



Tilburg papers in language and literature

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Gail Jefferson

Two papers on 'Transitory Recipientship'

Caveat Speaker:
Preliminary Notes on Recipient Topic-Shift Implicature

Notes on a Systematic Deployment of the Acknowledgement
Tokens "Yeah" and "Mm hm"

With an appended brief glossary of transcript symbols

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**Tilburg
University**

Dept. of Language and Literature

P.O. Box 90153

5000 LE Tilburg

The Netherlands

Notes on a Systematic Deployment
of the Acknowledgement Tokens "Yeah" and "Mm hm"

Gail Jefferson

Katholieke Hogeschool, Tilburg

Preface

In one of his lectures, Harvey Sacks proposes that the social sciences have tended to view a society as having "relatively few orderly products, where then much of what else takes place is more or less random." He offers "an image of a machine with a couple of holes in the front. It spews out some nice stuff from those holes, and out of the back it spews out garbage." Where, then, "the concern to find that data generated by the machine which is orderly" tends to focus on "what are in the first instance known to be 'big issues', and not that which is terribly mundane, occasional, local, and the like."

Sacks offers as an alternative approach, that "it is perfectly possible...to suppose...that wherever one happens to attack the phenomenon one is going to find detailed order. That is, one may alternatively take it that there is order at all points."

As a student of Sacks', I use 'order at all points' as a research presupposition, a working hypothesis, a base. But every now and then it appears that I do not fully accept it. There will be some occurrence at which I will balk: But surely not here. This cannot be orderly. This has got to be "garbage".

The phenomenon I will be reporting on is one of those. As it began to emerge, I kept thinking: No. Not here. This, surely, is garbage. And it is not that the phenomenon is too small. I have worked with much

finer-grained materials. But the fine-grained phenomena have a certain elegance. This thing is not elegant. It seems just too "terribly mundane", too trivial to be one of society's "orderly products". And yet, on examination, it seems to be capable of orderliness.

Introduction

If one works for a bit with the phenomenon of overlapping talk, one can begin to notice some procedures for dealing with it. For example, recurrently one speaker drops out and then recycles his utterance when the other has finished (see E. Schegloff, "Recycled Turn Beginnings", 1973, unpublished). For example:

(0.1) [NB:IV:13:R:21-22:Standard Orthography]

1 E: You know and I'm a big meat eater=
 2 Lo,ttie.]
 3 L: [I: kn_{ow} it a,nd you know I n_{ever} ea:t me,at.
 4 E: → [W e :] come d o : w n]
 5 E: → We come down here and my God we buy- (0.4) we'll eat about
 6 (.) three dollars worth of steak.

Roughly, the sort of attention being paid to the overlapping utterance is that of monitoring for its completion. Its 'substance' is, in effect, disattended.

This procedure stands in contrast to, for example, taking up the overlapping talk.

(0.2) [Fr:K:I:R:1:Standard Orthography]

1 A: The party is on for Saturda:y,
 2 T: Mmhm=
 3 A: → =hh Um okay. Bruce is gonna make the-
 4 T: [E v v i e] can't co:me,=
 5 A: → =Well she'll come la:te.

(0.3) [SBL:2:2:3:R:38:Standard Orthography]

1 C: Have you seen him?
 2 K: 'hh We:ll I(m) I've °met him,°
 3 C: → 'hhhhh Well *uh actually: when s h e ' s]
 4 K: [And the way th_e:y ↓pla:y. Oh-:
 5 (.)
 6 C: → Serious huh?

A third, and frequently used procedure seems to lie somewhere between these two. Someone who has dropped out, thereafter neither disattends nor takes up the overlapping talk. Rather, he produces what might be called 'minimal' or 'transitory' recipientship; roughly, exhibiting attention to the overlapping talk and getting back to his own overlapped talk.

(0.4) [SBL:3:3:R:3:Standard Orthography]

1 M: Well he thought I even u-haa (.) ought to have all the
 2 accounts i:temi:zed>and everything<]=
 3 K: → =W e l l
 4 M: → =y e : sthat's what uh, Ted and uh:: 'hhh_{hh} Smith were=
 5 K: → =going to do. ↓with it. ↓
 6 M: → =Yeh } I said well we already ga↑:ve you
 7 K: → =that long a↑go: I said you had them (.) i:temized but . . .
 8 M: →
 9

Again, then, the overlapping talk is neither disattended nor taken up. It is 'acknowledged'.

A procedure similar to this latter one crops up in a rather different domain, the articulation of topic. That is, recurrently a recipient of some ongoing talk will at some point neither simply shift topic nor talk on the topic in progress, but will produce an acknowledgement token and follow that with a shift in topic.

(0.5) [SBL:2:2:3:R:37:Standard Orthography]

1 C: but I: haven't ha:d them cha:nged in (.) fi:ve yea::rs.
 2 'hhhhhh An:d uh (.) so:: I-^hhh hh I liked your fra:mes so
 3 well I'll go over there and pick out the fra::mes [↓th*at]h
 4 K: → =Ya:h.
 5 K: → =Uh:m (.) I called uh Buh- uh: (.) Geri and Bu:d.
 6 C: Oh are they Can they co::me?

So far I have been calling these pre-shift objects 'acknowledgement tokens'. And we tend to talk of the various objects ("Yeah", "Mm hm", "Uh huh", etc.) as a class, and to produce various considerations about the class as a whole.

As it happens, the 'acknowledgement tokens' massively associated with topical shift are "Yeah" or "Yes". I will be arguing that this is not

happenstance, but that there can be distinctions among the various objects which make up the class 'acknowledgement tokens'. Roughly, "Yeah" can exhibit a preparedness to shift from reciprocity to speakership, while "Mm hm" exhibits what I will call 'Passive Reciprocity'. And roughly what I mean by 'Passive Reciprocity' is that its user is proposing that his co-participant is still in the midst of some course of talk, and shall go on talking.

I will present these materials by tracking the biography of the phenomenon's emergence.

1. The Possible Distinction Emerges From a Single-Instance Confrontation

While I was working on the articulation of topic, doing some analysis of a particular segment of conversation, I came across what turned out to be a Minerva Instance for the workings of "Mm hm" as a token of passive reciprocity.

The fragment is extracted from a long telephone conversation between two middle-aged sisters, Emma and Lottie. Lottie has just returned from a delightful vacation in Palm Springs, visiting her friend Isabel and Isabel's new husband, Dwight.

On the other hand, Emma, whose husband walked out on her (as he occasionally does) just before Lottie left for Palm Springs, has spent the intervening time coping with various troubles, including an outbreak of psoriasis, and such obstacles to the upcoming Thanksgiving Dinner as the husband's absence, and the illness of her daughter's father-in-law, Mr. Cole, which may prevent that branch of the family from attending.

The sisters have been virtually alternating tellings; Lottie giving bits of the good time she's had, Emma giving bits of her troubles. At the point where Fragment 1.1 starts, Emma has been talking about her troubles for awhile.

(1.1) [NB:IV:10:R:20-21:Standard Orthography]

1 E: I'm not gonna ↓pla:n things anym*o:re,h (.) *I mean this °is
 2 r*id*īculous° 'Course I know Mister C*o:le's sick let's Go:d
 3 let's hope he gets w*e:ll but 'hhh'hhhh I know the pro:blem,
 4 hhh you kno:w,hh
 5 L: What does he ha:ve.
 6 (0.3)
 7 E: 't'hh †Oh he's †got (.) this †ga:ll (.) bladder a:nd uh: thē
 8 (.) e-he's VO:MITTING AND everything they †took him to the
 9 ho:spital and I don't know how long he's gonna BE IN or what
 10 the t-†Well he (.) gonna †BE eighty fou::r,
 11 (0.9)
 12 L: °Ye::[ah° well hu
 13 E: [And he's qui]te a pla:y↓bo:y you kno:w,
 14 (.)
 15 L: Yeah you just got to be caref We:ll see: 'hh †Dwight only
 16 has (0.2) u-one: ga:ll bladder?
 17 (0.7)
 18 E: → °Mm,*hm,°
 19 L: [He ha]d e-and then †he has to be careful what he eats he
 20 can't eat anything greasy or anything you know? [°Mm-°]°Mhm:,°
 21 E: →
 22 L: Go:d what a ma:n he was out there this: morning and he (.)
 23 They have these †great big o:live trees a:ll over you
 24 kn.ow 'hhh
 25 E: → [Mm: hm,
 26 L: 't'h An:d the †wind was so ba:d that the the th- (.) the
 27 branches were hitting the hou:se and (.) God (0.3) *uh:: I
 28 got up abou:t (.) †well it was about ei:ght o'†clo:ck,
 28 E: → M m: hm:
 29 L: †hh[and HERE HE'S UP THERE s:awing tho:se o:ff you kno:w?
 30 E: Mm::

An elaborate analysis of this fragment can be seen in G. Jefferson, "On Stepwise Transition from Talk about a Trouble to Inappropriately Next-Positioned Matters", in M. Atkinson and J. Heritage (Eds.) Structures of Social Action, C.U.P., in press. For the purposes of this report I will focus on one point in it; what I take to be a Topical Pivot Point. And that is when, apropos of Mr. Cole's medical problems, Lottie mentions one of Dwight's maladies (see lines 15-16, vis-a-vis lines 7-8).

What struck me was that this is a point at which the talk could continue on along Emma's line, or could switch over to more about Lottie's visit to Palm Springs.

And it seemed to me that Emma shows that she sees that Lottie is prepared to be talking at length; that the mention of Dwight is not a

contribution to the troubles-talk, but the initiation of vacation talk, where, now, Emma is yielding to that by producing this particular acknowledgement token, "°Mm*hm,°" (line 18).

And indeed, Lottie seems to have been awaiting a decision. That is, she waits out a rather substantial silence of seven-tenths of a second, and then, just as it becomes clear that Emma is aligning as a recipient, with the "°Mm°" of her "°Mm//*hm,°" Lottie goes ahead (lines 15-19).

Further, I got the sense that Emma is not merely characterizable as 'yielding', but that she is 'doing recognizable yielding'; selecting an item that will convey just that meaning, in contrast, for example, to a recurrently-used device by which a coparticipant exhibits some interest in being told more, indeed encourages the telling of more, and warrants the introduction of the matter in the first place; i.e., the 'news receipt'/'topicalizer'. In this case, appropriate alternatives to "Mm hm" might be "He doe:s," "Oh really?", etcetera. Where, then, once the new topic is underway, the recipient might start providing acknowledgement tokens.

In this case, I get a sense that there is a bit of sequential elision; that instead of doing first a 'news receipt'/'topicalizer', Emma is immediately subsiding into a state of passive reciprocity, perhaps specifically as an alternative to 'encouraging' a telling. She may thereby be conveying, for example, that there is no need to 'encourage' more; the more will come whether she likes it or not.

As a result of this single-instance confrontation, I had this sense of the sort of work "Mm hm" might do; i.e., exhibit 'passive reciprocity'. Where this work stands in contrast to, on the one hand, 'news receipt'/'topicalizers' such as "Oh really?", and on the other hand, the 'imminent speakership' of "Yeah".

2. The Single-Instance Confrontation Generates a Collection

The possibilities raised in the Minerva Instance generated a search through the data. First of all I looked through other conversations among these two speakers. I found that Emma recurrently uses "Mm hm" and "Yeah" distinctively: "Mm hm" for passive reciprocity, "Yeah" as she moves into speakership. Here is just one example.

(1.1.a) [NB:I:6:R:9:Standard Orthography]

1 L: I didn't have five minutes yesterday.
 2 E: I don't know how you do i:t.
 3 (0.3)
 4 L: I don't kno:w. nh hnh
 5 E: You wuh: work all day toda:y.
 6 (0.3)
 7 L: Ye:ah.
 8 (0.2)
 9 L: Just get Well I'm (.) by myself I'm kind of cleaning up
 10 from yesterday.
 11 E: → Mm: hm,
 12 (0.2)
 13 E: 't'hhh₁hhh
 14 L: °A-and° (.) °I was just g-washing the dishes,°
 15 E: → Yeah we're just (.) cleaning up here too:.

This is a rather pretty instance, its details clearly exhibiting the distinctive work of the tokens. The utterance preceding the "Mm hm" is loaded with topical possibilities; the "I'm by myself" indicating that Lottie's husband is off and away somewhere, and while they tend to spend a lot of time apart, sometimes the partings are the result of fights, and such may be the case for this particular parting. And the "I'm kind of cleaning up from yesterday" can lead to some description of whatever events required special cleaning-up-after.

In contrast to the rapid uptake of a display of passive reciprocity in Fragment 1.1 (lines 18-19), here there is a bit of a silence (lines 11-12). Whereupon Emma, who has indicated her availability to further talk, makes a start on talk of her own, with an inbreath. However, that inbreath now being intersected by a soft and hesitant "°A-and°", Emma relapses into her

"Yeah" (or "Yes"). But many use both tokens. And among those who use both, the reciprocity/speakership distinction seems to hold. I am limiting myself to four instances; two American and two British. Further, Fragments 1.4 and 1.5 are taken from a sub-corpus of 'medical' interaction; from an American suicide prevention center and a British psychiatric ward, respectively.

(1.2) [SBL:2:1:7:3-4:R:Standard Orthography]

1 M: and she's been verty thrifty.
 2 B: → Mmhm,
 3 M: 'hhhhh So: (.) I said it-it adds up to one †thing money
 4 someplace
 5 B: → Mmhm,
 6 M: 'hhh
 7 B: → Mmhm,
 8 M: But ish (.) she tn- transacts all her business in
 9 Lo:s Angeles you know and people like this are so secretive
 10 it's a (m) really it's a almost a †mental state
 11 B: *→ Yeah 'hh Well 'hh Uh↓:m:
 12 (0.9)
 13 B: *→ u-There's something wrong too if she doesn't pay her|b*ills.
 14 h 'hh She doesn't know tha-a:† u-I thought she'd know more
 15 about the Law of Prosperity . . .

(1.3) [Her:III:1:14:3-4:Standard Orthography]

1 H: Uhm 'hh You see we were trying to play dow:n. this question:
 2 of of counselors having jollies.
 3 J: → Mm.
 4 J: → Mm:,
 5 H: This is of course what so many ratepayers are saying.
 6 J: → Mm:.
 7 J: *→ Yes. 'hh So: uhm u-really u-u-y-we- You (.) really need a
 8 correction: uh to the effe:ct u-that uh 'hhh uh: e-e-you
 9 did not in fact u-uh-m (0.4) sa:y and then quote it.

(1.4) [SPC:TC:55:Ex:2:Standard Orthography]

1 D: Has anyone talked with her about getting any he:lp.
 2 (0.6)
 3 C: We:ll? uh it's been pretty ha:rd to talk to her 'cause she's
 4 not very coherent.
 5 (.)
 6 D: → Mm hm?
 7 C: In other words it's the same dea:l if she doesn't want it
 8 you can't do anything.
 9 D: *→ 'hh Yes the only thing (.) u-an:d (.) you (.) believe that
 10 she doesn't want help.

(1.5) [Plym:15-11-75:D:272:Standard Orthography]

1 P: I still ca:n:'t (.) r-recognize half the people ().
 2 I,:t's thē
 3 D: → [°M-hm,°][°M-hm,°
 4 P: the, I can get them:
 5 D: *→ Ye:s.
 6 P: [uh the nu:rse
 7 D: *→ [h h h Well don't (.) eh don't worry about
 8 that at the moment because when you have electric treatment
 9 it does te:n:d̄ for a time 'hh to upset your memory for a
 10 bit.

So: The collections indicate that, among speakers who make regular use of both "Yeah" (or "Yes") and "Mm hm" (or "Mm"), there is a systematic distinction: "Mm hm" exhibits 'passive reciprocity', proposing that the coparticipant is the current speaker and shall go on talking. "Yeah" is used as a recipient-so-far is moving into speakership.

This systematic distinction, raised in a single-instance analysis which generated a collection, can now serve as a resource to be turned to further single-instance analysis, where some otherwise obscure interaction-bits can be brought into focus.

3. The Phenomenon Serves as a Resource for Single-Instance Analysis:

Discovering the 'Perverse Passive'

Once a possible systematicity emerged; i.e., it was possible that one token was not for-all-practical-purposes indistinguishable from another, then discrete uses could be examined for the work they might be doing. And one predictable sort of work is characterizable as the 'exploitation' or 'subversion' of the object's properties. I will be considering two fragments in which I take it there are systematically 'perverse' exhibits of passive reciprocity; specifically, at points where movement into speakership is appropriate.

The first fragment is taken from another conversation between the two sisters of Fragment 1.1. Here, Lottie is urging a remedy and advising how to use it. Emma is, in a range of ways, producing what turns out to be an

orderly activity, resisting advice ((See Jefferson and Lee, "The Rejection of Advice: Managing the problematic convergence of a troubles-telling and a service encounter", Journal of Pragmatics:5:5:1981)).

(3.1) [NB:I:6:R:11-12:Standard Orthography]

1 E: The do:ctors use it?
 2 L: Well:: uh Do:ctor Robinson gave it to me?
 3 E: 'hh This Revlō:n?
 4 L: Su:re nai:l buidder. [It's i n t h a t little
 5 E: [Well that's what] I ha]:ve.=
 6 L: =that little cream ja[:r.
 7 E: ↓Ya:uh.
 8 (0.3)
 9 E: 'hhh_{hh}
 10 L: Well I g-I start getting it and I use it for a couple
 11 of days and hell it goes right a way.
 12 E: [Yayah.
 13 (0.2)
 14 L: 'cause it's got the white fiodine or you can use the white
 15 iodine but the white iodine seem 'hhhh-it's a little bit
 16 stronger it kind of burns y[our flesh a little bit.
 17 E: → Ye:ah. [Ye:ah.
 18 E: → 'h'tch'hhhh Well I'm gonna make it uh-hh-hh I: uh
 19 (0.4)
 20 L: Well u↑:se that on the [re. Je:]sus=
 21 E: *→ [Mm: hm,
 22 L: =that's the only thing that helps me:,
 23 E: *→ Mm: hm,
 24 (0.6)
 25 E: 't'hhh I sat on the ^{Sa:n}fan the other day right on the very
 26 e:dge on a to:wel so: I mean I didn't get my foot in the
 27 (0.2) Sa:n'but I'm fi:ne,
 28 (0.2)
 29 L: Ye:ah.
 30 E: [I think I'll make it.
 31 L: O:ka:y,
 32 E: [hh'hhhh Alright,
 33 L: I'll see you next week then.
 34 E: Bye bye:
 35 L: [Bye bye

One bit of resistance involves the taking of speakership and using it to offer an 'optimistic projection' on the circumstances by reference to which the advice is being generated: "Ye:ah.'h'tch'hhhh Well I'm gonna make it" (lines 17-18). Other work indicates that the 'optimistic projection' is strongly implicative of closure of talk about a problem ((See Jefferson and Lee, "On the Analysis of Conversations in which Troubles and

Anxieties are Expressed", SSRC Final Report, 1980)).

In a next round of advice-giving and advice-resistance, Lottie declines to take up the close-implicature of the optimistic projection and pursues the advice-giving with a command-like utterance, "Well use that on there. Jesus that's the only thing that helps me" (lines 20-22). And here Emma deploys 'passive reciprocity', "Mm hm" (lines 21 and 23).

The first "Mm hm", in response to the command component "Well use that on there" (lines 20-21) is strikingly misfitted. The command is in no way a telling-in-progress, but something which a recipient expectably and properly accepts, rejects, or otherwise 'talks to'.

As it happens, the misfittedness of the response is obscured by the fact that the advice-giver 'embeds' the command into an utterance which might conceivably at its end be appropriately responded to by nothing more than acknowledgement, a report-component, "that's the only thing that helps me". Thus, the display of passive reciprocity turns out to be, if not within the spirit of the utterance, within the letter of the law. But at the moment it occurs, the first "Mm hm" is thoroughly inappropriate.

Finally, with the following fragment we can notice that not only can acknowledgement tokens be produced in systematic ways, that systematicity providing for exploitation/subversion, but that they can be consequential and effective. The effectiveness I will be pointing to is that the display of passive reciprocity can elicit further talk (a technique routinely used by interviewers).

Here, a telling is in progress, about the selling of a house and the attendant scavenging of fixtures and furnishings. As it happens, the recipient is herself a potential scavenger, with an interest in "some of the plants" (see lines 56-58).

(3.2) [SBL:2:1:5:5-7:R:Standard Orthography]

- 1 G: u-We:ll Loretta wanted thi:s, and (.) she wanted tha:t? and
 2 'hhh a:nd uhm (0.8) uh:m Loretta- w-the woman said to me
 3 well what uh: are you takin:g ou:t of the house.that's
 4 atta:ched.
 5 (.)
 6 B: M-hm,
 7 (0.2)
 8 G: †An:d uhm (0.3) †I said we:ll (0.4) I guess noth:ing'h (0.2)
 9 uh:m I thought well s- ih heavens. after †all you c(h)an't
 10 t(h)ake everything,
 11 B: No:,
 12 G: 'hhhh A:nd um (.) [S o t h e y e]
 13 B: [You're going to] take some crystal things
 14 though aren't you?
 15 G: Uh we:ll
 . . ((ca. 19 lines omitted re. switching chandeliers))
 . .
 35 G: I'd li:ke to have the mirrors. But if she wants †them? (.)
 36 'hh †why that's: i-th-tha:t's †fi::ne.
 37 B: Mm hm,
 38 G: If she's going to use them you know.
 39 B: Mm, hm,
 40 G: 'hhhhhh I'm not going to uhm, hh maybe queer a dea:l just
 41 by wanting this that and the other (you know),
 42 B: [NO:.
 43 (0.2)
 44 G: *→ 'hhhh s:So: uhm, h (.) tha:t's: the †story.
 45 B: *→ Mm hm,
 46 (0.2)
 47 G: An:d uh (0.6) uhm, hhh (1.0) 'hhhh u-Then I have a ma:n
 48 coming Tue:sday to see abou:t uh remo:deling the kitchen the
 49 way I want it you know? and the butler's pa:ntry
 50 B: [°Uh huh, °
 51 G: 'hhhh and doing a few thin:gs like tha::t.
 52 B: Uh-huh
 53 G: 'hhh †A:nd uh: (.) it's just (.) just geh- you know working
 54 then to try and get (.) things kind of li:ned u:p.
 55 B: *→ [°y e a:h.
 56 B: *→ Yeh<'hh Now I wonder uh:m 'hh eh-uh:(w) (0.5) 'h when would
 57 eh: (0.2) 'tch'hh be the best ti:me for me to get some of
 58 the pla:nts that Maurice doesn't wa:nt.

I want to initially notice that the recipient's inquiry into the availability of the plants occurs at a distance from the teller's reference to people "wanting this and wanting that" (lines 1-10 and 40-41) and to the possible consequence of such acquisitiveness; i.e., of "queering a deal" (line 40).

We can next notice that an opportunity for such an inquiry occurs

earlier, but in close proximity to the problematic references; i.e., there is an explicit assertion that a telling has been completed, "So uhm that's the story" (line 44). It is a perfectly appropriate place for a shift to other matters, and certainly for such relevant matters as the plants. The recipient makes no such move. Instead, she produces a passive reciprocity token, "Mm hm," (line 45).

Finally I want to note that at other points in this conversation, for other matters, the teller produces explicit assertions of completion, whereupon the recipient assumes speakership. For example:

(3.2.a) [SBL:2:1:5:3:R:Standard Orthography]

1 G: I: 've just got to take the ga:rdener †over there in the
 2 morning? We:ll?
 3 B: → [M-hm,
 4 (0.2)
 5 G: *→ So tha:t's †tha:t.
 6 B: *→ Ye:ah, 'hh We:ll I understa:nd . . .

(3.2.b) [SBL:2:1:5:11-12:R:Standard Orthography]

1 G: I uh you know she's †o:lder now than she was it gets †harder
 2 all the time.
 3 B: → [Ye:ah. °Mm-hm,°
 4 (0.6)
 5 G: *→ †A:nd uh:,hh tha:t's uh: tha:t's tha:t. That's all [I kno:w.
 6 B: *→ [Ye:ah.]'hh
 7 B: *→ Well I'm awfully glad to hear from you . . .

Both by single-instance inspection, and by contrast to these other two occurrences, "Mm hm" is strikingly misfitted to an announcement of topical completion.

What can be made of its occurrence at that point is something like this: A point where it is expectable and appropriate that a recipient assume speakership arises; i.e., the announced completion of a telling. As it happens, that point is a particularly inauspicious one for the recipient to introduce her pending business; i.e., a reference to wanting something from the house, at a point where the teller has just referred to

the possible adverse consequences of "wanting this that and the other".

The recipient manages the problem by preserving her status as recipient, and thereby preserving her coparticipant's status as teller. This move is especially dramatic in that the preservation of statuses is being done by reference to a matter the teller has just marked as being altogether exhausted.

Nevertheless, and unlike Fragment 3.1 in which a speaker, having said her say, remains silent (see lines 22-25), the teller in this case accepts the proposal that she go on talking. We see her searching for and eventually coming up with more to tell (line 47).

Within that search, "An:d uh (0.6) uhm,hhh (1.0) 'hhhh", there may be several discrete rounds of negotiation; the teller attempting to relinquish tellership, the recipient, by her silence, preserving their statuses. Specifically, such utterances as "And uh" and "Uh" are recurrent locuses of next-speaker-startings. While overlap may result as a current speaker gathers steam and continues, not infrequently the current speaker does relinquish. For example:

(3.2.c) [JG:II(a):6:2-3:Standard Orthography]

1 C: 'hhh and I said well I really 'hh you know just don't feel
 2 up to it today kiddo,
 3 (0.2)
 4 H: Yea:h, no::,=
 5 C: → =A:nd uh I : s a i d
 6 H: [You should only have that done when you're feeling
 7 good anyway otherwise your results come out so bad and you
 8 have to [go agai:]n.
 9 C: [↑Ri:ght.]

(3.2.d) [SBL:3:1:R:8:Standard Orthography]

1 C: That's one reason I didn't ↑take the ↓th*ing.
 2 M: [Ye:ah,
 3 M: Mm h m?
 4 C: → 't'hhh'hhhhh And uh [::,]
 5 M: [No:]:: This little petty selling
 6 stuff isn't fit for the birds.

(3.2.e) [NB:IV:7:R:1-2:Standard Orthography]

1 S: What can I: bring.
 2 E: i-Nothing, hhhh
 3 (.)
 4 E: → Uh::::: 'h,h Would,
 5 S: [What ha: p-u-What †ha:ppened anything serious?

(3.2.f) [Her:OI:2:3:Standard Orthography]

1 J: †No if you °care to come (to this)° please †do::.
 2 I: Uh::: it'll only be: for a cup of tea we won't be there for
 3 lunch we've got a party in the mo:rniing.
 4 J: [Ye:s. Ye:s.
 5 I: And it would just be:,hh a:fter lunch for a cup of
 6 [tea: rea:lly.]
 7 J: [(Well †co:me) †Do:: u,h come]=
 8 I: [Uh:::m
 9 J: =†Ye:s.
 10 I: 'hh 'Cause uh we'd †like to see you a:ll.
 11 J: → Uh::: :m
 12 I: [Now if it's foggy or s:nowing or anything like tha:t
 13 we'll pho:ne:,

And at least some of these sorts of utterances may constitute cases of what Harvey Sacks speaks of as 'interruption invitations'; talk having been initiated or continued under a range of sequential/interactional obligations, but readily yielded if someone else starts to speak. The enormously porous "An:d uh (0.6) uhm, hhh (1.0) 'hhhh u-Then . . ." may be serially constructed of at least two 'interruption invitations', neither taken up by the recipient.

The eventually-produced further talk is apropos of the selling of the house, but no longer about the exhausted business of people's acquisitiveness (see lines 47-54). And it appears to be a recurrent phenomenon that if recipients do not assume speakership at possible termination points of reportings, storytellings, etc., the speaker does go on, and/but in going on, introduces matters tangential to the primary telling ((See Jefferson, "Sequential Aspects of Storytelling in Conversation", J. Schenkein (Ed.) Studies in the Organization of Conversational Interaction, 1978)). Such a recurrent feature of tellings may be serving as a resource for the

recipient in this case; i.e., it may be predictable that should the teller accept her condition of ongoing speakership, the matters she offers will be tangential to the problematic materials.

It is in the course of this tangential and innocuous topical node that the recipient, having perhaps systematically set up the possibility for, and now having achieved, topical disengagement from the problematic issue of acquisitiveness, moves into speakership with "Yeah" and produces her inquiry into the plants (lines 55-58).

These considerations of the 'perverse passive' indicate that not only can acknowledgement tokens be selectively distributed and thus serve as indices of a participant's current status vis-a-vis reciprocity and speakership, but can themselves be deployable devices with consequence for the shape of the interaction.

Conclusion

I started off by mentioning that although I use Harvey Sacks' notion of 'order at all points' as a research base, I balked at there being order at this point. Even now, having accumulated a batch of fragments such as 1.1.a. and 1.2.-1.5., when the phenomenon turns up again, as in Fragments 3.2.a. and 3.2.b., I am surprized anew. Look at that! They really do it!

In one of his lectures, Harvey Sacks addresses this sort of issue, and I will close by quoting him.

In that the kinds of observations I make involve catching some details of actual occurrences, then we can come to find a difference between the way we procede and one characteristic way that social science procedes, which is to use hypotheticalized, proposedly typicalized versions of the world as a base for theorizing about it.

I want to argue that however rich a researcher's imagination is, if he uses hypotheticalized/typicalized versions of the world, he is constrained by reference to what an audience, an audience of professionals, can accept as reasonable.

That might not appear to be a terrible constraint, except when we come to look at the kinds of things that actually occur.

Many of the objects we work with would not be accepted as a base for theorizing if they were urged as imagined.

We can then come to see that a warrant for using close looking at the world as a base for theorizing about it is that from close looking at the world we can find things that we couldn't, by imagination, assert were there. One wouldn't know they were 'typical'.

One might not know that they ever occurred.