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Epistemics and Action Ascription

John Heritage
UCLA

Even where an utterance is in the linguistic form of a question, and seems to be doing questioning, the latter will not be adequately accounted for by the former. For if the question form can be used for actions other than questioning, and questioning can be accomplished by linguistic forms other than questions, then a relevant problem can be posed not only about how a question does something other than questioning, but about how it does questioning; not only about how questioning is done by non-question forms, but about how it gets accomplished by question forms (Schegloff 1984: 34-35).

We could not utter a phrase meaningfully unless we adjusted lexicon and prosody according to what the categoric or individual identity of our putative recipients allows us to assume they already know, and knowing this, don't mind our openly presuming on it. At the very center of interaction life is the cognitive relation we have with those present before us, without which relationship our activity, behavioral and verbal could not be meaningfully organized. And although this cognitive relationship can be modified during a social contact, and typically is, the relationship is extra-situational. Consisting of the information a pair of persons have about the information each other has of the world, and the information they have (or haven't) concerning the possession of this information. [Goffman 1983: 5-6]

Declarative Syntax

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(1) [Rah:12:1:ST]
 1  Jen:     °Hello?,°
 2              (0.5)
 3  Ida:     Jenny?
 4              (0.3)
 5  Ida:     It's me:,
 6  Jen:     Oh hello I:da.
 7  Ida:  -> Ye:h. .h uh:m (0.2) ah'v jis rung tih teh- eh tell you (0.3)
 8        -> uh the things ev arrived from Barkerr'n Stone'ou[:se,
 9  Jen:                                                     [Oh::::.
10              (.)
11  Jen:     Oh c'n ah c'm rou:nd,hh

(2) [MidWest 2.4]
 1  DOC:      Are you married?
 2            (.)
 3  PAT:      No.
 4            (.)
 5  DOC:   -> You're divorced (°cur[rently,°)
 6  PAT:                           [Mm hm,

(3) [Rah:12:4:ST]
 1  Jen:  -> =[Okay then I w]'z askin='er en she says yer
 2        -> working tomorrow ez well.
 3  Ida:     Yes I'm s'pose to be tihmorrow yes,
 4  Jen:  -> O[h:::.
 5  Ida:      [Yeh,

(4) [NB II:2:1 (Pomerantz 1980:195]
 1  Nan:     Hel↑lo:,
 2  Emm:     .hh HI::.
 3           (.)
 4  Nan:     Oh:'I::: 'ow a:re you Emmah:
 5  Emm:  -> FI:NE yer LINE'S BEEN BUSY.
 6  Nan:     Yea:h (.) my  u.-fuhh h-.hhhh my fa:ther's wife ca:lled me,h
 7           .hhh So when she ca:lls me::,h .hh I always talk fer a lo:ng
 8           ti:me cz she c'n afford it'n I ca:n't.hhh[hhh]°huh°]
 9  Emm:  ->                                          [OH:]:::::]:=
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Negative Interrogative Syntax

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(5) [US: 1076-1086]
 1  Mik:     You have a tank I like tuh tuh- I-I [like-
 2  Vic:                                          [Yeh I gotta fa:wty::
 3          I hadda fawtuy? a fifty, enna twu[nny:: en two ten::s,
 4  Mik:                                      [Wut- Wuddiyuh doing
 5          wit [dem. Wuh-
 6  Ric:  ->     [But those were uh::: [Alex's tanks.
 7  Vic:                               [enna fi:ve.
 8  Vic:     Hah?
 9  Ric:  -> Those'r Alex's tanks weren't they?
10  Vic:     Pondn' me?
11  Ric:  -> Weren't- didn' they belong tuh Al[ex?
12  Vic:                                      [No: Alex ha(s) no tanks
13          Alex is tryin'tuh buy my tank.


(6) [NB:IV:10(R):14-17]
 1  Emm:     .h ↑How wz yer tri:p.
 2  Lot:     Oh:: Go:d wonderful Emm[a,
 3  Emm:  ->                        [Oh idn'it beautiful do:wn the:re,
 4  Lot:     Oh:: Jeeziz ih wz go:rgeous::.


(7)  [NB VII:1-2]
 1  Emm:     =Oh honey that was a lovely luncheon I shoulda ca:lled you
 2          s:soo[:ner but I:]l:[lo:ved it.Ih wz just deli:ghtfu[: l.]=
 3  Mar:          [((f)) Oh:::]  [°(      )                     [Well]=
 4  Mar:     =I wz gla[d    y o u] (came).]
 5  Emm:              ['nd yer f:] friends] 'r so da:rli:ng,=
 6  Mar:     = Oh:::[: it wz:]
 7  Emm:  ->        [e-that P]a:t isn'she a do:[:ll?]
 8  Mar:  ->                                   [iY e]h isn't she pretty,
 9  Edn:     Oh: she's a beautiful girl.=
10  Mar:     =Yeh I think she's a pretty gir[l.


(8) [Bill Clinton Press conference:  7th March 1997]
 1  IR:     W'l Mister President in your zea:l (.) for funds during
 2       -> the last campaign .hh didn't you put the Vice President (.)
 3          an' Maggie and all the others in your (0.4) administration
 4          top side .hh in a very vulnerable position, hh
 5          (0.5)
 6  IR:  -> I disagree with that.hh u- How are we vulnerable because ...
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Straight Interrogative Syntax

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(9) [Field X(C):4:2-11]
 1  Les:  -> Oh ↑hello Joyce are ↑you going↑ t'the mee↓ting t'ni:ght,
 2           (0.2)
 3  Joy:     .hhh No I'm not Lesley.
 4  Les:     No↓:. O[↑kay then:,
 5  Joy:            [↓No.
 6           (0.4)
 7  Joy:     No:, sorry about that


(10) [Debbie and Shelley]
 1  Shelley:  So: I mean it's not becuz he's- he's- I mean its not
 2            becuz he:'s not going it's becuz (0.5) his money's
 3            not¿ (0.5) funding me.
 4   Debbie:  Okay¿
 5  Shelley:  So an ↑when other time have I ever [done that?
 6   Debbie:                                      [.hhh well I'm jus say:in'
 7            it jus seems you- you base a lot of things on-on guy:s.
 8            (·)
 9            I do'know:, it just- a couple times I don- I don-
10            .hh it's not a big deal.


(11) [Gypsyman:1]
 1  Tea: -> Okay (.) now then (.) has anyone anything to say (.)
 2          what d'you think this poem's all about?
 3          (2.9)
 4  Tea:    Miss O'Neil?
 5  Stu:    The uhrm gypsyman they want his to stay one more day
 6          longer.
 7  Tea:    The gypsyman they want him to stay one day longer,
 8          (.)
 9  Tea:    Don't be afraid of making a mistake, if you've got
10          any thoughts you put your hand up.=No-one's gonna
11          laugh at ya.=I shall be very grateful for anything
12          you have to say. Miss O'Neil said it's a poem about
13          a gypsyman (.) an' somebody wants him to stay.
14          (0.3)
15  Tea:    Any other ideas.=She's not right.


(12)  [US CBS Evening News: 25 Jan 1988: Iran-Contra]
      IR: Dan Rather  IE: George Bush
 1  IR:  => [You've- you've made us hyp]oc[rites in ]=
 2  IE:     =[(                     )]=
 3  IR:  => =[the face o' the world.]=
 4  IR:  => =How couldja [gr- how couldja-] (.) sign on=
 5  IE:                  [(That was ba:d) ]
 6  IR:  => =to such a policy. .hh[h And the question]=
 7  IE:                           [Well  (half-)  the]=
 8  IR:     =[is, what does that tell us about your]=
 9  IE:     =[   same   reason   the    President  ]=
10  IR:     =[ record.]
11  IE:     =[      si]gned on to it. (0.2) The same reason
12          the President signed on to it. .hh When a CIA
13          agent is being tortured to death, .h maybe ya
14          err on the side of a human life.
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Ambiguities

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(13) [CNN State of the Nation 22nd March 2010: 8:56 EST: Wolf Blitzer/Kevin Madden]
    Conversation prior to the Congressional vote on health care reform
 1   IR:     .hh Kevin Madden you're- you're watching all of this and uh
 2           you are a Republican strategist.
 3        -> Right now uh you realize of course the Democrats are going to win.
 4           (1.0)
 5   IE:  -> Right.
 6           (.)
 7   IR:     So [then what.
 8   IE:  ->    [Yes. (0.2) Oh are you asking me or telling me.
 9   IR:     On this- on this issue of health care reform.....

(14) [JH:FN]  [A has just returned from a fitness class that A and B attend on
               separate days]
 1    A:     So you're going to Ellen on Monday.
 2    B:     Tuesday.
 3    A:     No she's got a problem with Tuesday. She told me.
 4    B:     Oh.

(15) [KR:2]
 1  Mom:     Daddy 'n I have t- both go in different
 2           directions, en I wanna talk t'you about where I'm
 3           going (t'night).
 4  Rus:     (Mkay,)
 5  Gar:     Is it about u:s?
 6  Mom:     (Uh) huh,
 7  Rus:     <I know where yer goin,
 8  Mom:     Wh^ere.
 9  Rus:     To thuh eh (eight grade     )=
10  Mom:     =Yeah. Right.
11  Mom:  -> Do you know who's going to that meeting?
12  Rus:     Who.
13  Mom:     I don't kno:w.
14           (0.2)
15  Rus:     .hh Oh::. Prob'ly .h Missiz Mc Owen ('n Dad said)
16           prob'ly Missiz Cadry and some of the teachers.
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