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Los Angeles

Grammar, Epistemics and Action:
An epistemic analysis of talk about the self and others

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy
in Applied Linguistics

by

Patricia Ann Turner

2012

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Grammar, Epistemics and Action:

An epistemic analysis of talk about the self and others

by

Patricia Ann Turner

Doctor of Philosophy in Applied Linguistics

University of California, Los Angeles, 2012

Professor John Heritage, Co-chair

Professor John Schumann, Co-chair

Using the methodology of conversation analysis, this dissertation examines the grammatical resources that participants deploy to track and display relevant knowledge states as they navigate the social world. Specifically, it investigates the role that epistemics plays in the grammatical formulation of turns at talk, and explicates how the epistemic claims made by a particular grammatical format are deployed to do social actions. Chapter 1 defines relevant concepts and establishes the analytical framework for the study. Chapter 2 establishes the context for the study by providing a comprehensive cross-disciplinary literature review on work done in linguistics, discourse analysis and conversation analysis over the past 50 years as it relates to grammar and

epistemics. It is argued that while a large number of studies have implicitly acknowledged the role of epistemics in the grammatical formulation of utterances, few studies outside of the areas of conversation analysis and interactional linguistics have adequately acknowledged the role that epistemics plays in the grammatical formulation of turns at talk. Chapter 3 examines A- and B-event declaratives (akin to Labov and Fanshel's (1977) notion of A- and B-event statements) for their epistemic underpinnings and the interactional consequences of their deployment both sequentially and in terms of the actions they do. Evidence is provided for the observation that the declarative is a preferred format for talk about the self and a dispreferred format for talk about the other. It is further argued that grammatical variations on the declarative (e.g., reverse polarity tags, so-prefacing and A-perspectivizing) are resources for downgrading an epistemic claim made by a turn at talk and that the type of resource deployed indexes a particular epistemic state. Chapter 4 illustrates the application of an epistemic framework to the analysis of interaction in a particular context – that of physician/patient interaction with special attention to the epistemics of declaratively and interrogatively-formatted utterances targeting B events and the actions these utterances do. The chapter's findings include a discussion of how physicians deploy declaratives and interrogatives in different sequential contexts, and further, deploy these two formats to do different actions. Chapter 5 investigates the epistemic distinctions between 1) reverse polarity tag questions (RPTs) and same polarity tag questions (SPTs) and 2) reverse polarity tag questions with rising intonation (RPT↑) and reverse polarity tag questions with falling intonation (RPT↓). It is found that in the case of SPTs and RPTs, these two question types differ with respect to the authorship of the information contained within the turn. With respect to RPT↑s and RPT↓s, it is found that the former are used in utterances that are ancillary to the action-in-progress and can be either inclusive or preclusive in nature, whereas the latter are

central to and constitutive of the action-in-progress. Chapter 6 provides a summary of each of the substantive chapters and makes suggestions for future research.

The dissertation of Patricia Ann Turner is approved.

Marjorie Goodwin

Charles Goodwin

John Heritage, Committee Co-chair

John Schumann, Committee Co-chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2012

DEDICATION

To Rob Gatley, who never forgot.

His cathedral is always filled with light.

How fortunate I am to have been invited in.

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RESEARCH INTERESTS

Conversation analysis
Institutional interaction (e.g., doctor-patient, veterinarian-client, classroom interaction)
Technology in education
Teaching methods in higher education
Sociology of the humane movement

LANGUAGES

Basic oral proficiency in Spanish and French

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

1.1. Background of the dissertation

This dissertation investigates the intersection of three features of human interaction: grammar, epistemics and action. Specifically, it examines the ways in which several different grammatical formats (e.g., declarative statements, interrogative statements, and declarative + tag questions) index the claimed epistemic state of the speaker vis à vis the hearer, and how the resulting epistemic displays can be mobilized by speakers as a resource in interaction to do specific actions. As such, it follows in the steps of a large body of research that has addressed what philosophers have called “the problem of intersubjectivity,” that is, the difficulty faced by actors in the social world as they attempt to bridge the gap between the personal experience of a given actor (the subjective), and that which can be understood as the shared experience of two or more actors (the intersubjective), such that they may engage in the actions that constitute the actors’ social world.

The early twentieth century phenomenologist Alfred Schutz wrote that the tension arising from the interplay of the subjective and intersubjective has as its origin the differences between the claims to knowledge that different actors, who exist as discrete biological, social, and cultural entities, can make about the social world that they share. Heritage (1984a) notes...“Schutz sought in particular to distinguish between the irremediably private and unavailable aspects of experience and the contingently unavailable aspects of the other’s subjective intentions...[and] plans...” (Heritage, 1984a, p. 59).

Talk-in-interaction, as a primordial setting for human social action, would appear to be one of the primary arenas in which such questions of subjectivity and intersubjectivity are negotiated. Heritage and Raymond (2005) have noted that speakers do, in fact, orient to their own and to their interlocutors' knowledge states and that this orientation is displayed in the talk via the practices that speakers deploy:

“...the distribution of rights and responsibilities regarding what participants can accountably know, how they know it, whether they have rights to describe it, and in what terms is directly implicated in organized practices of speaking” (p. 16).

This orientation to knowledge states works in addition to, and as this dissertation demonstrates, in conjunction with, the myriad practices and actions that participants routinely engage in through talk. Such practices and actions (along with the language formulations used to achieve them) have constituted a focal area of study for conversation analysts since the field's inception in the 1970s. Taking a conversation analytic perspective, this dissertation investigates the intersection of grammar, epistemics and action in an attempt to provide an empirical account of the role of epistemics in the grammatical formulation of turns-at-talk and the actions these precise episto-grammatical formulations make possible. To lay the groundwork for the chapters to follow, this chapter first outlines some of the assumptions upon which the dissertation is based with respect to epistemics, action and grammar. It then discusses the action import of epistemics, that is, the role of epistemic factors in the formation of action. It then introduces conversation analysis as the analytical framework for the study and delineates the study's research questions. Finally, it lays out the chapter organization of the dissertation.

1.1.1. Epistemics

Epistemology, as it has been studied in the field of philosophy, has an over 2500 year history, during which philosophers have grappled with questions surrounding the nature of

knowledge, including questions as to its definition, sources, and acquisition, among others (Crumley, 2009). The current study investigates epistemological concerns in a very particular context: it investigates the ways in which speakers deploy grammar as an epistemic resource in the production of action in talk-in-interaction. The term epistemics, then, broadly-speaking and as it will be used in this study, may be viewed as encompassing two distinct but related ways of thinking about what it means for participants to “know” some piece of information. The first relates to the knowledge states (or claimed knowledge states) of individual social actors, and the second relates to how these states are encoded in talk.

The notion of “knowledge state” is admittedly difficult to define. As will be discussed more fully in Chapter 2, knowledge is not a static phenomenon; for example, actors’ knowledge states may change (Heritage, 1984b); there may be different degrees and different ways of knowing (see, for example, Chafe, 1986) and knowledge may be contingent on some other aspects of the interaction (Charles Goodwin, personal communication, March 4, 2010). For the purposes of this study, a working definition is offered: a participant’s knowledge state refers to the store of information which an actor possesses and brings to a given social interaction. This information is made available to the individual through a wide variety of channels, including prior experience, personal history, observation and other cognitive and social mechanisms. Such information encompasses a wide variety of types of knowledge and constitutes the knowledge necessary for a participant to be a proper social member.

Given a particular piece of information, a participant may have primary epistemic rights to that information or may have more attenuated rights to information. A canonical instance of a domain in which a speaker is generally treated as having primary epistemic rights is in the area of his or her feelings, expectations, thoughts and plans, for example. As Heritage (2012) notes:

Outside of very specialized contexts such as psychoanalysis, the thoughts, experiences, hopes, and expectations of individuals are treated as theirs to know and describe [...] Persons are also generally treated as knowing more about their relatives, friends, pets, jobs, and hobbies than others, and indeed may labor under an obligation to do so (p. 6).

Speakers' rights to a given proposition thus confer upon them a certain degree of epistemic *status* (Heritage, 2012), which may be greater or lesser than that of their recipients. However, as a number of researchers have noted (e.g., Heritage, 2012; Drew, 1991) speakers' claims to a particular epistemic status, particularly claims to primary epistemic status, are open to challenge by recipients, and these claims thus remain a dynamic, rather than static, element of human interaction.

A second aspect of epistemics is the way in which participants organize their talk to allow for the public display of their knowledge states at a particular point in time. This has been referred to as the epistemic *stance* of a speaker (Heritage, 2012). A simple example can be seen in the utterances offered by Chafe (1986), in his discussion of English evidentials. Thus, a statement such as "It *must have been* a kid" (Chafe, 1986), indexes the degree of certainty with which the speaker makes the statement, and further, indexes that the source of the knowledge is induction. These two phenomena, the (claimed) knowledge state of the speaker, and the encoding of that knowledge state in the talk, comprise what is meant by the term epistemics in the context of this dissertation.

Casual examination of naturally-occurring talk indicates that participants routinely orient to their own and to their recipients' epistemic status. In fact, it may be said that they not only orient to these statuses, but that they do so quite precisely. For example, the following extracts show that participants specifically treat the internal states (e.g., what one thinks, expects or feels) as belonging entirely within the epistemic domain of the individual who experiences them;

furthermore, participants specifically formulate their turns in a way that displays this orientation.

This can be seen in Extracts 1.1 – 1.4 below:

In Extract 1.1, a mother speaking on the phone with a physician about her daughter uses the verb “seems” to downgrade the status of her claim that the child wants to sleep (“she seems to want to sleep a lot,” line 7). This hedge indexes a downgraded epistemic claim with regard to her daughter’s desire to sleep - an internal state which the mother does not have direct access to:

Extract 1.1 DEC 2107

05 Doc: .<Has she got any other:¿ is she irritable¿ or: any
06 other symptoms¿
07 Clr: No:, she seems to want to sleep a lot.

We can contrast 1.1. with 1.2, where the patient herself is experiencing physical symptoms.

Here, the participant does not downgrade her claim to know about her symptoms – an expected response type given that she has direct access to and knowledge of the pains she is experiencing.

Extract 1.2 DEC 1205

06 Clr: I've (so many) pains I can hardly walk,

In Extract 1.3, speaker L has been asked by speaker R’s sister to install R’s father in his home after a hospital stay. In lines 30–33, L, who is a friend of the family, lays out what needs to be done in anticipation of R’s father’s arrival. As the son of the patient, R ostensibly has a greater right (and perhaps obligation) than L to decide what must be done, and L acknowledges this in lines 35–36, where she provides an account -- having had previous experience in such an undertaking -- for her upgraded knowledge claim in lines 30-33.

Extract 1.3 Comen II

27 L: Now d'z she- d'you think she expects tuh put im in
28 that back bedroom where he was before,
29 (1.5)
30 L: Cuz I'll haftuh get Mister Bush tuh go over ther with
31 me en cli- ·hh an' take that bed outta there, ·hh
32 becuz the-uh-they-they expect the place to be ready
33 y'know.
34 R: Mm hm,
35 L: --> I d- I been all through this with my brothers
36 --> so I-I know what they expect.

Another conversational practice can be seen in line 27 of Extract 1.3, reproduced as Extract 1.4, below, where L reformats her turn so that the question asks about R's epistemic status, rather than that of his sister.

Extract 1.4 Comen II

27 L: ->> Now d'z she- d'you think she expects tuh put im in
28 that back bedroom where he was before,
29 (1.5)
30 L: Cuz I'll haftuh get Mister Bush tuh go over ther with
31 me en cli- •hh an' take that bed outta there, •hh
32 becuz the-uh-they-they expect the place to be ready
33 y'know.

Inquiring about the expectation of a non-present third party, L begins her turn by asking R “d'z she-.” This turn, projectable as “does she expect tuh put im in that back bedroom,” assigns to R an upgraded knowledge state with regard to what his sister *expects*, an internal state, strictly-speaking, which lies outside of R's knowledge territory. The repair to “d'you think she expects tuh put im that back bedroom,” reframes the turn by asking him instead what *he* thinks she expects, a query about his own thinking processes, which are within his knowledge territory. As these four examples demonstrate, orientation to and displays of epistemic status are pervasive features of talk-in-interaction. This dissertation investigates how epistemics interacts with grammar in the doing of actions. These three focal elements, action, grammar and epistemics will be discussed in the following section.

1.1.2. Action

While participants clearly orient to their own and their recipients' epistemic status, it has been convincingly argued that they also orient to the action a particular utterance is doing. Indeed, it has been argued by scholars, particularly those working in the field of conversation analysis, that action is an omnirelevant concern for social actors. Developed in the 1970s by Emanuel Schegloff, Gail Jefferson and Harvey Sacks and grounded in the ethnomethodological approach of Harold Garfinkel, conversation analysis takes as its principal point of departure the

actions that participants engage in through talk. In investigating how such actions are achieved, conversation analysis has maintained that a clear understanding of human social action must rely on the detailed study of face-to-face interaction, conceived as situated human activity which unfolds locally on a moment-to-moment basis. This view of interaction as an unfolding phenomenon, subject at each moment to analysis and action by the participants involved, added a critical dimension to the study of human sociality that had previously received little attention. Investigating such crucial elements of talk-in-interaction as turn-taking and the organization of conversational sequences, work in conversation analysis has addressed issues of paramount importance to our understanding of the ways that people make sense of their social world.

Focusing on talk-in-interaction, conversation analysis offers compelling evidence for the omnirelevance of action in conversation (see, especially, Schegloff, 1995). Indeed, as Schegloff (1995) notes, one of the primary tasks in understanding an utterance is understanding its action import:

Especially (but not exclusively) in conversation, talk is constructed and is attended by its recipients for the action or actions it may be doing....There is virtually always an issue (for the participants, and, accordingly, for professional analysts) of what is getting done by its production in some particular here-and-now (p. 187).

Thus, according to Schegloff, an utterance such as “Have you got your waterbed yet?”, uttered as a run-up to an offer of information (e.g., “because I saw one on sale”), can be understood less as a request for information than as a pre-offer that seeks a go-ahead from the recipient so that an offer of information may be made. Likewise, Schegloff notes, the absence of an action in an environment where a particular action has been made relevant is also consequential for the participants and for the developing trajectory of the talk. After an announcement such as “My car is stalled,” a particular kind of response is made relevant, and the absence of such a response can be seen as doing something specific, for example, withholding an

offer of help (Schegloff, 1995). The action that a speaker may be doing with an utterance, therefore, is a primary concern of the participants involved, and accordingly, it should be so for analysts interested in studying human interaction.

1.1.3. Grammar

Also part of the interactional matrix that constitutes and facilitates social action is the composition of the utterance, a facet of talk in which there is no doubt that grammar is clearly implicated. Indeed, in traditional approaches to the study of language, grammar has often been viewed as the primary target of interest for the analyst. However, in more recent years, the importance of grammar as a deployable resource in talk-in-interaction implicated in the formation of action, rather than as simply a linguistic system, has been recognized. Conversation analysts have taken a primary role in this view of grammar as implicated in the formation of action, and the publication of *Interaction and Grammar* (Ochs, et al., 1996) represented a major effort to bring together a collection of works that viewed grammar from this perspective. In that publication, Schegloff (1996), for example, provided a compelling argument for reconceptualizing the notion of grammar to take into account its role and deployment within turn constructional units (TCUs), thereby laying the groundwork for a research program dedicated to the study of grammar within its natural environment, that of talk-in-interaction. In the same collection, Ford and Thompson's (1996) research looked at the ways in which syntax, pragmatics and intonation all work together to allow participants to project the completion of interlocutors' TCUs. Lerner (1996) examined the role played by grammar in how participants engaged in anticipatory completion of a speaker's TCU and found that such completions were accomplished at grammatical boundaries. Finally, Goodwin (1996) investigated the ways in which airline ground personnel used prospective indexicals to elicit co-present others' participation in a

particular activity and to provide a framework for how participants were to understand that activity.

The work of these scholars introduced a new research area to the field of conversation analysis that conceptualized grammar as a major resource via which participants construct social action. As Ochs, et al. (1996) noted:

“...the grammar at work in deployments of the language is ‘at work,’ that is, engaged in the activities that compose the quotidian life of the society and the quotidian experience of its members, in all its actual consequentiality...it is readily apparent that, at the very least, attention must be paid to what the relationship is between activity, action and the orderly deployment of language called grammar” (p. 21).

The present study argues that just as what Ochs termed the “orderly deployment of language” is implicated in the formation of action, so is epistemic status implicated in the deployment of grammar and, perhaps more significantly, in the formation of action. The following section demonstrates, using a piece of data, the central role that epistemics plays in the formation of action. Following that, the theoretical framework for the dissertation and the specific research questions that the dissertation seeks to address will be discussed. The final section of this chapter outlines the chapter organization of the dissertation.

1.2. The action import of epistemics

As mentioned earlier, the aim of this dissertation is to explore the intersection of these three constitutive elements of human social interaction: grammar, epistemics and action. Specifically, this study investigates the ways in which conversational participants formulate turns such that the epistemic claim embodied by the turn’s format is uniquely suited to, and designed to accomplish, a particular conversational action. Thus, this dissertation is interested in talk such as that seen in Extract 1.5. In this accusation-denial sequence taking place during a dinner time

conversation among four participants, V, a young teenage woman, accuses her sister, B, of having gotten drunk while on a recent trip to another city. The turn at point is line 11, where B denies the accusation using a reverse polarity tag question with downward intonation (“I wasn’t, was I.”)

Extract 1.5 Virginia

04 V: Well she wen' downta Charleston the other
05 weeken' with Paul?
06 V: An' Paul s[aid ()
07 B: [(They were) down there, stu:pid.
08 P: An' wha'd Paul say?
09 V: Paul said she was °laughin' 'er head off an' she was so:
10 bombed.
11 B: ->> I wudn' was I.
12 W: What that weeken' you were- (.) in Charleston?
13 B: Uh huh.
14 W: Nah, you didn' (.) appear tuh be.

As we can see, V launches her accusation with a pre-telling in lines 4-6. The accusation will eventually take the form of a report of what an absent third party had said, namely, that B had gotten “bombed” on a recent trip (lines 9-10); however, at precisely the point in the turn where the accusation is to take place, B begins a competing turn in line 7 (“They were down there, stupid,”), that overlaps with V’s turn and thus pre-empts, for the moment, V’s telling of B’s unflattering behavior. That the interaction between B and V is already contentious can be seen by the fact that B interrupts V’s turn, and more obviously, by the use of the word “stupid.” It is therefore not surprising that once V has gotten her accusation out (lines 9-10), B denies it in line 11 (“I wasn’t, was I.”)

At least two observations seem to be in order here. The first is that the content of B’s turn in line 11 is what Labov and Fanshel (1977) have called an A-event statement; that is, it constitutes information that very definitely falls within B’s epistemic domain since, of the four present, she is uniquely qualified to know with all certainty whether she was intoxicated or not. A second is that its formulation includes a reverse polarity tag. As will be noted in a later chapter, such utterances rarely have a reverse polarity tag (e.g., wasn’t I) appended to them,

precisely because the recipient is rarely as qualified as the speaker to comment on the speaker's mental or physical states. However, in this case, the speaker appears more than willing to give up her claim to upgraded epistemic status in this matter. One possible reason for this might be that she does not know if she was "bombed," which might be the case if she had indeed been intoxicated. However, it is all the more unusual because she is denying the very state that would make a reverse polarity tag relevant.¹

A more likely explanation might be found by understanding the action that the speaker is engaging in – a denial, which, if corroborated by others present, can increase the strength of the denial. By using a reverse polarity tag, B invites another participant, W, to corroborate her side of the story, which he eventually does. We can see in the video of this interaction that in line 11, W is looking at B, who is off-camera. That he has understood himself to be selected as next speaker is clear when he responds in line 12 with the first pair part of an insert sequence clarifying the event that B is talking about ("What that weeken' you were in Charleston?") and upon receiving confirmation, answers her question – thus supporting her denial – in line 14 ("Nah, you didn' appear tuh be"). It is also important to note that that she issues the tag with falling intonation. In contrast to rising intonation, which would invite either an aligning or a disaligning response, the falling intonation more strongly compels an alignment from W with what B has just said. In doing the denial using precisely this grammatical formulation – a reverse polarity tag with falling intonation on an A-event statement, B modifies her epistemic claim to the information in a way that is uniquely suited to and quite effective in accomplishing the action that she is engaged in. We can see here that epistemics, as encoded in the grammatical

¹ This example also demonstrates that epistemic claims are, indeed, *claims* to know and as such may or may not reflect actual knowledge states. If true, this also provides evidence for the view that epistemic claims are resources that speakers may deploy in various ways that render their talk more fitted to the action that they are doing regardless of whether they "know" the information or not.

formulation of talk, is a powerful driver in the formulation of actions.

1.3. A conversation analytical view of epistemics

As will be demonstrated in Chapter 2 of the current study, much of the work on epistemics and grammar to date in linguistics and discourse analysis has treated epistemics peripherally, as involved in a linguistic system rather than as central to the way that turns are constructed and central to the ongoing sequential construction of a spate of talk. The ways in which participants construct actions via epistemic and grammatical resources has also received little attention.² Taking a conversation analytical perspective, the present study aims to demonstrate that epistemics is directly implicated in turn construction, and that the epistemo-grammatical resources that participants deploy bear directly on the action that an utterance is doing. The present investigation thus differs from non-conversation analytic work in this area in that it investigates the interaction of these three elements, and it does so by investigating their deployment in naturally-occurring talk. Analyzing talk in its full and natural context, furthermore, permits the analyst's observations to be grounded in concerns that are, in the first instance, concerns of the participants and only secondarily and by extension those of the analyst. A second benefit of this orientation is that it allows observations to be made about the actions that the participants are doing through their talk. Studying turns at talk in their natural environment, as talk-in-interaction, decreases the tendency for the analyst to pathologize utterances as infelicitous or awkward, allows the utterance to be examined on its own merits for

² Notable exceptions are work done by interactional linguists such as Helasvuoto (2001), Tanaka (2001) and Ford (2001). The contributions of interactional linguists to the study of grammar and epistemics will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 2.

what it is doing at this time and with this participant, and by doing so, increases our understanding of what action or actions are being done in a given turn at talk.

The present study, therefore, seeks to answer three central questions:

1. What are the epistemic claims made by different grammatical formats?
2. What actions do these epistemic claims make possible through their deployment in naturally-occurring conversation?
3. How are these claims and the conversational actions they serve to deploy implicated in the formation of social action?

1.4. Chapter organization

The chapter organization of the dissertation is as follows: To establish the context of the present study, Chapter 2 provides a review of the major works in the fields of linguistics, discourse analysis and conversation analysis which have touched upon or directly investigated epistemics. In addition, it will identify the data used in the present analysis. Chapter 3 begins the analysis proper by investigating what Labov and Fanshel (1977) have called A- and B-event statements; in this chapter, I argue that claims to knowledge are omnirelevant in talk-in-interaction, and therefore, they must be dealt with by participants on a moment-by-moment basis as the interaction unfolds. Furthermore, it will be argued that the declarative format is a dispreferred format for invoking B events, whereas it is a preferred format for invoking A events. The social actions that are done by turns which depart from these grammatical norms will also be discussed.

Chapter 4 demonstrates the utility of applying an epistemic framework to the study of question formulation by investigating participants' deployment of questions in a specific context:

that of doctor-patient interaction. Specifically, it examines Yes/No declaratives and Yes/No interrogatives as epistemic alternatives and points to some of the specific actions that these alternatives do. It also investigates elliptical questions (e.g., “Any x?” and “No x?”) and discusses the role played by epistemic context in the deployment of these utterances in medical interaction.

Divided into two major sections, Chapter 5 looks first at declarative + same polarity tag formulations (e.g., “You’re feeling better, are you,”) and declarative + reverse polarity tag formulations (e.g., “You’re feeling better, aren’t you?”) and discusses the epistemic differences between these two types of grammatical formulation in terms of the speaker’s and hearer’s authorship of the utterance. In the second half of the chapter, reverse polarity tag questions with rising intonation (RPT↑) and reverse polarity tag questions with falling intonation (RPT↓) are studied in order to better understand the epistemic and sequential differences between them. It will be argued that RPT↑ and RPT↓ are indeed epistemically distinct, and it is this distinction that determines the action that the RPT is doing. Differences in the sequential contexts in which RPT↑ and RPT↓ are deployed are also investigated.

Finally, Chapter 6 discusses the implications of this investigation for the future study of grammar, epistemics and action and argues that all three of these elements of talk are an essential consideration for the analyst, as they are for the participants themselves, if we are to understand how participants engage in talk-in-interaction and in their larger social worlds.

CHAPTER TWO

Research in grammar and epistemics: A cross-disciplinary perspective

2.1. Introduction

As stated in Chapter 1, the goal of this study is, first, to investigate the epistemic claims made by different question formats; second, to identify some of the actions that these epistemic claims make possible through their deployment in naturally-occurring conversation; and third, to understand how these claims and their concomitant conversational actions are implicated in the formation of social action.

Gaining a deeper understanding of what it means to know something, or what it means for something to be known, has been a central concern, first, of philosophers over the past two and a half centuries, and later, of social scientists over the past forty years, as scholars from linguistics, discourse analysis, functional linguistics and, most recently, conversation analysis have turned their attention, whether explicitly or implicitly, to the problem of intersubjectivity as viewed through the lenses of their various disciplines. Part of the Cognitive Revolution of the 1950s and 60s, which displaced Behaviorism as a theoretical model for the study of human behavior, this wave of research has generated an enormous body of literature, with scholars taking approaches that embody widely varying emphases, assumed objects of study and methodologies. In the following section, I provide an overview of three of the fields that have investigated epistemics, and for each field, I review some of the more significant work coming out of that research tradition.

2.2. Linguistic approaches

Linguists interested in sentential structures were some of the earliest scholars in the social sciences of the modern era to investigate phenomena related to epistemics, though work in this area tended to bring epistemics into focus only occasionally. Approaching the question of knowledge states implicitly rather than explicitly, these scholars have investigated epistemics in areas as diverse as questions (Bolinger, 1957), sentential grammar (Lang, 1978), information packaging and/or information structure (Prince, 1981, 1992; Steedman, 2000; Engdahl, 2006) and prosody (Safarova & Swerts, 2004).

In a seminal work on questions, Bolinger (1957) provides an exhaustive typology of questions in English viewed from a multi-modal perspective; his analysis, unlike those which characterize traditional grammars, takes into account the roles of intonation, gesture and non-traditional question formats (e.g., turn-final ‘eh’-type questions) in the construction of meaning. Bolinger’s discussion of epistemics is implicit in his analysis of the meaning of particular question types. An example of this can be seen in his discussion of “assertive questions,” – questions given in declarative format with rising intonation as seen in (b), below (the preceding turn, (a), is provided for context):

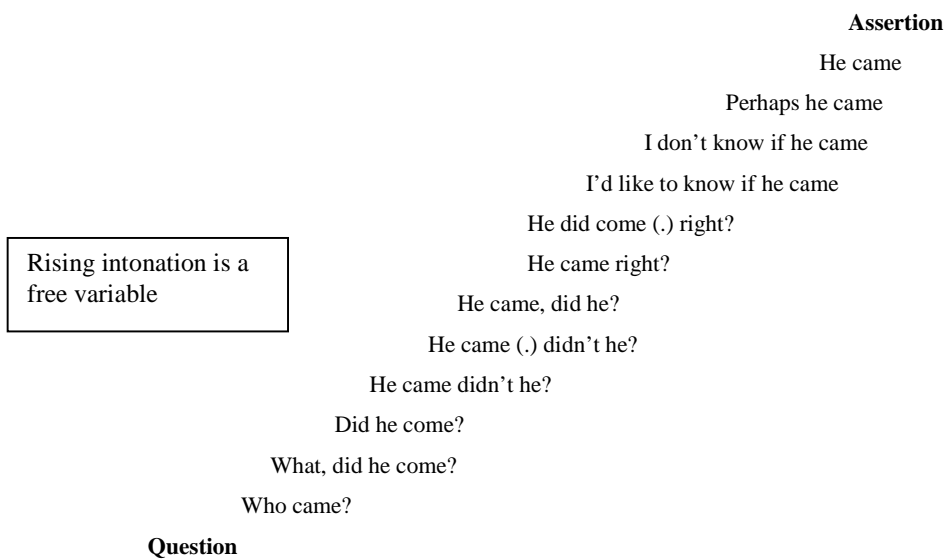
Example 2.01 Bolinger

- a. He hasn’t any money left.
- b. He spent it all?

Bolinger notes that in assertive questions such as ‘He spent it all?’ “a fact is assumed, pending confirmation” and that “assertive questions are informed” (p. 59). His discussion of “assumptions” and the informedness of a supposed speaker display an orientation to the epistemics of the participants, though in the cases cited by Bolinger, most appear to be examples provided by the analyst himself and are not instances of actual talk.

Levinson (in press) points out that Bolinger (1977) outlines a “question to assertion cline.” This cline clearly relies on some notion of speaker’s knowledge state to organize the utterances with reference to one another. This can be seen in Figure 2.01:

Figure 2.01. Bolinger’s (1977) question to assertion cline (Levinson, in press, p. 5).



Another early work in linguistics which makes an explicit reference to epistemics is Lang (1978), who, in talking about questions, argued for an “underlying ‘epistemic operator’” (Lang, 1978, p. 310), which he viewed as deleted hypersentences that function in the asking of questions. These hypersentences presumably constitute something resembling the question’s deep structure (Chomsky, 1957), and if present, function as an epistemic request and are the only means by which an interrogatively-formatted question can be interpreted by an interlocutor as a true question (i.e., as an information request, as opposed to an invitation, for example). Lang’s discussion of an underlying epistemic operator was one of the few early attempts to understand

the role that epistemics plays in action, or rather, in distinguishing true information requests from actions. Work that has followed has made passing reference to the knowledge states of speakers and recipients but has focused instead on the structure of utterances rather than on the ways that epistemic status is reflected in utterances; furthermore, unlike the present study, it has done so without focusing on the pivotal role that epistemics plays in the formation of action.

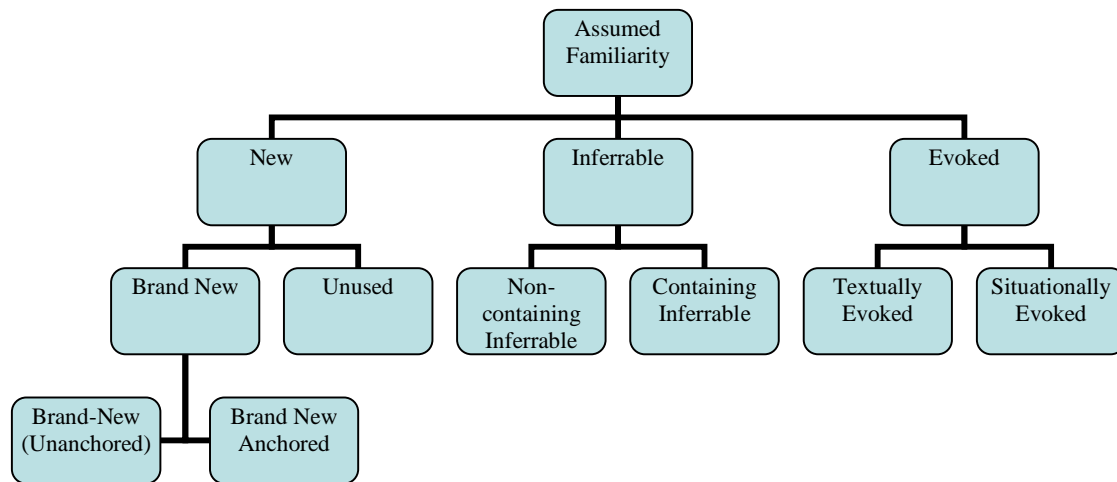
In the 1980s, many linguists turned their attention to “information packaging” or “information structuring,” referring to the arrangement of information within sentences and, at times, larger stretches of discourse. Prince’s (1981) discussion of the given-new distinction in “natural language” is one of the most prominent of these works. In this analysis, Prince implicitly evokes a notion of epistemics:

One presumably universal feature of natural language is that the objective information conveyed is not conveyed on a single plane. That is, there is an informational asymmetry in that some units seem to convey or represent information that is “older” than others. Given-new distinctions can be found on different levels — the sentence, the discourse, the participants' discourse-models... On all levels, however, — and perhaps this is not only universal, but also distinctive of human language — the crucial factor appears to be the tailoring of an utterance by a sender to meet the particular *assumed needs* of the intended receiver. That is, information-packaging in natural language reflects the sender's *hypotheses* about the receiver's *assumptions* and *beliefs* and strategies [italics added] (Prince, 1981, p. 224).

The categorization of some information as “given” and other information as “new” implies a recipient for whom these values apply, as does the later mention of the recipient’s “needs” – presumably epistemic needs. Furthermore, the agency implied by the term “information-packaging” and the word “hypotheses” suggest a speaker who is engaged in analysis of the recipient’s knowledge state. In addition, terms such as “assumptions” and “beliefs,” clearly display an orientation to knowledge states. All of these elements are suggestive of an epistemic framework, though Prince’s analysis remains essentially text-based and linguistic in nature. In this work, she lays out a taxonomy of what until that time had been termed

“givenness” and proposes the alternate term “assumed familiarity,” which subsumes both “new” and “given” information, though with some proposed changes in the categories (see Figure 2.02):

Figure 2.02. Prince’s taxonomy of given-new information (Prince, 1981, p. 237)



Prince established a taxonomy of three information types which are further subcategorized into seven distinct categories, each of which is briefly defined per Prince in Table 2.01, below:

Table 2.01. Prince’s (1981) taxonomy of given-new information

Brand-new anchored:	New information that is completely new to the discourse
Brand-new unanchored:	New information that is linked to another discourse entity
New unused:	New information assumed to be in the hearer’s model
Inferable (non-containing):	Information that can be logically inferred from the context
Inferable (containing):	Information that is contained in the inferred NP itself
(Textually) evoked:	Information that is evoked from prior discourse
Situationally evoked:	Information that is evoked from the extratextual context

Prince demonstrated her taxonomy using the examples of noun phrases (NPs). Prince points out, for example, that in the sentence “I got on a bus yesterday and the driver was drunk,” the NP “a bus” is brand-new unanchored information for the hearer, and the driver is a non-containing inferable (since buses usually have drivers). Similarly, in the sentence “A guy I work with says he knows your sister,” the NP “a guy I work with” is brand-new anchored information (anchored to the “I,” which is itself situationally-evoked) and “he” is textually evoked information. Thus, we can see in Prince’s work a clear concern for epistemics but with little mention of specific social context in which such a model could be applied.

In the same research tradition as Prince, Geluykens (1991), in his discussion of left-dislocation as a means via which participants introduce unrecoverable referents to discourse, proposed the term “recoverability” rather than givenness and noted that given information is vulnerable to both ‘interference’ and ‘distance,’ which can make it difficult for participants to recover what could otherwise be viewed as given information. In his analysis, he observes that other language can intervene between the given information and the original referent, producing ambiguity as to the referent. He gives the following example:

Example 2.02 Geluykens

a. John likes Bill; he loves Mary.

In this case, if “Bill” is meant to be co-referential with “he,” “John” obstructs this co-referentiality, thus demonstrating the vulnerability of information to interference. This often occurs when there is ‘distance’ – i.e., large numbers of words between the given information and its original mention, making it difficult for the hearer/recipient to recover the information from the preceding context. Again, in Geluykens’ study, we see an analysis focused on sentences rather than context.

In a discussion of “information packaging” in questions, Engdahl (2006) also invokes the question of epistemics by providing a theoretical account of how speakers’ and hearers’ information states are implicated in the production of utterances. In a cross-linguistic investigation of questions in English, French, German, and Swedish, Engdahl notes that the information structure of utterances, that is, “...the structuring of utterances into *focal* (new, informative, rhematic) information and *ground* (known, contextually-bound, thematic) information” (p. 93), is realized by the deployment of morphological, syntactic and phonological resources, the elements which make “information packaging” possible. Taking an example from Engdahl, we see question (a), “What did John read?” with three theorized responses (b1), (b2) and (b3), where only (b1) and (b2) can be considered felicitous:

Example 2.03 Engdahl

a: What did John read?

b1: He read the NEWSPAPER.

b2: the NEWSPAPER.

*b3: He READ the newspaper.

(Engdahl, 2006, p. 94)

In (a), the question projects “newspaper” as the relevant response; therefore, (b1) and (b2) are best fitted to (a) since in those sentences, it is “newspaper” which carries the stress and is

therefore the focal information. In (b3), however, the stress is on the word “read,” which makes “read” (rather than “newspaper”) the focal information. Engdahl points out that in the context of a question such as (a), “read” is not congruent with the information structure projected by (a), resulting in the infelicitousness of (b3) as a response to (a). Engdahl goes on to say that in order for question and answer sequences to be coherent, they must have a “matching ground-focus articulation” (p. 94).

As Engdahl points out, the context in which an utterance is spoken is determinative of the information structure it assumes. Engdahl defines context as that which is constituted by the speaker’s and hearer’s mental states, and it is this context that determines the information packaging of questions:

The way questions are realized is rather systemically correlated with the speaker’s view of what the hearer might know and what has happened so far in the conversation” (Engdahl, 2006, p. 93).

She presents a model of speakers’ and hearers’ “information states,” defined as “a snapshot of a person’s mental state at a given time in a conversation” (p. 96). Though it is not a focus articulated in her paper, Engdahl’s model appears to provide a theoretical construct for the resolution of the intersubjective problem identified earlier in this dissertation.

In her model, participants are privy to both “private” and “shared” information, the private consisting of beliefs and intentions, as well as understandings of what has transpired in the conversation. Shared information is the corresponding information and understandings of both participants. These are brought to bear on the Question Under Discussion (QUD), or the matter which occupies the current talk, and it is through the talk that participants’ knowledge states undergo change. Engdahl provides a representation of this model, which can be seen in Table 2.02, below:

Table 2.02. Model of a participant’s information state (Engdahl, 2006, p. 95)

PRIVATE	BELIEFS <i>set of propositions</i> QUD <i>partially ordered set of questions</i>
SHARED	BELIEFS <i>set of propositions</i> QUD <i>partially ordered set of questions</i> LATEST-MOVE <i>move</i>

The following example, given in Figure 2.03, taken from Engdahl (2006, p. 96) demonstrates how the mechanism might work:

Figure 2.03. Functioning of Engdahl’s information state model (Engdahl, 2006, p. 96)

(Question is issued)	1A: Does Mary like Paris? QUD update:	→	QUD = <?like(m,p)>
(Question is answered)	2B: Yes. QUD downdate:	→	QUD = <>
	3A: Uh huh.	→	BELIEFS = {like(m,p)}

In any conversation, there are two QUDs: one that is private to the participant, and one that is shared as a common understanding by the participants. As the questions are “updated” or issued (QUD update, line 1) and “downdated” or answered (QUD downdate, line 2) in the talk, the speaker’s beliefs undergo change and the new proposition is integrated into the speaker’s beliefs (line 3. See Heritage, 1984b, for a discussion of information receipts and change-of-state

tokens). Thus, Engdahl's model proposes one possible mechanism via which participants resolve differences in knowledge state and thereby build shared understandings through talk.

Engdahl examines several types of questions (e.g., information questions and reprise questions) in different languages, looking at how different languages use different grammatical formats (information packaging) to represent the information status of speakers. She concludes by noting that such a model may provide a useful framework for examining differences in how different languages represent utterances grammatically, semantically and intonationally.

As has been demonstrated by the works described above, studies by linguists have tended to approach the question of epistemics from the perspective of information packaging or information structure, employing researcher-generated data investigated from a text- or sentence-based perspective. In these studies, the question of participants' knowledge states is an implicit part of the analysis, and though in some cases the need to incorporate elements of the context in which the utterances are produced has been articulated (for example, Engdahl, 2006), this body of research has only peripherally addressed issues of larger communicative frameworks or the "context-shaped and context-renewing" (Heritage, 1984a, p. 242) character of naturally-occurring conversation.

2.3. Discourse analytic approaches

Discourse analysis constitutes the second research tradition that has given considerable research space to the question of epistemics, again approaching the phenomenon somewhat indirectly. Perhaps the most productive area of inquiry into epistemics has been the body of research that has been done on evidentiality and stance in spoken English (see for example, Chafe, 1986; Biber and Finnegan, 1988, 1989; Precht, 2003), written English (Bednarek, 2006;

Moreno and Suarez, 2008) and in languages such as Quechua (Faller, 2007), Western Apache (de Reuse, 2003) and Qiang (La Polla, 2003).

A working definition of evidentiality has been offered by Fox (2001), who defines it as the ways in which “languages encode how the speaker has come to know the proposition expressed by an utterance” (p. 167). Chafe (1986), as part of an influential work bringing together a collection of studies on evidentiality in a wide variety of languages (Chafe and Nichols, 1986), views evidentiality, broadly-speaking, as “attitudes toward knowledge.” Chafe’s definition subsumes such considerations as modes of knowing (e.g., belief, induction, hearsay and deduction, as illustrated by English sentences such as “I see her coming down the hall,” which exemplifies an inductive mode of knowing) and degree of reliability (encoded in English by the use of words such as *perhaps*, *possibly* and *maybe* in utterances).

How evidentiality interacts with epistemicity and the exact differences between the phenomena described by these two terms have not always been clear in the literature. Kärkkäinen (2003) differentiates epistemicity (or epistemic modality) and evidentiality and provides an excellent overview of the various definitions that have been put forth by scholars who have investigated the phenomenon of evidentiality. Kärkkäinen states that “evidentiality has commonly been understood to refer only to the source of knowledge and the type of evidence that a speaker has for making a claim or assertion” (p. 18). She further notes that researchers vary with respect to which category is regarded as super-ordinate to the other. She reports that Chafe (1986) and Biber and Finegan (1989) appear to regard epistemic modality as subordinate to evidentiality, but other researchers (e.g., Biber, et al., 1999; Palmer, 1986; and Willett, 1988) view evidentials as subsumed by epistemic modality. She concludes that “the dividing-line between the two may be fuzzy” (p. 19).

Kamio (1997), working on what he viewed to be a psychological phenomenon related to evidentiality, but only in partial overlap with it, introduced the concept of “territory of information,” which, unlike earlier conceptualizations of evidentiality, takes a more interactive view of talk by constructing a theory that takes into consideration both the speaker and the hearer. In his theory, “territory of information” refers to speakers’ and hearers’ relative rights to a given piece of information. Kamio gives the first major postulate of his theory as follows:

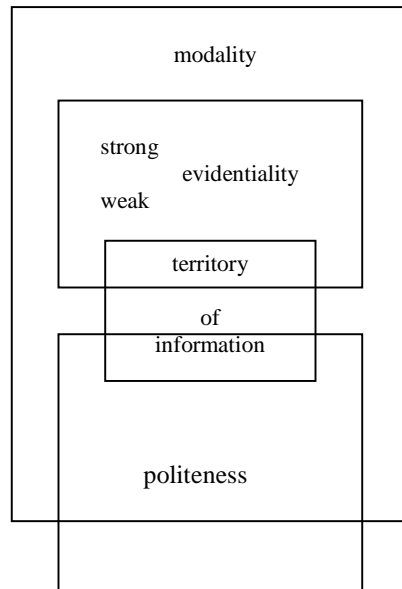
There are two linear psychological scales, one for the speaker and the other for the hearer, which measure the distance between the speaker/hearer and a given piece of information (p. 16).

Thus, according to Kamio, it follows that:

There are two conceptual categories called the speaker’s and the hearer’s territory of information. A given piece of information that is closer to the speaker...belongs to the speaker’s territory of information, and that which is closer to the hearer...belongs to the hearer’s territory of information (p. 17).

The theory of territory of information, along with evidentiality and politeness theory (Brown and Levinson, 1978; Brown and Levinson, 1987), are all subsumed under the linguistic concept of modality, according to Kamio, with territory of information acting as a link between evidentiality and politeness. Kamio notes that while evidentiality and politeness are not directly connected, it is the theory of territory of information which provides an essential link between these two constructs. This can be seen in Figure 2.04, below:

Figure 2.04. Relationship between evidentiality, politeness, modality and territory of information (Kamio, 1997, p. 186)



Kamio gives the following example of how evidentiality, territory of information and politeness theory are related. He begins by noting that (b) below, sounds more polite than (a).

Example 2.04 Kamio

- a. Your son is a medical student of Harvard.
- b. I hear that your son is a medical student of Harvard.

(Kamio, 1997, p.186)

In this case, Kamio claims that (b) sounds more polite because the information that the hearer's son is a medical student at Harvard is within the hearer's territory of information and is therefore "closer" to the hearer. If the speaker says (a), he is encroaching on the hearer's territory by not properly marking the utterance for source of information, whereas in (b), the evidential expression "I hear" has been added to the utterance, thereby recognizing that the information is

in the hearer's territory. Because (b) is considered more polite, Kamio notes, we can see here how evidentiality, territory of information and politeness interact with one another. The more precise details of the relevance of Kamio's theory for the present study will be discussed in a later chapter; however, for the moment, it is sufficient to note that in Kamio's framework, evidentiality, territory of information and politeness overlap to varying degrees and are all subsumed, or partially subsumed, under the more general linguistic notion of "modality" (Kamio, 1997, p. 186).

The preceding outline of some of the discourse analytical work that has been done in evidentiality, and the subsequent overview of how various scholars view the intersection of epistemics and evidentiality is of necessity brief; however, a discussion of some of the more significant contributions to this field may help to further clarify the contributions of discourse analysis to the field of epistemics.

Chafe and Nichols (1986), in one of the earliest comprehensive treatments of the topic, brought together the work of scholars investigating evidentiality in a number of non-European languages. This work covered languages as diverse as Northern Iroquoian (Mithun, 1986) Tibetan (DeLancey, 1986) and Chinese Pidgin Russian (Nichols, 1986), many of which encode evidentiality in a system of suffixes. Also in that volume, Chafe (1986) wrote one of the first substantive analyses of evidentiality in English. Taking as the object of study the differences between written and spoken English, Chafe outlines three notions central to the concept of evidentiality: degree of reliability of information, modes of knowing and matching of expectations. First, he notes that speakers and writers both seem to be aware that some bits of knowledge are more reliable than others, and they routinely encode that in their talk. In English, this is encoded by adverbs (e.g., *maybe*, *certainly*), modal verbs (e.g., *might*, *may*) and, in written

language, by adverbs which indicate reliability in some statistical sense (e.g., *generally*, *primarily*). Chafe notes that a second dimension with which speakers and writers are preoccupied at some level is that of *modes of knowing*. He outlines several of these modes and provides example utterances for illustration. The words in italics are those linguistic elements which encode the mode of knowing. These are reproduced in part below (Chafe, 1986, pp. 262-269):

- | | |
|---------------------|---|
| a. Belief | <i>I think</i> that a lot of the time I've been misjudging her. |
| b. Induction | It <i>must have been</i> a kid. |
| c. Sensory Evidence | <i>I hear</i> her taking a shower. (more reliable)
<i>She looks like</i> she's asleep. (less reliable) |
| d. Hearsay Evidence | They were using more verbs than English speaking kids <i>have been said</i> to learn. |
| e. Deduction | Adults <i>presumably</i> are capable of purely logical thought. |

A third epistemological consideration that is frequently encoded in the speech and writing of English speakers has to do with how speakers' (and writers') knowledge aligns with expectations. In those cases where the alignment is imperfect, Chafe notes, speakers and writers typically hedge by using markers such as "sort of," "kind of," and "about" (examples are from Chafe):

Example 2.05 Chafe

- a. And they tend to be *sort of* farmer kinds of people.
- b. ...a Mohawk community *about* 30 miles from Montreal.

Expectations are also encoded in English. Chafe cites "of course" and "oddly enough" as two examples of linguistic markers that encode alignment and disalignment (respectively) with expectations.

Chafe's work provides a general survey of some of the ways in which speakers and writers overtly signal epistemic stance with regard to information that is in play in text or conversation. Other scholars have taken this further. Biber and Finegan (1988) looked at adverbial stance types in English; Biber and Finegan (1989) expanded their investigation to include adjectives, modals and verbs.

Other work in evidentiality and stance has included comparisons of British and American English and the ways in which evidentiality and affect are influenced by a culture's norms (Precht, 2003); gender differences in the expression of stance (Precht, 2008); and the construction of stance in academic writing (Charles, 2006).

In a related but separate thread of research, functional linguists and speech act theorists (e.g., Tsui, 1992; Huddleston, 1994; Noh, 1998; Beun, 2000; Gunlogson, 2003; and Poschmann, 2008) have also investigated epistemics in language use. Much of this work has been concerned with question format and how non-interrogatively-formatted questions (e.g., declarative questions with rising intonation) do questioning. To the extent that questions can be viewed as a primary epistemic interface, embodying often by the mere act of questioning differential epistemic statuses between interlocutors (Raymond, 2010a), this work has implicitly addressed epistemics by investigating the knowledge states encoded by different question formats in an attempt to understand the *function* that the question carries out in conversation. Three of these studies will be briefly discussed in the following section with special attention given to the role of epistemics in the phenomena reported.

Tsui's (1992) primary interest is to clarify what is meant by the term *question*. Offering a critique of prior technical definitions of the term, she proposes the alternate term, *elicitation*, and outlines six subtypes of elicitation differentiated by the type of response each evokes. The six

subtypes are *elicit:inform*, *elicit:confirm*, *elicit:agree*, *elicit:commit*, *elicit:repeat* and *elicit:clarify*. Furthermore, she notes that a given type of elicitation can be realized by a variety of grammatical formats, thus pointing out the lack of one-to-one correspondence between grammatical format, such as the interrogative, and the function of an utterance as a question.

Tsui's analysis hinges, in some cases, on the knowledge states of the speakers and their recipients. This is most clear in her discussion of the subtype *elicit:confirm*, in which she makes the claim that elicitation that evoke confirmations “express... what the speaker assumes to be true and the speaker is inviting the addressee to confirm that his assumption is true” (Tsui, 1992, p. 105). She gives the following examples to illustrate this point:

Example 2.06 Tsui

- a. JOHN would know, would he?
- b. Yeah, John would know.

Example 2.07 Tsui

- a. These ARE students in the ENGLISH department
- b. That's right, they're all English majors.

In each of these cases, Tsui remarks, the “the addressee has better knowledge of the subject matter than the speaker. Hence they realize the function of seeking confirmation from the addressee” (p. 105).³ Citing Brazil (1985), she concludes that “the discourse function of an utterance depends not only on the intonation, but also on the situation and *who knows what*” [italics added] (Tsui, 1992, p. 105). Though interesting, Tsui's study does not focus on the specific ways in which these knowledge claims are made by participants, nor on the courses of action that the various functions may be implicated in.

³ One potential problem with this analysis is the lack of explication of how we can know that the addressee has more information than the speaker, and although it may be possible to derive this understanding from a more thorough analysis of the responses given by the recipients, such an analysis is not undertaken. On its face, however, Tsui's analysis appears to identify an action that such questions in fact do, and this issue will be taken up in Chapter 4 of the present study.

Taking an experimental approach, Beun (2000), in a study of Dutch, investigated the relationship between the speaker's degree of certainty about the propositional content of an utterance and the use of the declarative question format. In the first of two experiments, subjects were asked to read a dialog between an information seeker and an information provider. Subjects were then asked to focus on one target utterance that the investigator provided in both the declarative and interrogative format; next, the subjects guessed whether the format of an utterance that had originally been used by the speaker was declarative or interrogative. Beun found a significant association between the use of the declarative format and the estimated degree of certainty attributed to the speaker by his subjects. This finding was consistent with the results of Beun's second experiment, wherein the subjects were asked to judge the certainty of a speaker with respect to the information contained in the utterance. Again, he found a significant relationship between the use of the declarative format and the degree of certainty that a subject attributed to the speaker. Beun reported, however, that other contextual elements can affect the use of the declarative, noting that a shift in topic may cause a decrease in the use of declarative although the certainty of the speaker was judged to be high; in addition, he noted that politeness rules may play a role in the continued use of a declarative in a context where certainty about the content is reduced.

Beun's discussion of epistemics is explicit in his analysis, particularly in his discussion of the speaker's certainty. In carrying out his study, Beun posited that a speaker's certainty might be derived from any of several sources, namely, literal mention in the prior talk, presupposition based on the previous utterance, implicature, or the speaker's world knowledge (Beun, 2000). Although he does not mention epistemics or knowledge states in those precise terms, the analysis is clearly grounded in the epistemic statuses of the participants. However, unlike the present

study, Beun does not explicitly address the specific actions that a given epistemic stance may be doing. Beun's study also employs an experimental methodology that might be expected to bring into focus different results than a qualitative study such as the current analysis might yield.

Looking at the role of intonation in declarative questions, Gunlogson (2003) makes reference to the epistemic status of speakers and hearers via the notion of speaker and hearer *commitment*. In her study, Gunlogson's analyzes the differences among sentences such as:

Example 2.08 Gunlogson

- a. Is it raining?
- b. It's raining?
- c. It's raining.

(Gunlogson, 2003, p. 3)

Using a minimal pair methodology, Gunlogson demonstrates that the questioning function in English is produced by the interaction of sentence type, intonation and context, and explicates the restrictions that govern the use of declaratives with rising intonation (such as in (b)) as questions. She begins her analysis by noting that (a) and (b) are minimal pairs that differ only with regard to grammatical format (interrogative vs. declarative); rising intonation in this pair is held constant. Utterances (b) and (c), on the other hand, are also a minimal pair; however, they share the same grammatical format while differing in intonation contour. This sets up a natural contrast between interrogatives, on the one hand, and declaratives (whether rising or falling), on the other.

Gunlogson finds that declaratives such as (b) and (c) differ from interrogatives because they embody a contextual bias in that they commit participants (either the speaker, in the case of falling declaratives, or the hearer, in the case of rising declaratives) to the proposition contained in the utterance, whereas interrogatives are neutral with respect to commitment. Thus, she notes, in her discussion of declarative bias, that declaratives are infelicitous "in contexts where the Speaker is expected to maintain an attitude of neutrality or ignorance" (Gunlogson, 2003, p. 16).

She gives a variety of contexts in which the declarative would not be an appropriate question format (as denoted by “#” in the extracts that follow), for example, on tax forms, in guessing games and as exam questions – all contexts in which the individual posing the question would be expected to take a neutral or ignorant stance, as in the example below:

Example 2.09 Gunlogson

As an exam question:

- a. Is the empty set a member of itself?
- b. #The empty set is a member of itself?
- c. #The empty set is a member of itself.

(Gunlogson, 2003, p. 16)

She offers as further evidence the observation that “rising declaratives, unlike interrogatives, don’t work well to solicit advice or an opinion” (p. 17), since the opinion of the interlocutor is, by definition, unknown to the speaker. This can be seen in the following example:

Example 2.10 Gunlogson

What do you think?

- a. Should I cut my hair?
- b. #I should cut my hair?
- c. #I should cut my hair.

(Gunlogson, 2003, p. 17)

Declaratives therefore are not neutral because they are not uninformative, according to Gunlogson’s analysis. However, she notes, rising and falling declaratives do indeed differ with respect to the commitment they express to the proposition expressed in the utterance. Falling declaratives express commitment on the part of the speaker, while rising declaratives express commitment on the part of the addressee. She notes:

A second crucial observation about the distribution of rising declaratives is that they are far more natural as questions than their falling declarative counterparts...rising declaratives pattern in certain ways with the corresponding rising interrogatives, differing from falling declaratives. The generalization advanced is that rising declaratives, like interrogatives, fail to commit the Speaker to their propositional content (Gunlogson, 2003, p. 22).

This can be seen in the following example:

Example 2.11 Gunlogson

A's utterance

a. The king of France is bald.

B's response:

a. Is France a monarchy?

b. France is a monarchy?

c. #France is a monarchy.

(Gunlogson, 2003, p. 4)

Here, Gunlogson claims, the declarative with falling intonation is a poor fit as a response, whereas the interrogative (a) and rising declarative (b) are both appropriate, since they have in common the fact that they express that the propositional content of the utterance is newsworthy to the speaker. The difference between (a) and (b) as responses is that (b) expresses commitment on the part of the addressee; that is, it expresses that the information contained in the utterance is something the addressee is already publicly committed to, presumably by virtue of what the addressee has just said. Gunlogson calls this the *Contextual Bias Condition* and formalizes the observation as follows:

Contextual Bias Condition: Rising declaratives can only be used as questions in contexts where the Addressee is already publicly committed to the proposition expressed (Gunlogson, 2003, p. 6).

As can be seen in this example, A's utterance "the king of France is bald," contains the presupposition that France is a monarchy and thus commits A to that proposition, making utterance (b) a possible, though not obligatory, utterance in this context.

It is readily apparent that Gunlogson's study relies heavily on a notion of the knowledge states of the speaker and hearer, though she does not address knowledge states explicitly, nor is there an attempt to control for them or examine how knowledge claims (Gunlogson's "commitment") are made in interaction. Furthermore, the actions made possible by the varying

knowledge claims embodied in the grammatical formats she discusses are not a focus of her study. The present study differs from Gunlogson's in that knowledge claims (and their underlying epistemic states) are a primary focus, since, I argue, they constitute a primary resource deployed by participants in interaction for the construction of action in talk-in-interaction.

Kamio's (1997) notion of *territory of information* (TOI) provides a compelling theoretical account for how participants' knowledge states are implicated in interaction. The basis of this theory, which is elaborated for both English and Japanese, is the notion that, like the geographical territories that animals carve out for themselves in the wild, humans also carve out "territories" – not of geography, but of information – that "belong" to them, as well.⁴ That is, for a given a piece of information, that information may fall, relatively speaking, more *within* a speaker's territory or more *outside* of a speaker's territory and, in many cases of the latter, within the recipient's territory. This distinction appears similar to the notions outlined by Raymond (2003) of *rights* to information and *access* to information, where information to which the speaker has primary epistemic *rights* (e.g., information about his or her emotions, mental states and/or activities) can be said to fall *within* his or her territory of information (using Kamio's terminology). On the other hand, speakers can have *access* to information that they do not necessarily hold primary epistemic rights to; that is, a person may know something, without having that piece of information fall within his or her territory of information. Indeed, Kamio notes that knowing information and having it in one's territory are two different things:

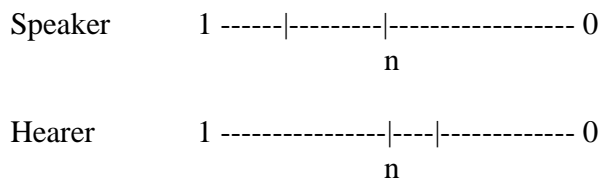
⁴ The notion of "territory of information" is reminiscent of the concept of "information preserve," elaborated by Goffman (1971). Goffman defined an individual's information preserve as "[t]he set of facts about himself to which an individual expects to control access while in the presence of others" (pp. 38-39). According to Goffman, two particular types of information preserve refer to "the content of the claimant's mind," and "biographical facts about the individual over the divulgence of which he expects to maintain control" (p. 39). Both of these appear to fall within Kamio's concept of "territory of information."

...[H]aving or knowing information and having it in one's territory must be distinguished for the moment. The former simply means having information in one's general storage of information. In contrast, the latter means that within one's general storage of information there is a conceptual category called the territory of information....[t]hus, the set of information which falls into one's territory of information is a subset of information known to him/her" (Kamio, 1997, p. 16).

We can note that within Kamio's framework, having rights to information presupposes access to the information; however, having access to information does not presuppose that one has rights to it.

To further develop the construct, Kamio posits the existence of two "linear psychological scales" (Kamio 1997, p. 17), one each for the hearer and speaker, which measure the distance of a piece of information from the hearer or speaker. This is illustrated in Figure 2.05:

Figure 2.05. Speaker's and hearer's psychological scales (Kamio, 1997, p. 17)



In Figure 2.05, the information on the point marked with a vertical line is "closer" to the speaker than to the hearer; therefore, that information falls into his or her territory of information.

Kamio's theory postulates that:

There are two conceptual categories called the speaker's and the hearer's territories of information. A given piece of information that is closer to the speaker than n belongs to the speaker's territory of information, and that which is closer to the hearer than n belongs to the hearer's territory of information, where n is a specified value between 1 and 0 and designates the outer boundary of both territories (Kamio, 1997, p. 17).

Kamio further posits that, in English, the following types of information, which he calls

“conditions,” fall within a given speaker's TOI. Kamio explicates each as follows:

1. Information obtained through the speaker/hearer's internal direct experience (e.g., pain, emotions, memories and beliefs);
2. Information embodying detailed knowledge which falls into the speaker's/hearer's professional or other expertise;
3. Information obtained through the speaker's/hearer's external direct experience (including information conveyed to him/her verbally that he/she considers reliable and information obtained through the five senses); and
4. Information about persons, objects, events and facts close⁵ to the speaker/hearer including information about the speaker/hearer him/herself (such as plans, behavior and his/her geographical relations).

(Kamio, 1997, p. 18)

⁵ A further problem with the notion of closeness is the circular nature of the definition that Kamio presents. In his discussion of the speaker's and hearer's scales, he notes that “each [scale] contain[s] information close to the speaker/hearer....” He later goes on to explain the conditions that determine whether a piece of information is “close” to the speaker/hearer by saying “there are general conditions which determine the location of information on the speakers' or the hearer's scale.” What constitutes close is clearly explained in Conditions 1 – 3; however, Condition 4 is then elaborated as “information about persons, objects events and facts close to the speaker/hearer, including information about the speaker/hearer him/herself” (1997, p. 18). This formulation exhibits a certain circularity of definition which obscures crucial distinctions between what it means to have epistemic rights to information, on the one hand, and having access to information to which one does not have primary epistemic rights, on the other. The information contained in Kamio's Conditions 1 and 2 appears to constitute what I will call having *epistemic rights*. It is information that a speaker comes to know as part of his or her internal direct experience, e.g. emotions, memories, physical states and beliefs (Condition 1), and professional or other expertise (Condition 2). Information that the speaker has come to know by being told or that the speaker has obtained through external and direct experience e.g., information that is gathered through the five senses or information conveyed to the speaker/hearer which he/she considers reliable (Condition 3) seem to fall under the category of *epistemic access*. The present study proposes that differences between rights and access must be taken into account in such analyses if we are to arrive at an understanding of how epistemics functions in interaction.

He notes that 1-4 above are true for English, but further notes that the portion of 3 which includes information conveyed verbally to the speaker that the speaker considers reliable does not fall into the speaker's TOI in Japanese.

Demonstrating how these conditions relate to declarative sentences, Kamio indicates that only the direct form (i.e., non-hedged, or what Fox (2001) calls the "zero-marked" form) of a declarative statement can be applied to information based on direct, internal experience, as hedging indexes that the information falls outside of the speaker's TOI. Thus, sentences like (a) and (b), below, are infelicitous, as denoted by the asterisks:

Example 2.12 Kamio

- a. *I seem to be nauseated.
- b. *I seem to feel lonely.

(Kamio, 1997, p. 18)

Kamio also brings in a number of metaconditions which obtain after the four initial conditions above. These are:

- a. Information meeting conditions [2, 3, and 4] is considered less close to the speaker/hearer if he/she does not have an adequate basis for asserting it.
- b. Information whose accessibility to the speaker/hearer is low is considered less close to him/her.

(Kamio, 1997, p. 20)

These metaconditions can modify where information falls with regard to a speaker's TOI, and Kamio outlines several cases in which various knowledge states obtain between speaker and hearer, resulting in the use of a variety of different grammatical structures which correspond to the various combinations of knowledge states.⁶

⁶ Though Kamio's analysis is interesting, further discussion of the details of his analysis is beyond the scope of the present study. Readers are referred to Kamio (1997) for a comprehensive discussion of this matter.

2.4. Overview of the studies

In the aggregate, the studies presented thus far from the fields of linguistics and discourse analysis provide a useful point of departure for understanding the ways in which utterances are understood to be within a speaker's epistemic domain; however, some of the assumptions and methodologies on which such work is based are problematic for gaining a clear understanding of how epistemics functions in actual interaction.

A first observation is that the utterances upon which many of these works base their findings appear to be idealized utterances that are not drawn from or examined within a specific context; even more importantly, perhaps, they are isolated from the type of sequential environment in which they would appear in ordinary talk. In rare cases where a context is specified, it is often underspecified and created in an idealized form by the analyst (e.g., Gunlogson's (2003) Contextual Bias Condition). This limits the scope of the observations that can be made about them, particularly about the types of actions that they do. As Heritage and Maynard (2006a) note:

The production and understanding of an utterance as an action derives from *features of the social context*, most especially an utterance's place in an organized sequence of talk. Sequencing is what conversation analysts regard as an utterance's fundamental context (p. 10).

This lack of specific context gives rise to a reliance on a notion of "naturalness" as defined by the analyst, which is problematic, especially when utterances are presented in isolation. Thus, observations which characterize certain utterances "marginal" (as in statements such as "You are nauseated,"⁷ which index the internal state of someone other than the speaker) can be questioned. As will be seen, the present analysis demonstrates that such statements occur

⁷ Kamio (1997) calls these types of utterances, which refer to internal emotional and physical states, "psychological utterances." As "psychological utterances," (in Kamio's framework) they are more aptly uttered using the pronoun "I" as the subject.

regularly in ordinary talk, and rather than being marginal, are instead doing particular actions in particular contexts. It is further demonstrated that these actions depend in large part on the epistemic stance that the turns at talk display.

The lack of context that characterizes such studies can also have deleterious effects on the conclusions reached. An example is the distinction that Kamio makes between “closeness” and what he terms the “epistemological problem of other minds.” For Kamio, these two constructs are not necessarily related. Thus, although in the above example (“you are nauseated”) the utterance’s supposed marginality does indeed arise from a problem of “other minds,” Kamio notes that most English psychological utterances, “have nothing to do with the epistemological problem of other minds,” (1995, p. 258) but are instead governed by the notion of the speaker’s “closeness” to the information. Kamio notes “...what is really relevant to the availability of English psychological utterances in the direct form is whether the information they express is sufficiently close to the speaker to fall within his/her territory of information (Kamio, 1995, p. 258). Thus, he gives the example of a defense attorney, who, speaking to the judge about his client might utter sentences such as those in (a) and (b):

Example 2.13 Kamio

- a. He was totally unaware of that fact then.
- b. He now feels very guilty about it.

According to Kamio, the defense attorney does not need to be “close” to the defendant in order to make such statements (Kamio’s Condition 4), nor does he need to actually believe the statements. Instead, Kamio attributes the felicitousness of these statements to Condition 2 about professional expertise, which places the information “deep within the attorney’s territory of information.”

An examination of the context in which such utterances occur and the ways in which such utterances come to fall within the attorney’s TOI provide the analyst with significant insight

into how such utterances work. First, these utterances appear in a context where the actual experiencer of the feelings, the defendant, has limited rights to speak on his or her own behalf. It is thus the duty of the attorney within this context to speak for the defendant, that is, to act as “animator” for the defendant, who is, in turn, the “principal,” or the person whose beliefs are being represented (see Goffman, 1981 for a more complete discussion of the concepts of *animator*, *author* and *principal* in conversation). Understanding the attorney’s role as the animator of the information expressed in the utterance rather than as the author is crucial in understanding how it is possible for the attorney to speak about the defendant’s inner states in this way. While it may be true that attorneys’ professional roles allow them to be “closer” to their clients than perhaps the judge is, it is clearly not because he is “close” to his client that he can make these statements. Rather, these statements can be made because the defendant, who has primary epistemic rights to the information at hand, putatively made them to the attorney (i.e., gave the attorney access) and therefore made them using a direct format. The attorney then, now having access to the information and acting as animator for the defendant in a socially-sanctioned role, also uses the direct form. It is therefore not closeness but epistemological concerns mediated by socially-sanctioned institutional practices which allow for such statements.

Despite the issues raised here, these studies are a useful starting point for further research into the workings of epistemics in talk-in-interaction. It seems clear that speakers register differences in the epistemic statuses of participants, and the practices they deploy index these differences. However, much remains to be learned about the relationship between epistemics, grammar and action. The current study seeks to extend our knowledge of epistemics and grammatical formulation by providing an empirical, rather than merely theoretical, account of how participants’ knowledge states are implicated in their talk and how the knowledge states

indexed in talk allow participants to formulate particular actions. The perspective taken here views grammar and epistemics as fundamental elements of interaction, and in adopting this perspective, builds on a growing body of work that views epistemicity as an overwhelmingly situated, interactive phenomenon that must be investigated in the context of naturally-occurring talk. In the following section, a number of context-driven studies taking into account the interactive nature of epistemicity will be discussed.

2.5. Interactional studies/Conversation analysis

As discussed above, most earlier work addressing epistemics has focused on sentential, semantic or functional mechanisms of language per se, or as part of a lone speaker's mental apparatus; however, in more recent years, scholars interested in interaction have investigated how knowledge is lodged in interaction. Kärkkäinen (2003), an interactional linguist, investigated epistemic markers such as modal verbs (e.g., *would, must, might, could*), epistemic phrases (e.g., *I think, I don't know, looks like*) and epistemic adverbs (e.g., *probably, maybe*) in naturally-occurring conversation and found their use to be grounded in and motivated by interactional concerns. This is in contrast to earlier discourse analytic studies (cf., Chafe, 1986), which had treated epistemic markers as reflecting a lone speaker's mental state or view of the world, unconnected to a larger interactional context. In her study, Kärkkäinen found that 1) the expression of epistemic stance is highly routinized, and 2) stance-taking is "an emergent interactive activity" (p. 16). According to Kärkkäinen, the highly-routinized nature of the marking of epistemic stance is evidenced by the fact that speakers of English tend to select from among a relatively small number of epistemic markers and therefore use the same markers with great frequency. This results in some markers (e.g., *I think* and *I don't know*) fulfilling a large

number of functions in interaction. Another piece of evidence for the highly-routinized nature of epistemic marking, Kärkkäinen notes, is that speakers of English have a preference for turn-initial rather than turn-final epistemic markers. Likewise, she claims that speakers of English prefer certain markers over others; for example, personalized, subjective markers (e.g., *I think*, *I believe* and *I guess*) occurred much more frequently in her data than impersonalized markers (e.g., *It is certain/likely*; *There is a likelihood*).

Despite this aspect of routinization, Kärkkäinen notes, stance-marking appears to arise from interactional concerns. For example, Kärkkäinen found that placing an epistemic stance marker such as “I think” in turn-initial position establishes the speaker’s stance early in the turn, thus allowing recipients to interpret the unfolding utterance as expressing a certain stance. Such a placement of the stance marker “helps recipients to align themselves to the unfolding utterance...” (p. 183). She also found that stance marking allowed speakers to manage various contingencies that arise during an interaction, including, for example, “managing routine trouble spots, engaging in more strategic recipient design, [and] pursuing uptake or signaling completion of one’s turn at talk” (p. 183).

Focusing specifically on the epistemic marker *I think*, Kärkkäinen found that, contrary to the findings of earlier studies which viewed *I think* as indexing a tentative stance, *I think* fulfilled multiple interactional functions in intonation unit-initial (IU-initial) position. Specifically, she identified three different functions of the marker, the last two of which are particularly relevant to the current study in that they index the epistemic status of the participants involved.

In the first instance, she found that *I think* in intonation unit-initial position serves to frame the remaining information to which it is attached such that it “marks a boundary of some

kind in the talk” (p. 121). An example of this can be found in “asides,” as can be seen from this example from Kärkkäinen (2003, p. 123):

Example 2.14 Kärkkäinen

10 ...Well anyway,
11 they were on the rack.
12 And uh,
13 I wanted to order that muumuu
14 -> I think it was around twenty-nine dollars,
15 or something like that,
16 and two pairs of short pajamas.
17 one for Sam
18 and one for me.

Kärkkäinen argues that in such instances, *I think* functions as “part of a frame created by the speaker to highlight that the [information introduced by *I think*] comes as extra information inserted in the main story line, and something that the other participants should keep track of for later use” (p. 123).

A second way that “I think” functions is to routinely bring in the speaker’s perspective.

Very frequently in the data, *I think* occurs in certain sequential positions, namely in second-pair parts of adjacency pairs, where the current speaker perceives some minor interactional trouble in the preceding turn. *I think* locates and *routinely attends to that trouble* in the current turn, by marking specifically that the *current speaker’s perspective will follow* (Kärkkäinen, 2003, p.130).

She offers the example of a speaker who brings in a different perspective from that which was offered in the immediately-preceding turn:

Example 2.15 Kärkkäinen

(Talking about a child whose broken leg has healed quickly)

05 H: He healed very quickly
06 J: Guess kids bones, just like grow back really fast.
07 P: Mhm
08 H:-> Yeah I think they’re really soft to start with.
09 J: They’re made of rubber.
10 H: That’s why b-little kids usually don’t break their legs anyway.

In line 7, she notes that H’s perspective on children’s bones differs slightly from that of J, who has forwarded the notion that children’s bones grow back quickly. H, on the other hand, has a

competing interpretation: children's bones are really soft (line 8), and as a result, they don't usually break their legs (line 10). Kärkkäinen notes:

It is...possible to argue that *I think* is not really marking uncertainty or doubt here, and rather than marking that the claim made is an opinion of the speaker (which it does not really seem to be anyway, since the speaker is making an assessment based on general cultural knowledge), it seems to express that the current speaker orients to the assessment offered in the prior turn as not quite accurate and that he is about to bring in a slightly different slant to it (p. 132).

A final function of *I think* that Kärkkäinen points out, and one which will be discussed at some length in Chapter 3 of the present study, is the use of *I think* to deal with trouble spots in the interaction, especially those which occur with regard to the recipient. In such utterances, *I think* can be used to pursue alignment from a recipient whose alignment could threaten the recipient's "face," (Brown and Levinson, 1978; 1987). Kärkkäinen offers the following illustration from a conversation where the participants are discussing the growing of basil:

Example 2.16 Kärkkäinen

08 D: Isn't [that] what you gave the neighbor one time?
09 S: [I-]
10 D: You gave him [some kind of herb]
11 S: [Did I give him some]
12 I gave him a red pepper.
13 D: I think y—I think you gave him...some...herb of some [kind
14 S: [I may have
15 given-given him some basil.

(Kärkkäinen, 2003, p. 147)

Kärkkäinen notes in this example that D's utterance "I think y= I think you gave him...some...herb of some kind," (line 13) coming as it does after S's statement that she had given the neighbor a red pepper, constitutes a threat to S's face because she is "telling the recipient something that she should already know but does not recall" (p. 147). Kärkkäinen differentiates this from the second function of "I think" (i.e., the introduction of the speaker's perspective) and notes that it is doing more than merely personalize the counter-argument being made. It is, in fact, an explicitly face-threatening act, an observation based on the fact that it

occurs in a turn that occupies first position in an adjacency pair and the fact that “it appears in an environment where the speaker is making an assertion about a coparticipant’s past actions, which may potentially constitute a high face threat to that participant: she may thereby be portrayed as forgetful of her own actions” (p. 148).

What Kärkkäinen seems to be addressing here in her third example is clearly a question of epistemic domain, though she does not say so explicitly. It is, however, the claim of the current study that it is the encroaching of utterances such as these on the epistemic domain of the recipient that prompts the use of *I think* since *I think* allows the speaker to comment on something that is within the epistemic domain of the recipient by transferring it, albeit in a superficial way, to the speaker’s domain (i.e., via reformulating the turn as something speaker, rather than the recipient, thinks). This phenomenon, which I have called “A-perspectivizing,” following Labov and Fanshel’s (1977) discussion of A- and B-event statements, will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 3.

Kärkkäinen’s study is of special relevance to the present study. In her analysis, she has examined the intersection of action and epistemics; however, the role she attributes to epistemics is implied, and to the extent that it is not discussed explicitly, marginalized in terms of its importance to our understanding of how participants accomplish actions in talk-in-interaction. Furthermore, she focuses on the single discourse marker “I think,” whereas the current study focuses on a wider range of declarative sentence constructions and thereby examines the interaction of grammar and epistemics in the doing of actions in conversation.

Kärkkäinen’s attention to interaction resonates with a series of seminal papers by Goodwin (1979, 1981, 1987) in which he investigated epistemics as a locally-situated

phenomenon lodged within the interaction of two or more participants. Taking note of the difference between traditional linguistics and interactional approaches, Goodwin (1979) states:

..in traditional linguistics it has been assumed that the analysis of sentences can be performed upon examples isolated from the process of interaction within which they naturally emerge. The analysis presented here has argued, to the contrary, that the sentence actually produced within a particular turn at talk is determined by a process of interaction between speaker and hearer. Their collaborative work in constructing the turn systematically modifies the emerging structure of the sentence....Insofar as this is the case, the procedures utilized to construct sentences are, at least in part, interactive procedures (Goodwin, 1979, p. 112).

In his analysis, Goodwin (1979) introduced the terms “knowing recipient” and “unknowing recipient” and found that participants, who may address several people over the course of an utterance, maintain a refined orientation to the epistemic statuses of their recipients. Specifically, Goodwin notes that changes in recipient and recipient knowledge state are accompanied by changes in the turn's composition even in the course of the same utterance. His analysis focused on the ways in which a speaker in a given instance modified an initial characterization of an event so that it became “news” to a recipient with shared knowledge of the event. In this study, Goodwin examined one speaker’s, John’s, turn at talk and the shifts in his gaze at varying points during the turn. Initially, as can be seen in the excerpt below, John’s gaze was directed at Don, a guest at his house and an unknowing recipient (brackets denote the point during the talk at which the speaker begins gazing at the recipient.).

John: . . . , Don . . . Don
 I gave, I gave u_p smoking c_igarett_es:: =

Don: = Yea:h,

John: . . . Beth . . . Ann
 I-uh: one-one week ago t'da:y. acshilly

(Goodwin, 1979, p. 99)

Here we can see that while the speaker is saying “I gave up smoking cigarettes,” he is looking at Don, who is an unknowing recipient of this information. However, when Don’s response (“Yea:h”) does not request elaboration or express significant uptake, John’s gaze turns to John’s wife, Beth, who is a knowing recipient. However, Goodwin notes that this information (and the repair which appears to be an abandoned form of “last Monday” or some similar time formulation) is not appropriate to a knowing recipient, and he repairs the turn to discuss an anniversary – an event which may be celebrated by someone who has shared experience of the original event. This lamination of the two events, the moment of giving up cigarettes and the anniversary, makes the turn appropriate for Beth, who already knew about the original event. At the same time, the turn continues to be relevant to the original recipient, since the original event is invoked through the mention of the anniversary. In the data segment, however, Beth does not return John’s gaze; instead Ann begins to look at Beth, the ratified recipient. Goodwin notes that a recipient is supposed to look at a speaker when being addressed. Beth’s failure to do so at this point leaves John with no recipient. The search for a recipient brings John to Ann, who is looking at Beth and is thus attending to the interaction, though not as a primary recipient. Goodwin notes that at the moment that Ann is looking at Beth, John’s turn is coming to an end. At the point where he begins to look at Ann, John continues the turn past its first possible completion point by adding “ackshilly,” which gives Ann the time to shift her gaze to John and therefore fulfill the requirement that a speaker secure the gaze of his or her recipient while speaking to him or her.

Goodwin (1979) shows that the epistemic status or knowledge state of a recipient is something that speakers are attuned to. In further studies in this area, Goodwin showed that speakers may use forgetfulness or displaying uncertainty as a way of rendering an utterance

appropriate for a knowing recipient and noted that doing so allows a knowing recipient to assist the speaker in carrying out a course of action (Goodwin, 1981, 1987).

Goodwin (1987) demonstrates how displays of uncertainty indexing a missing piece of knowledge in the form of a word search are consequential to the wider interaction in a number of ways. He notes that previous accounts of conversational practices such as word searches, restarts and pauses viewed such displays as disfluencies and therefore not worthy of study. However, Goodwin's analysis reveals that such displays are in fact social phenomena with wide-reaching consequences for the unfolding interaction and for the participants engaged in it. Specifically, his analysis shows that word searches can modify the participation framework, invoke discourse identities which in turn invoke larger social identities, and alter the trajectory of the interaction, thereby furthering the speaker's projects.

A word search, by its very nature, is an attempt to fill a claimed gap in the speaker's knowledge. Goodwin notes that participants may deal with a word search in two possible ways. Through the use of gaze, a speaker may treat it as a private matter (by looking into the distance) or as a public matter (by seeking out a recipient or recipients through gaze), making relevant contributions from others present. Furthermore, by initiating a word search, the speaker makes the search the primary activity with which the interaction is concerned, and this, combined with the possible elicitation of others' participation in the search, can modify the action in which participants were previously engaged, as well as modify the participant structure of the interaction. This can be seen in Goodwin's example, a conversation between a married couple, Mike and Phyllis, and a group of their married friends (Gary, Carney, Curt and Pam):

Example 2.17 Goodwin

01 Mike: I was watching Johnny Carson one night
02 En there was a guy by the na- What was
03 that guy's name. [Blake?
04 Curt: [The Critic.
05 Mike: Blake?
06 Curt: [No.
07 Pam: [A no-
08 (0.6)
09 Mike: Rob[ert Blake?
10 Pam: [Reed?
11 (0.2)
12 Mike: Er somp'n like 'at. [=He was
13 Pam: [Robert Reed.

(Goodwin, 1987, p. 116)

Goodwin points out that the word search, initiated in lines 2-3 by Mike, becomes the main business with which the participants are concerned from lines 4-13, putting on hold a story that he had begun in line 1. It also marks a change in the participation structure, wherein a number of participants become engaged in the talk as they try to produce the name that Mike has forgotten.

Goodwin also notes that in this word search, discourse identities (viz., knowing recipient and unknowing recipient) are instantiated. At line 2, where Mike begins the word search, there is a cut-off followed by a Wh-question. It is precisely at the point where he cuts off that Mike shifts his gaze to his wife, Phyllis, thus ratifying her as next speaker. By turning his gaze to her at this point in the interaction, Mike treats Phyllis as a knowing recipient, as someone who could provide the information he is searching for. Goodwin notes: "Such discourse identities are intimately tied to, and indeed part of, the activities that are being done within the talk in which they occur" (p. 118). Discourse identities, in turn, make it possible for people to infer other larger social identities of participants. Mike's treatment of Phyllis as a knowing recipient (i.e., someone whom he knew had seen the same segment of the same late night TV show as he did) invokes her identity as his spouse.

Example 2.17a

01 Curt: The S'preme Court really screwed up.
02 (0.8)
03 Curt: I think that's terrible. I really
04 do.
05 Mike: [Well
06 Pam: [Yeah.-] I think everybody should be
07 allowed to (0.1) s:ee what they want er
08 Pam: [read what they want. Bu:t,
09 Mike: [I was watching Johnny Carson one night
10 En there was a guy
11 Phyl: [Yuh:, 'h if they wanna go t'see it, they should
12 Mike: [by the na- *What* was that guy's name. [Blake?
12 Curt: [The Critic.

In Example 2.17a, an extended version of Example 2.17, Goodwin points out that just after Mike launches his telling (lines 9-10), Phyllis (line 11) responds to a previous speaker's (Pam's) turn (line 8) whose talk is in competition with Mike's (as evidenced by the simultaneous onset of their turns in overlap in lines 5 and 6). By using the Wh-question format to initiate a word search, which is in itself an epistemic operation, Mike is able to dislodge another participant (Pam) from a competing course of action, and that, combined with the word search, allows him to win the floor in the current interaction. Thus, using the example of a word search, which is clearly an epistemic operation, Goodwin explicates the import of epistemics in social action.

Building upon Goodwin (1979, 1981, 1987), the current study seeks to extend the discussion to include a variety of other actions as well as to investigate the role of grammar in the construction of epistemic claims that in turn are deployed in specific actions.

Another seminal work which has examined epistemics from a conversation analytical perspective is that of Heritage (1984b), who discusses the particle "oh" and investigates its epistemic import in the context of informing and repair sequences. In his study, Heritage explicates the functions of "oh" by examining its sequential placement within specific sequences and by identifying specific types of turn components which regularly follow "oh" when it is deployed in naturally occurring talk.

In the context of informing, Heritage (1984b) investigates the sequential consequences of “oh” in three different types of informing sequences: straightforward informings, informing in response to a question and counterinformings. In each of these cases, he found that “oh” marked the recipient as having received information, indeed, as having undergone a change of state with regard to his or her knowledge state. In the case of straightforward informings, oh-receipts in a great majority of cases prefaced some other turn component, namely assessments, questions, and newsmarks. Heritage found that “oh”-prefaced assessments were closure-relevant (as in Example 2.19, below) whereas “oh” followed by a question or newsmark prompted more talk on the part of the initial speaker (as in Example 2.20, below).

Example 2.19 Heritage

R: And I got athletic award.
C: REALLY?
R: uh huh.=From sports club.
C: -> Oh that's terrific Roger. (assessment)

(Heritage, 1984b, p. 302)

Example 2.20 Heritage

R: I fergot t'tell y'the two best tings that
happen'tuh me t'day.
C: -> Oh super.=What were they? (question)

(Heritage, 1984b, p. 303)

Heritage notes that “oh” contrasts with “yes” and “yeah” in that the latter two are deployed as continuers in extended tellings and do not treat the talk as particularly informative, whereas “oh,” because it indicates a change of state, treats the talk as informative and in that way highlights or foregrounds significant story elements in extended tellings. Thus, Heritage notes, “oh,” when used in informings, can be used with additional turn components that either produce more talk, curtail the talk or foreground important story elements. This finding demonstrates that epistemics plays a significant role in the sequential organization of talk.

Heritage explains that “oh” also occurs in the context of question-elicited informings, as in Example 2.21, below:

Example 2.21 Heritage

J: Oh:::. Have they'ave yih visitiz g[one then,]
 V: [They've go]:ne. Yes,
 J: -> Oh: ah

(Heritage, 1984b, p. 308)

As in the the straight informings, the “oh” conveys that the prior turn has been informative. However, speakers can withhold an “oh” to propose that the proceeding information is self-evident and has not produced a change of state for the speaker:

Example 2.22 Heritage

N: Nice Jewish bo:y?
 (.)
 H: O:f cou:irse,=
 N: -> ='v cou:irse

(Heritage, 1984b, p. 310)

In question-elicited informings, the “oh” also displays an understanding that the informing has been complete; therefore, “oh” recipients (the person who is informing) may delay engaging in further talk and instead may wait for another question or simply wait before offering further information as in Example 2.23, below:

Example 2.23 Heritage

N: ='hhh Dz he 'av 'iz own apa:rt [mint?]
 H: [°hhhh] Yea:h,=
 N: =Oh:
 -> (1.0)
 N: -> How didju git 'iz number,

(Heritage, 1984b, p. 311)

Finally, in counterinformings, Heritage notes that speakers may either receipt the counterinforming with an “oh” or not, as in Examples 2.24 and 2.25, below. In those cases where the counterinformings are receipted with an “oh” (Example 2.24), the speaker treats the prior speaker’s talk as correcting the speaker’s earlier statement. In those cases where the speaker

withholds the “oh” (Example 2.25), the speaker makes a claim to have used his or her own knowledge in order to revise his or her understanding.

Example 2.24 Heritage

B: It looks like beef 'n bean curd.
(1.0)
J: Well I wan' lots of beef.
D: I think it's pork.
B: -> Oh. Pork.

(Heritage, 1984b, p. 312)

Example 2.25 Heritage

V: Where didje get to la:s' ni-ight,
(1.0)
J: La:st- I dit (0.2) I di'n't go anywhere?
(0.4)
V: W'l Andrew rang t'see if you were here,
(0.7)
J: °hh °Ohh:::. °hh Well I w'z it las' night,
(.)
J: -> Yes it w- Tha:t's right I' was la:s' nah-

(Heritage, 1984b, p. 313)

In addition to informings, “oh” is also ubiquitously deployed in the context of other-initiated repair sequences and understanding checks. In these types of sequences, “oh” is a repair receipt, as can be seen in Example 2.26, below.

Example 2.26 Heritage

1 A: Well who'r you workin' for.
2 B: °hhh Well I'm working through the Amfat Corporation
3 A: The who?
4 B: Amfah Corpora[tion]. T's a holding company.
5 J: -> [Oh

(Heritage, 1984b, p. 316)

In cases such as Example 2.26, where a speaker has asked a question (line 1) and initiated repair by identifying the problem with the response received (line 3), the “oh” indicates to the recipient that the difficulty has been resolved and thereby allows for a “mutually ratified exit from repair sequences” (p. 318). In this case, we see the epistemic token “oh” allowing participants to end sequences, acting therefore a major resource in the formation of sequences in talk.

In the case of understanding checks, “oh” is also a repair receipt, but the sequential context in which it occurs differs from that of other-initiated repair in that the speaker offers a candidate understanding of what has been said in the prior turn rather than a straight repair. This can be seen in Example 2.27, below:

Example 2.27 Heritage

1 J: Derek's home?
 2 (0.5)
 3 I: Your De[rek].
 4 J: [Ye:s m [m
 5 I: -> [Oh

(Heritage, 1984b, p. 319)

In this case, the repair initiation is an understanding check that allows its recipient to confirm or disconfirm the understanding. Upon receipt of confirmation in Example 2.25, above, the speaker says “oh,” and the sequence ends.

A final context in which “oh” appears, Heritage notes, is in those understanding checks in which the speaker wishes to show that the prior turn has been sufficient, and in those cases, the placement of the “oh” reflects a greater degree of confidence in the “oh” speaker’s understanding of the information provided earlier by the other speaker. In such cases, the speaker’s “oh” prefaces the candidate understanding, rather than deploying it after the confirmation of the candidate understanding, as was seen in Example 2.25. Thus, we see sequences such as that in Example 2.28:

Example 2.28 Heritage

1 G: He wz o:n the opposite side a' the driver ri:ght?
 2 (.)
 3 G: °with iz::°
 4 (.)
 5 M: No he w- (.) e-he wz on the sa-:me side ez the
 6 drive[r
 7 G:-> [Oh on nuh ba:ck seat?=
 8

(Heritage, 1984b, p. 321)

In line 7, G offers a candidate understanding of where the person discussed in the story was located “on nuh ba:ck seat?” This understanding is made possible by the information provided in

line 5 by his interlocutor. Rather than offering a straightforward candidate understanding, G displays confidence in his response by prefacing his understanding with “oh,” thereby indicating that the other speaker’s earlier turn had allowed him to infer the correct location of the person under discussion. As Heritage notes, “G thereby proposes its independence of subsequent confirmation and hence, his confidence in his displayed grasp of the state of affairs” (p. 321).

Heritage concludes his discussion of “oh” as an epistemic token by looking at it in the context of new topic beginnings. Heritage begins by noting that new topic beginnings can occur in two environments. In the first, the speaker announces the new topic (a news announcement), and in the second, an individual makes an inquiry about a particular topic (an itemized news inquiry) that entails the development of a new topic. Heritage demonstrates that in the context of news announcements, “oh” plus question or “oh” plus newsmark, as discussed earlier, produces more talk. However, in the case of itemized news inquiries, speakers routinely deploy “a more or less passive continuation object, most commonly ‘yes’ and ‘mm hm’” (p. 332). In the case of the news announcement, Heritage explains, the announcement is unilaterally proposed, and therefore, the recipient is not necessarily committed to the topic that the speaker has brought up. In such cases, the “oh” accompanied by a question/newsmark is necessary in order for the topic to continue since it displays a willingness on the part of the “oh” speaker to “sign on” to the topic by requesting further elaboration. On the other hand, in the case of itemized news inquiries, where a speaker has asked to be updated on a particular topic (e.g., “How is your mother, by the way?”) the speaker is already committed by virtue of having asked the question and thereby having nominated the topic him or herself. In those cases, continuers such as “Mm hm” or “yes” are sufficient to prompt further talk; in such cases, Heritage notes, the deployment of “oh” would curtail talk by marking the prior turn as having been sufficiently informative. Heritage notes:

In the context of news announcements, [freestanding “oh”] is generally insufficient to promote continuation whereas, conversely, in the case of itemized news inquiries [“oh”] may constitute a curtailing intervention in to the informing sequence...in this latter context, a free-standing “oh” receipt may be produced by a questioner who began with a gap in information and who is unaware of, or unwilling to collaborate with, an answerer’s desire to respond to the question in an elaborated or topic-generative fashion (p. 333).

Thus, Heritage demonstrates that epistemics, as it is embodied by the change-of-state token “oh,” is a central resource that speakers deploy in order to do a number of actions, such as exiting repair sequences, displaying confidence in one’s understanding of prior talk, and either curtailing or inviting a participant to elaborate on a particular topic. In doing so, this work provides a compelling demonstration of the central role that epistemics plays in talk-in-interaction.

Since Heritage’s (1984b) and Goodwin’s (1979, 1981, 1987) work on epistemics, conversation analysis has continued to investigate epistemics, with recent work being done in the area of epistemics and grammar, particularly the formulation of questions. Adding a critical dimension to the work begun by Kamio (1997), Heritage (2012) has investigated the knowledge states of participants relative to one another and has noted that the act of questioning instantiates an “epistemic gradient” between speaker and recipient such that the questioner is in a K- (knowledge minus) position, and the addressee is in a K+ position. Heritage further notes that the grammatical format of a question indexes this gradient. Thus, the three utterances (1) “Are you married?” (2) “You’re married, aren’t you?” and (3) “You’re married.” represent three distinct points on the epistemic gradient going from a K- position to a K+ position, where (1) invokes a steep epistemic gradient, embodying a claim by the speaker to know the least about the matter at hand, (2) invokes a slightly more upgraded claim to knowledge about the matter and (3) invokes a shallow epistemic gradient, embodying a much-upgraded claim to knowledge about the matter. Examination of naturally-occurring talk bears this out. Extract 2.01 provides an

example taken from a medical consultation in which a physician questions a patient about the birth of her baby:

Extract 2.01 DEC 1205

```
52 Doc: ->> Right. Did you have any problems
53         ->> with your ba:by?
54         (.)
55 Clr:      No:
56 Doc: ->> Diñ delivery was alright, was it?
57 Clr:      Ri:ght,
58 Doc: ->> Didn't have any operations, '
59 Clr:      'No,
60 Doc:      Ri:ght, it doesn't sound anything toom-
61           too serious but I'll pop in and have a look
62           at you (.) some time this evening.
```

In lines 52-53, the physician uses a full interrogative format to inquire into the birth of the patient's baby, and after a micropause receives a "no" response. He then revisits the topic by targeting a more specific phase of the birth, the delivery, in line 56, using a declarative format with a tag appended, thus indexing an upgraded claim to knowledge about the matter in question, which he has already received a putative answer to in the just-prior turn. Finally, in line 58, he issues a third inquiry about whether the birth was problematic, this time using a truncated declarative format with no tag ("Didn't have any operations,") before going on to deliver an assessment of the caller's complaint. Thus, we see in this example a progressive movement from a K- to a K+ knowledge state on the physician's part, with each successive stage indexed by a different grammatical format.

Questions such as those found in lines 56 and 58 of Extract 2.01 refer to what Labov and Fanshell (1977) have called "B events" – social facts known by a speaker's recipient, which the recipient, and not the speaker, has primary rights and obligations to know about. We can see in lines 56 and 58 that even in the absence of a straightforward interrogative format, the recipient nevertheless treats these statements as making a response conditionally-relevant. They are thus treated as questions requiring a response, and, in the above example, the physician's statements about the recipient's B events receive those responses in lines 57 and 59. The extreme degree to

which B-event statements make a response from the recipient conditionally relevant despite the lack of an interrogative format can be seen in Extract 2.02, where a reported B-event statement attributed to a non-present third party (line 2) nevertheless receives a response (line 3) from the current recipient:

Extract 2.02 Rah:12:4:ST

1 S: Okay then I was asking her and she says
2 -> you're working tomorrow as well.
3 R: -> Yes I'm supposed to be tomorrow yes,
4 S: -> Oh:::,

We see here that not only the recipient but also the speaker has treated the B-event statement as a question – in other words, as having instantiated an epistemic gradient — as evidenced by the change-of-state token (Heritage, 1984b) issued by the speaker in line 4, displaying that the speaker has gone from a K- to a K+ state with regard to the information being discussed.

Other work on epistemics and question formulation has focused on how participants invoke and maintain situationally-relevant social identities through practices that index participants' orientations to variation in the participants' *access* to knowledge on the one hand, and in the participants' *rights* to claim access to that knowledge, on the other. Heritage and Raymond (2005), for example, looked at assessments in first and second position and examined how participants' rights to offer evaluations are indexed within the talk. They found that participants work to manage the relationship between rights to assess, on the one hand, and the sequential position of the assessment, on the other, by manipulating the design of the terms out of which their assessments are built.

Heritage and Raymond found that participants used evidentials and tag questions to downgrade first assessments when their access and/or rights to the information were not consistent with a first position assessment (i.e., the speaker didn't have primary epistemic rights and/or access to the matter being assessed). Conversely, they employed a variety of grammatical

and turn-compositional elements, including negative interrogatives and oh-prefacing, to upgrade second position assessments when their epistemic authority warranted it.

Building on this work, Raymond and Heritage (2006) also looked at the resources used by participants to mark epistemic authority and subordination in ordinary conversation and found that as participants negotiate rights to information on a moment-by-moment basis, it is largely through the deployment of these epistemic resources that participants construct their interactional identities with regard to one another and the information being discussed. Understanding practices such as these, the authors note, is essential to understanding how identities are “produced and reproduced in specific episodes for interaction” and “...provides a window into how the complexity of social structure is produced and reproduced through actual conduct” (Raymond and Heritage, 2006, p. 701).

Bringing this work on epistemics to bear on the grammatical formulation of questions, Raymond (2010a) examined interactions between new mothers and health visitors (community nurses) in Great Britain, looking specifically at how health visitors’ use of Yes/No interrogatives⁸ (YNIs) and Yes/No declaratives invoke differing orientations with regard to who has rights to the information and who has access to the information:

[I]n deploying the alternative declarative and interrogative forms, HVs target recipients who – by virtue of some aspect of their identity or experience – know or are responsible for knowing about the matters formulated in these forms, thus deferring to their primary *rights* in the matter...(Raymond, 2010a, p. 88) [italics added].

He further notes:

[T]he use of these alternative forms varies in terms of the claimed *distribution of knowledge* between the participants, invoking alternative social relations between initiating and responding speakers, thus making different kinds of responses relevant (Raymond, 2010a, p. 88) [italics added].

⁸ Raymond (2003) notes that the term “question” can be unnecessarily confusing and thus uses the term “Yes/No Interrogative” to denote the grammatical structure, while reserving the term “question” for one of the many actions (in the same way that invitation and request are actions) that a YNI can do.

Raymond's work indicates that Yes/No initiating actions in both the declarative and interrogative forms index the recipient as holding primary *rights* to the information in question, but the two grammatical formats differ in terms of the participants' claimed *access* to the information; that is, the declarative claims that both speakers currently have or have had access to the information (though their levels of access may differ), whereas the interrogative claims that the participant who generates the question does not have access to that information:

By using the interrogative form, speakers treat the matters formulated in their initiating action as in question and thereby claim not to know the "answer" as a basis for making an answer relevant; by contrast, in using a declarative, speakers assert the matters formulated in their in their initiating action and thereby claim to know about them (or assume them or treat them as established) as a basis for making confirmation relevant. In using these forms to initiate action, speakers accountably target both (1) recipients who know (or are responsible for knowing) about the matters formulated in them....and (2) recipients who have primary rights to know because of their relationship to those matters (Raymond, 2010a: pp. 92).

Raymond further notes that these alternate formats do different actions, make different types of responses relevant from the recipient, and have different sequential consequences on the interaction.

The notions of distribution of information and rights to information can also be found in Drew (1991), who makes two critical observations. The first is that there a distinction between actual knowledge states and claims to knowledge. In his analysis of asymmetries of knowledge between conversational participants, Drew notes that while asymmetries of knowledge may exist between speakers and their recipients, asymmetry is not equivalent to "not knowing."

Investigating how patients talk about their health states, Drew notes that patients, though they have first-hand knowledge of their own health, treat medical knowledge as falling within the domain of ('belonging' to) their physicians and do so through conversational practices such as hedging and self-repair. The second observation follows naturally from this and has to do with

differing levels of knowledge and the relevance of membership categories (Schegloff, 2007b) to the claiming of knowledge:

Entitlements to knowledge are attached to, or belong to, categories – and not to persons... This has the consequence that a speaker may possess some knowledge, but nevertheless have an asymmetrical position with respect to that knowledge (Drew, 1991, p. 37).

In other words, one participant may have primary epistemic rights (or access) to information while another participant has a lesser degree of rights or access to the same information. This differs markedly from the discussion of knowledge states by Labov and Fanshel (1977), which treats A-event and B-event statements as falling either entirely into one speaker's domain or falling entirely into the other speaker's domain.⁹ Clearly, the distribution of rights and access to knowledge is a much more complex phenomenon. In carrying out this analysis, I have followed Drew (1991), Heritage and Raymond (2005), Raymond and Heritage (2006), and Raymond (2010a) in adhering to the more nuanced view of the distribution of rights and access to knowledge with an eye to adding to current accounts of the role that epistemics plays in the construction of social action.

Works such as those by Drew (1991), Heritage and Raymond (2005), Raymond and Heritage (2006) and Raymond (2010a) have understood grammar to be embedded within a social context and closely tied to the construction of social actions and identities. In much the same vein, Fox (2001) has investigated how epistemics is implicated in the specific social constructs of authority and entitlement. In her analysis, she makes two subclaims. The first is that the evidential marking used by a speaker can index the speaker's social relationship with an interlocutor. Her primary evidence for this comes from data in which a single speaker

⁹ As will be further explicated in Chapter 3, according to Labov and Fanshel (1977, p. 100), A-event statements are statements that are concerned with information that is known to A (e.g., his internal states, emotions, wants, needs, etc.) and not to B, while B-event statements are concerned with information that is known to B, but not to A. A-event statements, it should be noted, correspond roughly to Kamio's (1997) notion of "psychological utterances."

epistemically marks his or her talk differently when talking to two different recipients on different occasions about the same event. The two turns in point are reproduced in (a) and (b) in

Example 2.29, below:

Example 2.29 Fox

(a) Andrew: And apparently the old ABC was pretty generous with their money
(to recipient A on occasion 1)

(b) Andrew: whereas the ABC before were kinda loose with the money with these
projects? (to recipient B on occasion 2)

(Fox, 2001, p. 178)

She notes that although the speaker uses rising intonation in (b), it is essentially characterized by what Fox terms “zero-evidential marking” – that is, it contains no overt evidential marker, and thus constitutes an upgraded claim to know the information in question. Utterance (a), on the other hand, contains an overt evidential marker, “apparently.” The difference between these two turns stems from differences in the relationship between the speaker and the hearer, Fox notes. In (a), the speaker is talking to a person who works in the same profession as the speaker, but who has not yet been able to get a job in that profession. She notes:

“My hypothesis for why Andrew works to create this distance between himself and his new employer centers on exactly the tension that exists between Andrew and [his recipient.] Andrew has a job in his chosen profession, and [his recipient], who would like a job in the same profession, was not successful in getting such a job. It would thus be rubbing salt in the potential wound between them for Andrew to talk about his new employer as if he were fully part of the company....By distancing his own voice from that of his new employer, then, Andrew minimizes the tension over employment between himself and [his recipient] (p. 180).

She maintains, therefore, that “evidential marking...indexes social meanings and that the social meanings so indexed involve the speaker’s construction, on a particular occasion, with a particular recipient, of authority, responsibility, and/or entitlement” (p. 176).

The second subclaim supporting her observation that evidential marking indexes social meaning is derived from the observation that evidentiality is sequentially-implicated; that is, the sequential environment in which a turn at talk takes place is consequential for the epistemic stance that is taken in the turn. Some of the sequential aspects of epistemics as it relates to the grammatical format of an utterance will be more thoroughly discussed in Chapters 3, 4 and 5 of the present analysis.

Given the breadth and depth of the results gained from work such as Goodwin (1979, 1981, 1987), Heritage (1984b, 2012), Fox (2001) and Karkkainen (2003), it is not surprising that conversation analysts have begun to see an understanding of epistemics as increasingly fundamental to our understanding of human sociality. As a result, the role that epistemics plays in talk-in-interaction has received increased attention from conversation analysts in recent years. Indeed, since 2003, scholars in the field of conversation analysis have been making a collective effort to look at the role of epistemics in social action, particularly as it concerns conversational practices involved in social phenomena such as affiliation and disaffiliation. The product of this collective effort appears in Stivers, et al. (2011), an edited volume of work which focuses on epistemics as a “morally ordered” form of organization. In this volume, scholars have investigated epistemics in a variety of languages and social contexts as well as from a number of different vantage points. Mondada (2011), for example, has examined epistemics in institutional interaction. Kidwell (2011) has studied the role of epistemics in the interactions of young children. Hayano (2011) has looked at the ways in which ‘yo’-marked assessments are implicated in epistemics in Japanese. Heritage (2011) examines the role of epistemics in empathic moments in interaction, and Hakulinen and Sorjonen (2011) have investigated the role of epistemics in agreeing with negative stances. These works represent a collective effort to gain

a greater understanding of how epistemics acts as a moral force in human interaction and how it is implicated in human social life. In the following section, one representative work from this volume, Stivers (2011) will be discussed to demonstrate the general tenor of this body of work.

Stivers (2011) takes as the object of her study the marked interjection, “of course,” explicating the epistemic import and concomitant moral implications of such a formulation in response to requests for information. She notes that in question-answer sequences, the normative response is “yes,” “no,” “mmhm,” or some variation on the yes/no response. This has been noted by a number of researchers (e.g., Heritage, 1998 and Raymond, 2003), and in an earlier study, Stivers (2010) found that 77% of responses to questions were done with some variety of a yes/no answer. Marked interjections, such as “absolutely” and “of course,” Stivers notes, constitute only 1 percent of responses, and when deployed, have significantly different implications for the participants in terms of the meanings and identities they instantiate.

“Of course,” Stivers argues, challenges the askability of the question to which it responds. “Unaskable questions,” she notes, “are frequently questions that insinuate something that, based on existing epistemic access, should not be insinuated” (p.187). The stance that the question is not askable based on what the questioner already knows treats the question as morally problematic, and by answering a question with “of course,” the question recipient takes a morally superior position with regard to the asking of the question. The questioner’s epistemic access to the information contained in the question may be derived from interactional history or from general knowledge, including cultural knowledge, that the questioner possesses. This can be seen in the following extract:

Example 2.30 Stivers

14 J: =Well don't tell Bernie but I got him a hat fer his birthday.
15 S: Oh you got Bernie a hat?
16 J: Yeah.
17 (.)
18 J: 'Cause you took his. It's sort of like
19 S: ^I[didn't take his.<I paid him for it. what he paid for it.
20 J: [(m)
21 J: Oh you paid him for it.
22 S: Of ^course!
23 J: Oh:. So I got him one sortuv li:ke that.
24 S: Oh.

(Stivers, 2011, p. 89)

In this extract, J tells S that she has gotten a hat as a gift for a non-present third party and gives as her reason for doing so the fact that S had “taken” the person’s hat. Stivers notes that S responds to J’s assertion as an accusation and states that rather than taking it, he had paid for it. When J displays her understanding in declarative format that the hat had been paid for, her turn in line 21 nevertheless “treats disconfirmation as possible,” (p. 89) and therefore keeps open the possibility that he had, in fact, not paid for it. S’s “of course” response (line 22) indicates both that he *had* paid for it, and that it is impossible for one to believe that he would *not* pay for it. We can see that the response to J’s turn in line 21 is available from prior talk (line 19) (and perhaps from general knowledge that S feels J should have about S from extensive prior interaction); therefore, it can be treated as information to which J had prior epistemic access to. This treats the question that J asks in line 21 as unaskable and morally problematic, since it portrays S as someone who would take another person’s belongings rather than pay for them.

Stivers also notes that this particular meaning of “of course,” can also be seen in participants’ orientations to turns which feature the interjection. Example 2.31, below, comes from an interaction between a pediatrician, a mother and the child patient.

Example 2.31. Stivers

1 D: You guys take care. Good tuh see ya. Have uh good holiday
2 M: You to^o:.
3 D: £Buh bye. (h)£
4 (1.2)
5 D: ^Joshua=Joshua
6 (0.2)
7 D: Okay.>You (°on't) wanta sticker before you go?<
8 P: Yeah_
10 D: Of c^ourse you do:. (Yes) you can't walk out without uh
11 sticker:?,
12 (0.5)
13 D: Here you go. You can choo:se.

(Stivers, 2011, pp. 95-96)

In this case, the doctor has offered the child a sticker (line 7). In line 8, the child responds with “yes.” The physician, then, in line 10 speaks for the child using “Of course you do.” The physician’s following TCU “you can’t walk out without uh sticker:?” specifically and explicitly treats the idea that the child would leave without a sticker as unthinkable.

A final observation that Stivers makes is that deployment of “of course,” may be both socially-affiliative and socially-disaffiliative. In cases such as Example 2.30, the “of course,” can be seen as socially-disaffiliative in that it disaligns with the implication that the question recipient would take someone’s hat as opposed to pay for it. The case given in Example 2.31, on the other hand, may be seen as socially-affiliative in that it treats as unthinkable the idea that the child would not be given a sticker. The dual role that epistemics can play in socially-affiliative and socially-disaffiliative actions will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 3 of the present study.

Stivers’ research and that of her colleagues reveals the pervasive role that epistemics plays in turn formulation, action formation and social action. In this way, it is of great relevance to the current investigation, which seeks to add to this body of work by investigating the role of epistemics in questions and the formation of action.

2.6. Summary of the research

Over the past 50 years, epistemics as it relates to talk and interaction has received a great deal of attention from scholars who have viewed it from different perspectives, employing a number of different methodologies applied to a wide variety of objects of study and producing an impressive range of results. Specifically, we have seen that the early semantic treatment of studies of epistemics (e.g., Chafe and Nichols, 1986) have given way over the years to more interactionally-based, conversation analytic studies (e.g., Goodwin (1979, 1981, 1987), Heritage (1984b), Kärkkäinen (2003), Fox (2001)) that take into account larger context- and situationally-bound considerations. Other conversation analytic studies such as Heritage and Raymond (2005), Raymond and Heritage (2006), Heritage (2011, 2012), Raymond (2010a) and a series of papers appearing in Stivers, et al. (2011) have expanded our understanding of how epistemics functions in talk by investigating how grammar and epistemics interact, and further, how they interact to construct social identities.

The current study seeks to further our understanding of the role of epistemics in human social action by investigating the crucial role that grammar plays in the display of epistemic stance, and further, by examining the ways that actions are done via the deployment of epistomgrammatical resources in talk-in-interaction. In the next section, I will discuss the goals of the present study and provide an overview of the chapters that comprise this analysis.

2.7. Goals of the present study and chapter overview

The present study proposes a view of grammar as epistemically-driven. That is to say that:

1. Speakers and hearers orient to their own and to their recipients' epistemic statuses as an omnirelevant concern;

2. These statuses are grounded in each participant's territory of information (Kamio, 1995; Kamio, 1997), and the speaker's stance with respect to that information is displayed in his or her talk as an epistemic claim;
3. It is a particular epistemic claim which accounts for the deployment of a given grammatical formulation at a given moment in an interaction;
4. These grammatical formulations are highly implicated in the formation of action; and
5. These actions, underwritten as they are by grammar and epistemics, are pivotal in the establishment of social roles and identities.

To illustrate how grammar can be seen as epistemically driven, on the one hand, and relevant to action formation, on the other, each chapter in the present study examines a particular grammatical format used in questioning for its epistemic import. The intention, in looking at a variety of formats, is to demonstrate the utility of the epistemic framework (the bases of which are explicated in Chapter 3) to the analysis of grammar-in-interaction.

Chapter 3 begins by laying out some of the basic ways that epistemics functions in the formulation of declarative statements, taking A and B-event statements (Labov and Fanshel, 1977) as a point of departure. As maximally-differentiated turn types with regard to their epistemic properties, A and B-event statements yield important insights into the working of epistemics and grammar in the formation of action. In Chapter 3, I will argue for an expansion and reconceptualization of the notion of A and B-event statements in light of empirical (conversational) data and show how epistemics provides the basic framework for grammar in interaction. This will be done by demonstrating that the preferred grammatical format for conveying information about the self (A events) is the declarative, while the declarative is a dispreferred grammatical format for conveying information about one's recipient (B events).

Chapter 4 investigates interrogative and declarative formats in the context of doctor-patient interaction and explicates some of the actions that are made possible by the deployment of one question format (and epistemic claim) versus another. In addition, elliptical questions and their epistemic bases are also examined.

Chapter 5 takes tag questions as its object of study. The first half of the chapter discusses the epistemic difference between reverse polarity tag (RPT) questions (e.g., “you did your homework, didn’t you?”) and same polarity tag (SPT) questions (e.g., “you feel better, do you?”), finding that these two question formats differ with respect to who authored the information contained in the utterance. The second half of the chapter investigates the epistemic differences between RPTs with rising intonation and RPTs falling intonation, and looks at the actions these formats do. Finally, in Chapter 6, I bring together the findings discussed in the prior chapters and give suggestions for future research.

2.8. Description of the data

This dissertation draws upon several bodies of data to demonstrate how participants deploy question format as an index of epistemic status. The data encompass audio samples taken from both institutional and ordinary conversation. The data include audio recordings and transcripts of 1) health visitor-mother interactions in the UK, 2) after-hours calls to an on-call physician in the UK, 3) 911 calls recorded in a major metropolitan area in the mid-west of the United States, 4) telephone calls to a legal advice talk show from a radio station in a major metropolitan area in the western United States and 5) audio recordings and transcripts of ordinary conversations recorded over the past 30 years in the U.S. and Great Britain.¹⁰ In

¹⁰ Many thanks are due to Paul Drew, John Heritage and Emanuel Schegloff for making these data available for this study.

addition, some of the data used in this study came from the Talkbank Project (MacWhinney, 2007). It is hoped that by drawing upon a diverse data set, general principles governing epistemics and question formulation in English can be identified and explicated. The audio recordings that are used in this dissertation have been transcribed according to the transcription conventions developed by Jefferson (2004) and elaborated by Heritage and Maynard (2006b) and are well-established data sets within the fields of conversation and discourse analysis.

CHAPTER THREE

A and B events revisited: Patrolling epistemic boundaries

3.1. Introduction

As discussed in Chapter 2, little of the scholarly work done in epistemics outside of the field of conversation analysis has addressed the topic of epistemics explicitly; indeed, most studies have only implicitly acknowledged the role of epistemics in the linguistic or discursive phenomena under study. A review of the literature has shown that when epistemics does receive attention, it is often compartmentalized and restricted to a specific domain (e.g., as a semantic phenomenon), while in other studies, it has been portrayed as a psychological construct lodged within the brain of an idealized speaker-hearer. In yet other studies, epistemics has been viewed as a theoretical construct, treating only marginally the question of how the theory holds up in light of empirical data. Furthermore, the vast majority of these studies have overlooked the relationship between epistemics and the formulation of action. These various orientations have therefore yielded an incomplete understanding of how epistemics functions in both the formulation of grammar and the formation of action. Specifically, such orientations have given rise to two problems with respect to our understanding of grammar-in-interaction.

One problem is a lack of a *systematic* account for the epistemic differences among grammatical formats. The current study proposes that the grammatical format that an utterance takes is underwritten by an orientation to the epistemic circumstances of the participants in a particular interaction. Furthermore, it is this orientation that drives the production of a particular grammatical format at a given moment in interaction, and this grammatical format, underwritten as it is by an epistemic claim, plays a significant role in the formation of action.

A second problem is that the view of epistemics that emerges from these studies portrays grammar as determinative of epistemics, rather than the reverse. That is, an adverb such as “perhaps,” when inserted into a declarative utterance, “shows” the analyst that the speaker isn’t certain about the content of the proposition. In other words, the use of “perhaps,” is itself the proof of the epistemic stance taken by the speaker. In the current study, I argue that it is the epistemic stance of the speaker vis à vis the hearer that determines the grammatical format of the utterance, and that this can be determined independently of the hedge or other grammatical formulation deployed. This study thus views utterances as epistemic in the first instance, and further argues that grammatical variations in format can be explained by the epistemic circumstances of the interactive situation in which they are deployed.

This dissertation seeks to address these issues by demonstrating that epistemic status is an ongoing concern for participants engaged in interaction and that this orientation to epistemic status is consequential to the grammatical formulation (e.g., as declaratives, interrogatives or tag-questions) of turns at talk. Because grammar is a basic feature of turns at talk (Sacks, et al., 1974) and because of the role that epistemics plays in the formulation of grammar, it will be argued that epistemics is an omnirelevant issue for participants in talk-in-interaction. In this chapter, the foundation for this claim will be established by investigating two turn types that are maximally differentiated with respect to their epistemic status but which are similar with respect to their grammatical format and therefore their epistemic stance: A-event (declarative) statements and B-event (declarative) statements (Labov and Fanshel, 1977). It will be shown that A-event declaratives¹¹ (canonically speaking, those declaratives which index a speaker’s

¹¹ The terms A-event and B-event declarative will be employed in this analysis to eliminate any ambiguity that the term “statement” may introduce. Although statements are regularly understood to be declaratives, I find the more precise formulation with regard to this concept to be essential to a clear discussion of grammar and epistemics.

emotions, intentions, thoughts and personal details) are preferred, whereas B-event declaratives, in which a speaker indexes a *recipient's* emotions, intentions, thoughts and personal details, are dispreferred (See Schegloff, 2007a for a discussion of *preference* in talk-in-interaction). In other words, it will be shown that the preferred grammatical format for formulating A events is the declarative format, whereas the declarative is a dispreferred format for formulating B events. Finally, some of the actions that are deployed using A- and B-event declaratives will be discussed.

3.1.1. Overview of the chapter

The current chapter begins this discussion by investigating declarative statements about the self and about the other (discussed in other literature as A-event statements and B-event statements (Fanshel and Labov, 1977)) in order to establish the omnirelevance of epistemics in talk-in-interaction. It will do so by demonstrating that the declarative statement is a basic format for making knowledge claims, and that it is the preferred format for making claims about the self (A events). This is consistent with Fox (2001), who found that the declarative is “zero-marked” for epistemic stance; however, the claim of the current analysis is that zero-marking is specifically based on the information’s falling within in the *speaker's* epistemic territory, and explicit marking for epistemic stance (via the use of evidentials, such as “maybe” and “perhaps,” for example) occurs primarily when the speaker is talking about information which falls into the *recipient's* epistemic territory. The primary evidence that is offered for this observation is that participants rarely downgrade claims to know information that they have upgraded epistemic rights to (A events), whereas they routinely downgrade claims to know information that their recipients have upgraded epistemic rights to (B events). It will also be demonstrated that knowledge claims about recipients are subject to challenge by the participant with greater

epistemic rights to the information under discussion, and perhaps to avoid such challenges, speakers consistently deploy a variety of grammatical and paralinguistic resources to downgrade B-event declaratives. Finally, the intersection of epistemics and affiliative and disaffiliative social action in the context of B-event declaratives will be discussed, giving special attention to the case of the downgraded A-event declarative and the unmarked (neutral) B-event declarative in order to better understand how epistemics is deployed as a dynamic resource by speakers and hearers in talk-in-interaction.

The structure of this chapter is as follows: it will begin with a discussion of three notions in epistemics that form the theoretical basis this analysis: A- and B-event statements (Labov and Fanshel, 1977), the epistemic gradient (Heritage, 2012) and epistemic ecologies (Goodwin, 2010). Next, it will investigate declarative A-event formulations as the basic format for making knowledge claims, specifically as they apply to information falling into the speaker's territory of information. It will be argued that the declarative is the preferred grammatical format for making claims about A events. Then, B-event declarative formulations (B-event statements) will be examined. It will be shown that, in contrast with A-event declarative formulations, declaratives are a dispreferred grammatical format for formulating B events. Evidence for this claim includes the observation that B-event declaratives are routinely downgraded by speakers, and in this section, some of the resources that participants deploy to downgrade statements about their recipients will be identified. Furthermore, it will be shown that those B-event declaratives that are highly warrantable, i.e., underwritten by some form of access to the information targeted by the utterance by the speaker, are not downgraded. A third piece of evidence for the dispreferred status of the declarative in talk about B events that will be presented is the tendency

of recipients to resist B-event declaratives. Finally, some of the social actions permitted by departures from these normative practices will be analyzed.

This view of B-event declaratives, particularly those which are downgraded, is a marked departure from previous accounts of epistemic marking (e.g, Chafe, 1986), which argued that speakers downgrade B-event declaratives because they are uncertain. Rather, it is argued that speakers deploy epistemic downgrades in the deployment of B-event declaratives because the information contained within them falls outside of the speaker's epistemic territory. Furthermore, this view of epistemics distinguishes itself from previous accounts in that it identifies evidentials and other downgrades as part of a larger interactive phenomenon involving more than one participant rather than a cognitive phenomenon lodged within the brain of the individual.

3.2. The epistemics of A- and B-event statements: An expanded definition

The current study relies heavily on the notions of A- and B-event formulations, the origin of which is the identification of A- and B-event statements made by Fanshel and Labov (1977). The notions of an epistemic gradient (Heritage, 2012) and epistemic ecologies (Goodwin, 2010) are also central to the discussion. In this section, each of these notions will be reviewed in order to establish the analytical framework in which this analysis is based. It will be proposed that Labov and Fanshel's (1977) concepts of A- and B-event statements present a binary view of participants' knowledge states that, though useful as a point of departure, does not capture the complex epistemic processes at work in human interaction, and that other accounts are necessary in order to come to a more complete understanding of grammar and interaction.

3.2.1. A- and B-event declaratives

An often-cited heuristic for understanding how participants orient to epistemic boundaries and one that is uniquely well-suited to the current analysis is that established by Labov and Fanshel (1977), who originated the notions of A-events and B-events. This concept is formalized as follows:

- A-events: events known to A, but not to B.
- B-events: events known to B, but not to A.
- AB-events: events known to both B and A.¹²
- O-events: events known to everyone present
- D-events: events known to be disputable.

(Labov and Fanshel, 1977, p. 100)

Labov and Fanshel note that these classifications refer to social facts – that is, generally agreed upon categorizations shared by all those present. According to their model, “A-events are those that typically concern A’s emotions, his daily experience in other contexts, elements of his past biography, and so on” (p. 100). This characterization would also presumably include A’s physical internal states (i.e., how he/she feels physically) as well as information about his or her inner mental states (e.g., wants, desires and opinions). A broader interpretation of A-events would include all of the above, and, in addition, anything else that A knows that B doesn’t know, based, for example, on his daily experience in other contexts, including information about other people and their internal states and external circumstances that B does not know about or other situations that B does not know about.

In fact, demonstrating the latter point, examination of ordinary conversation reveals that participants routinely treat interlocutors as having greater epistemic rights and/or access than they themselves have to information that falls within the epistemic territory of a third party, as can be seen in Extracts 3.01 and 3.02. In 3.01, R is asking B about a third party’s age,

¹² Extensive discussion of the notions of AB-event, O-event and D-event falls beyond the scope of the present study.

presumably something that belongs within the third party's epistemic territory, properly speaking, but which B is taken by R to have greater epistemic rights and/or access to:

Extract 3.01 SBL 1-1-10-R5

05 R: ->> A:nd uh (0.3) °h Isn't she quite a young woman? only in
06 ->> her fifties?=
07 B: =↑Ye:s uh hah,

In Extract 3.02, M asks A what an absent third party wants for a gift:

Extract 3.02 Kamunsky3

95 M: ->> Oh: wut sh'd I get um.Wudiz 'e-Wudis he wa::nt.
96 A: nhh-hhu::h. Whadiz he nee:d, No.
97 M: [Ye-eah.
98 A: ['hhhh u-Okay well- this- first'v all it's cm-
combination Halloween party.

At the same time, as demonstrated in Chapter 1, participants consistently differentiate between information that falls strictly within their own epistemic domain (e.g., internal physical states, emotions, intentions and desires) and information which falls within another's epistemic domain. This can be seen in Extracts 3.03. and 3.04. In 3.03, we see a neutral A-event declarative deployed with no epistemic downgrades, where the speaker is discussing her own physical state. In 3.04, however, we see a participant deploy the downgrade "seems" in the discussion of her daughter's desire to sleep – information which falls squarely within her daughter's, and not her own, epistemic territory.

Extract 3.03 DEC 1205

06 Clr: I've (so many) pains I can hardly walk,

Extract 3.04 DEC 2107

05 Doc: .<Has she got any other:¿ is she irritable¿ or: any
06 other symptoms¿
07 Clr: No:, she seems to want to sleep a lot.

Thus, it is clear that the notions of the A- and B-event statement are useful as analytical constructs, as they appear to be constructs that participants themselves attend to; however, as we shall see, the concepts are not entirely unproblematic.

3.2.2. The epistemic gradient: A non-binary view

Labov and Fanshel's characterization of A and B events establishes a binary relationship between two values: "knowing" and "not knowing." While it is possible for a speaker to be completely knowing while his recipient is completely unknowing, it may be helpful to conceive of participants' relative epistemic states in terms of an "epistemic gradient" (Heritage, 2012), such that a speaker may have greater rights or access to information (a Knowledge + or K+ position), lesser rights or access to information (a Knowledge – or K- position) or perhaps equal rights and access to information with respect to his or her recipient. It may be more useful, then, to speak of an *epistemic gradient* between speakers, wherein one speaker may claim greater epistemic authority than another. This notion yields an alternate working definition of a B-event (declarative) statement, and it is this definition which will be used in the following analysis:

A B-event statement is a declarative statement made by A containing information that B has greater epistemic rights and/or access to or rights to formulate.

This chapter will examine some of the practices that participants deploy to make epistemic claims in the formulation of statements about themselves and about their recipients, and in particular, will look at the ways in which epistemic status works in the formation of particular actions. Before we turn to the ways in which participants formulate A and B-event statements, the following section further discusses the complex nature of epistemics in talk-in-interaction.

3.2.3. Epistemic ecologies

The graduated distribution of epistemic status discussed above may be seen as part of a larger epistemic ecology (Goodwin, 2010) that goes beyond simply "knowing" or "not knowing."¹³ Some preliminary observations about what it means for participants to "know" something will be articulated in this section. Goodwin (personal communication) notes that the

¹³ Many thanks to Charles Goodwin, who articulated many of the concepts discussed in this section during a personal communication on March 4, 2010.

state of “knowing” appears to be a dynamic rather than a static state; that is, a participant’s knowledge state may undergo change in the course of an interaction. Second, there may be different ways and degrees of knowing – knowing a person intimately vs. by sight, for example. In addition, there can be different levels of knowing and different ways of formulating knowledge. Next, examination of data shows that knowing some bit of knowledge is a *situated* phenomenon, not simply a mental state of the speaker, and finally, speakers’ knowledge may be contingent on other aspects of the interaction. Each of these will be briefly discussed in this section.

In any discussion of epistemics, it is important to note that participants’ knowledge states can undergo a change of state. A typical case of this can be seen in Extract 3.05 below:

Extract 3.05 NBIV:13:R

666 E: -> Yih quh dunt wor(.)k uh yih don't go tuh work til three:,h
 667 (0.2)
 668 L: -> Fou:r.
 669 (0.6)
 670 E: -> [Oh: f]ou:r.]
 671 L: [T'da:y]!s Sa:]turday.
 672 (.)
 673 E: ↑Aoh that's -°r*ight.°
 674 L: Ye:ah.

In Extract 3.05, speaker E has issued a B-event declarative (line 666) regarding the time at which her recipient goes to work. Her recipient corrects her in line 668 and E receipts this information in line 670 with an “Oh,” (Heritage, 1984b) that indexes her change of state. A similar example can be seen in Extract 3.06, where the speaker receipts the information with “Oh,” in line 29, and the change of state is brought to the surface of the conversation by the speaker’s directly commenting on her change of state (“I thought you were the one that taught her how.”):

Extract 3.06 Virginia

26 V: She's good. 'Cuz pa- (0.8) Paul taught 'er how.
 27 (1.0)
 28 V: Paul danc[es good.
 29 P:-> [>Oh I thought you were the one that taught her how.<

Furthermore, the transformation of state affects and is affected by elements of the social context, including the sequential progression of the ongoing interaction. This can be seen in

Extract 3.07 below:

Extract 3.07 TC II (b): #28

```
01 B:      Hello
02 P:      Mr Bush
03 B:      Yes
04 P:      Mr. Fiatt
05 B:      Yes
06 P: ->   Yknow where Mr. Bowdwin is?
07 B:      What?
08 P:      hhhahhhah
09 B:      Do I know where who?
10 P:      Leo is.
11 B: ->   No.
12 P:      Oh. Okay
13 B: ->>'s the down in Mexico or some'in...?
14 P: ->>   I don't know
15 B: ->>   Oh/ Your looking for him.
16 P:      y-      y-      y-
```

In this extract, P is asking B if he knows the whereabouts of a mutual friend (line 6). That B has taken P to know the friend's whereabouts, thus orienting to P's question in line 6 as a pre-announcement or pre-informing is seen in line 13, where B asks if the friend is "down in Mexico or some'in...?" P's "I don't know" in line 14 is clearly what prompts a change in B's knowledge state (marked by the "Oh," in line 15 (Heritage, 1984b)), as he begins to understand that his initial understanding, that P knew the whereabouts of the friend (line 13), is incorrect and that in fact, P does not know where the friend is. Thus, participants can know or believe they know something and then later revise their understanding based on the unfolding interaction.

Another point to be made with respect to knowledge states is that there may be different levels of knowing. In Extract 3.08, below, we can see a participant formulating the way and extent to which she knows a non-present third party:

Extract 3.08 Kamunsky 3

419 J: =Uhm that w'l be out front the:re uhm who wz else, who else car.=
420 ->> =Uhm, (0.4) wul wyou don't know Ro:b'(s) car. Uhm, 'p I ah well
421 th't's about i:t. I d'nuhhhh hm.
422 M: ->> Who's Ro:b,
423 J: Rob Sterling f'm the group,
424 (0.6)
425 M: ->> °Rob-° OH yea[i:h.]
426 J: [The ta]ll gu:y?
427 (0.4)
428 M: ->> W'l I know him fr'm sight I u-he doesn'know me.
429 J: Oh.

In this extract, J attempts to answer a question his recipient has asked (not shown) regarding a particular car she can use as a reference point to know that she has arrived at the correct location of a party. In line 420, J deploys a B-event declarative “wul wyou don't know Ro:b'(s) car.” As he moves to close that particular sequence, M reopens it by asking who Rob is (line 422). Rob's identity is developed over the next three turns, and then M in line 428 formulates more precisely how she knows him – by sight, which is one way of knowing a person, as opposed to knowing the person very well, for example. Thus, we can see that participants orient to different levels of knowing.

Knowledge can also be formulated in different ways, as can be seen in Extract 3.09:

Extract 3.09 Joyce and Stan

14 J: =Well don't tell Bernie but I got him a hat fer his
15 birthday.
16 S: Oh you got Bernie a hat?
17 J: Yeah.
18 (.)
19 J: ->> 'Cause you took his. It's sort of like
20 S: ->> ^I didn't take his.<I paid him for it. what he paid for
21 it.

In line 19, J says that she bought a hat for a non-present friend because S “took his,” a formulation which claims to know something about the movement of the hat into J's possession at some earlier point in time, namely that it was “taken.” In line 20, S resists the formulation of the action that J has attributed to him (“^I didn't take his.<I paid him for it. what he paid for it.), thus transforming the action from “taking” the hat (which arguably has accusatory overtones) to “buying” – a more socially sanctioned way of conducting the transaction.

Finally, participants' knowledge can be seen as both situated within a particular context and contingent on the folding interaction. Epistemic claims are situated in larger structures that invoke different sources of knowledge and procedures for gaining knowledge, and these can be made visible in the talk. In Extract 3.10, below, taken from a call to a 911 exchange, the caller requests a phone number. Several observations may be made from this extract. First, the dispatcher's knowledge of the phone numbers is a form of *situated expertise* derived from her position within an organization, and as such, she has at her disposal specific procedures for obtaining knowledge (presumably, here, a list of phone numbers or a directory from which she can retrieve the information.) Second, we can see that in the course of retrieving the information, she has located a problem in the way in which the question was initially formulated (lines 5-6), and her knowledge of the correct phone number is contingent on obtaining other information from her recipient. In line 8, an attempt is made to obtain the information that will make it possible for her to retrieve the appropriate number from among several alternative numbers for her recipient. In this sense, her knowledge is situated knowledge; furthermore, it is incipient and developing, rather than fixed, and it is contingent upon the interaction; that is, it is through the interaction that her knowledge of the appropriate number emerges and becomes available to the participants.

Extract 3.10 Midcity 17 Call 18

05 C: Y:es can I have the number to the s:outheast
06 precinct(h),
07 (0.2)
08 D: Did you want a squa:d or just talk to somebody
09 (.)
10 C: >Talk to someone<
11 (0.4)
12 D: -->> Umokay it's three four eight(h),

The preceding discussion indicates 1) that participants' epistemic claims are routinely displayed within their talk, 2) that these claims are part of a complex and dynamic epistemic ecology; and 3) that participants orient to their own versus their recipients' information territories in different

ways. Taking A and B-event declaratives as a point of departure, the next two sections will argue that the declarative format is the preferred grammatical format for formulating A events, whereas the declarative format is a dispreferred format for B events.

3.3. The preferred status of A-event declaratives

As mentioned above, Labov and Fanshel canonically viewed A-event statements as declaratively-formatted statements about "...A's emotions, his daily experience in other contexts, elements of his past biography, and so on" (Labov and Fanshel, 1997, p. 100). Examination of data shows that participants overwhelmingly do not downgrade A-event declaratives; that is, speakers' statements regarding matters to which they hold primary epistemic rights and access are, in the aggregate, straightforward and do not contain mitigating elements. This can be seen very clearly in examples where the speaker is talking about his or her physical or emotional state. This is demonstrated in Extracts 3.11 – 3.13:

Extract 3.11 DEC 1205

05 Clr: I've (so many) pains I can hardly walk,

Extract 3.12 Hyla and Rich

03 R: ->> =But I feel great that you called (me).

04 H: ->> I_don't I(hh)'m d(h)esper(h)ate heh[e hehe he.]

Extract 3.13 TG

10 A: ->> I'm so:: ti:yid.I j's played ba: ske'ball t'day since the

11 ->> firs' time since I wz a f reshm'n in hi:ghschool.

These A-event statements are notable for the lack of hedges (e.g., probably, seem, etc.) they contain. In addition to clearly internal physical or emotional states, speakers can also deploy A-event declaratives to talk about information that clearly falls within their epistemic territory by virtue of any number of life or situational circumstances, including, for example, their institutional role (Extract 3.14), their agency or intentions (Extract 3.15), and their sensory observations (Extract 3.16):

Extract 3.14 Midcity 17 Call 18

01 C: Y:es can I have the number to the s:outheast
02 precinct(h),
03 (0.2)
04 D: Did you want a squa:d or just talk to somebody
05 (.)
06 C: >Talk to someone<
07 (0.4)
08 D:->> Umokay it's three four eight(h),

Extract 3.15 Midcity 17 Call 17

10 D: Ugh(hhhhhh) .h I wonder(h) um::: (1.8) he could
11 still be in the:(h) (0.7) transcription room
12 ->> but: u:h (0.4).hhhh (0.2) I'm gonna put you through
13 ->> to Bryan hh (0.4) Just a minute.

Extract 3.16 Midcity 17 Call 16

01 C: =I gotta woman here claiming that u::gh=a c:ar
02 is following her (0.6) (kept) following her for
03 quite a whi:le (1.0) Uh she says fifteen miles
04 ->> (0.8) Uh she's sitting here in front of me no:w
05 a:n:d u:::h (0.6) ('know) wdjyou send a squad
06 down here please,

In each of the above cases, the speaker uses a straightforward declarative format to deliver information that is clearly within his or her epistemic territory (in these extracts, the phone number of a precinct, a participant's intentions and information available through sensory channels, respectively). In fact, that A-events are treated by the people to whom they apply as proprietary can be seen in the way speakers treat A-event information that they are not able to claim complete knowledge of. In such cases, a speaker may provide an account for not knowing the information, as can be seen in Extract 3.17. In this extract, M is telling a story about how he had been hit in the face on a prior occasion. When one of his interlocutors issues a B-event declarative (note the inferential modal "must have hit" which indexes that she does not have primary epistemic rights or access to the matter) regarding how hard he had been hit, he offers an epistemically-attenuated response followed by an account ("I wz really drunk et th'time") for not knowing that piece of information, which clearly falls within his epistemic domain.

Extract 3.17 SN-4 Page 3

16 M: And- I moved one way, en th's:- girl (.) Debbie, moved the
17 other way,=and her hand wen' right up intuh my face 'n hit
18 me right in the eye.=`hhh All this bloo:d started gushing
19 down my face.='T's really weird.
20 (0.2)
21 R: -> She musta hitchu awflly ha:rd.
22 M: ->> She did I think. I-I don't-I wz really drunk et th'time but
23 I went intuh the bathroom all this bloo:d was >comin' down
24 my face<=`hhh[hh

That speakers do not downgrade A event declaratives appears to be true even in cases where B is implicated in the A-event declarative, as in Extract 3.18 and Extract 3.19. In 3.18, E tells M that M fascinates her. While the verb “fascinate” situates M as the agent that causes fascination, it places E as the experiencer of the fascination, a mental state that E has primary rights and access to, thus making it an A-event declarative, albeit one in which her recipient is implicated.

Extract 3.18 NB VIII Power

10 E: ->> =[Ma:rgy I- I: mar[vel]atche rilly.eh you fascinate me,=
11 M: [hhh]
12 M: =hh=
13 E: =I've never seen a ga:l li:ke you.

The same phenomenon can be seen in 3.19, where R, as the writer and sender of a letter that R and H are discussing, is in a unique position to know that a letter which H has not yet received is on its way to her, thus making “ye- you got another letter coming” (line 37) a B-implicated A-event declarative. That H treats R as having greater epistemic access to this information can be seen in line 39: “(you mean) I’ll get one tomorrow?”

Extract 3.19. Hyla and Rich

33 H: No no no no but that’s uh the whole th[ing if]
34 R: [You got]
35 two letters to (refer to the one I: got.)
36 H: Wha:??
37 R: ->> Ye- you got another letter coming You shoulda gotten two
38 letters. h
39 H: ->> I n got o:ne (0.3) friday (you mean) I’ll get one tomorrow?

These examples demonstrate that A-event declaratives are straightforward, unmitigated and are treated as unproblematic by their recipients. They are also ubiquitous, constituting by far the most common grammatical format for the discussion of A events. In the data used in this study,

only one interrogative was found to target A-event information.

```
04 N: ->> m I g'nna cry:~?
05      (·)
06 H:      Ye:s I cried hysterically et the movie.
```

This one instance will be discussed in the second section of this chapter, where it will be examined for the particular social action that it does.

Given that A-event declaratives are the dominant format for expressing A events, and given that they are treated as unproblematic and are rarely if ever downgraded, it is hopefully by now clear that the declarative is the preferred grammatical format for the conveying of A events. Evidence for the dispreferred status of the declarative with reference to B events will be discussed in the following section.

3.4. The dispreferred status of B-event declaratives

That B-event declaratives are dispreferred can be readily seen upon investigation of ordinary talk. Four types of evidence are offered for this claim. The first is that B-event declaratives, unlike A-event declaratives, are regularly downgraded by speakers; the second is that if a B-event declarative is not downgraded, it normatively exhibits a high degree of warrantability that provides grounds for the upgraded epistemic claim embodied by the declarative; a third point in support of this claim is that B-event declaratives are regularly resisted by their recipients, i.e., the person about whom the statement has been made, and furthermore, bald on-record B-event declaratives, particularly those lacking a high degree of warrantability, often result in extended sequences during which the content of the B-event declarative is disputed by both the speaker and the recipient, and the fourth piece of evidence offered is the observation that even when speaking about non-present third parties, speakers maintain the epistemic primacy of the non-present third party to whom the information belongs

by downgrading their own epistemic status with respect to that information. At the conclusion of this section, it will be suggested that the interrogative, rather than the declarative, is the preferred grammatical format when engaged in talk with B about B.

3.4.1. Downgraded B-event declaratives

The first observation is that downgrades are a regular feature of B-event declaratives, especially those for which no particular warrant for the declarative (e.g., mention in prior talk or prior knowledge of the speaker's thoughts, plans or emotions, for example) exists. In this section, various types of downgrades which occur in association with B-event declaratives are discussed. These include downgrades done in an "on the record" manner, as in Extract 3.20, or through various other elements of turn format such as evidential adverbs (as seen in Extracts 3.21 and 3.22), paralinguistic elements, such as intonation, breathiness and laughter (as seen in Extracts 3.23 and 3.24), grammatical elements (Extracts 3.25 and 3.26) and A-event perspectivizing (Extracts 3.27 and 3.28).

3.4.1.1. "On the record" formulations

Participants may provide an "on the record" downgrade of the statement they are making about a recipient's B-event, as seen in Extract 3.20 where a radio interviewer makes a statement about the inner mental processes of his interviewee ("you made a decision early on"; lines 8-9) that in mid-TCU is undercut by an insertion that significantly weakens the epistemic claim in progress in the form of an on the record disclaimer ("stop me if I'm if I'm getting this wrong"; lines 9-11). This is immediately followed by an even weaker reformulation of the claim in progress, using "seems" ("but it seems to me that you made a decision early on"; lines 11-12). It is important to note that the interviewee had not referred to making a conscious decision in prior

talk (not shown); therefore, the interviewer did not have a warrant underpinning the B-event declarative, thus occasioning this rather elaborate downgrade.

Extract 3.20 The Story (NPR)

01 IE: U:m (.) she always came tuh work with me. (.) so: (.) there w'z
02 something that she wanted to do in- in what we were doing hh uh:
03 an jus wannida leave that door open for:r:
04 (0.1)
05 IE: an this I consider outside of what I'm doing photographically an
06 outside iv the pr(h)o(h)ject but just as a human being (ar-)
07 IR: =yeah but how do you separate this stuff? This is the
08 ->> fascinating thing for me becu:z hhhh you made a decision
09 ->> early on, stop me if I'm if I'm=
10 IR: =mm=
11 IE: ->> =getting this wrong but it seems to me that you
12 made a decision early on that you didn't wannihd. just be
13 an observer that you didn't wanna play the journalist's
14 role an go back to a hotel at night an an (.) and watch a
15 movie so (.) hh how do you separate the work that you're
16 doing †documenting these people's li:ves from the
17 relationships that build as a result of that,
18 IR: mch! It's ve:ry complicated Dick, I mean, on the one hand
19 you're right...meanwhile, you know, all the while and so it
20 was really complicated to know how much to get involved,

3.4.1.2. Evidentials: Verbs and adverbs

Participants may also regularly use modals of inference such as “must” and “must have,” evidential adverbs such as “maybe” and “perhaps,” and verbs of perception such as “appear” and “seem” in B-event declaratives to downgrade their claims to know. In Extract 3.21 (which appeared earlier as Extract 3.17) R, who was not present at the time that M was hit by a third party, offers the observation “She musta hitchu awfully ha:rd,” using the inferential modal “must have” to indicate her attenuated epistemic claim to the matter in question. The same can be seen in Extract 3.22, where, in response to B’s solicitation of confirmation of her sober state (line 15) on a night where her recipient, W, was also present, W responds with “Nah, you didn’ appear tuh be” thus indexing via the verb “appear” his indirect access to B’s state of inebriation, which is essentially a physical or mental state that only B has direct access to (line 25).

Extract 3.21 SN-4

16 M: And- I moved one way, en th's:- girl (.) Debbie, moved the
17 other way,=and her hand wen' right up intuh my face 'n hit
18 me right in the eye.= 'hhh All this bloo:d started gushing
19 down my face.='T's really weird.
20 (0.2)
21 R: ->> She musta hitchu awflly ha:rd.
22 M: She did I think. I-I don't-I wz really drunk et th'time but
23 I went intuh the bathroom all this bloo:d was >comin' down
24 my face<='hhh[hh

Extract 3.22 Virginia

11 V: Paul said she was °laughin' 'er head off an' she was so:
12 bombed.
13 (0.2)
14 P: eh huh huh [huh
15 B: [I (wudn' was [I?]
16 P: [^D'you need some^ help?
17 (0.2)
18 V: °uh uh
19 P: eh heh h[ah huh-
20 W: [What that weeken' you were- (.) [in Ch a r l e ston?]
21 P: [(I'll) take up some]
22 pla(h)tes.=
23 B: =Uh huh.
24 (0.8)
25 W: ->> Nah, you didn' (.) appear tuh be.

3.4.1.3. Intonation, breathiness and laughter

In Extract 3.23, we see breathiness and, to some extent, repetition, featured in the downgrade of a B-event declarative in what appears to be a teasing sequence.

Extract 3.23 Talkbank 6476

15 M: cause ahm- I'm also considering uh contacting my landlord
16 Hh and getti(n) some free white paint from them cause they.
17 M: supply some paints nseh don't repaint the houses?
18 M: a:nd paint my bathroomhh
19 (0.2)
20 M: mch!=
21 D: ->> =wow you are boredhh
22 M: hhwe:ll, I: been contemplating this ever since like the
23 first week of school but during school I never had a
24 chance to.hh
25 D: ->> hhhm! mch!you are b(h)ored. hh hh
26 M: well no, I'm just productive
27 D: ->> hh mbored hhh hhh
28 M: oh=
29 D: ->> =ihh I call it bored, hhh hihh!

In line 21, D provides an unflattering account (“wow you are boredhh”) for the summer plans that M has developed over lines 15-18. This account references an area in which M has epistemic authority, as boredom is a mental state that only M is privy to. M resists D’s characterization of his motivation for the plans in lines 22-24, and in line 25, D reissues his turn, this time with

breathiness and hitches which index a joking tone. After M resists for a second time, recharacterizing the account for the plans he has made as being productive, D targets the core element of M's characterization ("productive") for replacement by the word he had originally used ("mbored"). In line 29, just as M begins a turn with an "oh," which in this sequential environment appears to be a bid by D to reassert his epistemic authority in the matter (Heritage and Raymond, 2005), D reinstates his claim that M is bored, transforming it into an A-event statement ("I call it bored,"), a turn that is punctuated with laughter tokens.

The same can be seen in Extract 3.24. Talking about his role in his wife's pregnancy, B says "Least I know I'm built right" (lines 68-69). Several of the following turns are occupied by laughter tokens, indicating that this is a joking sequence, and in line 78, following a B-event declarative that is warrantable by prior talk ("you had all hh you always had all the tools"; line 77, warranted by lines 68-69), P issues a less-warranted "you jus' didn't know whether they work right or not," (line 78) referencing again, a mental state of his recipient that in the joking context is aligned with by his recipient.

Extract 3.24 TC IIb: Pyatt and Bush

68 B: -> Yeah I think so too. Least I know I'm built
69 -> right y know
70 P: Yeah right
71 B: heh heh heh heh heh//
72 P: heh heh
73 B: sitting there shakin her head
74 P: Hah hah//hah
75 B: Hah. hah
76 B: No. I//(think I) -
77 P: -> heh you had all hh you always had all the tools
78 ->> you jus' didnt know whether they work right or not
79 B: Yeah
80 P: hehh

3.4.1.4. Discourse markers: So and Then

So

Speakers may also use a variety of discourse markers to downgrade B-event declaratives. The discourse markers “so” and “then” permit participants to downgrade the claim made by a B-event declarative by displaying that there is an inferential relationship¹⁴ between what the recipient (or someone aligned with the recipient) has said in prior talk and the B-event declarative. This can be seen in the following extracts. In Extracts 3.25 and 3.26, the speaker prefaces the B-event declarative with “so.” In Extract 3.25, the use of “so” to preface “you feel safe,” in a health visitor’s (community nurse’s) talk is warranted by the fact that in prior talk it was revealed that the new mother’s husband is on the police force (line 04). In Extract 3.26, a police dispatcher makes a claim about information to which the caller has greater epistemic rights – whether or not some alleged troublemakers had entered the house – and prefaces it with “so.” In both cases, the inferences made by the speaker are confirmed by the recipient in the immediately following turn.

Extract 3.25 HV 4A1

03 HV: And your occupation?
04 F: *(P'lic' f's)*
05 HV: Uh::(h)::r hhh[eh heh heh huh huh
06 M: [heh heh heh heh
07 F: Don't say it like that.
08 M: Mm hhehhm.
09 (0.8)
10 HV: At Cowley?
11 F: *Yeh.*
12 HV: Ri:ght.
13 (1.8)
14 HV: ->> So you feel safe.
15 M: Yeh. heh heh heh

¹⁴ The inferential relationship indexed by “so” and “then” is discussed in great detail in Schiffrin (1987). Extensive discussion of the different actions that “so” and “then” do in their respective sequential contexts is beyond the scope of the present study.

Extract 3.26: Midcity 21:23

25 C: Clunky boots hh they were running up an' down the
26 stairs shuttin' the downstairs door an' then in thuh
27 ba:ck,=
28 D: ='n you think there was somebody that broke in
29 downstairs?
30 C: .hhh NO (0.1) They were comin' up thuh stairs tryin'
31 to get in to where we are now.
32 D: ->> O:::h so it wasn't actual- they didn't actually get in.
33 C: Uh uh

Then

“Then,” like “so,” indexes an inferential relationship between the turn containing the “then” and what the recipient has said in prior talk. In Extract 3.27, the “then” appears to obtain its warrant from L’s turn in line 18 where she says that her family left at half past three in the morning, prompting M to offer the understanding in lines 23 and 24 that L had stayed up all night. In Extract 3.28, C offers the understanding that her recipient had travelled a greater distance than she herself had. This appears to be warranted by J’s turn in lines 39-40, where she specifies the name of the city they had visited. In both cases, we can see that the speakers, prior to making the inference (in lines 23 and 41 respectively) display a change in their knowledge states with “Oh,” (Heritage, 1984b), marking the recipient’s prior turn as informative and thus providing the warrant for the upcoming inference.

Extract 3.27 Holt 1:1:1

14 M: 'Av your family gone o:ff?
15 (.)
16 L: Ye:s,
17 M: Oh ↓goo:d,
18 L: <A:t um: half past three: this morning.
19 (0.3)
20 M: ↑Oh my wo:rd.
21 L: .hh Well it was gon'be half pas'o:ne but they realized
22 they'd of been: up at Gatwick fa:r too early
23 M:->> [Oh:: gosh
24 ->> y'been up all ni:ght the:n
25 (0.3)
26 L: .t Oh well I went back t'bed,

Extract 3.28 SBL 2:1:3:1

33 C: 'hht Oh well ^we wen'up there oh::: about thr hhhh I'd say
34 about three weeks ago we wz up et Meriposa:: hh[h
35 J: [Uh huh
36 C: An' up in the Mother Lode country'n we we[n' all: through=
37 J: [Yes.
38 C: =tho:se ghos'~taowns[s hhh [hhhh
39 J: [Oh:: [I see well we were up uh hh
40 intuh Red< (0.4) R:ed Blu:ff?
41 C: Oh~::.
42 J: °(Cuz[i t was)°]
43 C: --> [You wen'up] further ~then.h[h
44 J: [Ye:s.[Uh hah,]

3.4.1.5. Tag questions

Another way in which speakers downgrade the epistemic claim made with a B-event declarative is through the use of various types of tag questions, such as same polarity tag questions and reverse polarity tag questions.¹⁵ This section provides an introduction to these practices, which will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 5 of the present study.

As has been noted, reverse polarity tag questions are one practice employed by participants to downgrade their epistemic claims by making another turn relevant next (Heritage and

¹⁵ The appending of the tags “right” and “huh” (e.g., “It’s just sitting there with the headlights on, huh?”) to declaratives are also resources for downgrading the epistemic claim made by the declarative. Though discussion of these two resources is not the focus of the current study, there does appear to be some evidence that these two types of utterance are epistemically-distinct: B-event declaratives to which “right” is appended appear to be authored by the speaker, whereas B-event declaratives to which “huh” is appended appear to be spoken by the speaker but authored by the recipient. This mirrors the distinction between reverse and same polarity tag questions discussed in Chapter 5 of the present work.

Hyla and Rich - “Right”

04 H: Well y-ya know w' happen u-w- very s- weird thing.
05 I musta called the wrong number cause I c-called like
06 about (0.1) five minutes ago .h en (0.3) some little
07 boy(he) (h) answered the phone=
08 R: =No that wasn't my kid(h).
09 H:--> hehuhuhu I know yours is asleep right=
10 R: =Ri[ght.]

MidCity 17:6 “Huh”

01 C: [somebody a:sked a while ago=
02 C: [Hello:,
03 D:--> =for the s:ame thing (0.3) he::: doesn' get any response,
04 (0.2)
05 C:--> N: response huh.=
06 D: =U-uh.=
07 C: =Okay thanks.

Raymond, 2005). This can be seen in Extracts 3.29 and 3.30, below. In 3.29, B references a mental state of her recipient (remembering) and uses a reverse polarity tag to weaken the epistemic claim about her recipient’s mental state (“well you r'member Helen Hoder don'tchu?). Likewise, in 3.30, we see a joking or teasing sequence in which T teases her recipient, referencing a mental state (wanting something) by saying “Money’s all you wa:nt iznid” (lines 9-10).

Extract 3.29 Death Announcement

103 B: i-Yihknow it's uh:eh it's a way'v li:fe it's just one a'
 104 those things we uh:::~::~, .hhhh uh d-un d-un unfornately in the
 105 interum thuh:: several of ar: dear friends uh y'know past away
 106 end u[h:
 107 F: [Anyone I kno[:w?
 108 B: [.hhh .t .hhhh
 109 (.)
 110 B: ->> Uh well I don'know whether you knoo uh:::~::~: well you
 111 ->> r'member Helen Hoder don'tchu?
 112 (.)
 113 F: Ye:s,=

Extract 3.30 SBL 2-1-6-R:7

08 B: En:d uh, I don't think I need anythi[:ng,
 09 T: ->> [↑Money's ↓all
 10 ->> you wa:nt iznid.
 11 B: ↑THA:T'S a:[:ll,
 12 T: [e-↑heh huh hu[h huh u]h
 13 B: [Ah hah]
 14 T: °hhh Aaright< Say I: hadda ↓very busy day:

The differing intonational contours of the two tag questions (in 3.29, the intonation is rising and in 3.30, falling) appear to be related to the differing courses of action in which the participants are engaged in the two sequences. In 3.29, B’s turn (I don'know whether you knoo uh:::~::~:) was initially built to formulate an attenuated epistemic claim as to F’s acquaintance with a particular person. Her offering of a named individual as a person whom her recipient might know is accordingly downgraded by the reverse polarity tag question with rising intonation, which makes a either a confirming or a disconfirming response relevant. In the joking sequence in 3.30, on the other hand, the falling intonation of T’s reverse polarity tag question, which constitutes an invitation to join in the joke, appears to prefer an aligning response. In this sequential context, an aligning response is socially-affiliative. The use of falling intonation in

this position, therefore, seems to be designed to carry the sequence off as a joke to be shared, rather than as a legitimate information request as was the case in 3.29. The different sequential contexts as well as the different social actions implicated in the deployment of rising and falling tag questions on B-event declaratives will be discussed further in Chapter 5.

Same polarity tags are also deployed by speakers to downgrade the epistemic claim made by a B-event declarative; however, like “so,” and “then,” the downgrade appears to be made not only by using a tag question that makes a response relevant next, but also by establishing an inferential relationship between the speaker’s turn and something the recipient has said in prior talk. This can be seen in Extract 3.31

Extract 3.31 Holt 2:1

26 F: Didu have a good EastER?
 27 L: .hh Uh w:-we:ll yes it- ehhhh I'm always a ski: widow at
 28 Easter time,
 29 F: [Oh.
 30 (.)
 31 F: khhe[h heh .hh] hh ehY(h)eh
 32 L: [B u t um]
 33 F: .hhhh Mm:.
 34 L: i[h:
 35 F: -->> [They hauled o:ff did they?
 36 (.)
 37 L: They go off u-a:nd uh (0.7) they had a good Easter heh
 huh heh eh.hhhhh

In line 35, F’s turn consists of a B-event declarative with a same polarity tag question appended to it (“They hauled o:ff did they?”). The warrant for this appears in lines 27 and 28 of the recipient’s talk (“I’m always a ski: widow at Easter time”). Thus the claim made by the declarative is downgraded by not only the tag, which makes a response relative in next position, but also by the fact that it targets something said in prior talk that is related to the turn at point via implicature. This will be discussed more fully in Chapter 4.

3.4.1.6. A -perspectivizing

A final practice for downgrading a B-event declarative is A-perspectivizing: the transformation of the B-event declarative into an A-event declarative via the use of a wide variety of elements, two of which are seen in Extracts 3.32 and 3.33:

Extract 3.32 Debbie and Shelley

16 S: I understand that bu- ya I- I mean its not-
17 its not just tha:t I mean IwaIw
18 I was excited to go befor:e and I still wanna go its jus I
19 mean I don't wanna spend the money: and I know I have other
20 responsibiliti:es:an,=
21 D: ->> seein well thats okay but if Mark went you would
22 ->> spend the mo::ney.
23 S: °we:ll thats not true either= ((begins soft, then rising))

In Extract 3.32, a sequence in which one participant is reproaching another about her decision to not attend a group outing, D transforms a B-event declarative into an A-event declarative via the turn-initial use of “this is what I’m see:in. I’m seein” in lines 21-22. In Extract 3.33, L and R are discussing some tasks that R had been asked by a non-present third party to do. R, as the recipient of the initial instructions and the person who is supposed to carry them out, has primary access to this information; however, L had also talked to the third party about what R would do, and has had some access, though not primary access, to the information. In this extract, L offers her understanding of what R is to do. The formulation “As I understood it” (lines 36-37), A-perspectivizes the statement, which may not only be responsive to the epistemic contingencies of the talk, but also may weaken what in this sequential context, may sound like a re-issuing of the instructions to R, who seems to have some trouble recalling what the instructions were (lines 33-34).

Extract 3.33 Comen II

33 R: Well she told me something like that en I hadn't // heard
34 lately // so that's what I wz-
35 L: Yes
36 L: ->> Now you were to meet her, and' bring him on, out. As
37 ->> under//stood it
38 R: She said she'd let me know when (they left there).
39 L: Oh well then she's planning on calling you // then.

The pervasive practice of downgrading B-event declaratives highlights the potentially delicate nature of making statements about information which falls into a recipient’s epistemic territory. We can see that participants deploy a wide variety of practices to assert and defer to epistemic claims. How then, can B-event declaratives which are not downgraded be accounted for? One possible explanation is provided by the concept of warrantability. In the following section, it will be argued that B-event declaratives that are not downgraded exhibit a high degree of warrantability, thus providing grounds for a claim of upgraded epistemic status, as embodied by the unhedged declarative formulation.

3.4.2. Warrantability of B-event declaratives

Examination of data indicates that both speakers and hearers appear to orient to the warrant which underwrites a B-event declarative. Warrantability, like epistemic authority, is not binary in nature, and although a B-event declarative may be warranted on some grounds, the question of the degree of epistemic authority conferred by a B-event declarative’s warrantability is by no means a closed question for participants. This can be seen in Extract 3.34, below, where E in lines 90-91 offers her recipient, L’s, weight loss as a reason for L’s disliking a dress she had once worn:

Extract 3.34 NB:IV: 3:R:7

```

87 L:      [↑↑OH::: ]I LO[:VED I]T [L A : S]T YEA)R BUT it doesn: duh:=
88 E:      [↑N O : ] [NO th- ]u h h]
89 L:      =do any ih doesn'do anything for me: (.) no:w. [y i h know]
90 E:  ->>                                     [Yeh yuh lo]s'
91 E:  ->>      suh much wei:ght.
92 L:      huh hm-m-hm N(h) ah° thā' no:t thā:t much.=

```

What is interesting here is the warrant that apparently exists for Emma to make the straightforward declarative “yeh yuh los’ suh much weight.” When a person loses weight, especially a substantial amount of it, at some point, that becomes something observable to other people around the individual, and this appears to be the warrant underwriting Emma’s turn in

lines 90 – 91. However, as the person who actually lost the weight, and who presumably tracked the weight loss and knows how many pounds she lost, L offers some resistance to this characterization and reinstatiates her claim to know about her weight loss: “no:t tha:t much.” Thus, in this example, we can see that while E clearly has some epistemic grounds for making the B-event declarative, L claims primary rights to know this information in her subsequent turn.

One observation that readily emerges from the data is that B-event declaratives underwritten by some warrant or some degree of warranting tend not to be downgraded and are characterized by the speaker of the B-event declarative’s having some type of access (though not necessarily rights) to the information in question. In contrast, as was shown in section 3.4.1, B-event declaratives that have a lower degree of warrantability, that is, statements about B’s circumstances to which A does not have access or does not have primary rights, are routinely downgraded.

B-event declaratives can be warranted in a variety of ways. Though not an exhaustive list of the ways in which B-event declaratives can be warranted, the following extracts demonstrate that warrants for B-event declaratives are routinely established by A’s claiming knowledge derived from the environment, including direct mention in the talk, through implicature from the talk and through A’s social knowledge of B. These warrants provide the grounds for the deployment of the declarative, which, as was demonstrated in the section on A-event declaratives, embodies a claim of higher epistemic status.

3.4.2.1. Environment

In Extract 3.35 we see a B-event declarative whose warrant is provided by the immediate environment.

Extract 3.35 SN-4

01 S: Hi Carol.=
02 C: =H[i : .]
03 R: [CA:RO]L, HI::
04 S: ->> You didn' get en icecream sandwich,
05 C: I know, hh I decided that my body didn't need it,
06 S: Yes but ours di:d=
07 S: =hh heh-heh-heh[heh-heh-heh `hhih

In Extract 3.35, C enters the room, engendering a greetings sequence that is followed by S's noticing in line 4 that Carol had not purchased an ice cream sandwich. C is primary rightsholder of the information regarding what she has or has not purchased; however, the presumed lack of a visible ice cream in Carol's hands (this extract is taken from an audio recording) prompts S to make the B-event declarative with some authority, warranted as it is by her not seeing an ice cream sandwich in S's hands.

3.4.2.2. Talk

B-event declaratives can also be warranted directly through the talk, as seen in Extracts 3.36 and 3.37. Extract 3.36 demonstrates the precise degree to which participants can attend to their recipient's talk, as H's talk (line 23), very closely followed by N's (lines 24-25), provides the warrant for N's observation that H "really accomplished a lot."

Extract 3.36 HGII

23 H: -> NO I wz very:, (0.3) pleased that I c-[accomplish'.]
24 N: ->> [You really a]ccomplished
25 ->> a lo:t.=
26 H: =so much.=

In Extract 3.37, S, who has just received a report of low test results for a law school admissions test, remarks on her chances of being admitted to a particular law school (lines 143-145). After some intervening talk, G in line 165 reinvoles the possibility of S getting into the earlier-mentioned university and in line 168 makes the statement "You'd git in there," a statement for which S's earlier turn (lines 143-145) provides the warrant.

Extract 3.37 Geri and Shirley

141 G: W' what scores dih yih usually nee:d,h
142 .hhh to get in[to a law school.]=
143 S: [.hhh [O k a : y.] If I
144 S: wantituh get intuh:: (0.2) .hhhh Sou:thwestern.
145 I think I c'n get intuh Southwestern.
146 (0.2)
147 G: Ye[:ah?
148 S: [Regardless.

(Lines omitted)

165 G: .hh- .hh Well why not Southwe:stern.=
166 S: =.hhhhhh I'm g'nna call the(d) edmissions office en ask tuh
167 speak tih their dean.
168 G: ->> You'd git in there,
169 S: Yeah,=
170 G: =I think,=
171 S: =.hhh I think I might.

3.4.2.3. Implicature

Another way in which B-event declaratives can be warranted is via implicature. Though this will be covered in greater detail in Chapter 4, a snapshot of how this can happen is given in Extract 3.38, below:

Extract 3.38 Hyla and Nancy

10 N: You called Richard,=
11 (): =hh-hh=
12 H: =(h)y(h)Yea(h)h en I h(h)ung up w(h)un 'e a(h)ns[wer
13 N: [Oh: Hyla=
14 why::::::,

(Lines omitted)

27 N: C'djih tell iz vo[i:ce,]
28 H: [Y e a] :h, I knew iz voice,=
29 N: =Oha:::[w,
30 H: [hhhih'hh=
31 N: =Ho:w was it tuh hear iz [voice,]
32 H: [a h :] :::, 'u-'ehhh I wan'duh
33 tape record ihhhhh heh heh

(Lines omitted)

50 H: Ye::h I din'think of it I wz too upset about hearing iz
51 vhhoi(h)ce,=
52 N: =Aw-:::::,
53 (0.8)
54 H: 'hhh[hh
55 N: ->> [Eh least you know 'e was ho:me,

In Extract 3.38, line 55, N offers a B-event declarative “eh least you know ‘e he was ho:me, which appears to ground its warrantability in two earlier turns, notably line 12, where her recipient confirms that she called the third party (“Richard,”) and line 28, where her recipient

says that she knew his voice. The relationship between knowing someone’s voice and calling them at home conveys the sense, via implicature, that the individual who was called was at home. Thus, even when a B event is not explicitly stated, as it was in 3.36 and 3.37, a B-event declarative referencing that B event can appear in talk and be warranted by implicature.

3.4.2.4. Social knowledge of B

B-event declaratives can also be warranted by A’s legitimately knowing information about B’s person and circumstances as seen in Extract 3.39, where A claims knowledge of the means via which B will have to get into the city.

Extract 3.39 TG

30 A: Well if you wan' me (to) give you a ring tomorrow morning.
 31 B: Tch! 'hhh We:ll y-you know, let's, eh- I don'know, I'll
 32 B: see (h)may [be I woon' even be in,]
 33 A: --> [Well when yih go intuh] the city y'gonna haftuh
 34 --> walk down t'the train a[n y w a y.]
 35 B: [r-Ri:ght.]
 36 A: So might ez well walk with some[buddy. 'hh
 37 B: [Right. So I'll s-Alright.
 38 so gimme a call,
 39 A: Bout ten thiridy.
 40 B: Ri:ght.

Thus, we have seen from the preceding examples that B-event declaratives can be warranted in a wide variety of ways.

3.4.3. Resistance to B-event declaratives

Another piece of evidence for the dispreferred status of B-event declaratives can be seen in the responses they receive from their recipients. In response to B-event declaratives, participants have a choice as to whether they will “sign on” to A’s version of events and therefore the partitioning of epistemic authority that the speaker has instantiated, or alternatively, they may resist it. As mentioned earlier, participants appear to resist B-event declaratives under a variety of circumstances. A rather straightforward observation is that participants may resist B-event declaratives when the B-event declarative contains information that can be disputed fairly straightforwardly as factually incorrect. In cases where the B-event declarative contains

information that is more open to interpretation; that is, in cases where the information contained in the B-event declarative is not factually incorrect but can nevertheless be formulated in an alternate fashion, participants will also often resist the speaker's formulation and reserve the right to formulate the B-event in such a way that it is clear that they do not align with A's characterization-in-progress, and in such cases, they may offer an alternate formulation of the B-event. At times, resistance to a B-event declarative may engender an extended sequence in which a central part of the talk is occupied with determining whose version of events will hold sway. Finally, another way that speakers resist B-event declaratives is through overlapping the talk of the person making the B-event declarative. These observations will be discussed in greater detail below.

3.4.3.1. Correcting a factual error

Speakers may take the stance that a B-event declarative is factually incorrect, as seen in Extract 3.40 (seen earlier as Extract 3.05), below:

Extract 3.40 NBIV:13:R

```

666 E: ->   Yih guh dunt wor(.)k uh yih don't go tuh work til three:,h
667         (0.2)
668 L: ->>  Fou:r.
669         (0.6)
670 E:      [Oh: f|ou:r. ]
671 L:      [T'da:y]'s Sa:]turday.
672         (.)
673 E:      ↑Aoh that's °r*ight.°
674 L:      ye:ah.

```

In Extract 3.40 E's B-event declarative in line 666 (“guh dunt wor(.)k uh yih don't go tuh work til three:,h”) is countered by L in line 668 with an other-correction (“Fou:r.”). As the sequence continues, E aligns with L's correction in line 670. L's reminder that today is Saturday, presumably the day on which she goes to work at four, and E's response in line 673 (“that's right”) indicate that E had been previously told that L was working until four and had made an error in the time.

In Extract 3.41, we see a particularly ill-conceived B-event declarative which is met with resistance because it incorrectly characterizes the recipient's thought process. In lines 6 and 9, N offers a collaborative completion of H's A-event declarative in line 5. Predictably, it meets resistance in line 11. That N's statement was designed to be a representation of H's thoughts is displayed in line 12 ("is tha'w'tcher thinking?"). In the subsequent turn, N's characterization is again met with resistance and a correction is issued in lines 14-16.

Extract 3.41 HGII

```

05 H:      Becuz I figure,hhhhhh[hhh
06 N:  ->                [If 'e [hasn' written ye:t,
07 (H):                [(He-)
08                (0.4)
09 N:  ->      then 'e doesn' want to.
10                (0.2)
11 H:  ->      Oh:: don't say thahhh[a(h)at]
12 N:  ->                [NO is ]tha'w'tcher [think[ing?]
13 H:  ->>                ['hhhh[N o ]:::, '
14 H:      hhhhh u-ahm 'hh I wz js thinking thet (0.3) I'd like it
15          tih go::all the way through where he::, does s:it
16          first,hh'hhhhhhhhh
17 N:      't Yeah,

```

3.4.3.2. Changing the terms

Speakers may also resist a B-event declarative by changing the terms of what has been said in the B-event declarative. Extract 3.42 provides an example of this. In this extract, B has called A at her home and in line 43 makes mention of the fact that A is home ("You are (home).") A's alignment with the speaker's B-event declarative, is not immediate, and in fact, she only appears to do so after B has pursued a confirmation ("Ri:ght?" line 45) that begins in overlap with another turn that A had already begun and is essentially made to abandon. When B reinstatiates the B-event declarative in line 49 ("You are home,"), A's response, though initially in alignment with what B has just said, increasingly disaligns as the turn progresses ("Yeh- I believe so. Physically anyway" line 50), thus allowing A to assert an alternate formulation of what B has said, in spite of the fact that it is quite clear, since B has called A at her home phone number, that A is indeed at home.

Extract 3.42 TG

37 A: YOU HO:ME?
38 (0.4)
39 B: No,
40 A: Oh I didn't think so.
41 B: nNo,
42 (0.9)
43 B: ->> You are, hhnhh [hnhh! 'hhh
44 A: [Y'sounded too fa[r a-]
45 B: -> [Ri:gh]t? hh=
46 A: ->> =Yeh.=
47 B: =See? hI-I'm doin' somethin right t'ay finally, ['hh
48 A: [Mm
49 B: ->> I finally said something right. (0.2) You are home. hmfff
50 A: ->> Yeh- I believe so. [Physically anyway.
51 B: [°°hmm hhh
52 B: Yea-a-h.°Not mentall(h)y (h)though(hh)

A similar case can be seen in Extract 3.43, where two participants are talking about a film one of them has seen.

Extract 3.43 HG II

13 H: =En ao I mean it's jist (·) a f:fantastic moo-oh en then the
14 one thet's bigotted, 'hhh she's married tih this guy who's,
15 (·) rilly quiet'n inhibited'n [it turns out]=
16 N: [Uh h u : h,]=
17 H: =like she's frigid'n evrything en she [covers up]for it by bejing=
18 N:-> [A:l l] ri: :ght,]
19 H: =yihknow a(h)ll-khhhhhh! 'huh ['huh]'hheh]'hheh]hh [hhhhhhh]=
20 N: [S o]basic]ll y,] [n-hn-hn]=
21 H:->> =hhhinh huh 'ehh Yih ghhot ahlll excited w'n I said the
22 ->> frigid p[art hu:h.] 'u 'u 'u 'u]
23 N:->> [y:Yeah.I] mean she de|se:rvs (h)i(h)it.
24 (0.2)
25 H: 'he::h huh,=
26 N: =But, so basiclly it's kind'v a love story in a wa:y,=

Subsequent to N's enthusiastic reaction (line 18, "A:l l ri: :ght,") to her telling of the film's story, H issues a B-event declarative ("Yih ghhot ahlll excited w'n I said the frigid part"; lines 21-22). In line 23, N initially aligns with H's characterizing her behavior as "all excited," but her subsequent TCU recasts the characterization of her enthusiasm not as excitement about "the frigid part" but rather as an appreciation, ostensibly of the fact that someone who is bigoted would also deserve to be frigid. Thus, N recasts the B-event declarative in her own terms.

3.4.3.3. Extended sequences

In Extracts 3.42 and 3.43, the recipient's resistance to the B-event declarative was not itself resisted; however, when a participant resists a B-event declarative, the initial speaker of the

39 D: ->> Eh:: yeah:h, (.) Oh yeah.
 40 (0.4)
 41 D: A:::nd uh::: (.) yihknow I uh::: (.) anywy what the hell. I
 42 figure what- (0.6) `f I wanna go out now I:::`d better do
 43 it. hhhhAnd if- °hh

In lines 9-10, C resists her recipient's re-characterization of the relationship and reinvokes her own characterization of D's relationship ("yYe:s but I mean it's a relationship whe:reuh: yihknow pa:ss the butter dear, hh"). Receiving no uptake from her recipient as evidenced by the .5 second gap in line 11, C reinstatiates her characterization of the relationship "yihknow make a piece'toa:st dear this type'v thing" in line 12. In line 13, D again resists this characterization ("No not really") and continues to resist it in lines 16 – 17, calling the relationship "healthy." In lines 18-19, C issues a question ("Why: b'cuz you haven' knocked each other's tee:th ou:t?") designed to establish a definitive answer, which in fact, presents yet another challenge to his characterization of his relationship as "good" (line 5) and "very healthy" (line 17). In lines 21 and 22, D once again asserts his epistemic rights to the matter in question, citing the "good communication" and health of the relationship.

In line 23, C again invokes her characterization of D's relationship ("Yah b'd it's lacked a lo:t lDee." line 23). In lines 25 and 26 ("I mean be honest with yerse:lf. You know that th'same es I do.") she makes direct mention of epistemic status. This is followed by a downgrade which appears to be a weak attempt at disaligning with her repeated characterization ("I: don'know") from her recipient as to his epistemic status in line 28. In lines 30 and 31, he makes another attempt to characterize the relationship in his own terms ("I can't complain let's put it that way bu:t I think uh:: .hh I think (it's)-"), and this is yet again countered by C with a B-event declarative in lines 32 – 33. Over the next several turns, D gradually concedes the point ("That might be true" – lines 34, 36 and 37) as C continues to build the case for her alternate characterization of the relationship. Finally, in line 39, D's "Eh::: yeah:h, (.) Oh yeah" aligns

with C's characterization. D's subsequent "anyway" in line 41 marks the end of this sequence and D returns to an earlier sequence, as he mentions "going out," an activity he had discussed with C some minutes earlier (see Extract 3.60 for a discussion of this sequence).

3.4.3.4. Overlap in talk

A final example of resistance indicates that resistance to the epistemic authority invoked by a B-event declarative can be done while nevertheless aligning with the content of the turn. This can be seen in Extract 3.45.

Extract 3.45 SBL 1-1-10/7

372 R: Well? I think if you kun affor:d tih be: (.) uh more er
 373 less reti*uhd, uh I think you de`s*erve it, an:'you have
 374 enough hobbies. tuh kep yihself
 375 B: ->> [Ye:aw.
 376 R: and frie:nds tih keep yihself (0.5) occupied.=ah think the
 377 only reas'n fer (.) you tuh: (0.3) be working ^more would
 378 be if you really needed (.) th'money en if yih do:n't then
 379 if you were (.) ^bo:red. Ennuh you do[n't seem tih be=
 380 B: [Uh-huh,
 381 R: =bo:red.
 382 B: [Goodness ~no.

In Extract 3.45, the recipient asserts her epistemic authority in second position in a way that contrasts with the other examples discussed above — by confirming the proposition contained in the speaker's talk. However, she does so (line 375) while the speaker is still mid-TCU (line 374), thereby instantiating an upgraded claim to epistemic authority in the matter.

Thus, in the preceding examples, we can see how participants' deployment of B-event declaratives can be resisted by their recipients, who have upgraded epistemic rights to the information being formulated. Resistance may occur when a speaker's B-event declarative contains a factual error, or in other cases, when B does not sign on to the particular version of events that the B-event declarative formulates. Furthermore, B-event declaratives can engender expanded sequences when B-event speakers do not retreat from their original formulation in the face of their recipients' disalignments, and in these sequences, the facts under discussion, as well

as the distribution of epistemic rights, become the focus of the interaction. Finally, participants may resist B-event declaratives by aligning with a speaker while the speaker is still mid-TCU.

3.4.4. Non-present third parties' rights

A final argument that speakers treat B-events as proprietary to the person in question (B), can be seen in talk where a participant has treated a recipient as having upgraded epistemic rights and/or access rights to non-present others' information. In these cases, although the recipient is treated as having upgraded epistemic rights and /or access, recipients regularly display an orientation to their attenuated epistemic status by downgrading their claim in a variety of ways, including evidentials, accounts and reports, as in 3.46 – 3.47.

Extract 3.46 DEC 2107

12 Doc: .<Has she got any other:¿ is she irritable¿ or: any
13 other symptoms¿
14 Clr: -> No:, she seems to want to sleep a lot.

In Extract 3.46, a mother is reporting on her child's desire to sleep, an internal state that the mother does not have direct access to, thus occasioning the use of "seems" in her turn in line 14. A similar case obtains in Extract 3.47, where the downgrade appears in response to a question. Indexing the source of the participant's knowledge ("sounds,"), the verb of perception permits the recipient to downgrade his epistemic claim and thereby preserve the non-present party's epistemic primacy with regard to the matter.

Extract 3.47 Talkbank 5051

50 C2: he said w'll that's tempting and I'll give you a call
51 back=but I don't think I don't think he's gonna do it.
52 C3: ->> waidaminit. is he still living from paycheck to paycheck?
53 C2: ->> Sounds like it, yeah

In line 52, an interrogatively-formatted B-event statement, the speaker asks his son, a friend of the non-present third party about whom they are speaking, about the person's financial situation using the interrogative, thereby making a downgraded epistemic claim to know and treating his recipient as the proper holder of the information. In line 53, despite being treated as having upgraded epistemic status in the current interaction, his recipient uses a verb of perception

(“sounds like it,”) in his response, in this way displaying not only that he is not the epistemic authority on the matter but also the means through which he came to know the information (presumably by being told).

3.4.5. Preferred format for B-events: The interrogative

Having demonstrated that the declarative is a preferred grammatical format for A events and a dispreferred grammatical format for B events, we arrive at the question of what the preferred grammatical format for B events is. A ready candidate for the preferred format for B-events is the interrogative. That the interrogative is overwhelmingly used to formulate B-events is seen from the plethora of examples that can be found in ordinary talk.

Extract 3.48 HV 1C1

1 HV: ->> Didju have an easy ti::me,
2 HV: hhh .hh
3 M: W'l I: didn't think so:,
4 HV: Oh dea:r.

Extract 3.49 Marcia-Ron Fercano

432 M: ->> How _ old er yih now Ro:n
433 R: Thirdy f:::fou:r. Thirdy f-almos' thirdy five.

Extract 3.50 TG

16 B: ->> Where didju play ba:sk[etbaw.]
17 A: [(The) gy]:m.

Overwhelmingly, B events are formulated as clear, epistemic inquiries, claiming little or no knowledge of the matter in question beyond the candidate understanding (Pomerantz, 1988) contained in the proposition itself. In each of the extracts above, the deployment of the B event information in an interrogative format is accomplished in an unproblematic fashion, receiving a response from the recipient in short order.

The data presented in this section provide evidence for the argument that the “zero-marked” (Fox, 2001) A-event declarative is considered the basic format for making knowledge claims. If this is true, the case could be made that interrogatives targeting B events are situated at

the opposite end of an epistemic continuum where the speaker claims little or no knowledge of the information in question. If that is so, interrogatives may be considered an extreme form of downgrade from the declarative and provides evidence for the existence of a systematic epistemic relationship among different grammatical formats, where each grammatical format indexes a particular epistemic relationship to the information contained in the proposition, as it relates to a particular hearer at a particular moment. In the following section, the action import of A and B-event declaratives will be discussed.

3.5. The action import of A and B-event declaratives

In the first half of this chapter, it was argued that the preferred grammatical format for the expression of A events is the declarative format, and it was further argued that the declarative format is dispreferred for the expression of B events. In this section, I turn to the action import of A- and B-event declaratives. In the first part of this section, I discuss departures from the straightforward A-event declarative format: those cases in which participants either downgrade the declarative or use the interrogative format (a further downgrade) to do socially-affiliative actions. In the second part of this section, I look at the ways in which B-event declaratives are implicated in both socially-affiliative and socially-disaffiliative actions.

3.5.1. Downgraded A-event declaratives

Having observed that A-event declaratives about the participant's own internal and external states and circumstances are generally unproblematic and therefore are not subject to downgrading, this is not to say that participants never downgrade A-event statements about information that falls solidly within their own epistemic territory. This can be seen in Extracts 3.51 and 3.52. In 3.51 a speaker declines a potential job offer, giving as a reason the more stable

position that she currently holds. In this case, the downgrade appears to do the job of “softening” an interactionally-delicate act – that of rejecting an offer made by the other participant.

In Extract 3.51, the speaker, R, rejects the offer of a job at several points in the previous talk, an instance of which is included below. In lines 77-81, R cites her obligations to her children as a reason for not accepting the offer of the job. She then re-issues her rejection of the job in lines 271-273 using a downgraded A-event declarative. She continues to develop her reasons (back problems and caring for children) for not taking the job that her recipient is offering over lines 275-283, and she once again rejects the offer using a downgraded A-event declarative in lines 288-289.

Extract 3.51 SBL 1-1-10:5

74 R: [(We:ll,)]
 75 B: [So they('d) wunt to replace b*er. hh An' I thought'v
 76 you: the- (.) the [(hus'b'n')]
 77 R: [Well it's very ki^:nd 'v you. End I:
 78 mean if *it (.) It would of bean lovely. <Ah mean en if
 79 it wehrn't thet ah have so many home responsibi[lities=
 80 (B): [()]
 81 R: =of[the children.]
 82 B: [h h h h h h]

(Lines omitted)

271 R: ->> But I ^think ah:'ll(1.0) stick with this: pie:ce et
 272 ->> Saint Francis for awhile becuz (1.0) ah mean ah'm sure
 273 ->> of my (.) days there.
 274 B: Ye:s *ah-h*ah.
 275 R: Uh an:d *uh I've: gone temporarily onto this (because I've
 276 been suffering fr'm) hh ruinous b*a:ck p*ai:n.
 277 B: Ye:s,
 278 R: And uhm (0.9) uh:* (.) *uh ^I've had *uh some little
 279 problems w'th my ch*ildren an ah found thet it was: (0.7)
 280 ^jus:t (.) jus'too ^mu:ch.
 281 (0.7)
 282 B: Ye*:s.=
 283 R: =to work f*ull t*time,
 284 B: 'Ah-huh, '=
 285 R: = h An:d uhm hhh so *I'm ^not making much money right now
 286 but the hours suit m*e.
 287 B: Mm hm,=
 288 R: ->> =An'*I think I'll jus'tick with it ez long ez ther willing
 289 ->> t'keep me o:n tha[t bas]is.

In lines 271 – 272, the speaker uses “I think” to mitigate the rejection proper of the job offer:

“ah:'ll (1.0) stick with this: pie:ce et Saint Francis for awhile.” The one-second delay mid-TCU

(line 271), as well as the account provided lines 272-273, is indicative of a dispreferred response (Schegloff, 2007a). Thus, participants may mitigate an A-event declarative to do delicate interactional work, such as declining a request or offer.

Extract 3.52 offers another clear example of how participants may downgrade an A-event statement in the delivery of a dispreferred response. In this example of cross-cutting preferences (Schegloff, 2007a), two young women, H and N are discussing an absent third party who has promised to write to H, but has not yet done so. Earlier in the talk, N has said that she believes the person will write, but offers that it might take him more than two weeks to get back to H (line 29). In line 31, H questions this estimate and in line 33 makes a B-event declarative to offer as evidence for her rejection of N's estimate the fact that N would have written back within two weeks. Thus, H displays an understanding that the estimate was offered as a reasonable estimate and puts forth the counter-understanding that two weeks is, in fact, not reasonable given that N, her friend, would respond in a more timely manner. In line 34, N's downgraded A-event declarative ("I guess I would") aligns with H's statement, thus providing confirmation of what H has said. At the same time, however, this alignment undermines her earlier stance in line 29, which held that two weeks was a reasonable time to wait for a response, effectively withdrawing the hope for a response that line 29 offered. In this way, N's answer in line 34 is a dispreferred response, which N overtly registers in line 37 ("HYLA don' make me sa(h)y th(h)ings i(h)ike th(h)at.").

Extract 3.52 HGII

29 N: ↑I .wouldn'expect him tuh write back sin-w-in 'hh two wee:ks,
 30 (0.4)
 31 H: Why:??
 32 (.)
 33 H: -> You woulda hh[hh hn-n-hn] heh huh huh_
 34 N: ->> [You would o]fhhhhhhh 'hh_h ↑I guess ↑I would=
 35 heh heh=
 36 H: =[eh 'hhh
 37 N: ->> =[heh HYLA don' make me sa(h)y th(h)ings i(h)ike th(h)at.

Extract 3.53 presents a case where the speaker essentially cedes her epistemic primacy to that of her recipient with regard to her own internal state – the question of whether or not she is likely to cry during a play that her recipient has already seen before as a movie. She does so by formulating her A-event as an interrogative, a clear downgrade of her epistemic primacy in the matter.

Extract 3.53 Hyla and Nancy

01 H: =['n there's something rilly sa:d thet happ'ns=
 02 N: =[D o n ' t [te::ll [(oo:::)]]
 03 H: =_'n I don't [wanna [t_e_l_l you]:::ehhh [uh]
 04 N: ->> [im] I g'nna cry::?
 05 (.)
 06 H: Ye:s I cried hystericlly et the [movi_e.I don'know'f'm]=
 07 N: [O h : g u y]=
 08 H: =g'nna c_r_y::,

This extract shows that participants may downgrade epistemic status in matters surrounding their own epistemic territory when, within a particular situated context, their recipient has made an epistemic claim on the information in question that the speaker is willing to align with. In Extract 3.53, N asks H if she (N) is going to cry during a play that H has seen before as a movie. In previous talk (not shown) H has talked at great length about the movie, thus displaying her epistemic authority about it – a stance that N has aligned with all along. The interrogative (“im I g'nna cry::?”), targeting an A event, recognizes H’s epistemic authority with respect to the movie and simultaneously situates H as someone who knows N well enough to know N’s likely emotional reactions in the matter of things such as sad movies and plays. That H is in agreement with the upgraded epistemic authority assigned to her in the matter of the play and N’s probable emotional reaction to it is evidenced by H’s almost immediate alignment, after a micropause, with N’s statement in line 6. Thus, the two participants engage in an action something like “doing being friends,” or “doing being intimate.” The implications of giving up one’s epistemic authority in matters relating to A events may be an interesting avenue for further research, as such a practice may be one way in which people display willingness to engage in convivial

relations with others.

3.6. The action import of B-event declaratives

Like downgraded A-event declaratives, B-event declaratives tend to be implicated in the formation of socially-affiliative, and as it will be shown, socially-disaffiliative actions. This finding resonates with Kamio's (1997) territory of information theory. Kamio discusses at length the intersection of politeness theory and territory of information. Recall Kamio's observation, discussed in Chapter 2 of the present analysis, that given the two statements, (a) and (b) (below), (b) is the more polite of the two because it recognizes that (a) falls within the epistemic territory of the recipient and therefore compels the use of the formulation "I hear" (an example of A-perspectivizing, as discussed in this chapter) as an acknowledgement of that fact.

- a. Your son is a medical student of Harvard.
- b. I hear that your son is a medical student of Harvard.

An investigation of the actions done by B-event declaratives indicates that B-event declaratives are indeed highly-implicated in the formation of socially-disaffiliative and socially-affiliative actions. This is discussed in the following two sections.

3.6.1. Socially-disaffiliative actions

Though not universally the case, in the aggregate, B-event declaratives that are resisted tend to have a negative tenor, and in many cases, appear in turns that either are doing or are construed by their recipients to be doing socially-disaffiliative actions, such as insulting, accusing or reproaching. This resistance appears to occur regardless of the degree of epistemic access that A has to B's information. In other words, even in those cases where A has a relatively high degree of epistemic access and thus the B-event declarative has high-warrantability, if the

statement does a negative action or formulates B negatively in some way, resistance occurs.

This will be demonstrated in extracts 3.54 – 3.56.

In Extract 3.54, discussed earlier as Extract 3.09, we see that the B-event declarative is taken by the recipient as an accusation, which he resists by issuing a denial. In line 18, J provides as an account for her choosing to buy a mutual friend a hat for his birthday the fact that S “took” the non-present third party’s hat. In line 19, S resists the characterization of his action as “taking” the hat by explicitly countering that formulation (“^I didn't take his”) and providing an alternate formulation of his action (“<I paid him for it. what he paid for it” line 19), thus characterizing his action as a fair exchange of money for an item, rather than the morally-ambiguous action of “taking” the hat.

Extract 3.54 Joyce and Stan

```
14 J:      =Well d on't tell Bernie but I got him a hat fer his birthday.
15 S:      Oh you got Bernie a hat?
16 J:      Yeah.
17         (. )
18 J: ->>  'Cause you took his. It's sort of like
19 S: ->>  ^I[ didn't take his.<I paid him for it. what he paid for it.
20 J:      [(m)
21 J: ->   O h you paid him for it.
22 S:      Of ^course!
23 J:      O h:. So I got him one sortuv li:ke that.
```

Extract 3.55 provides an example of an insult/counter-insult sequence that consists of a B-event declarative that is resisted by its recipient. In 3.55, B and V are having an argument at the family dinner table. B has just used a word that V feels is inappropriate (line 29). In line 32, B begins a justification for her use of the word that she ends in line 34 with “You’ve heard worse,” an insult that strongly implies that V frequents others who might use such language. V’s epistemic status with regard to what she has heard or not heard before outranks B’s, and on this basis alone she might resist the statement; however, the socially-disaffiliative action done by an insult appears to provide additional grounds for resisting the declarative, and in line 37, V does so with a counter-insult which categorizes B as one who uses such language (“From yo:u:.”)

Extract 3.55 Virginia

29 V: That ^ is na:sty, Beth.<Don't (tey abou:::h) that around
30 Mo:m̩
31 (0.9)
32 B: Y o u ASKED tuh keep hearin' it.<I wanna hear it, I wanna
33 hear it=
34 B: ->> =ub- (.) ^Y ou've heard worse.
35 (0.4)
36 P: eh h eh huh hu[h hah
37 V: [From yo:u:.

That participants orient to the mere possibility of B-event declaratives being heard as doing socially-disaffiliative actions can be seen in Extract 3.56, where L and J are discussing an absent third party who had called L earlier to ask L to participate in an activity that both L and J view as undesirable.

Extract 3.56 Holt 0/88-1-08

04 L: ->> An' ↑then she rang me up 'n said that (.) Joyce
05 ->> suggested that I [(normally)] he_l ↑huh[hah huuh↑
06 J: [Ahhh:::] [Ohhh:::~::~.~::~.
07 L: hu-uh .hhhhh[↑So I said um .khhh W'I'm sorr[y I'm=
08 J: [()] [()
09 L: =teaching she said .hh ↑↑Oh: (.)↑oh my dear, well how
10 lovely that you're involved in ↑↑tea-ching. A[n' -I:]=
11 J: [Ohh:~::~.
12 L: =thought .hhh ↑well al↑right then p'haps I'd like to
13 suggest you ↑↑f'the nex'supply pe(h)ers[(h)on
14 J: [UH:::~::~h=
15 L: =h[eh-uh heh-uh heh-uh huh.
16 J: [heh.
17 (0.5)
18 J: ->> She: said um::n e::m did I know if you were tea:ching.
19 ->> (0.2)
20 J: ->> I didn:'t suggest you at all[shē-]

In line 4, L reports what the third party had said in the prior conversation. The grammatical formulation of the turn in point, lines 4-5, displays a refined orientation to the delicate social actions that B-event declaratives can be understood to do, as it features a replacement with the name “Joyce” – a direct speech formulation – at precisely the point where the word “you” – a reported speech formulation – would appear, thus attributing the B-event declarative to the absent third party. A detailed examination of the grammatical formulation of this turn may be useful at this point. The direct and reported speech versions of L’s turn can be seen below:

a. *Direct speech* version of L's turn:

And then she rang me up and said, "Joyce suggested that you normally help."

b. *Reported speech* version of L's turn:

And then she rang me up and said that you suggested that I normally help.

Although L's turn begins in a reported speech framework, ("An' then she rang me up 'n said that"), at precisely the point where a B-event declarative is projectable, there is a micropause and the "you" is replaced with "Joyce," thus rendering "(.) Joyce suggested that I [(normally)] hel) huh hah huuh." The replacement of "you" with "Joyce" is a direct speech formulation that effectively attributes this portion of the turn, which is occupied with identifying who it was who had prompted the unwelcome phone call to L, to the absent third party, rather than to L. The return to the indirect speech framework at the end of the turn (via the use of "I") localizes the source of trouble as specifically the "Joyce" / "you" distinction. In line 18, J issues an alternate account of what had been said that exonerates her. J's correction (line 18; "She: said um::n e::m did I know if you were tea:ching.") supports her subsequent denial in line 20 ("I didn't suggest you at all"), which displays an understanding of lines 4-5 as a possible accusation by denying that she had suggested L for the task.

Thus, it is clear that statements about information that a recipient has epistemic authority over are routinely resisted by recipients, and as extracts 3.54-3.56 have demonstrated, in many cases, these statements can be understood by both speakers and recipients to be implicated in socially-disaffiliative actions.

3.6.2. Socially-affiliative actions

A final piece of evidence to support the observation that B-event declarative that do socially disaffiliative actions are resisted comes from examination of a contrasting set of B-event

declaratives that do socially-affiliative actions. In these cases, we see that B-event declaratives routinely receive alignment. Thus, in Extract 3.57, earlier discussed as Extract 3.37, line 168 is an encouragement. In this case, the declarative also has high warrantability (see lines 144-145).

Extract 3.57 Geri and Shirley

141 G: W' what scores dih yih usually nee:d,h
 142 .hhh to get in[to a law school.]=
 143 S: [.hhh [O k a : y.] If I
 144 S:->> wantituh get intuh:: (0.2) .hhhh Sou:thwestern.
 145 ->> I think I c'n get intuh Southwestern.
 146 (0.2)
 147 G: Ye[:ah?
 148 S: [Regardless.
 149 S: .hhh Uh:m .hh 'f I wannid t'get intuh like Cal Western er
 150 Loyola. .hhh or Hastings er Golden Gate I need et least
 151 right now a six hundred.

(Lines omitted)

165 G: .hh- .hh Well why not Southwestern.=
 166 S: =.hhhhhh I'm g'nna call the(d) edmissions office en ask tuh
 167 speak tih their dean.
 168 G: ->> You'd git in there,
 169 S: Yeah,=
 170 G: =I think,=
 171 S: =.hhh I think I might.

In Extract 3.58, the speaker's B-event declarative appears to be deployed in the context of an action that can be characterized as "showing understanding." In this extract, the speaker, T, has just had her house burn down and is talking about her reaction to the event. In lines 5-7, she contrasts her experience of the fire as "real" with an absent third party's (Brad's) experience ("so it's more real fuh (you)/(him)"). N's turn in line 10, "En it's not tuh you," is parasitic on T's turn via the "En," (And). The action this turn does is showing understanding of the upshot of the prior speaker's turn, namely that the situation is "more real" for Brad than it is for T. Insofar as the B-event declarative made by N is displaying understanding of T's turn without having had the information said explicitly, this is a socially-affiliative action, and T treats it as such by aligning with it in line 11.

Extract 3.58 House Burning

05 T: E::n, hh I don'know, I just I guess I ruh-I really haven'
06 been up there tuh see it=Brad's b'n up there twice uhready
07 ->> so it's more real fuh (you)/(him).
08 N: .HH-Yea:h.
09 (0.2)
10 N: ->> En it's not tuh you.Sure.//Oka:y.
11 T: (Sure)/(mmmh)

Extract 3.59 provides another example of a participant's displaying uptake of what her participant has said in the immediately preceding talk. In lines 10 – 13, G details the impressive size of the book she has just read. In line 17, F counters G's statement ("I've never read such a book in my life"; line 13) by issuing a B-event declarative ("Sure you have," line 17). In line 18, G resists this formulation. Although "sure you have" projects that a compliment may be in the offing, this turn does not display F's uptake or acceptance of the A-event declarative G has just made. In lines 18-19, G begins to detail how this particular book differs from a typical four-hundred page book, and in line 20, F demonstrates uptake via a B-event declarative ("It's like dense"). This prompts G to stop her turn-in-progress to issue an alignment and a partial repeat of F's turn ("yeah its dense").

Extract 3.59 Talkbank 6015

10 G: I have go:: much stuff a:ll the time like its cra:zy I just
11 finished a four hundred page bookh hh in ti:me because I have ta
12 write a phhaper on it hh Like its crazy its this hu:ge book.
13 -> massive.=I've never read such a book in my life.=
14 F: =Four hundered pages?
15 (.)
16 G: (Mch!)What?=
17 F: ->> =Sure you have,
18 G: -> It's- no b'd it's not like a four hundred page book like four
19 hundred page li:ke=
20 F: ->> It's like dense,
21 G: -> =Its- yeah its dense an its called global dreams,

Additionally, in Extract 3.60, lines 6-7 constitute an invitation to go out cloaked as a B-event declarative ("So in other words you'd go out if I:: askedche out one a' these times.") The alignment is almost immediate (line 8).

Extract 3.60 JGIIB

01 D: So who're the boyfriends fer the week.
02 (0.2)
03 C: °k°hhhhh- Oh: go::d e-yih this one'n that one yihknow, I
04 dist, yihknow keep busy en go out when I wanna go out Dee
05 it's nothing °hhh I don'have anybody serious on the string,
06 D: ->> So in other words you'd go out if I:: askedche out one a
07 ->> these times.
08 C: Yeah! Why not.
09 D: Why no:t.
10 (D): (Okay,)
11 D: Whenih you uh: what nights'r you available.

Finally, in Extract 3.61, discussed earlier as Extract 3.24, a B-event declarative that is part of a joking sequence receives alignment. This sequence is characterized by a large number of laughter tokens issued by both speakers (lines 71, 72, 74, 75, 77 and 80), indicating that both speakers understand the action they are engaged in to be joking. In lines 77-78, P issues two B-event declaratives (“you had all hh you always had all the tools you jus' didnt know whether they work right or not”). B aligns immediately in line 79.

Extract 3.61 TC IIb: Pyatt and Bush

68 B: Yeah I think so too. Least I know I'm built
69 right y know
70 P: Yeah right
71 B: heh heh heh heh heh//
72 P: heh heh
73 B: sitting there shakin her head
74 P: Hah hah//hah
75 B: Hah. hah
76 B: No. I//(think I) -
77 P: ->> heh you had all hh you always had all the tools
78 ->> you jus' didnt know whether they work right or not
79 B: ->> Yeah
80 P: ->> hehh

3.7. Conclusion

The goal of this chapter was to establish a foundation for understanding the role of epistemics in the grammatical formulation of turns in talk-in-interaction through the examination of A and B-event declaratives and the knowledge claims that they make. One observation that can be made from the preceding analysis is that the declarative appears to be the preferred grammatical format for the expression of A events. On the other hand, the declarative appears to

be a dispreferred format for the expression of B events, and it was proposed that interrogatives may instead be the preferred format based on their ubiquity in naturally-occurring talk. Supporting this analysis is the finding that straight declaratives (i.e., declaratives that are not downgraded) are deployed when speakers have clear epistemic rights to the information under discussion (as is the case in A-event declaratives); however, when their *recipient* has clear epistemic rights to the information under discussion (as is the case in B-event declaratives,) speakers orient to the warrantability of their B-event declarative; if the statement has low warrantability, they routinely downgrade their epistemic claims by modifying the declarative through the deployment of a variety of grammatical and paralinguistic elements. Departures from this practice were explainable by specific actions that participants were doing, such as softening the rejection of an offer or making an accusation. It was also noted that knowledge claims made by B-event declaratives are just that – *claims* to know which may or may not reflect the true knowledge status of the speaker. In those cases where the warrantability or factual accuracy of a B-event declarative is in question, recipients may resist aligning with the B-event declarative, and in some cases, extended sequences in which the facts and the rights to characterize the facts become the main matter with which the participants (and the sequence) are occupied.

Taken together, these facts indicate that a systematic epistemic relationship exists among various grammatical formats such that each format indexes a particular epistemic stance vis à vis the information contained in the turn and vis à vis a particular recipient. The epistemic differences between A-event declaratives, B-event declaratives and interrogatives are summarized in Table 3.01, below:

Table 3.01. Epistemic differences between A-event declaratives, B-event declaratives and interrogatives.

Utterance type		Downgraded (typically)	Speaker has access	Hearer is primary rightsholder
A-event declarative		No	Yes	No
B-event declarative	High warrantability	No	Claims access	Yes
	Low warrantability	Yes	No	Yes
Interrogative		Yes – the interrogative format itself indexes low epistemic status	No	Yes

Having discussed A and B-event declaratives in an attempt to establish some preliminary facts about how they interact with epistemics and formation of action, we will now turn, in Chapter 4, to the epistemic claims made by interrogative as opposed to B-event declaratives and the kinds of actions that such claims mediate in the context of medical interaction.

CHAPTER FOUR

An epistemic approach to declarative and interrogative formulations

4.1. Introduction

In Chapter 3, an analysis of A- and B-event declaratives revealed that participants' orientations to their own and to their recipients' knowledge states is a pervasive feature of talk-in-interaction. Building on the previous chapter's discussion of epistemics in A and B-event declaratives, the current chapter seeks to accomplish two goals: the first is to further demonstrate the utility of epistemics as an analytical tool by investigating the role of epistemics in the grammatical formulation of several types of utterance. The other is, by way of the first goal, to extend this discussion of how epistemics operates in talk by investigating the role of epistemics in the formulation of utterances in a particular context – that of doctor-patient interaction.

The rationale for the inclusion of institutional data in a study such as this can be found in Drew and Heritage's (1992a) discussion of the methodological relevance of conversation analytic studies to the study of institutional talk. In their paper, the authors note that institutional talk differs from ordinary conversation in three ways: 1) the orientations that participants exhibit with regard to the interaction, 2) the constraints that are placed upon participants by the roles conferred upon them in a particular institutional context, and 3) the "inferential procedures and frameworks" associated with a particular institution (p. 22). They further state that because of these features, comparative studies of ordinary conversation and institutional talk can inform studies involving institutional data. The authors note:

Significant light can be shed on institutional data by showing, for example, *how* nonspecialized conversational procedures are being thus adapted; how they might be altered in some respects as compared with their use in conversation; whether or how they are being used to novel effect in a specialized setting; and how such conversational forms are otherwise being systematically and recurrently mobilized to perform some specialized role-related or “strategic” task in that setting” (p. 38).

In this chapter, the converse may be said to be true: that significant insights may be gained into conversation and interaction, specifically in the area of epistemics and the formulation of grammatical utterances, by investigating how epistemics is deployed as a resource in a particular type of institutional talk, in this case, that between a doctor and patient or patient caretaker during after-hours emergency calls. Specifically, this chapter investigates three question formats commonly used in medical questioning: Yes/No declaratives, Yes/No interrogatives and elliptical questions. The specific goal of this chapter is to understand how each of these formats indexes rights and access to information in the history-taking phase of the telephone consult, thereby constituting an epistemic resource which participants can draw upon to manage social identities and relationships. The organization of this chapter is as follows: To establish a context for the analysis, the literature on physician questioning will be reviewed. Then the data used for the current analysis will be discussed. The bulk of the chapter will discuss the use of the declarative and the interrogative as alternate formats for questioning during after-hours emergency medical calls. Specifically, it will be demonstrated that interrogatives and declaratives are deployed in distinct sequential environments: the interrogative is deployed by physicians when asking patients or their caretakers about symptoms that have not figured in the prior talk and thus constitute a weak epistemic claim on the part of the physician to have access to the information the interrogative targets. Declarative formulations, on the other hand, embody a claim to know some piece of information. In the present context, it will be shown that declaratives were used to target information that the physician had partial knowledge of, but

which the physician needed to revisit in order to obtain further information about the patient's health state. It was also used to do other social actions, including projecting a stance about a proposed course of treatment and transitioning from patient- to physician-directed talk. Finally, elliptical interrogatives and elliptical declaratives will be examined, and the epistemic distinction between them will be discussed.

4.2. Participants' knowledge: Questions and epistemics

Questions and questioning have received considerable scholarly attention over the past 30 years, and the literature on the epistemics of question formulation is extensive, reflecting a wide array of perspectives and orientations (e.g., Bolinger, 1957; Lang, 1978; Goodwin, 1979, 1981, 1987; Heritage, 2002a; Pomerantz, 1988; Beun, 1990, 2000; Hirschberg and Ward, 1994; Huddleston, 1994; Koshik, 2002; Gunlogson, 2003; Raymond, 2003; Romero and Han, 2004; Tottie and Hoffmann, 2006 and Poschmann, 2008, among others).

As demonstrated in Chapter 3, participants orient to epistemic territories — both their own and those of their co-participants, and it is perhaps in the action of questioning and the ways in which participants patrol and defend these territories that the relevance of epistemics becomes most apparent. In the medical consultation, epistemic claims are massively implicated in the questioning of patients by physicians because of the complementary nature of the information exchanged in the medical interview: the patient has rights and access to information about his or her physical symptoms, sensations and experiences, whereas the physician has access to the medical knowledge necessary to make sense of these symptoms and formulate a plan for treatment. To reach their goals, each participant must convey information to the other, often through a process of questioning which may involve a variety of question formats. Examination

of data revealed that Yes/No declaratives (hereafter Y/N declaratives), Yes/No Interrogatives (hereafter YNIs) and elliptical questions were among the major grammatical formats used in questions deployed by physicians to gather information from callers about patients' physical states. Each format, along with any variants, is exemplified in Table 4.01:

Table 4.01. Some questioning formats used in after-hours emergency calls

Questioning format	Example
Yes/No declarative Yes/No declarative + same polarity tag ¹⁷	"But she's keeping all her fluids down?" "You've tried him with just boiled water, have you?"
Yes/No interrogatives	"Is she drinking plenty?"
Elliptical question	"No blood or anything green or anything" "Any problems with your breathing?"

In this chapter, it will be argued that each of the formats identified above makes a particular epistemic claim that, in turn, addresses a particular interactional contingency that is consequential for the establishment of a social relationship between physicians and patients. To begin this discussion, the literature on epistemics as it relates to physician questioning will be reviewed.

4.2.1. Epistemics and physicians' questioning

It has become increasingly clear that the practices employed by physicians to question patients about their medical history can significantly impact the delivery of medical care and the attainment of desired health outcomes. Scholars of medical interaction have commented on the central role that physician questioning plays in the delivery of care, noting that it is one of the

¹⁷ In these data, all same polarity tag questions featured affirmative verbs in the main clause accompanied by affirmative verbs in the tag (e.g., "You were late, were you?"). No instances of negative-negative type same polarity tag questions (e.g., You weren't late, weren't you?) were found.

primary means by which physicians gather the information necessary to diagnose and treat patients' medical problems. Quantitative studies of physician-patient interaction have found that slightly over 20% of a medical visit may be dedicated to physician questioning (Roter and Hall, 2006, as cited in Heritage, 2010). Other studies have found that many illnesses can be diagnosed uniquely through the process of effective questioning of patients by physicians (Hampton, et al., 1975). Not surprisingly, medical questioning practices have received increased scholarly attention in recent years. Much of this work has focused on the organization of question and answer sequences and the consequences of this organization for the participants. Stivers and Heritage (2001), for example, have examined the ways in which patients break free of the constraints imposed by physician question design and expand their responses to physician questions to implement specific projects. Heritage (2002b, 2010) discusses two preferences in the design of routine questions and their consequences on the relationship between health visitors (community nurses) and their patients. Looking at physicians' questioning practices, Boyd and Heritage (2006) found that physicians' questions reflect the principles of optimization and recipient-design and that these design features, among others, differentiate medical questioning from other forms of questioning, for example, the "essentially anonymous" (quotes in original) form of questioning used in social surveys (Boyd and Heritage, 2006, p.168). These researchers found that the design features of optimization and problem-attentiveness are primary resources via which physicians establish a rapport with their patients. The principles of optimization and problem-attentiveness are of particular relevance to the current study and will be discussed below.

4.2.2. Optimization and problem-attentiveness

A major feature of physicians' questions is that they display a particular orientation to the patient's physical state. These orientations are generally one of two kinds: optimized (Heritage, 2002b; Heritage, 2010; Boyd and Heritage, 2006) or "problem attentive" (Stivers, 2007). On the one hand, physicians' questions can be characterized by "optimization"; that is, the questions may be designed such that they present a positive characterization of the patient's current medical state by "incorporating presuppositions and preferences that are biased towards 'best case' or 'no problem' outcomes" (Boyd and Heritage, 2006, p. 164). A question such as "How 'bout the headache. Is that settled?" is optimized because it establishes a positive medical state (a settled headache) and grammatically prefers an affirmative response. Likewise, a question like "any diarrhea a'tall?" is optimized because it establishes a negative medical state (diarrhea) and grammatically prefers a negative response. In both of these cases, the question is biased toward a "no problem" characterization of the patient's health, and a response which aligns with these preferences would, indeed, yield such a characterization.

However, if a patient is in fact not in the best of health, physicians may avoid characterizing a patient's health state as positive; thus, a physician whose patient has just presented with a flu or cold would be unlikely to optimize questions surrounding that complaint. In such a case, a problem-attentive question such as "Are you feverish?" which asks about a negative health state (being feverish) and grammatically prefers an affirmative response might be asked. Problem-attentive questions, therefore, exhibit the characteristic of recipient design, formally defined as the "multitude of respects in which the talk by a party in a conversation is constructed or designed in ways which display an orientation and sensitivity to the particular other(s) who are the co-participants" (Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson, 1974: 727).

Heritage (2002b) notes that the questioning modalities of optimization and recipient design are of primary importance to the “process of making and sustaining personal relationships with particular other individuals” (Heritage, 2002b, p. 331). In his study of interactions between British health visitors (community nurses) and new mothers, Heritage found that health visitors attended to proper recipient design in a number of ways – by avoiding redundancy in their questions, by explicitly acknowledging having already been told information by the mothers, and by supplying candidate answers about the new mothers to questions required by a government form. All of these practices related to recipient design, Heritage notes, are instrumental to the establishment of relationships between health visitors and their clients.

Extending this line of work to investigate the role of grammar in medical interactions, Raymond (2010a) examined the ways in which Yes/No interrogatives and declaratives can be deployed by speakers to index the social relationships among or between participants, and, further, to manage what has been termed “the epistemics of social relations” (Raymond and Heritage, 2006). Raymond (2010a) specifically looked at interactions between health visitors and new mothers in Great Britain and showed how the grammatical formats used in building Yes/No inquiries indexed different social relations between the health visitors and their clients, thereby constituting a practice by which participants manage their social and institutional relationships.

In earlier work on Yes/No interrogatives, Raymond (2003) had identified the grammatical formulation of turns as a potentially fruitful area of research in conversation analysis which “contribute[s] to our understanding of interaction as a form of social organization...by establishing links between its normative organization and the grammatical structures of turns at talk, which are its primary constituents” (p. 941). In his subsequent study

of health visitors and new mothers in the UK (Raymond, 2010a), Raymond examined health visitors' use of Yes/No interrogatives (YNIs) and Yes/No declaratives, looking specifically at how these alternate question formats invoke differing orientations with regard to two matters: 1) the participants' *access* to the information being formulated in the question and 2) the recognition by the participants of who has the primary *right* to know that information. In work in line with Heritage's study of the epistemic gradient (2012), Raymond found that the two grammatical formats differ in terms of the participants' claimed access to the information: the declarative claims that both speakers currently have or have had access to the information, whereas the interrogative claims that the participant who generates the question does not have access to that information. Raymond further notes that these alternate formats do different actions, make different types of responses relevant from the recipient, and have different sequential consequences on the interaction. He concludes that it is partly through the varying interactional contingencies arising from these alternate question formats that participants form the social relationships that make up the fabric of human sociality.

The present chapter seeks to demonstrate the utility of applying an epistemic framework to the study of question formulation in a specific context: that of after-hours calls to an on-call physician. In doing so, it extends Raymond's work on grammar in medical interaction and Heritage's (2012) work on epistemics and action by examining several types of grammatical resources used to build physicians' questions in the context of after-hours calls to an on-call physician. Specifically, this chapter will investigate how three question formats commonly used in medical questioning, Yes/No declaratives, YNIs and elliptical questions, index rights and access to information in the history-taking phase of the telephone consult, thereby constituting a resource which participants can draw upon to manage social identities and relationships.

4.3. Data

The data set upon which this analysis draws is composed of audio recordings of 59 telephone calls made by individuals to an on-call physician in the English Midlands (Drew, 2006a).¹⁸ In some cases, the caller was the patient him or herself; in others, the caller was a friend or family member calling on behalf of patients suffering from various physical complaints. The calls were all made to the same physician after normal clinic hours.

A brief ethnographic note regarding the data may be relevant at this point. These data are taken from phone calls between doctors and patients in Britain. Unlike in the U.S., physicians in Britain are employed by the government under the auspices of the British National Health Service. Patients are assigned to specific physicians within a given health district, and patients may see their physician during regular daytime office hours; in addition, however, patients may make after-hours calls to their doctor, and in certain cases, the doctor may deem it necessary to make a house call. Because of this context, the gross phase structure of the telephone medical consultation includes the call opening, problem presentation, history taking, possible diagnosis, which may include a physician's promise to visit, treatment recommendation, and the call closing (Drew, 2006b). It is the history-taking phase which is the focus of the current analysis.

One characteristic that is unique to this particular medical context is the purpose of the history-taking phase of the phone consult. Unlike face-to-face medical consults, where the goal of the history-taking phase is the identification of the medical problem and determining a subsequent plan of treatment, the history-taking phase during these telephone calls constitutes a process via which the physician can determine, among other possibilities, whether the patient needs to be seen immediately (necessitating a home visit by the physician) or whether a

¹⁸ Thanks are due to Paul Drew for permission to use these data and to John Heritage for making them available for use.

treatment, an interim treatment (to be implemented by the patient until he or she can be seen during normal clinic hours) or other medical or non-medical advice can be given over the phone (Drew, 2006b). Thus, history-taking in after-hours calls differs from the history-taking which occurs during face-to-face consultations in its purpose, and these differences may affect the degree to which the observations made based on these data can be applied to face-to-face interactions; however, they provide an interesting starting point for future investigations of the role of grammar and epistemics in face-to-face doctor-patient interactions.

4.4. Yes/No declaratives and Yes/No interrogativeness in physicians' questions

Physicians regularly use both YNIs and Y/N declaratives to elicit information from their patients, and indeed, the mere act of questioning the patient displays an orientation to the patient as having primary rights to information about his or her medical situation. However, as Raymond (2010a) notes in his study of British health visitors (HVs), it is the use of one particular question format chosen over the other that indexes the medical provider's changing access to the information over the course of the medical visit.

As in HV-mother interactions, during physician-patient interactions, an asymmetrical relationship exists with regard to the participants' access to the information being formulated. As the proper holders of information about their physical condition, patients are viewed within the interaction as having primary rights and obligations to know such information. The physician then questions the patient to find out relevant particulars in order to properly evaluate and diagnose the patient's medical condition. However, there are distinct differences in how physicians use YNIs and Y/N declaratives when questioning patients about their symptoms during the history-taking phase of the medical consultation. Section 4.4.1 examines how

physicians use declarative and interrogative syntax as a resource to index the changing status of the physician's access to the information and, by extension, to manage the socio-epistemic relationship between doctor and patient with regard to that information.

4.4.1. Yes/No declaratives and Yes/No interrogatives as alternative question formats

An immediate observation in these data is a contrast between the physician's use of the interrogative and the declarative in two distinct sequential environments: the interrogative is overwhelmingly used to query the patient about symptoms and other matters that have not been explicitly mentioned in the prior talk, while declaratives and declaratives + tag are used to ask patients about information that has figured in some way in the prior talk; that is, as was discussed in Chapter 3, they are B-event declaratives that exhibit a high degree of warrantability. This is demonstrated in Extract 4.01, below, where a mother is calling about her baby:

Extract 4.01 DEC 1112

01 Clr: A:nd it's d- it's (bringin') up its mi:lk,
02 Clr: Its face is (callin')/(comin') out all in spots.=I wondered
03 if it w'jus: be the heat, or:
04 Clr: =I've tried givin' 'im wa:ter but 'e spits that out,
05 Doc: Is 'e?=How long 'as this been going on for then
06 Clr: U::h we:ll basically since dinner i-tha' 'e's actually bringin'
07 the milk up,
08 Clr: you know, it's sort'us: comin' up all the while at the minute,
09 Doc: ->> Is it? What-w: it's just milk coming up, no: 'hhh no blood or
10 anyt'ing gree[n or anything?
11 Clr: [No:,

(Lines omitted)

25 Doc: ->> =He, yeah. A:nd um: (0.4) you've trie:d him
26 ->> with: just- (b):boiled water, have yo[u?
27 Clr: [Yes,

(Lines omitted)

33 Doc: ->> Yeah:, and these spots, they're just on the face, are they?
34 Clr: Pardon?
35 Doc: Didyou say he had sspots on 'is fa:ce,
36 Clr: Yeah, 'e's got spots on 'is face, but I think that's=
37 Clr: =just like a heat- he[at (spots)
38 Doc: [Yeah,
39 Doc: ->> Yeah Now I mean ar-you keeping him as cool as
40 ->> possible? in t[his (.) weather?
41 Clr: [Yes, Yes, I have

(Lines omitted)

71 Doc: ->> Is'e crying a lot more than normal, or:
 72 Clr: 'E get- well I haven't got- managed to get 'im off ta
 sleep, ata- atall,

The caller develops the problem in lines 1, 2, 4, 6, 7 and 8; namely that the child is bringing up milk (lines 1, 6, 7 and 8), has spots on his face (line 2) and spits up water (line 4). After the caller has completed the problem presentation, the physician revisits in line 9 the child's symptom of bringing up milk initially mentioned in lines 1, 6, 7 and 8 ("What-w: it's just milk coming up,"), using the declarative format. He does the same in lines 25 and 26, returning to the mother's claimed treatment of the child in line 4 ("you've trie:d him with: just- (b):boiled water, have you?"), and does it once again in line 33 ("Yeah:, and these spots, they're just on the face, are they?") to ask about the spots mentioned by the mother in line 2. When he shifts, however, to ask whether the mother has been keeping the child cool – a topic not yet explicitly addressed in the talk,¹⁹ he uses the interrogative: ("Now I mean ar-you keeping him as cool as possible; in this (.) weather;"). Later in the talk, the physician again asks about a symptom that has not been explicitly discussed in the prior talk when he asks about whether the child has been crying (line 72), and here again, in questioning the caller about a symptom that has not been mentioned in prior talk, he uses the interrogative.

Extract 4.01 presents a typical example of how the declarative was used by the physician in these data. Whereas the interrogative was used to discuss symptoms or other information that had not yet been explicitly discussed in the interaction, the declarative or declarative + tag format was used to address information that had already figured in the prior talk. In epistemic terms, the declarative and declarative + tag formats index an upgraded epistemic claim by the physician regarding the information targeted by the question; that is, it makes the claim that he already has

¹⁹ Although heat spots are mentioned in the prior turn and may provide a stepwise topic shift (Jefferson, 1984) that prompts the next question, the actual question of whether the mother has been keeping the child as cool as possible has not been explicitly addressed in the prior talk.

access to the information targeted by the question and is revisiting something that is “on the record” as having already been discussed.

Interactionally-speaking, the potential benefits of deploying these alternate grammatical formats is clear. The use of the interrogative in a context where the physician has already had access to the information in question may be infelicitous: the interplay between what has already been mentioned in the problem presentation, on the one hand, and what the physician questions the patient about, on the other, is delicate: in particular, a physician’s questioning a patient about information he has ostensibly already been given access to during the course of the interaction can be heard by the recipient as inattentive. Extract 4.01 demonstrates that one resource that physicians can use to avoid being heard as inattentive is the grammatical form of the question. Specifically, the use of the declarative format allows the physician to reinvolve, for various reasons, information that he has been given access to in prior talk while displaying that he has been listening to what the patient has already said.

4.4.2. Interactional uses of the declarative

The question that presents itself, then, is why a physician would revisit information he has already been given access to. While one readily-available explanation for returning to information already invoked is the notion that the physician is seeking confirmation of earlier-mentioned information, closer examination of the data indicates that, while the question does provide prima facie confirmation, it may have other interactional functions, as well. That is, epistemic claims may be a resource that participants deploy in the service of social actions other than simple confirmation. In these data, the physician revisited information to augment his understanding of the patient’s health state, to project a stance regarding a proposed treatment and

to transition from patient-centered to physician-centered talk. The first of these will be discussed at some length in section 4.4.2.1.

4.4.2.1. Pursuing information: Implicature and the maximal property of descriptions

Although the declarative is used to revisit information invoked in prior talk, closer examination of the talk reveals that the information targeted by the physician's declaratively formatted question is not always exactly that which was stated in the prior talk. This can be seen in Extract 4.02. In the problem presentation (line 20), the caller says that her daughter has been ill "since four o'clock." This formulation retrospectively describes her daughter's symptoms as occurring from 4:00 until the time that the caller made the phone call to the physician.

Extract 4.02 DEC 1103

```
20 Clr: -> She's been at this since four o'clock,  
21         =(n')/(now)I haven't been out of 'er bedroom  
22         since four o'clock since I come home from  
23         wo:rk,  
24 Doc:    Ri:ght,
```

(Lines omitted)

```
45 Clr:    And she's al(most) (bladder[an']) a:nd bowel  
46         control,  
47 Doc: ->> Ri:ght, and this: i-she was areallyf: quite  
48         ->> well up until about fou:rɔ  
49 Clr:    ^Yea[h,
```

In lines 47 and 48, the physician revisits what the patient had said in line 20 by asking what appears to be a "confirmation question" ("she was areallyf: quite well up until about fou:rɔ")

However, the physician's question is clearly designed to obtain a slightly different piece of information than that which the caller originally provided: it asks how the patient was doing *before* four o'clock – a piece of information not explicitly stated, but rather, retrievable from the caller's original formulation by implicature.²⁰ It will be argued that the use of the Y/N

declarative by the physician in lines 47 and 48 constitutes a claim of having heard this

²⁰ This practice appears to constitute an empirical example of how participants orient to what has been described elsewhere as Grice's Maxim of Quantity (Grice, 1975), namely, to be as informative as the exchange requires and no more informative than the exchange requires.

information before by virtue of the relationship of implicature that obtains between the question and the caller's original formulation. At the same time, however, he is able to obtain other relevant information that may be consequential for the patient's health outcome.²¹ The deployment of the declarative in this sequential context thus allows the physician to hold himself accountable vis à vis his recipient for having access to the information that the caller is on record as having reported in prior talk, while permitting him to obtain other information that is needed for him to evaluate the patient's medical condition.

To further deconstruct this example, it can be noted that the relationship that obtains between turns such as "She's been at this since four" and "She was areallyf: quite well up until about four:00" is one of implicature: "She's been at this since four" can be heard not only to say that the patient has been exhibiting symptoms since 4:00, but by implicature, to also say that before 4:00, she did not exhibit symptoms (i.e., she was quite well) or her symptoms were substantially less or different before 4:00 than they were after 4:00. Drawing on Sacks (1971/1991), Drew (1992) called this "the maximal property of descriptions" (p. 495). Drew notes that the bases for this concept had been earlier discussed by Sacks (1971/1992) in the context of event descriptions. Using the example of an invitation to dinner, Sacks observed that a person may invite someone over for an evening that will include dinner, talking and drinks; if the invitation is formulated as "Come over for dinner," all of these activities will be understood as possibly occurring during the evening. In contrast, if the invitation is formulated as "Come over for drinks," it is understood that the evening's activities will exclude dinner. Thus, Sacks notes, if the invitation includes dinner, dinner should be mentioned. Dinner, in this case, has "first-preference" status (Sacks, 1971/1992, p. 368) in such invitations and carries with it the

²¹ It may also be targeting a more precise formulation from the caller as to when the problem started; that is, had the problem begun at 4:00, or had 4:00 merely been the time at the caller, having come home from work, had noticed the symptoms.

implication of any number of other activities, whereas the formulation “drinks” does not carry the implication of dinner and does not have “first-preference” status in the case of dinner invitations.²²

With respect to Extract 4.02, we see the principle of first-preference operating in the caller’s description of her daughter: in problem presentations to physicians, reports of illness, and not of wellness, are “first-preference” reports; wellness can be understood to exist at any time that illness is not reported. Thus, by implicature, in 4.02, the caller’s report that her daughter has “been at this since 4:00” carries with it the meaning that she wasn’t “at this” before 4:00, or at the very least, that the caller had not witnessed the symptoms prior to 4:00, when she came home from work. Thus, line 20 constitutes the locus of implicature²³ in relation to lines 47 and 48, and allows the physician to understand that the patient was well or that the symptoms were not seen by the caller prior to 4:00, despite the fact that this has not been directly stated. That the physician holds himself accountable for this is seen in the use of the declarative format of his question. However, the question then arises: if the physician knows by implicature that the caller’s daughter was well before 4:00, why formalize this by asking if she was well up until 4? One possible explanation comes from the caller’s remark that she had come home at 4:00, which may mean that she had only begun to observe the symptoms at 4:00. The physician is then left to inquire as to the wellness of the patient before and until 4, which he does. Another explanation may be that whereas information that can be understood by implicature can pass without comment or re-asking by participants in the course of everyday conversation, physicians may need to be particularly attentive to patients’ talk, as errors of omission could be consequential for

²² This characterization of events appeared in Sacks’ lectures on April 23 and April 26, 1971, which can be found in Sacks (1971/1992).

²³ It should be noted that any turn is a potential locus of implicature, although claims of what a turn is understood to imply may vary from recipient to recipient.

health outcomes. In 4.02, the physician's question about the patient's state up until 4:00 may be a way of pursuing information about the onset of symptoms, giving the physician information about whether the illness came on suddenly or whether its development was more incremental – a determination which could have a bearing on diagnosis and subsequent treatment.

Returning to Extract 4.01, we can see that the same relationship between the physician's question and the locus of implicature obtains in several instances. The physician's query in lines 9 and 10 of 4.01 reinvokes information given over several loci of implicature (lines 1, 6, 7 and 8,) and seek to limit the substance that the child is producing to milk, thereby excluding other, more serious substances, such as blood ("it's just milk coming up,"). A similar case can be seen in the physician's question about the spots on the child's face (line 33), where again, the physician reinvokes the information stated in the locus of implicature ("Its face is (callin')/(comin') out all in spots," line 2) but seeks to limit the location of the spots to the child's face ("Yeah:, and these spots, they're just on the face, are they?" line 33). Likewise, with respect to the water, the caller initially states that she "tried givin' 'im wa:ter" (line 4), and the physician's declarative transforms this to "boiled water" in lines 25 and 26, information which tells him whether the caller had boiled the water, thus excluding the possibility that the illness could have been caused by a microorganism present in the water. Thus, the use of the declarative format in these examples displays the physician's orientation to the information as having already been invoked by implicature, thereby pre-empting the possibility of being heard as inattentive. At the same time, he seeks out more information than the caller has stated before, while being accountably attentive to what the caller has already said.

4.4.2.2. Projecting a stance and transitioning from patient to physician talk

Obtaining additional information is one possible action that the declarative does in medical interviews; however, in these data, the declarative was used for other interactional purposes, as well, including transforming the caller's original report to project a stance toward a proposed treatment and summarizing the caller's report to transition from patient talk (problem presentation) to physician talk (history-taking).

Extract 4.03 demonstrates the deployment of the declarative to project a stance toward a proposed treatment. Stivers (2007) has noted that physicians and patients engage in various practices to negotiate the treatment that will be pursued. In 4.03, we see the physician use the Y/N declarative to project a denial of a request in a call from an alcoholic who has requested a prescription for a drug to decrease the effects of alcohol withdrawal.

Extract 4.03 DEC 1102

```
17 Clr:      But we're alcoholicz
18 Doc:      Ri:ght,
19 Clr: ->   that's been off the drink fer: a good year,

(Lines omitted)

55 Clr:      (I) kept me- well, I kept me te:rms with it
56           obviously not now,
57           (0.3)
58 Doc: ->>  Right, but y-you-you were able tuh come off
59           ->> it beforez

(Lines omitted)

134 Doc: ->  Right, 'hhh A:um, (0.4) >I mean
135         -> I-<I can't really do anything (.) tonight,
136         -> I mean 'hhh I ha- I don't have any:'magic pills,

(Lines omitted)

278 Doc: ->  Well I'm I don't have anything that'd that
279         -> I could give you
280 Clr: ->  (Yihknow) because basically what I'm decidin'
281         -> is now it's what what half past nine,
282 Doc:      [Yeah,
283 Clr: ->  ['hhhh >do I< go back up there, the pub and
284         -> the club an' jus: '(.) stick alcohol down me
285         -> (ah dea:r)/(all day'r)
286         (0.4)
287 Clr:      'mh Yeah?
288 Doc:      Sure,
289 Doc: ->  mt pt 'hhh mhWell that's up to you really,
290         -> isn't it,
```

Fairly early in the call the caller characterizes himself as an alcoholic that has “been off the drink fer: a good year” (line 19). In lines 58-59, the physician revisits the fact that the caller has a history of resisting alcohol but formulates the caller in a Y/N declarative as “able tuh come off it before;”, thus transforming the caller’s previous characterization by emphasizing the caller’s active role in achieving sobriety.²⁴ In lines 134-136, the physician declines to prescribe for the caller and declines again in lines 278-279. Subsequently, in lines 280-281 and 283-285, the caller invokes the strong possibility that he may continue drinking, which, in the sequential environment immediately following a second rejection of his request, can be heard as an outcome of the physician’s not prescribing the drug. Finally, in lines 289-290, the doctor explicitly formulates the stance that was projected in lines 58-59 – that it is the caller’s responsibility to abstain from drinking. Thus, we can see that rather than being a simple confirmation, the Y/N declarative in this case revisits earlier-invoked information and thus is formulated in declarative form to show that the physician has registered hearing the information, while at the same time projecting a stance regarding treatment that is later explicitly formulated by the physician.

Another interactional contingency that Y/N declaratives may be designed to handle is to transition from problem presentation to history taking. Heritage (2010) has noted that physicians may ask a question which repeats information from the patient’s immediately preceding talk at the beginning of history taking as in Extract 4.04, below:

²⁴ I argue here that “being *able* to come off (the drink)” characterizes the achievement of sobriety as the responsibility of the patient, in contrast with the caller’s somewhat downgraded formulation of simply “being off the drink,” which does not invoke anything beyond the simple state of being sober and in doing so maintains a neutral stance as to who carries the responsibility for staying sober. This may be a case of a speaker’s exploiting the notion of implicature to project a particular stance with regard to the matter under discussion.

Extract 4.04 DEC 2202

08 Clr: -> My husband was taken ill: (wi') th'most awful stomach
09 -> pains, and sickness, h[h
10 Doc: [Ye:s,
11 Clr: -> .hh An' it's gone on a:ll night. He has vomited once.
12 Doc: Righ[t,
13 Clr: [An' also had some diarrhea,hh!
14 Doc: Right,=
15 Clr: You know he seems >t'be< almost writhing in
16 a:gony, (He's had) 'is appendix ouhht!
17 Doc: Ye:s,
18 Clr: Uhm: (.) an:d (.) you know he just feels he ought to see a
19 doctor.
20 Doc: R:ight, ih- h[e's actch-
21 Clr: [He's ly:ing in be:d, really absolutely
22 wre:tched.
23 Doc: ->> And he's had thuh pain in 'is tummy all night (h)as ['e?
24 Clr: [Y:es,

In lines 8-16 , the caller explains her husband’s complaint and details his symptoms. The receipt tokens in lines 10, 12, 14 and 17 show the physician passing on his turn at talk at the conclusion of the caller’s turn-constructural units in lines 9, 11, 13 and 16. After the caller concludes the problem presentation with a request to see the doctor, the physician issues a Yes/No declarative (line 23) that revisits information that caller had stated earlier in the talk (lines 8, 9 and 11). This accomplishes the transition from patient- to physician-talk, and in the ensuing sequence (not shown), the talk is led by the physician, who issues a series of questions designed to elicit information about the patient’s problem.

Thus, as in Extracts 4.02 and 4.03, in Extract 4.04 the physician’s turn targets information that is “on record” as having already been aired in the previous talk, and as a result, builds the question using a declarative format to index that he has heard the information, while simultaneously accomplishing a distinct social action -- in this case, managing the transition from the patient’s problem presentation to the physician-directed history-taking phase of the consult.

The notion that physicians use the grammatical formulation of their questions to manage interactions with patients is in keeping with Raymond’s observation that “grammatical

forms...are selected by reference to the local sequential context and the contingencies of action posed by it rather than the speakers' 'state of mind' or 'level of certainty'" (Raymond, 2010a, p. 102). In the above cases, the physician reinvokes information aired earlier in the talk to accomplish the actions of obtaining additional information, projecting a stance, and transitioning to the history-taking phase of the consult. Because the information has been made available to the physician, either explicitly or through implicature, he formats his information request in declarative structure, which exhibits recipient design by acknowledging that he has heard the information. Y/N declaratives, therefore, are a resource that physicians use to show that that they are holding themselves accountable for the information the patient has given them. It is this accountability which, in part, provides a basis for the doctor-patient relationship.

The use of the interrogative in such an environment, in contrast, would abruptly invoke an asymmetry between the physician and patient (Raymond, 2010a) and would constitute a claim that the physician had not been given access to the information when in fact he had. This would be hearably inattentive. In fact, in the next example, the interrogative appears to be quite consequential in constructing for the recipient whether or not the question is about information that has not been explicitly addressed in prior talk or about something which is already on record as having been discussed.

Extract 4.05 DEC 2117

05 Clr: I have a: a fourteen week old baby,
06 Doc: R:ight,
07 Clr: -> (Got bituv) a temprature but it's only
08 -> a hundred an' two- a: hundred point two.
09 (.)
10 Doc: Right,
11 Clr: But I don' know if it's tuh do with 'is
12 teeth or not an' I was just wantin' some
13 advice, really.
14 Doc: >Sure.< <'hh How is 'e in 'imself.
15 Clr: -> Well 'e's bit- restless an': 'e's not
16 -> with it all.
17 Doc: ->> 'mh[hhh Is 'e: feeding alright?
18 Clr: [uhh!
19 (.)
20 Clr: -> Well 'e's just takin' liquids he's not

21 takin' 'is solids.
 22 Doc: ->> R:ight.<But 'e's takin' those [nicely, is ['e?
 23 Clr: [Yes. [Uh huh.

(Lines omitted)

41 Doc: An':: an' I'll keep him on: just plenty 'a fluids,
 42 ->> ((swal[low]))t! Uh: <I mean is he taking solids much yet;
 43 Clr: Mm hm,
 44 (0.4)
 45 Clr: -> Well 'e:'s 'e's takin' two solids a day.
 46 Clr: -> Take one: in mornin' one at night.=
 47 Doc: =eh-khm! <Did'e have 'is morning ones.
 48 Clr: Yeah'e had 'is mornin' but 'e didn't have 'is night.

In Extract 4.05, the caller details the baby’s symptoms over several turns, explaining that he has got a temperature (lines 7-8), and is restless and “not with it all” (lines 15-16). When the physician questions the parent about new, heretofore unmentioned information (“Is 'e: feeding alright?”, line 17), he uses the interrogative. Then, he shifts to the declarative when asking about the child’s ability to drink (“But 'e's takin' those nicely, is 'e?”, line 22), which revisits information about the child’s drinking given by the parent in line 20 but seeks out more information than the caller had originally provided. Finally, in line 42, the doctor appears to revisit the question of whether the child is eating solid food, a topic seemingly addressed earlier in line 17, but the word “yet” and the parent’s subsequent displayed understanding (lines 45-46) indicate that this question has targeted something quite different – namely, whether the child, at fourteen weeks old, has reached the developmental stage where he has left bottle feeding and begun to eat solid food. In doing this, the physician is exploiting the relationship of implicature to close a gap in the information he needs to evaluate the child’s health condition. Thus, in this example, the alternation between Y/N declaratives and YNIs indexes changes in the speaker’s access to the knowledge formulated in the current question, with Y/N declaratives used to formulate questions about medical information about the patient that both participants have access to and YNIs being used to formulate questions about symptoms or other health

circumstances about which the physician does not yet have access to – i.e., that have not yet been mentioned explicitly or by implicature in the prior talk.

4.4.2.3. Special Case: Y/N declarative use in a normatively interrogative context

We can contrast these uses of Y/N declaratives and YNIs with a sequence in which the physician asks a question about a symptom that has *not* been evoked in prior talk – that is, a question asking about information that the recipient alone has access to, where the interrogative would normatively be employed – but where the physician instead uses the declarative. In both of the following cases, the declarative is used to talk about information that did not figure in the prior talk. The deployment of the declarative appears to be warranted by the fact that the physician is questioning the caller about information that the physician should reasonably be expected to know by virtue of his medical training (viz., in Extract7, the symptom of a non-active illness that the patient had experienced in the past and in Extract 4.07, the time of day a particular medicine is generally taken).

Extract 4.06 DEC 2204

```
84 Doc: -> Are you- are you otherwise fit and healthy?
85 Hus:   Yeah, I'm ever so fine, the last time I went
86       tuh the doctors is when they:: uh-like this,
87       an' they (me an' I was in)that was um:
88       just a blood disorder thing I had.
89 Doc:   <Sorry. e:-Was like what.
90 Hus:   What was that I 'ad out (do) ((to wife))
91 Cld:   (heenoxshongneye) ((in background))
92 Hus: -> He-he: (nox shong neye) if that means anything
93       -> to you.
94 Doc: -> >Yeah.< (He no- shurnlin) Right.
95       --> Well you had a rash then, though, [I presume.
96 Hus:   [That- well, it
97       started in me stomach, apparently: an:d I was
98       in hospital (uf) fuh quite some time before
99       it came out, yea[h.
```

At the point where Extract 4.06 begins, the patient has finished explaining his current symptoms, and in response to the physician's question in line 84, begins explaining the last time he had sought medical care, which occasioned his seeing the doctor for a disorder whose name he has trouble saying. The patient then acknowledges that his naming of the condition may not

be comprehensible (“He-he: nox shong neye if that means anything to you,” lines 92-93). The physician’s “Yeah.” and recasting of the name of the disease (“He no-shurnlin”) in line 95 acknowledges the condition, Henoch-Schoenlein (purpura),²⁵ as one he is familiar with. In line 97, the physician introduces a symptom (“Right. Well you had a rash then, though, I presume.”) that has not been mentioned thus far in the talk. Although an interrogative would perhaps be the normative format for the question to take in this sequential context, the doctor instead uses a declarative. The use of the declarative in this context can be understood by taking into account the fact that once the name of the disease has been invoked, the associated symptoms are within the purview of what the physician could be reasonably expected to know, and since this symptom is typical of the disease (see note 25), it could be presumed that the patient had experienced it. Thus, the symptom’s existence is treated as shared knowledge, and is expressed in declarative format. That the physician knows that this information has not been aired in the preceding talk but has nevertheless been treated as knowledge to which he has access is further evidenced by the formulation “I presume” in turn-final position. The inclusion of “I presume,” also indicates the inferential method via which his access has come about. To conclude this point, the use of the declarative in a sequential context where one might normatively expect to see the interrogative can in this case be seen as a practice via which the physician’s identity as a medical expert is instantiated.

Similarly, in Extract 4.07, an individual, who is calling on behalf of a diabetes patient, has given the name of a medication for diabetes (brand names have been changed in these data), which she begins to spell in line 52. The physician’s “Yes” and candidate naming of the medication (“Glibencremeine”) inserted before the caller’s turn has come to completion (line 53)

²⁵ According to Kraft, McKee and Scott (1998), Henoch Schoenlein Purpura is an inflammatory disorder that “usually causes a triad of symptoms, including a purpuric rash on the lower extremities, abdominal pain or renal involvement, and arthritis” (p. 1). <http://www.aafp.org/afp/980800ap/kraft.html>. Accessed 4/19/12.

indicates that he has recognized the medication without having to hear the entire spelling, constituting a claim of primary rights to this information.

Extract 4.07 DEC 1213

51 Clr: I'm not gonnoo attempt tuh pronounce
52 -> next one, the other one is G L I B E=
53 Doc: -> =Ye[s. Glibencremeine,
54 Clr: [N
55 Clr: <That's it.
56 Doc: ->> Right.<An' she's takin' those in the morning,
57 ->> (has)/(is) she?
58 Clr: uh, yes.

This claim is carried forward in his turn in lines 56-57, where he uses the declarative to ask a question about when the patient is taking the medication – information which has not yet been invoked in the conversation, but which, as a physician, he may claim to be a primary holder of based on his medical training, thus motivating the use of the declarative, again in a context where the interrogative might be expected to be deployed.

Though physicians may use the declarative to make strong epistemic claims, physicians regularly display sensitivity to the possibility of claiming too much access to information when such a claim may not be warranted. In these data, this often occurred in cases where surrounding trouble in the talk placed the physician's access to the information into question. In such cases, the declarative may be used initially, but the shared information status that the declarative indexes may be relaxed by an uncertainty marker such as “did you say” or “do you say” placed in turn-final position. The practice of appending “did you say” to a declarative weakens the claim that the information contained in the declarative is already shared, though it may have been treated as shared in the first instance. In Extract 4.08, the inebriated state of the caller may contribute to some trouble around the pronunciation of a non-present physician's name.

Extract 4.08 DEC 1102

008 Clr: I'm a patient of ay::
009 -> doctor (0.4) Bagawals, yeah?

(Lines omitted)

049 Clr: -> Doctor Agawald probly doesn't even realize
050 I've got this problem,

(Lines omitted)

148 Doc: Yeah, 'hhh A:um, really would be to: (0.2)
149 t! ((swallow))perhaps have a longer chat
150 with your own doctor (.) 'hhh tomorrow,
151 (0.4)
152 Doc: ->> That is Doctor Agwar, y'say_i
153 (0.2)
154 Clr: -> Yeah,

In Extract 4.08, the trouble in the conversation comes from the caller's inconsistency in pronouncing the name of the physician he normally sees, and he makes two attempts over the course of the interaction to pronounce it, using different pronunciations each time. In line 9, he gives his doctor's name as "Bagawals," whereas in line 49 he gives it as "Agawald." Finally, in line 152, the physician reformulates the name of the physician ("That is Doctor Agwar, y'say_i) using a declarative. In response, he receives a confirming "yeah" in line 154. These examples show that some trouble in the talk at the point where that information was articulated has prompted the physician to reduce the strength of his claim of access to the information. The use of the declarative with "did you say" in turn-final position allows the physician to make a claim of having been attentive to the caller's talk (by virtue of the declarative), but allows him to re-ask the question by offering the correct name of the doctor (without using the interrogative, which would be hearably inattentive) in order to resolve uncertainty introduced by the trouble in the talk at the point that the information was first mentioned.

4.4.2.4. YNIs and declaratives in repair

That physicians orient to the interactional import of the practices indexed by the use of interrogative and declarative grammar in the formulation of questions becomes increasingly clear

when one inspects those sequences in which repair is initiated. In the context of question formulation in these data, we see the initiation of repair when the physician formulates his turn in such a way that it does not exhibit appropriate recipient design for that precise moment in the interaction.

In Extract 4.09, a mother details her daughter's symptoms, focusing on her ability to eat and drink in lines 34-44.

Extract 4.09 DEC 2107

31 Doc: No:. An' this all started when.
32 Clr: Um:: well yesterday morning, I suppose.
33 when she got up. an:d she didn't want to
34 -> eat anything.<She never had anything to eat
35 -> all day yesterday but she did drink.
36 Doc:->> She drank plenty, [(did) she.
37 Clr: [Yeah,
38 Doc: Yeah. `th[hh
39 Clr: [And she she did drink milk,
40 but- then today, she can't (0.2) (it's)
41 sort'uv from the 'bout: seven o'clock
42 this morning, she's been `hh bringing
43 (tu:l-) being sick, an:' an:' e- where
44 she hasn't had anything to drink <She's
45 just been bringing up bile.
46 Doc: Just bile.<Nothing else. (It isn') like
47 blood or anything.
48 Clr: No.
49 Doc: No.=
50 Clr: =No.=
51 Doc:->> =`hhhh Um: but she ha- has she actually been
52 ->> thirsty¿ wanting tuh drink.

In line 36, the physician's question ("She drank plenty, did she") in declarative form revisits the information about her daughter's drinking given by the caller in lines 34 and 35 as would be expected. In lines 51-52, however, pursuant to a delay, he begins another question, initially formulated as a declarative, but which is rapidly repaired to an interrogative as he issues a question about the patient's desire to drink ("=" hhhh Um: but she ha- has she actually been thirsty¿ wanting tuh drink.") Two elements, in addition to grammatical format, work to make this a new question formulation. One is the emphasis on the word "been," which references a state rather than an action of drinking (compare this to line 36 "She drank plenty, (did) she.") and another is the addition of the increment "wanting tuh drink" with downward intonation,

which is hearably designed to provide a gloss for the just preceding “has she actually been thirsty_ç”, thus differentiating it from the earlier question in line 36 about the adequacy of the amount the child drank. These two elements of the turn’s design mark this question as addressing information not yet addressed in the interaction, thus occasioning the repair from a declarative format to an interrogative one.

Extract 4.10 presents a similar case:

Extract 4.10 DEC 1105

07 Clr: It's thee: (0.4) the baby, she's: (0.4)
 08 just comin' up on four weeks old,
 09 Doc: Right,
 10 Clr: -> A:nd (.) she's been awake since about
 11 -> half past twelve this afternoon,
 12 (1.1)
 13 Doc: Right,
 14 Clr: She's taken 'er feed alright, (but) uh, khh!
 15 -> she keeps pullin' 'er legs up an:d somebody
 16 suggested it might be colic or somesin like that,
 17 Doc: Right,
 18 Clr: I been trying gripe water and I've tried
 19 eh: bonjela 'cause I thought it might be
 20 teethin' or somethin',
 21 Doc: Right,
 22 Clr: -> None'a that seems to've worked. <She's still
 23 -> awake here, she won't go to sleep,
 24 Doc: ->> 'hhShe is she screaming a lot or:
 25 Clr: -> Yeah, (at what) until you pick her up that is, you
 26 -> know >an' then< could be five or ten minutes later
 27 -> she'll start agin,
 28 Doc: ->> Wubutwhatwhat an' when you:'ve when you're
 29 ->> actually comforting her she quietens down, does she?
 30 Clr: For a little while, yeah, but she'll start again,
 31 Doc: hhhRi:ght,
 32 Doc: ->> 'hhhh Has she been vomiting at allç
 33 Clr: No:ç,

In lines 10-11, 15, 22 and 23, the caller develops the physical complaint in the problem presentation by stating that the child had been awake since half past twelve (lines 10-11), has been pulling up her legs (line 15) and has not been able to go to sleep (lines 22-23). In line 24, the physician uses the interrogative to ask about a previously unmentioned symptom – screaming (“hhShe is she screaming a lot or”).²⁶ We can see that the physician begins the turn with what

²⁶ The use of the “or” in turn-final position in this excerpt may display an orientation to other interactional matters, the discussion of which is beyond the scope of the present study. However, this type of utterance will be discussed in Chapter 6 as a potential topic of further research.

appears to be the beginning of a Y/N declarative. At the word “is,” the turn is repaired and rebuilt as an interrogative, as would be expected at the point where a new symptom was being introduced.

Thus, the examples of repair developed in Extracts 4.09 and 4.10 offer evidence of a refined orientation on the part of the participants to the grammatical format that a question takes. This orientation displays the participants’ locally-occasioned understanding of each participant’s status with regard to access to the information that is currently being formulated. In those cases where the physician uses the declarative format to revisit information that has been mentioned in prior talk, he shows that he holds himself accountable for that information; thus, we can see that grammatical format is a resource via which physicians manage their interactions with patients, and it is therefore a practice that provides one basis for the establishment of a socio-epistemic relationship between the doctor and the patient. In the section that follows, I will consider the epistemics of a related type of question — elliptical questions.

4.4.2.5. Elliptical questions

Heritage (2010) has noted that another feature of physicians’ questions is the use of elliptical formats whose typical form is “No X?” or “Any X?” (e.g., “No headaches?” “Any bleeding?”) These question types are ubiquitous in doctor-patient communication. This section discusses the differences, epistemically-speaking, between “No X?” and “Any X?” formulations. It will be demonstrated that “Any X?” formulations are epistemically similar to interrogatives in that they are deployed to inquire about symptoms that have not yet been discussed in the prior talk. They also display the physician’s understanding that they are not likely to be present. “No X?” formulations, on the other hand, are similar to declaratives in that they target symptoms that

the physician claims to know are *not* present and that the physician considers unlikely to be present. The distinction between these two formulations can be seen in Table 4.02, below:

Table 4.02. Elliptical questions and their epistemic import

Question type	Example	Epistemic import
“Any x?” (interrogative-style)	“Any headaches?”	1. Targets new symptom that may be present and that 2. Physician believes unlikely to be present
“No x?” (declarative-style)	“No bleeding?”	1. Targets symptom whose absence is shared information and which 2. Physician believes unlikely to be present

Research into these short-form questions has indicated that when they are deployed, they convey to the patient a sense of relative seriousness of the symptom, on the one hand, and the reduced likelihood that the symptom is active in the patient’s case, on the other (Heritage, 2010). On this axis, the two formulations are similar; however, with respect to the amount of knowledge the physician is claiming, the formulations are quite different. In the case of “Any x?” the physician claims not to know whether or not a symptom is present; in the case of “No x?” the physician claims to know that a symptom is *not* present.

This can be seen in Extract 4.11. In this example, a patient with a complaint of chest pains gives a rather brief initial account of his symptoms, characterizing the pains as “very bad” (line 13), worsening (line 15), and a “constant weight” (line 19).

Extract 4.11 DEC 2110

```

13 Clr: -> Yea. Em:: I'm phonin' up- I've: got very bad pains in mah
14 chest.<I've had them all week end now, but they're gettin'
15 -> worse tuhnight.
16 (0.4)
17 Clr: (hm)
18 Doc: Can you tell me a bit about them?
19 Clr: -> Well it just feels as though there's a constant weight on my
20 chest.
21 Doc: `hhh A:n::duh when did this all start.
22 Clr: Uh:: Friday.hh
23 Doc: M::orning? (m):[:::====
```

24 Clr: [Ev'in.hh
 25 Doc: =Friday evening. ['hhh
 26 Clr: [Yeah.
 27 Doc: -> And have you been coughing at all or:
 28 Clr: No.
 29 Doc: ->> (Nu- unt)'hhh Ehm:: any other symptoms? 'mhh[h
 30 Clr: -> [Just dizziness.
 31 (0.3)
 32 Doc: Dizzy.
 33 Clr: 'Mm hm.=
 34 Doc: ->> =Any: problems with your breathing?
 35 (0.4)
 36 Clr: t! 'hhh Well when I lie down (uh-I'm-) (0.2) sor'uv gettin'
 37 flutterin' (in-) mah heart's flutterin'.<You know?

The following analysis targets the two elliptical interrogatives in the extract above: line 29 “any other symptoms?” and line 34 “Any: problems with your breathing?” To begin, we see that in line 27, the physician issues a fully-formed interrogative targeting a symptom that has not been introduced (“And have you been coughing at all or:”). The caller’s minimal response of “no” is notable in that it is not followed by any elaboration of the patient’s symptoms. Drew (2006b) and Heritage and Stivers (2001) have noted that patients will often elaborate on their symptoms in second position when the initial question does not elicit a complainable symptom. Such detailing is hearably missing in this example, and in line 29, the physician treats it as such by deploying an interrogative-style elliptical asking if the caller has experienced “any other symptoms.” The use of “any” is reminiscent of the interrogatively formatted “Do you have any other symptoms?” rather than the declaratively formatted “You have no other symptoms.” This interrogative-style, elliptical format is warranted on two counts – the interrogative format, as has been noted above, is used when asking about other possibly present, as-yet-unaddressed symptoms, and the elliptical format is used when the physician believes a symptom is unlikely to be present. That other symptoms may be viewed by the physician as unlikely to be present is indicated by the question’s deployment in a place in the sequence where the patient has just passed over two places where patients normatively detail their symptoms: in the problem

presentation in lines 13 – 15 (in this case minimal) and in response to a physician question in line 18 (that is, again, only minimally addressed).

The elliptical interrogative in line 34 appears just after the participant responds to the question in line 29. The caller's response to the question in line 29 ("Just dizziness," line 30) while responsive to the question, does not elaborate. Furthermore, the "just" serves to exclude other symptoms as present for inspection by the physician. Having just been told that there are no other symptoms, the doctor nevertheless asks in line 34 if the caller has experienced any breathing problems ("Any: problems with your breathing?") – another symptom that has not been mentioned in prior talk, which, in light of the patient's previous lack of detailing, is unlikely to be present, an orientation to which by now would be expected to be and indeed is displayed by the use of the elliptical form.

Elliptical declaratives, on the other hand, share the feature of targeting symptoms that are not likely to be present with elliptical interrogatives by virtue of their truncated format, but unlike their interrogative counterparts, elliptical declaratives (which share features of declaratives of the type "you have no x" or "there is nothing x," for example) treat the information as *relevantly* missing – in other words, they treat unstated symptoms as information which should have and would have been stated by the patient had those symptoms been present, and not having been stated when, had they been present, they should have been, their absence is treated as information to which the physician has access. This is demonstrated in Extracts 4.12 and 4.13 below. In both cases, the caller is explaining a symptom and in doing so limits his or her discussion to that symptom only. However, in such a context, if the symptom had been accompanied by other symptoms (such as the appearance of blood), those other symptoms

should have been noticed and should have been remarked upon by the patient in the original problem presentation.

Extract 4.12 DEC 1112

15 Clr: -> U::h we:ll basically since dinner i-tha' 'e's actually bringin'
16 -> the milk up,
17 Doc: [Right,
18 Clr: [(while), you know, it's sort'us: () comin' up all the
19 while at the minute,
20 Doc: ->> Is it? What-w: it's just milk coming up, no: 'hhh no blood or
21 ->> anyt'ing gree[n or anything¿
22 Clr: [No:,

Extract 4.13 DEC 1203

30 Doc: R:ight.<Is she drinking alright¿
31 Clr: ^Yes:, (yea[h), (she's been) drinkin' juice.
32 Doc: [(No?)
33 Doc: -> 'mhhh An' whereabouts are these ulcers.
34 Clr: -> On 'er tongue.
35 Doc: On her tongue.
36 Clr: Yeh.
37 Doc: ->> 'hh Nothing else in her mouth.
38 (0.8)
39 Clr: -> No' that I can see:<It loo:ks as if there might be one startin'
40 on the inside'uv 'er lip, but I couldn't [be sure, it looks a=
41 Doc: [Right,
42 Clr: =bit red

In 4.12, the caller explains that her daughter is “bringin' the milk up,” (lines 15-16).

Subsequently, in line 20, the physician asks a question which limits the substance coming up to milk (What-w: it's just milk coming up, no: 'hhh no blood or anyt'ing green or anything¿),

explicitly ruling out the possibility that in addition to milk, the child might be bringing up blood or a substance indicating a more serious health problem. This question, formatted in a

declarative stye, thus treats the second symptom (the presence of blood) as something that, if present, should have been mentioned before but wasn't. Stivers (2007) has found that if a

symptom is not mentioned by the patient, the physician orients to the symptom as not present.

This is known as the Q Principle: “Doctors appear oriented to the assumption that if the parent did not mention particular symptoms, they are not likely to exist” (Stivers, 2007, p. 56). Thus,

the use of the declarative in such formulations indexes just such an orientation to the information

that is the topic of the discussion in that the physician treats the information as information that he has access to by virtue of its *not* being mentioned.

A similar example can be found Extract 4.13, where the caller has called to report that her daughter has ulcers in her mouth. In response to the physician's question about the location of the ulcers, the mother states that they are on her daughter's tongue. Again, the physician limits the symptom to that mentioned by the mother by using an elliptical declarative (line 37, "hh Nothing else in her mouth."), treating the information, again, as something which, by virtue of not having been said, was relevantly missing from the account, was therefore now known *not* to be a symptom, and having not been said but nevertheless having been understood to not be a symptom, could be inquired about using a declarative format.

4.5. Conclusion

As noted at the outset of this discussion, co-participants display an orientation to their relative epistemic status with regard to access to information as reflected in the grammatical format of the questions asked. In the context of the medical consultation, a sensitivity to such matters may be of immense consequence to the establishment of social relations between physician and patients, as rights and access to information are negotiated on a moment by moment basis in the interaction. Physicians' questioning practices appear to display a refined orientation to these matters, as displayed through the grammatical format employed in physicians' questions. In this chapter, two grammatical formats of physicians' questions were examined. In line with Raymond's (2010a) work on British health visitors, it was found that although patients were treated as having primary rights to information about their own health status by virtue of the physician's asking questions which made relevant a yes or no answer from

the patient, the interrogative form treated the patient as having sole access to that information and was thus used overwhelmingly to inquire as to symptoms or other matters not yet aired in the interaction.

Y/N declaratives, on the other hand, treated the information as having already been shared with the physician either explicitly or by implicature; further, in those questions where the declarative was used, it allowed the physician to manage a variety of interactional contingencies, including eliciting more information about the patient's health condition, projecting a stance with regard to treatment and transitioning from the problem presentation to the history-taking phase of the medical consult. In addition, it was found that physicians used the declarative in an environment where the information had not been previously invoked if the question targeted information that the physician could reasonably be expected to know by virtue of his medical training. Further, it was argued that the use of a declarative in a normatively interrogative context might be one practice via which physicians instantiated their medical authority.

It was further found that physicians use elliptical interrogatives ("Any x?") and declaratives ("No x?") to convey that a symptom was not likely to be present; however, there were important differences in how this was accomplished. Specifically, in the case of elliptical declaratives, the question targeted a symptom which had not been mentioned in prior talk but which normatively should have and would have been had it been present, and the fact that it had not been mentioned was treated by the physician as information that was relevantly missing, thereby making the *absence* of the symptom something to which he had access, thus occasioning the declarative construction. Elliptical interrogatives, on the other hand, were deployed to ask about symptoms that had not figured in the prior talk and were

thus “new” symptoms in that respect. However, unlike elliptical declaratives, these questions carried no accompanying claim of knowledge as to whether the symptoms were present or not. By virtue of the elliptical format of the question, however, the physician displayed the stance that they were not considered likely to be present.

The differences among the utterance types found in these data are summarized in Table 4.03, below:

Table 4.03: Differences among interrogatives, B-event declaratives and elliptical questions in physicians’ talk

Utterance type		Targets information previously aired	Speaker has access	Hearer is primary rightsholder
Interrogative		No	No	Yes
B-event declarative, B-event declarative + tag		Yes	Yes (from prior talk)	Yes
Elliptical questions	“Any X”	No	No	Yes
	“No X”	Absence of information is taken to be a known absence of the symptom	Speaker <i>claims</i> access	Yes

The ways in which the grammatical design of turns index participants’ orientations to their rights and access to information and, by extension, to their social roles and relationships indicate that epistemic status and its concomitant grammatical formats are significant resources that participants, in this case physicians, draw upon to manage their interactions and establish relationships. This finding lends support to Raymond’s (2003) assertion that language and social action, long viewed to be separate entities, are in fact inextricably linked and that grammar is

“...one among a number of other sequentially sensitive resources that speakers can use to coordinate social action in interaction” (Raymond, 2003, p. 964). In the next chapter, I will extend the present analysis to investigate the role of epistemics in the formulation of reverse and same polarity tag questions; as in Chapters 3 and 4, it will be argued that epistemics and grammar are significant resources deployed by participants in the formation of action.

CHAPTER FIVE

The epistemics of reverse polarity tag questions

5.1. Introduction

The goal of the present chapter is to investigate the epistemics of declarative + reverse polarity tag formulations, such as those seen in (a) and (b):

- a. You can see it, can't you?
- b. You can't see it, can you?

In these formulations, the polarity of the tag question reverses that of the verb contained in the main clause (in (a), above: can't vs. can), and in those cases where a modal verb is not implicated, the "do" auxiliary is inserted, again, in reverse polarity vis à vis the verb contained in the main clause (e.g., You know her, don't you?).

Such formulations are readily distinguishable, morphologically-speaking, from some polarity tag questions, such as those seen in chapter 4 of the present work, where the polarity of the tag question mirrors that of the verb contained in the main clause as in (c) and (d):

- c. So he's able to drink alright, is he?
- d. When you're actually comforting her she quietens down, does she?

Quirk, et al., (1985) have noted that speakers may say each of the formulations of the type shown in (a) and (b) using a rising intonational contour or a falling intonational contour on the tag question, yielding four types of tag question as seen in (e)-(h), below (examples taken from Quirk, et al., 1985):

- e. POSITIVE + NEGATIVE
RISING TONE
He likes his jòb, dóesn't he?
- f. POSITIVE + NEGATIVE
FALLING TONE
He likes his jòb, dòesn't he?²⁷
- g. NEGATIVE + POSITIVE
RISING TONE
He doesn't like his jòb, dóes he?
- h. NEGATIVE + POSITIVE
FALLING TONE
He doesn't like his jòb, dòes he?

In a study of British tag questions, Kim and Ann (2008) found that tag questions were an overwhelmingly spoken phenomenon, and that reverse polarity tag questions, as opposed to same polarity tag questions, constituted 90% of the tag questions in their data. A first look at their results provides support for the claim made in Chapter 3 of the present study. The notion that reverse polarity tags are a primary resource for downgrading B-event declaratives (which often begin with the pronoun “you”) is in line with the finding that 23% of tag questions in Kim and Ann’s data were appended to “you” pronouns. This stands in marked contrast to only 7% of reverse polarity tags being appended to declaratives employing the first person pronouns (“I” and “we”). They further found that when analyzed as a function of pronoun type, the most common type of tag question employed the non-personal pronouns “it” and “there” (47% and 4% of tags, respectively, for a total of 51%). A summary of their findings can be seen in Table 5.01, below:

²⁷ The question marks appended to the tags with falling tone in (f) and (h) appear in the original text; however, in the original, the authors clearly did not intend for the question mark on the falling tone tag questions to denote rising intonation.

Table 5.01. Distribution of tag questions by pronoun type (Kim and Ann, 2008, p. 110)

	Pronoun type	Frequency
Personal	1 st per (I, we)	53(7%)
	2 nd per (you)	172(23%)
	3 rd per (he, she)	69(9%)
	3 rd per pl (they)	73(10%)
Non-personal	it	356(47%)
	there	31(4%)
Total		754

Tag questions have long been of interest to linguists and grammarians, who have focused predominantly on the discourse functions of reverse polarity tag questions. Quirk, et al. (1985) note that reverse polarity tags with a rising tone “invites verification, expecting the hearer to decide the truth of the proposition in the statement,” (p. 811), whereas tags with a falling tone invite “confirmation of the statement, and have the force of an exclamation rather than a genuine question” (p. 811). Nasslin (1984, as cited in Harres, 1998), in an analysis contrasting reverse polarity and same polarity tag questions, found that in reverse polarity tag questions, the speaker believes the information to be true, but expresses no such belief when using same polarity tag questions. Other investigators have classified tag questions by discourse function, with an eye to the social meanings that these functions index. Holmes (1990, 1995), for example, classified tag questions as either content-oriented or affective. That is, those tags which were content-oriented were designed to allow the speaker to obtain information (i.e., they were true epistemic requests), whereas affective tags were more hearer-oriented; that is, they were designed to express social

meaning vis à vis a hearer. In Holmes's study, content-oriented tags were typically uttered using rising intonation, while affective tags were uttered using falling intonation. Algeo (1990), in his classification scheme of British tag questions, posits 5 types of tags: informational, confirmatory, punctuational, peremptory, and aggressive. A peremptory tag, for example, "immediately follows a statement of obvious or universal truth, with which it is practically impossible to disagree...the speaker considers the conversation...at an end.... The intonational tune is always a falling one. The tag is....often a put-down of the addressee" (Algeo 1990, pp. 446-447). An example of this provided by Algeo would be a tag such as that shown in (i), below:

- i. I wasn't born yesterday, was I?²⁸ (falling intonation)

(Algeo, 1990, p. 447).

A number of problems arise from categorizing tag questions in such ways. As Tottie and Hoffman (2006) note, many researchers have been unable to find an exact correlation between form and function. Indeed, they note that many tag questions are multi-functional, and this multifunctionality poses problems for the classification of tag questions into discrete categories, though these researchers appear to agree with Holmes (1983) that is possible to "identify the predominant or primary function of any particular tag question in a specific social context" (Tottie and Hoffman, 2006, citing Holmes, 1983). Furthermore, Tottie and Hoffman note that a number of early researchers (e.g., Aijmer, 1979; Cattell, 1973, and Millar and Brown, 1979) made their observations based not on empirical data, but on "constructed examples with imaginary contexts" (p. 297). Moreover, pointing out a potential weakness in their own study, Tottie and Hoffman note that their corpus-based study relied on written exemplars of spoken

²⁸ Again, the question mark appears in the original. The parenthetical notation, (falling intonation), indicates what appears to be the author's actual intonational reading of the utterance.

language rather than on recordings of spoken language itself and thus excluded considerations of meaningful linguistic elements such as intonation and other metalinguistic features of languages.

Work done in conversation analysis on reverse polarity tags has done much to remedy the problems identified above and has yielded compelling accounts for the ways that reverse polarity tags, specifically, and grammar, more generally, are deployed in conversation. Looking at the role of negative tag questions in the epistemics of assessment, Heritage and Raymond (2005) looked at assessments in first and second position and investigated how participants' rights to offer evaluations are indexed within the talk. As the authors note:

“...rights to evaluate states of affairs are indeed ‘ordinarily patrolled and defended’ by individuals in routine conversational practices through which these rights are ranked by speakers relative to one another” (p. 34).

In their study, the authors looked at the sequential placement of assessments and the role of sequence in the management and deployment of epistemic resources. They found that sequential placement of assessments is highly implicated in the epistemics of assessments. Specifically, they found that because first position assessments come first, temporally speaking, such assessments make a claim to primary rights to evaluate the matter assessed, and, in fact, they embody K+ rights. Second position assessments, on the other hand, embody K- rights. Thus, first position assessments invite agreement and place the second position assessor in a subordinate position. In looking at their data, Heritage and Raymond have noted that the sequential placement of assessments and the rights assigned to the participants to assess something by their social roles may at times be in conflict; therefore, the turns out of which participants' assessments are built may incorporate elements that work to manage the relationship between rights to assess and the sequential position of the assessment. One of the ways rights and access are managed is by downgrading first position assessments in cases where

the speaker has K- rights to the information being discussed, and to upgrade second position assessments in cases where the recipient has K+ rights to the information being discussed. This is accomplished, the authors explain, in the following way: reverse polarity tag questions in first position serve to downgrade a first position assessment by making a second pair part relevant in next position, whereas RPT declaratives in second position serve to upgrade a second position assessment by making a second relevant in a place where sequentially no conditional relevance normatively exists. As Heritage and Raymond (2005) note, this is an example of what Schegloff (1996) has called “positionally-sensitive grammar” (p. 76).

Following Heritage and Raymond, the present analysis proposes to investigate tag questions as epistemic phenomena in the context of naturally-occurring conversation. By examining these utterances in their wider context, this chapter demonstrates the following:

1. Reverse polarity tags (RPTs) and same polarity tags (SPTs) are epistemically distinct from one another in the following way: reverse polarity tag questions embody a claim of authorship on the part of the speaker of information that does not fall within the speaker’s epistemic domain, whereas same polarity tags do not embody this same claim of authorship, and
2. Reverse polarity tags with rising intonation (RPT↑) and reverse polarity tags with falling intonation (RPT↓) are also epistemically distinct from one another, and, furthermore, they are positionally-sensitive in that they occur in different sequential environments in naturally-occurring talk.

Each of these points will be considered in the following sections.

5.2. Authorship in RPTs and SPTs

In previous studies of tag questions, much of the focus has been placed on reverse polarity tags, with same polarity tags receiving little scholarly attention. This is not surprising, as it has been reported that same polarity tag questions are much less commonly used than reverse polarity tags in both British and American varieties of English. According to Tottie and Hoffmann (2006), same polarity tags constituted only 8% of all tags appearing in their corpus in British English and only 4% of all tags appearing in American English. As a result, little substantive analysis has been done on the distinction between RPTs and SPTs. Kim and Ann (2008) do state, however, that “the constant polarity tag is attached to a sentence that the speaker is not putting forward as his own but is citing in order to ask the listener if it is his” (p. 107). The present study offers an alternate analysis of SPTs, namely that SPTs, which are appended to a declarative, embody a K+ knowledge claim; however, it is a claim based on *access* to the information, not on epistemic *rights* to the information. In fact, SPTs embody a claim on the part of the speaker to know information that is within the epistemic domain of the hearer which has also been authored by hearer. In this chapter, I will demonstrate that RPTs, like SPTs, claim access to the information that is in the epistemic domain of the hearer. However, unlike the information in SPTs, which is authored by the hearer, the information contained in RPTs is authored by the speaker of the RPT about information that is in the hearer’s epistemic domain. This will be further elaborated in the following sections.

5.2.1. SPT and the hearer as author

As has been demonstrated by the discussions of declarative question formulations in previous chapters, declaratives embody claims on the part of participants of K+ rights and/or access to information. K+ rights and access can be derived from any of many sources. One that

has been discussed thus far is rights and/or access derived from revisiting information explicitly aired in prior talk, as in Extract 5.01, taken from an interaction between a health visitor (community nurse) and a new mother in Britain:

Extract 5.01 HV 3B1

1761 HV: -> =.tch Are you drinking
1762 -> plenty of wa:[ter,
1763 M: -> [Oh ye:[s.
1764 HV: [Yea[h.
1765 M: -> [Masses.

(Lines omitted)

1847 HV: -> But you're drinking plenty of wa:ter are you.
1848 M: *Ye:s.*
1849 HV: Mm:,
1850 M: *I drink masses of (.) tea coffee,
1851 HV: Mm: ,=
1852 M: =*Weak tea an' coffee,*

As in the cases discussed with reference to Chapter 4, where the data are taken from on-call physician's emergency calls, the health visitor in lines 1761 – 1762 asks the mother if she's been drinking plenty of water and receives a response (“Oh yes, masses.”) in lines 1763 and 1765. Later in the interaction, the health visitor again revisits the topic, asking this time in declarative format with a same polarity tag (“But you're drinking plenty of water are you,” line 1847) about the mother's drinking habits. This time the mother responds with a yes (line 1848) and goes on to elaborate on her answer.

As was demonstrated in Chapter 4, same polarity tags questions may also also target previous information while inquiring about a slightly different aspect of what had been mentioned before. In these cases, same polarity tag questions (and straight declaratives, it was shown) target a previous turn and exploit it as a locus of implicature. This was demonstrated by Extract 4.01, now presented as Extract 5.02. As mentioned before, the physician's turn in lines 25-26 targets information that was mentioned by the mother previously (the fact that she'd given the baby water, line 4) but targets slightly different information (whether it had been boiled or not), exploiting the earlier turn as a locus of implicature. He does so again in line 33, which

indexes the mother's utterance in line 2. It is clear from these two examples that the doctor is not the author of the information, rather the mother is, and the doctor is revisiting what has passed in prior talk to obtain further information needed to arrive at a possible diagnosis.

Extract 5.02 DEC 1112

01 Clr: A:nd it's d- it's (bringin') up its mi:lk,
02 Clr: -> Its face is (callin')/(comin') out all in spots.=I wondered
03 if it w'jus: be the heat, or:
04 Clr: -> =I've tried givin' 'im wa:ter but 'e spits that out,
05 Doc: Is 'e?=How long 'as this been going on for then
06 Clr: U:h we:ll basically since dinner i-tha' 'e's actually bringin'
07 the milk up,
08 Clr: you know, it's sort'us: comin' up all the while at the minute,
09 Doc: Is it? What-w: it's just milk coming up, no: 'hhh no blood or
10 anyt'ing gree[n or anything?
11 Clr: [No:,

(Lines omitted)

25 Doc: ->> =He, yeah. A:nd um: (0.4) you've trie:d him
26 ->> with: just- (b):boiled water, have yo[u?
27 Clr: [Yes,

(Lines omitted)

33 Doc: ->> Yeah:, and these spots, they're just on the face, are they?

Thus, speakers who deploy same polarity tag declaratives are revisiting information that their recipient has already gone on record as having said and therefore the speakers of the same polarity tag question do not claim authorship of the information. In this way, same polarity tag questions can be seen as unproblematic in that the speaker is not on record as having authored or asserted a piece of information that does not fall within his or her epistemic domain.

However, it is the case that speakers regularly do say things that their recipients, rather than the speakers themselves, have primary rights or access to without those things having been mentioned in prior talk.²⁹ In such cases, the speaker can be said to claim authorship of the information contained in the turn. In this chapter, I demonstrate that these types of question formulations regularly take the form of [declarative] + reverse polarity tag (for example, “you

²⁹ Indeed, straight B-event declaratives are canonical examples of statements made by speakers about information that does not fall within their epistemic domain. As mentioned in Chapter 3, such statements are regularly downgraded in a variety of ways, including via tag questions.

know where it is, don't you?"). In reverse polarity tag declaratives (RPT declaratives), the tag question serves to weaken the epistemic claim embodied in the declarative portion of the question.

5.2.2. RPT and the speaker as author

This section demonstrates that reverse polarity tags³⁰ are routinely attached to declaratives such that:

1. The declarative embodies a speaker's claim to have access to the target information;
2. The speaker is not the primary rights holder of that information;
3. The sequential placement of the declarative embodies a claim of authorship of the information contained in the declarative.

To begin, consider Extract 5.03, from a 911 call where the caller is trying to reach an officer who had responded earlier to an attempted robbery:

Extract 5.03 MidCity 17 Call 17

01 D: Minneapolis p'lice an' fi:re,
 02 (.)
 03 C: mt .h Y:eah what I'm: looking for is a number
 04 to get a hold of an officer that was involved in
 05 helping us out in an attempted robbery at our
 06 place of business tonight .hhhh He: called me
 07 a f:iew: (.) oh about an hour ago (0.4) he: had one
 08 of the s:uspects and he (.) called ba:ck for some
 09 added information .hhh an' I'm: not sure what
 10 number to call to try to get a hold of him.
 11 (0.4)
 12 D: -> Where was the the ru:bbery(h).
 13 (0.4)
 14 C: U:h it was an attempted- (0.3) s::=u:h at top
 15 of the list restaurant.
 16 (1.0)
 17 D: -> What uh- what is the address
 18 (0.2)
 19 C: Thirty four thirty l:ist (0.2) place.
 20 (0.8)
 21 D: Thirty four thirty L:ist place.=
 22 C: =An' it was officer (Thrane) was his name.
 23 (0.8)
 24 D: ->> .hhhhh hhh List place is over by the lakes isn'
 25 -> it?↑
 26 (0.3)
 27 C: Right.

³⁰ In the interest of clarity, reverse polarity tags with rising intonation are denoted by "?↑" following the tag question. Reverse polarity tags with falling intonation are denoted by "↓" following the tag question. The degree to which the intonation curves on tag questions rise or fall is not captured by this notation; however, it is the fact that they rise or fall that is relevant to this analysis, and this is denoted by the "?↑" and "↓" notations in the transcript.

28 (0.6)
 29 D: U:::h
 30 C: -> He had the guy downtown as I understand it (.) .hh
 31 when he called back for the added information.
 32 (0.8)
 33 D: H:^m:| h
 34 (1.4)
 35 C: mt Would there be uh (0.8) s- certain detective
 36 bureau that I'd call or=
 37 D: =mt .hhhhh
 38 (1.0)
 39 C: Anything like that,
 40 (0.6)
 41 D: Ugh(hhhhhh) .h I wonder(h) um:: (1.8) he could
 42 still be in the:(h) (0.7) transcription room
 43 -> but: u:h (0.4).hhhh (0.2) I'm gonna put you through
 44 -> to Bryant hh (0.4) Just a minute.
 45 (0.2)
 46 C: Umkay,
 47 ((end of call))

After the call opening (line 1) and the caller's initial presentation of his reason for calling (lines 3-10), the dispatcher asks in lines 12 and 17 for the location and address of the robbery. The Wh-interrogative formats of the questions are relatively straightforward, and as full interrogatives display a K- stance on the part of the dispatcher toward the information in question. In lines 24 and 25, however, the dispatcher deploys an RPT declarative with rising intonation: "List Place is over by the lakes isn' it?↑". The RPT is attached to a declarative containing information that has not yet been aired in the interaction. It also does not adhere to an interrogative format, which is the normative format for information which the speaker has no rights or access to, as was demonstrated in the discussion of Chapter 4. The declarative in the absence of 1) a prior mention in the talk, 2) information available via implicature from prior talk, or 3) information perceived in the environment, can be understood as having been authored by the speaker. At the same time, however, her recipient's status as one whose place of business is in the area (lines 5-6) makes him the primary rightsholder of the information in question. This circumstance occasions the use of the reverse polarity tag, which invites confirmation of her assertion. The caller takes the RPT declarative in line 24 to be an attempt to locate the correct station, and, after confirming the assertion made by the speaker in line 24, provides his own

candidate understanding of where the officer might be in line 30 (“he had the guy downtown as I understand it”). The RPT declarative in lines 24 and 25 thus contains information authored by the dispatcher, the asking of which is designed to help her to find the station where the office would most likely be found, and as soon as this is determined, the call ends.

Thus, we see a declarative in a position where a claim to a K+ knowledge state is made about something within the epistemic domain of the recipient and which is warranted neither by something observable in the environment, nor by the fact that the information has been aired previously in the interaction. One might say that the speaker is making an assertion – a claim to know information that has not been authored by the person with primary rights to author that information and without grounds in the immediate context to justify such an assertion. Because of its status as an independent assertion, the declarative therefore embodies the speaker’s claim to authorship of the information contained in the turn, with the reverse polarity tag inviting confirmation from the recipient.

Extracts 5.04 – 5.06 provide further evidence for the notion of RPT declaratives as a claim of authorship of information not within the speaker’s epistemic domain. Each of these will be briefly explicated below. In Extract 5.04, the caller is reporting a suspicious circumstance at a neighboring business.

Extract 5.04 MidCity 21 CALL 21

01 D: Mid-City emergency.
02 C: .hh This is the Starlite Club, on thirty one
03 ten Penn?
04 D: Mmhm?
05 C: A:nd thuh lau:ndrymat? Paul's laundrymat?
06 D: Mmhm,
07 C: It's (.) down thuh street here a bit.
08 (°it's-°)<anyway> it's left (.) open. It's wi::de
09 open.
10 D: Mmhm?
11 C: An' it's s'posed to be locked at nine o'clock so I
12 don't know if somebody broke in the:re or what's
13 goin' on.
14 D: <We'll get somebody there.>
15 C: We do not have thuh na::me of thuh owner so:: you
16 must have it on fi:le at the Northside Station.
17 D: -> O:kay that's u:m: (.) [.hh
18 C: -> [It's two doors do:wn from

19 ->> thuh Starlite Clu[b.
 20 D: ->> [Right.=It's south of you isn't it?↑
 21 (.)
 22 C: U:::h north of us.
 23 D: It is north of you?
 24 C: Of thuh Starlite.
 25 (.)
 26 D: -> Okay you're (.) <thirty one ten Penn Avenue north
 27 -> aren't you?↑>
 28 C: That's correct.=
 29 D: =<Okay we'll get somebody there.>

Subsequent to the caller's report and an initial offer to respond (line 8-14), the dispatcher begins a turn in line 17 that is projectably formatted in the declarative ("That's u:m") and which stalls mid-TCU. The caller in line 18 adopts the same grammatical frame to provide an approximate location of the business ("It's two doors down from thuh Starlite Club"; lines 18 and 19). In line 20, we then see the dispatcher use an RPT declarative ("It's south of you isn't it?↑") to ask about information that has not been mentioned in the prior talk and is therefore authored by her by virtue of its declarative format, but which targets information that falls within her hearer's epistemic domain. In a separate instance of the same phenomenon in this extract, we see the dispatcher again use an RPT declarative in lines 26 and 27 when she asks the caller if the caller is located at 3110 Penn North. Examination of the caller's original reference to the address from which the call is being made (lines 02 – 03) shows that "North" was not part of the original formulation of the address; therefore, the information contained in the dispatcher's RPT declarative is once again information authored by the speaker, with the RPT serving as an invitation to the recipient to confirm that information, which is done in the immediately subsequent turn.

Extract 5.05 provides another example of the phenomenon of a speaker's authoring information which the recipient clearly has primary rights to know.

Extract 5.05 HV 1C1

616 HV: Her eyes're oka:y.
617 () ((Sniff)) (0.7)
618 M: They ge- th- they get a bit wee:py sometimes,
619 ->> but that's normal isn't it?↑ And I swab th'm
620 with wool with cotton woo:l,
621 (0.3)
622 HV: Ye:s if they- if they: (0.2) if you think they're
623 pussie
624 (0.8)
625 M: Yea:h.

In line 616, a health visitor asks a new mother about her baby's eyes. The mother responds that they get weepy at times and then adds the TCU "but that's normal isn't it?" uttered with rising intonation. Insofar as it is the health visitor's business to know whether weepy eyes can be considered normal for babies, the mother has made an assertion about a matter which she does not hold primary knowledge rights to, and has, accordingly, requested confirmation of the assertion. This is especially significant because of its sequential placement immediately following the health visitor's declaratively-formatted and optimized (Heritage, 2010; Boyd and Heritage, 2006) turn in line 616. It is interesting to note that the mother does not wait for the confirmation but instead immediately adds another TCU to her turn. This additional TCU appears to be designed to pre-empt the possibility of a negative assessment on the part of the health visitor vis-à-vis the mother's assertion that it is normal for the child to have weepy eyes and properly situates her as attentive to her child's needs.

Another example of the ways that RPT declaratives assert information of which the speaker is the author and not the primary rights holder is in Extract 5.06, where an on-call physician is discussing the efficacy of two types of eye medication that a caller has given his child. Throughout most of the call, both participants display an understanding that one and not both of the medications was prescribed by a doctor. It isn't until the middle of the call (lines 79-80) that the physician displays (and, as we shall see, asserts) an understanding that in fact *both* of

the medications were prescribed by a doctor. He does this via the use of an RPT declarative. The particulars of this analysis follow.

Extract 5.06 DEC 1109

17	Clr:	A:nd e:m (.) first of all I got some drops, and they didn't	Got some drops
18		seem to be workin', so (.) I went to see Doctor Walker on:um	
19		Thursday,	
20	Doc:	Right,	
21	Clr:	And he gave me some: ointment,	Doctor gave him some ointment
22		(.)	
23	Doc:	Right,	
24	Clr:	So: I've been usin' it roug <h>hly</h> for twenty four hours,	
25	Doc:	t!Ye[s,	
26	Clr:	[So that's about a (t-)/(d-) half a dozen ti:mes,	
27		>'cause (it's)< every four hours,	Discussion of eye ointment
28	Doc:	That's right,	
29	Clr:	h[h	
30	Doc:	[Yeahm,	
31	Clr:	Um- (.) wull- they'd- it doesn't seem to be doin' anythi:ng,	
32		it('s) just makin' 'im really red (0.6) an'	
33		uncomfortable,	
34		(.)	
35	Clr:	<So I just wanted to know if I ought ta carry on (.) usin' it	
36		or: (.) s[^{top} ;	
37	Doc:	[Bup- is it making (your) things worse, do you	
38		th[ink	
39	Clr:	[Yes, I[: :] think [so,] yes,	
40	Doc:	[Yeah,] [yeah,]	
41	Doc:	(Well) sometimes he may a- he may actually have a an allergy	
42		to: (.) to the antibiotic, [eye ointment hhh	
43	Clr:	[(ey ley ley yah,)	
44	Doc:	E:h it might be worth stopping 'im altogether, and just (.)	
45		washing his d'you what were the other drops you had,	Discussion of eye drops, now called Chloramycetin
46	Clr:	"(ud- clair-)" uhd drops I had; were u:m*	
47	Kid:	{	
48	Clr:	[(Chloramer:)] ((* to * = (0.9)))	
49		{0.3}	
50	Doc:	Chlo[ramyc-	
51	Clr:	[(tecten)	
52		{0.7}	
53	Doc:	Those- those were the drops, were the[y?	
54	Clr:	[Chloramycetin, yes,	

In lines 17-21, the caller introduces the drops by stating that he had first gotten some drops (the source of which is not specified) that didn't seem to be working, so he visited the doctor, who then gave him some ointment. This portion of the problem presentation, while agnostic as to the exact source of the drops, presents the (presumed) first doctor's visit as occurring only after the drops were acquired. Lines 22-43 contain a report of how the ointment seems to be making the child's condition worse. In line 45, the physician asks the caller about the drops he had originally used ("what were the other drops you had").

Extract 5.06 DEC 1109, continued

53 Doc: -> Those- those were the drops, were the[y?
54 Clr: [Chloramycetin, yes,
55 Doc: ->> And what were the ones that the doctor
56 ->> ga[ve
57 Clr: ->> [And the ointment;
58 Doc: Yeah,=
59 Clr: =Um: (1.2) I don' know where I put it now<what's the
60 name of that ointment (Ma), 'cause [(I've)*
61 Ma?: [()
62 Clr: [*Had it earlier,=
63 Clr: =I don' know where I('m) put it,<I('ve) keep it in the
64 fridge an' it's not there at the moment,
65 Doc: (Fusasalamic),
66 (1.0)
67 Doc: 'hh[h
68 Clr: [Um: no, it wasn't=
69 Kid: =Here it is!
70 Clr: (life) here it is,
71 (0.6)
72 Clr: [U:m
73 Kid: [(Um:max!)
74 (1.0)
75 Clr: Polyfax,
76 (0.9)
77 Doc: -> mtOh right, and that's what- (0.4) the doctor gave you,
78 Clr: -> Yes,
79 Doc: -> Th-whereas the Chloramycetin, that was also given to you
80 -> by the doctor, wasn't it?†
81 Clr: Yes, [(so) before we had the [Chloramycetin, ('h) and that=
82 Doc: [Yeah, [(Mm),
83 Clr: =[didn't seem t[o be wo:rkin',
84 Doc: [Yeah, ['hh'hh

Further discussion of ointment, identified as Polyfax and as 'what the doctor gave you" (line 77)

RPT assertion that the Chloramycetin drops were ALSO given to him by the doctor

After receiving the names of the drops, the physician asks in line 55 and 56 for the name of the other medication, using the formulation “the ones that the doctor gave,” thereby identifying the second medication, as opposed to the drops, as the medication given by the doctor. This candidate understanding is not overtly contested by the caller, who initiates a repair in line 57 designed to clarify which medication the physician is talking about (“the ointment?”). After the name of the ointment is produced, the physician again confirms (note the use of the declarative) that the ointment was given by the doctor (“mtOh right, and that's what- (0.4) the doctor gave you,” line 77). This is again confirmed by the recipient in line 78. It is only in line 79, after two confirmations from his recipient that the heretofore understood one and only medication that had been given by the doctor was the ointment, that the physician asserts, using a declarative RPT, that the drops (under the brand name Chloramycetin) had *also* been prescribed by the doctor.

The use of the RPT declarative here is a display on the part of the physician that he has understood that the medication, once its name has been mentioned, would properly have been prescribed by a doctor, but in the face of two earlier confirmations of information to the contrary, the use of the RPT seeks out explicit confirmation of this newly-authored bit of information. Indeed, the sought for confirmation comes in the immediate next turn.

A final example of an RPT declarative with rising intonation comes from ordinary conversation and offers some indication that the observations about the epistemics of this question format as discussed above are equally valid in non-institutional talk. Extract 5.07 comes from a longer sequence of talk in which a young girl (V) is complaining about her older sister's embarrassing behavior.

Extract 5.07 Virginia

27 M: Well why does she embarrass you.
 28 (1.1)
 29 V: >^Becuz the other night.<She w-we were at a party,
 30 >(tagetha) you know¿<
 31 (2.5)
 32 V: An' she starts teasin' me.I swear (it's) °embarrassing me.
 33 (1.4)
 34 V: ((shrilly)) YOU GOT TO GO HOME, IT'S ELEVEN THI::RTY:!
 35 (1.2)
 36 M: Well she's supposed tuh be in'et eleven thirty when she
 37 takes tuh c a:r out.
 38 (1.4)
 39 V: °()=
 40 W: ->> =(Now) you taught 'er howda dance, didn' y(ou)?†
 41 (1.0)
 42 V: Hu[h?
 43 W: [Weren'[t you teachin' 'er some new steps the othuh day?
 44 V: [Yeah.
 45 V: Y:eah.

This portion of talk is part of a larger sequence in which V is complaining about her allowance; the discussion of the older sister's shortcomings (e.g., line 32) is in some ways parasitic to a larger complaint V has about the older sister's propensity for charging V money for driving her around, a topic which is directly related to V's larger complaint about her lack of allowance. In line 40, we see the older brother, W, insert a turn which is disjunctive with the earlier talk (though it is arguably related in a step-wise fashion (Jefferson, 1984)) and seems designed to

move the talk into a less complaint-focused area.^{31 32} A few points should be noted regarding this turn: The new turn seems disjunctive precisely because it has *not* been mentioned in prior talk (and it is perhaps a reason for V's initiation of repair in line 42). It is also a B-event declarative, referencing as it does an activity that V (and not W) was engaged in and about which he is therefore not the primary rights holder. However, it is formulated in the declarative, thereby indexing an upgraded epistemic claim on W's part about information that he does not hold primary rights to. In such a turn, the use of the RPT declarative, as mentioned in prior examples, invites confirmation of W's version of events from the primary rights holder of the information, V. Thus, it appears that RPT declaratives can also be deployed in ordinary talk when a speaker is asserting information (and making a knowledge claim) about information to which he does not hold primary epistemic rights. However, in the case of SPTs, the information in the turn targets something that the hearer has authored, but which speaker has access to through prior talk or some other means. The differences between SPTs and RPTs are summarized in Table 5.02, below:

³¹ W may do this pursuant to another participant's earlier complaint that she "wished she didn't get involved in (W's) family arguments":

15 P: °Wish I didn't get=
 16 =[involved in your family arguments| all the time.]
 17 V: [An' she always embarrasses me Mo|m I swear ,]
 18 Beth is so-=
 19 W: h-hm?
 20 P: °Wish I didn't get in(yu)volved in your family arguments
 21 all the ti(h)hah [hih ('hh)
 22 W: [eh heh!

³² This turn is also designed to render the complaint V has about her sister moot. This is an example of what will be discussed in Section 5.4.1. as an RPT that addresses an ancillary concern by bringing up some issue that could have or should have been addressed earlier in the talk and had it been addressed earlier, would have pre-empted the sequence.

Table 5.02. Epistemic differences between SPTs and RPTs

Utterance type	Downgraded (from declarative)	Speaker has access	Speaker is author	Hearer is primary rightsholder
SPT	Yes	Yes (prior mention)	No	Yes
RPT	Yes	No, but claims access	Yes	Yes

This section demonstrates that SPTs and RPTs are epistemically distinct in terms of the authorship of the information contained in the turn. In the next section, I will turn to the epistemic distinctions between RPTs uttered with rising intonation and RPTs uttered with falling intonation.

5.3. Two epistemically distinct formats: RPT \uparrow and RPT \downarrow

Another question which has interested scholars is the difference between RPTs with rising intonation and RPTs with falling intonation. The difference appears to be an epistemic one, and this claim will be developed over the following sections. RPTs with rising intonation (hereafter known as RPT \uparrow s) and RPTs with falling intonation (hereafter RPT \downarrow s) are epistemically distinct in that they occur in different epistemic environments. Namely, RPT \uparrow s typically occur on utterances that satisfy one epistemic condition vis à vis the speaker's and hearer's knowledge states: they contain information to which the hearer has primary epistemic rights (what I will call the H>S condition), whereas RPT \downarrow s are appended to utterances that satisfy two epistemic conditions: either the hearer has greater primary epistemic rights to the information contained in the question (the H>S condition), or the hearer and speaker have equal epistemic rights to the information contained in the question (the H=S condition). This claim shall be developed over the next several examples.

5.3.1. RPT↑: H>S

Looking at RPT↑s from an epistemic perspective, we can see that in each of the following extracts, the hearer has greater epistemic rights to the information contained in the proposition than the speaker does. In addition, all of the tag questions are uttered using rising intonation. This is demonstrated in Extract 5.08, a bit of talk from a dinner conversation, where the adult son of the woman hosting the dinner asks his mother if she buys his younger sister's clothes for her (“you-you buy ‘er clothes anyway, dontchyuh?” line 23). As can be seen in the accompanying Praat³³ pitch curve given in Figure 5.01, the tag question “dontchyuh” is uttered with rising pitch.

Extract 5.08 Virginia 4:23

```
23 W: ->> Wu'yo-y[ou buy 'er clothes anway, dontchyuh?↑  
24 P:      [eh heh huh °uh uh  
25      (0.3)  
26 P:      'hhk!=  
27 M:      =^Yea:h. But I've bought 'er all the clothes that she ne:e:ds.
```

Figure 5.01. “Wu’yo buy ‘er clothes anway, dontchyuh?↑”



Although the son may have some epistemic access to the information contained in the utterance, (and, indeed, he does claim to have at least some access via the use of the declarative), this utterance targets a piece of information to which the mother has primary epistemic rights. Thus the hearer's knowledge rights are greater than the speaker's knowledge rights (H>S), and accordingly, the speaker uses an RPT

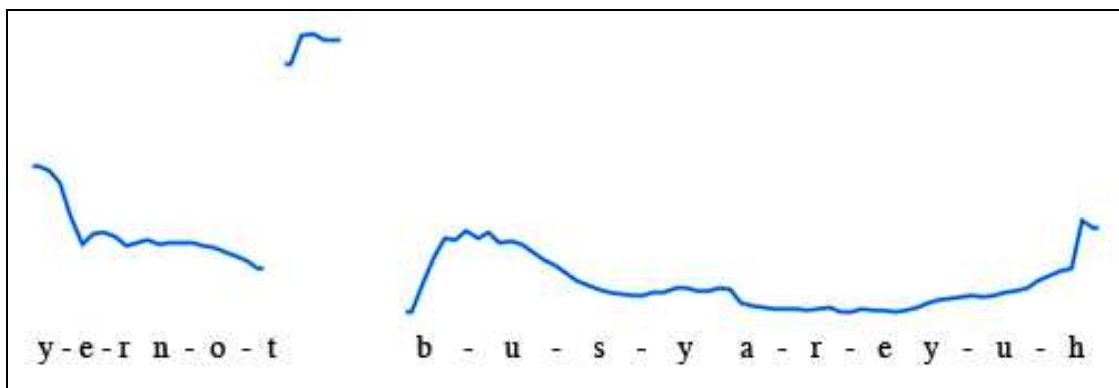
³³ Praat is a speech analysis program developed by Paul Boersma and David Weenink of the University of Amsterdam.

with rising intonation. We can see that this is a persistent practice in conversation, as Extracts 5.09 and 5.10 demonstrate:

Excerpt 5.09 Kamunsky 1:06

06 K: Hello?
 07 A: Karen Baxter?
 08 K: Yea?
 09 A: -->> Yer not busy are yuh?[↑]
 10 (0.3)
 11 K: Well yeah, I a:m.

Figure 5.02. “Yer not busy are yuh?[↑]”



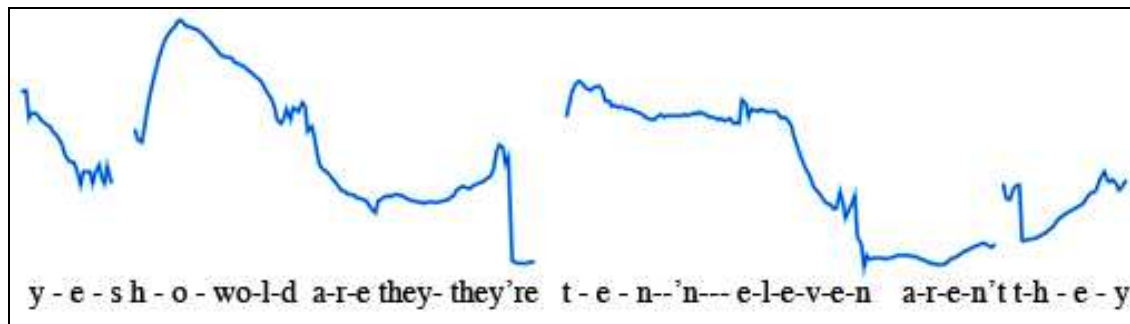
In Extract 5.09, which is the opening of a telephone conversation, A offers as part of a presequence the RPT “yer not busy are yuh^ε” (line 9). Whether the recipient is busy or not is clearly within the recipient’s epistemic domain, and accordingly, the speaker has used a tag question with a rising pitch. This can be seen the Praat pitch wave in Figure 5.02, where the rising curve, which correlates with the tag question “are yuh,” indicates that the tag is uttered with rising intonation.

In Extract 5.10, which comes from a telephone conversation in which the speaker has been asked to work as a substitute teacher or caretaker of children, the speaker asks her recipient (“how old are they” and “they’re ten’n eleven aren’t they?” line 24) about the ages of the children that will be in her charge:

Extract 5.10 Holt 1:2:24

24 L: -->> =.hh Yes how old are they they're ten'n eleven aren't they?[↑]
 25 H: <They're the middle::. Middle juniors.
 26 L: Oh yes.

Figure 5.03. “they're ten'n eleven aren't they?↑”



Here we can see the use of the interrogative in the first TCU, which indexes a claim on the speaker's part that the information contained in the interrogative falls within the epistemic domain of her recipient. She then begins a second TCU by offering a candidate answer authored by the speaker ("they're ten 'n eleven" followed by a tag question "aren't they?"), which, as can be seen in Figure 5.03 above, is uttered with rising intonation. Thus, we can see in this excerpt another example of an RPT with rising intonation used to inquire about information that the hearer has greater epistemic rights to know about.

5.3.2. RPT↓: H>S or H=S

RPT↓ is deployed over a greater range of epistemic conditions than RPT↑. Like RPT↑, RPT↓ can be used in turns which index an H>S condition (e.g., Extracts 5.11 and 5.12, below); however, RPT↓ can also be deployed in turns which index an H=S condition (e.g., Extracts 5.15 and 5.16). In the former case, the speaker makes an upgraded epistemic claim about information to which he/she does not have primary rights by using the falling tag and is requesting confirmation of this information; in the latter case, the speaker is making a claim about something that the both the speaker and hearer have equal epistemic rights to; in this case, the speaker is requesting alignment with what he or she has said. This will be developed over the following extracts.

5.3.2.1. RPT↓: H>S

As mentioned above, speakers may use RPT↓³⁴ to make an upgraded epistemic claim regarding a piece of information to which they do not have primary epistemic rights. The ideal piece of direct evidence for a claim of this type would be found in an extract in which the speaker overtly explains the warrant with which he or she makes an upgraded epistemic claim. Conversational extracts where epistemics are discussed overtly are relatively rare; however, the following extract presents a case where the speaker reveals in his talk the epistemic warrant for his inquiry.

In Extract 5.11, an RPT↓ is used to make an upgraded epistemic claim to information the speaker does not have primary rights to. In this phone conversation, A is calling S to invite him to a party for a mutual friend (lines 72-77). As the call progresses, it becomes clear that the issuing of the invitation is complicated by the fact that the speaker knows that the invitation's recipient is "grounded" (line 83) and may not be able to attend the party:

Extract 5.11 Kamunsky 2

72 A: =Yeh 'e s(h)ure is. 't'hh Well anyway if yer not doing
73 anything af:ter uhm rehearsal I'm having a s'prize
74 birthday party fer Kevin he:re,
75 (0.7)
76 (A): p't!
77 A: If y'wanna co:[me,
78 S: [Et yer house.
79 A: Yah!
80 (0.4)
81 S: hHm:.
82 (1.0)
83 A: ->> Cz I know you were grounded aren'tyuh↓
84 (0.2)
85 S?: p't!
86 S: Yeah, u-hhuh-huhh=
87 A: -> =ehh (h)ye(h)h(h)I(h)kneh- 'hhh I hhha- I figured well
88 -> I'll call im mebbe th-by nex'Sa:turday he'll be um
89 A?: ('hhh)
90 S: Yeh hopefully.=
91 A: -> =back flying.
92 S: hhuh: fly[ing?]heh]
93 A: [e-heh]heh]heh,
94 (0.2)
95 S: Hm:.
96 (0.7)

³⁴ In this section, the notation ↓ has been used in the transcript to denote falling intonation on the tag question.

97 A: 'hhhhhh But[if you c'n ma]_ke it,
 98 S: [U__h : : :]
 99 S: 'hh Yeah, su:re.
 100 (0.3)
 101 A: It's after- it will be aft-(wud) seven thirty er so.
 102 S: Bout seven thirty er so.

It is at line 83, where, after issuing the invitation (line 77), the speaker explains that he knows his recipient is grounded and thus may not leave the house. This turn contains several notable characteristics. The first is that it targets a piece of information to which the hearer has primary epistemic rights (the fact that he is grounded). Second, this information has not been mentioned in the talk so far, and is therefore authored by the speaker, thus occasioning the use of the reverse polarity tag. The third is that it can be considered potentially delicate in two respects: 1) the turn brings up the topic of the recipient's being "grounded," which is a socially-dispreferred status for people in this age group and 2) informing a knowing recipient that he or she is grounded when that information is already known by the individual in question can be interactionally problematic. A fourth observation is that perhaps because of the delicate nature of the turn, it has been strongly A-perspectivized by the addition of "I know" in turn-initial position; however, we should note that at the same time as it A-perspectivizes the turn, the formulation "I know" also constitutes a much stronger epistemic claim than the more canonical "I think" which was discussed in Chapter 3. Indeed, it is the addition of "I know" to the turn, combined with the falling intonation with which the turn is uttered, that demonstrate (in this example, with great clarity) the upgraded knowledge claim that RPT↓-type utterances typically embody. That this information was previously known (or thought to be known) by the speaker can be seen in lines 87, 88 and 91 where the speaker explains his rationale for calling the hearer given that the speaker already knew that the hearer was grounded and could potentially be unable to attend the party: ("I figured well I'll call im mebbe th-by nex'Sa:turday he'll be um back flying," lines 87,

88 and 91). Thus, we see in this extract a speaker who uses an RPT↓ to make an upgraded epistemic claim about information that he does not have primary epistemic rights to.

We can see a similar example in Extract 5.12, where two female friends are talking about their daughters and whether or not one of the daughters has written to the other.

Extract 5.12 Holt 2:2:2:5

230 L: .hh ^Okay then Carol, I'll uh drop the book in:tuh ˘lib'ry
 231 C: ->> 0:kay an' Kath did write tih Melissa didn't sh[e↓ I-]
 232 L: [YES sh]e's
 233 [posted it.]
 234 C: [I didn't pult her off writing=
 235 L: =↑Oh no she p↑sted it t'da:y.

In the turn at point (line 231), C uses an RPT↓ to ask whether L's daughter has written to C's daughter. The grammatical composition of this turn is telling; in line 231, C says “Kath did write.” The use of the “did”, rather than the alternative, “Kath wrote,” is an emphatic formulation that asserts that that Kath did indeed write (as opposed to did not write,) and as such constitutes a clear epistemic upgrade that is also reflected in the use of the RPT↓.

More straightforward examples can be seen in Extracts 5.13 and 5.14, where the RPT↓ alone does the epistemic upgrade.³⁵ In Extract 5.14, a health visitor (HV) talking to a new mother inquires about the new mother's previous occupation.

Extract 5.13 HV 3A1:7

384 HV: ->> And um: (.) you were (.) anaesthetic's nurse weren't
 385 ->> you↓
 386 M: Yep.

In lines 384 and 385, the HV uses an RPT↓ to ask about the mother's previous occupation. Two observations are relevant here. The first is that the HV's use of an RPT of any type at all is to downgrade the declarative “You were an anesthetic's nurse.” That the HV is known to be a nurse but not necessarily an anesthetic's nurse is grounded in the earlier talk. Earlier in the conversation (not shown), the mother says that she is acquainted with the student midwife who attended her

³⁵ Note that in both cases, RPT↑ and RPT↓, the RPT is a downgrade from a declarative; however, relatively speaking, RPT↓ represents an upgrade from the stance that RPT↑ takes.

birth (“And also there was a student midwife from one of the wards that I worked on before” (lines 140 and 142)). The mother’s former occupation specifically as an anesthetic’s nurse had not been mentioned before and is a piece of information that is authored by the HV, thus occasioning the use of an RPT in line 384. However, the formulation “one of the wards that I worked on before,” without an earlier explanation that she is a nurse who had worked in the same hospital where nurses whom the HV has worked with also are employed, indicates that the mother’s occupation as a nurse was something that she believed to be known to the HV, which provides an explanation for the HV’s upgraded epistemic claim about the mother’s previous job (via the deployment of an RPT↓ rather than an RPT↑). Thus, we can see here that the use of an RPT declarative in the first instance was occasioned by the use of the word “anesthetics,” whereas the use of an RPT↓ is occasioned by the claim to know that the mother was a nurse.

A final example of the deployment of RPT↓ comes from a phone conversation between two women about a gathering one of the women will soon host:

Extract 5.14 SBL:2:1:6:R

17 T: =Dih you [need inny sil]ver.
 18 B: [hhh [hhhh (0.2) Uh: ^no buhcuz I'll::
 19 [u h °*u°]
 20 T: ->> [Yr only ha]ving six aren'tch[uh↓]
 21 B: [Eh-] No I'm having te-e:n.

In line 17, T, who is not hosting the party, asks B if she needs silverware. The offer is refused in line 18, and B begins what could be an account for why she doesn’t need the extra silverware (“Uh: ^no buhcuz I’ll:”). In the next turn, her recipient offers an account for her not needing extra silverware (“Yr only having six aren'tchuh↓,” line 20) This account is one possible reason why someone would not need extra silverware, and it appears to be on this basis that T makes this upgraded epistemic claim, though her understanding is corrected in the end by her recipient.

5.3.2.2. RPT↓: H=S

While speakers may use RPT↓ on utterances where the hearer has primary epistemic rights (that is, where H>S), they are also deployed on utterances where both speaker and hearer have equal epistemic rights (H=S). Instances where speakers deployed RPT↓ in situations where both speaker and hearer had access and rights to the information contained in the utterance were ubiquitous in the data. One extremely common H=S environment in which RPT↓s appear is in assessment sequences. This is not surprising, as objects, elements or circumstances in the immediate environment are often those things which two or more participants have equal access and/or rights to (Heritage and Raymond, 2005). Two typical examples can be seen in Extracts 5.15 and 5.16, below:

Extract 5.15 HV 1:C1:32

01 HV: It's quite- it's quite wa:rm in he:re isn't [it↓
02 M: [Ye:h

In Extract 5.15, a health visitor, commenting on the temperature of the room, notes that it is warm in the room using an RPT↓. The mother, as a co-present other who has equal access to the temperature in the room, aligns with the noticing before the tag question is complete. Thus, the tag question here is meant to acknowledge the epistemic rights of the recipient by inviting a co-present other who has equal rights and access to the information in question to also assess the situation. The falling intonation is meant to invite alignment from the recipient, which it receives virtually immediately. It is interesting to note that, as was mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, the collocation of an assessment and the pronoun “it” would appear to be one of the most common contexts in which reverse polarity tag questions are used, constituting, as noted by Kim and Ann (2008), 47% of all tag questions found in their data.

In Extract 5.16 two male friends are talking about one of the men's difficulty in obtaining concert tickets over the phone from a ticketing agency. Near the end of the conversation, they talk about the name of the customer service representative who assisted one of the speakers.

Extract 5.16 Concert Tickets

02 J: Doesn' rilly soun' like someone's re::al na:me, duzzit↓
03 A: No::: it does(h)n't maybe he wuz bullshitting you .hhhhh

In line 02, J comments on the name of the representative who helped him over the phone (“Doesn' rilly soun' like someone's re::al na:me, duzzit↓”). This assessment is based on the sound of a person's name. As this name has just been said in prior talk (not shown), the “sound” of his name is immediately accessible to both speakers; therefore, the RPT↓ is used. This is met with alignment in the next turn by his recipient. As in Extract 5.15, the tag question is designed to recognize the recipient's epistemic rights, and at the same time, it invites alignment with the speaker's assessment. It in fact gets this alignment in line 3, in addition to some laughter as an appreciation of the speaker's pointing out of the name as sounding somehow made up or implausible. In this respect, this sequence appears to be a light joking sequence.

Indeed, it is interesting to note the socially-affiliative nature of the preceding examples. Use of assessment sequences in cases where both speaker and hearer have epistemic rights to the information in question may be one of the constitutive elements of “small talk,” and that inviting someone to align with one's assessment of circumstances that are equally accessible to both parties may be a way of establishing common ground with one's recipient, and as such may be a major resource for members to build sociality.

The purpose of the preceding section was to demonstrate the epistemic difference between RPT↑s and RPT↓s. RPT↑s appear in the condition where the hearer possesses greater epistemic rights to the information in question (H>S), whereas RPT↓s appear in a broader range

of conditions, where $H>S$ and $H=S$. Table 5.03 summarizes the differences among the three utterance types mentioned in this chapter thus far.

Table 5.03. Epistemic differences among SPT, RPT \uparrow and RPT \downarrow

Utterance type	Downgraded (from declarative)	Speaker has access	Speaker is author	Hearer is primary rightsholder
SPT	Yes	Yes (prior mention)	No	Yes
RPT \uparrow	Yes	No, but claims access	Yes	Yes
RPT \downarrow	Yes (but upgraded from RPT \uparrow)	No, but claims access	Yes	$H>S$ or $H=S$

In the next section, the sequential character of RPT \uparrow and RPT \downarrow will be discussed.

5.4. Sequential placement of reverse polarity tag questions

In addition to the differences in the epistemic distribution of RPT \uparrow s and RPT \downarrow s, there are also differences in their sequential distribution. RPT \uparrow s appear as parts of larger sequences whose final resolution is contingent in some way on the participant's response to the RPT \uparrow . In other words, they are parts of smaller sequences within larger sequences, where the smaller sequences are ancillary to the work that the participants are centrally engaged in, but are simultaneously sequences which some aspect of the larger sequence is contingent upon. RPT \downarrow s, on the other hand, do not have this ancillary relationship to the rest of the sequence, but are, instead, the main part of the action with which the participants are concerned. This will be demonstrated in the following examples.

5.4.1. RPT↑ as an ancillary concern

As ancillary elements of a larger sequence, RPT↑s can be inclusive or preclusive in character. Inclusive RPT↑s typically appear in pre-sequences and are designed to “clear the floor” for talk to take place. In this sense, they work to “include” further talk. The following two examples will demonstrate this.

In Extract 5.17, we see an RPT↑ deployed as part of a pre-invitation sequence. In this extract, two women are discussing their upcoming school vacations and whether a third party will be available for a get-together:

Extract 5.17 Geri and Shirley

```
67 S: ->> Yihknow. .hh Maybe if he ee-I'm sure hill be arou:nd fer
68 ->> Chrismiss won't 'e?↑
69 G: Oh yeh. Hill be down here [fer Chris[miss. ]
70 S: -> [.hh [Good.m]aybe we c'get
71 -> t'gether fer dinner.
72 G: Mm-hm?
73 (. )
74 G: Su:re.
```

In lines 67 and 68, S asks if G’s friend will be around for the holidays. (“Maybe if he ee-I’m sure hill be arou:nd fer Chrismiss won't 'e?”) The turn is begun as a conditional declarative which appears to be the launching of a suggestion (“Maybe if he’s around, we can get together”). This is cut short in mid-TCU in favor of an A-perspectivized RPT↑ (“I’m sure hill be arou:nd fer Chrismiss won't 'e?”) which functions as a pre-invitation, which, once it receives the go-ahead from the recipient, is followed by an invitation to get together for dinner. Here, we see a pre-invitation being launched by an RPT↑. The subsequent invitation, of course, is contingent upon the RPT↑’s receiving the go ahead from the recipient.

In Extract 5.18, we see a pre-invitation/pre-announcement in the form of the opening of a telephone call. In line 9, A, who has called K, asks if she is busy using an RPT↑ (“Yer not busy are yuh?↑”). This functions as a request to go ahead with the business of the telephone call. We see in this extract, however, that a go-ahead from the recipient is not necessarily always

forthcoming, and the caller has to do some extra work to receive the clearance he is seeking (“Well this’ll be qui:ck I mean it’s nothing,” line 12) before he finally receives it in line 14 (“keh”).

Extract 5.18 Kamunsky 1

06 K: Hello?
 07 A: Karen Baxter?
 08 K: Yea?
 09 A: ->> Yer not busy are yuh?↑
 10 (0.3)
 11 K: Well yeah, I a:m.
 12 A: -> Well this'll be qui:ck I mean it's nothing
 13 A: 't'h[hhh
 14 K: -> [Keh

In Extract 5.19, a participant is in the process of launching a story. He begins with a pre-telling in line 23 (“Have you heard about the orgy we had the other night?”) and after a short discussion of a related topic, he returns to the telling in line 28 using a return marker (“Ennyway-, 'hh u:m(-) we were havin' this orgy”) and almost immediately interrupts the telling and recycles back to a second pre-telling with a latched interrogative that is immediately followed by an RPT↑ (“s this okay t'talk about? this doesn't offend you does it?”).

Extract 5.19 SN-4

23 Mark: Have you heard about] the orgy we had the >other night?=That's
 24 how I got (th')< black eye:.=Y'like the black eye:?
 25 [(Oh it's lovely)]=
 26 Ruth: [Oh it's lovely.]=
 27 Mark: =Great.
 28 Mark: 'hhhh Ennyway-, 'hh u:m(-) we were havin' this orgy='s this okay
 29 ->> t'talk about? this doesn't offend you does it?↑
 30 Sher: No=
 31 Ruth: =No=
 32 Mark: =Oh.=
 33 Mark: ='hhhpt-hh well it should.

The latched interrogative and RPT↑ seek permission (though how serious a request is arguable) to continue with the story by asking whether it’s okay to continue and whether it offends the hearers. This sequence is not part of the storytelling sequence as such, and the continuation of the sequence is contingent upon the teller’s receiving the go-ahead from his recipients. Thus, we can see in this example, the use of an RPT↑ in a sequence which is ancillary to the action in which

the participants are currently engaged, and the continuation of the sequence-in-progress (a story-telling) is made contingent upon the recipients' responses to the question.

In each of the above extracts, we see RPT↑ being deployed as presequences in a way that “clears the floor” for a particular action – an invitation or an announcement. In this way, it can be seen as having an inclusive character; that is, it seeks to create a space in the interaction for an action to potentially be included if a go-ahead is granted. In the next section, we will see another view of RPT↑, that in which RPT↑ acts as potentially preclusive, that is, it is a turn at talk which, had it been asked earlier in the talk, would have potentially precluded the talk or the action in progress.

In Extract 5.20, which was earlier presented as Extract 5.05, a health visitor and new mother are talking about the baby's eyes. The mother explains in line 617 that the baby's eyes “get a bit wee:py.” The turn at point is in line 618, where she continues with “but that's normal isn't it?”

Extract 5.20 HV 1C1:11

616 HV: Her eyes're oka:y.
617 M: They ge- th- they get a bit wee:py sometimes,
618 ->> but that's normal isn't it?• And I swab th'm
619 with wool with cotton woo:l,
620 (0.3)
621 HV: Ye:s if they- if they: (0.2) if you think they're
622 pussie
623 (0.8)
624 M: Yea:h.

The RPT↑ “but that's normal isn't it?” in this sequential context is designed to be preclusive in nature. Having just stated that her child has weepy eyes, the mother then issues the RPT↑, which, in effect, potentially removes from further talk (or renders moot) the issue of weepy eyes as problematic. That she says that she swabs them in the immediately following TCU shows her concern with presenting the eye situation as non-problematic, which is in keeping with the preclusive RPT↑ issued just before.

In Extract 5.21, we see a request sequence in which the final granting of a request is treated by the participants as contingent upon the response to the RPT↑. That is to say that the concern raised in the RPT↑ could potentially preclude the completion of the action in progress, the granting of a request to work. In this extract, H has called L to ask if she can to work as a substitute teacher or caretaker of children.

Extract 5.21 Holt:1:2:25

06 H: -> Hello Missis Field .hh uhm .t.h Wouldju be available for
 07 -> supply on Thu::rsda:y.=
 08 L: =Sorry, Thursda[:y?
 09 H: [Thu:rsday this week.
 10 L: -> YES: ye:is,=
 11 H: =Lovely. .hh It's tuh take my cla:ss only Missiz Tate's
 12 (.) got a hospital appointment
 13 L: [Oh ye[s.
 14 H: [So: uhm .hh if ih- it'll
 15 be the last day'v term which's a bit'v a day to (.) cope
 16 with.=becuz it's gen'lly (.) sort'v packing up'v thi:ngs=
 17 b[ut
 18 L: [Yes.=
 19 H: =We'll try tuh have as much done as we can on the Wednesdee
 20 so that you c'n: p'raps joo: (.) do jus'the one off thi:ngs
 21 on the Thu:rsday.=
 22 L: =Yes fi:ne.
 23 H: -> Alright?=
 24 L: ->> =.hh Yes how old are they they're ten'n eleven aren't they?↑
 25 H: <They're the middle::: Middle juniors. There'r some::
 26 L: Q[uh yes.
 27 H: [Some which'r second jear some thet'r r third jea[rs.
 28 L: [Yes fine.
 29 H: -> Oka[:y?
 30 L: [Ye:is?
 31 H: Lovely. Thank you very much. See you: Thu:rsday

We can see that H makes the request in lines 6 and 7, and the request is granted by her recipient in line 10. However, despite her recipient's granting of the request, H goes on to give the specifics of the assignment in lines 11-17, including a complicating factor (i.e., the fact that L would be working on the last day of the term, which is “a bit've a day to cope with,”). In lines 19-21, the speaker continues to characterize the day as potentially problematic by explaining the measures she will take to make the day easier for L to take over the class. Throughout this stretch of talk, in lines 13, 18 and 22, L displays uptake (line 13: “oh yes”; line 18: “yes,” and line 22: “yes, fine,”) all of which are treated by the speaker as responding to the immediately preceding turn rather than to the initial request since in line 23 she re-instantiates the request with

an “Alright?” L responds “yes,” again (line 24), but this time continues by adding two additional TCUs using an interrogative and an RPT↑ to ask about the age of the children (“Yes how old are they they're ten'n eleven aren't they?”) In response to these questions, H explains the levels of the children, which gets uptake in lines 26 and 28. These responses in lines 26 and 28 are again treated as responding to the preceding turns, as finally, in line 29, H again re-instantiates the request with an “Okay?” that receives a “Yes,” in line 30. It is the reopening of the request by H in line 29 that indicates that she has taken the RPT↑ asking about the age of the children to be a potentially complicating factor and that the granting of the request could be contingent upon the response to this question. Thus, we see again an RPT↑ in a context where the concern brought up by the RPT↑ is potentially preclusive in that the accomplishing of the action that the participants are engaged in is contingent on the response to the turn containing an RPT↑. As in Extracts 5.19 and 5.20, the question is sequentially “misplaced” in a sense, since, had the information they target been brought up earlier, it would have rendered the point under discussion moot.

A slightly more involved case is seen in Extract 5.22, below. In this extract, which was discussed in detail as Extract 5.07, a doctor and patient are discussing two types of medication that the caller has given his young son. Neither medicine has worked:

Extract 5.22 DEC 1109

```

17 Clr: ->  A:nd e:m (.) first of all I got some drops, and they didn't
18          seem to be workin', so (.) I went to see Doctor Walker
19          on:um Thursday,
20 Doc:    Right,
21 Clr: ->  And he gave me some: ointment,
22          (.)

```

(Lines omitted)

```

44 Doc:    E:h it might be worth stopping 'im altogether, and just (.)
45 ->      washing his d'you what were the other drops you had,
46 Clr:    *(ud- clair-)* uhd drops I hadɔ were u:m*
47 Clr:    [*(Chloramer:)      (( * to * = (0.9)
48          (0.3)
49 Doc:    Chlo[ramyc-
50 Clr:    [(tecten)
51          (0.7)

```

52 Doc: -> Those- those were the drops, were the[y?
53 Clr: [Chloramycetin, yes,
54 Doc: ->> And what were the ones that the doctor ga[ve
55 Clr: ->> [And the ointment;
56 Doc: Yeah,=

(Lines omitted)

75 Clr: Polyfax:,
76 (0.9)
77 Doc: -> mtOh right, and that's what- (0.4) the doctor gave you,
78 Clr: -> Yes,
79 Doc: -> Th-whereas the Chloramycetin, that was also given to you by
80 -> the doctor, wasn't it?↑
81 Clr: Yes, [(so) before we had the [Chloramycetin, ('h) and that=
82 Doc: [Yeah, [(Mm),
83 Clr: =[didn't seem t[o be wo:rkin',
84 Doc: [Yeah, ['hh'hh

According to the caller in lines 17-18, the first medication, some unnamed drops, were not working and prompted him to visit a physician from whom he obtained some ointment (lines 19 and 21). At the conclusion of his problem presentation (not shown), the caller asks whether he should stop the second medication or continue using it. The answer to this question is eventually given in lines 44-45; however, as can be seen in the extract below, the doctor reopens the sequence by asking for the name of the drops the caller had used initially. The sequence at point (lines 44-80) surrounds the names of the medications that the caller has already administered and whether the caller obtained them from a physician or not. In line 45, the doctor asks for the name of the drops, which were the initial medication that the caller had tried. Once the name is supplied (lines 48-54), the doctor asks in line 54 for the name of the “ones the doctor gave you.” As explicated earlier in this chapter, this formulation displays the physician’s understanding that the initial medication (some drops) had not been obtained from a doctor, whereas the second medication had been obtained from a doctor. The physician displays his understanding in line 77 that the second medication (an ointment) had been obtained from a doctor, but in line 79 revises his understanding of the source of the first medication by asserting via an RPT↑ that that medication, too, had been obtained from a physician.

At this point, several observations can be made about the RPT↑ and about the sequence containing it. First, the names and source of the medications that the caller has already tried is something the physician must know in order to give the caller medical advice on this issue. In this sense, the current course of action, giving medical advice to a caller, is dependent on the physician's knowing the correct name and source of the medications that have already been tried, the very information that is targeted by the RPT↑ in lines 79-80. Second, the caller's failure to identify the drops as having come from a physician at two points earlier in the talk where that information became relevant (line 17 and line 55) has perpetuated the physician's misunderstanding of the source of the drops and necessitated the clarification seeking on the part of the physician in lines 79 and 80. Thus, the RPT↑ targets information that should or could have been given earlier in the sequence and had it been, it would have precluded much of the talk that has taken place until this point. In effect, the RPT↑ asks about information that is sequentially "misplaced," that is, it inquires about information that could have and should have relevantly been given earlier in the sequence, and had it been given, would have obviated the need for this particular stretch of talk. In this sense, it is ancillary but nonetheless necessary to the current course of action, which is to give medical advice.

A final example can be seen in Extract 5.23, an excerpt of a conversation between a mother and her daughter about the daughter's allowance. The woman's older son and his girlfriend are also present. The course of action in which the mother and daughter are engaged is the granting/denial of the daughter's request for a dress, and should a granting not be forthcoming, an increase in the daughter's allowance so that she may buy the dress herself. The sequence is composed of turns at talk primarily by the mother (M) and the daughter (V), with occasional turns taken by the son (W) and his girlfriend (P). In lines 4 and 6, the mother tells her

daughter that the daughter could afford to buy extra items if she saved her allowance. This is rebutted in lines 6 and 7 by the daughter, who says that her allowance is not sufficient. P's turn in lines 8 and 9 support the mother's position and the mother reinforces her position by aligning with P (lines 10 and 12). The daughter disaligns with her mother's characterization of how she spends her money in lines 13-14.

Extract 5.23 Virginia

04 M: (if you) save yer allowance, an:' um: you could get=
 05 M: =these little extr[a things.
 06 V: [A(h)llo:wan(h)ce? I o(h)nly g(h)et fi(h)ve
 07 d(h)ollars a week.That's rid(h)i(h)c(h)ul(h)ous.
 08 P: [ɛ(Well) that seems like] a lo(h)o(h)ot! heh! uh! 'hhh!=
 09 P: =[I(h) n(h)e|ver g(h)ot that| mu:ch],
 10 M: =[F i v e | D o l l a r s | a Wee:]kɿ=
 11 V: =W[u-
 12 M: [Jus' to throw away, my gosh it is a lo:t.
 13 V: *I don't throw it away though,I spend it.=I mean-* an'
 14 that was back in- (.) >I mean< no offense °a long time ago.
 15 ((* to * = shrill/"whiny"))
 16 (0.3)
 17 W: ->> Wu'you-you buy 'er clothes anyway, dontchyuh?↑
 18 P: [eh heh huh °uh uh
 19 (0.3)
 20 P: hhhk!=
 21 M: =^Yea:h. But I've bought 'er all the clothes that she ne:e:ds.
 22 (0.6)
 23 M: Mo:re than ih-she need[s.
 24 V: [N:uh uh::
 25 (0.2)
 26 V: I 'on't 'ave enough clo:thes.

The turn at point is that by W at line 17. In contrast to the turns surrounding his, W's turn targets information that would resolve the question by rendering it moot (thus precluding the entire discussion), though it is unclear who would be favored by the resolution. In line 17, W uses an RPT↑ directed at his mother: “Wu'you-you buy 'er clothes anyway, dontchyuh?”. The implication of this turn is ambiguous as to its interpretation. As Raymond (2010b) notes in his examination of this sequence, in one sense, it can be seen to side with the mother by “provid[ing] materials to challenge [the daughter's] claim (insofar as it positions Mom as the one who decides ‘anyway,’)” (p. 123). However, Raymond notes, the since the question is directed toward the mother, it could also be seen as a challenge directed at her. Furthermore, given that the mother buys all of the daughter's clothes “anyway,” the turn could be interpreted as saying that an

additional dress should not be problematic, which would support the daughter's argument. In either case, this turn addresses something that is ancillary to the current course of action (who buys the dresses as a general rule vs. determining whether the daughter should be given the money to buy another dress) and addresses some point that, if resolved, would obviate the need for further discussion, thus making the current course of action potentially contingent on the response it receives. Furthermore, like the preceding examples, it addresses information that is "backgrounded," that is, that could have been considered earlier in the sequence and thus could have affected the trajectory of the conversation, possibly by precluding it from discussion.

The preceding extracts demonstrate that RPT↑s are ancillary to the current course of action, target information that the continuation of the course of action is contingent upon, and in the cases where they do not occur within pre-sequences, are preclusive in that they make relevant information that could have or should have been relevantly made at an earlier point in the sequence, and in doing so, bring into focus information that could render the point moot, thereby precluding discussion of the topic. In this way, RPT↑s are quite different from RPT↓s. As will be explicated in the following section, RPT↓s occur in turns that are central to the course of action in which the participants are engaged.

5.4.2. RPT↓ as a central concern

In the following cases, we can see that the course of action in which the participants are engaged is not contingent upon the response to the RPT. In this sense, the RPT makes relevant something that is relevant at this exact point in the interaction. As the unmarked case, their use is relatively straightforward. Examples occurring in both the H>S and H=S conditions of the RPT↓ are explicated below:

In Extract 5.24 we see a case in which a health visitor and a mother are filling out the mother's visit card. The course of action in which they are engaged is explicitly stated by the health visitor in line 10. She begins the second TCU in this turn with the field which she is filling in on the form – “Mothers occupation” and then issues the RPT↓ “it-that was catering wasn't it” (line 11). This turn is clearly doing exactly the action that both participants are currently engaged in. As it turns out, the health visitor is mistaken, the mother corrects her, and the action is completed.

Extract 5.24 HV 3B1:20

10 HV: I'd better fill in the rest of this ca:rd then, .hh
 11 ^Mothers occupa:tion it-that was catering
 12 wasn't [it↓
 13 M: [No no::.= (Uh:m)
 14 pottery.=Teaching.
 15 (.)
 16 HV: Ah:
 17 M: Pottery teacher.

A similar example can be seen in Extract 5.25, where a health visitor and mother are discussing the vaccination schedule for a new baby. This is part of a larger sequence (not shown here) during which the mother poses a number of questions to the health visitor about new mother concerns. First, she asks the health visitor about appropriate mother-toddler groups. Then, she asks when she should take the infant in to be weighed. Next, she asks about which physician she will see at her mother's wellness appointment. Then, in this portion of the sequence, she asks about the vaccination schedule using an RPT↓ (lines 30-31). This receives a response that goes on for 11 lines, and then, in line 44, the mother closes the sequence with “That's 'bout it then,” signaling that she has finished asking her questions. Thus, the question in lines 30-31 are part of the precise course of action, an information seeking/giving sequence, that the participants are engaged in.

Extract 5.25 HV 3B1:27

30 M: ->> An' the injections don't sta:rt (0.7) *(er)
31 ->> (immediately) do the:Y↓*
32 HV: No:. Er you don't u::m (.) *have to come for
33 inje:ctions until about three months.

(Lines omitted - HV talks about the vaccinations)

44 M: *That's 'bout it then.*

A final example of the H>S case can be seen in Extract 5.26, which comes near the end of a visit which began with a report from the mother that the child had been waking up every hour the night previously. As the visit comes to an end, the health visitor and mother are discussing when to bathe the infant in what turns out to be an advice-giving/advice-receiving sequence. We can see that the health visitor's discussion is clearly in response to the mother's complaint about the child's wakefulness that had been made at the beginning of the visit:

Extract 5.26 HV1A1:27

10 HV: It's uh- (.) It might be an idea to bath her at
11 ni::ight.
12 M: Ye::ah.
13 HV: If it sort'v knocks her ou:t,
14 (1.0)
15 HV: ->> It doesn't matter when you bath her does it!
16 M: Oh [no:.
17 HV: [Mo:rning or evening?

In line 10, the health visitor suggests that the mother bathe the baby at night. This receives an alignment from the mother, and the sequence is possibly complete at that point; however, the health visitor continues her TCU using a conditional clause in line 13 (“If it sort'v knocks her out:”), thereby showing her suggestion's relevance to the complaint the mother had made at the beginning of the visit. Not receiving uptake after a 1.0 second silence, the health visitor pursues alignment with her suggestion in line 15 using an RPT↓, and that alignment is given in line 16. The sequence then goes on for some time (not shown) during which the health visitor talks about her own experience with a sleepless baby. 49 lines after the above sequence, the health visitor suggests that she return the following day to hear how the baby's next night had gone, indicating that the giving and getting of advice about the baby had been the central concern of the

28 J: ->> =eh well surely she's clever ↓mentally isn't s[he↓
 29 L: [Oh I don't
 30 know'bout ↓that, I mean uh I don't think it's all that
 31 difficult really

In lines 20-21, the speaker issues an assessment of the third party. In line 22, there is a 0.5 second gap, during which the preferred response (Schegloff, 2007a), an alignment, has become relevant. This gap adumbrates the mitigated disalignment from her recipient that comes in line 24. In line 28, the speaker pursues alignment by limiting the scope of her claim to mention only the party's mental attributes, while simultaneously upgrading her epistemic claim by the addition of the word "surely" and by the use of the RPT↓, which, as was demonstrated in an earlier section of this chapter, prefers alignment. Clearly, at this point of the sequence, the assessment of the person in question (and arguably, agreeing on an assessment of the person in question) is the action in progress, and the RPT↓ is designed specifically to complete the action that the speaker had initiated in lines 20-21. Thus, as in the previous examples, it is not a turn upon which the continuation of the sequence is contingent, but which is deployed in the doing of the action itself.

A final observation with regard to the varying sequential contexts in which we see RPT↑ and RPT↓ which is worth noting is that it may be the difference in sequential context which may explain in part the relative infrequency of RPT↑ relative to RPT↓ in these data. RPT↓ constituted the overwhelming majority of tag questions found in these data, which crossed a wide variety of institutional and non-institutional types of talk; RPT↑ formulations were scarce in comparison. This would be consistent with the analysis that RPT↑ formulations are implicated in a small subset of sequences, namely those which target talk which could or should have been (or in fact are, as in the case of pre-sequences) entered into the sequence earlier and upon which the sequence is contingent, whereas RPT↓ formulations were found to be ubiquitous in the data as

they were central to the action being engaged in by the participants and were, in many cases, constitutive of the action themselves or formulated to pursue alignment with a course of action underway. In many cases, they also appeared to be closure relevant. The sequential differences between RPT↑ and RPT↓ are summarized in Table 5.04, below:

Table 5.04. Differences in the sequential placement of RPT↑ and RPT↓

RPT↑	Ancillary to action in progress	Inclusive	Presequences
		Preclusive	Sequentially “misplaced”
RPT↓	Central to action in progress	Designed to pursue alignment	Often closure-relevant

5.5. Conclusion

The aim of the present chapter was to investigate some of the epistemic differences between SPT and RPT formulations, on the one hand, and RPT↑ and RPT↓ formulations, on the other, in an effort to demonstrate the efficacy of approaching the analysis of such formulations and the actions they do using an epistemic framework. Unlike previous work, which has treated tag questions in their many instantiations (same polarity tags and reverse polarity tag with varying intonation patterns) as epistemically, sequentially and grammatically similar, this analysis has attempted to identify some of the primary epistemic differences among these different forms. Specifically, it was found that same polarity tag and reverse polarity tag questions differ as to the authorship of the information contained in the tag question. While in both types of tag question, the information contained in the turn falls within the *hearer’s*

epistemic domain, the authorship of the information differs. In same polarity tags, the information is authored by the hearer (but said by the speaker) and in reverse polarity tags, the information is authored by the speaker (and said by the speaker). This may be what Quirk, et al. (1985) intended when they noted, though without providing empirical evidence, that same polarity tags indicate “the speaker’s arrival at a conclusion by inference,” (p. 812) – the term inference implying that the conclusion was information falling within the hearer’s epistemic domain to start with. Reverse polarity tag questions, they noted, are designed to elicit verification or confirmation, depending on the tone with which they are uttered, of the proposition contained in the turn (p. 811). While such an analysis may constitute a good starting point for investigating speakers’ epistemic orientation to talk, it tends to overlook the pivotal role played by epistemics in the formulation of turns at talk.

Further, the present chapter has investigated the epistemic differences between two often-theorized-about instantiations of the reverse polarity tag – the RPT with rising intonation and the RPT with falling intonation. It was found that RPT \uparrow s are deployed in cases where the hearer has greater epistemic rights or access to the information contained in the turn (H>S), whereas RPT \downarrow s are used in a wider range of contexts – cases where the hearer has greater epistemic rights or access (H>S) or both participants have equal epistemic rights or access (H=S) to the information contained in the turn. Using this finding as a basis for a more fine-grained understanding of the epistemic differences between these two formulations, the sequential placement of the two types of RPT was examined, and it was found that RPT \uparrow s were part of sequences that were ancillary to the course of action being undertaken and that they were inclusive or preclusive of further talk. RPT \uparrow s that were part of presequences were inclusive in that they cleared the floor for further talk, and RPT \uparrow s that occurred as part of other sequences were preclusive in that they

addressed information that could have or should have entered into the talk at an earlier point, and had they been addressed earlier, could have rendered the point moot. In that sense, they were sequentially “misplaced.”

RPT↓s, on the other hand, were centrally concerned with or implicated in the course of action in which the participants were engaged and sought alignment, which often then brought the sequence to closure.

As this and the preceding chapters indicate, the potential benefits of examining talk from an episto-grammatical framework are many. The following chapter will outline the major conclusions of the present work and provide suggestions for further research in the area of epistemics, grammar and action.

CHAPTER SIX

Conclusion

Taking a conversation analytic perspective, this study has investigated some of the ways in which epistemics operates in the grammatical formulation of utterances, while exploring the role that these epistemically-encoded turns play in the formation of social action. In doing so, it has attempted to situate this effort within a larger research tradition which has viewed epistemics from a variety of perspectives. In a large number of these studies, epistemics has been only marginally addressed in the analysis, and where it is addressed, it is often only treated implicitly. In others, the role of epistemics has been discussed more explicitly. Also in these studies, epistemics has, at various times, been viewed as a semantic or linguistic phenomenon which served as a means to formulate a theory of the structure of language (e.g., Bolinger, 1957; Chafe, 1986). Alternatively, it has been viewed as a psychological phenomenon, located within the mind of an idealized speaker-hearer (e.g., Kamio, 1997). The present study, in contrast, has proposed that epistemics is firmly lodged in interaction between two or more actors; furthermore, this analysis has attempted to demonstrate that participants maintain an ongoing orientation to their own and to their recipients' epistemic status and that this orientation pervades their talk. In this sense, an orientation to epistemic status can be seen as an omnirelevant concern for participants engaged in talk-in-interaction. Further, it argues that this orientation is consequential both for the grammatical formulation of turns at talk and for the social actions that these turns at talk are designed to do.

The goal of this analysis was to investigate the intersection of grammar, epistemics and action, specifically as these notions relate to the grammatical formulation of declarative,

interrogative and tag questions in English. The remainder of this chapter will provide a summary of each of the chapters included in this study, as well as suggestions for future research.

6.1. Chapter 3: Summary

Chapter 3 sought to establish the omnirelevance of epistemics in talk-in-interaction by examining A- and B-event declaratives deployed in talk. Consistent with Fox's (2001) finding that declaratives are "zero-marked" for epistemics, the present study expanded this understanding by establishing that that zero-marking (i.e., neutral, straightforward, unmitigated deployment of the utterance) was common for declaratives which targeted A events, but was uncommon for declaratives whose content dealt with B events. Thus, it was argued that the declarative format is the preferred grammatical format for utterances targeting A-events, while it is a dispreferred format for utterances targeting B-events.

To establish the framework for this discussion, the notion of the A- and B-event statement (Labov and Fanshel, 1977) was reviewed in light of recent studies in epistemics from the field of conversation analysis, and it was proposed that, though useful, the notion of A- and B-event declaratives be understood as unfolding within a multi-dimensional interactive matrix – an epistemic ecology – which is dynamic and which views knowledge as a situated phenomenon that may be highly contingent on other aspects of the interaction.

Having established the notion of epistemics as a complex, interactive, dynamic phenomenon, the remainder of the chapter was divided into two parts. The first part of the analysis addressed the dispreferred status of the declarative format for the discussion of B events. In the second part of the chapter, some of the social actions done by utterances that depart from

this norm – mitigated or downgraded A-event declaratives and “zero-marked” (Fox, 2001) B-event declaratives – were examined.

In the first part of the chapter, it was argued that the declarative is the dispreferred format for the deployment of B events in talk. It did so by first examining A-event declaratives and demonstrating that these declaratives are rarely downgraded. In fact, the overwhelming majority of A-event declaratives examined in these data were straightforward, unmitigated, zero-marked declaratives. It was noted that A-event declaratives were deployed when discussing information of a personal nature (e.g., emotions, intentions and internal physical states) as well as when discussing information that fell within the speaker’s epistemic domain professionally. It was further found that when speakers downgraded their claims to know information that clearly fell within their epistemic domain, they held themselves accountable for such a lack of knowledge.

In contrast, it was argued that declarative formulations are a dispreferred format for the discussion of B events. Several types of evidence were offered to support this claim. The first is that B-event declaratives are routinely downgraded by speakers. This downgrading can be accomplished in a variety of ways, for example, through “on the record” formulations such as “*stop me if I’m getting this wrong,*” through evidential formulations, such as modals of inference (e.g., “*She must have hit you awful hard*”) and through verbs of perception (e.g., *appear, seem*). Speakers can also use paralinguistic signals such as intonation, breathiness and laughter to downgrade a B-event declarative, and they can also deploy grammaticalized downgrades, such as reverse polarity tag questions, A-perspectivizing (e.g., *I think* appended to a B-event declarative) and discourse markers such as *so* and *then*.

A second piece of evidence offered in support of the notion that declaratives are dispreferred in the formulation of B events is that participants orient to the warrantability of B-

event declaratives, and several of the ways in which B-event declaratives can be warranted (e.g., through the environment, prior talk, implicature and social knowledge of B) were discussed.

A third type of evidence offered for the dispreferred status of the declarative as a formulation for B events was found in the types of responses that B-event declaratives receive. It was found that B-event declaratives were often resisted by their recipients. Recipients resisted B-event declaratives in a variety of ways, including other-correction; recasting the B-event declarative in other terms; repeatedly resisting the terms of a B-event declarative, resulting in an extended sequence; and, by aligning with the speaker while the speaker was still mid-TCU.

A final piece of evidence was found in how speakers treat non-present third parties' rights to information that falls within the absent party's epistemic domain. It was found that even when a third party was not present, speakers whose talk addressed third party information nevertheless preserved the third party's epistemic rights within their own talk by using verbs of perception such as "seems" and "sounds like." Having established the dispreferred status of the declarative as a format for formulating B events, it was suggested that the interrogative might be the preferred format for formulating B events.

The second major portion of the chapter addressed the action import of A- and B-event declaratives by specifically looking at declaratives which departed from the norms described above. It was found that downgraded A-event declaratives (e.g., "I think I'll just stick with this piece at St. Francis for awhile") were regularly deployed to do dispreferred interactional work, such as declining a job offer or delivering bad news. B-event declaratives, on the other hand, were implicated in both socially-disaffiliative actions (e.g., accusations and insults), and socially-affiliative actions such as offering support or showing understanding.

Let us now turn to a discussion of future research directions in the area of A- and B-event declaratives.

6.1.1. Chapter 3: Future research directions

The present work represents a first attempt to study how A- and B-event declaratives and the epistemic claims they make are implicated in the formation of social action. One potentially fruitful area of future research may be to investigate the ways in which these formats are strategically deployed in arenas such as politics and the law. Examination of a well-known political exchange from the 1988 United States vice-presidential debate between Senator Lloyd Bentsen and Senator Dan Quayle shows the ways that speakers can strategically deploy A- and B-event declaratives to instantiate authority, for example.

Extract 6.01 Bentsen-Quayle Debate

```
01 Q:          tch! I have as much sperience in the Congress (.) as Jack Kennedy
02             did↓
03             (0.1)
04             when he sought (.) th'presidency. (.) I will be prepared (.) to
05             deal with the people (.) in the Bush administration (.) if that
06             unfortunate event would ever occur,
07 M:          Senator Bentsen?
08             (0.1)
09 B: -->>    Senator (0.1) I served with Jack Kennedy (.) I knew Jack Kennedy
10             -->>    (.) Jack Kennedy wz a friend uh mine, (0.1) Senator, ↑yer no Jack
11             -->>    Kennedy.

                ((Prolonged shouts and applause))
```

In Extract 6.01, Senator Quayle responds to a question which he claims in earlier talk (not shown) to have been asked numerous times – that of how he would conduct business in the event that he had to take over the presidency. His response in lines 1-4 draws a clear parallel between him and John F. Kennedy. (“I have as much sperience in the Congress (.) as Jack Kennedy did↓ when he sought (.) th'presidency.”) To the extent that Quayle has epistemic rights to know the amount of experience he possesses and can use that information to compare himself to the former president, this statement constitutes an A-event declarative that, as would be expected, is deployed in a straightforward, unmitigated way. To counter such an A-event declarative is a

matter of some delicacy, and were such a counter stated in terms of a B-event declarative, it would put the speaker at some risk of appearing to claim knowledge of something he does not have knowledge of, an undesirable position for a debate participant to be in. Bentsen's response, in lines 9-11, counters Quayle's A-event declarative in perhaps the only way that would allow Bentsen to come off as knowledgeable on the subject – through the use of a three-part series of A-event declaratives on a subject about which he has some grounds for claiming knowledge – his own personal acquaintance with President Kennedy: (“Senator (0.1) I served with Jack Kennety (.) I knew Jack Kennedy (.) Jack Kennedy wz a friend uh mine, (0.1)”), which he then uses to warrant a final assessment of Quayle vis à vis the former president: (“Senator, ↑yer no Jack Kennedy.”) It is precisely through deploying the strong epistemic claim embodied by A-event declaratives in this turn that Bentsen was able to effectively counter Quayle's claim. Studies of institutional talk such as debates, classroom interaction and doctor-patient interaction, using an epistemic framework, may potentially provide a much greater understanding than we currently have of how authority is created in social relationships, particularly those in society's institutions. (See Drew, 1991 for a discussion of the epistemics of authority.)

The findings presented in this chapter revealed the pervasive way in which participants orient to their own and their recipients' epistemic status. At the same time, it established that participants patrol and defend their own epistemic territories through the grammatical formulation of their turns at talk. Furthermore, it established the declarative as the preferred format for making knowledge claims about the self (A-event statements) and showed that the declarative was a dispreferred format for making claims about others (B-event statements.) The succeeding chapters furthered the investigation by examining how epistemics are implicated in other grammatical formats (e.g., the interrogative and reverse polarity tag questions).

6.2. Chapter 4: Summary

The focus of Chapter 4 was to investigate the deployment of the interrogative, the declarative and elliptical question format (e.g., “Any problems breathing?”) in 59 after-hours calls to an on-call physician. The inclusion of institutional data in a study such as this can serve to shed light on more general conversational practices by holding “inferential procedures and frameworks” (Drew and Heritage, 1992a) constant so that the ways that actions are being produced in talk can be analyzed. After situating the study in the already-existing body of research on medical questioning (e.g., Heritage, 2002b; Raymond, 2003), the ways in which physicians use the interrogative and declarative/declarative + same polarity tag (SPT) as alternate question formats in the history-taking portion of the phone consultation were examined. It was noted that the physician’s use of the interrogative coincided with the discussion of new symptoms or other information that had not been discussed in the prior talk. The declarative, on the other hand, was used in the deployment of a number of actions designed to help the physician to manage the contingencies of the medical interview with the final goal of determining whether a patient needed immediate care necessitating an after-hours visit, or whether a treatment or interim treatment might be given over the phone.

The first interactional contingency that the declarative seemed to manage was to obtain additional information about a situation or symptom that had already been mentioned in prior talk. In such cases, the patient or caretaker gave some bit of information, and the physician, in talk subsequent to that, revisited the information in such a way that it allowed him to gain more information about what had already been said. As can be seen Extract 6.02 (introduced earlier as Extract 4.01), the patient’s parent explains in line 4 that the baby has been given water. In line 25, the physician revisits that information, using the declarative to query the patient’s parent

had not been mentioned in the prior talk, while displaying, via its truncated form, the physician's stance that the symptom was not likely to be present. The similarity in format ("Do you have any x?" vs. "Any x?") is quite felicitous, as they behave in epistemically-similar ways. On the other hand, "No x?" was deployed in sequential positions where the patient had not reported a symptom where it normatively would have been reported had the patient been experiencing it. Analysis of the sequential context indicated that the lack of a report at precisely those places in the interaction was taken by the physician to mean that the symptoms most likely did *not* exist, that is, that the symptom was *understood* not to exist, thus allowing the physician to make an upgraded epistemic claim via the "No x?" formulation. The knowledge claim implicit in the "No x?" formulation is morphologically similar to its declarative counterpart, "There is/you have no x" or related variants (e.g., "There is nothing in her mouth?"). Thus, we can see that such formulations, which from a 20th century linguistic perspective were considered to be part of the grammatical detritus caused by improper use of the language, are instead meaningful and effective resources that participants can use in the formulation of social action.

6.2.1. Chapter 4: Future research directions

The goal of this chapter was to look at how physicians use declaratives and interrogatives in after-hours calls to an on-call physician. This was merely a starting point for many more investigations into the use of declaratives and interrogatives in other interactional settings. One possible area of investigation would be to see if the declarative is deployed in a similar way in face-to-face doctor-patient interactions. Moving into other institutional settings, a possible area of research could be to investigate how declaratives and interrogatives are deployed as alternatives in the law or in politics, giving special attention to the actions each type of

formulation does. Because of the ubiquity of these grammatical formats, the possible areas of study related to declaratives, interrogatives and epistemics is virtually without limit.

One potentially interesting area of research may be to more fully investigate how epistemics functions in the case of interrogatives. Although interrogatives typically address B events, they do, via the presuppositions and candidate answers they contain, reflect the epistemic status of the speaker. Pomerantz (1988) notes that when speakers ask questions, they make implicit claims about their knowledge of the information contained in the questions, and further, their questions contain presuppositions about what the recipient is expected to know. She explains that “unmarked questions” such as “What time is it?” expect the recipient to know the answer, whereas “Would you know what time it is” does not expect the recipient to know the answer. Pomerantz notes that speakers have a choice of strategies when asking questions; one option is to offer a candidate answer embedded within the question. One way of offering a candidate answer that Pomerantz identifies is for the speaker to provide a model for an appropriate response to his or her question.

Pomerantz notes that questions like “And have you been treated alright by the police,” used instead of “how have the police been treating you” give the recipient a model of what the answer should be (e.g., “Yes – they’ve been treating me well.”) They also reveal the speaker’s knowledge. While this is a characteristic of ordinary conversation, we also see this phenomenon at work in the case of the optimization of physicians’ questions to patients (Boyd and Heritage, 2006), particularly in the case of interrogative or-inquiries, a question formulation not addressed in the current study but one which, if studied, could provide interesting insights into grammar and epistemics in interaction.

Lindstrom (1997), in her study of or-inquiries in Swedish, defines an or-inquiry as “a ‘yes’/ ‘no’ interrogative that ends with ‘or’” (Lindstrom, 1997, p. 1). An example of an or-inquiry is given in Extract 6.03.

Extract 6.03 DEC

Doc: .<Are you breast feeding her? or:=

It appears that physicians regularly use or-inquiries to ask about their patients’ health. These questions contain candidate answers which reveal the physician’s epistemic stance vis à vis a particular health state. At the same time, the “or” formulation allow the recipient to disalign if need be. Some preliminary information about or-inquiries may be useful at this point.

Lindstrom points out that the or-inquiry is “produced and understood as a turn in its own right” (p. 2). That is, these turns are treated as complete by both the speaker and the recipient, and the final “or,” rather than simply being added on, is produced and understood to be part of the turn constructional unit to which it is attached. Furthermore, she notes that or-inquiries are a major interactional resource for marking the action that a turn is doing as problematic in some way by “relaxing the preference structure of the turn” (p. 2) such that a question, for example, that prefers a “yes” answer by virtue of its polarity and grammatical structure, can clear the way for the recipient to give a dispreferred “no” answer. This practice, Lindstrom states, displays an orientation to possible recipient resistance by making it easier for the recipient to disalign with the question’s preference and issue a dispreferred response.

In the context of the medical consultation, or-inquiries fulfill a similar role in that they do indeed appear to mark a turn as somehow problematic while relaxing the preference structure of the question as stated by the physician. However, an additional consideration that arises in the context of medical questioning concerns the presuppositional content of physicians’ questions. Boyd and Heritage (2006) found that:

“...doctors’ questions tend to embody presuppositions about aspects of the patient’s life circumstances, health status, bodily awareness, and medical knowledge with varying degrees of explicitness” (p. 159).

Presuppositions would appear to be linked to epistemic status in that, in the first place, the presuppositions form a part of the physician’s knowledge base. Indeed, it may be in part via presuppositions embedded in the content of physicians’ questions (which reflect the physician’s greater knowledge of health and medicine) that exchanges of information between physician and patient (Cassell, 1985), particularly with regard to information about positive health practices, are accomplished.

In Extract 6.04, we can see how physicians’ or-inquiries can embody best case health scenarios for the patient and how the formulation of the turns as or-inquiries allows patients who do not follow best case health practices to dislign with that preference.

Extract 6.04 DEC

```
37 Doc:      Yeah. 'hhh Um: th'important thing is to: (0.3) um:: e- just
38         -> (0.4) e- u-wu-what are you feeding her.<Are you breast feeding
39         -> her? or:=
40 Clr: ->   =Ehr: bottle.
41 Doc:      Bottle.
```

In Extract 6.04, the physician asks the patient in lines 38–39 about how she is feeding her baby (“e- u-wu-what are you feeding her. Are you breast feeding her? or:”). Such questions are designed to reflect a “best guess” (clearly an epistemic designation) (Heritage, 2002b, p.3) orientation by the physician to the patient’s health state or practice. Thus, by highlighting a positive health practice and grammatically preferring a “yes” answer, this question both presupposes that the caller breastfeeds her daughter and conveys to the caller the desirability of doing so. The preferences imposed by these presuppositions, however, are softened by the formulation of this turn as an or-inquiry. That the caller understands this to be the case is evidenced by her delayed (and dispreferred) response (“=Ehr: bottle.”) in line 40.

Investigating candidate answers contained in interrogatives may give us a clearer picture of how epistemics functions in the formulation of interrogatives and how it impacts participants' responses. Looking at or-inquiries would be one way to begin such an investigation.

6.3. Chapter 5: Summary

The central goal of Chapter 5 was to investigate the epistemics of reverse polarity tag questions (RPTs) of the type:

- a. You can see it, can't you?
- b. You can't see it, can you?

As was noted in the chapter, these questions appear in four variants, grossly speaking:

- c. POSITIVE + NEGATIVE
RISING TONE
He likes his jòb, dóesn't he?
- d. POSITIVE + NEGATIVE
FALLING TONE
He likes his jòb, dòesn't he?
- e. NEGATIVE + POSITIVE
RISING TONE
He doesn't like his jòb, dóes he?
- f. NEGATIVE + POSITIVE
FALLING TONE
He doesn't like his jòb, dòes he?

Kim and Ann (2008), in their study of British tag questions, found that reverse polarity tag questions made up 90% of the tag questions in their data. Furthermore, they found that 23% of tag questions were appended to utterances with the subject "you," whereas the subject of the utterance was "I" in only 7% of the tag questions. By far the largest number of tag questions were appended to utterances with the subject "it" (47%).

Literature on reverse polarity tag questions was reviewed, and it was noted that much of the literature has analyzed RPTs by looking at their relationship to the speaker's beliefs about the truthfulness of the proposition contained in the RPT (e.g., Nasslin, 1984), or more commonly by classifying RPTs into discourse function (e.g., Holmes, 1990, 1995; Algeo, 1990). The current study instead proposed to investigate the epistemics of RPTs and to see how they are deployed in a particular sequential context.

The specific goals of this chapter were two-fold. One was to clarify the distinction between RPTs and same polarity tag questions (SPTs) in terms of their epistemic properties, and the other was to draw an epistemic distinction between RPTs with rising intonation (RPT↑) and RPTs with falling intonation (RPT↓).

In the first section of the chapter, RPTs and SPTs were analyzed and were found to be epistemically distinct. SPTs are tag questions of the type:

g. But he's taking those nicely, is he?

where the clause in the main verb is of positive polarity, as is the verb in the tag question.

It is important to note that past studies of RPTs have often treated reverse polarity tag questions as similar or as functioning in the same manner as SPTs. The results of the current analysis have provided evidence that they are indeed quite different, epistemically-speaking.

It was found that RPTs and SPTs differed epistemically with respect to the authorship of the information contained in the question. In SPTs, it was found that the information contained in the statement had been authored by the recipient of the SPT. That is, it was information that had been warranted in some other way by the speaker of the SPT, most commonly, through the talk. This can be seen in Extract 6.05, earlier introduced as 5.01:

Extract 6.05 HV 3B1

1761 HV: -> =.tch Are you drinking
1762 -> plenty of wa:[ter,
1763 M: -> [Oh ye:[s.
1764 HV: [Yea[h.
1765 M: -> [M_asses.

(Lines omitted)

1847 HV: -> But you're drinking plenty of wa:ter are you.
1848 M: *Ye:s.*
1849 HV: Mm: ,
1850 M: *I drink m_asses of (.) t_ea c_offee,
1851 HV: Mm: ,=
1852 M: =*W_eak t_ea an' coffee,*

In this extract, the same polarity tag occurs in line 1847, where it revisits information that had been asked about in lines 1761 and 1762. This is consistent with the finding in Chapter 3, which noted that B-event declaratives, of which this is a type, revisit information that was presented in prior talk. In this sense, the utterance “But you’re drinking plenty of wa:ter are you” states information that had been authored by the SPT speaker’s recipient in line 1763, when she answered “yes” to the question of whether she has been drinking. It can be readily seen from this example that the information contained in the statement in line 1847 fell within the epistemic domain of the SPT speaker’s recipient and that it had been authored by the recipient, as well.

RPTs, on the other hand, contained information that fell within the recipient’s domain but that was authored by the speaker of the RPT. In other words, RPTs were found to contain information that the speaker did not have epistemic rights to but about which he or she ventured to make a knowledge claim. This can be seen in Extract 6.06, earlier introduced as 5.05.

Extract 6.06 HV 1C1

616 HV: Her eyes're oka:y.
617 () ((Sniff)) (0.7)
618 M: They ge- th- they get a bit wee:py sometimes,
619 ->> but that's normal isn't it? And I swab th'm (up)
620 with wool with cotton woo:l,
621 (0.3)
622 HV: Ye:s if they- if they: (0.2) if you think they're
623 pussie
624 (0.8)
625 M: Yea:h.

In Extract 6.06, a health visitor (community nurse) is speaking with a new mother about her child’s weepy eyes. The new mother states that “they get a bit wee:py sometimes, but that’s

normal, isn't it?" in line 619. The use of the tag question in this case is quite apt – the mother is querying the nurse about something which falls within the nurse's epistemic domain and which has not been mentioned in the prior talk; however, she *is* making some claim to know the information (as evidenced by the declarative portion of the formulation). Therefore, she uses an RPT to make this claim. This is in marked contrast with the way in which participants use SPTs and provides evidence for a true epistemic distinction between RPTs and SPTs in naturally-occurring talk.

The second part of the chapter was concerned with the epistemic difference between RPTs with rising intonation (RPT↑) and RPTs with falling intonation (RPT↓). It was found that RPT↑s were appended to declaratives containing information to which the hearer had greater epistemic rights. This was called the H>S condition. RPT↓s, on the other hand, were regularly appended both to declaratives containing information to which the hearer had greater epistemic rights and to declaratives containing information to which both the hearer and speaker had equal epistemic rights, thus yielding two possible conditions for RPT↓, H>S and H=S. A summary of the epistemic distribution of RPT↑ and RPT↓ can be seen in Table 6.01, below:

Table 6.01. RPT↑ and RPT↓ and associated epistemic statuses

Tag question type	Associated epistemic statuses
Reverse polarity tag with rising intonation (RPT↑)	H>S
Reverse polarity tag with falling intonation (RPT↓)	H>S; H=S

Examination of these two formulations indicated that RPT↑s and RPT↓s do different actions in conversation. RPT↑s are implicated in true information requests about information which falls in

the hearer's epistemic domain but which the speaker, and not the hearer, has authored (cf. the section on authorship in RPTs, above). RPT↓s, on the other hand, have an expanded role: first of all, RPT↓s appended to declaratives in the H>S condition are implicated in requests for information that is in the hearer's domain in the same way that RPT↑s are. In other words, in the H>S condition, the speaker is seeking *confirmation* of an understanding of a particular bit of information that he or she has authored but that falls in the hearer's epistemic domain. However, RPT↓ are also appended to declaratives where the hearer and speaker have *equal* access to the information under discussion, and therefore, these types of RPT are used to invite *alignment* with a particular stance. These results are summarized in Table 6.02, below:

Table 6.02. Epistemic status and action import classified by tag question type

Tag question type	Associated epistemic statuses	Action import
Reverse polarity tag with rising intonation (RPT↑)	H>S	Seeks confirmation
Reverse polarity tag with falling intonation (RPT↓)	H>S	Seeks confirmation
	H=S	Seeks alignment

These results indicate that RPT↑ and RPT↓ are epistemically distinct and that this epistemic distinction is heavily implicated in the actions that they do.

The second portion of this section dealt with the sequential placement of RPT↑s and RPT↓s. Again, significant differences between the two were found. RPT↑s were found to be ancillary to a larger sequence in progress and were deployed to discuss matters upon which the continuation of the

rest of the sequence was contingent. Furthermore, they were found to fall into two categories: inclusive RPT↑s and preclusive RPT↑s. Not surprisingly, presequences were found to be a sequential environment in which inclusive RPT↑s frequently occur. Presequences are, once again, ancillary to the main action that is unfolding in that they are preliminary to them and in that they clear the floor for the inclusion of talk once they receive a go-ahead. This can be seen in Extract 6.07, introduced earlier as 5.18.

Extract 6.07 Kamunsky 1

06 K: Hello?

07 A: Karen Baxter?

08 K: Yea?

09 A: ->> Yer not busy are yuh?↑

10 (0.3)

11 K: Well yeah, I a:m.

12 A:-> Well this'll be qui:ck I mean it's nothing

13 A: 't'h[hhh

14 K: -> [Keh

In this extract, A has called K. Before beginning the business about which he is calling, he asks if K is busy (line 9), using an RPT↑. Such turns are typically designed to obtain a go-ahead from the recipient to continue with the reason for the call. In this sense, the continuation of the rest of the sequence is contingent on her answer to the RPT↑.

Preclusive RPT↑s, on the other hand, are ancillary to the action in which the participants are engaged but are potentially preclusive of further talk. This can be seen in Extract 6.08, presented earlier as Extract 5.20:

Extract 6.08 HV 1C1:11

616 HV: Her eyes're oka:y.

617 M: They ge- th- they get a bit wee:py sometimes,

618 ->> but that's normal isn't it?• And I swab th'm

619 with wool with cotton woo:l,

620 (0.3)

621 HV: Ye:s if they- if they: (0.2) if you think they're

622 pussie

623 (0.8)

624 M: Yea:h.

In this extract, the turn at point is in line 618. In this extract, a mother is talking to a health visitor (HV) about her daughter's eyes. In line 617, in response to the HV's question about her daughter's eyes in

line 616, the mother states that “they get a bit weepy sometimes,” thus nominating as a topic of discussion the problematicity of this eye condition. However, in line 618, she issues an RPT↑ (but that’s normal isn’t it?↑) which re-positions the eye problem as *not* a problem but as a normal state of affairs, thus potentially precluding it as a topic of further discussion. The TCU immediately following the RPT↑ further buttresses this characterization of the eye condition as non-problematic by detailing the steps she takes to resolve the problem. That the HV signs on to this characterization of the eye condition as non-problematic and not warranting further discussion is made evident by her response in lines 621-622, which targets only the comment about the step the mother takes to resolve the problem (swabbing the eye) and leaves unanswered the RPT↑.

Thus, the deployment of the RPT↑ serves to stop the action in progress to introduce a contingency that could well (and does) pre-empt the discussion of weepy eyes as problematic, depending on her recipient’s response. In this way, it is ancillary to the action in progress, and it is in some sense preliminary, though it is sequentially “misplaced,” coming as it does after the mother has mentioned weepy eyes in a sequential position where a problem report has been made relevant.

This is markedly different from the sequential environment of RPT↓. RPT↓s are central to and often constitutive of the course of action in which the participants are engaged. This is demonstrated in Extract 6.09, presented earlier as 5.28.

Extract 6.09 Holt 2:15:1

20 J: -> She's not only clever MENTally she's clever with her
 21 -> fingers as we:ll
 22 -> (0.5)
 23 J: .hh[hh
 24 L: -> [Oh::[w:well I]don't kno::w?=
 25 L: =uh mih hheh heh heh (h) I'm (not), .hh[hh
 26 J: [Uh:?
 27 L: eh hah lneh=
 28 J: ->> =eh Well surely she's clever ↓mentally isn't s[he↓
 29 L: [Oh I don't
 30 know'bout ↓that, I mean uh I don't think it's all that
 31 difficult really

In this extract, we see a speaker, J, who is favorably assessing a non-present third party (lines 20-21). This is arguably a matter that both speaker and hearer have equal epistemic access to (an H=S condition). Her recipient, L, resists this assessment, as evidenced by the lack of immediate uptake (line 22). In lines 24-27, the speaker actively resists the assessment saying “I don’t know” accompanied by a series of laughs and hesitations. In line 28, J pursues an alignment from her speaker with her positive assessment by reducing its scope by dropping the observation about the person’s manual dexterity. At this point, she deploys an RPT↓ that appears designed to pursue the alignment. Clearly, as this case shows, J and L are in the midst of an assessment sequence in which the RPT↓ plays a very important role. It is designed specifically to complete the action that the speaker had initiated in lines 20 and 21. In this sense, the RPT↓ is not ancillary, but instead is central to and constitutive of the action in progress. In the chapter, a number of these examples were presented.

Thus, Chapter 5 presented evidence for the following claims:

1. RPTs and SPTs are epistemically distinct question formats in that speakers of RPTs are authoring information contained in the RPT that falls in the hearer’s epistemic domain, whereas SPTs are said by the speaker but authored by the hearer.
2. RPT↑ and RPT↓ are epistemically distinct question formats; in fact, RPT↑s occur only in conditions where H>S, whereas RPT↓s occur in conditions where H>S and H=S. In this sense, RPT↑s are true epistemic requests – inquiries about information, but RPT↓s are upgraded epistemic claims about which a speaker requests confirmation.
3. RPT↑ and RPT↓ occur in sequentially different contexts. RPT↑s occur in sequences where they are appended to information that is ancillary to the question under discussion and upon which the rest of the sequence is contingent. They can be either inclusive of further talk, or

they can raise a question that, had it been addressed earlier, would have been preclusive of the current sequence. RPT↓s, on the other hand, are constitutive of or central to the action in which the participants are engaged.

6.3.1. Chapter 5: Future research directions

The findings of Chapter 5 seem particularly well-suited to informing future studies of the role of RPTs, particularly RPT↓s, in the construction of authority. The relationship between epistemics and authority has been noted by Fox (2001), who claimed that evidential markings in utterances are consequential for the construction of authority in everyday talk:

...[E]vidential marking, at least in English, indexes social meanings and...the social meanings so indexed involve the speaker's construction, on a particular occasion, with a particular recipient, of *authority, responsibility, and/or entitlement*. (p. 176). [Italics in original]

The preference for alignment embodied by the reverse polarity tag with falling intonation may occasion its use in just such a context -- those cases where a speaker wishes to secure alignment from his or her recipient with the speaker's course of action or other displayed stance in the face of possible or displayed resistance to the speaker's stance. This can be seen in Extracts 6.10 and 6.11 In Extract 6.10, we see an extended advice-giving sequence wherein a health visitor (community nurse) attempts to convince a new mother to put her baby down between feedings; however, she encounters repeated resistance from her recipient:

Extract 6.10 HV 1C1:66:2111

1437 HV: 1->>And you're able to put her down in between fee:ds are you:,
 1438 (1.0)
 1439 M: 1-> No::: (0.4) She screams.
 1440 HV: uhhhh hah hah [hah .uhhhhhhhhhh
 1441 M: [if I put her in the:[re.
 1442 Fr: [hhehhhh=
 1443 HV: =hah °hah°=
 1444 Fr: =eh hnh
 1445 (1.0)
 1446 M: Ye:s.=
 1447 HV: 2->>=Well it is important you kno:w tuh: (0.2) get it into a
 1448 rou:ti:ne (0.2) otherwise she'll get so used to sittin' on
 1449 your lap she'll want to do it all the ti:me.
 1450 M: Well she di- that's what (.) I did in hospital: uh I
 1451 2-> realise (about) my mistake no:w but you (can't) keep them qui:et.
 1452 I- (in fact) I don't like ()=
 1453 HV: =Well my advice to you: is that when she's had a cuddle

1454 and you've changed her and you've fed her and she's brought her
1455 3->>wind up (1.2) that you firmly put her do:wn,
1456 M: 3-> I've started.
1457 HV: O[:n her ow:::n,
1458 M: 3-> [I did it this mo:rnng.
1459 HV: preferably not right by you:
1460 (0.8)
1461 HV: and you can check her every (1.0) fifteen minutes
1462 if she [()
1463 M: [She had a cry for twenty minutes this morning
1464 M: [(then she:) went to slee:p.
1465 HV: [Did she:?
1466 HV: Mm.
1467 HV: 'Cuz she has to lea:rn that uh (0.7) she can't uh be
1468 HV: with you a:ll the ti:me.
1469 B: ((Sneeze)) (1.5)
1470 HV: 4->> And you need (.) the separation from he:r as well as sh-
1471 she needs one from you: in order to sleep and gro:w doesn't she:.
1472 M: This is i:t.
1473 (0.6)
1474
1475 HV: Mm.
1476 M: Well () I thou:ght to () to () well y'know what is it
1477 her co:ld? () but in the e:nd
1478 (0.5)
1479 4-> I: jist suddenly realised it's jist- she doesn't like bein'
1480 4-> put in that pra:m.
1481 (0.2)
1482 M: (This is) (.) I tried sneak 'er in when she was asleep
1483 an' I'd
1484 yihknow wait for her to nod o:ff (0.4) 'til my ba- would
1485 take three or four hou:rs,
1486 HV: .hh No: I think it's a very important right from the
1487 5->> beginning to be fi:rm with 'em.=I(f) you firmly put
1488 -> 'em down you: TELL 'em (0.8) bedti:me an' I'm
1489 not pickin' you: up so you can: (0.5) you kno:w=
1490 M: =Tha:[t's i:t.
1491 HV: [do what you li:ke (.) and I'm goin' off to
1492 (1.0) uh:m
1493 (0.7)
1494 M: 5-> Oh I wouldn't let 'er cry too: lo:ng you kno:w.=
1495 HV: =No:.
1496
1497 M: I mean (0.2) half an hou:r (0.5) y'know l- like you sa:y
1498 you look- you check them.
1499 HV: Oka:y well th'n I mean (0.5) (let her tr- (0.3) cry-) if
1500 she's- if she's sounding re:ally desperate
1501 well then you pick her up
1502 HV: =do the same old routine again pat 'er ba:ck (0.3)
1503 ehr cuddle 'er a little bit uh:m
1504 M: °That'[s it °
1505 HV: [then uh (1.0) make sure that she's alri:ght and then
1506 6->>put her do:wn again and tell her again it's bedti:me.
1507 (0.2)
1508 6-> Well she must have been alright this mornin' 'cos she slept
1509 si:x hou:rs (after she had a cry:))

Virtually the entire sequence in Extract 6.10 is occupied with the attempts of the health visitor to secure alignment from her recipient (a new mother) with the health visitor's advice about not picking a new baby up when the baby cries. The health visitor makes several attempts (attempt 1 at line 1437; attempt 2 at line 1447; attempt 3 at line 1455; attempt 4 at line 1470; attempt 5 at lines 1487-1488 and attempt 6 at line 1506.) On repeated occasions, she fails to

receive full alignment from her recipient (line 1439; line 1451; and lines 1479-1480); furthermore, what attenuated alignment she does receive does not appear to convince her (attempt 3, lines 1456 and 1458 and attempt 6, line 1508). What prompts the health visitor to pursue alignment with her advice to such an extent appears to be the lack of a commitment from the mother to implement the advice in the future or to accept the advice as a general practice. Heritage and Sefi (1992) have noted that treatment recommendations in medical interaction are often accepted by an “Okay” with falling intonation, but the mother in this extract does not deliver this. In line 1456, the mother states that she’s started to not pick up the baby and line 1458 she states that she had resisted picking up the baby that very morning – both statements focused on past behaviors. What is lacking is a promise to sign on to the advice in the future or to accept it as her regular practice. This lack of alignment has consequences much later in the visit, as the health visitor is preparing to leave, where we see Extract 6.11:

Extract 6.11 HV 1C1:2111

2111 HV: ->>.tch Oka:y I'm goin' to go:: and you're goin' to
2112 ->> put that baby do:wn aren't you:↓=
2113 M: =I am goin' to: what yo(h)u (h)a y(h)ea(h)s
2114 HV: ha ha ^ha ha

In Extract 6.11, the health visitor in lines 2111 and 2112 deploys an RPT declarative with falling intonation to revisit her earlier instruction. “I’m goin’ to go:: and you’re goin’ to put that baby do:wn aren't you:.” The use of the declarative with falling intonation, the slight emphasis placed on “that baby” and “aren't you:.” and the relative loudness of the turn relative to the just-prior talk reinforce the instructions-giving action performed by the “you’re goin to put that baby down” portion of the turn. In addition, the placement of the second TCU (“you’re goin’ to put that baby do:wn aren’t you:.”) immediately following a clear intentional (“I’m goin’ to go::) also displays an orientation to the instructions as a course of action that the recipient should comply with. In this case, the RPT appears to be designed to almost force alignment with the proposed course of

action, and indeed, it finally does get a delayed and somewhat mitigated alignment from the speaker, in the form of a turn-final “yeas.” Thus, we can see in this extract what Fox referred to as socio-interactional work that is consequential for the participants, both in terms of determining a particular medical course of action and in terms of constructing a social relationship that establishes the authority of the health visitor vis à vis the new mother. This is done so through the deployment of epistemic resources encoded in a grammatical formulation, the RPT↓. As this example demonstrates, investigating the ways in which participants deploy particular epistemo-grammatical formulations could prove to be a productive area for further research.

6.4. Conclusion

The goal of this study has been to present epistemics as a lens through which to view grammar and action in human interaction. It has argued for the omnirelevance of epistemics in the unfolding of talk-in-interaction and has hopefully provided evidence that this orientation to epistemics is a pervasive and powerful force in the formulation of utterances and therefore in the formation of actions. Furthermore, in establishing the A-event declarative as a canonical format for making knowledge claims, it provides some basis for understanding variations on this format (e.g., RPTs and interrogatives) as a function of an omnirelevant epistemic orientation. In short, this study has demonstrated the utility of applying an epistemic framework to the study of talk-in-interaction, and by doing so, has hopefully increased our ability to arrive at a greater understanding of how humans navigate and make sense of the social world in which they live.

APPENDIX

Transcription Conventions

(Reproduced from Heritage and Maynard, 2006b with slight modifications)

1. Temporal and sequential relationships

Overlapping or simultaneous talk is indicated in the following ways.

- [Separate left square brackets, one above the other on two successive lines with utterances by different speakers, indicate a point of overlap onset, whether at the start of an utterance or later.
-] Separate right square brackets, one above the other on two successive lines with utterances by different speakers, indicate a point at which two overlapping utterances both end, where one ends while the other continues, or simultaneous moments in overlaps which continue.
- = Equal signs ordinarily come in pairs – one at the end of a line and another at the start of the next line or one shortly thereafter. They are used to indicate two things:
 - 1) If the two lines connected by the equal signs are by the same speaker, then there was a single, continuous utterance with no break or pause, which was broken up in order to accommodate the placement of overlapping talk.
 - 2) If the lines connected by two equal signs are by different speakers, then the second followed the first with no discernable silence between them, or was “latched” to it.
- (0.5) Numbers in parentheses indicate silence, represented in tenths of a second; what is given here in the left margin indicates 5/10 seconds (half a second) of silence. Silences may be marked either within an utterance or between utterances.
- (.) A dot in parentheses indicates a “micropause,” hearable but not readily measurable; ordinarily less than 2/10 of a second.

2. Aspects of speech delivery, including aspects of intonation.

Punctuation marks are not used according to standard written grammatical conventions, but to indicate intonation.

- . A period indicates a falling, or final, intonation contour. Period intonation does not necessarily indicate the end of a spoken portion of talk.
- ? A question mark indicates a high rising intonation. It does not necessarily indicate a question, nor does it index an interrogative syntactic structure.

- , A comma indicates “continuing” intonation, not necessarily a clause boundary.
- ¿ An inverted question mark indicates a rise stronger than a comma, but not as strong as a question mark. In some transcripts, the combination of a question mark followed by a comma (“?,”) is used instead of an inverted question mark.
- _ An underscore following a unit of talk indicates “flat” or level intonation.
- :: Colons are used to indicate prolongation or stretching of the sound just preceding them. The more colons, the longer the stretching. On the other hand, graphically stretching a word on the page by inserting blank spaces between the letters does not necessarily indicate how it was pronounced; it is used to allow alignment with overlapping talk to be represented on the page.
- A hyphen after a word or part of a word indicates a cut-off or self-interruption, often done with a glottal or dental stop.
- word Underlining is used to indicate some form of stress or emphasis, either by increased loudness or higher pitch; the more underlining, the greater the emphasis. Underlining is sometimes placed under the first letter or two of a word rather than under the letters which are actually raised in pitch or volume.
- Word Especially loud talk may be indicated by upper case; again, the louder, the more letters in upper case. And in extreme cases, upper case may be underlined.
- °word The degree sign indicates that the talk following it was markedly quiet or soft in volume. When there are two degree signs, the talk between them is markedly softer than the talk around it.
- ↑ An upward arrow indicates a rise in pitch or upward pitch reset. In some transcripts, the circumflex “^” is used instead of the upward arrow.
- ↓ A downward arrow indicates a fall in pitch or downward pitch reset.
- ?↑ A question mark followed by an upward arrow is used in Chapter 5 to indicate a reverse polarity tag question with rising intonation.
- >< The combination of “more than” and “less than” symbols indicates that the talk between them is compressed or rushed.
- <> Used in reverse order, the combined symbols indicate the talk is markedly slower than the surrounding talk.
- < The “less than” symbol by itself indicates that the talk following is “jump started,” i.e., sounds like it starts with a rush.

- hhh Hearable aspiration is shown where it occurs in the talk by the letter “h” – the more “h”s, the more aspiration. The aspiration may represent breathing, laughter, etc.
- (hh) If the aspiration occurs inside the boundaries of a word, it may be enclosed in parentheses in order to set it apart from the sounds of the word.
- .h If the aspiration is an inhalation, it is shown with a dot before it
- h (sometimes a raised dot.)
- # A raspy or “creaky” voice quality is indicated with a “#” sign.
- £/\$ A “smile voice” – a voice quality which betrays the fact that the speaker is smiling while speaking – is normally indicated with the “£” or “\$” sign.

3. Other Markings

- (()) Double parentheses are used to mark transcriber’s descriptions of events, rather than representations of them. For example, ((cough)), ((sniff)), ((telephone rings)) and the like.
- (word) When all or part of an utterance is in parentheses, or the speaker identification is, this indicates uncertainty on the transcriber’s part, but represents a likely possibility.
- () Empty parentheses indicate that something is being said, but no hearing (or, in some cases, speaker identification) can be achieved.

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