral.

The discussion of the prescriptions of interview methods texts documents some of the ideals about interview practices. The discussion of the data has shown one of these *ideals-in-and-as-lived practice* (cf. Hester and Francis 1994). Interviewers may choose to locally produce themselves through their talk and other actions as more 'passive' (facilitative and neutral) or more 'active' (facilitative and self-disclosing) or another identity. Despite my critique of the impossibility of interviewers '*being* facilitative and neutral' in any traditional sense, I am not advocating that interviewers *should* practice 'alternative' interactional norms or ideals. Whatever methodological ideal about interviewer practices that are locally produced (if they are at all) *no single ideal gains 'better data' than the others*. As noted throughout the thesis, we cannot escape from

the interactional nature of interviews (i.e. that the 'data' is collaboratively produced). Whatever 'ideals' interviewers practice, their talk is central to the trajectories of the interviewees' talk. As such, it should be analysed in relation to that specific interactional context.

In contrast to the above 'ideals', Michael (1996) advocates that as researchers we should consider working against a stance of interviewer 'facilitation' and 'neutrality' (or self-disclosure), in that more '*adversarial*' or '*confrontational*' questioning of some of the talk we hear may lead us to radically different outcomes in the talk. He raises the more 'political' questions: are we facilitating interviewees to produce their own agenda, in this way becoming 'mouthpieces' for their projects? Do we want to challenge some of the talk that is produced?¹⁴ Do we want to challenge some of the moral-identities interviewees construct? It is not within the scope of this thesis to offer anything hearable as 'answers' to these (provocative) questions. However, I do want to note how underlying interview methods texts is the implicit 'ideal' that interviews should *only* be undertaken in a friendly, conversational, non-threatening and non-judgmental interactional context. According to this ideal interviewers 'doing *non-co-operation*' - arguing against interviewees talk - will not gain 'valid' knowledge¹⁵.

9.2.2 *The context of interviews*

The interview can be an economical means, in the sense of time and money, of getting access to a 'topic'. It may also be an economical means of getting access to topics that are not routinely available for analysis, to get people to 'think-out-loud' about certain topics. However saying this, most topics are 'freely available' for analysis. As Holstein and Gubrium (1995) note, to understand the topic 'family' we do not *need* to interview people or enter people's homes, we can see people 'doing family' on the bus, in supermarkets, in newspapers etc. Importantly, we should be sensitive that these are actions-occurring-in-a-specific-context.

¹⁴ See Wetherell and Potter (1992: 99-100) for a discussion of interviewers (at some moments) 'being argumentative' with interviewees.

¹⁵ As interviews are meant to be about gaining 'detailed' and 'comprehensive' and, often, '*truthful*' answers a fear may be that 'argumentative talk' may not allow access to extended, elaborated and 'honest' accounts.

With respect to the qualitative interview methods literature, I suggest the ‘this-takes-a-lot-of-hard-work’ quality of the texts should be downgraded. Interviews do take a lot of interactional work, but these texts needlessly produce interviewing as being “time outs” from people’s everyday lives. To some extent the ‘technical access’ they provide to the lived practices of interviewing is insightful and possibly quite useful to novice interviewers. However, rather than just offering ‘ideals’, they could offer actual transcripts of interviews, showing their ideals-in-action. In the end, however, interviewers and interviewees will always do ‘so much *more* than they can say in so many words’ (Silverman, personal communication) and the actual relationship between ‘ideals’ and ‘lived practices’ will always remain in tension¹⁶.

Houtkoop-Steenstra (2000) argues that structured interviewers should be encouraged to be ‘*competent*’ participants in the structured interview. They should be given the ‘flexibility/freedom’ to engage with, and draw inferences from, interviewees’ answers and to clarify specific questions. She notes how, in and through becoming ‘spokespersons’ for the research project, they could increase the validity of that research process whilst only slightly downgrading the reliability (the standardisation-of-the-questions)¹⁷. On a related note, I would argue that *qualitative* interviewers should be ‘positioned as’ *already* competent-at-information-gathering, over being orientated to (in and through the normative methods texts) as interactional ‘dopes’. Rather than ‘training’ qualitative interviewers via ‘telling-them-about-ideals’ or ‘showing-them-through-role-playing’, show them actual interactions and highlight how they already have the necessary ‘competencies’ (cf. Silverman (1997) in relation to the training of HIV counsellors).

Put simply, I would argue that maybe we should ‘just’ let qualitative interviewers interview; we do not ask, or expect, interviewees to read ‘how-to’ manuals on their

¹⁶ I want to stress that I have not been arguing for a causal ‘conveyor-belt’ relationship, where ‘ideals’ lead to ‘lived practices’. Fundamentally, as Garfinkel (1967) outlined with the documentary method of interpretation, each element ‘points to’ the other element, they reflexively inform ‘how to understand’ the other element.

¹⁷ She also notes that structured interviewers should be engaged in the research process so that they can be ‘*valid* spokespersons’ when translating questions.

behaviour¹⁸. The main reason for such how-to manuals is to show ‘good interview practice’ and stop ‘bad interview practice’. A question then emerges: what makes ‘bad’ interview practice ‘bad’? Who is it bad for, the interviewee, the interviewer, or the analyst? It can be orientated to as ‘bad’ in the interview, or much more routinely, *post hoc*, when analysing the interview. If you analyse the interview for ‘what happened’, rather than for ‘what should happen’, the notion of ‘bad’ interview practices and, importantly, *incompetent* qualitative interviewers may begin to hold less weight.

On the whole, qualitative interviewing is routinely presented as providing data on ‘people’s experiences, opinions, aspirations and feelings’ (May 1993: 91). As this thesis has shown, and, as Firth and Kitzinger’s (1998) work on ‘talk-about-emotions’ in focus groups so persuasively demonstrates, it is vital to be aware of how the ‘data’ is jointly *talked* into being, i.e. that this is ‘talk’; that this ‘talk’ is occurring in and is produced for a *specific context*; that those producing this ‘talk’ are locally producing and negotiating their ‘experiences, opinions, aspirations and feelings’, in short, their *here-and-now* moral-identities.

Such an understanding of the qualitative interview, and the related methods texts, was made possible through using insights from CA/EM/MCA. It is to this methodological/theoretical perspective to which I will now turn.

9.3 A conversation with conversation analysis

As I have shown, the term ‘qualitative interview’ is a gloss for a range of interviewing practices. As I noted in section 1.1, the data set contains twenty-eight interviews that are *labelled*, by those who conducted the interviews, as ‘semi-structured interviews’ and one interview that is *labelled*, by the person who conducted the interview, as an ‘open-ended interview’. I have found no definitive differences in the lived practices of the interviewing to warrant the distinct labels. The only difference is that with those labelled as semi-structured interviews, grammatically similar questions are produced both by the different interviewers and by the same interviewers over different interviews.

¹⁸ As Atkinson and Silverman (1997) note, we are part of an ‘interview society’, we seem already to know ‘how-to’.

This observation leads me to ask, what if any, are the differences in the lived practices between qualitative interviews given the labels of: biographical interviews, depth interviews, focused interviews, guided interviews, in-depth interviews, informal interviews, life-history interviews, non-directed interviews, open-ended interviews, oral history interviews, semi-structured interviews, unstandardized interviews, unstructured interviews? This is surely something worthy of further research and something that CA/EM/MCA could, and has begun to (see Mazeland and ten Have 1996/8), attempt to answer.

9.3.1 *What makes qualitative interviews 'qualitative interviews'?*

Another question that this thesis has sought to answer is: what makes the talk distinct as a qualitative-interviews? The answer emerged by showing how a specific constellation of methods and concomitant identities produced the talk, for both speakers, as 'qualitative interview talk'. This 'came off' through a focus on the sequence, structural, topic and turn-taking organization along with turn-design, lexical choice and category work. For the speakers, the interview context and its concomitant identities of interviewer/interviewee, was massively orientated to *throughout* the interaction.

In this light, it is puzzling that Widdicombe and Wooffitt's (1995) CAMCA analysis of qualitative interviews talks about analysing the talk (at some points) as 'informal conversations' (74). In order to explain their analytic move, let me contextualise that specific categorisation. Widdicombe and Wooffitt offer the following methodological note immediately prior to the start of their substantive analysis:

'So, it may be argued that the interview situation furnishes a context which somehow systematically constrains the talk of the participants. But it is not obvious that such a description actually, or always, coincides with participants' understandings of the circumstances. Certainly, there are occasions when respondents did orient to the relevance of their talk as interview talk; we discuss one such occasion ... , the opening of the interviews. *The point is that the relevance of talk as 'interview talk' (or any other kind of categorisation of the interaction) should manifest in the data.* A further point is that it seems highly unlikely that people have a special set of communicative competencies which are exclusive to interviews as a method of eliciting rather than constraining speakers' accounting practices. So, rather than treat the material we

collected as primarily exercises in information gathering (the primary purpose of interview talk), unless our data indicate the contrary, we have treated these interviews as *informal conversations*. Therefore we have treated these interviews as the kind of environment in which peoples' interpretative reasoning practices would be exhibited in their talk (Potter and Mulkay 1985).' [my emphasis] (73-74).

Following the members' work (and the analysis) demonstrated in this thesis, their *analytic choices* do seem strange. I want to stress that the interactional work of their *interviewers* and *interviewees*¹⁹ shares massive (family) resemblances to the interactional work of those in my data-set. So, how is it that their analysis comes off as it does?

As the thesis has shown, the interview-context 'systematically constrains the talk of the participants'. It constrains:

* The turn-taking organization: the interviewing format (Peräkylä and Silverman 1991a) is massively orientated to. One speaker is aligned as 'questioner' and the other is aligned as 'answerer' with the 'answerer' orientated to as producing 'multi-turn talk'.

* The structural organization: the interviewers are solely responsible for, and orientated to as, opening and closing the interaction, opening, closing and re-opening task-orientations.

* The sequence organization: interviewers are massively responsible for producing the first-part pair of various adjacency pairs - question/answer, (more specifically, question/elaborated-answer) and formulation/decision (more specifically, elaborated-formulation/decision). They are responsible for, and orientated to as, initiating and progressing (expanding) various courses of action produced in and through the adjacency pair format.

* The topic organization: interviewers control the overall topical trajectory, they initiate 'radical' shifts in the topic-talk. They also, in negotiation with the

¹⁹ And they routinely use these specific categorisations (as compared to 'questioner' and 'answerer') throughout their analysis.

interviewees topic-talk, selectively follow-up specific topical trajectories. The topic-talk massively produces an ‘on-topic or subtopical’-trajectory.

* The turn design, lexical choice and category work: interviewers massively produce themselves, and are orientated to, as ‘facilitative and neutralistic’ types-of-interviewers. The interviewees routinely produce themselves as the types-of-interviewees that give detailed, comprehensive and, very often, locally appropriate ‘morally adequate’ talk.

Given these observations, to argue that ‘it is not obvious that’ interviewees orientate to the interview context is somewhat of a ‘mystification’ of the lived practices of qualitative interviewing.

It may not be ‘*obvious*’ to us as *analysts* but I would argue that the participants massively orientate to the talk as interview-talk. I think the problems with, and for, Widdicombe and Wooffitt’s work is a product of their specific analytic aims. Following the work of Watson and Weinberg (1982), they choose to focus on ‘people’s interpretative reasoning practices’ their ‘communicative competencies’, in short some *generic* practices of talk-in-interaction²⁰. As this thesis has highlighted, interview talk is a specific constellation of methods that are generic to talk-in-interaction. As Widdicombe and Wooffitt highlight, the talk is fundamentally about doing the activity of ‘information gathering’ and such work occurs in *all* contexts of talk-in-interaction²¹. However, to attend to ‘qualitative-interview-information-gathering’ talk as being the same-as ‘*informal-conversation-information-gathering*’ talk denies the site-specific practico-moral work of the speakers. To be sure, Widdicombe and Wooffitt, following Watson and Weinberg (1982), are trying to emphasise that ‘interview talk’ massively draws on methods available to ‘informal talk’. However, for me one of the aims of CA/EM/MCA is to offer ‘a “therapeutic” respecification of previous scholastic treatments of action and reasoning’ (Lynch 1993: 217). To identify relatively

²⁰ Also the mainstay of their analysis is grounded in their interviewees talk, they are the ‘people’ under their analytic gaze.

²¹ As Linell and Luckmann (1991) note, without asymmetries in ‘knowledge’ talk would be practically redundant.

unproblematically interview-talk as informal-talk gives far too much ground to ‘traditional’ sociological treatments of qualitative interviewing²².

The above discussion of Widdicombe and Wooffitt’s work was, in part, designed to show how CA/EM/MCA work on qualitative interviewing has been (relatively) silent about the site-specific interactional work of interviewing. As noted in sections 1.2 and 3.1.1, the current work on qualitative interviews is still in an embryonic stage and by primarily focusing on both discrete sequences and interviewees’ talk it often glosses over the relevance of *interviewers’ work* in producing the interaction. This body of work does not discuss in detail what makes the talk distinct from information-gathering/interviewing in other *institutional* contexts. An analytic resource I have relied upon, and that I feel is very useful when highlighting the specific interactional work of qualitative interviewing is a focus on the relationship between identity work, sequence, topic and turn-taking organization.

9.3.2 *The use(fullness) of a focus on identity, sequence, topic and turn-taking*²³

Interviewing is, in some ways, ‘just’ an expansion (Schegloff 1990) of a question-answer base adjacency pair. The ‘activity’ of interviewing - doing detailed and comprehensive topic-talk on ‘this-or-that’ topic - is carried out in and through the (repeated) expansion of this base pair (cf. Greatbatch 1998, Heritage and Greatbatch 1991, Peräkylä and Silverman 1991a; section 3.1.1). However, what is also important is not just that this first-turn is a ‘question’ and that this receives an ‘answer’, but that *this questioner* expects an answer from someone who is reflexively identified as *an answerer*. It is not that interviewees just produce answers, perspectives, stories, knowledge or opinions, but that they are locally produced in the identity of ‘answerer’, ‘perspective-provider’, ‘story-teller’, etc.

We can now begin to see how interview-talk comes off via the speakers mutually

²² I am not downgrading their analysis *per se*. They do show how ‘subcultural identity-work’ and ‘identity work *per se*’ can get done and, in so doing, begin to respecify that work.

²³ The argument in this section draws on my reading of Jayussi (1984, 1991), Jefferson and Lee (1992), Sacks (1992) and Watson (1994, 1997b); see especially, Sacks (Spring 71: April 19 and April 30, Spring 73: Lecture 3 on caller/called SRP) and Watson’s work on category and sequence in relation caller/called and queuing.

producing themselves as one part of the a standardised relational pair (SRP), be it ‘questioner/answerer’, perspective-seeker/perspective-provider’, ‘story-seeker/story-teller’²⁴. The identities made relevant through these SRPs produce certain rights and responsibilities for the speaker and the recipient of the talk. This is an incredibly economical way to facilitate topic-talk in which the questioner is interested (cf. Maynard 1992, section 7.4). This specific topical organization (doing extended and elaborated on-topic and subtopical talk) comes off in and through the turn-taking organization (multi-turn talk), the sequence organization (the question-answer adjacency pair) and its related identities (questioner/answerer) with their specific rights and responsibilities.

So, identity, sequence, topic and turn-taking are intimately bound²⁵. However, following Schegloff (1999c) maybe the primacy should be given to sequence organization (and its inter-relationship with turn-taking). He argues that:

‘To be sure, one very important and common action which an utterance or a series of utterances can be doing is ‘doing topic talk’, in which case analysis in topic terms - for what it is ‘about’ - can become very much the point. Indeed that is how parties show their orientation to the ‘topic-talkness’ of some utterance - by producing further utterance designed to be on-topic with a prior. ‘Topic-talking’ - or ‘doing topic talk’ - is itself an action participants do. The more *general* organization then seems to be the organization of *action* in talk-in-interaction, and more specifically of *courses-of-action* realized in sequences of turns, with contingent but orderly, describable trajectories and structures to them’ [author’s emphasis] (410)

However, as is noted above, it is not ‘just’ that someone asks a question, it is that they are locally producing themselves as a ‘questioner’. If no answer is forthcoming it is their identity as an ‘answerer’ that is *also* relevant. Any appeal to the primacy of sequence (and turn-taking) organization must simultaneously be an appeal to the primacy of ‘identity’ work that sequences can and do make relevant.

In arguing for a focus on turn-taking, sequence *and* identity organization I am not advocating a ‘respecification’ of CA’s analytic gaze. This approach is not something ‘new’. Such an analytic focus is how the empirical part of the thesis was initiated (see

²⁴ And with these SRPs you get other, related, identities , e.g. teller-initiated-story-teller, invited-story-teller etc.

²⁵ See Chapter Four for a more empirical discussion of this.

sections 3.1-3.1.1.) and that analytic move was grounded on the work of (among other things) Peräkylä and Silverman (1991a) on AIDS counselling. For me, an exemplary use of such an analytic gaze can be found in Jefferson and Lee's (1992) work on 'troubles-telling' in 'service encounters'. Their analysis focuses on *both* a 'Troubles-Telling Sequence' *and* the identities (with their related rights and responsibilities) of 'troubles teller/troubles recipient' and 'troubles teller/advice giver' that are orientated to in and through such a sequence. In simultaneously explicating these two 'organizations', they offer an insightful and rigorous analysis and show clearly the possibilities and benefits of such an approach.

To return to this data-set, the activity of 'interviewing' is realised in and through using a *generic* feature of talk-in-interaction - an extended sequence of question/answer adjacency pairs with their related identities questioner/answerer²⁶. We hear any other identities, of say 'argumentative', 'interested', 'nosy', 'neutral' as laminated onto this base SRP of questioner/answerer. Similarly, more *institutional* identities, like 'counsellor', 'doctor', 'lawyer', 'police-interrogator' and importantly in this data, '(qualitative) research interviewer' are laminated onto the base identity of 'questioner' (cf. Watson 1994, 1997b in relation to queuing).

The question/answer pair and the SRP (with its rights and responsibilities) make available a range of various identities about *who you are and why you are asking this specific question*. This information offers the participants, and analysts, a range of possible identities with related 'motives'. Importantly, this work does not just come off through sequence and identity - in that they are just asking *a* question - but that the speaker is asking *that* question in *that* specific way. As the thesis has shown, speakers can, and do, orientate to identity work, sequence, topic and turn-taking organization alongside, turn-design, lexical choice²⁷ in and through producing and orientating to the specific context. It was this methodology that allowed me to explore, in detail, a range

²⁶ In other spaces, say with 'active interviewing' (Douglas 1985), or 'informal conversation' more ad hoc work may occur, for example questioners may produce 'second stories' (Sacks 1992).

²⁷ alongside structural organization.

of interactional methods interviewees *and* interviewers draw on “to get the specific qualitative-research-interview job done”²⁸.

Taken individually the methods documented in this thesis are generic to talk-in-interaction and have all been ‘outlined’ by previous CA/EM/MCA researchers. So another question emerges: does this thesis offer any ‘news’ to this research community other than outlining (some of) the site-specific work of qualitative interviewing?

9.3.3 A (possible) ‘generic’ implication for (studies of) talk-in-interaction?

One feature of the talk that I have repeatedly focused on was how an interviewer can work to inform, explicitly, an interviewee ‘how to read what they are being told’ (Sacks 1992, Spring 1970, 7: 274). I showed how interviewers routinely *inform, explicitly, interviewees as to how the talk is to be heard and understood*. I also showed how such work constructs specific identities in direct relation to their talk: namely that they are ‘facilitative and neutral types-of-interviewers’. This (analytic) observation was highlighted through Sacks’ (1992, Spring 1970, 7) discussion on laughter-prefaced talk (see section 5.3). I could equally have drawn on Sacks’ (1992, Winter 1969, 8) discussion of the ‘den-mother’ identity reformulation or Goodwin’s (1994) analysis of the trial between Rodney King and four police officers accused of beating him²⁹. I called such ‘recipient design’ work, drawing on Sacks and Buttny, *contextual information work*³⁰.

I want to argue that providing contextual information is *routinely* a central task of

²⁸ I feel that such an approach could be very useful in explicating the *site-specific work* of any particular (informal-)institutional interaction. Schegloff alludes to this when notes, rather than a focus on ‘doing topic talk ... [t]he more *general* organization then seems to be the organization of *action* in talk-in-interaction’ [author’s emphasis] (1999c: 410). He is concerned to outline the *generic* methods of talk-in-interaction over the site-specific methods of (informal-)institutional talk. Following from Drew and Heritage’s (1992) ‘foci of research into institutional talk’ (28) and Heritage’s (1997) ‘places to probe the ‘institutionality’ of interaction’ (164) maybe another foci could be on the inter-relationship of identity and sequence organization and, where appropriate, topic organization. Again, I raise this not to argue ‘against’ contemporary analytic practice but to highlight the possible benefits of such an approach.

²⁹ Goodwin shows how the defense constructed a specific way to ‘see’ or ‘code’ the video of the police officers repeatedly striking Rodney King. The police officers actions, their repeated blows, are not to be seen as a ‘massive beating’, rather, *the expert informs us to see them as* individual acts of ‘careful’, ‘controlled’, police work.

³⁰ I am drawing on both Sacks’ (1992, Spring 1970, 7: 274) term ‘context information’ and Buttny’s (1998: 49) term ‘contextual framing’.

speakers. Look at the following question:

Extract 9.4

- 1 ((tape switched on))
- 2 IR: **okay::, first of all >just as a bit of background=could**
- 3 **you tell me what<=you'r,::e studying in the school**
- 4 **at the moment.=**
- 5 nat: =I'm doing:: maths resit=because I failed

The talk in bold provides contextual information about how to hear this specific question. Note that it is pragmatic, it is not essential for the question to survive as this specific question. The question could have been produced as “what are you studying at school?”, as such the contextual information is ‘minimal’, it ‘just’ explicitly informs Nat to hear and understand this as a question about what she is studying at school. Equally, IR could have said “just to relax us, before the interview really starts, what are you studying at school?”, which provides ‘massively explicit’ contextual information, it is a ‘meta-commentary’, specifically informing Nat to hear the question as part of the pre-interview ‘ice-breaking’ talk. Rather than follow either ‘extreme’, IR produces some contextual information talk that explicitly marks the question as (among other things³¹) an initial-introductory-type-of-question. Note especially how IR’s talk ‘okay::,’ (2) and the contextual information that follows, also orientates to, and makes relevant his prior physical-action: turning on the tape.

Such contextual information work can come off through: speed, pitch and tonal qualities of talk (e.g. Atkinson 1984 a b Holt 1996) an alignment of talk and gestural work (e.g. Goodwin 1994, Heath and Luff 2000) pre-sequences, prefacing and tag-components to talk (e.g. Schegloff 1980, Beach and Metzinger 1997, Sacks 1992 Winter 1969, 8), lexical choice (e.g. Myers 2000, Roth 1998) preference organization work (e.g. Houtkoop-Steenstra 2000) category work (e.g. Baker 1997, Hester 1998) and turn-design (e.g. Clayman 1988, Silverman 1997). Despite emerging from and attending to different local interactional work, such contextual information all shares a common feature, it enables speakers to *lamine* ‘additional layers’ of ‘instructions as to how the

action of their utterance is to be appreciated' (Sacks 1992, Winter 1969, 8: 135) and most importantly makes relevant, or laminates, specific *identities* to the action of that specific piece of talk.

It may be, on further analysis, that 'contextual information work' is not one of the methods that makes up 'recipient design' rather just a gloss for a specific way of 'doing' recipient design. In Sacks et al's (1974) original discussion they note:

'[b]y 'recipient design' we refer to a multitude of respects in which the talk by a party in a conversation is constructed or designed in ways in which display an orientation and sensitivity to the particular other(s) who are co-participants.' (727)

By using term contextual information over recipient design, I meant to emphasise how speakers work not just to 'display' an orientation but to *explicitly display, produce or mark an orientation*. By this I mean to draw the analytic gaze to how speakers work - to use an analogy from the work on reported speech Buttny (1997, 1998) Holt (1996, 2000) - to '*show*' rather than just '*tell*' others what they are doing. I also meant to emphasise how such 'recipient design' work does, and is central to, the specific category/identity work of the speakers. Importantly, for me as the analyst, it (re)orientated my gaze to what makes the talk *for the participants* a specific type-of-talk: 'qualitative interview-talk'³².

9.4 A conversation with my work

I am more than aware that any of the empirical chapters in this thesis, indeed, any of the sections of the chapters³³, *could* have been the basis for a whole thesis. The broad approach adopted in this thesis is a product of the relative paucity of detailed analysis of the *range of, and inter-relationship between, the lived practices of 'qualitative interviews'*. In the same way that interviewers have to manage the tension between the here-and-now interactional event and the broader, extra-local, need to collect data on a

³¹ Note also that it is a 'directive-as-invitation' (see section 5.4.1 and 5.7) and the sound stretch on 'you'r,::e' (3) hearably produces the question with a 'improvised-any-question-will-do' quality as IR is 'doing-searching-for-some-thing-to-focus-on'.

³² It could be that a focus on 'contextual information work' may well be a useful 'foci' in other studies of talk-in-interaction, especially those explicating the 'institutionality' of talk. I have found it incredibly useful in various data-sessions that I have attended; it allowed me to both 'think-through' and 'explicate' some of the site-specific Members' work, to offer some possible 'answers' to the classic CA/EM/MCA question "Why that now?".

³³ and possibly some of the footnotes (!).

topic, I have been caught in a tension between a focus on specific instances of interaction, specific methods of talk-in-interaction and a broader focus on the interview as an 'event-in-itself'. If it lacks in detailed 'expositions' of single devices/methods/practices, I feel this is offset by the way it does (begin to) answer the Sacksian question, 'how is it that *qualitative interviews about recreational drugs* come off'.

In line with Korzybski's (1990) classic saying 'The map is not the territory', this thesis is just a 'map' of *some of* the methods the speakers in this data-set use "to get their job done"³⁴. Alongside developing the specific methods explicated in each of the chapters further research should also be done on: (what I can only loosely gloss as) 'intonational/tonal/voice quality work'; repair organization (including references to insertion sequences initiated by interviewees); response tokens. I also feel research on *videos* of interviews could be analysed with a focus on talk, bodily and gestural work and the embodiment of artefacts (especially any orientation to the interview schedule, if it is used at all, and the tape-recorder). All this research would focus on how the speakers orientate to and use these various 'methods' to do interactional work, to do (among other things) identity, sequence, topical and turn-taking 'work'.

Very interesting questions still emerge from, and with, the current-data set. Of special note is how the 'professional work' of qualitative interviewers comes off in, through and as their practico-moral interactional work.

Greatbatch and Dingwall (1999) note three research questions in relation to 'professional neutralism':

'First, how are the bounds on neutralism shaped by the participants' management of tasks and constraints that are indigenous to particular forms of institutional interaction? Second, to what extent do the speaking practices that participants use to advance, ratify, challenge and defend professional neutralism vary across different settings and professionals? And third how does the use of these practices shape the management of organizational activities' (288)

³⁴ As David Silverman (personal communication) noted a 'complete' map is never possible (or desirable) i.e. Members are not (and should not be orientated to as) 'robots'.

I have begun to answer these questions in relation to a specific version of qualitative interviewing: ‘professional facilitatory neutralism’. Research is needed on the ‘professional work’ in the many other ‘versions’ of qualitative interviewing. This should be undertaken not only to establish how this professional work comes off, but also to show how, if any, the lived practices in these other sites differ from that shown in this data-set. It could provide information on how ‘different’ different forms of qualitative interviewing really are.

On a related note, I would also be fascinated to compare the findings of this data-set with how other professionals use the ‘interviewing format’ (Peräkylä and Silverman 1991a) as part of their professional work. This is especially relevant as the ‘interviewing format’ may often be used to do an information-gathering task. As this thesis noted, such a task is a local *collaborative* achievement yet the information is often used as though it was a ‘transparent’ record of the ‘information-providers’ beliefs/conduct/knowledge etc. How, *if at all*, do professionals work to produce themselves as ‘*facilitative and neutral* information-gatherers’, types-of-people who ‘listen’, who are ‘thoughtful’ and ‘interested’, who are trying to ‘understand’ *whilst* ‘doing being neutral’. The focus could be, as with this thesis, on their question-design and any ‘contextual information’ work that is found as prefaces, tags and/or embedded in their turns.

9.4.1 *A final “therapeutic” respecification*

It should be noted that the work (especially in sections 9.1-9.2.2) can be read as having somewhat of a ‘remedial tone’ in relation to the drugs-qualitative interview and interview methods communities. In and through *demonstrating* the lived practices of drugs-qualitative interviewing, my work can be read as suggesting *remedies* to these communities. This ‘remedial tone’ goes (in some ways) beyond the stance of ‘ethnomethodological indifference’. However, I am not suggesting that my version *must be* ‘better-than’ others. The empirical work and my discussion of it, demonstrates some general ‘*[s]ocial practices that are possible*’ [author’s emphasis] (Peräkylä 1997: 215), within the practices and analysis of (drugs)-interview talk.

I ‘attempted to review the ordinary linguistic competencies [of interviewees and interviewers] for a kind of “therapeutic” respecification of previous scholastic treatments of action and reasoning’ (Lynch 1993: 217) in relation to both the analysis and practices of (drugs) qualitative interviewing. I also offered some lived practices, methods, or “facts”, that those participating in interviews orientate to in and through their lived practice. Practitioners engaged in drugs-interview talk or interview talk *per se* might want to juxtapose their practice, be it interviewing or theorising-about-interview-talk, with that described in the thesis. A more reflexive (in the postmodern sense) and informed understanding of drugs-interview talk and interview talk *per se* is necessary as interviewing increasingly saturates contemporary practice and debates.

Appendix

The data have been transcribed according to conventions developed by Gail Jefferson (see 'Transcript Notation' in Atkinson and Heritage, 1984).

(0.6)	Length of pause measured in tenths of a second.
(.)	Micro-pause, less than two-tenths of a second.
why.	Full stop: falling intonation.
why,	Coma: slightly rising or 'continuing' intonation.
why?	Question mark: rising intonation.
↑why	Up-arrow: very rapid rise in intonation.
↓why	Down-arrow: very rapid fall in intonation.
wh-	Dash: a sharp cut-off of prior word or sound.
°why°	Degree signs: the volume of talk is less than the surrounding talk.
WHY	Capitals: marked rise in volume.
<u>why</u>	Underlining: speakers emphasis or stress.
>why<	Word in > < indicates faster pace than surrounding talk.
<why>	Word in < > indicates slower pace than surrounding talk.
why=because	Equals sign: words are latched, so that there is no hearable gap.
w[h y]	Square brackets: onset and offset of overlapping talk.
[bec]ause	
(why)	Word in brackets: the best possible hearing.
()	Empty brackets: unclear speech or noise to which no approximation is made.
.hh	This indicates an in-breath, without dot, an outbreath.
huh/heh	Laughter.
wh(h)y	(h): laughter within a word.
wh:::y	Colons: sound-stretching. The more colons the greater the extent of the stretching.
#why#	Number signs: spoken in 'creaky' voice.

£why£	Pound signs: spoken in 'smiley' voice.
@why@	'At'-signs: spoken in 'animated' voice.
((rhythmic))	Double parentheses: transcriber's comments.
why	Word in bold: indicates point of special interest in the extract addressed in the text.
←	Side arrow: indicates point of special interest in the extract addressed in the text.

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