# Agency in response: The role of prefatory address terms[☆]

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## Abstract

Although sequence-initiating or first actions normatively constrain what is done in response, there are various methods through which interactants manage to exert agency from within the sequence-responsive position. One such method operates at the level of action selection, as when interactants produce disaligning or dispreferred responses that were not solicited by the prior action. Another method operates at the level of the framing of action, as when the response (whether aligning or disaligning, preferred or dispreferred) is portrayed as motivated independently of the prior action. This paper examines prefatory address terms as a resource by which responses can be cast as independently motivated rather than sequentially occasioned, acquiescent, or coerced. It also explores how the generic sense of "independence" achievable through this practice is particularized in specific cases, how it inflects the character of the action in progress, and bears on self-presentational and relational concerns. Particular attention is devoted to request sequences and the portrayal of services as offered rather than granted, and question–answer sequences and the portrayal of claims as volitional rather than acquiescent.

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A central concern in the study of the sequential organization of interaction has been the issue of how agency may be accountably exercised from within the sequence-responsive or "second position" in interaction. Second position is, to be sure, an inauspicious environment for agency. Because sequence-initiating or first-position actions normatively constrain what should be done in response (Schegloff, 2007), first position is the prototypical site for the exercise of agency and social influence (Heritage, 1984), while the sequence-responsive or second position is the prototypical site for constraint and social acquiescence. Nevertheless, there are various avenues by which agency becomes an observable feature of second-position actions.

One such avenue operates at the level of *action selection*, as when interactants produce a type of action that was not sought by the prior action and is thus sequentially disaligned or dispreferred vis a vis the course of action previously in progress. Such responses, although noncompliant and accountable, are nonetheless produced and managed by reference to their accountability (e.g., Clayman, 2001; Drew, 1992; Heritage, 1988; Pomerantz, 1978, 1984a,b; Raymond, 2003; Sacks, 1987; Schegloff, 2007; Sidnell, 2007; Stivers and Hayashi, 2010).

Another avenue operates at the level of *action framing*, as when the response – whether aligning or disaligning, preferred or dispreferred – is portrayed as implementing an action independently of the prior action. Such framing is achieved whenever the action is formulated so as to display an intentional history, epistemic basis, social entitlement, or other motivational wellsprings originating outside of the present interactional moment. The independent origins of the response can be quite explicit, as in the following excerpt from a phone conversation between Emma, who is recovering

from surgery, and her friend Ann. In response to Emma's invitation to come over and visit (line 3), Ann sidesteps and in effect rejects the invitation by means of a counter-invitation to go shopping (beginning at line 4).

```
(1)    [NB II.4.R: 1]
((Emma has just reported her recent toenail surgery to Anne.))
1    Ann:          [e-Oh:]:: I:'m sorr[y E:m]ma:h,hh
2    Emm:                       [AH::.]
3    Emm:          ((cutesy)) dI AM TOO WHYNCHE COME'N SEE m[e.
4    Ann:   –>                                             [.hh-hh-hh W'l I
5           –>     wz gunnuh call en a:sk you'f you (.) Buh wz playing golf
6                  th's aft'noon 'f you wandih go over tuh Ro:bins'ns with
7                  me.=I've got to uh .hhh I have goT.hh t[o g e]t.h .hhh
8    Emm:                                               [Aah ha]
9    Ann:          a couple of things tuh wear Emma I (.) jus'don't have
10                 enough clothes tuh: (.) t'go duh work in.
11   Emm:          Mm m[:.         [(0.3) ]
12   Ann:              [.t.hhh at a:ll.[.hhhh] Ken yih wa:LK?hh
13                 (0.3)
14   Ann:          °W'd be too ha:rd for yu[h?°]
```

Notice that Ann portrays her counter-invitation as having been planned in advance and already "in mind" before Emma issued her prior invitation ("Well I was gonna call and ask you..."). This portrayal is built into the beginning of the turn that launches the counter-invitation. Consequently, while Ann's ensuing *utterance* comes off as responsive to its immediate sequential context, *the action it delivers* is given an intentional history that antedates the present sequential moment and is thereby presented as having been launched independently rather than responsively.

Less explicit variants of this phenomenon have received substantial attention in recent work on epistemics (Hakulinen and Sorjonen, 2009; Heritage, 1998, 2002; Heritage and Raymond, 2005, 2012; Mondada, 2009; Raymond and Heritage, 2006; Schegloff, 1996a; Stivers, 2005; Stivers et al., 2011). For instance, Heritage and Raymond (2005), focusing on second-position assessments, identify a variety of practices through which responding speakers can cast their views as already settled prior to their present articulation, or as if they were being offered from within first position. Such practices frame the second-position assessment as independent of the prior, thereby reducing the sense in which it is responsive.

Turn beginnings are a primary locus for this kind of agentic work because, as a general principle, beginnings are recurrently occupied with the task of projecting the character of the turn in progress, and specifying its relationship to what came before (Schegloff, 1996b). Various turn-initial particles and allied practices project responses that are not precisely fitted to the previous action and its sequential implications, and these vary in the forms of non-fittedness that they engender.

Perhaps the most general practice involves *the particle well*, which launches a wide range of response types that are less than straightforwardly responsive: e.g., disaligning, dispreferred, nonconforming, indirect, and circuitous responses (Davidson, 1984; Pomerantz, 1984a; Schegloff and Lerner, 2009; Schiffrin, 1987). Somewhat more specialized is *the lexical item look*, which launches responses that are sequentially disaligning and pursue a competitive action agenda (Sidnell, 2007). Then there are practices specialized for responses that embody singular forms of nonresponsiveness or independence. *Oh-prefaced second assessments* portray the viewpoint being advanced as "recollected" and hence formed prior to and independently of the prior assessment (Heritage, 2002; Heritage and Raymond, 2005; Raymond and Heritage, 2006). *Repetitional responses to yes/no interrogatives* (Heritage and Raymond, 2005; Raymond, 2003; Raymond and Heritage, 2006), unlike indexical response tokens such as *yes* or *no*, are more independently assertive and thus enact confirmation and relative epistemic authority for the respondent (Heritage and Raymond, 2012, cf., Schegloff, 1996a and Stivers, 2005). Both oh-prefaced and repetitional responses are commonly associated with sequentially aligning and preferred responses, but they impart a sense of autonomy to the action being implemented, and they do so as a by-product of epistemic independence or authority. Correspondingly, they can also evoke broader social identities and entitlements from which such authority can be understood to arise (Raymond and Heritage, 2006; Stivers, 2005).

This paper explores a relatively general, direct, and unvarnished method by which ostensibly responsive actions can be framed as motivationally independent rather than sequentially occasioned: addressing the recipient explicitly, typically by name, as a preface to the response. Address terms can appear in a variety of turn- and sequence-organizational positions, where they perform diverse interactional tasks (e.g., Butler et al., 2011; Clayman, 2010, 2012; Lerner, 2003; Rendle-Short, 2007, 2010; Wootton, 1981). The present study focuses on those prefatory to responsive actions, and demonstrates that such address terms recurrently launch responses that are independently undertaken – whether at the level of action selection, action framing, or both – and thus more "initiating" than would normally be the case. Moreover,

the independent or non-acquiescent lamination of meaning embodied in response-prefatory address terms can be mobilized, in conjunction with allied practices, to manage a variety of self-presentational and relational concerns. Data are drawn primarily from ordinary conversation, with supplementary materials from broadcast news interviews.

## 1. Background: positioning and import of prefatory address terms

From a formal linguistic point of view, address terms are syntactically optional vocative expressions establishing the directionality of the talk in progress, that is its delivery to a particular recipient. However, since the directionality of talk is readily achieved through nonvocal means (i.e., gaze and body orientation), and is a *fait accompli* in dyadic interactions, address terms are largely redundant as resources for addressing per se and are best understood as performing a variety of other interactional tasks (Butler et al., 2011; Clayman, 2010, 2012; Lerner, 2003; Rendle-Short, 2007, 2010; Wootton, 1981). Most relevant to the present discussion are those in turn-prefatory position, a space that encompasses various syntactically optional items of talk – e.g., particles and connectors (e.g., *well*, *oh*, *and*, *but*, *so*), as well as address terms – that precede the main body of the turn.

### 1.1. Prefatory to sequence-initiating actions

Previous research demonstrates that within sequence-initiating or first-position actions, prefatory address terms are deployed systematically for particular tasks. One primary task involves establishing the availability of recipients whose attention or engagement is in doubt (Lerner, 2003, Wootton, 1981). This can occur when the recipient is otherwise occupied, or has failed to respond to a previous initiating action, as in the following exchange between an adult driver and her child passenger.

```
(2)  [Lerner, 2003: 187]
1    Ann:        Turn around' n face the front sweetheart.
2                ((3-turn sequence between two other participants deleted))
3                (1.0)
4    Ann:        Baby?
5                (1.0) ((Engine whines and catches))
6    Ann:  –>    'Omi, turn around, face the front.
7    Nao:        Wha:::
8    Ann:        Because it's better that way when we're driving, okay?
```

This function of prefatory address terms (arrowed above) exploits the engagement-soliciting property of recipient names and other second-person reference forms, which can also be free-standing utterances that operate as summonses prior to focused interaction (Schegloff, 1968), and occasionally within an ongoing interaction (see line 4 above). When recipient names are prefatory rather than free-standing, their engagement-soliciting property is embedded within some other action, but it becomes exposed whenever the name is disjoined from subsequent talk rather than through-produced. For instance (as analyzed in Lerner, 2003: 188), a brief silence (line 2 below) intervening between the recipient name and subsequent talk allows for a response to the name itself. Here the response takes a nonvocal form; immediately after the name's completion, the addressed recipient turns his head to the right and gazes toward the speaker to show his engagement.

```
(3)  [Lerner, 2003: 188]
1    Nancy:  –>  Michael
2                (0.4) ((Michael shifts gaze toward Nancy.))
3                I thought you were going to church tomorrow?
4                (1.3)
5    Michael:    I'll go Wednesday night
```

Examples of this sort underscore that through-produced prefatory address terms also advance a claim on the recipient's attention and participation, although they do so embeddedly and in passing rather than as a separate and discrete action.

Just as the quasi-summoning property of prefatory address terms accounts for their use in initiating actions directed to disengaged or unresponsive recipients, the same property explains another pattern of use: for initiations directed to recipients who are engaged but pursuing a course of action at odds with what the speaker is about to launch. Such address-prefatory actions are geared to re-directing the recipient toward a competing course of action (Butler et al., 2011; Whalen and Zimmerman, 1998; Whalen et al., 1988: 350). For instance, after Shelly indicates (just prior to the following

excerpt) that she can't face re-taking her law school admission test, she takes up a defeatist stance toward the prospect of making it into law school (lines 1–3), and forcefully reaffirms this stance after Keri's expression of disbelief (lines 5–8).

```
(4)    [Frankel TC: Reel 1: Call 1]
1      Shelly:        .t.hhhh B't I rilly don't think I'm g'nna go tuh law school.
2                     (0.3)
3      Shelly:        et least not right now.
4      ( ):           .hh
5      Keri:          Are you se:rious,=
6      Shelly:        =Yeh,
7                     (0.2)
8      Shelly:        Very.
9                     (0.6)
10     ( ):           .t.hh
11     Keri:    –>    .hhhh She:lley, I mean why don'tchu try taking it agai[:n.
12     Shelly:                                                              [.hhh-
13     Keri:          .hhhhh Cz I rilly don'know if I c'd put myself through it
14                    all over again.
```

In an effort to dislodge Shelly from this defeatist stance, Keri addresses her by name before proposing that she take the test again (line 11). In this case the address term's strong prosodic emphasis, coupled with the subsequent restart of the turn ("I mean. . ."), exposes and intensifies its engagement-soliciting character. The quasi-summoning aspect of prefatory address terms is here mobilized not for the purposes of securing interactional engagement, but rather to bring about a competitive shift in the recipient's course of action.

### 1.2. Prefatory to sequence-responsive actions

Against this backdrop, address terms prefatory to sequence-*responsive* or second-position actions might seem particularly redundant. Since a responsive action normally deals with its prior, such an action is already "addressed" by virtue of its contribution to the sequence in progress. Moreover, since the initiator of the sequence has invited a particular type of response, and may be expected to monitor what follows for its response relevance, the initiator is already presumptively engaged and attending to what follows. Given all of this, why would an explicit address term be needed when both the direction of address and recipient engagement has already been secured as an intrinsic precondition of sequence organizational considerations?

To resolve this puzzle, consider the specific response environments in which prefatory address terms tend to be mobilized. One such environment, documented previously in news interviews (Clayman, 2010; Rendle-Short, 2007) and telephone counseling (Butler et al., 2011), involves actions that are grossly disaligned or dispreferred relative to what the prior action was seeking. For instance, overt refusals to provide the relevant response may be prefaced with address terms, as in this refusal to answer journalist David Brinkley's question in a broadcast news interview.

```
(5)    [ABC This Week, 5 May 1996: Treasury Sec. Robert Rubin]
1      IR1:     S:everal c:en:ts in thuh price of a g- of a gallon
2               of gasoline: is tax, (0.4) which: f:alls under your:
3               (.) department, (.) .hhh Have you given any thought
4               to cutting thuh tax to (.) s:ave: some money for thuh
5               tax (and) for thuh b:uyers of gasoline?
6               (.)
7      IE: –>   .hhh Well David that's a proposal that (.) uh:: may
8               be made:, and may be arou:nd, that I don't wanta
9               speculate on where tha:t-(.) where tha:t's gonna go,
10              <but thuh president as you know. . .
```

In a parallel exchange from ordinary conversation, an initial refusal to provide a definitive response to a request (for an increase in the speaker's allowance) is prefaced with an address term ("Virginia"). This case, like the previous one, also includes the particle "well" within the preface.

```
(6) [Virginia: 13]
1   VIR:     ˙hh But >I don't have a car< and >I don't drive< so plea-
2            uhh!˙hh Mom, just- >I'm not talkin' about that< ^please,
3            just let me have ten dollars¿ plea::hse.<I MEAN THAT'S NOT
4            ASKIN' too much I mean rea:lly.
5            (2.8)
6   MOM: –>  Wull Vuhginia, (0.5) I: just don't know.
```

Address terms also preface turns that furnish a response of sorts, but one that does not conform to the specific action alternatives made relevant by the linguistic form of the prior action (cf., Raymond, 2003). For instance, an address term prefaces this nonconforming response to an alternative choice question, which sidesteps both of the response options proffered by the interrogative.

```
(7)   [NBC Nightly News, 15 Nov. 1996: Texaco Lawsuit]
1    IR:       .h Mister Bijur what's pro:- what prompted this settlement.
2              .hh Thuh fact that you concluded your company was in fact
3              discrimina:ting, or thuh prospects of: (.) more economic
4              losses.
5    IE: –>    To:m it was that we wanted to be f:air: to ah all of
6              the employees involved, we're a: wonderful: gr:oup of
7              people and family in this company, en we wanta be
8              equitable with everybody.
```

They also preface turns that are sequentially aligning but dispreferred, as in this disagreement with a viewpoint embedded within a prior question.

```
(8)   [NBC Nightly News 15 Nov. 1996: Texaco Lawsuit]
1    IR:       .hh But as thuh chairman and thuh C E O as you got deeply
2              into thuh matter did you in f:act f:i:nd that there was
3              a great deal more discrimination <in your company,> .hhh
4              than you had realized.
5    PB: –>    To:m I don't think there's any more discrimination in our
6              company that there i:s in s:ociety in general.=But we have
7              s:ome and it's in:tol:erable, .h and we're gonna eradicate it.
```

And finally, address terms also launch turns that are both disaligning and dispreferred. Here the respondent both declines to answer the question as framed (about whether the interviewee would ''agree with the president. . .''), and also disputes a proposition embedded presuppositionally within it (regarding what the president allegedly said).

```
(9)   [ABC This Week, 5 May 1996: Treasury Sec. Robert Rubin]
1    IR2:      You spoke of so glowingly thuh president's program for
2              thuh past three years, I wonder (.) if you agree: with thuh
3              president, (.) in his latest pronouncement, (.) that he: (.)
4              T:A[Xed (.) rich Americans too much.=in nineteen ninety three.
5    ??:          [hm hmm:
6    IE: –>    .hhh S:am tha-that's not what he said.
```

All of the address-prefaced responses in excerpts 5–9 are independent at the level of the type of action selected, which departs from what the prior action established as the sequentially relevant and/or preferred response.

   If prefatory address terms were restricted to disaligning and dispreferred responses of various kinds, one might conclude that they project some form of disalignment or dispreference in the action in progress. However, they also figure recurrently in responses that are at least broadly fitted to what the prior action was seeking, but are portrayed as undertaken independently or autonomously. For instance, when Karen asks if she will be invited over next week to watch a television program (line 1), Vicky implies an affirmative answer (lines 5–6) while also indicating that she has been extending such invitations repeatedly (and fruitlessly) in recent weeks. She thereby portrays next week's invitation as arising not in response to Karen's present query but as a continuation of a stable pattern of invitations reaching backward in time, and she prefaces her independently framed response with an address term.

```
(10)   [Erhardt 10]
1      Karen:      Will I be invited next week?
2                  (0.4)
3      Vicky:      tch
4                  (0.2)
5      Vicky: –>   Karen you've been invited every week b'tchu dis
6                  never:: (.) get around tih coming do:wn.
```

And in the next example, Dee uses an address term (and *well*) to launch a turn that agrees with Mark's prior claim that a wedding is something "you only do once," while simultaneously indicating that she had said just this thing to a prospective bride on an earlier occasion (line 4). The use of an address term by the prior speaker ("Deena" in line 3) makes this a less than pristine case, although the focal address term ("Mark" in line 4) actually begins in overlap with the other term and is thus unlikely to have been triggered by it.

```
(11) [Holt 5/88-2-4]
1     Mar:    [Yeh].hhhhhhh  [We:ll you only do it once=
2     Dee:    [Any]way we ha[(           )
3     Mar:    =[ Deena]do:n't you. ].     hh: h h h h ]
4     Dee: –> =[We:ll Ma]rk t h i s ]'s what we: said]'n I mean we
5             [told'er straight I mean if she messes th[is u:p (0.4)
6     Mar:    [.p.t                          [.knhh.hhhhhhh
7     Dee:    if she messes 'er marriage up then there's no way we-
8             (.) we pay [out for another w[edding ( [ )
9                        [k n h h h h     [n N o:.  [N o:,
```

Prefatory address terms may also launch turns embodying both sorts of independence – that is, responses that are independent both at the level of action selection (departing from what the prior action was seeking) and action framing (portrayed as independently undertaken). For instance, when Virginia's mom rejects her daughter's request for a new dress, she also frames her position on this issue as already settled ("Oh Virginia, we've been through this before," lines 4–5) via the *oh*-preface (Heritage, 1998) and the subsequent account.

```
(12) [Virginia]
1     VIR:    Can I please get that dre:ss, please mom¿ Lemme g[et that-
2     MOM:                                          [Dreh(ss)-?
3     VIR:    >You know that [one-<
4     MOM: –>               [OH VUHginia, we('ve) been through this
5             befa[wh, you've got enough summa d[resses now I think you=
6     P??:        [hhhh! ((laughter?))           |
7     VR?:                                   [uhhh! (("pained" sound))
8     MOM:    =just wait an' get- some'uh'the'new fa:ll stuff when it comes
9             in.
```

Similarly, when Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin refuses to answer Sam Donaldson's question about changing interest rates, he casts his address-prefaced refusal as reflecting a general policy that he's maintained "for three and a half years" (line 7).

```
(13) [ABC This Week 5 May 1996: Robert Rubin]
1     RR:     . . .And the consequence is (.) that while r:ates have gone
2             up and down, (.) they've remai:ned consistent (.) with having
3             s:olid gr[owth and [that's exactly what we've had]
4     IR?:             [((clears  [throat))
5     IR2:                        [But which way are they goi]ng now?=
6     RR:     =>f' three and a half years.<
7         –>  .hhh Sa:m I have had f'r three and a half years a policy
8             of >not commenting on what markets are gonna do.=
```

In both of the preceding cases, an address term prefaces a response that not only declines to provide what the prior action was seeking, but also frames the declination as arising from a previously expressed or predetermined point of view.

Accordingly, the overall pattern of use suggests the following role for response-prefatory address terms: they portray the action being implemented *as standing in a relationship of motivational independence from the preceding action*. The independent or agentic lamination of meaning imparted by response-prefatory address terms derives from their association with the kind of engagement-soliciting characteristic of new and competitive courses of action (Lerner, 2003; Schegloff, 1968). These address terms thus constitute a species of generalized alert (cf., Schegloff and Lerner, 2009) to the effect that the action in progress should be understood as less ''responsive'' in its underlying motivation, and hence more ''initiating'' than would normally be the case. This generic sense of an action being implemented independently is then particularized, depending on the subsequent course of the response, as either (1) grossly disaligning or dispreferred relative to the type of response sought by the initial action, or (2) grossly aligning/preferred, but framed as autonomously motivated rather than sequentially occasioned, or (3) independent both at the level of action selection and action framing.[1]

Since the case of address terms prefatory to disaligning and dispreferred responses has been explored elsewhere (Butler et al., 2011; Clayman, 2010; Rendle-Short, 2007), the remainder of this paper will focus primarily on responses that are at least grossly fitted but autonomously undertaken, the role of address terms in bringing off that agentic framing of action, and the import and utility of that framing in particular action environments.

## 2. Prefatory to responses framed as independently undertaken

Prefatory address terms figure in grossly aligning and preferred responses to a variety of initiating actions. We've already seen one instance of such an address-prefaced aligning response operating within a social invitation sequence (excerpt 10 above). The following array of instances gives some indication of this practice's range of use in other action environments. In many of these cases, the address term operates in conjunction with other aspects of turn design to recast the action being implemented as autonomously motivated rather than arising from its local sequential context.

*Pre-empting a request*. Prefatory address terms figure in pre-emptively ''accepting'' responses to pre-requests. The following request is projected as a ''big favor'' (line 1) involving the completion of some buttonholes on a hand-sewn blouse (lines 5–6). Before the request proper can be fully articulated, however, the recipient agrees to finish the buttonholes (lines 7–8), while also indicating that she had already promised to do this back when she made the blouse.

(14)    (Schegloff, 1980: 112–113)
1       Fred:       Oh by the way((sniff))I have a bi:g favor to ask ya.
2       Laurie:     Sure, go'head.
3       Fred:       'Member the blouse you made a couple weeks ago?
4       Laurie:     Ya.
5       Fred:       Well I want to wear it this weekend to Vegas but my
6                   mom's buttonholer is broken.
7       Laurie: –>  Fred I told ya when I made the blouse I'd do the
8                   buttonholes.
9       Fred:       Ya ((sniff)) but I hate ta impose.
10      Laurie:     No problem. We can do them on Monday after work.

Here the prefatory address term foreshadows an independent response, which turns out to be broadly ''accepting'' of the anticipated request, but is also framed as a *fait accompli* by virtue of it having been already expressed and promised on an earlier occasion.

*Agreeing with an assessment*. Address-prefatory responses also figure in broadly agreeing responses to assessments. When Lottie suggests that there must be ''a lotta smog'' where Emma is (lines 12–14), Emma agrees (line 15) while also underscoring – by prefacing the response with ''oh'' (Heritage, 2002; Heritage and Raymond, 2005) – that she knows this independently of Lottie's prior suggestion.

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[1] The general-alert analysis applies most straightforwardly to turn-initial address terms, which comprise the vast majority of response-prefatory cases. The analysis must be qualified for cases where some other prefatory particle precedes the address term. For prefaces involving *Well* + address term, the turn-initial *Well* is a more general alert projecting nonstraightforwardness in response (Schegloff and Lerner, 2009), while the address term particularizes this as nonresponsiveness or motivational independence. For prefaces involving *Oh* + address term, the initial *oh* projects the specific form of independence that is epistemic in nature (Heritage, 2002; Heritage and Raymond, 2005), and this sense carries forward to color the subsequent address term.

(15) [NB II.3.R: 3–4]
```
1    Emm:                              [Yah we didn't git down til abou:t
2                      (0.5) °oh° I °don't know,° (0.3) six uh'clo:ck b't oh::
3                      m:ma::n was it ho::t up there [WO::W. Th[e wind w]z=
4    Lot:                                           [( )        [W h a:t- ]
5    Emm:    =blo:win a liddle bih- .hhhhhhhh Oh but it's pretty,
6                      (0.2)
7    Emm:    It'[s-
8    Lot:       [Yea[h,
9    Emm:           [ni::ce b't I like beach better,
10   Lot:    Ye:ah:.
11                    (0.2)
12   Lot:    It's beautiful: day I [bet ] chu had a lotta smo::g=
13   Emm:                          [Yah-]
14   Lot:    =up there havencha.
15   Emm: –>  Oh::: Lo:ttie,hh (.) You don't kno::w,
16   Lot:    I kno[:w.
```

Here the address term accentuates the sense of an independent response, one that is already particularized as arising from a separate and first-hand source of knowledge. All of this renders the action in progress, not as a simple agreement, but as a confirmation offered from an independent and indeed superior epistemic vantage point.

*Answering a question*. The final environment to be considered involves that of answering an information-seeking question. Consider this excerpt from Tom Brokaw's interview with the CEO of Texaco, Peter Bijur, just after the company settled a racial discrimination lawsuit. After a lengthy preface referencing Bijur's trials and tribulations during such a difficult time (lines 1–4), the interviewer invites him to reflect on what he's learned from the experience (lines 5–6). In his response, Bijur asserts the unacceptability of intolerance as his main takeaway lesson (lines 7–8), and he avows his commitment to fighting intolerance within the company and beyond (lines 9–11).

(16) [NBC Nightly News 15 Nov. 1996: Texaco Settlement]
```
1    IR:     .hhh Mister Bijur you've been in the spo:tlight now f'r
2                    two wee:ks, these are thuh wor:st kinds of ch:arges
3                    >to (be)< have .hhh leveled against your company¿ <or
4                    against you personally?
5                    .hhh What toll: has it taken on you?=What have you
6                    learned from this experience?
7    PB: –>  °.Tch°.hh To:m I've lear:ned that ah::: i:n- that ah::
8                    i:ntolerance is just not accep:table:, we've gotta
9                    eradicate it, <not only from thuh company but from
10                   s:oci:ety, .hhh and I'm personally committed ta do:ing
11                   that within this company.
```

The prefatory address term (line 6) projects an independently motivated response, and the subsequent repetitional and hence self-contained response format ("Tom, I've learned that. . .") (Heritage and Raymond, 2012; Stivers, 2005) further dislodges the ensuing ideals and commitments from their local sequential environment, enabling the speaker to assert them fully on his own behalf.

## 3. The import and utility of the independent action frame

The agentic sense of independent initiative projected by prefatory address terms, and subsequently elaborated by other language practices, can affect the quality and character of the specific action being implemented, with further ramifications for the speaker's self-presentation and relations with others.

### 3.1. Services as freely offered rather than granted or coerced

Studies of interaction have documented a structural preference for the act of *offering* favors and other services over that of *requesting* them (Schegloff, 2007: 81–96; Pillet-Shore, 2011). This preference is most powerfully manifest in the provision and exploitation of opportunities to maximize the occurrence of offers relative to requests, most notably via

pre-expansions allowing for impending requests to be foreshadowed and circumvented by offers. But there is a further dimension to this process: in addition to responding early and pre-emptively, the offerer can also frame the action in progress in a way that downplays its responsiveness to the pre-request and accentuates its independent and volitional character. Prefatory address terms play a key role in this process.

To illustrate, consider once again how the pre-request for buttonholes (examined briefly as excerpt 14 above) is produced and dealt with.

```
(17)  (Schegloff, 1980: 112–113)
1     Fred:         Oh by the way ((sniff))I have a bi:g favor to ask ya.
2     Laurie:       Sure, go'head.
3     Fred:         'Member the blouse you made a couple weeks ago?
4     Laurie:       Ya.
5     Fred:         Well I want to wear it this weekend to Vegas but my
6                   mom's buttonholer is broken.
7     Laurie: –>   Fred I told ya when I made the blouse I'd do the
8                   buttonholes.
9     Fred:         Ya ((sniff)) but I hate ta impose.
10    Laurie:       No problem. We can do them on Monday after work.
```

The pre-request talk by Fred foreshadows the impending request in a particularly transparent way. He first overtly attributes responsibility for the blouse to the recipient, Laurie ("the blouse you made..." in line 3). He then conveys an immediate need and, embeddedly, a specific problem concerning the buttonholes (lines 5–6). Given all of this, Laurie can have little doubt as to what is about to be requested of her. In this sequential environment, a pre-emptive offer is vulnerable to being seen as coerced by the pre-request and perhaps not a genuine "offer" at all. The framing of the pre-emptive offer is geared to avoiding this eventuality. The prefatory address term foreshadows and underscores the independent and hence voluntary nature of the offer in progress, while the subsequent account invokes a motivational history for the offer that predates the present sequential moment. All of this casts the action in progress as a non-coerced and fully volitional offer, with the further consequence of implying that the request was unnecessary.

Just as a volitional framing can be used to package pre-emptive responses to pre-requests, such framing can also be used in the design of responses to requests themselves. Consider the sequence involving arrangements to watch television (cf., excerpt 10 above). Karen's query about being invited over next week (line 1 below), in so far as coming over is intrinsically imposing and hence a service for which Vicky would be the provider, has some of the hallmarks of a request. Vicky's response implicates an affirmative answer (lines 5–6), but is built to be understood as something other than "the granting of a request."

```
(18)   [Erhardt 10]
1     Karen:       Will I be invited next week?
2                  (0.4)
3     Vicky:       tch
4                  (0.2)
5     Vicky: –>    Karen you've been invited every week b'tchu dis
6                  never:: (.) get around tih coming do:wn.
```

The address term projects an independently motivated response, while the subsequent talk indicates that she has been extending such invitations routinely and by implication voluntarily for many weeks. This framing further implies that an invitation for next week, although not yet articulated explicitly, was already in the works and would have been offered without any prompting. All of this works to undercut the antecedent request, while also registering a complaint about Karen's persistent failure to take up the prior invitations.

In the environment of actual or impending requests, then, independently framed responses have complex self-presentational and relational implications. On the one hand, by casting the service as "already offered" rather than granted, they carry overtones of thoughtfulness and generosity for the speaker. On the other hand, they undercut the definition of the situation embodied in the request and can be taken to correct or sanction the party responsible for "inappropriately" launching it.

### 3.2. Claims as volunteered and genuine rather than prompted or coerced

When claims of various kinds – assertions of belief, opinion, attitude, etc. – appear in second position, they risk being seen as acquiescent or coerced by the prior action and hence less than genuine (Heritage and Raymond, 2005, Raymond

and Heritage, 2006). This risk is exacerbated when the claim has face-saving, self-presentational, or relational payoffs, in which case the speaker is vulnerable to being seen as ''just saying that'' for the secondary payoffs (Clayman, 2012). This risk may be reduced by framing the act as instigated at the speaker's own initiative, and by implication arising out of the person rather than the sequential circumstance and its pressures.

   Consider this excerpt from Tom Brokaw's interview with the CEO of Texaco, Peter Bijur (examined briefly in excerpt 16 above) conducted shortly after the company had agreed to settle a high-profile and damaging racial discrimination lawsuit. This exchange occurs toward the end of the interview, and entails a shift away from the lawsuit/settlement and toward a more ''personal'' focus on its ramifications for Bijur as CEO. The interviewer sets the scene for the question (lines 1–4) by characterizing Bijur as ''In the spotlight now for two weeks,'' and as subject to ''the worst kinds of charges.'' In that context, and after referencing ''the toll'' it's taken, he asks Bijur (lines 5–6) to say what he's learned from the experience.

```
(19)   [NBC Nightly News 15 Nov. 1996: Texaco Settlement]
1    IR:    .hhh Mister Bijur you've been in the spo:tlight now f'r
2           two wee:ks, these are thuh wor:st kinds of ch:arges
3           >to (be)< have .hhh leveled against your company¿ <or
4           against you personally?
5           .hhh What toll: has it taken on you?=What have you
6           learned from this experience?
7    PB:    °.Tch°.hh To:m I've lear:ned that ah::: i:n- that ah::
8           i:ntolerance is just not accep:table:, we've gotta
9           eradicate it, <not only from thuh company but from
10          s:oci:ety, .hhh and I'm personally committed ta do:ing
11          that within this company.
```

In response Bijur references the unacceptability of intolerance as his main takeaway lesson (lines 7–8), and he then avows his commitment to eradicating intolerance ''not only from the company but from society'' (lines 9–11). These rather lofty ideals and commitments might be seen as instrumental and self-serving, particularly when claimed only in response to the interviewer's prompting. The prefatory address term (line 6) frames these avowals as undertaken independently at the speaker's own initiative, and the subsequent repetitional and self-contained response format (''Tom, I've learned that. . .'') (Heritage and Raymond, 2005, 2012; Raymond, 2003; Schegloff, 1996a; Stivers, 2005; Stivers and Hayashi, 2010) further dislodges them from their sequential environment and embodies a tacit claim to full ownership of the views being expressed. The cumulative import of both practices is to render the avowals as ostensibly genuine.

   A similar dynamic is at work in this excerpt from an interview with the chief Justice Department attorney responsible for investigating wrongdoing at the Wall Street banks implicated in the 2008 financial crisis. When asked whether other government officials have tried to pressure him to ''go easy on the banks'' (lines 1–6), the attorney rejects this (lines 7–12) with a forceful assertion that ''the Justice Department is acting absolutely independently,'' with no outside interference and purely by reference to the facts and the law.

```
(20)   [CBS 60 Minutes 4 Dec. 2011: Prosecuting Wall Street]
1    IR:    Has anybody at Treasury er: .hh or the Federal Reser:ve or
2           the White House come to you and said look. .hhh we need to
3           go (.) easy on the banks. (.) that- (.) there are collateral:
4           (.) consequences. .hh if you bring prosecutions. thet thees-
5           some o'these organizations .hh are still very fragile and we
6           don't want to push them over the edge.
7    IE: –>  .tch Steve this Department of Justice is acting absolutely
8           independently:. Every decision that'sbeing made by our
9           prosecutors around the country .hh is being made one hundred
10          percent based on the facts o'that particular case 'n the law
11          th't we can apply(d). .hh 'n there's been absolutely no
12          interference whatsoever.
```

These claims of moral rectitude are repeatedly expressed in very extreme terms (''absolutely independently,'' ''every decision. . .,'' ''one hundred percent based on the facts. . .,'' ''absolutely no interference whatsoever''). Since they emerge only in response to an accusatory question and work to shore up the reputation of the attorney and the Justice Department

that he represents, they could be seen as obligatory and self-serving. Here again, the prefatory address term (line 7) frames these claims as independently motivated, and hence volitional rather than responsive.

The very next exchange in this interview unfolds in a remarkably similar manner. Here the interviewer shifts from external pressures on the Justice Department to question the motivation and commitment of the Department itself. He articulates "the perception" that "it doesn't seem like you're trying" and that the Department lacks the will to prosecute major banks (lines 1–6). The attorney rejects this accusation (lines 7–13), asserting that he finds the behavior of the banks to be offensive and upsetting, and that he shares the public's frustration.

```
(21)    [CBS 60 Minutes 4 Dec. 2011: Prosecuting Wall Street]
1       IR:    Thuh perception: >I mean eh- it doesn't seem like you're
2              trying.=
3       IE:    =.hh [weh-
4       IR:         [It doesn't seem like you're: (0.7) making an effort.
5              that the Justice Department doesn't have the will .h to take
6              on: these big (.) Wall Street (.) banks.
7       IE:    Steve (.) I get it. .h I find the excessive risk taking to be
8              offensive. .hh I find the greed that was manifested by
9              certain people to be very upsetting. .hh But because I
10             may'ave an emotional reaction and I may personally share
11             .hh thuh same frustration that American people: all over
12             the country are feeling, .hh that in and of itself doesn't
13             mean we bring a criminal case...
```

Here what is being claimed by the attorney is that he feels the proper level of outrage and by implication is duly motivated to prosecute. But again, this claim emerges only in response to an accusation calling his commitment into question, and is thus vulnerable to being seen as obligatory and coerced. This vulnerability is tacitly registered at the outset of the response, the first unit of which is devoted to an exposed and "pure" assertion of sincerity ("I get it"). Correspondingly, the prefatory address term launching this assertion also pushes back against this specific vulnerability, portraying what follows as being said at the attorney's own initiative. Indeed, unlike the previous sequence, the address term here is slightly disjoined from subsequent talk rather than through-produced, exposing its summoning quality and thus upgrading the sense of agentic independence that it implicates.

In summary, all three of these cases involve strong claims of moral rectitude: commitment to the ideals of racial harmony (excerpt 19), prosecutorial purity (excerpt 20), and the vigorous pursuit of high-level corruption (excerpt 21). These avowals have clear payoffs for the public image of the speaker as well as the corporate or governmental institution that he represents. And each response is framed, in part by virtue of the prefatory address term, as independent of sequential pressures and hence ostensibly volitional and "genuine."

## 4. Conclusions

The preceding analysis underscores the power of sequential organization and its relevances, the systematic work devoted to signposting actions that depart from those relevances, and the significance of turn beginnings as a site for language practices geared to this task. In the environment of a prior sequence-initiating action, address terms provide an alert to the effect that the ensuing action should be understood as independently motivated and hence less "responsive" than would normally be the case. Unlike other turn-initial practices that are more restricted in environments of use, and that convey specialized forms of agency associated with epistemic independence or social entitlement (e.g., *oh*-prefacing, repetitional responses), the address term operates as a more general, direct, and unvarnished harbinger of non-responsiveness and motivational independence. This practice is thus very broadly usable across a wide range of action environments, including actions involving the provision of both information and services, and for many distinct forms of non-responsiveness.

The generic sense of "independence" achieved by this practice is subsequently elaborated and particularized depending on how the turn develops. Some turns-in-progress will turn out to implement actions that were not sought by the prior action, either because they are sequentially disaligning, dispreferred, or both of these in combination. Others will turn out to be at least grossly aligning/preferred, but framed as independently undertaken on bases such as (1) the priority of the action's intention, (2) the action's epistemic origins or social entitlement, or (3) the "pure" volition of someone acting without regard to the pressures of sequential circumstance. Correspondingly, the specific sense of independence in any

particular case depends on how the address term is used in conjunction with other practices of talk in interaction, and within specific activity frameworks and social environments.

The independent action-frame launched by response-prefatory address terms, and elaborated by other practices, has different self-presentational and relational ramifications depending on the type of action being implemented in a given context. For actions involving the provision of services, it corrects or sanctions the prior speaker, and carries overtones of thoughtfulness and generosity for the current speaker. For actions involving claims of moral rectitude, it casts the claims as volunteered rather than prompted or coerced, and carries overtones of genuineness and sincerity.

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