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CUSTOMER SERVICE THROUGH AN INTERACTIONAL LENS:

THE STATUS OF STATUS INQUIRIES IN A CAMERA REPAIR SHOP

by

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Customer Service Through an Interactional Lens:

The Status of Status Inquiries in a Camera Repair Shop

by HEIDI KEVOE FELDMAN

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Jenny Mandelbaum and Jeffrey D. Robinson

This study uses conversation analysis to examine the organization of responses to Customers' repair status inquiries in customer service calls to a camera repair shop. Using as data 193 recorded phone calls to a customer service center in a camera repair shop, the analysis describes practices participants use to jointly construct a multi componential response to repair status inquiries as a conditionally relevant response, and demonstrates how participants orient to this type of response as a normative organizational structure.

Findings of this study reveal that participants treat the action of inquiring about repair status as making relevant a response that contains two separate components, as a single response, where each component reports a different type of repair status. The first component of the response is a report of where the item that is in for repair is currently in the repair process, and the second is a report of the estimated repair completion time. Together, these two reports constitute the normative organizational response to a repair status inquiry. In addition, this study shows how response also constitutes an organizational structure that is produced in and through interaction. A second set of

findings suggests that customers treat the organizational response to repair status inquiries for how it bears on another type of status, which is the delivery time, or when customers can expect to receive their equipment back from the organization. This second set of findings reveals how participants manage organizational knowledge and what assumptions customers make about what organizational members might know.

Within organizational communication, structuration theory (Giddens, 1984) focuses on the duality of the structure provided by the organization, such as rules and resources, and the agency of the actors that represents the autonomy of human agents to produce action. Giddens (1984) argued that as participants create their own normative, organizing structure through which they produce and reproduce conditions for achieving particular goals within a given encounter, their interaction is also influenced by the rules and resources provided by the organization. Thus, as members draw on organizational resources when they produce social actions, their actions simultaneously reproduce the organizational structure itself. By examining the details of actual interaction, this study moves from a theoretical framework to an examination of how members produce action, and documents how organizational structures are produced through talk. This study contributes to the growing body of research that examines how organizational processes and constructs are built through discourse in organizations (Putnam & Fairhurst, 2001). Findings about the organization of responses to status inquiries further conversation analytic research by describing previously undiscovered features of responding actions. The study also provides insight into how specific features of communication processes contribute to the provision of "customer service."

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I dedicate this dissertation in the loving memory of my grandfather Abe Kevoe.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This dissertation examines the communicative specifics of customer service interaction in calls to an electronics repair facility. Within organizations, customer service is vital to the "success of any organization that deals with Customers, and strong customer service can build sales and visibility as companies try to distinguish themselves from their competitors" (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2006). Customers' positive impression of organizations can lead to Customers exhibiting more trust in organizations and a willingness to refer others to a company for future service (Gutek, Cherry, Bhappu, Schneider, & Woolf, 2000). Service encounters not only contribute to the overall success of organizations, but previous research indicates that both good and bad customer service can affect the quality of Customers' lives as well (Czepiel, Solomon, Surprenant & Gutman, 1985; Ford, 1999; Gutek, 1995).

Customer service is the lifeblood of any organization that provides service to Customers. Customer service representatives serve as a primary point of contact between organizations and their Customers and their responsibilities include providing Customers with quality service with regard to questions they have about products or services. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2006), customer service representatives held about 2.1 million jobs in 2004, and this type of employment is expected to increase by over 27% through the year 2014. With an increase in the number of employees working in the service sector customer service, particularly customer service calls centers, have become an important organizational resource for managing organization/Customer relationships.

Despite the projected employment growth of customer service and the significance that service interaction has for organizations' bottom line, McCammon and Griffin (2000) indicated that the organizational communication literature lacks research in the area of service provider-customer interaction. This dissertation contributes to the research in service provider-customer interaction by examining customer service interaction through a communication lens.

Within organizational communication, structuration theory (Giddens, 1984, Poole, Siebold, & McPhee, 1985; Scott, Corman & Cheney, 1998) focuses on the duality of structure and agency, where structure represents the rules and resources individuals use for interaction and agency represents the actions of the human agent. Thus the duality becomes interactive between structure and agency, where individuals draw from the resources of the structure in their actions and in turn their actions simultaneously produce and reproduce the structure itself. Structuration theory proposes that organizational structures, and the business that gets done within organizations (Boden, 1994), is produced through social interaction between members. This study moves from this theoretical framework to an examination of action, and documents how organizational structures are enacted through talk. In this study, I examined naturally occurring customer service calls to a customer service call center in an electronics repair facility, where Customers were calling for a repair status update on equipment they sent in for service. Through a detailed examination of these interactions, I discovered how participants jointly construct a response to a particular type of Customer inquiry, responses to Customers' repair status inquiries, and how this response is a stable and recurrent feature within these interactions. By examining the specific details of how the interaction

unfolds, I describe the normative organization of responses to repair status inquiries, and show how these responses emerge as an organizational structure for this type of customer service inquiry. In addition to contributing to our understanding of organizational structures, my findings yield discoveries about social interaction. Specifically I show how responses to inquiries may consist of multiple components as a single response to an initiating action.

Findings in the first analytic chapter (Chapter 4) suggest that the normative organizational response to repair status inquiries is a multi componential response. That is, the response to repair status inquiries is a second pair part (SPP) that consists of two separate components that are produced as a single response, where each part contains a different type of status: a. **repair status**: where the equipment is within the organization's repair cycle and b. **completion status**: when the repair will be completed. As I show in this chapter, if one of the responding action components is not produced, it will be sought. In this chapter I describe how participants build a complete response to Customers' repair status inquiries to contain both a report of the current repair status and the estimated timeframe for the completion of the repair. I also describe the various communicative practices that participants use to display their orientation to this multiple componential response as a normative response to repair status inquiries.

In the second analytic chapter (Chapter 5), findings show that Customers treat the organizational response to their inquiry for how it bears on another type of repair status, which is when they will receive their equipment back ("**return status**"). Although Customers could use the reports of the current repair process and estimated completion status provided in the initial response to do the inferential work to calculate when they

should receive their equipment back, data show that Customers do not usually do this overtly, but rather pursue return status with tentative and provisional inquiries. This raises the question of why Customers do not ask the Representatives for this return status in the first place. After all, Representatives are supposed to be in a position to answer Customers' questions. In this chapter I describe various ways in which Customers seek a specific return date for their repair, and consider the insight this provides on how Customers and Representatives manage organizational knowledge.

In what follows, Chapter Two locates this study in research in organizational communication, showing how it contributes to our knowledge about customer service in general, and about how organizational procedures are enacted in particular. In Chapter Three, I describe how this inductive study was done using field recordings from a customer service center. I provide the theoretical underpinning of the method used to examine these customer service interactions first, and then describe the specific procedures used to do the study. This Chapter includes ethnographic details of the customer service center. This dissertation used Conversation Analysis to examine the details of how interaction unfolds and to describe how participants produce action in orderly ways. Conversation analysis examines the details of social action by looking at how members produce action for one another in and through their everyday talk. Furthermore, actions are not viewed as isolated events that can be analyzed independently from their situated context. Actions are analyzed as they are understood by and for the participants as "contextually understood by reference to their placement and participation within the sequences of actions" (Atkinson & Heritage, 1984, p. 5).

This study describes the organization of an action that has yet to be described in the literature: the organization of a responding action to repair status inquiries. The findings in this study show that responses to repair status inquiries normatively contain more than one component as a single response. This contributes to work in conversation analysis by discovering a type of initiating action that makes relevant a response composed of two separate components that, taken together, constitutes a single responding action. Furthermore, by examining the details of the unfolding interaction between Customers and Representatives, I show how responses to Customers' inquiries are an interactively produced organizational structure, and not simply a one-sided product from the organization. Thus, this study also contributes to research on discourse in organizational studies that calls for a better understanding of how the use of discourse shapes organizational processes and constructs (Putnam & Fairhurst, 2001) by demonstrating how participants enact and construct a type of organizational structure through talk. Findings of this study show that organizational structures are a complex interactional achievement by demonstrating that responses to Customers' inquiries are built though the organizational of social action and not something that is merely "provided" to the Customer by the organization.

In addition to describing how organizational structures are constructed, data also show that Customers often push back on the normative organizational answer to their repair status inquiries to pursue another type of answer that is beyond what the organization is prepared to provide. What emerges from this study is a description of how participants negotiate the distribution organizational knowledge, and how Representatives come to manage the demands of the organization while satisfying the

needs of the customer. This study offers insight into the assumptions that people make

when dealing with knowledge (see Pomerantz, 1988) and tells us something about what

Customers take they can reasonably ask an organizational member when they call for an

update on their repair order.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF CUSTOMER SERVICE RESEARCH

Introduction

Within organizations, customer service is vital to the "success of any organization that deals with Customers, and strong customer service can build sales and visibility as companies try to distinguish themselves from their competitors" (www.bls.gov, 2006). Communication scholars define customer service as "a communication process in which an organizational representative presents products or professional assistance in exchange for another individual's money or cooperation" (Ford, 1999, p. 342). While this definition places an emphasis on the importance of communication between Customers and organizational members, it offers little in the way of describing what makes customer service interactions unique from other types of interaction where organizational members interact with Customers. For example, this definition encompasses a wide range of jobs that may not include customer service, such as: doctors; store clerks; mechanics; college professors; flight attendants, etc. This study contributes to our understanding of customer service by describing the communication practices through which service Representatives and their Customers construct this encounter and achieve customer service. Below I discuss prior research on customer service, and show how a conversation analytic approach contributes to this research by providing an account of customer service that is grounded in the specific details of interaction. After reviewing research on customer service, I show how structuration theory offers a useful model for thinking about

customer service. Next I show how basic findings of conversation analysis regarding both everyday ordinary interaction, and institutional interaction provide a basis for this study.

Customer Service within the Big Picture of the Organization

Customer service is an important part of the overall operation of an organization. Within the field of economics and service marketing, customer service is understood as a component within the service delivery system (Fitzsimmons & Fitzsimmons, 1998; Normann, 1984;). Features of this system include market segment, production and delivery, benefits of the product or service, corporate image, and organizational culture (Fitzsimmons & Fitzsimmons, 1998; Normann, 1984). This system is a corporate blueprint for structuring the interplay among the various segments of an organization's system and provides the foundation for operations management. The operation of the service delivery system provides some insight into how the function of customer service within the overall operation of an organization is understood. This is important to understand for this study because the service delivery system is a macro-organizational structure used to organize the various components of the organization's operation, and since customer service holds an important position within this structure, there is reason to believe that customer service interaction has a direct effect on the operation of the organization as a whole.

The interaction between Customers and organizations has been called the moment of truth (Normann, 1984), the point during which Customers evaluate service and form opinions of the quality of products and service in terms of their delivery (Fitzsimmons & Fitzsimmons, 1998; Normann, 1984). Customer service representatives are one type of "front-line employee" (Jean, 2004, p. 387) because they have the responsibility of

upholding organizational procedures as they manage Customers' demands. By examining

the details of how these customer service interactions unfold, one of the findings in this

study includes the discovery of the interactional practices through which Representatives

maintain their organizational standards when faced with Customers' demands to know

more than what the organization is willing to provide. This contributes to our

understanding of how organizational members work with organizational resources to

assist Customers with various customer service related goals.

Organizations Providing Communication-Focused Service Delivery Models

Communication between organizations and their clients is typically treated as a

transfer of information where information is viewed as a "component" that can affect the

delivery of service. Research that examines the function of customer service within the

service delivery system focuses on how to improve service delivery by proposing models

that offer service delivery solutions (Chase, 1978; Klaus, 1985; Larsson & Bowen, 1989).

However, less is known about the actual communication that occurs between

Representatives and Customers, and how what transpires within the actual interaction

affects the delivery of goods and services. As Gutek (1995) noted, one problem with

organizational models that look towards improving the process of delivering service is

that they overlook the importance of the interaction that takes place between

Representatives and Customers. This study describes the practices that Representatives

and Customers use to produce and construct the actions through which a particular type

of customer service delivery is achieved. Specifically, this study demonstrates how

Representatives and Customers jointly construct responses to Customer repair status

inquiries.

The Organizational Robot: Structuring "Relationships" as a Model for Service Delivery

In a move toward addressing customer service as a social process, there has been a call to treat communication between organizations and their Customers as structured through "relationships" (Ford, 2001; Gutek, 1995; Gutek et al., 2000). These "relationships" are a type of macro-organizational structure that is used to describe a form of service delivery (Gutek, et al., 2000). There are two different types of service "relationships": a. service relationships which are characterized by the repeated interactions Customers have with the same provider (e.g. Doctors), and b. service encounters which are characterized by their one-time interaction with a service provider. Service relationships are seen to be more interactive in terms of how the actual service is delivered. For example, in doctor-patient interactions, patients may take a more participatory role in how they receive treatment from their doctors. This is in contrast to service encounters, which are viewed as less interactive in terms of how service is delivered. For example, Customers in restaurants may take less of a participatory role in how they receive service when ordering their meal. In the current study, I show how service encounters are in fact interactive by describing how Customers who call an electronics repair center with an inquiry about the status of their repair order take a more participatory role in the service delivery process through their interaction with the service representative. To better understand the differences between service relationships and service encounters, and how customer service is a type of service encounter, in what follows I describe each of these "relationship" structures.

Service relationships are considered to exist when Customers have multiple interactions with the same provider each time their service is required (Gutek, 1995,).

Within service relationships, Customers and service providers are interdependent as is the case with a primary care doctor or hair stylist, where a long term and personal relationship often develops (Gutek, 1995; Gutek, et al., 2000). Over time, the participants develop trust as their relationship develops. Gutek (1995) noted that these relationships are neither friendships nor casual contacts. Rather they are "service relationships [that are] based on the formal organizational structure and on role expectations" (p. 8).

Service encounters, on the other hand, are classified as "single interactions between a Customer and provider, and they are typically fleeting rather than lengthy" (Gutek, 1995, p. 8). Service encounters are more impersonal and the Customer places more emphasis on obtaining a service, rather than establishing trust (Gutek, Bhappu, Liao-Troth, & Cherry, 1999). Examples of business types that create a context for service using the service encounter structure include fast food restaurants, airlines (flight attendants and ticket counter personnel), and organizations such as telephone companies, cable companies and repair services, most of which rely on customer service call centers to field Customers' service requirements. Thus, these service encounter environments are typically associated with high volume services with standardized procedures for delivering service.

Service relationships have certainly received more attention in the literature, perhaps due to the opportunities to study the complexity of managing interactions where Customers have higher expectation for the quality of service they are to receive (Ford, 1999, 2001; Ford & Etienne, 1994; Gutek, 1995). Within service relationships, interaction is not only important for what is getting done, but it is also viewed as part of

the product or service. That is, Customers' satisfaction ratings are largely based on the level of commitment the service provider displays towards the customer, and how much attention customers receive during service-related activities (Gutek, 1995).

Since service encounters are considered more task-oriented and routine, more attention is placed on strategies to improve the efficiency of service delivery. By developing a more user-friendly interface, it has been found that customers become more familiar with organizational procedures (Gutek, 1995). Thus, interaction is viewed in terms of processing Customers through the organizational system, rather than treating them as having specific service-related needs. This view of service encounters does not fully consider the interactional work involved in achieving the particular tasks and goals for obtaining service. This current study demonstrates that service encounters are in fact interactive by describing the different practices that participants use to pursue responses to their customer service inquiries.

Customer Service and Communication Behaviors – Looking at What People Actually Do

A small body of research examines communication behaviors in customer service encounters. Ford and Etienne (1994) identified three broad categories of customer service behaviors that incorporate various communication practices between service providers and their customers. These customer service behaviors include courteous service, personalized service and manipulative service. Within these categories courteous service includes friendly service used to inspire trust; personalized service is used to meet Customers' particular needs; and manipulative service is considered strategic sales (Ford, 1999; Ford, & Etinne, 1994). This area of research shows how Representatives produce service behaviors (e.g. courteous service; personalized service, manipulative service) by

using different modalities of communication, such as phatic speech, verbal immediacy, and Customer orientation (see Ford, 1999 for a complete taxonomy). What this research shows is that when Representatives exhibit these different communication behaviors, Customers will perceive them in a particular light (e.g. as friendly, helpful, attentive, etc.). Although this research begins to point to features of interaction, it does not fully explore the specific details of how Representatives' service styles are enacted. My study contributes to this area of research by examining the detailed features of interaction, and in doing so describes a set of *communication practices* that participants use in customer service encounters.

Communication, Encounters, and Interaction: Moving Towards an Interactional Approach for Examining Customer Service

Customer service interactions include a particular type of relationship among three interrelated parties: the organization, the Customer, and the service representative. The relationship among these three parties constitutes a customer service "system," where the system is the outcome of members drawing from organizational resources such as rules, resources, and procedures. The service encounter model (Czepiel, Solomon & Surprenant, 1985) provides an overview of the relationship among these three primary segments of the customer service "system" within an organization:
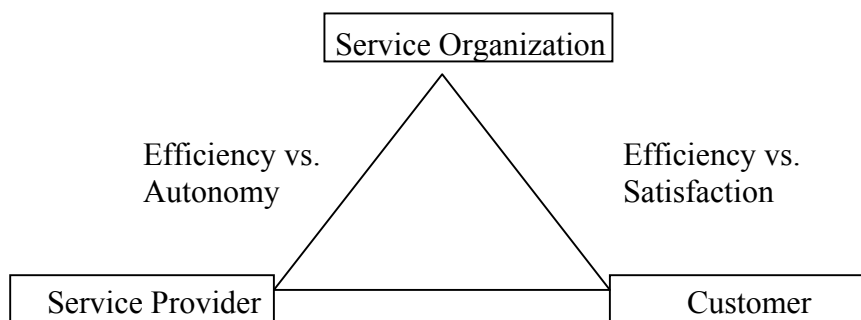
Figure 1. Service Encounter Model

Within this service encounter model, the organization is a third party to the interaction. In order to assist Customers, Representatives normally follow procedures, established by the organization, to provide service to the customers. These organizational procedures provide a means through which Representatives can assist Customers while at the same time maximize the efficiency of the call. Thus, customer service interactions tend to be highly structured calls where Representatives follow strict procedures set by the organization.

By establishing specific procedures for Representatives to follow when assisting customers, organizations have found ways to increase efficiency in terms of how service is delivered and, in turn, increase productivity because Representatives can assist more Customers. Although these procedures in service encounters can improve service efficiency, which can lead to customer satisfaction, these "controlled" interactions can also have serious negative interactional, as well as interpersonal consequences, for the participants. One consequence is that while service providers are familiar with the procedures for a particular type of service request, Customers are less familiar with how a particular organization operates and may experience frustration because they might not know how to initiate a service request, nor how to ask for service, nor the language they need in order to communicate with service providers (Gutek, 1995). Another consequence is that service providers become focused on implementing the rules and procedures of the organization over satisfying the needs of the Customer (Gutek, 1995). Regardless of the possibly negative implications, these procedures provide a solution for managing a high volume of customers in the shortest amount of time. Thus, the more

"people" Representatives can process, the more productive they become, and an increase in productivity leads to an increase in profitability.

The concept of the service encounter has some interesting implications for research on customer service interaction. For example, the idea that service providers are "functionally equivalent" (Gutek, 1995, p. 110), meaning that anyone within the organization could do the job if they know the rules, and can follow instructions. However, this suggests that these service providers have very little autonomy within their job, and are viewed as part of the organizational process, rather than as a competent member of society who can be an active participant in an interaction. Thus Representatives can be seen as bounded by the rules of the organization and not able to break away from these rules to meet the individual needs of the customer. These organizational rules are part of the overall structure, or operation of an organization and by following these rules Representatives are maintaining this organizational structure. However, as this study shows, organizational rules, as structures, are not something that participants necessarily follow. Rather, organizational structures emerge out of interaction, and we can think of organizational structures as something that can get produced, constructed and enacted through talk.

So far I have referred to about a number of macro "organizational structures" that offer ways of understanding where customer service fits within organizations. For example, customer service is seen as a component within the larger organizational system that contributes to the overall operation and production of organizations. From the organization's perspective, customer service is vital for maintaining positive customer relationships. Another type of organizational structure for understanding customer service

within an organization is the service delivery model, where service "relationships" describe the different ways in which organizations provide service. Finally, I have suggested that a third type of "structure" is the rules and resources provided by the organization that provides service representatives with the tools they need in order to assist customers. However, even though organizations can provide Representatives with the resources they need to assist Customers, this study shows that even when Representatives have the resources for assisting Customers, the process of providing service is still interactive.

Structuration Theory: A Backdrop for Understanding Organizational Structures as Enacted Through Interaction

Structuration theory provides a basis for understanding how organizational structures are produced through interaction. Within structuration theory, Giddens (1984) suggested that participants have the means to create a stable organizational structure. That is, according to Giddens, the norms of interaction provide members with a resource for shaping and changing organizational structures. According to Giddens' (1984) structuration theory, "analyzing the structuration of social systems means studying the modes in which such systems, grounded in the knowledgeable activities of situated actors who draw upon rules and resources in the diversity of action contexts, are produced and reproduced in interaction" (p. 25). Giddens (1984) argued that participants create their own normative, organizing structure through which they produce and reproduce the conditions for achieving a particular goal or activity within a given encounter. As I demonstrate in this study, participants display an orientation to what constitutes a normative response to a certain type of customer inquiry, and together they produce an

organizational structure fitted to a particular type of activity. Thus, we see how an organizational structure is produced through the actions participants construct to achieve certain organizational tasks or goals. For example, in Chapter Four of this study I demonstrate how both Customers and Representatives jointly construct what could constitute a relevant response to Customers' repair status inquiries. This chapter shows how both Customers and Representatives orient to responses to status inquiries as a multi-componential response that contains two different statuses as a response. Thus, Chapter Four describes a stable, recurrent feature within these service interactions: the specific ways in which responses to repair status inquiries are produced. In Chapter Five we see how participants orient to this multi- componential response as a type of organizational structure from which Customers can draw inferences regarding the actual return date of their equipment.

Given the previous discussion, structuration theory can provide a useful theoretical perspective for understanding customer service interaction as a form of organizational communication. Structuration theory brings together two key ideas about how the structure of organizations is built through interaction. First, by noticing that participants produce their own organizing structure through which they produce actions, structuration theory points to the interaction order (Goffman, 1983). That is, interaction has a set of norms for how people organize their actions and activities in orderly ways. Second, by producing and reproducing the stable recurrent features of organizational structures, there is reason to believe that organizations have their own rules and norms that are particularized to an activity, but also give their employees the autonomy to reframe these rules. Thus, there is an interaction order, with its own set of norms that also

shapes, and is shaped by, the rules and norms of the organization. That is, organizational communication such as customer service encounters is shaped by both the interaction order and the procedures outlined by the organization for managing the customer service activity.

What remains to be discovered, if we accept that there is an agency/structure relationship, are the norms for the different types of activities within a particular organizational setting, and the interactional basis for the organizational structures that members produce. Conversation analysis, the study of talk-in-interaction, offers a unique contribution to the study of interaction within organizational settings by treating talk between participants as a "specimen of social interaction" (Whalen & Zimmerman, 1987 p. 408) in its own right rather than as a product of external influences. Thus, conversation analysis offers a way of looking at how interaction can shape organizational structures. Structuration theory lays out the theoretical basis for claiming that organizational structures are constructed through social interaction within the organization. What conversation analysis does is to give the tools to explore this theoretical assumption by examining the actual enactment of organizational structures within these interactions. Giddens (1984) suggested that agents construct actions. In this study I show how participants actually do this. In order to understand how organizational structures are constructed through interaction, we need to first understand some basic features of interaction.

Basic Features of Talk-In-Interaction: Overview of Relevant Areas of

Conversation Analysis for this Study

The orderliness of interaction can be observed through the methods, or practices, people use to produce and organize actions systematically in interaction. The practices of conversation include generic mechanisms through which people organize their talk in ways that others can understand. These mechanisms include the organization of turn-taking in interaction where participants construct and distribute their turns at talk (Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson, 1974); sequence organization where participants implement courses of action through series of interconnected turns (Schegloff, 2007); repair organization where participants manage in the smooth flow of interaction that may be interrupted due to problems in hearing, speaking, or understanding (Schegloff, 1987a, 1992; Schegloff, Jefferson & Sacks, 1977); and the overall structural organization of conversation which consists of the coordinated entry into and ending of a conversation (Schegloff, 1968, 1986; Schegloff & Sacks, 1973). To provide a background for understanding the findings presented in this study, the next section addresses turn-taking organization and sequence organization, the two areas to which this study contributes.

Turn-taking organization

Turn-taking organization within ordinary conversation describes a set of practices participants use to construct and allocate turns at talk (Sacks et al., 1974). Turns are constructed through turn constructional units (TCUs), where the first possible completion of such a unit makes transition to a next speaker relevant. Turns at talk are the vehicles through which social actions are recognized and constructed.

Within ordinary conversation, speakers have the right to produce one TCU within a turn at talk before a next speaker begins. However, there are instances where speakers may produce more than one TCU within a single turn. This is comparatively rare since the organization of turn taking provides for one unit of talk at a time. However, there are several practices speakers can use at the start of a first TCU that communicates they are beginning something that will take more than one unit to complete. For example, speakers can produce a list starter, ("First of all") that shows what will come next will have more than one unit of talk (Jefferson, 1990; Lerner, 1994), or speakers can begin with a story preface ("I have something wonderful to tell you") (Sacks, 1992) which can secure an extended turn at talk produced with more than one TCU. Speakers can also "rush through" ("He's the only regular.=the only good regular out there) (Schegloff, 1987b) whereby they "talk through" the transition space to produce a next unit of talk. In what follows I demonstrate that a fundamental feature of responses to repair status inquiries is that they are actually built as two components in a multi-unit turn.

Sequence Organization: The Organization of Action

Turns at talk are also the building blocks of action (Sacks et al., 1974). Participants can build courses of action through turns that are fitted together where the production of one unit of talk constructs an action that makes relevant a particular type of next action. The adjacency pair is considered the most basic unit of a sequence of action (Schegloff, 1990; 2007; Schegloff & Sacks, 1973). Examples of such pair types include action sequences such as greeting/greeting, question/answer, invitation/acceptance, etc. (Schegloff, 2007).

Features of the adjacency pair, in its simplest form, include that it is composed of two turns, that the turns are adjacently positioned, produced by different speakers, and there is a relative ordering of parts: first pair parts (FPP) followed by second pair parts (SPP) (Schegloff, 2007).

The adjacency pair is a pair-type sequence where the SPP should be of the same pair type as the first. Actions that initiate a sequence of action (FPPs) do not merely solicit a response, but they solicit a response that is relevant for the initiating action (Sacks, 1992; Schegloff, 2007;). One puzzle for the speaker of a FPP at the possible completion of a SPP is how this constitutes an answer or a response to the FPP.

In order to achieve the primary goal within an institutional interaction, many organizational interactions are organized around a single adjacency pair (Drew & Heritage, 1992; Zimmerman, 1992; see Schegloff, 1990 for ordinary conversation). In the calls examined for this study, Customers initiate a particular type of action when they call to inquire about the status of their equipment that is being repaired. This "inquiry" initiates a course of action, where the response to the Customer's inquiry constitutes a possible end to that course of action. Previous research that has examined features of the initiating action in service encounters includes work by Lee (2006; 2009) where she found that Customers' services requests are typically extended, meaning they are built through several sets of sequences, before the request is fulfilled. This work demonstrates how requests, and the fulfillment of these requests, are collaboratively built in and through interaction. This current study contributes to this line of research that examines the organization of interaction in service encounters by describing how responses to service inquiries are interactionally achieved. Specifically, this study shows how the

initiating action of inquiring about the status of a repair order makes relevant a response

that contains multiple components, and demonstrates how these responses are

collaboratively built. Furthermore, this study contributes to research on how basic

features of interaction are deployed to achieve activities within organizational settings.

Talk in Organizational Settings

Within institutional settings, we can expect particular types of interactions to have

recurrent features as participants typically organize their interaction around the specific

purpose for which the interaction is occurring. My study pursues three common themes in

conversation analytic research that examines interaction in institutional settings:

- The interaction normally involves the participants in specific goal oriented
  activities

- The interaction involves special constraints on what will be treated as allowable
  contributions to the business at hand

- The interaction is associated with inferential frameworks and procedures that are
  particular to specific institutional contexts

(Heritage, 2005 p. 106)

While these criteria do not define institutional talk (Drew & Heritage, 1992), they

do provide guidelines for distinguishing between ordinary talk and institutional talk. By

considering these areas when examining interaction within an institutional setting, I

describe the various ways participants shape the institutional context and identify features

of interaction that are unique to a particular type of action participants are working to

achieve. In order to show how my study builds on previous work on talk in institutional

settings, in the next section I review previous research that has shown how participants

orient to various institutional goals, special constraints, and inferential frameworks in institutional interactions.

Goal Orientation

Institutional settings are considered places where more "formal task-based or role-based activities are undertaken [such as] doctor-patient interaction, courtroom trials, job interviews, classroom lessons, news interviews and emergency calls to police" (Heritage & Greatbatch, 1991, pp. 93-94). Previous research on institutional talk has also shown how the types of goals and ways of accomplishing goals can be unique to each type of institutional setting (Clayman & Heritage, 2002; Drew & Heritage, 1992; Heritage, 2005; Kidwell, 2000; Lee, 2009; Zimmerman, 1992). For example, in emergency service calls participants organize their conduct by reference to the goal of getting help or reporting an emergency (Whalen & Zimmerman, 1987; Zimmerman 1992) and in doctor-patient visits the interaction is organized by reference to the diagnosis and treatment of a patient (Robinson & Heritage, 2005). Within service encounters participants organize their conduct by reference to the goal of fulfilling a requests, such as a request for airline reservations (Lee, 2009) or request for information at a library reference desk (Downing, 2008). The customer service calls examined in this study show that the interaction is organized by the Customer's goal of a type of requests where they are seeking an update regarding the repair of their equipment that was sent in for service. For example, see Extract 2.1 where the Customer indicates the reason for the call with "I'd like to check on the status of my camera that's being repaired" (line 4-5).

Extract 2.1 (Sta 2)

```
1          ((Ring))
2    Rep:  G'd afternoon Jacks Camera >how can I help you.<
```

```
3               (.)
4  >  Cus:    Yes. I'd like to check on the stat:us of my:=uh:m
5  >          camera that's being repai:red.
```

In this instance, the Customer establishes the goal for the interaction as an inquiry about his repair order after the Representative self-identifies as one who can assist the caller.

Constraints and Allowable Contributions

Participants' orientation to how the interaction unfolds is observed through what participants treat as allowable contributions within each phase of achieving the overall goal for the interaction. For example, allowable contributions include who dispatches help in 911 calls, who makes the diagnosis in doctor patient interactions, or in the case of the customer-service encounters, who provides the information regarding the Customer's inquiry. Allowable contributions set up the normative structures from which participants can make inferences regarding what their interlocutor is doing to move towards achieving the overarching goal.

Inferential Frameworks

Levinson (1992) argued that the types of activities within institutional settings play a vital part in how utterances are understood by participants in that "activity types constrain what will count as allowable contributions and they help to determine…what kinds of inferences will be made from what is said" (p. 97). For example, Robinson (2003) showed that in doctor-patient interactions, patients display an understanding of doctors' diagnosis as a response to patients' problem presentation and not as an informing that requires a response. Furthermore, Robinson (2003) also indicated that patients' withholding a response to a diagnosis also "displays their understandings and

expectations that the activity of treatment relevantly follows that of diagnosis" (p.44). This finding is consistent with Levinson's (1992) observation that "to each and every clearly demarcated activity there is a corresponding set of inferential schemata" (p. 72), where the inferential schemata are demonstrably oriented to by participants through the way in which participants display their understanding of the expectations governing the activity (p.74).

<div align="center">Summary</div>

When Customers call to inquire about the status of their repair, the Customer's use of the term "status" may seem rather simple, and straightforward. However, as this study shows, the action of responding to a repair status inquiry is rather complex. This study describes the organization of responses to repair status inquiries and argues that this response is a type of organizational structure that is jointly constructed and enacted through talk.

Within organizational communication studies there has been a move towards developing a theory of organizational discourse. As Putnam & Fairhurst (2001) argued, in order to gain a better understanding of the language-organization relationship and how organizational life can be understood as shaped through different types of discourse including talk, there is a need for research that addresses how organizational constructs and processes are built through discourse. Applying the conversation analytic method to analyze actual customer service interaction answers this call for research by describing what organizational members are attending in their talk as they engage in organizational activities. Specifically, this study describes the processes of communication within

customer service interaction and demonstrates how participants jointly construct a type of organizational structure, responses to Customers' repair status inquiries.

We can begin to understand communication processes within customer service encounters by considering what customer service interaction really looks like. As indicated above, the service encounter model (Czepiel, Solomon & Surprenant, 1985) proposes that there are three parties to the interaction, the service organization, the service representative and the Customer. According to this model in order to assist Customers, Representative follow specific organizational procedures which enable the Representative to provide service while controlling the interaction in a way that maximizes call efficiency. However, the problem with such a model is that Representatives have very little autonomy to assist Customers, and Customer can walk away from the interaction feeling that their needs were not fully met.

Despite a the body of research that provides models of customer service encounters (Czepiel, Solomon & Surprenant, 1985; Gutek, 1995), less is know about actual communication processes within the interaction itself. In order to describe communication processes, we need a better understanding of the organization of interaction within customer service and what Giddens (1984) would call the agency effect. Giddens' (1984) structuration theory outlines how participants draw from organizational resources such as rules and procedures to produce their action within an activity, and it is through these social actions that participants produce and reproduce organizational structures. Thus, structuration theory points to organizational structures as being shaped by both interaction and the organizational norms and rules for specific types of activities. By examining the details of actual interaction in customer service

encounters, this study moves from a theoretical framework to an examination of how

members produce action, and documents how organizational structures are constructed

and enacted through talk. The following section outlines the data and method used to do

this study.

CHAPTER THREE

DATA AND METHODS

Ethnographic Background about the Organization

The organization that participated in this study is an electronics repair facility located in the northeastern part of the United States. This is a family owned and operated mid-size company, with thirty-five full time employees and was established nearly forty years ago. Although this organization began as a small camera repair shop, servicing local stores and customers in their immediate area, this company expanded their service to include a store front, where they sell camera and video equipment. In addition, they also have a division of sales and service for local police departments and an international extended repair warranty program. A large portion of their business is repairing electronic equipment in their in-house repair shop. On average, this organization receives one hundred pieces of equipment for repair each day. When equipment is received in the shipping department, the receiving clerk in the shipping department creates a record of each piece of equipment (noting the make/model and serial number of the equipment) in a logbook. This initial step is done manually. The equipment is then sent to the customer service department where the Representatives enter the equipment into the repair tracking system.

The Customer Service call center is located on-site in this organization. At the time of the data collection, there were eight Customer Service Representatives working for this organization, and out of the eight Representatives, five agreed to participate in this study. Out of the five, three of the Representatives have more than five years of experience as Customer Service Representatives for this company (Kendra, Lorainne, and

Michelle). Each Representative receives on-the-job training which includes learning the repair process within the organization, how to use the repair tracking system, and listen to how Representatives assist customers.

As part of data collection I spent ten hours per week over the course of one year at the observation site. This enabled me to develop a set of ethnographic observations of the actual work site and organizational practices. These observations are a useful supplement to the field recordings that were collected. In what follows I describe the data and procedures for collecting the data for this study, and then I provide a detailed outline of the organizational resources that Representatives draw from when responding to Customers' repair status inquiries.

<div align="center">Data</div>

Data for this study are drawn from twenty five hours of recorded telephone calls that I recorded and collected from five customer service representatives in one customer service call center in an electronics repair facility located in the Northeastern part of the United States. The data set consists of five hundred customer service calls between the five customer service representatives and callers to the customer service helpline. The total number of unique Customers is approximately four hundred and seventy five. Out of the five hundred customer service calls, one hundred and ninety three consist of calls where Customers are inquiring about the repair status of equipment they sent in for service.

I collected these recordings between January and May of 2007, and I received approval from the Institutional Review Board at Rutgers University for the use of these recording for research. This is the only customer call center within this organization, and

Representatives' primary job involves assisting customers with repair orders. Figure 2 (below) shows the Call Center.

Figure 2. Customer Service Call Center at the Data Collection Site

Organizational Resources

Data show that Representatives rely on two major resources that are relevant for this study and its findings: the computer system that maintains a tracking record of where Customers' repair orders are within the organization's repair process, and a whiteboard that provided a resource for reporting the estimated repair completion time. I describe each in turn.

Computer System – for Tracking Customers' Repair Orders

As part of the organizational procedure for handling repair status inquiries, after Customers inquire about the repair status of their equipment, Representatives ask for Customers' repair order numbers so that they may locate the equipment in the repair tracking system. Extract 3.1 is an example of how a Representative initiates the process of locating the Customers' order in the repair tracking system:

Extract 3.1 (Sta 4)

```
01          ((Ring))

02    Rep:  G'd afternoon Jack Camera Michele speaking.

03          (.)

04    Cus:  Yea::h=I wanted da check on a:=uh:

05          a repair status.

06          (.)

07 >> Rep:  O'kay what is thuh work order number¿

08  > Cus:  .hhh Ah:: see:: looks like (.) two two fi:ve

09  >       zero ni:ne six.
```

Asking customer for repair order number

Customer provides order number

After the Representative enters the order number into the repair tracking system, the customer's order appears on her screen. For an example of what the Representative sees on her computer screen, see figure 3 (below):

Figure 3. Computer Screen Shot of a Repair Status

Figure 3 shows that there are several resources available to Representatives after they locate a repair order in the system. First, in the box labeled #1 on the top of the screen, is the Customer's repair order number. Representatives may use this number to reconfirm that they have located the correct customer order. Second, in the box labeled #2 on the upper right hand portion of the screen, is the date that the equipment was entered into the repair tracking system. Third, the box labeled #3 in the bottom portion of the screen is the most current repair process location of the Customer's equipment. Within this box there are four key pieces of information that Representatives rely upon: "John/On Hold/Ordered Main Board" and "Board is expected to be delivered 7/10". For this particular order, the name "John" refers to the technician who is going to repair the Customer's equipment. In this organization each technician has their area of expertise, and the Representatives know what type of equipment each of the technicians repair. So in this instance, when the Representatives see the name John, they know that the Customer sent in a digital still camera for repair. The second piece of information in this box is "On Hold". As I describe below, "on hold" is the organization's technical term for the location of the equipment within the organization's repair process and provides the Representative with the information for the current repair status. In this case the customer's equipment is on hold for parts. A third piece of information is the delivery date for the part that was ordered to repair this equipment. Finally, the fourth box, labeled #4 to the left of the screen, reports the date of the last scan, or the date the equipment arrived at its current location. As I show in Chapter Five, the dates are of particular importance for the participants when they estimate a timeframe for when the repair will be sent back to the Customer.

The importance of providing the details of what appears on the computer screen is that Representatives actively use this resource when they report the current repair process status (see Chapter 4) as part of their response to Customers' repair status inquiry. Extract 3.2 shows how the Representative responds to the Customer's inquiry (from Extract 3.1 above) after she has located his equipment in the repair tracking system:

Extract 3.2 (Sta 4)

```
01              ((Ring))

02      Rep:    G'd afternoon Jack Camera Michele speaking.

03              (.)

04      Cus:    Yea::h=I wanted da check on a:=uh: a

05              repair status.

06              (.)

07      Rep:    O'kay what is thuh work order number¿

08      Cus:    .hhh Ah:: see:: looks like (.) two two fi:ve

09              zero ni:ne six.

10              (2.5)

11      Rep:    An' thuh na:me on thee account?

12              (1.0)

13      Cus:    Ah::: it's possibly Tina. Trisha Weaver.

14      Rep:    °M'kay.°

15              (0.2)

16      Rep:    Fer Paradise Computers Corporation.

17      Cus:    mn=Yes that's me. Heh heh

18              (0.2)

19 >>   Rep:    .hh We:ll it looks like it wuz entered into our

20 >>           system on thuh ten:th. (0.2) an': (0.2) currently

21 >>           been in line since the eleventh.=These repairs are

20              taking fifteen tuh thirty business days.°°Right now.°°
```

Date equipment was first entered

Current location of the equipment within the repair process and date equipment was moved to that location

Notice that within the Representative's response, she reports the date the equipment was first entered into the organization's system, ".hh We:ll it looks l<u>i</u>ke it wuz entered into our system on thuh t<u>e</u>n:th." (lines 19-20), as well as the current repair process status, "in line" (line 21) and the date it moved to that location, "since the eleventh." (line 21). Thus, we can see how the Representative relies on the repair tracking system to assist Customers with their repair status inquiries.

The total repair process, beginning with the time the equipment is first entered into the repair tracking system, to the end when the equipment is being prepared for shipping back to the Customer, involves multiple, ordered stages where each stage indicates a location within the overall process. The organization defines *repair process status* as the current location of equipment within this repair process. When Representatives begin their response to Customers' repair status inquiries, they start by reporting the current location of the equipment within the organization's repair process. The major stages of this process include: Logged in; In line/Assigned to a technician; On hold; On Bench; Quality Control/Shipping. The following chart represents the ordering of the various stages of the repair process, which begins with Stage 1 when the equipment is first entered into the system:

Stages of the Repair Process

Stage #	Organization's technical term
Stage 1	Logged In
Stage 2	In line/Assigned to Technician
Stage 3	On Bench
Stage 4	On Hold

Stage 5   Quality Control

Stage 6   Shipping Ready

Optional Stage   Manufacturer

Figure 4. Stages of the Repair Process

When Customers call to inquire about the status of their equipment that is in for repair, as

demonstrated in Extract 3.2, Representatives look in the repair tracking system and report

the location of the equipment within the organizationally defined repair process. Extracts

3.1-3.8 (below) provide additional examples of how Representatives actively use the

repair tracking system as a resource for reporting the current repair process status when

Customers call to inquire about their repair.

Stage 1 Logged In

<u>Ex 3.3 (Sta 45)</u>

```
17    Rep:   Okay. Uhm yeah it's just in thuh process of being

18           lo:gged into thuh system.[.hh  ]it 'ill be logged in

19    Cus:                            [Mm hm]

20    Rep:  b'fore the end of t'da:y¿
```

Stage 2 In Line/Assigned to Technician

<u>Ex 3.4 (Sta 178)</u>

```
34    Rep:    Okay. It is in line with our technician.

35    Cus:    Uh huh:.
```

<u>Ex 3.5 (Sta 13)</u>

```
11    Rep:    Okay sir.=That has bee:n

13            assigned to a technician tuh work on:¿
```

Stage 3 On Bench

Ex 3.6 (Sta 71)

```
29    Rep:    Okay. It's on: thuh technician's ben:ch.
```

Stage 4 On hold

Ex 3.7 (Sta 2)

```
14    Rep:    Oka:y um: that's on hold for par:ts.
```

Stage 5 Quality Control and Shipping

Ex 3.8 (Sta 183)

```
37    Rep:    Okay. It is being quality contro:lled.
```

Stage 6 Shipping Ready

Ex 3.9 (Sta 77)

```
10  Rep:  Ma'm that's shipping rea:dy,=it's
11        in thuh shipping department.
```

Optional Stage: Manufacturer

Ex 3.10 (Sta 186)

```
11    Rep:    Okay. Kenny, (.) uh: we are sending it to
12            Nikon.
13            (.)
14    Rep:    Nikon will be doing thuh repairs for you.
15    Cus:    M=Oka:y.
```

Whiteboard – Resource for Reporting Estimated Repair Completion Time

In Chapter Four I show how Representatives respond to Customers' repair status inquiries with two types of reports concerning status: a report of current repair process status, and a report of estimated repair completion time. As shown in the previous section, Representatives use the organization's repair tracking system to report the

current repair process status. The second resource that Representatives rely on when responding to Customers' repair status inquiries is a whiteboard that lists the approximate repair time for the different types of equipment that the organization repairs. This whiteboard provides Representatives with a resource for reporting the estimated repair completion time, which is the second component of Representatives' repair status responses (see Chapter Four). This whiteboard is centrally located within the customer service call center, and picture of this whiteboard is presented in Figure 5 (below).
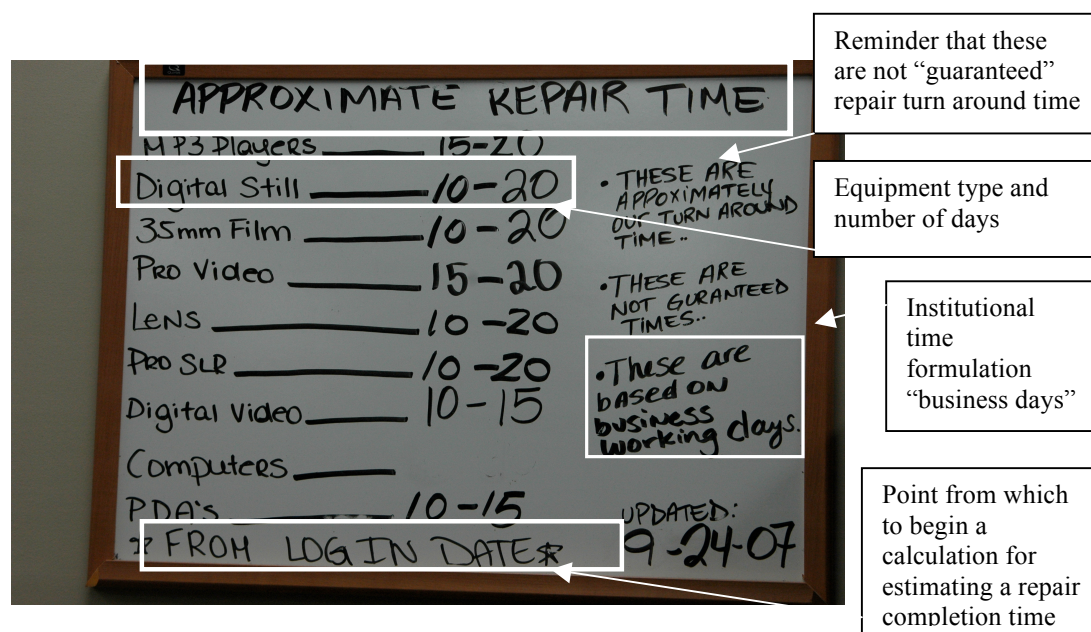
Figure 5. White Board Listing Estimated Repair Completion Time

This whiteboard has a number of different components that Representatives rely on when they respond to Customers' repair status inquiries. The first type of resource this whiteboard provides is how Representatives should understand the repair time, which bears the title: "Approximate Repair Time". In addition, there are two bullet points along the right hand side of the board that indicate that the repair time for equipment should be understood as an estimated amount of time, and not as a guaranteed time. These bullet points reinforce how the repair timeframe should be understood: "these are

approximately our turn around time" (first bullet point), and "these are not guaranteed times" (second bullet point). Extract 3.11 shows how a Representative designs the second component of her response as an estimated, non-guaranteed timeframe when she reports an estimated repair completion time:

Representative uses institutionally provided resource to respond

Extract 3.11 (Sta 47)

```
25    Rep:   .hh Wh- Right now normally on laptop
26           r'pairs we are taking approximately
27           between fifteen ta twenny business da:ysⵥ
28    Cus:   Okay.
29    Rep:   It does depend on thuh pro:blem with unit and
30           parts pending.
```
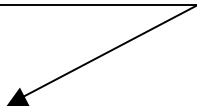
A second resource provided on this whiteboard is the various equipment types repaired by this organization (listed on the left side of the board), along with a number range (to the right of the equipment) which indicates the estimated number of days it takes for the organization to complete a repair. Extract 3.12 shows how a Representative reports the amount of time it will take the organization to complete the Customer's repair.

Extract 3.12 (Sta 45)

```
23    Rep:   ↑O↓kay. Uh:m yeah.=It's just in th'
24           process of being lo:gged into thuh system.
25           [.hh  ]it 'ill be logged in=
26    Cus:   [Mm hm]
27    Rep:   =b'fore the end of t'da:y¿
28    Cus:   Mm hm.
29    Rep:   .hh an' then uh:m it goes in
30           line with thuh technician. An' right
31 >>        now fer digital stills we're taking
32 >>        approximately ten ta twenny business
```

Representative uses elements from the whiteboard for reporting the number of days for the repair

```
33 >>          days for our repair turn around time.
```

Notice in this instance how the Representative relies on the information provided

on the whiteboard by reporting the number of days, for the Customer's equipment type,

using the institutionally provided formulation that appears on the whiteboard, "business

days" (lines 32-33).

Finally, a third resource that is listed on this whiteboard is the reminder "*From

Log In Date*" that is written on the bottom of the board. As I show in Chapter Five, the

"Log In Date" is an important resource for both Representatives and Customers to be able

to calculate an estimated repair completion time because it provides a starting point from

which to begin the calculation. In Extract 3.13, the Representative begins her response to

the Customer's repair status inquiry by reporting the past repair process status which

includes the starting date of the repair process for this equipment.

Extract 3.14 (Sta 54)

```
16 >>  Rep:   Uhm Yeah.=It was entered into our

17            system on thuh thirtieth, and (.) it's

18            in line to see thuh technician,

19    Cus:    I see that on thuh we:b.

20    Rep:    °Mm hm.° Right now for digital stills

21            our turn around time is taking

22            approximately ten ta twenny business days¿
```

Representative includes starting point of the repair as part of her report of the repair process status

Starting date of the repair for this equipment

Method

Conversation analysis is an approach to the study of talk in interaction that provides access to the details of how members construct action through talk. One premise behind conversation analysis is that members produce talk for one another "in orderly ways that exhibit their orderliness, have their orderliness appreciated and used, and have that appreciation displayed and treated as the basis for subsequent action" (Schegloff & Sacks, 1973). In this respect, conversation analysis deals with the details of social action by looking at how members produce action for one another in and through their everyday talk. Furthermore, actions are not viewed as isolated events that can be analyzed independently from their situated context. Actions are analyzed as they are understood by the participants as "contextually understood by reference to their placement and participation within the sequences of actions"(Atkinson & Heritage, 1984). By examining the details of talk, conversation analysts seek to explain how interactants achieve certain actions through their interactional conduct (both spoken and embodied) by looking at the position and composition of a turn within a sequence of actions.

In order to understand how customer service interactions unfold, and how customer service related actions are enacted and produced through talk, we need to look at the details of the interaction itself and the basic features of interaction through which customer service interaction is produced. There are a number of methods that can be used to study language and social interaction, such as discourse analysis, conversation analysis, ethnography of communication, sociolinguistics, etc. (see LeBaron, Mandelbaum, & Glenn, 2003 for a review of research in language and social interaction;

Fitch & Sanders, 2005; Sanders, 2004). For this study I use conversation analysis to provide a grounded description of participants' practices for enacting organizational structure through talk.

Conversation analysis, developed by Harvey Sacks, Emanuel Schegloff, and Gail Jefferson, is an inductive method that examines naturally occurring everyday conversation in order to describe orderly practices for achieving action that we may not have otherwise noticed (Sacks, 1992). The primary goal of conversation analysis is best described by Atkinson & Heritage (1984):

> The central goal of conversation analytic research is the description and explication of the competences that ordinary speakers use and rely on in participating in intelligible, socially organized interaction. At its most basic, this objective is one of describing the procedures by which conversationalists produce their own behavior and understand and deal with the behavior of others. A basic assumption throughout is Garfinkel's proposal that these activities – producing conduct and understanding and dealing with it – are accomplished as the accountable products of common sense procedures. (1984, p. 1)

A main premise of conversation analysis is that talk-in-interaction is a form of social interaction that is orderly, and that its orderliness is achieved through members' practices for producing and understanding social action. The foundation of conversation analysis as a method for describing the practices through which members produce social action is based on Sacks' contention that talk can be examined in its own right as it is through talk that people produce action (Sacks, 1984). Research that applies the method of conversation analysis seeks to discover how participants work together through interaction to produce social actions and how these actions are understood by interactants (Pomerantz & Fehr, 1997) by describing what is getting done through talk, and how it gets done (Clayman & Gill, 2004). What differentiates conversation analysis from other

approaches to language is the assumption "that all aspects of social action can be found to exhibit organized patterns of stable, recurrent structural features" (Heritage, 1984, 241).

Conversation analysis emerged out of the influence of Garfinkel's (1967) ethnomethodology, and Goffman's (1983) contention that interaction is at the center of social life. Garfinkel's ethnomethodology lays out the reasoning procedures through which the orderliness of social action is constructed. Conversation analysis brings together ethnomethodology's focus on the orderliness of interaction, and Goffman's observation that interaction is at the center of social life, by examining the orderly practices of interaction through which social actors produce their everyday actions and social world.

A conversation analytic approach to organizational communication involves accounts of interaction that may provide for an understanding of various features of different organizational tasks, identities, and actions that are grounded in sets of particular communication practices. Research in organizational discourse seeks to understand how organizational constructs and processes are constructed through discourse (Putnam & Fairhurst, 2001). Conversation analysis is particularly adapted to this line of research in that by examining actual conversation the analysis describes what participants attend to in their interaction with one another.

Applying the Method of Conversation Analysis

Conversation analysis is a naturalistic, inductive approach for studying talk in social interaction and relies on field recordings of naturally occurring interaction as its source of data. While conversation analysis is a qualitative approach that involves the close analysis of single cases of interaction, there is also a quantitative aspect to

conversation analysis in that researchers assemble a collection of instances of a phenomenon for systematic inspection (Clayman & Gill, 2004). Applying the method of conversation analysis to examine naturally occurring interaction involves a number of determinate steps. Below I describe how I conducted my study by presenting the procedures used to apply a conversation analytic method to naturally occurring interaction (for a complete description of applying the method of CA see Clayman & Gill, 2004; Heritage, 1984; Pomerantz & Fehr 1997). Within this section I describe how I built data collections, which led to the discovery of the phenomena described in Chapters Four and Five of this study.

Phase 1 Data Collection

Audio recordings of customer service calls to an electronics repair facility were made. The advantage of using audio (or video) recordings of interaction is that they provide reliable evidence for how a given interaction unfolds, in real time, for the participants. Using recordings I was able to capture details of the interaction between Representatives and their Customers, and inspect these interaction for organizing features of interaction that they contained.

Since I recorded twenty-five hours of telephone calls, I sorted the data by making individual files for each call and I characterized them in terms of Customers' reasons for calling. So, for example, in my initial collection I have categories such as: sales inquiries; store hours; how to send equipment in for service; repair estimates; repair status calls. After I categorized five hundred telephone calls, I noticed that the most frequent type of inquiry Representatives managed is repair status calls, where Customers asked for a repair status update on a piece of equipment they sent in for service. Out of the five

hundred telephone calls, one hundred and ninety three of them (38% of the total collection) are these repair status inquiries. Given that repair status inquiries are the most recurrent type of call with the most stable features in terms of what Customers are inquiring about, I selected the repair status inquiry call as a place to begin my investigation.

Phase 2 Transcribing Data

Once data was collected I transcribed using the transcription system created by Gail Jefferson (Atkinson & Heritage, 1984) to capture productional features of talk such as position of turns, overlap, laughter, in-breaths and out-breaths, sound stretches, etc. The transcription key used for this study is provided in Appendix A. The transcription is meant merely as a guide to help me use the tape-recorded interaction to examine how participants achieve and orient to the actions they produced for one another.

Phase 3 Making Observations

Since the analytic objective for conversation analysis is to understand the endogenous organization of interaction by focusing on what is being done and how it is accomplished (Clayman & Gill, 2004 p. 8), after I transcribed the data I began making observations about the different types of actions participants were producing for one another. One of my initial observations was that Customers could design their repair status inquiry in a number of different ways. That is, they can produce very elaborate, overbuilt repair status inquiries by complaining, recounting a story, or accounting for why they are calling the organization. Alternatively repair status inquiries can be very simple, with Customers just asking for the repair status of their equipment and nothing more. Out of the one hundred and ninety three repair status inquiry calls, fifty-six of these

calls were instances of Customers inquiring about the repair status of their equipment and nothing more. I then assembled a collection of these fifty-six calls to see how Representatives responded to repair status inquiries when Customers are just asking for the status of their repair. Thus, a question that emerged through my initial observations was what could constitute a response to a repair status inquiry when Customers are asking for repair status and apparently nothing more? In order to answer this question, I re-examined my data and looked to see if there was a recurrent pattern for responding to these "simple" repair status inquiries.

A second examination of these fifty-six calls led me to the observation that Representatives' responses to the simple repair status inquiry are composed of two different types of repair statuses as a single response: a. a report of the current repair process status and b. a report of the estimated repair completion time. This led me to a third observation about the organization of the repair status sequence that the initiating action of inquiring about a repair status appears to make relevant a two-component response. Another feature I noticed about repair status inquiries was that once Customers understood the estimated completion time, they pursued from the Representative a more "vernacular" formulation of when they would receive their equipment back. Once I identified these phenomena, that the simple repair status inquiry makes relevant two repair statuses as a single response, and may be followed by pursuits of when the equipment will actually be received, I moved on to the fourth phase of the method which is grounding the analysis.

Phase 4 – Grounding the analysis

The fourth phase of the analysis that led to the findings described in Chapters Four and
Five was grounding my observations in participants' demonstrable orientations to what
could constitute a relevant response to Customers' repair status inquiries. As I analyzed
each of the simple repair status calls, I began to notice that participants design their
conduct in a way that shows their expectation that a full response to repair status inquiries
contains these two different repair status responses. For example, I noticed that
Representatives design their response to include both a report of a current repair process
status and a report of an estimated repair completion time as a single response:

```
Extract 3.15 (Sta 20)

15     Rep:    M'kay. .hh Uhm That's on thuh technician's shelf

16 >>          waiting to be worked o:n.>th' repair ti:me (0.2)

17             runs approximately ten ta twenny business days from

18             thuh date that it's logged into our system.
```

In Extract 3.15, after the Representative completes the unit of talk that contains
the report of the current repair process status, she immediately rushes through to report
the estimated repair completion time.

I also noticed that Customers, independent from Representatives, also display an
expectation that a complete response to their repair status inquiry contains these two
components. In cases where Representatives produce the first component as a complete
response to the repair status inquiry, Customers treat the second component as missing
and they pursue it:

```
Extract 3.16 (Sta 38)

15     Rep:    Okay.=I just checked up on thuh status uhm:

16             a:t (.) thee manufacturer. >Well it< went to a
```

```
17          r'pair facility, .hh uhm that does th' r'pairs
18          for Minoltas¿ .hh They started on thuh
19          repair as of yesterday¿
20          (0.2)
21   Rep:   it was in repair at their repair facility.
22 > Cus:   Kay.=Have ya got any expected time that
23 >        it's gonna be ou:t¿
```

Here, after the Representative completes her report of the current repair process status (line 21), the Customer goes on to pursue the second component, the estimated repair completion time, by asking for it. An important aspect of grounding the analysis is that I document my claims with demonstrable orientations of the participants (Schegloff, 2005). In this way I do not rely on my own inferences, but on inferences documented in participants' actual conduct. Conversation analysis provides a method for making grounded and documented claims for the interactants in this setting.

Phase 5 – Managing a collection

For a full understanding of how my phenomena work, I analyzed my collection of instances of repair status inquiries and their responses in detail to describe the actions that were being produced, and to offer details of how they were produced. Understanding how the actions were produced involved close examination of the specific practices participants used. This included making detailed observations about the composition of the talk, and the various positions in talk in which they occurred. Detailed analysis of each instance yielded observations about regularities in the actions that were produced. The features of the composition of those actions and their position enabled me to determine the specific practices by which interactants enacted and responded to repair status inquiries.

Summary

Conversation analysis is a naturalistic, inductive method for examining the organization of action in interaction and relies on field recordings of naturally occurring talk as a source of data. The focus of this method is on what interactants are attending to in their talk as they produce action in their interaction with others. Applying a conversation analytic method to examine customer service encounters will allow a detailed examination of how participants jointly construct a type of organizational structure through talk.

CHAPTER FOUR

REPAIR STATUS INQUIRIES AND THEIR RESPONSES: THE ORGANIZATION

OF A MULTI COMPONENT RESPONDING ACTION

Introduction

This chapter focuses on the social organization of responses to one type of

Customer inquiry: when Customers call for a status update on a piece of equipment they

previously sent in for repair (e.g. I'd like to check on the status of my repair). This

chapter has two main analytic goals. First, I demonstrate that participants orient to repair

status inquiries as making relevant a response that contains multiple components as a

single response, where the first component is a report of the current repair process status

and the second is a projection of the estimated time for the completion of the repair. The

first type of evidence for this claim is that when Representatives respond to repair status

inquiries, they design their turn to include both of these "statuses" in a single turn at talk.

A second type of evidence is that Customers demonstrate an expectation that the second

"status" report will follow the first. As shown in the analysis, when a second status report

is not forthcoming, Customers will treat the responding action as insufficient by treating

the second component as "missing" and pursue it.

The second analytic goal of this chapter is to describe a normative organizational

structure that is oriented to by both Customers and Representatives. Through the analysis

I show that the multi-componential response is a stable and recurrent feature in these

calls. Importantly, it will be demonstrated that participants treat this type of response as a

conditionally relevant responding action to repair status inquiries.

I begin this chapter by showing how participants treat single action responses to other types of Customer inquiries as sufficient and complete. Then I provide a background for the analysis by providing examples of the repair status inquiries that are the focus of this chapter. Following this section is an overview of the responses to repair status inquiries where I define each of the components based on participants' observed conduct, and review the ordering of these action components within Representatives' responses.

The analysis begins by describing practices Representatives use to display their orientation to the multi-componential structure of the responding action to Customers' repair status inquiries. Then I describe practices that Customers use to display their orientation to this structure by showing how Customers display an expectation that more of a response to their inquiry is due after Representatives produce the first component as a complete repair status response. Finally, I show that Customers treat repair status responses that contain both repair status components as a complete and sufficient response to their inquiry.

<div align="center">Customer Service Inquiries</div>

The Customer Service Representatives in this electronics repair shop handle a number of reasons for calling (Schegloff, 1986; Zimmerman, 1992), such as calling for store hours (Extract 4.1), calling to follow up on estimate approvals (Extract 4.2), and inquiring about equipment repair (Extract 4.3). Each of the cases below shows how Representatives' responses consist of multiple units of talk. For example, in Extract 4.1, the Customer explicitly asks for the organization's store hours and treats the

Representative's response to his inquiry as sufficient and complete after she provides the

store hours:

<u>Extract 4.1 Hours</u>

```
01     Rep:    Jack Camera.=This is Tara speaking.=May I

02             help you?

03     Cus:    Hi. How are you. Tara.

04     Rep:    I'm good.

05  >  Cus:    Good. What er yer hou:rs.

06             (0.8)

07 >>  Rep:    ((throat clear)) We're open Monday

08 >>          through Friday from eight thirty

09 >>          til' si:x. And on Saturdays from

10 >>          nine thirty ta two.

11             (.)

12     Cus:    Nine thirty da two.=Thank you

13             very much.

14     Rep:    No problem.

15     Cus:    Bye.

16     Rep:    Bye.
```

Here the Customer establishes his reason for calling with an inquiry, "What er yer

hou:rs." (line 5) and the Representative treats this as a request for store hours by

responding with, "We're open Monday through Friday from eight thirty til' si:x. And on

Saturdays from nine thirty ta two." (lines 7-10). The Representative responds with the

single action of reporting the store hours. After a beat of silence (line 11), the Customer

treats her response as sufficient by registering receipt (Goldberg, 1975) of the store hours

(line 12) and then immediately moves to close the sequence by showing his appreciation

with "Thank you very much." (lines 12-13) (Zimmerman, 2006). This instance shows the

Customer's action of inquiring about store hours makes relevant a response that includes

the single action, produced as one turn component, of reporting the store's hours and that

the Customer treats this response as sufficient.

In Extract 4.2 the Customer calls to confirm that the organization received a

document that he sent via a fax. In this instance the Representative's response contains

more than one turn component by responding to the format of the inquiry and then the

action (Lindstrom, 1997; Schegloff, 1995).

Extract 4.2 Fax

```
01     Rep:   Jack Camera. Kendra speakin'.=How may

02            I help you.

03            (0.2)

04  >  Cus:   Hi. I just wanted ta confi:rm that uh

05  >           you'all had received my fa:x. authorizing

06  >           repair of some uh equipment.

07     Rep:   What's yer repair number.

08            (0.4)

09     Cus:   Uhm: (.) eh- Would that be thuh work

10            order estimate number:.=hh

11     Rep:   Yeh:s. 12              (.)

13     Cus:   Okay. Two three: zero. (0.2) Nine

14            eight seven. dash ay:e.

15            (.)

16 >>  Rep:   Yes.=We did receive thuh fa:x.

17            (.)

18     Cus:   Okay. Terrific. I jus' wanna make

19            sure ya got it.
```

```
20      Rep:    Oh:kay.

21              (0.2)

22      Cus:    Thank you fer your help.

23      Rep:    Your welcome.

24      Cus:    Bye.
```

The Customer formulates his reason for calling as seeking confirmation that the organization received his approval to proceed with the repair of his equipment (lines 4-6). The Representative assists the Customer by first locating the Customer's order in the system (lines 7-8), and then the Representative confirms that they have the Customer's document when she says, "Yes.=We did receive thuh fa:x." (line 16). Here the Representative produces her response in two units of talk, where each unit is doing the same class of action, confirming. The Representative's first unit, "Yes." (line 16) responds to the format of the Customer's inquiry and through this response token the Representative claims that she has heard and understood the action of the Customer's inquiry (Lindstrom, 1997; Schegloff, 1995). The Representative then immediately produces a more elaborated confirmation with, "We did receive the fa:x." (line 16). With this second unit, the Representative responds to the action of the Customer's inquiry by reconfirming that her fax was received. The caller accepts the Representative's response with, "Okay. Terrific. I jus' wanna make sure ya got it." (lines 18-19) and then moves to close the call (line 22). Here the Customer treats the action of confirming as a sufficient and complete response to his inquiry.

Another type of request that can get responded to with multiple units of talk is when Customers call to see if the repair shop can fix their particular type of equipment as

in Extract 4.3. In this instance the Customer designs his inquiry is a yes/no interrogative

(Raymond, 2003) and

Ex 4.3 Service Question

```
01    Rep:   Jack Camera. This is Tara speaking.=May

02           I help you?

03    Cus:   .hh Yeah I have a camera uh:m a video

04           camera that needs repa:ir.=and I

05  >        wanted ta check ta see if you work on this

06  >        particular mo:del.

07           (.)

08    Rep:   Oka- Wha:t's thuh model?

09    Cus:   .hh It's a So:ny vee ex twenny one

10           hundred.

11 >> Rep:   Yeah.

12           (.)

13 >> Rep:   Mm hm.

14    Cus:   You do work on it.

15    Rep:   Yes.

16    Cus:   .hh Okay. Uh::m. I guess I can go online

17           ta find thee instructions on how da

18           handle. (.) sending it in for repair?
```

In this instance, the Customer calls the repair shop to see if they can fix her video

camera, ".hh Yeah I have a camera uh:m a video camera that needs repa:ir.=and I wanted

ta check ta see if you work on this particular mo:del." (lines 4-5). The Representative

initiates a next action as an insertion sequence when she asks for the model number of the

equipment, "Oka- Wha:t's thuh model?" (line 8). Here she seeks information necessary

for her to respond to the Customer's inquiry. By asking for the model of the Customer's

equipment, the Representative displays her understanding that the Customer's request

involves establishing that the repair shop can assist her with a possible repair. After the

Customer reports to the Representative with the type of equipment she that she has (lines

9-10) the Representative responds to the Customer's inquiry by confirming that the repair

shop can fix her equipment, "Yeah." (line 11), and then after a lack of immediate uptake

by the Customer (line 12), she produces minimal confirmation, "Mm hm." (line 13). In

this instance the Customer treats the Representative's response as not enough by seeking

a reconfirmation that the organization repairs this type of equipment when she says, "You

do work on it." (line 14), to which the Representative produces another confirmation,

"Yes." (line 15). In this example, the Customer treats the Representative's response token

(line 11) as an insufficient response to her inquiry by seeking a reconfirmation, thus

pursuing a more complete response to the action of her inquiry (see Lindstrom, 1997 for

multiple component responses of responding to format then action). While the Customer

treats the confirmation token alone as an insufficient response to her inquiry, she accepts

the second turn component, where the Representative responds to the action of the

Customer's inquiry by confirming, as a sufficient and complete response. Evidence for

this is the fact that after the Representative confirms that the organization can repair her

equipment (line 15), the Customer registers and accepts the Representative's response,

".hh Okay." (line 16) and moves on to a next activity, seeking instructions on how to

send his equipment in for service. Progressing to a next activity provides further evidence

that the Customer treats the Representative's response as complete.

These three cases illustrate different types of Customer inquiries that Representatives manage in this organization. As Extracts 4.2 and 4.3 demonstrate, some calls to the customer service center consist of initiating actions that can make relevant responses that contain more than one turn component, where the first component is a response to the format of the inquiry and the second is a response to the action. In each of these instances, the Representatives produce their response to the action in a single component and Customers routinely treat these responses as sufficient and complete.

In what follows I show how the action of inquiring about the repair status of equipment that is in for service makes relevant a response that contains multiple components, where each component is produced as a response to the action of the Customer's inquiry. As the following section shows, the first component is a report of the current repair process status and the second is a projection for the estimated repair completion time. Although the first component could possibly constitute a response to the action of inquiring about the repair status of equipment, participants routinely treat the first component as an insufficient answer for their repair status inquiry, thus treating the second component as a relevantly "missing" part of the responding action. The remainder of this chapter demonstrates how participants display a joint orientation to this multi-componential responding action.

<p style="text-align:center">Customers' Repair Status Inquiries</p>

This chapter focuses on responses to calls where Customers inquire about update on the repair of equipment they currently have in for service. These inquiries are one type of institutional interaction that is "single topic" (Schegloff, 1990), meaning that they are organized around a single reason for calling or visiting (e.g., requesting emergency

service from 911; dealing with a single medical problem in doctor/patient visits, etc.).

The goal of this chapter is to show what, from members' perspective, constitutes a

relevant response to an inquiry seeking a service update. For the purposes of this chapter,

these inquiries are termed "status inquiries" because in many cases Customers explicitly

orient to their action as seeking a "status" update on the repair of equipment they

currently have in for service. For example, see Extracts 4.4 and 4.5 (below) where

Customers overtly ask for a status update on their repair order:

Extract 4.4 (Sta 26)

```
01              ((Ring))
02      Rep:    Jack Camera Kendra speakin'>how may I help you.<
03              (0.4)
04  >   Cus:    Hi. .hh uh:: I need ta check thuh status of my::
05  >           repair laptop.
06              (0.5)
07      Rep:    What's thuh repair number?
```

Extract 4.5 (Sta 142)

```
01              ((Ring))
02      Rep:    Jack Camera. Kendra speakin'=How may I help you.
03  >   Cus:    .hh Yeamp- (I'd) like you'd check in on
04  >           (r-) sta:tus of a- camera. In fer r'pair.
05              (0.5)
06      Rep:    Okay. One second,=What is your repair number.
07              (0.6)
08      Cus:    Uh:: it is: two three two. Nine five nine.
```

In each of these cases, Customers formulate their reason for calling as seeking a

"status update" by asking to "check" (Extract 4.4 line 4 and Extract 4.5 line 3) on the

"status" (Extract 4.4 line 4 and Extract 4.5 line 4) of a piece of equipment, "laptop"

(Extract 4.4) and "camera" (Extract 4.5) they have in the repair shop for service.

Although members use terms such as "status update," the way in which Customers design

their "status" inquiries does not project what could constitute a relevant responding action

for what they want to know about "status."

Other times, Customers initiate their reason for calling without overtly stating that

they are seeking a status update on equipment repair. For example, in Extract 4.6 (below),

the Customer asks to "check up on an order" (line 5):

<u>Extract 4.6 (Sta 6)</u>

```
01          ((Ring))
02    Rep:   Jack Camera this is Tara speaking.
03           =May I help you?
04           (.)
05  > Cus:   .hh Yes=I'd like ta check up on an order.
06           (0.2)
07    Rep:   Okay.=Can I have yer repair
08           authorization number?
```

Here the Customer formulates the action of his call as "checking up" (line 5). This

is vague in terms of the type of service he is calling about, since he is calling to check up

on an "order." (line 5). That is, given the range of services this organization offers (sales

or service), by formulating his reason for calling as seeking an update on an "order" (line

5) he leaves the nature of inquiry, and the type of response his action makes relevant, up

to the Representative to figure out. However, after a bit of silence at line 6, the

Representative's next move shows that she understands the Customer's reason for calling

to be one that involves checking on a piece of equipment he has in for repair, by asking

him for an order number (lines 7-8) so she can locate his equipment in the system.

At other times, Customers can be even more obscure in terms of what kind of

action they are producing in their reason for calling. For example, in Extract 7, the

Customer indicates that she is calling about something she identifies as a "work order"

number (line 4) in the slot where requests for service are normally produced (Downing,

2008; Kidwell, 2000; Lee, 2006; Schegloff, 1968).

Extract 4.7 (Sta 154)

```
01              ((Ring))

02      Rep:    Jack Camera.=G'd morn:ing.=This (es) Lorainne.

03              (.)

04 >    Cus:    Ah Yes. I'm calling about work order two

05              three three [nine ]

06      Rep:               [A'rig]ht jus' one moment.=°Please.°

07              (1.2)

08      Rep:    Thuh number?

09              (0.2)

10      Cus:    Two three three: (.) nine nine four.

11      Rep:    An' yer name is?

12      Cus:    Pa:t Roberts.

13      Rep:    Okay Pa:t uhm: (.) it is in our shipping

14              d'partment.

15              (.)

16      Rep:    It will be shipping ou:t to you within

17              thuh next day.

18              (.)

19      Cus:    Okay.=B'cause it's been there almost a

20              wee:k.
```

After the call opening, the Customer begins to produce her reason for calling by providing the Representative with her order number, "Ah Yes. I'm calling about work order two three three comes in nine" (lines 4-5). Although the Representative begins speaking before possible completion of the Customer's turn (line 6), the Representative displays her understanding that the Customer is calling for an update on her repair order when she asks for, "Thuh number?" (line 8), meaning the customer's repair order number. This is further supported by the fact that once the Representative locates the Customer's order in the system, she goes on to provide the Customer with an update of her repair order when she produces, "Okay Pa:t uhm: (.) it is in our shipping d'partment." (lines 13-14). Here, despite the Customer only providing an order number as her inquiry, the Representative treats the Customer's reason for calling as seeking an update on her repair.

In Extracts 4.4-4.7, when Customers call the repair shop for an update on their equipment being repaired, Customers formulate their reason for calling in slightly different ways. Whether Customers explicitly ask for a status update (Extracts 4.4 & 4.5), want to "check up" on a repair (Extract 4.6), or simply provide an order number (Extract 4.7), Representatives regularly treat the action of Customers' inquiries as seeking status updates on equipment they have in the repair shop for service. However, what participants constitute as a relevant response to repair status inquiries is still a matter of investigation. Unlike yes/no type questions, requests for confirmation, and invitations where participants can look to the syntax of the initial action to figure out how to respond, participants rely more on shared knowledge of what constitutes a relevant responding action to repair status inquiries. This chapter describes what participants

constitute as a relevant response to these status inquiries by describing the particular ways in which Representatives' responses and Customers' next turn moves come to constitute a relevant second pair part to repair status inquiries.

<div align="center">Responses to Repair Status Inquiries</div>

Repair status inquiries and their responses are typically organized around a single base adjacency pair sequence that gets expanded (Schegloff, 2007) in a variety of ways (Drew & Heritage, 1992; Zimmerman, 1992; see Schegloff, 1990 for ordinary conversation). Customers' status inquiries are first parts of adjacency pair sequences (Schegloff, 2007; Schegloff & Sacks, 1973) that launch a particular course of action. Fundamental to understanding action is discovering what participants construct and orient to as relevant second-part responses. The analysis in this chapter shows that: a: responses to repair status inquiries contain two components, where the first component is a report of a current repair process status and the second component is a projection for an estimated repair completion time and b: both Representatives and Customers orient to these two components as necessary to constitute a relevant response to a repair status inquiry.

In the following sections, after I describe each of the components within the repair status response, I demonstrate how Customers and Representatives, independent from one another, orient to responses to Customers' repair status inquiries as a multi-componential response. I begin by describing the practices through which Representatives display their orientation to the multi-componential response as response to repair status inquiries through the way in which they design their talk. Then I show that Customers also orient to responses to repair status inquiries as a multi-componential response and that they treat these responses as sufficient and complete after the second

component is produced.. Finally, I demonstrate that this two-component response is an

organizational structure that is a stable and recurrent feature in these calls.

Responding Action Components

       This chapter shows that a relevant and complete response to a repair status inquiry

contains two components produced as a single response: a. the first component is a report

of where the Customer's equipment is within the repair process, and b. in the second

component the Representative reports an estimated timeframe for when the Customer's

repair will be completed. In this section I describe how Representatives produce these

components in their responses to Customers' inquiries and I show that these components

are completely different types of "status". The Following examples demonstrate just how

clear this is for participants.

       Extract 4.8 (below), provides an exemplar of the responding action to repair status

inquiries. The Representative's response begins on line 30, after she indicates that she

retrieved the Customer's order in the repair tracking system with, "Okay."

<u>Extract 4.8 (Sta 26)</u>

```
01              ((Ring))

02      Rep:    Jack Camera Sondra speakin'>how may I help you.<

03              (0.4)

04  >   Cus:    Hi. .hh uh:: I need ta check thuh status of my::

05  >           repair laptop.

06              (0.5)

07      Rep:    What's thuh repair number?

        ((Representative retrieves Customer's order))
```

```
27      Rep:    Rashad Oni?
```

Current Repair Process Status

```
28      Cus:    Y'right.

29              (.)

30 >> Rep:    Okay. That is in li:ne with thuh technician waiting

31 >>         to be worked on¿ .hh Repai:r times usually run

32 >>         approximately fiftee:n .hh to thirty business days

33 >>         from the date that it was logged into our system.

34              (0.5)

35      Cus:    Oh okay. So: (0.5) this is your policy for a'roun one

36              mo:nth.

37              (0.5)

38      Rep:    .pt Ye:s.
```

A first observation about this response to the Customer's repair status inquiry is that the Representative designs her response to include two components, where each component contains a different type of "status". The Representative begins her response to the Customer's inquiry by providing a "status" where she reports the location of the equipment within the organizationally defined repair process: "That is in li:ne with thuh technician waiting to be worked on¿" (lines 30-31). As discussed in Chapter Three, Representatives draw upon organizational resources such as the repair tracking system that indicates the current location of Customers' equipment within the organization's repair process. When Representatives assist Customers we can see how they use these organizational resources through the way in which they design their talk. In this instance the Representative uses the technical phrase, "in li:ne with thuh technician" (line 30)

when she reports the current location of the equipment within the organizationally

defined repair process.

Extracts 4.9-4.12 provide additional examples of how Representatives produce

the first component of their response to Customers' repair status inquiries. In each of

these cases, Representatives draw from the organization's repair tracking system to report

the most current repair process status. For example, in Extract 4.9, at the time of this call,

the Customer's equipment is on the technician's shelf:

Extract 4.9 Technician's shelf (Sta 20)

Rep: Th<u>a</u>t's on thuh technician's shelf waiting to be worked o:n

In Extract 10, the Customer's equipment is on hold for parts:

Extract 4.10 Parts (Sta 2)

Rep: Oka:y um: that's on h<u>o</u>ld for par:ts.

On some occasions, the organization sends the equipment to the manufacturer for

the repair. Extract 4.11 is an example of a current repair process status for equipment that

when to the manufacturer:

Extract 4.11 Manufacturer (Sta 179)

Rep: Okay Rob. (0.2) Uhm: it is: at thee manufacturer¿

As I noted in Chapter Three, when the repair is complete, the equipment is moved

to the shipping department where it is processed and sent back to the Customer. As

indicated in Chapter Three, "shipping" is the last technical stage of the repair process:

Extract 4.12 Shipping (Sta 154)

Rep: Okay Pa:t uhm: (.) it is in our shipping d'partment.

Based on participants' orientations displayed in and through interaction, the first

component of Representatives' responses to repair status inquiries is a report of the
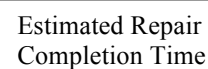
location of the equipment within the organization's repair process. I refer to this as the

current repair process status.

As indicated earlier, Representatives' responses to repair status inquiries include

two different types of "status". The first, as described above, is a report of the current

repair process status. Returning to the exemplar case, now Extract 4.13, we see that after

the Representative brings the current repair process status to a point of possible unit

completion (line 31), she immediately continues and reports a second type of "status"

where she provides an estimated completion time for the repair:

```
Extract 4.13 (Sta 26)

01              ((Ring))

02      Rep:    Jack Camera Sondra speakin'>how may I help you.<

03              (0.4)

04  >   Cus:    Hi. .hh uh:: I need ta check thuh status of my::

05  >           repair laptop.

06              (0.5)

07      Rep:    What's thuh repair number?

        ((Representative retrieves Customer's order))

27      Rep:    Rashad Oni?

28      Cus:    Y'right.

29              (.)

30  >>  Rep:    Okay. That is in li:ne with thuh technician waiting

31  >>          to be worked on¿ .hh Repai:r times usually run

32  >>          approximately fiftee:n .hh to thirty business days

33  >>          from the date that it was logged into our system.

34              (0.5)

35      Cus:    Oh okay. So: (0.5) this is your policy for a'roun one

36              mo:nth.
```

Estimated Repair
Completion Time

```
37          (0.5)

38    Rep:   .pt Ye:s.
```

The second "status" the Representative provides is an estimate of the amount of time for the organization to complete the repair of the Customer's equipment, ".hh repai:r times usually run approximately fiftee:n .hh to thirty business days from the date that it was logged into our system." (lines 31-33). As I described in Chapter Three, another resource Representatives use to assist Customers is the whiteboard in the Customer service center that lists the "approximate" time for different types of equipment that the organization handles. Figure 6 (below) is a picture of the whiteboard that was described in the data section:
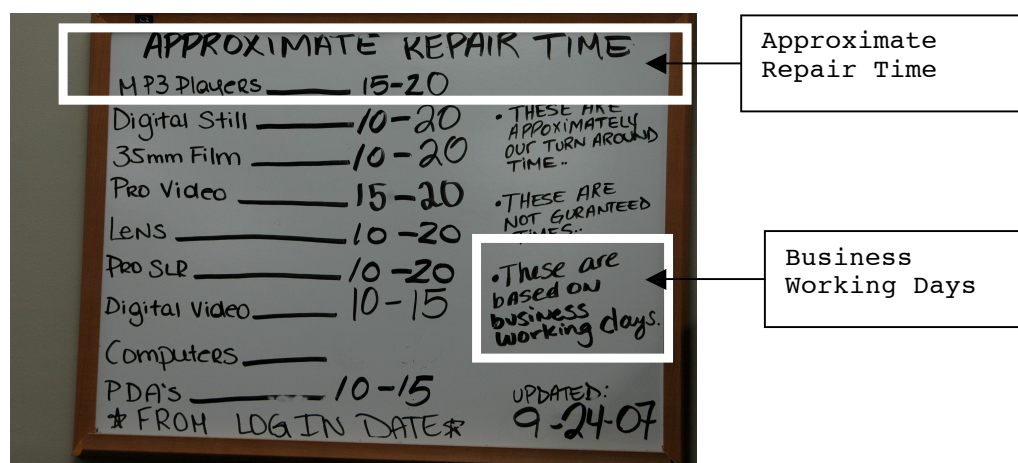
Figure 6 – White Board Listing Approximate Repair Time

Notice that when the Representative produces this second component of the status report, she may be using the whiteboard as a resource to formulate her response when she say , "Repai:r times usually run approximately" (lines 31-31). As I described in Chapter Three, Representatives have available as a resource a whiteboard where the approximate timeframes are listed, and it appears that Representatives draws directly from the

whiteboard provided by the organization when they report the second component of their

response. In addition to reporting the "approximate" repair time, the Representative

reports the number of days for the repair in "business" days, which is an organizational

timeframe as opposed to a "lay" or Customer timeframe. Extracts 4.14-4.16 provide

additional examples of how Representatives formulate this second response to provide an

institutionally formulated estimate for the repair completion time:

Extract 4.14 (Sta 20)

```
Rep:    th' repair ti:me (0.2) runs approximately

        ten ta twenny business days from thuh date

        that it's logged into our system.
```

Extract 4.15 (Sta 13)

```
Rep:    .hh repairs usually run approximately ten tuh

        uh twenny business days.
```

Extract 4.16 (Sta 78)

```
Rep:    Right no:w fer laptop r'pair we're taking

        approximately b'tween fifteen ta thirty

        business da:ys from thuh day it was entered

        °inta thuh system.°
```

This second type of status is the second component of the response to repair status

inquiries and is referred to the report of the *estimated repair completion time.*

In this chapter I show that the organization of a relevant responding action for

repair status inquiries contains two separate components produced as a single response,

where each component is a report of a different types of "repair" status: 1. current repair

completion status 2. estimated repair completion time. These "status" components are

normatively ordered where the report of the current repair process status is produced

before the estimated repair completion time. The ordering of these action components

turns out to be a recurrent feature in the data. For example, in Extracts 4.17 and 4.18

below, the Representatives begin their responses to the Customers' repair status inquiries

by providing a report of the current repair process status and then they immediately

continue their turn to produce the second repair status component, a report of the

estimated repair completion time.

Extract 4.17 (Sta 20)

```
Rep:    M'kay. .hh Uhm That's on thuh technician's shelf       [1]
        waiting to be worked o:n=

                                th' repair ti:me (0.2)         [2]
        runs approximately ten ta twenny business days from
        thuh date that it's logged into our system.
```

Extract 4.18 (Sta 13)

```
Rep:    Okay sir.=That has bee:n assigned to a                 [1]
        technician tuh work on:

                        .hh repairs usually                    [2]
        run approximately ten tuh uh twenny business days.
```

As the analysis in this chapter demonstrates that participants orient to a complete and

sufficient responding action to a repair status inquiries as containing *both* a report of the

current repair process status and the estimated repair completion time status, in that order

and produced as a single response.

One key feature of the multi-componential response, and a major observation in

this chapter, is that participants do not treat responses to repair status inquiries as a

complete and relevant response after the first action (the current repair process status).

However, Representatives do not always begin their response with a current repair

process status. One way that a current repair process status can be reported is by starting

from the beginning and recounting the history of the repair so far. When Representatives

begin by reporting a past repair process status, Customers do not treat a first possibly

complete TCU as the end of the report of the repair status. Rather, they wait until the

present has been reached.

Beginning with a Report of a Past Repair Process Status

In Extracts 4.19-4.21 (below) Representatives begin their response to the repair

status inquiry by reporting a past repair process status, before providing a current repair

process status. As found in other service-industry contexts, "beginning in the simple past

tense is a practice for beginning a narrative, which projects that tellers will not be

complete until they produce present-tense events" (Robinson & Heritage, 2005 p. 485;

see also Labov & Waletzky, 1997). When Representatives begin with a report of the

history of the repair so far, they project that the component of their response that contains

the repair process status will not be complete until it is brought to the present. Data shows

that, after Representatives produce the past repair process status, participants display their

expectation that more of a response to the repair status inquiry will follow. In each of

these instances below, when Representatives continue, they go on to produce a current

repair process status as the next unit within their turn. For example, in Extract 4.19

(below), the Representative begins her response by reporting the history of the

Customer's repair so far. Notice that in this instance, when the Representative continues

her turn (line 16), she provides the current repair process status.

<u>Extract 4.19 (Sta 85)</u>

```
01          ((Ring))
02   Rep:   Jack Camera. This is Tara speaking.=May I help you?
03          (0.4)
```

```
04    Cus:    .hh=Hi.=I wondered if I could=uh find out

05            thuh status of my: uhm: (.) my laptop that

06            I sent in for r'pair.

07    Rep:    Sure. Do you have thuh repair authorization

08            number?

09    Cus:    .hh I do:. An:d it is: (.) two: three three.

10            zero seven fi:ve.

11 >>  Rep:  ┌ ─ · ─ · ─ · ─ · ─ · ─ · ─ · ─ · ─ · ─ · ┐
             ¦ It was entered into our system on th'   ¦ ◄── Past
12           ¦ second which was uhm: Monda:y¿           ¦
             └ ─ · ─ · ─ · ─ · ─ · ─ · ─ · ─ · ─ · ─ · ┘
13               (.)

14 >>  Rep:   last week.

15    Cus:    Ah huh¿=

16 >>  Rep:  │ =An:d it's in line ta see thuh technician │ ◄── Current
```

The Representative begins her response to the status inquiry by reporting when the Customer's equipment passed through the first stage of the repair process, "It was entered into our system on th' second which was uhm: Monda:y¿ (.) last week." (lines 11-14). By designing her turn using a past tense formulation, "was entered" (line 11), and producing the end of the unit with a slightly rising, continuing intonation, "Monda:y¿" (line 12), the Representatives projects more talk to follow. Evidence that the Customer hears that the Representative designed her turn as not complete, and that he is expecting more, is that he remains silent during the micro-pause at line 13. When the Representative continues, she recompletes her prior turn by adding an increment "last week." (line 14) to "Monda:y," (line 12) which further specifies the start date of the repair process. This increment recompletes the unit of talk that constitutes the report of the past repair process status.

In this instance the Customer also orients to the Representative's response to his status inquiry as not yet complete after she reports the past repair process status by producing a continuer, "Ah huh¿" (line 15). With this continuer, he orients to the speaker continuing with further talk (Schegloff, 1982). The Representative does in fact continue her turn by producing, "An:d it's in line ta see thuh technician." (line 16). Here the Representative brings the repair process status to the present with, "in line" (line 16), which is the next stage within the organization's repair process, and the current location of the Customer's equipment within the process.

In Extract 4.20 the Representative displays an expectation that there will be more of a response after the report of the past repair process status by designing the report of the current repair process status as a continuation of the report of the past repair process status. By continuing with a report of the current repair process status, the Representative displays her orientation that a current repair process status report is a necessary feature of responses to status inquiries.

Extract 4.20 (Sta 68)

```
01           ((Ring))

02    Rep:   Jack Camera this is Tara speaking.=May I help you?

03    Cus:   Hi Sara. My name is Tom McKinny:=And I:::: UPS'ed

04           a camera in fer repai:r (.) oh: 'proximately

05           two weeks ago,

06    Rep:   Mm hm.

07    Cus:   .hh Uh:m My R A N number,

08           (0.2)

09    Rep:   Okay¿

10    Cus:   Is one five four. Two nine five¿

11           (1.6)
```

```
12      Rep:    °Yes.° There was a new work order number

13              made?

((Representative locates the order in the computer system))

25      Rep:    Thuh new number is two three four,

26              (.)

27      Cus:    Just a second. Lemme have a pencil.

28              (0.2)

29      Cus:    Two three four¿

30              (0.2)

31      Rep:    Seven five six¿

32      Cus:    Uh huh
```

```
                                                          ┌──────────┐
                                                          │   Past   │
                                                          └──────────┘
33 >>   Rep:  ┌ - ⋅ - ⋅ - ⋅ - ⋅ - ⋅ - ⋅ - ⋅ - ⋅ - ⋅ ┐
              │ .hh An' it was entered into thuh system│◄──
34 >>         │ on th' sixth.=Which was last Friday¿   │
              └ - ⋅ - ⋅ - ⋅ - ⋅ - ⋅ - ⋅ - ⋅ - ⋅ - ⋅ ┘
35              (.)

36      Cus:    Mm hm.
```

```
                                                          ┌──────────┐
37 >>   Rep:  ┌────────────────────────────────────────┐  │ Current  │
              │ An:' it was given to thuh technician,   │  └──────────┘
38 >>         │ (.) uhm an' it was- wull it >was        │◄──
39 >>         │ assigned< to thuh technician.           │
              └────────────────────────────────────────┘
```

After the Representative gives the Customer a new tracking number for his repair order (lines 25-32), she provides the Customer with the date that the equipment was entered into the organization's tracking system, ".hh An' it was entered into thuh system on th' sixth." (lines 33-34). Similar to Extract 4.19 (above), by beginning with a report of the past repair process status the Representative projects that her response will not be complete until she produces a report of the current repair process status. In this instance the Representative adds an increment, "Which was last Friday¿" (line 34) which specifies the date that the equipment was entered into the system, ("th' sixth." line 34) and

recompletes the report of the past repair process status. The Representative designs this increment to end with a rising intonation that projects that her turn so far is not yet complete. The Customer orients to the Representative continuing by remaining silent (line 35) and then producing a continuer, "Mm hm." (line 36) which treats the Representative's response as not complete after the report of the past repair process status.

The Representative continues her turn with, "An:" (line 37) and then goes on to produce, "it was given to thuh technician, (.) uhm an'it was- wull it >was assigned< to thuh technician." (lines 37-39). With this unit of talk, the Representative brings the report of the repair process status into the present by providing the most current repair update for the Customer's order, "assigned to the technician" (line 39).

Previous research has shown that once a speaker brings a turn into the present, participants can treat the end of that unit as the end of a possibly complete turn and as a place where someone else can begin a next turn (Labov & Waletzky, 1997; Robinson & Heritage, 2005). Extracts 4.19 and 4.20 support this previous research by showing how after Representatives report a past repair process status, Customers display an expectation that the Representative will continue. In each of the above cases, when Representatives continue, they bring their turn into the present by reporting a current repair process status, at which point their response could be possibly complete, and the Customer could take a turn. However, a feature of the multi-componential response is that after the possible completion of the first action where the current repair process status is reported, participants regularly treat the action of responding to the repair status inquiry as not yet complete. In Extract 4.21 (below), after the Representative produces the report of the

current repair process status (lines 15-16), when she continues her turn she produces the

second action component of her response, which is the estimated repair completion time

(lines 18-23). This observation is important because after she brings the report of the

repair process status to the present, the participants could move to end the call. That is,

the report of the current repair process status alone is a complete action and could

constitute the second pair part to the Customer's repair status inquiry. However, as this

chapter shows, participants regularly treat the second pair part of the responding action as

complete after Representatives produce the second action of the response, a report of the

estimated return completion time, rather than after the first action in which the current

repair status is reported.

Extract 4.21 (Sta 78)

```
11 >>   Rep:  | Okay. It was entered into our system |◄──┤ Past      │
12 >>         | on: Thursday thuh fi:fth¿           |
13              (.)
14      Cus:   Mm hm.=
15 >>   Rep:  ┌─────────────────────────┐
             │=an': it's put in line with │
16 >>         │thuh technician¿           │◄──   Current
             └─────────────────────────┘
17              (.)
18 >>   Rep:  ┌──────────────────────┐
             ┊'An right no:w fer laptop ┊
                                                    Estimated
19 >>         ┊r'pair we're taking approximately┊◄── repair
                                                    completion
20 >>         ┊b'tween fifteen ta thirty ┊         Time
21 >>         ┊business da:ys from thuh day┊
23 >>         ┊it was entered °inta thuh system.°┊
             └──────────────────────┘
```
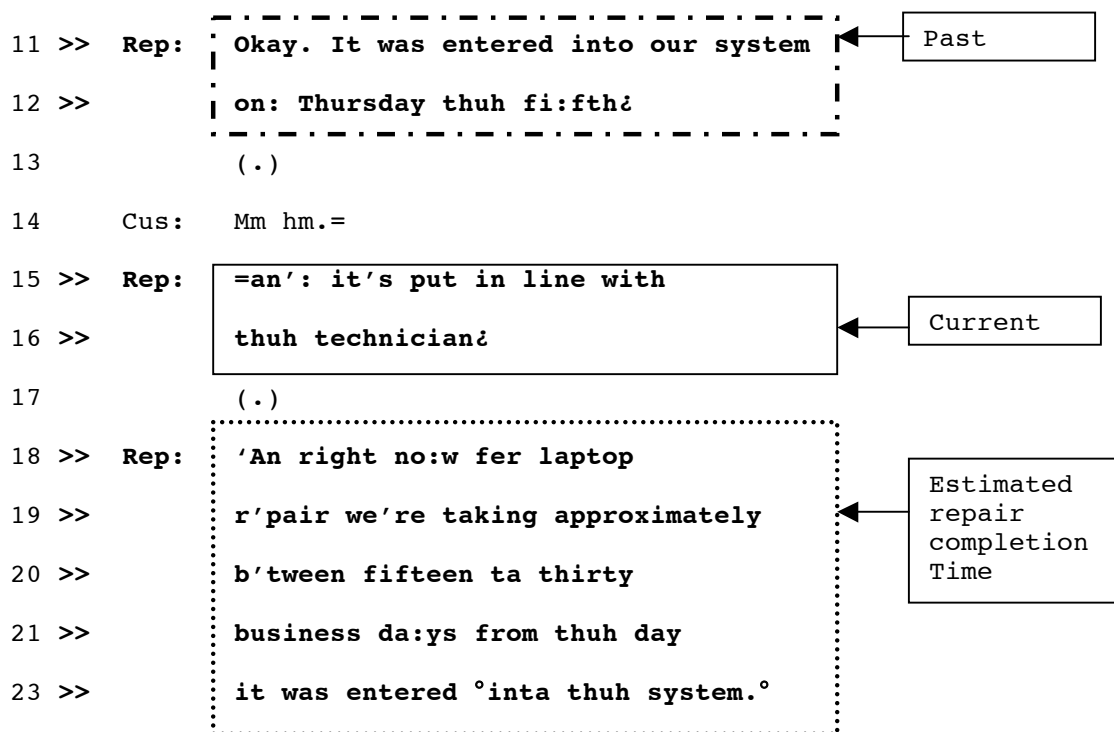
The Representative begins her response to the status inquiry by providing a report

of the past repair process status with, "Okay. It was entered into our system on: Thursday

thuh fi:fth," (lines 11-12). The Representative designs this unit of talk so as to project

more to come by ending with a rising intonation at "fi:fth¿" (line 12). The Customer

treats the Representative's turn as not yet complete by remaining silent (line 13) and then

producing a continuer, "Mm hm." (line 14). The Representative then builds her next unit

as a continuation of the prior with, "an':" (line 15) and then brings the report of the repair

process status into the present when she produces, "it's put in line with thuh technician¿"

(line 15-16). Although the Representative brings this unit of talk to a point of possible

unit completion at "technician¿" (line 16), she designs it so as to communicate that her

turn, and thus her response to the status inquiry, is not yet complete by ending with a

rising intonation (symbolized in the transcript by an inverted question mark).

The Representative builds her next unit of talk as a continuation with, "An'" (line

18), then goes on to provide the estimated repair completion time status, "right no:w fer

laptop r'pair we're taking approximately between fifteen ta thirty business da:ys from

thuh day it was entered °inta thuh system.°" (lines 18-23). The Representative designs the

estimated completion time status as part of her response to the Customer's status inquiry

and, as this chapter shows, by doing so produces a responding action that contains two

components, the current repair process status and repair completion time as a single

response to the Customer's repair status inquiry.

The remainder of this chapter describes the organization of a multi-componential

response to Customers' repair status inquiries. In the following sections, I demonstrate

that both Representatives and Customers, independent of one another display their

orientation to the multi-componential structure through a number of different practices. I

begin by describing the practices that Representatives use to design their talk in a way

that projects that their response will continue after they produce a report of the current

repair process status. Then I show how Customers do not treat the action of

Representatives' responses as complete after they produce the first component, which is

the report of the current repair process status. Within this section I show that when

Representatives do not include the second component, a report of the estimated repair

completion time, as part of the responding action, Customers display their expectation

that there should be this second part by explicitly asking for it. Finally, I show how both

participants orient to the responding action for repair status inquiries as a multi-

componential structure, and how Customers can treat these responses as a complete and

sufficient responding action for their repair status inquiry.

 Representatives' Orientations to a Multi-Componential Response to an Initiating Action

Unit Final Rising Intonation Plus Inbreath

Speakers have several resources available to them to project more to come after a

point of possible unit completion. One such practice includes designing a unit of talk to

end with a rising intonation (Ford & Thompson, 1988). This occurs in line 35 of Extract

4.22 (below) after the Representative confirms the identity of the Customer in lines 30-

31. In this instance the Representative builds the end of the first unit of her turn so that it

is hearable that there will be more talk to come.

```
Ex 4.22 (Sta26)
05     Cus:   Hi. .hh uh:: I need ta check
06            thuh status of my:: repair laptop.
       ((Representative locating customer's order))
30     Rep:   Rashad Oni?
31     Cus:   Y'right.
32            (.)
```

```
33      Rep:    Okay. That is in li:ne with thuh
34              techni:cian waiting
35 >>           to be worked o:n¿ .hh Repai:r times usually
36              run approximately fiftee:n .hh to thirty
37              business days from the date that it was
38              lo:gged in to our system.
```

Current to Estimated

The Representative designs the report of the current repair process status to end with a rising intonation, and then immediately produces an inbreath so as to project the beginning of a next unit of talk. While Representatives can use an inbreath to project the beginning of more talk, these inbreaths are not recognizable beginnings of next turn constructional units (Schegloff, 1996). However, when Representatives design their talk in a way that projects further talk, with the unit-ending rising intonation, followed immediately by an inbreath, through this practice Representatives communicate that at the possible unit completion of the report of current repair process status, they will immediately continue with their response. Here the Representative begins her response to the Customer's inquiry by reporting the current location of the equipment within the organization's repair process, "That is in li:ne with thuh techni:cian waiting to be worked o:n¿" (lines 33-35). The Representative ends this first unit with slightly rising intonation, "o:n¿" (line 35), (symbolized in the transcript by an inverted question mark), which projects that her turn will continue. Then the Representative immediately produces an inbreath (line 35) which may project a new unit of talk (Schegloff, 1996), and by doing so displays an orientation that her response to the status inquiry is not yet complete after the report of the current repair process status. When the Representative continues, she goes on to produce the second component of the repair status response where she reports

the estimated repair completion time, "Repair times usually run approximately fifteen .hh

to thirty business days from the date that it was logged into our system." (lines 35-38).

This instance shows how Representatives can use rising intonation, which projects more

talk, plus an inbreath, which projects that more may follow, to indicate that they will

continue with their response after the possible completion of the current repair process

status.

 In Extract 4.23 (below) the Representative also indicates that she will produce

more of a response to the Customer's status inquiry after she reports the current repair

process status by designing the first component to end with a rising intonation which

projects more talk.

Extract 4.23 (Sta13)

```
05     Cus:    Check on uh repai:r plea:se.

06             (0.5)

07     Rep:    M'kay what is yer repair number.

08             (1.0)

09     Cus:    Two three two:. (.) Six six seven.

10             (4.0)

11     Rep:    Okay sir.=That has bee:n assigned to

12 >>          a technician tuh work o:n¿ .hh repairs

13             usually run approximately ten tuh uh

14             twenny business days.

15             (1.2)

16     Cus:    Ten ta twenny da:ys?

17     Rep:    Mm hm. Ye:s.

18             (1.2)

19     Cus:    From: resu- from receipt.

20             (.)
```

Current to Estimated

```
21    Cus:    [For  whe-]

22    Rep:    [From thuh]time that it's logged into our

23            system>=it wuz< logged in on: uh three

24            twenty one.

25            (.)

26    Cus:    Three twenny one.
```

In Extract 4.23 the Representative begins her response to the Customer's inquiry
by providing a report of the current repair process status for the Customer's order, "that
has bee:n assigned to a technician tuh work o:n¿" (lines 11-12). Although the
Representative produces the report of the current repair process status a possibly
complete unit of talk, she projects that her response to the Customer's inquiry may not be
complete through the way in which she designs her talk. In this instance, the
Representative ends the report of the current repair process status with a rising intonation
"o:n?" (line 12), which projects that more talk is on the way. This is further supported by
the fact that she immediately goes on to produce an inbreath (line 12) that projects a next
unit of talk. When the Representative continues, she produces more of a response to the
Customer's status inquiry by reporting the estimated repair completion time "repairs
usually run approximately ten tuh uh twenny business days." (lines 12-14). Similar to
Extract 4.22 (above), while the Representative produces her report of the current repair
process status as a possibly complete unit of talk, she orients to the current repair process
status as only part of the response to the Customer's repair status inquiry by continuing
with the second action of the response which is the estimated repair completion time.

This instance also shows how Customers collaborate with Representatives on the
production of this multi-componential response by withholding taking a turn in a place

where speaker transition could occur. Although the Representative uses a practice that specifically projects that her turn is not yet complete, the slightly rising intonation at the end of, "on:¿ .hh" (line 12), the Customer displays his understanding that her turn will continue by remaining silent and continuing to align with the Representative as a recipient of more talk.

By producing their talk with upward intonation at the end of a possibly complete response to Customer's repair status inquiries, Representatives display their orientation to responses to status inquiries containing more than the first component. An alternative to using a rising intonation occurs when Representatives produce a multi-componential response to repair status inquiries by rushing through (Schegloff, 1981; 1987b) to produce a next unit of talk after the possible completion of their report of the current repair process status.

Rushing Through

The practice of rushing through is best characterized as when "a speaker, approaching a possible completion of a turn-constructional-unit, [he or she] speeds up the pace of the talk, withholds a dropping pitch or the intake of breath, and phrases the talk to bridge what would otherwise be the juncture at the end of a unit" (Schegloff, 1981, p. 76). By rushing through, a current speaker may offset the chance of the next speaker coming in to take a turn at the possible end of a turn constructional unit where speaker transition may be relevant. Important for the following analysis, and as shown in Extracts 4.24 and 4.25 (below), when Representatives come to a point of possible completion of the report of current repair process status, they project that their response to status is not yet complete by rushing through to produce the estimated repair completion time, thus

displaying their orientation that both of these actions constitute a complete response to status inquiries.

Extract 4.24 (Sta 4)

```
04    Cus:   Yea::h=I wanted da check on a:=uh: a repair status.
              ((Representative retrieves Customer's order))
15    Rep:   Fer Paradise Computers Corporation.
16    Cus:   mn=Yes that's me. Heh heh.
17           (0.2)
18 >> Rep:   .hh We:ll it looks like it wuz entered into our
19 >>        system on thuh ten:th.               ┌──────────────┐
                                                  │ Rush through │
20           (0.2)                                │ between units│
21 >> Rep:   an': (0.2) currently been in line since the └──────────────┘
22 >>        [eleventh.=These] repairs are taking fifteen
23 >>        tuh thirty business days.°°Right now.°°
24    Cus:   Shu::: uh. Go:d.
```

After the Representative confirms that she has located the Customer's order (lines 15-16) she begins her response by providing the Customer with the history of the repair so far, ".hh We:ll it looks like it wuz entered into our system on thuh ten:th." (lines 18-19). By beginning with a history of the repair, the Representative provides the Customer with some background to be able to understand the current repair process status in a particular way. After a 0.2 gap (line 20) the Representative builds her next unit of talk as a continuation with "an:" (line 21), then after another 0.2 seconds of silence (line 21), she continues by reporting the most up-to-date repair process status with, "currently been in line since the eleventh." (lines 19-20).

The Representative designs the report of the repair process status as possibly complete by ending with a downward, final intonation (line 20). However, the

Representative orients to her turn-so-far as being incomplete by rushing through

(Schegloff, 1982; 1987) (symbolized in the transcript by an equals sign) to produce a next

unit, "These repairs are taking fifteen tuh thirty business days. °°Right now.°°" (lines 22-

23). Here the Representative projects the likely repair completion date because she

reports the estimated timeframe for the completion of the repair. By rushing through to

the next unit of talk, the Representative not only treats the current repair process status as

complete by moving on to report the estimated repair completion time, but she also

produces her response so as to include both a report of the current repair process and

estimated repair completion time as a single response to the Customer's status inquiry.

Thus, the Representative displays her orientation that a complete response to a status

inquiry contains these two different components.

Extract 4.25 (below) provides another example of how the Representative

produces the current repair process status and the estimated repair completion time as a

single response to the customer's repair status inquiry.

Extract 4.25 (Sta 20)

```
05      Cus:    .hh Uhm I'm calling t' f:- get a little bit mo:re

06              information on thuh repa:ir of a digital camera I

07              sent in about a week ago=.hh

                ((Representative retrieves Customer's order))

12      Rep:    M:itchell?

13              (.)

14      Cus:    Correct.

15      Rep:    M'kay. .hh Uhm That's on thuh technician's shelf

16 >>           waiting to be worked o:n.>th' repair ti:me (0.2)

17              runs approximately ten ta twenny business days from

18              thuh date that it's logged into our system.
```

Current to
Estimated

```
19            (1.2)
20    Cus:   So:: fro:m (.) >we'[re      about-<]
21    Rep:                     [>Twenny< ninth.]
```

The Representative begins her response to the Customer's inquiry by reporting the current repair process status, "Uhm That's on thuh technician's shelf waiting to be worked o:n." (lines 15-16). Here the Representative produces the report of the current repair process status within one, possibly complete grammatical unit, and ends with a sound stretch, "o:n." (line 16), normally found at the end of turn constructional units (Schegloff, 1987b). The Representative ends this unit with a downward intonation and then rushes through to the next component of the repair status response which is the estimated repair completion time, ">th' repair ti:me (0.2) runs appr̲oximately ten ta twenny business days from thuh date that it's logged into our system." (lines 16-18). In this instance the Representative not only shows that there is more of a response after the repair process status, but that the remainder of the response consists of the estimated repair completion time.

The cases presented in the section above show that Representatives take Customers' initiating action to make relevant a response that consists of two components, a report of the current repair process status followed by an estimated repair completion time. The data presented so far outline the various practices Representatives use to construct their response in a way that embodies their orientation to this multi-componential structure. We also see this orientation on the part of the Customers.

Customers' Orientations to a Multi-Componential Response

The next section shows how Customers also orient to the relevance of the multi-componential structure by describing what Customers do when Representatives come to a point of possible unit completion at the end of the report of the current repair process status. In cases where Representatives produce the report of the current repair process status as a complete response to Customers' inquiries, Customers treat this first component as an insufficient response and display their expectation that there should be more. The following cases show how there is a progressive upgrade in the extent to which Customers can elicit the second component of the response to their status inquiry, estimated repair completion time, from the Representative.

First, Extracts 4.26-4.29 show how Customers display their orientation that there should be more of a response to their inquiry by remaining silent after Representatives produce their report of the current repair process status. Second, in Extracts 4.29-4.30 Customers display an expectation more of a response to their inquiry is due by producing a continuer and passing on a turn at talk after Representatives produce a report of the current repair process status. Customers can also use a combination of these practices as in Extracts 4.32 where the Customer orients to the possibility that there will be more of a response after the Representative reports the current repair process status by remaining silent and then producing a continuer. In this particular instance the Customer designs the continuer to end with a rising intonation, which prompts the Representative for more of a response to her status inquiry. Finally, Extracts 4.32-4.33 show that when Representatives do not immediately provide the second component, Customers display their orientation that there should be more of a response and will ask for the second

action component. This section provides evidence that Customers specifically orient to the report of the estimated repair completion time as the second component in the response to their repair status inquiry.

Customers Remain Silent

Extract 4.26 below provides a first example of how Customers orient to the structure of responses to status inquiries as containing two separate actions. In this first instance, the Representative designs her turn to end with a rising intonation which, similar to Extracts 4.24-4.25 (above), is a practice Representatives use to project that their turn-so-far is not yet complete. This case shows how the Customer can remain silent after the Representative produces a possibly complete unit of talk, indicating that he is waiting for the Representative to continue her response to his inquiry. The focus of this instance is the silence at line 22 (below):

Extract 4.26 (Sta 79)

```
01              ((Ring))
02      Rep:    Jack Camera. This is Tara speaking.=May I help you?
03              (1.2)
04      Cus:    Hi Sara. I was wondering if you could help me with
05              my:- >I've got a r'pair number here,< It's uh:
06              (.) two three fi:ve. Zero. Seven nine.
07              (4.5)
08      Rep:    °Okay.°
09              (1.4)
10      Cus:    Ca:n (.) you give me a little bit more infro- (.)
11              on what's happening with it¿
12      Rep:    Sure. Uhm We entered into our system as of
13              yesterday.
```

```
14              (0.5)

15      Rep:    Uh[m: th']=

16      Cus:      [Ya:hp.]

17      Rep:    =r'pairs they said (refusal) an:d it

18              was given to (.) a service manager

19              uhm to check it over and make sure

20              everything's working okay¿ So it's

21              in quality control¿
```

Customer expecting more

```
22   >          (0.2)

23      Rep:    .hh An' if everything is checking okay

24              then they'll be sending it back out

25              to you.

26              (1.4)

27      Cus:    Okay. Uh: ih- is: thuh fellow in

28              t'day?
```

The Representative produces the first component of the response to the

Customer's inquiry over the course of multiple units of talk, beginning with a report of

the past repair process status (lines 12-13). The Representative reports the current repair

process status by saying, "th' r'pairs they said (refusal) an:d it was given to (.) a service

manager uhm to check it over and make sure everything's working okay¿" (lines 15, 17-

20). She then continues her turn by reformulating the report of the current repair process

status by specifying the location of the Customer's equipment in the organizationally

defined location within the repair process, "So it's in quality control¿" (lines 20-21).

After the Representative brings her unit of talk to a point of possible unit completion, the

Customer could possibly take a turn. However, the silence at line 22 projects that the

Customer may not be about to speak. Through this silence the Customer treats the

Representative's response to his status inquiry as not yet complete, and by not taking a

turn, he may be indicating his expectation that she will be, or should be, continuing.

After the silence at line 22, the Representative builds her next unit of talk as a

continuation of the prior when she produces, ".hh An'" (line 23), then continues by

providing the estimated repair completion time with, "if everything is checking okay then

they'll be sending it back out to you." (lines 23-24). Here the Representative treats the

Customer's silence as indicating that he takes it not only that more of a response to his

inquiry is due, but also that there should be a second component of the response to status,

the estimated repair completion time. Although there is a gap (line 26), which may

project that the Customer treats the Representative's response as inadequate, the

Customer accepts the Representative's response and treats it as complete when he

produces, "Okay." (line 27), and then moves on to a next activity which is a request to

speak to the service manager.

Similar to Extract 4.26 (above) in Extract 4.27 (below), the Representative

projects that she will produce more of a response after the report of the current repair

process status by designing the first component to end with a rising intonation. I call your

attention to the silence at line 16 (below) where the Customer treats the Representative's

response to his inquiry as still in progress.

Extract 4.27 (Sta 78)

```
01              ((Ring))
02      Rep:    Jack Camera. This is Tara speaking. May I help you?
03              (.)
04      Cus:    Hi. I'm calling ta check thuh sta:tus of my repair?
05              (.)
06      Rep:    ((throat clear))
```

```
07              (0.4)

08      Rep:    Okay. What's th' repair authorization number?

        ((Representative retrieves Customer's order))

11      Rep:    Okay. It was entered into our system on:

12              Thursday thuh fi:fth¿

13              (.)

14      Cus:    Mm hm.=

15      Rep:    =an': it's put in line with thuh technician¿
```
```
16   >          (.)  ◄───────────────────────  Customer
                                                Expecting More
```
```
17      Rep:    'An right no:w fer laptop r'pair we're

18              taking approximately b'tween fifteen

19              ta thirty business da:ys from thuh day

20              it was entered °inta thuh system.°

21      Cus:    Oh wow.

22              (0.2)

23      Cus:    Is there anyway ta expedite it?
```

The Representative begins her response to the Customer's status inquiry by
reporting the history of the repair so far (lines 11-12). The Customer displays his
orientation that her response to his inquiry may not be complete by remaining silent (line
13) and then producing a continuer, "Mm hm." (line 14), showing his expectation that the
Representative will continue. The Representative builds her next unit of talk as a
continuation of the prior with "an':" (line 15), then continues her turn by reporting the
current repair process status with, "it's put in line with thuh technician¿" (line 15). After
the point of possible unit completion of the current repair process status, the Customer
remains silent (line 16) which indicates his expectation that the Representative should
continue with her response. In this instance when the Representative continues she builds
her next unit as a continuation of the prior with, "An" (line 17) which projects that what

she is about to produce is still part of her response to the status inquiry, and then goes on to report the estimated repair completion time, "right no:w fer laptop r'pair we're taking approximately b'tween fifteen ta thirty business da:ys from thuh day it was entered °inta thuh system.°" (lines 17-20). The Customer treats the Representative's response as complete by producing an assessment, "Oh wow." (line 21) and then after a silence at line 22, continues by initiating a next action where he inquires about speeding up the repair process.

So far I have described one practice, remaining silent, that Customers use to indicate that the Representative should continue with the response to their repair status inquiry after they report the current repair process status. By remaining silent after Representatives report the current repair process status and come to a point of possible unit completion, Customers regularly treat Representatives' responses to their inquiry as not yet complete. When Customers remain silent after the report of the current repair completion status, they orient to the possibility that the Representative could provide more of a response to their repair status inquiry. As I indicated at the beginning of this section, there is a progressive upgrade in terms of how Customers show their expectation that there will be a second component of the response to their repair status inquiry. This next section shows how Customers use continuers to treat the Representative's response as not yet complete, and in doing so, show an expectation that there will be a next component within the repair status response.

Customers Orient to More to Come by Producing a Continuer

In cases where Representatives design the report of the repair process status in a way that projects more talk to follow, Customers can continue to align with the

Representative as the recipient of ongoing talk by producing a continuer. In addition, when Customers produce continuers, they also mark a particular stance with regard to the talk in progress. That is, by producing a continuer after a point of unit completion, Customers "embody the understanding that the extended talk by another is going on" (Schegloff, 1981, p. 81) and that the speaker should continue with more of the type talk already in progress.

When recipients of ongoing talk produce continuers at points of possible unit completion, not only do they orient to the speaker's turn as not yet complete, they also enable the production of the speaker's extended turn (Schegloff, 1981). In Extract 4.28 (below) the Representative designs her unit of talk containing the report of the current repair process status in a way that projects that her turn is not yet complete. The Customer displays her understanding that the Representative is going to continue by producing a continuer in a place where she could possibly take a turn:

Extract 4.28 (Sta 97)

```
01           ((Ring))
02     Rep:  Jack Camera. This is Tara speaking. May I help you?
03           (0.2)
04     Cus:  Yes. Do you speak Spanish.
05           (.)
06     Rep:  Uh:m no.=But I can get somebody on thuh
07           line who does?
08     Cus:  Oh >no no no< uh there's no problem.
09     Rep:  [°Oka-°]
10     Cus:  [.hh  ] I just want check it=ou:t a
11           repair status of uh camera¿
12           (.)
```

```
13     Rep:    Okay. Uhm Do you have thuh repair

14             authorization number?

       ((Representative retrieves Customer's order))

19     Rep:    Kay. It wuz entered into our system on

20             thuh thirtieth of: March, .hh

21     Cus:    Mm hm.=

22     Rep:    =An' on thuh second which was on uh m-

23             last Monday, .hh it was sent out to

24             Nikon manufacturer fer thuh repai:rs¿

25  >  Cus:  | Mm hm. |   ◄

26     Rep:    An:d Nikon normally takes about ten ta

27             fifteen business days fer their turn

28             around time.
```

Customer treating Representative's response as still in progress

The Representative designs her report of the current repair process status in a way that projects more talk after the possible completion of the initial unit by ending with a rising intonation, "an' on thuh second which was on uh m- last Monday, .hh it was sent out to Nikon manufacturer fer thuh repai:rs¿" (lines 22-24). Although the Representative designs this unit of talk using a past tense formulation, "it was sent out to Nikon manufacturer fer thuh repai:rs¿" (line 23-24), the Customer can infer that his equipment is still at the manufacturer at the time of this call. The Customer then produces a continuer, "Mm hm." (line 25), passing on a turn at talk, thus treating the Representative's turn as not yet complete after she reports the current repair process status. When the Representative continues she reports the estimated repair completion time, "An:d Nikon normally takes about ten ta fifteen business days fer their turn around time." (lines 26-28) which constitutes the last component of her response to the Customer's inquiry.

In Extract 4.28 (above) the Representative produces the report of the current repair process status in a way that projects more talk. However, there are also cases where Representatives design their report of the current repair process status to end with a downward, final intonation and produce their report of the current repair process status as a complete response to the Customer's repair status inquiry. In such cases, Customers display their expectation that there should be more of a repair status response by producing a continuer, thus treating Representatives' responses as an insufficient responding action for their inquiry after the first component. This next instance provides further evidence of the Customer's orientation to the multi-componential response.

Extract 4.29 (Sta 178)

```
01              ((Ring))

02      Rep:    'Morning Jack Camera.=This is Lorainne.=Hold

03              on Please.

04              ((Actual hold time not available))

05      Rep:    Thank you for holding. How can I help you.

06      Cus:    Yes. I sent in: about a week er- (.) more

07              ago, .hh Uhm: something to repai:r.=If

08              I give my customer number would .hh you

09              be able s- check on thuh statu[s.

10      Rep:                                  [S]u:re.

11      Cus:    Eee. Like in every.=Eye? Dee:. Four.

12              Zero zero.

13              (.)

14      Rep:    First name is Linda?

15      Cus:    Correct.=hh

((Representative provides Customer with a repair order number))

31      Rep:    Okay this is for your pee dee aye. (PDA)
```

```
32                  Corre[ct?]

33      Cus:            [Ri:]ght.

34      Rep:    Okay. It is in line with our technician.

35 >    Cus:    Uh huh:.

36              (.)

37      Rep:    [So   ] it does take uh few weeks before=

38      Cus:    [It'll]

39      Rep:    =t[huh repai-]

40      Cus:      [Few   wee:]ks?
```

Customer treating Representative's response as still in progress

The Representative responds to the Customer's status inquiry by providing a report of the current repair process status, "It is in line with our technician." (line 34) . In this instance the Representative produces the report of the current repair process status as a possibly complete unit of talk. Furthermore, by ending her turn with a downward, final intonation, she also designs this unit of talk as a possibly complete response to the Customer's inquiry. However, in this instance, the Customer produces a continuer, "uh huh:." (line 35), which treats the Representative's turn as not yet complete, and also embodies the expectation that more of a response is due. Evidence that the Representative did in fact design the report of the current repair process status as a complete response to the Customer's inquiry is that she remains silent during the gap in line 36. The Representative treats the lack of Customer uptake of the report of the current repair process status as expecting more of a response to the repair status inquiry by going on to report a projected time for the completion of her repair. When the Representative speaks next, there is some evidence that points to her lack of knowledge regarding the estimated completion time when she designs this component in lay terms with a non-specific timeframe, "So it does take a few weeks before thuh repai-" (lines 37 & 39). The

Representative nonetheless shows her understanding that by producing a continuer, the

Customer indicates her expectation that the Representative's response to her repair status

inquiry is not complete and that she should continue her turn. Furthermore, when the

Representative produces the report of the estimated repair completion time, she treats the

Customer as expecting more of a response to her repair status inquiry where that "more"

consists of this second action, an estimated repair completion time.

Cases such as Extract 4.30 (below) provide an example of how Customers can use

a combination of the practices of silence plus a continuer, to show their expectation that a

next action after the report of the current repair process status is due. That is, in the

following instance, the Customer remains silent and then produces a continuer with a

strong rising intonation which prompts the Representative for more of a response to the

repair status inquiry:

Extract 4.30 (Sta 77)

```
01              ((Ring))

02      Rep:  Jack Camera Kendra speakin' please ho:ld.

03              ((Actual hold time not available))

04      Rep:  Jack Camera.=Sondra speakin'>How may< I help °you.°

05      Cus:  Ye:as. (.) I wanna follow up on: a r'pai:r?

06      Rep:  Okay.=What's your r[   'p ]air number?

07      Cus:                       [*uhp*]

08      Cus:  Uhm Two three one nine two nine.

09              (3.2)

10      Rep:  Ma'm that's shipping rea:dy,=it's

11              in thuh shipping department¿

12   >          (0.2)

13   >  Cus:  Mm hm?=
```

Customer treats
Representative's
response as still in
progress

```
14      Rep:   =Uhm: That'll probably go out by the

15             end of this week.

16             (0.2)

17      Cus:   O:kay. Thank yo[u.]

18      Rep:                  [Ok]ay.
```

After the Representative locates the Customer's order in the system she produces two turn constructional units each containing a current repair process status. The first turn constructional unit, "Ma'm that's shipping rea:dy," (line 10) constitutes a report of the current repair process status because the Representative reports the location of the equipment within the organization's repair process. The Representative ends this unit with a continuing, rising intonation (symbolized in the transcript by a comma) and then rushes through to produce the second turn constructional unit, "it's in thuh shipping department¿" (lines 10-11). Rather than providing the estimated repair completion time, the Representative unpacks the meaning of the technical phrase, "shipping ready" with a clarification that provides a physical location of the equipment, "shipping department¿" (lines 11) within the organization.

For the members of this organization the "shipping ready" status, which is part of the repair process, indicates that the repair is complete and is ready to go back to the Customer. The Representative designs her turn to project more talk by ending with a rising intonation. The Customer then responds to the Representative's practice of projecting more talk by remaining silent, thus displaying her expectation that the Representative will continue. When the Representative does not immediately continue her turn, the Customer produces a continuer, "Mm hm?" (line 13) with a strong rising intonation (symbolized in the transcript by a question mark) that is a minimal receipt of

the Representative's turn and prompts the Representative for more. That is, by producing the continuer with a strong, rising intonation, the Customer displays an expectation that there should be more of a repair status response after the first component.

When the Representative continues, she produces, "Uhm: That'll probably go out by the end of this week." (lines 14-15). Here the Representative provides the Customer with a specific timeframe, "end of this week." (line 15) for when the equipment will be returned to her. In this particular case the Representative provides a time status, which shows that she orients to when the Customer should receive her equipment. Although there is silence at line 16 which projects possible trouble, the Customer produces, "O:kay. Thank you." (line 17) where "O:kay." (line 16) accepts the response and "Thank you." (line 17) is a service receipt (Zimmerman, 2006) that treats the status report as closed, and thus moves to close the call. Extract 4.30 is another example of how Customers can pursue more of a response to status by treating repair process status as only part of the larger response to the status inquiry.

This section described different ways in which Customers display their orientation that Representatives' responses to repair status inquiries are not complete after a report of the current repair process status alone. This provides some evidence to support the claim that Customers orient to there being more than one piece of information that constitutes a full and proper response to a repair status inquiry. The next section provides additional evidence that, independent from Representatives projecting a possible next component, Customers orient to the report of the estimated repair completion time status as the relevant next component within the response to repair status inquiries. Extracts 4.31-4.33 below show that when Representatives produce a report of the current repair process

status as a complete response to Customer status inquiries, Customers regularly treat this response as incomplete and go on to pursue the estimated repair completion time.

Customers' Explicit Orientation to Repair Completion Status

As indicated earlier in this chapter, when Customers inquire about the status of a repair order, they produce a first pair part that makes a particular type of second pair part conditionally relevant. The notion of relevance is associated with what Schegloff (2007) called "negative observations," where he indicated that for something to be a non-trivial absence, or relevantly "missing", an action must have occurred that makes relevant a particular type of response, and when that response is not forthcoming it becomes noticeably absent. In Extract 4.31 (below), when the Representative produces the report of the current repair process status as a possibly complete response to the Customer's repair status inquiry, the Customer explicitly pursues a report of the estimated repair completion time when it is not provided. By pursuing the estimated repair completion time, the Customer treats this second component as a relevantly missing feature of the Representative's response.

Extract 4.31 (Sta 38)

```
01              ((Ring))
02      Rep:    Jack Camera. This is Tara speaking.=May I help you?
03      Cus:    .hh Yea::s. This Bill Mau:l.=I'd like
04              ta check on thuh sta:tus of camera repair please.
05      Rep:    ((throat clear)) Sure. Do you have a repair
06              authorization number?
07      Cus:    Two three on:e. Five three two.
        ((Representative retrieves Customer's order))
12      Rep:    Hello?
13              (.)
```

```
14      Cus:    Yes.

15      Rep:    Okay.=I just checked up on thuh status uhm:

16              a:t (.) thee manufacturer. >Well it< went to a

17              r'pair facility, .hh uhm that does th' r'pairs

18              for Minoltas¿ .hh They started on thuh

19              repair as of yesterday¿

20              (0.2)

21      Rep:    it was in repair at their repair facility.

22 >    Cus:    Kay.=Have ya got any expected time that

23 >            it's gonna be ou:t¿

24              (.)

25      Rep:    As long as they have all thuh parts in

26              sto:ck, .hh it should be about ten ta-

27              uhm (.) it should be about ten business

28              days >before we receive it ba:ck.< .hh

29              However if they do not have thuh parts

30              in stock it can be up to thirty or forty

31              business days.

32              (.)

33      Cus:    Kay. Rea:son I ask it's already been there

34              'bout thirty days.
```

Customer pursuit of second component

After accounting for putting the Customer on hold (lines 15-16), the

Representative reports the history of the repair so far, and in doing so provides the

Customer with a background for being able to understand the report of the repair process

status in a particular way when she produces, "Well it went to a r'pair facility, .hh uhm

that does th' r'pairs for Minoltas¿" (lines 16-17). The Representative ends this first unit

with slightly rising, continuing intonation, indicating that she will continue her turn (line

17). The Representative brings the report of the repair process status into the present when she reports, "they started on thuh repair as of yesterday," (lines 18-19). The Representative designs the report of the current repair process status to end with a rising intonation, which projects that she will continue her turn. As described in the previous sections (see Extracts 4.26-4.27), one practice Customers use to display their expectation that there should be more of a response is remaining silent after the possible completion of the current repair process status. In this instance, the Customer's silence (line 31) may indicate that he expects the Representative to continue with more of a response to his repair status inquiry. However, when the Representative continues she produces, "It was in repair at their repair facility." (line 21), which recompletes the report of the current repair process status by reformulating the equipment's current repair process status at the manufacturer which is, "in repair" (line 21), i.e. still ongoing. The Representative designs this unit of talk with a downward, falling intonation which projects unit completion, and also treats the action of responding to the repair status inquiry as complete after the reformulation of the current repair process status.

At line 22, in sequentially third position, the Customer produces an abbreviated version of *Okay*, "'Kay.". Schegloff (2007) suggested that, "the import of [*Okay*] as a practice for *possible* sequence closure in third position is that it may be followed by further talk which extends the sequence" (p. 137; emphasis original). Here, with "'Kay.", the Customer only nominally accepts the Representative's response as being possibly complete. This claim is supported by the fact that the Customer rushes through (symbolized in the transcript by the equals sign) to produce "Have you got any expected time that it's gonna be ou:t¿" (lines 22-23), where he pursues an estimated repair

completion time, thus reopening the possibly closed sequence. Note that the Customer

pursues this second action after the Representative re-completes her report of the current

repair process status and indicates that her response to the Customer's repair status

inquiry is complete. The Representative understands that the Customer is pursuing the

second component of the repair status response by reporting an estimated timeframe for

the manufacturer to repair the equipment (lines 25-31). By explicitly asking for an

estimated completion time for the repair of his equipment after the Representative

produces her response to his repair status inquiry as possibly complete, the Customer

treats the estimated timeframe for the completion of the repair as a relevant (and so-far

missing) feature of the response to his status inquiry.

Extract 4.32 is a second example that provides evidence of how a Customer treats

the second component of the Representative's response as missing. After the

Representative provides an account for why the organization sent the Customer's

equipment to the manufacturer for repair (lines 15-16), the Customer treats her response

as incomplete by pursuing the estimated repair completion time:

Extract 4.32 (Sta 102)

```
01              ((Ring))

02      Rep:    Jack Camera. Kendra speakin'.

03              How may I help you?

04      Cus:    .hh Ah yes. I was callin' to check on

05              thuh r'pair status?

06              (.)

07      Rep:    What's thuh repair number?

08      Cus:    .hh Two three three: nine nine four.

09              (.)

10      Rep:    Beth Finkel?
```

```
11      Cus:    Ye:s.

12              (0.2)

13      Rep:    It looks like they're sending that

14              out ta th' manufacturer fer repair-

15              .hh repair.=They have uh uhm: See See Dee

16              recall on that u-

17      Cus:    Uh huh:

18      Rep:    Unit¿

19      Cus:    Okay.=

20      Rep:    =So they have to send that out to uhm:

21              Canon for repair.

22 >    Cus:    .hh Okay. Do you: d'- know how long

23 >            that's gonna take?

24              (.)

25      Rep:    Uhm:: Canon: I believe is runnin'

26              approximately two: three weeks. Uhm::

27              lemme jus' double check that.

28      Cus:    Okay.
```

Customer pursuit
of the second
component

In this instance, the Customer nominally accepts the Representative's report of the

current repair process status by producing, ".hh Okay." (line 22). The Customer then

immediately continues her turn by pursuing the second action of the Representative's

response which is the estimated repair completion time, "Do you: d'- know how long

that's gonna take?" (lines 22-23). By explicitly pursuing the timeframe, the Customer

treats the Representative's responding action as incomplete and displays her

understanding of what it would take to complete the action of responding to her repair

status inquiry. Thus, the Customer indicates that she also understands what constitutes a

complete and relevant responding action to repair status inquiries. When the

Representative speaks next, she reports her understanding of the estimated repair

completion time, "Uhm:: Canon: I believe is runnin' approximately two: three weeks.

Uhm:: lemme jus' double check that. (lines 25-27). Although the Representative indicates

that she has to reference another source in order to provide a more accurate report of the

second component, the Representative treats the Customer's pursuit as seeking the

estimated repair completion time as the second component to the repair status response.

In Extract 4.33 (below), the Customer displays his expectation that the

Representative will continue her response to his repair status inquiry after she reports the

current repair process status in two ways. First, he remains silent (line 19) after the

Representative provides an account for why his equipment was sent to the manufacturer,

which is a practice for displaying an expectation that the Representative will continue

speaking (see Extracts 4.26-4.28 above). And second, the Customer prompts the

Representative to continue with her response to his repair status inquiry by asking for an

estimated repair completion date:

Extract 4.33 (Sta 15)

```
01              ((Ring))
02      Rep:    Jack Camera Kendra speakin'.
03              =How may I help you?
04      Cus:    .hh Hi=ye:s uhm. (.) .pt I'm
05              calling ta see: if I could get a
06              stat:us on a r'pai:r that we sent
07              in to=or- our video camera¿
08              (0.2)
09      Rep:    .hh Uhkay what wuz thuh repair number?
        ((Representative retrieves Customer's order))
15      Rep:    Yeah=looks like they sent that
```

```
16              out to: uhm Panasonic fer repai:r.

17      Cus:    Oh they di:d¿

18      Rep:    Yehs:. Because it has a bad See See Dee?

19              (0.4)

20      Cus:    Okay. hh

21              (.)

22 >    Cus:    So do you have an estimated (.)

23 >            (duh-) da:te.=hh

24              (0.2)

25      Rep:    I believe Panasonic usually takes

26              approximately two tuh

27              three weeks fer a=repairs.

28      Cus:    So when did you send it out.

29              (0.4)

30      Rep:    Looks like it went out on thuh twenny second.

31              (0.6)

32      Cus:    .hh On March twenty second?

33              (1.0)

34      Cus:    Okay. It-so it has a bad see see dee:?

35      Rep:    Ri:ght.

36      Cus:    Okay.

37              (.)

38      Cus:    .hh Now. if. Panasonic has questions: or-

39              (0.2).pt yih know:(0.5) whut would they
```

Customer pursuit of second component

40   do a=like if they can't repair it.

After the Representative produces the account for why the equipment went to the manufacturer, there is a silence at line 19. This silence comes in a position after the Representative's account, which is a place where the Representative could resume her response to the Customer's repair status inquiry. By not speaking in this position, it is possible that the Customer is expecting the Representative to continue (see Extracts 4.26-4.28). When the Customer speaks next, he registers and accepts the Representative's account by producing a sequence closing third, "okay. hh" (line 20) which proposes to complete the confirmation sequence (lines 17-19). After a beat of silence (line 21), where the Representative could resume her response to the repair status inquiry, the Customer treats the estimated repair completion time as "missing" by pursuing this second component, "So do you have an estimated (.) da:te.=hh" (lines 22-23). Similar to Extracts 4.31 and 4.32 (above), by explicitly pursuing an estimated repair completion time, the Customer treats the Representative's responding action to the repair status inquiry as incomplete. In this instance, the Representative understands that the customer is pursuing an estimated repair completion time when she reports, "I believe Panasonic usually takes approximately two tuh three weeks fer a=repairs." (lines 25-27).

Extract 4.34 (below) the Representative displays her understanding that the Customer is going on to pursue a report of the estimated repair completion time before the action of the Customer's pursuit is projectable. After the Representative reports the current repair process status (lines 42-43), the Customer indicates that she is writing down what the Representative provided (lines 45-46). The Customer then indicates that she has recorded what the Representative just provided and is ready to move on when she

produces, "Okay." (line 50). However, the Representative hears the Customer's "Okay."

(line 50) as a possible move to close the course of action of inquiring about the status of a

repair and goes on to propose a possible closing of the larger course of action (Schegloff

& Sacks, 1973) when she produces, "M'kay¿" (line 52). This instance shows how the

Customer can re-open this sequence to pursue the "missing" component of the

Representative's response to her status inquiry at line 54:

Extract 4.34 (Sta 16)

```
01          ((Ring))

02  Rep:    Jack Camera Kendra speakin'>how may I help you.

03          (0.2)

04  Cus:    Yes hi I'm caw:ling in reference. to check on a status of::

05          a: repai:r?

06          (.)

07  Cus:    I'm calling from Sixth Avenue. ((sniff))

08          (0.6)

09  Rep:    Okay. D' you have our re-repair number, or jus' have thuh

10          *serial number.*

     ((Representative retrieves Customer's order))

42   Rep:    .hh They sent that out to Canon because uh:m it had

43            a uhm: (0.5) See See Dee reca:ll.

44            (.)

45   Cus:    Hold on=they sent it. Ou::t. .hhh=I hh=have ta=hh

46           >write all=hh .hhh n- hhh *Can::n:::* For what,=A

47           See S- Se: [Se:      ]

48   Rep:               [°See See°] Dee: recall.

49          (.)

50   Cus:    Okay.

51          (0.2)
```

```
52    Rep:    M'kay¿
53            (0.2)
54 >  Cus:    So:: there's no- you have no [idea when >it should-<]
55 >> Rep:                                 [<T  h  e :  :  :  y]
56            usually take> approximately two ta three weeks fer
57            repairs.
58            (0.2)
59    Cus:    Ta:ke th-
60            (0.2)
61    Rep:    Mm hm.
62    Cus:    O'kay=hh
63    Rep:    Okay¿
64            (.)
65    Cus:    Thank you.
```

Customer pursuit of second component

By remaining silent at line 53 the Customer does not take up the Representative's proposal to close the course of action. After the silence, the Customer re-opens the sequence by beginning to formulate an upshot when she produces, "So:: there's no- (line 54). The Customer abandons her turn in progress with a cut-off at "no-" (line 54) and then immediately re-starts her turn when she produces, "you have no" (line 54). This case indicates that before the action of the Customer's turn is projectable, the Representative comes to produce, "<The::::y usually take> approximately two ta three weeks fer repairs." (lines 55-57). Notice that just as the Customer begins to formulate an upshot of the Representative's turn, the Representative begins a report of the estimated repair completion time before the Customer's turn is possibly complete. Here the Representative displays her understanding that the Customer not only expects more of a

response after her report of the current repair process status, but that she specifically expects the estimated repair completion status as the next component of the response to her status inquiry.

In Extracts 4.31-4.34 (above), Customers display their orientation to the normative structure of responses to repair status inquiries by pursuing the second component, the estimated repair completion time, when Representatives do not provide it as part of their response. With these explicit pursuits, Customers show that they are not just expecting more of a response to their repair status inquiry, but that they are specifically orienting to the estimated repair completion time as the relevant next component of the Representative's response.

The next section shows how, in their pursuit of the second component, Customers may build in an account that the Representative might not be able to provide an estimated repair completion time. By designing their pursuits in a way that leaves open the possibility that Representatives might not know the estimated repair completion time, Customers take the position that if Representatives had further information about their repair they would report it in their response to the repair status inquiry.

Taking a Stance of a Low Expectation that Representatives Can Provide the Second Action

In Extract 4.35 (previously 4.31 above), the Customer designs her pursuit of the "missing" component with an expectation that the Representative does not know when the Customer's repair would be complete.

Extract 4.35 (Sta 38)

```
01              ((Ring))
02      Rep:    Jack Camera. This is Tara speaking.=May I help you?
```

```
03      Cus:    .hh Yea::s. This Bill Mau:l.=I'd like

04              ta check on thuh sta:tus of camera repair please.

05      Rep:    ((throat clear)) Sure. Do you have a repair

06              authorization number?

07      Cus:    Two three on:e. Five three two.

        ((Representative retrieves Customer's order))

12      Rep:    Hello?

13              (.)

14      Cus:    Yes.

15      Rep:    Okay.=I just checked up on thuh status uhm:

16              a:t (.) thee manufacturer. >Well it< went to a

17              r'pair facility, .hh uhm that does th' r'pairs

18              for Minoltas¿ .hh They started on thuh

19              repair as of yesterday¿

20              (0.2)

21      Rep:    it was in repair at their repair facility.

22 >    Cus:    Kay.=Have ya got any expected time that

23 >            it's gonna be ou:t¿

24              (.)

25      Rep:    As long as they have all thuh parts in

26              sto:ck, .hh it should be about ten ta-

27              uhm (.) it should be about ten business

28              days >before we receive it ba:ck.< .hh

29              However if they do not have thuh parts

30              in stock it can be up to thirty or forty

31              business days.

32              (.)

33      Cus:    Kay. Rea:son I ask it's already been there

34              'bout thirty days.
```

Designs turn in a way that embodies the expectation that the Representative does not know

After the Customer registers and accepts the Representative's response to her

repair status inquiry, "Kay." (line 22), she immediately continues her turn by pursuing the

estimated repair completion time, "Have ya got any expected time that it's gonna be

ou:t¿" (lines 22-23). The Customer designs her pursuit to include a negative polarity

item, "any" (line 22), which prefers a "no" as an aligning response (Schegloff, 2007). By

designing her pursuit in this way, the Customer designs her inquiry in a way that builds in

her expectation that the Representative does not know the answer.

Customers can also build in the possibility that the Representative does not know

the estimated repair completion time by designing their pursuit as an indirect request

designed as a yes/no interrogative, leaving open the possibility of a no type response as in

Extract 4.36 (below):

Extract 4.36 (Sta 102)

```
01              ((Ring))

02      Rep:    Jack Camera. Kendra speakin'.

03              How may I help you?

04      Cus:    .hh Ah yes. I was callin' to check on

05              thuh r'pair status?

06              (.)

07      Rep:    What's thuh repair number?

        ((Representative retrieves Customer's order))

10      Rep:    Beth Finkel?

11      Cus:    Ye:s.

12              (0.2)

13      Rep:    It looks like they're sending that

14              out ta th' manufacturer fer repair-

15              .hh repair.=They have uh uhm: See See Dee

16              recall on that u-
```

```
17      Cus:    Uh huh:

18      Rep:    Unit¿

19      Cus:    Okay.=

20      Rep:    =So they have to send that out to uhm:

21              Canon for repair.

22 >    Cus:    .hh Okay. Do you: d'- know how long

23 >            that's gonna take?

24              (.)

25      Rep:    Uhm:: Canon: I believe is runnin'

26              approximately two: three weeks. Uhm::

27              lemme jus' double check that.

28      Cus:    Okay.
```

Customer embodies an expectation that the Representative might know, but leaves open the possibly that she does not

In this instance, the Representative reports the projected repair process status and indicates that sometime in the near future the organization will send the Customer's equipment to the manufacturer for repair (lines 13-16, 20-21). The Customer nominally accepts the Representative's response by producing, ".hh Okay." (line 22), and then, when she continues, the Customer goes on to pursue an estimated repair completion time with, "Do you: d'- know how long that's gonna take?" (lines 22-23). Here the Customer orients to the *possibility* that the Representative does not know the estimated by designing her inquiry as an indirect request, "Do you: d' know" (line 22). By designing this inquiry as a yes/no interrogative, which prefers a yes, it also leaves open the possibility of a "no" response. With this pursuit, the Customer treats the Representative as having provided all that she knows about the status of her repair.

For a final example of how Customers can take the stance that the Representative has provided all they know about their repair status, see Extract 4.37 (below). In this instance the Customer projects that she is pursuing more information regarding the

Representative's repair status response, and just before the nature of her inquiry is

projected, the Representative reports the estimated repair completion time. Similar to

Extracts 4.35 and 4.36 (above), the Customer designs her pursuit to leave open the

possibility for a no-type response:

<u>Extract 4.37 (Sta 16)</u>

```
01          ((Ring))

02  Rep:    Jack Camera Kendra speakin'>how may I help you.

03          (0.2)

04  Cus:    Yes hi I'm caw:ling in reference. to check on a status of::

05          a: repai:r?

06          (.)

07  Cus:    I'm calling from First Avenue. ((sniff))

08          (0.6)

09  Rep:    Okay. D' you have our re-repair number, or jus' have thuh

10          *serial number.*

((Representative retrieves Customer's order))

42    Rep:    .hh They sent that out to Canon because uh:m it had

43            a uhm: (0.5) See See Dee reca:ll.

44            (.)

45    Cus:   Hold on=they sent it. Ou::t. .hhh=I hh=have ta=hh

46           >write all=hh .hhh n- hhh *Can::n:::* For what,=A

47           See S- Se: [Se:      ]

48    Rep:              [°See See°] Dee: recall.

49            (.)

50    Cus:   Okay.

51            (0.2)

52    Rep:   M'kay¿

53            (0.2)
```

```
54 >  Cus:   So:: there's no- you have no [idea when >it should-<]

55     Rep:                              [<T  h  e :  :  :  y]

56            usually take> approximately two ta three weeks fer

57            repairs.

58            (0.2)

59     Cus:   Ta:ke th-

60            (0.2)

61     Rep:   Mm hm.

62     Cus:   O'kay=hh

63     Rep:   Okay¿

64            (.)

65     Cus:   Thank you.
```

Embodies the expectation that the Representative does not know have the information to provide the second action component of the response

After the Customer hears that the Representative is initiating a possible closing sequence (line 52), the Customer reopens the repair status inquiry sequence by pursuing the second component of the repair status response. When the Customer produces her pursuit, she designs her turn in a way that builds in an expectation that the Representative does not have the information to be able to provide an estimated repair completion status, "So:: there's no- you have no [idea when >it should-<" (line 54). In her pursuit of the second component of the response, the Customer shows that she anticipates that the Representative does not have a repair completion status by incorporating a candidate answer (Pomerantz, 1988) into her question, "you have no idea when >it should-<" (line 54). Thus, the Customer's pursuit treats the Representative as not having the information she is seeking available at this moment.

In this last section I argued that Customers could design their pursuits of the estimated repair completion time in ways that leave open the possibility that Representatives do not have the information necessary to provide the second component

of the response. In formulating their inquiry in a way to show their expectation that

Representatives do not know the answer regarding the estimated repair completion time,

we can infer that Customers are taking the stance that if the Representatives did know,

then they would tell the Customers. Thus, the way in which Customers design their

follow-up questions shows an expectation of what Representatives can legitimately know

about their repair order.

Providing an Account for Not Needing the Second Component

As we have seen, when Customers call seeking an update on their repair,

participants regularly orient to a relevant response to such an inquiry as containing two

components, each containing a report of a different type of repair status. As data show,

participants use a variety of practices to display their orientation to the relevance of this

structure when one of the components is possibly "missing". As further evidence for

participants' orientation to the structure of the response, Extract 4.38 (below) shows how

Customers can treat accepting the first component as a complete and sufficient response

as accountable.

Extract 4.38 (Sta 6)
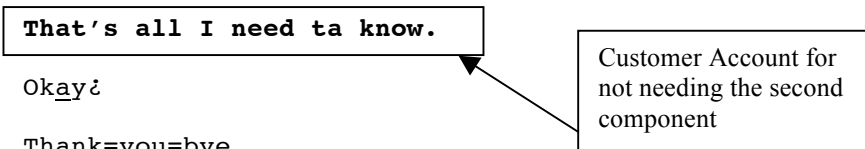
```
01              ((Ring))

02      Rep:    Jack Camera this is Tara speaking.

03              =May I help you?

04              (.)

05      Cus:    .hh Yes=I'd like ta check up on an order.

06              (0.2)

07      Rep:    Okay.=Can I have yer repair

08              authorization number?

        ((Representative retrieves Customer's order))
```

```
19    Rep:   The estimate was appro:ved on

20           the twenty four:th.

21           (0.2)

22    Rep:   .hh An' it's currently in repair with thuh technician¿

23           (0.2)

24    Cus:   Okay excellent.

25           (0.2)

26  > Cus:   That's all I need ta know.

27    Rep:   Okay¿

28    Cus:   Thank=you=bye.

29    Rep:   No problem bye:.
```

Customer Account for not needing the second component

The Representative begins her response to the Customer's status inquiry by reporting the history of the repair so far (lines 19-20). After a gap (line 21), where the Customer displays his orientation to the Representative's turn as still in progress, the Representative continues her response by reporting the current repair process status, ".hh An' it's currently in repair with thuh technician¿" (line 22). The Representative designs this unit to end with a rising intonation (symbolized in the transcript by an inverted question mark), which projects that her turn-so-far is not yet complete. The Customer orients to the Representative's turn as ongoing by remaining silent during the gap at line 23. In this instance the Customer produces a positive assessment where he registers and accepts the Representative's response so far with, "Okay excellent." (line 24). Producing a positive assessment after the first action of the Representative's response could be hearable as a sequence-closing move.

However, the participants orient to the normative multi-componential structure of the response to the Representative's status inquiry in two ways. First, the silence (line 25) after the Customer's assessment is a position where the Representative could initiate a

move to close the course of action. Here the Representative's silence provides some

evidence that the Representative is orienting to more of a response from the Customer,

thus leaving the status inquiry sequence open. Second, and important for this section, is

that when the Customer continues his turn, he produces an account, "That's all I need ta

know." (line 26) which treats moving to close before the second component is produced

as accountable. In addition, with this account, the Customer displays his orientation to the

possibility that the Representative might have more of a response to his repair status

inquiry.

Extracts 4.35-4.37 provide further evidence that Customers also orient to the

normative structure of responses to status inquiries as containing components, a report of

the current repair process status and the estimated repair completion time. These

instances show that when Representatives produce the first component as a complete

response to Customer inquiries, Customers orient to the second component as relevantly

"missing" by pursuing the estimated repair completion time. Further evidence that

supports the claim that Customers orient to this normative structure is that Customers

treat accepting the first component as a complete response as accountable as in Extract

4.38.

The Extracts shown in this chapter describe practices that both Representatives

and Customers use to display their orientation that a complete response to repair status

inquiries involves a report of both the current repair process status and estimated repair

completion time. First, Representatives display their orientation to the structure by

designing the first component of their response in a way that projects more talk, as in

Extracts 4.22-4.25. These instances show how Representatives independently orient to

the relevance of multiple component as a single response to Customers' status inquiries by communicating that their response is not complete after the possible completion of the first component. Second, Customers also display an independent orientation to this structure by either treating Representatives' responses as not yet complete after the first component (Extracts 4.26-4.29) or by explicitly pursuing the second component as in Extracts 4.29-4.33. When Customers pursue the second component they treat the report of the current repair process status alone as insufficient by explicitly pursuing the "missing" component, which is the estimated repair completion time. Customers' pursuits also provide insight into another normative feature of responses to status inquiries in that the way in which they design their pursuits embodies a presupposition that Representatives also orient to the normative structure of responses to status inquiries, and that if they knew the second component they would have produced that as part of their response.

Customers Can Treat the Multi-Component Response as Complete

The final case, Extract 4.26, shows how Customers can treat Representatives' responses to their status inquiry as complete after they report the estimated repair completion time. In this instance the Customer recently sent his equipment in for service and it is just now being entered into the organization's system. After the Representative indicates that his equipment will be checked into the system by the end of the day (lines 23-25 and 27), the Representative continues her response by reporting the next step of the repair process which is putting the equipment in line to see a technician (lines 29-30). This instance shows how 1. both the Representative and Customer orient to the normative

multi-componential structure of the response to a status inquiry and 2. the Customer can

treat the Representative's response as complete after she provides the second action.

Ex 4.36 (Sta 45)

```
04    Cus:   Yeah. Can I check thuh sta:tus
05           on my r'pair¿
06           (0.2)
07    Rep:   Sure=what's th' repair authorization
08           number?
```

((*Representative retrieves Customer's order*))

```
21    Rep:   Hello¿
22    Cus:   Yes.
23    Rep:   ↑O↓kay. Uh:m yeah.=It's just in th'
24           process of being lo:gged into thuh system.
25           [.hh  ]it 'ill be logged in
26    Cus:   [Mm hm]
27    Rep:   b'fore the end of t'da:y¿
28    Cus:   [Mm hm.]
29    Rep:   [.hh   ]an' then uh:m it goes in
30           line with thuh technician. An' right
31           now fer digital stills we're taking
32           approximately ten ta twenny business
33           days for our repair turn around time.
34           (.)
35    Cus:   (°Eh-°)
36           (0.2)
37 >  Cus:   Okay.
38    Rep:   Okay?
39 >  Cus:   Thank you:
40    Rep:   No problem.
```

Customer treats Representative's multi componential response as complete

```
41              (.)
42     Rep:   Bye.
```

In this instance the Customer's equipment is just being processed and entered into the organization's system (lines 23-25 and 27) and since the equipment has not entered into the repair "process", the Representative technically does not have an "update" to report on the progress of the repair of the Customer's equipment. However, after the Representative reports that the equipment is being processed, she begins to respond to the Customer's status inquiry by reporting the next step of the process for the Customer's equipment, which is the first stage of the repair process, "an' then uh:m it goes in line with thuh technician." (lines 29-30). The Representative produces this unit of talk as possibly complete by ending with a downward, final intonation, "technician." (line 30). At this point, given there is no "status" to report, the Representative's response to the Customer's inquiry could be complete.

Notice that, in lines 28 and 29, both the Customer and Representative simultaneously display their orientation to the normative structure of the response to the Customer's status inquiry in two ways. First, after the Representative comes to a point of possible unit completion, the Customer produces a continuer, "Mm hm." (line 28) which treats the Representative's response to his inquiry as not yet complete. And second, the Representative produces an inbreath (line 29) in simultaneous overlap with the Customer's continuer, which projects further talk. The Representative builds her next unit of talk as a continuation of the prior with, "an'" (line 29), then goes on to provide the Customer with the second component of the response to his repair status inquiry which is the estimated repair completion time for the repair of his equipment, "an' then uh:m it goes in line with thuh technician. An' right now fer digital stills we're taking

approximately ten ta twenny business days for our repair turn around time." (lines 29-33). The Representative produces this last unit of talk as complete, and treats her response as complete by remaining silent during the gap at line 34).

Although the Customer also remains silent (lines 34-36) after the Representative produces the second component of her response and treats it as complete, the Customer shows that she registers and accepts the Representative's response by producing, "Okay." (line 37) which is a sequentially third move that also claims possible sequence closure. Here the Customer not only accepts the Representative's response, he also treats the response as sufficient and complete after she provides the estimated repair completion time. The Representative treats the Customer's turn at line 37 as closure relevant by initiating a pre-closing move with, "Okay?" (line 38) and the Customer aligns with the Representative's proposal to close the course of action and the call when he produces, "Thank you:" (line 39).

Discussion

When Customers call the repair shop to seek an update on a piece of equipment they sent in for repair, Customers and Representatives jointly achieve what constitutes a conditionally relevant response for this type of inquiry. Through the analysis in this chapter, I showed that participants display an orientation to the normative organization of responses to repair status inquiries as consisting of a multi-componential response, where there are at least two components each containing a report of a different type of repair "status": current repair process status and estimated repair completion time. I have shown that participants achieve this organization through a number of different practices. First, Representatives can display their orientation to the normative structure through the way

in which they design the first component of their response as not yet complete after the

first possible completion of the *current* repair process status. Second, Customers can

display their orientation to this structure by treating Representatives' responses as on

going after they report the current repair process status. In rare cases where

Representatives produce the first component as a possibly complete response to the

Customer's repair status inquiry, Customers orient to the relevance of the second

component by explicitly pursuing a report of the estimated repair completion time. Thus,

the analysis has shown how participants, independent of one another, orient to a multi-

componential structure as a normative response to repair status inquiries, with two

specific parts: a report of the current repair process status, and a report of an estimated

completion time.

Earlier in this chapter I noted that Customers' repair status inquiries are the first

pair part of a single adjacency pair, where the Customer's action of inquiring about status

makes relevant a particular type of next action, the second pair part to the adjacency pair.

As Heritage (1984) noted, the adjacency pair structure is a "reliable and accountable

template for action [as well as] interpretation" (p. 254). That is, the producer of a first

pair part can examine the recipients' response to see if the action he or she produced in

that first pair part was understood by the recipient, or not. Thus, the recipient's response

acts as a resource for the producer of the first pair part to see if they were properly

understood. In cases where there is misunderstanding, participants have resources to

initiate repair (see Heritage, 1984; Schegloff 1992; 2000; Schegloff, Jefferson & Sacks,

1977) and restore intersubjectivity. The findings in this chapter show that both

participants orient to a multi-componential structure as a single response to the action of

inquiring about repair status. After Representatives produce the first component, a report of current repair process status, Customers hear that Representatives understood their inquiry as one that involves seeking an update on a repair order.

As the analysis shows, there are some instances where Representatives produce the first component as a complete response to Customers' inquiries, and Customers display their orientation to the normative structure by pursuing the "missing" second component. When Customers pursue the estimated repair completion time, they design the pursuit in a way that embodies a presupposition that if Representatives were able to provide the second component, they would. Thus, these pursuits display Customers' orientation that the normative, multi-action structure, of responses to repair status inquiries is mutually understood.

The discovery of the multi-componential responding action expands our understanding of the types of actions organized by the adjacency pair. Previous research has shown how first pair part actions can make relevant alternative types of responses, for example yes/no type questions make relevant yes/no type answers (Raymond, 2003); invitations make relevant acceptance or declination (Drew, 1984), offers make relevant accepts or rejection (Davidson, 1984), and through this research we know a lot about the organization of different types of actions. In each of these cases, the relevant response is a single component that takes place immediately next, usually consisting of a single turn-constructional unit.

The findings of this chapter, however, expand our understanding of the composition of a type of responding action that is implemented through multiple action components, consisting of multiple turns at talk. As indicated earlier, studies of ordinary

conversation have shown that speakers' turns are built unit by unit and that speakers are initially entitled to one unit of talk at a time (Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson, 1974). This tends to be enforced by all participants, such as when a possible next speaker shows they are going to start speaking at the possible end of the current speaker's turn. However, there are other systems of organization, such as the organization of action, which can provide for a speaker to produce more than one unit at a time. In this chapter I discovered one type of initiating action that makes conditionally relevant a responding action that contains multiple components. As was demonstrated, this multi-componential response to repair status inquiries is a stable and recurrent feature of these actions. Furthermore, I also demonstrated that participants have interactional practices for enforcing the relevance of this structure, and through these practices we see how they produce and reproduce an organizational structure through talk.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE INFERENTIAL ACHIEVEMENT OF THE ELUSIVE RETURN STATUS

Introduction

As demonstrated in Chapter Four, customers' status inquiries make conditionally relevant an answer that includes a report of a current repair process status (e.g., *That is in line with the technician*) and an estimated repair completion time (e.g., *Right now for digital stills repair time is running approximately ten to twenty business days*). As noted in Chapter Four, this composite status is an "organizational" one. It is the status of the equipment within, and from the perspective of, the repair shop. For the remainder of this current chapter, *organizational status* will refer to the multi-componential repair status response.

The current chapter has three analytic goals. First, I demonstrate that *Customers recurrently treat representatives' organizational status answers for how they bear on yet another, and different, type of status which I am calling the delivery time*. The delivery time refers to when Customers will actually receive their equipment back from the repair shop. Relative to the equipment's organizational status, delivery time is a "practical" type of status in that it translates the organization's projected completion time into an actual date for possible receipt of the equipment by the Customer. Second, this chapter demonstrates that *Representatives understand that Customers treat the organizational status for how it bears on the delivery time*. Third, given the above two observations that Customers recurrently treat organizational status for how it bears on the delivery time and

that Representatives understand this, this chapter demonstrates that Representatives resist the provision of a delivery time.

<div align="center">Customers Recurrently Treat Organizational Status for How it</div>

<div align="center">Bears on the Delivery Time</div>

This section demonstrates that Customers recurrently treat organizational status for how it bears on the delivery time. Evidence for this claim varies different depending on whether or not Representatives' responses contain sufficient resources. This section begins by arguing that Representatives' organizational status answers can either contain sufficient resources for Customers to infer the delivery time, or not. These two scenarios provide different types of evidence that Customers recurrently treat institutional status for how it bears the delivery time of their equipment.
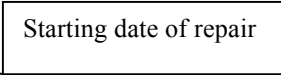
When Representatives' Organizational Status Answers Contain Sufficient Resources for Customers to Infer the Delivery Time

In some cases, Representatives' organizational status answers contain possibly sufficient resources for Customers to infer the delivery time. This claim is made for each case below. In such cases, Customers regularly treat organizational status as being sufficient "for all practical purposes." For example: a. Customers can produce sequence-closing *Okays* followed immediately by requests for confirmation of reformulations of organizational status in terms of the delivery time; and b. Customers can negatively assess, or complain about, organizational status in terms of its implications for the delivery time. Each of these two types of evidence is presented below.

Okay + Practical Reformulation

In the following three cases, after the possible completion of the institutional status, Customers produce "Okay" and then immediately request confirmation of a reformulation of organizational status in terms of the delivery time for their equipment. In Extract 5.1 (below), it is arguable that the Representative's organizational status answer contains sufficient resources with which to infer the delivery time.

Extract 5.1 Sta 82

```
01    Rep:   Jack Camera. This is Tara speaking.
02           May I help you?
03           (0.2)
04    Cus:   Yeah. Uh: I'm tryin' (.) find out wh-
05           what thee: uh (0.2) repair status is:.
06           Of my camera that I sent back about
07           six ta seven weeks ago.
08           (.)
09    Cus:   An' uh:: uh th' I jus' keep getting
10           thuh same message on thuh website
11           that it's (0.2) at Canon. There's no::
12           uh n-n- no: uh uh indication of when
13           it's gunna be finished.
14           (0.2)
15    Rep:   Kay. Do you have th' r'pair number?
      ((Representative locates Customer's order))
23    Rep:   Yeh. Uhm: Canon sta:rted on thuh r'pairs
24 >>        as thuh fi:fth. of this month?      Starting date of repair
25    Cus:   Yea:p.
```

```
26      Rep:    .hh An:d (.) they normally take

27 >>           approximately ten business days fer      ┌─────────────────┐
                                                         │ Estimated repair │
28 >>           their repai:rs=and then send it back◄────│ completion time  │
                                                         └─────────────────┘
29              to us.

30              (.)

31      Cus:    Uh huh.

32 >>   Rep:    So: (.) ten business days from thuh      ┌─────────────────┐
                                                         │ Summary of      │
33 >>           fifth=it should be back to us. ◄─────────│ organizational  │
                                                         │ status          │
                                                         └─────────────────┘
34      Cus:    'Ka[y.]

35      Rep:      [So] probably by: thee end of next

36 >>           week we should uhm: they should be       ┌─────────────────┐
                                                         │ Estimated repair │
37              completing it and sending it back to◄────│ completion date  │
                                                         └─────────────────┘
38              us:¿ .hh [an' t]hen=

39      Cus:             [Kay. ]

40      Rep:    =as soon as we get it back we turn it

41              around and send it out to you.           ┌─────────────────┐
                                                         │ Reformulating   │
42              (.)                                      │ organizational  │
                                                         │ status answer to│
                                                         │ a timeframe for │
                                                         │ the delivery of │
43   >  Cus:    Kay. So I should look for it in about◄───│ his equipment   │
                                                         └─────────────────┘
44   >          two weeks.

45              (.)46      Rep:    Yes. Most likely. Yes.

47      Cus:    Yeah. Mh. Uh: 'pparently: uh: if I

48              can jump to a conclusion. Your guys

49              worked on it an' they couldn't figure

50              out what was wro:ng so: (.)

51              send it back to Canon?
```

The Representative has provided four different types of resources for the

Customer to be able to infer the delivery time: 1. The actual date the manufacturer started

the equipment's repair, "thuh fi:fth. Of this month?" (line 24); 2. a report of the estimated repair completion time, "ten business days" (line 27); 3. a formula for calculating the estimated repair completion time, "ten business days from thuh fifth" (lines 32-33); 4. A calculation of an estimated date for the completion of the repair and its return to the organization, "probably by: thee end of next week we should uhm: they should be completing it and sending it back to us:¿" (lines 35-38).

In this case, it is arguable that the organizational status answer has sufficient resources from which the Customer may infer the delivery time. After the Representative reports the next step of sending the equipment back to the Customer (lines 40-41), the Customer shows that he registers and accepts the Representative's response, when he says, "Kay." (line 43). The Customer's use of "okay" indicates that he treats the Representative's organizational status answer as complete and accepts this as a sufficient organizational response. However, the Customer reopens the sequence by requesting confirmation of a reformulation of the organizational status in terms of a delivery time, "So I should look for it in about two weeks." (lines 43-44). Through this reformulation, the Customer produces his own "lay timeframe" calculation for the Representative's confirmation. Thus, with this calculation of the delivery time, the Customer shows that the delivery time is something he can infer from the Representative's organizational status response.

In Extract 5.1 the Representative provided a number of different resources for the Customer to be able to infer the delivery time over the course of multiple units of talk, where in the end she reported a date for the estimated repair completion time. This case is rare in that Representatives usually report the estimated repair completion timeframe,

without reporting an actual date for that completion. Similar to Extract 5.1, in Extract 5.2

it is again arguable that the organizational status answer provides sufficient resources for

Customers to be able to infer the delivery time.

Extract 5.2 Sta 96

```
01              ((Ring))
02      Rep:    Jack Camera. This is Tara speaking. May I help you?
03      Cus:    .hh Yes Tara I'm- I'm calling da- de- en-.
04              fer direction on an inquiry on a repair
05              of a- of a camera¿
06              (.)
07      Rep:    Okay¿
08              (0.2)
09      Cus:    Who do I talk to?
10              (.)
11      Rep:    Uh:m (.) Do you have thuh repair n-
12              Yeh- I mean is it in here for repair no:w
13              o[r:]
14      Cus:     [ Y]es it is.
15      Rep:    Kay. What's thuh repair authorization number?

        ((Representative locates Customer's order))

25      Rep:    Eh=heh heh (.) Ah let's see uh:m (.) it was
26  >>          entered into our system on thuh twenny
27  >>          ninth of Ma:rch.                          Repair starting date
28      Cus:    Mm hm.
29      Rep:    An' put in line with thuh technician.     Estimated
                                                          repair
30              (.)
31              Uh right no:w for digital still repairs we're
32  >>          taking approximately ten ta twenny business
33  >>          days d'pending on thuh problem with
```

```
34            th' unit and parts available.

35  >  Cus:  .pt .hh Okay. So ih it will probably be

36  >        sometime in Ma:y.

37     Rep:  Uh:m It could be th' end of this month

38           or it could .hh [be in thuh yeah beginning of]

39     Cus:                  [That's what I wanna find out]

40           okay dear. I'm jus' tryin' ta get a handle on

41           what to expect.=That's all.

42     Rep:  [Yeah   It's   a]bout=

43     Cus:  [No I'm not- .hh]

44     Rep:  =ten ta twenny business days from thuh

45           third.

46           (0.5)

46     Cus:  [From thuh thir:d.]

47     Rep:  [From   thuh time ]that it was given to th'

48           technician.

50     Cus:  .hh Ka:y, .hh You: are very hel:pful. .hh Now.

51           when they (.) wh- whe:n you will send an

52           email out when it's bein' shipped?
```

Reformulating repair status answer to an estimated delivery time

Within the Representative's organizational status answer, she includes a report of when the equipment was entered into the repair tracking system, "Ah let's see uh:m (.) it was entered into our system on thuh twenny ninth of Ma:rch." (lines 25-26), and the estimated time for the completion of the repair, "Uh right no:w for digital still repairs we're taking approximately ten ta twenny business days" (lines 31-32). As demonstrated in Extract 5.1 (above), the exact date that the equipment was entered into the system and the estimated repair completion timeframe are resources for calculation of the projected timeframe for when the repair of the equipment should be complete. After the

Representative produces the organizational status answer as complete (line 34), the

Customer registers and accepts her answer when he says, "Okay." (line 35). In addition,

with this "okay", the Customer treats the organizational status answer as a sufficient

organizational response. However, the Customer immediately continues his turn by

reformulating an upshot of organizational status answer into practical status timeframe

for the Representative's confirmation, "So ih it will probably be sometime in Ma:y."

(lines 35-36). With this reformulation the Customer shows that, based on the resources

she reported in her response, he is able to infer a lay timeframe for when his repair will

be complete, and presumably sent back to him.

Extracts 5.1-5.2 provide evidence to show that when Representatives report

organizational status answers with enough resources for Customers to be able to infer a

delivery time, Customers will treat the organizational status answer as complete, and then

go on to reformulate a delivery time for Representatives' confirmation.

Extract 5.3 (below) provides some evidence for how Customers process the

organizational status answer and treat it for its delivery time implication. In the following

example the Customer enacts a calculation by using the components of the

Representative's organizational status answer in order to understand what it means for the

delivery of this equipment.

Extract 5.3 Sta 49

```
01              ((Ring))
02      Rep:    Jack Camera.=This is Tara speaking. May I help you?
03      Cus:    .hhh Hi. Yeah. I sent in my: uh Sony walkman
04              fer r'pair a while ago, And I'm lookin' at
05              thuh r'pair status on thuh we:bsite an'
06              it seems ta be a little confu:sing
```

```
07          an' Not very helpful. .hh An' I wuz

08          jus' wonderin' if could get a better idea

09          ov' what's goin' on with it.=hh

10          (.)

11   Rep:   R'pair authorization number?

     ((Representative locates Customer's order))

21   Rep:   It's at- So:ny manufacturer. Sony normally

22          takes approximately: about (.) uh: ten

23          ta twenny business days depending on thuh-

24          thuh problem with thuh unit¿

25          (.)

26   Rep:   An' it was sent out to them on thuh

27          thirtieth, (.) of March¿

28          (.)

29   Cus:   And where is thuh So:ny manufacturer

30          place located.

31   Rep:   Lemme ask thuh manufacturing department.>If

32          you wanna hold on a moment?<

33   Cus:   Sure.

34          (9.0)

35   Rep:   H'Lo?

36   Cus:   Yes:.

37   Rep:   Uhm It's S:ony in Texas.

38   Cus:   Okay. So- well it's out there a little wa:ys

39   Rep:   Mm hm.
```

```
40  >  Cus:    So:. It:'s been about ten business days so
```
```
41  >          they should be sending it ba:ck some time
```
```
42  >          soo:n so: (.) 'bout ten more days.
```
```
43              (0.2)
```
```
44  >  Cus:    Sounds about right I guess.
```
```
45     Rep:    Uhm As long as everything 's going fine
```
```
46              with their turn around that's:- should
```
```
47              be what their approximate- yih know it
```
```
48              should be back within that approximated
```
```
49              time. Yeah.
```
```
50     Cus:    Okay. And wha- And under thuh notes
```
```
51              section it says ess en why ((S N Y))
```

Doing a Calculation of the delivery time

The Customer has several resources from which he can calculate an estimated amount of time for the completion of his repair. These resources include the estimated repair completion time, "Sony normally takes approximately: about (.) uh: ten ta twenny business days depending on thuh- thuh problem with thuh unit¿" (lines 21-24), the date the organization sent the equipment out to the manufacturer, "thirtieth, (.) of March¿" (line 27), and the location of the manufacturer's repair facility, "Texas" (line 37). In his next turn, the Customer begins to reformulate what the Representative provided in her response by doing a calculation in the service of estimating a delivery time when he says, "So:. It:'s been about ten business days so they should be sending it ba:ck some time soo:n so: (.) 'bout ten more days." (lines 40-42). Here the Customer shows that he is taking the amount of time his equipment has been in repair to determine where the equipment is in the process, so that he can estimate how much longer he has to wait before he will receive his equipment, and in doing so enacts the calculation process, and exposes the inferential work he is doing to estimate a delivery timeframe.

Extracts 5.1-5.3 provide evidence to show that when Customers have sufficient

resources with which to calculate a delivery time, Customers will produce "Okay" and

thus accept the organizational status answer, and then go on to reformulate the

organizational status to a delivery time for the Representatives' confirmation. By

reformulating the organizational status answer, Customers treat the organizational status

for how it bears on the delivery time, or when they will receive their equipment back

from the organization. The next section provides another type of evidence that Customers

treat the organizational status answer in terms of how it bears on the delivery time

through assessments and complaints.
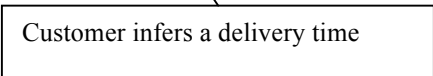
Assessments/Complaints

The cases below provide additional evidence for how Customers treat

organizational status for how it bears on the delivery time. In Extract 5.4 (below) after the

Representative produces the organizational status answer as possibly complete, the

Customer shows that he understands the organizational status for its delivery time

implications by producing an assessment.

Extract 5.4 Sta 7

```
01     Rep:   Jack Camera this is Tara speaking=may I help you,

02            (.)

03     Cus:   .pt Uh Yes Sara I'd like ta check the status on

04            my: camera.

05            (.)

06     Rep:   Sure can I have your repair authorization number¿

       ((Representative locates Customer's order))

29     Rep:   .hh Okay. It wuz appro:ved uhm: fe:r (.) them tuh start

30            doing thuh repairs on it as of toda:y¿

31     Cus:   Mm h[m.]
```

```
32    Rep:        [.h]h an:d normally: if they can get thuh parts

33                in=because Minolta is having trouble getting parts

34                fer some ov' the:ir .hh units because of it being

35                bought out by Sony¿

36    Cus:    Mm hm.

37                (.)

38    Rep:    If they can get the par:ts, it's gunna be about ten

39                business day:s. An' then they turn it back to us.

40                (0.2)

41    Rep:    .hh If they can:not get the parts, er thuh parts are not

42                in sto:ck. (.) It's (.) between thirty da forty

43                business day:s.

44                (0.2)

45  >  Cus:    Wo:w. hh

46                (0.8)

47  >  Cus:    Huh heh S(h)o  in oth(h)er wo(h)rds I might see it

48                by summer. .hh

49    Rep:    °°Yeah°°

50                (.)

51    Cus:    °Mhuh huhm°

52    Rep:    Uh: I mean they would be in con:tact with you if is

53                going to be that. If its- the issue is going to be

54                that they're no:t (.) receiving the par:t.
```

Customer infers a delivery time

The Representative provides two different types of resources within her

organizational status answer. First, the Representative reports that the organization sent

an approval to the manufacturer for them to proceed with the repair, "It wuz appro:ved

uhm: fe:r (.) them tuh start doing thuh repairs on it as of toda:y¿" (lines 29-30). Within

this report the Representative includes the starting date for the repair, which as shown in

the above section, is one type of resource that Customers use to be able to infer a delivery time. Second, the Representative reports best case and worst case scenarios for the estimated repair completion time where the best case is, "If they can get the par:ts, it's gunna be about ten business day:s." (lines 38-39), and the worst case, "If they can:not get the parts, er thuh parts are not in sto:ck. (.) It's (.) between thirty da forty business day:s." (lines 41-43). With these two possible estimates for how long it could take before the Customer's equipment is repaired, the Representative provides a second resource from which the Customer could possibly infer a practical status.

Here the Customer treats the Representative's organizational status answer as surprising news (Wilkinson & Kitzinger, 2006), and assesses it as news when he produces "Wo:w. hh" (line 45). By producing a third positioned assessment, the Customer treats the organizational status answer as complete. In addition, as Pomerantz (1984) indicated, "with an assessment, a speaker claims knowledge of that which he or she is assessing" (p. 57). Thus, with this assessment the Customer shows that he also registers and accepts the sufficiency of the organizational status.

After a 0.8 second gap (line 46) which is a place where the Representative could take a turn, the Customer continues by displaying his understanding of what the Representative's response means in terms of when he will get his equipment back by reformulating an upshot of the organizational status answer to an estimated delivery time, "Huh heh S(h)o in oth(h)er wo(h)rds I might see it by summer. .hh" (lines 47-48). Notice that while the Customer designs his talk to be heard as sarcastic by producing an extremely long timeframe that is bubbled through with laughter, this reformulating is similar to those in Extracts 5.1 and 5.2 where Customers infer the practical status based

on the resources provided in the organizational status answer. In this instance the

Representative tentatively confirms the Customer's understanding of the practical status

when she quietly produces, "°°Yeah°° (line 49). Important for this study, however, is that

by confirming the Customer's reformulation of the organizational status to a practical

status, the Representative indicates that the Customer inferred the upshot of the

organizational status answer "correctly".

Customers can also show that they treat the organizational status answer for how

it bears on the delivery time by complaining about how long the repair is going to take to

complete as in Extract 5.5 (below).

Extract 5.5 Sta 140

```
01              ((Ring))

02      Rep:    Jack Camera Sondra speakin'.=How may I help ya?

03              (2.1)

04      Cus:    Hello?

05      Rep:    Hello¿

06      Cus:    Ye:s.

07              (1.0)

08      Rep:    Hi. This is Jack Camera. How can I help you.

09              (.)

10      Cus:    Oh hi:. Uhm .pt I was calling ta check thuh

11              status of my: camera?

        ((Representative locates Customer's order))

56      Rep:     That's on thuh technician's shelf waiting

57               to be worked on:. .hh Thuh repair ti:mes

58               usually run approximately ten ta twenny

59               business days.

60               (1.0)
```

```
61  >  Cus:    It takes that long?
```

```
62          (0.2)

63    Rep:    Ye:s.

64          (.)

65 >  Cus:    Oh: How do you put a rush on it. Because

66 >          my dau- .hh I need it uhm:: (1.0) like

67 >          it's kinda an emergency. .hh

68    Rep:    When da ya need it by?
```

In this instance the Representative's organizational status answer contains at least one resource for the Customer to be able to infer the implications for the delivery time which is the estimated repair completion time, "Thuh repair ti:mes usually run approximately ten ta twenny business days." (lines 57-59). This component of the Representative's response provides the Customer with a possible resource for being able to infer how long she might have to wait before she receives her equipment back.

Evidence that the Customer has the resources to be able to infer the delivery time is that the Customer treats the organizational status as bad news by initiating repair that claims "agreement" trouble (Schegloff, Jefferson & Sacks, 1977) and carries a possible complaint regarding the amount of time for the repair to be complete when she says, "It takes that long?" (line 61). In addition, with this complaint the Customer also shows that she registers and accepts the organizational status answer as a complete organizational response for all practical purposes.

Additional evidence that the Customer treats the organizational status answer as having implications for the delivery time is that after the Representative produces a confirmation in response to the Customer's possible complaint (line 63), the Customer goes on to pursue the delivery time when she inquires about how to speed up the repair

process, "Oh: How do you put a rush on it." (line 65). By inquiring about how to speed up the repair process, the Customer shows that she is able infer from the organizational response that it will be a long time before she receives her equipment back.

This section demonstrated that when Representatives' organizational status answers contain sufficient resources for Customers to infer the delivery time, Customers treat the organizational status answers as complete organizational responses by producing things like "okays", assessments and complaints. In addition, the cases examined in this section provide evidence that Customers treat organizational status for how it bears on the delivery time. For example, Customers indicate that they understand what the organizational status means in terms of the delivery time when a. they infer the delivery time from the organizational status when they reformulate it for confirmation (Extracts 5.1-5.3), and b. they take a particular stance towards the organizational status through assessments and complaints (Extracts 5.4.-5.5).

The next section provides additional evidence to show that Customers treat the organizational status as bearing on the delivery time. We see that Customers can orient to the organizational status answer as not containing sufficient resources for the inference of a delivery time for when they can expect to receive their equipment back.

When Representatives' Organizational Status Answers Do Not Contain Sufficient

Resources for Customers to Infer a Delivery Time
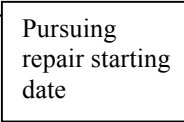
This subsection continues to demonstrate that Customers recurrently treat organizational status for how it bears on the delivery time. However, unlike Extracts 5.1-5.5, in the following cases Customers treat Representatives' organizational status answers as providing *insufficient* resources with which to infer a delivery time. In each of the

following cases Customers regularly pursue organizational status-based resources

necessary for them to be able to infer the delivery time. In Extract 5.6 (below) the

Customer pursues a resource, a repair starting date that presumably will enable him to

infer when he should receive his equipment back from the repair shop.

Extract 5.6 Sta 15

```
01              ((Ring))

02    Rep:    Jack Camera Kendra speakin'.

03            =How may I help you?

04    Cus:   .hh Hi=ye:s uhm. (.) .pt I'm

05            calling ta see: if I could get a

06            sta:us on a r'pai:r that we sent

07            in to=or- our video camera¿

08            (0.2)

09    Rep:   .hh Uhkay what wuz thuh repair number?

      ((Representative locates Customer's order))

15    Rep:   Yeah.=It looks like they sent that

16            out to: uh:m Panasonic fer repai:r.

17    Cus:   Oh they di:d.

18    Rep:   Yehs:. Because it has a bad See See Dee?

19            (0.2)

20    Cus:   Okay. hh

21            (.)

22    Cus:   So do you have an estimated (.)

23            da:te.=hh

24            (0.2)

25    Rep:   I believe Panasonic usually takes

26            approximately two tuh
```

```
27              three weeks fer repairs.

28  >  Cus:    So when did you send it out.

29              (0.4)

30     Rep:    Looks like it went out on thuh twenny second.

31              (0.6)

32     Cus:    .hh On March twenty second?

33              (1.0)

34     Cus:    Okay. It-so it has a bad see see dee:?
```

Pursuing repair starting date

The ability for the Customer to infer the delivery time is possibly complicated in

two ways. First, the Representative's organizational status contains a limited number of

resources for the Customers to be able to infer a delivery time. That is, the Representative

reports that the organization sent the equipment to the manufacturer for repair, "It looks

like they sent that out to: uh:m Panasonic fer repai:r." (lines 15-16), and provides an

account as to why the organization sent the equipment to the manufacturer, "Because it

has a bad See See Dee?" (line 18). In the previous section I demonstrated that specific

dates (when the equipment was entered into the system, repair starting times, etc.) are an

important resource for Customers to be able to infer a practical status. In this case the

Representative's answer does not include repair status related dates within her

organizational status answer. Second, the Customer treats the Representative's response

to his inquiry as an incomplete response by pursuing the second component, the

estimated repair completion time, when he says, "So do you have an estimated (.)

da:te.=hh" (lines 22-23). After the Representative reports the estimated repair completion

time, "I believe Panasonic usually takes approximately two tuh three weeks fer repairs."

(lines 25-27), the organizational status answer is possibly complete.

The Customer, however, treats the Representative's organizational status answer as insufficient by pursuing the date that the organization sent the equipment to the manufacturer for repair, "So when did you send it out." (line 28). By soliciting the date the equipment was sent to the manufacturer, the Customer pursues a calculation point for being able to estimate a timeframe for the completion of the repair, which, as indicated in the above section, would provide her with a resource to be able to infer a delivery timeframe.

After the silence (line 29), where presumably the Representative is searching the repair tracking system so that she can provide a response to the Customer's inquiry, the Representative provides the Customer with the date when she says, "Looks like it went out on thuh twenny second." (line 30), and produces this as a possibly complete unit of talk. The silence at line 31 projects that the Customer has a possible problem with the Representative's turn, and then the Customer requests confirmation for her inference about the date the Representative provided by including the month, "March" (line 32) when she asks, ".hh On March twenty second?" (line 32). However, in this instance the Representative treats the Customer's turn as registering and accepting her response by remaining silent during one second of silence at line 33. When the Customer speaks next, she produces, "Okay." (line 34) which indicates that she now accepts the organizational status answer as a sufficient and complete response to her repair status inquiry.

This next case provides additional evidence that after the possible completion of the organizational status, Customers can treat the organizational status answer as insufficient. Similar to Extract 5.6 (above), the Customer orients to a specific date as a

key resource for being able to infer what the organizational status answer means in terms of a delivery time.

<u>Extract 5.7 (Sta 20)</u>

((Representative picks up a call where the Customer was put on hold))

```
01     Rep:    .pt °Yeh° Sir,

02             (.)

03     Cus:    Ye:s=hh

04     Rep:    Okay How can I help you?

05     Cus:    .hh Uhm I'm calling t' f:- get a little bit mo:re

06             information on thuh repa:ir of a digital camera I

07             sent in about a week ago=.hh

08             (.)

09     Rep:    Wha' wuz thuh repair number.

10     Cus:    I b'lieve it's two: triple three: eight seven.

11             (7.5)

12     Rep:    M:itchell?

13             (.)

14     Cus:    Correct.

15     Rep:    M'kay. .hh Uh:m That's on thuh technician's shelf

16             waiting to be worked o:n.=Th' repair ti:me (0.2).hh

17             runs approximately ten ta twenny business days from

18             thuh date that it's logged into our system.

19             (1.2)

20  >  Cus:    So:: fro:m. (.) We'[re      about. ]                  Pursuing
                                                                     starting date
21 >>  Rep:                       [>Twenny< ninth.]                  of the repair

22             (0.2)

23     Cus:    .hh

24             (1.0)

25     Cus:    Twenty ni:nth. Even thou:gh you received=
```

```
26      Rep:    [(Actually  )]

27      Cus:    =[it    on    ] Monda:y thuh twenny sixth. .hh

28              (5.5)

29      Rep:    That's ten ta twenny °uhm business days.°

30              (0.2)

31      Cus:    Oka:y.

32              (0.2)

33      Cus:    .hh So: r=is there gunna be any upda:te¿

34              (0.2)

35      Cus:    Or:: do I jus' need da' wait ten- ten

36              d[ays >I'm gunna be lookin'<]

37      Rep:     [ Uhm    you.       If.  ] Y'know

38              they need they need ta order parts or

39              anything you'll see uhm: (0.2) a status change

40              on thuh website.

41              (1.1)

42      Cus:    A'right but what chure sayin' is it's .hh

43      Rep:    They don't update thuh: (.) thuh system randomly.

44              .hh I mean they'll update it sayin' that maybe

45              that it's on thuh technician's bench or somethin'

46              like that. .hh or uh:m (0.4) on hold fer par:ts¿

47              (.)

48   >  Cus:    Ri:ght but what I'[m tr]yin' ta understand is=

49      Rep:                      [o- ]

50   >  Cus:    =yer comment about ten ta twenny day:s. .hh Is that

51   >          ten ta twenny days from when you recei:ved it¿ Er

52   >          [ten ta tw-]

53      Rep:    [Ten ta twe]nny business days from thuh date that

54              it was logged into thuh system.
```

Seeking clarification of a repair starting point

```
55    Cus:   So an' that's thuh twenny ni:nth?

56    Rep:   °°Ri:ght.°°

57           (1.2)

58    Cus:   Oka:y.

59           (.)

60           So I need d'- an' that's (.) ten tuh-

61           those are wor:king days or calendar d[ays ]

62    Rep:                                        [Yes.]

63           Business days.

64           (.)

65    Cus:   Okay.

66           (.)

67    Cus:   .hh A'ri:ght. Well thank you very much.

68    Rep:   Okay yer welcome.

69    Cus:   Buh bye.
```

The Representative produces her report of the organizational status as complete after her report of the estimated repair completion time. Within her report, however, the Representative does not include a starting date for the repair when she reports the current repair process status component, "M'kay. .hh Uh:m That's on thuh technician's shelf waiting to be worked o:n.=Th' repair ti:me "(lines 15-16). This appears to complicate how the Customer treats the organizational status answer because after the long 1.2 seconds silence (line 19), which projects a possible problem for the Customer in that he does not immediately take up her response to his repair status inquiry, the Customer begins to produce a reformulation of the organizational status, "So:: fro:m." (line 20). Notice, however, that the Customer designs his reformulation with a sound stretch (symbolized in the transcript by the colon), thus possibly soliciting the cooperation of the

Representative by showing that he is doing a search for a date (Schegloff, Jefferson &

Sacks, 1977). Evidence that the Representative hears that the Customer is searching for a

date is that she begins to speak in overlap with the start of the Customer's next unit of

talk to provide a starting date of the repair, ">Twenny< ninth." (line 21). With this report

of the starting date for the repair, the Customer now has an additional resource for

inferring a delivery time of his equipment.

However, the Customer indicates that this starting date complicates how he

understands the organizational status in terms of how it bears on the delivery time. Here

the Customer treats this starting date as problematic by producing a possible complaint

"Twenty ni:nth. Even thou:gh you received it on Monda:y thuh twenny sixth. .hh" (lines

25, 27). The Customer contests the organization's repair starting date for his equipment

by asserting that he knows that the organization received the equipment much earlier than

the date that the Representative reported. With this possible complaint the Representative

may infer that, from the Customer's perspective, the Customer considers the date the

organization received the equipment to be the official starting repair date. The

Representative treats the Customer's report as seeking reconfirmation of how long before

his equipment is repaired when she says, "That's ten ta twenny °uhm business days.°"

(line 29). Although the 0.2 gap (line 30) could project possible trouble for the Customer,

the Customer registers and accepts the Representative's response by producing, "Oka:y."

(line 31) which claims that he registers and accepts the Representative's response as now

complete and sufficient, and proposes to close the sequence.

It appears that the Customer is prepared to accept the Representative's repair

status answer and treat the sequence as closed by moving on to a next action when he

inquires about future repair status updates, ".hh So: r=is there gunna be any upda:te¿"

(line 33). However, after the Representative responds to this inquiry (lines 43-36), the

Customer makes at least two attempts at seeking clarification regarding the starting date

of his repair. First, the Customer begins to produce a next action where he seeks

clarification of something the Representative already produced, "A'right but what chure

sayin' is it's .hh" (line 42). However, before the action of the Customer's turn is fully

projected, the Representative begins her response and treats the action of his inquiry as

seeking clarification about the organization's website, "They don't update thuh: (.) thuh

system randomly. .hh I mean they'll update it sayin' that maybe that it's on thuh

technician's bench or somethin' like that. .hh or uh:m (0.4) on hold fer par:ts¿" (lines 43-

46).

The second attempt the Customer makes to clarify his understanding about the

starting date of his repair comes in his next turn. He begins this unit of talk by showing

that the he registers and understands the Representative's response when he produces,

"Ri:ght" (line 48). Then when he continues his turn, he builds his unit of talk as a contrast

to what the Representative just produced which indicates that her response did not

provide an answer to what he is trying to understand, "but what I'm tryin' ta understand

is yer comment about ten ta twenny day:s. .hh Is that ten ta twenny days from when you

rec<u>ei</u>:ved it¿ Er ten ta tw-" (lines 48-52). By seeking clarification of the starting date of

the repair, the Customer pursues the pieces of information he presumably needs to

calculate the estimated repair completion time, from which he could project a delivery

timeframe. The Representative responds to the Customer's request for clarification by

redoing the estimated repair completion time, "Ten ta twenny business days from

thuh date that it was logged into thuh system" (lines 53-54).

The Customer still treats the organizational status as insufficient by seeking reconfirmation of the starting date of the repair when he produces, "So an' that's thuh twenny ni:nth?" (line 55). Even after the Representative confirms the repair starting date, "°°Ri:ght.°°" (line 56), the Customer projects a possible problem with the organizational status by remaining silent during the 1.2 second gap (line 57) before registering and accepting the organizational status as sufficient and complete when he produces, "Oka:y." (line 58) which possibly closes the sequence. While the Customer proposes possible sequence closure with his "Oka:y." (line 58), after a beat of silence (.), he reopens the sequence by requesting clarification about how to understand Representative's formulation of the number of days for the repair, "So I need d'- an' that's (.) ten tuh- those are wor:king days or calendar days" (lines 53-54). With this request the Customer treats the organization's time formulation as a resource for being able to infer a delivery time, and displays his understanding that there is a difference between the two (working days does not include weekends, thus 10-15 business/working days would translate into 3-4 weeks in lay terms). After the Representative clarifies that the repair time is based on working days, "Yes. Business days." (line 63), after a beat of silence (line 64) the Customer produces, "Okay." (line 65) which registers and accepts the Representative's response, and treats the organizational status as sufficient. Further evidence that the customer now treats the organizational status as sufficient is that he goes on to close the call (line 67).

In this instance we saw that by pursuing the components necessary to do a calculation of how long the repair will take, the Customer orients to the organizational

status as not containing sufficient resources for the inference of a delivery time. This case

also indicates that the resources Customers orient to as necessary to be able to infer a

delivery time (repair starting date; staring point within the process – from the time the

equipment was received vs. from the time the equipment was logged into the repair

tracking system; difference between business days and calendar days) poses possible

complications for Customers to be able to infer a delivery time in terms of understanding

problems. This is also seen in Extract 5.8 (below) where the Customer displays a problem

in understanding from what point he should begin to calculate the estimated repair

completion time. By seeking clarification of the starting point of the repair, the Customer

shows that he is treating the organizational status answer as insufficient for being able to

infer a delivery time for the return of his equipment.

Extract 5.8 Sta 13

```
01              ((Ring))

02      Rep:    Jack Camera. Kendra speakin'.

03              =How may help you.

04              (0.5)

05      Cus:    Check on uh repai:r plea:se.

06              (0.5)

07      Rep:    M'kay what is yer repair number.

        ((Representative locates Customer's order))

11      Rep:    Okay sir.=That has bee:n assigned to

12              a technician tuh work on:¿ .hh repairs

13              usually run approximately ten tuh uh

14              twenny business days.

15              (1.2)

16      Cus:    Ten ta twenny da:ys?

17      Rep:    Mm hm. Ye:s.
```

```
18                    (1.2)
19    >  Cus:    | From: resu- from receipt. |          Customer seeks
                                                          clarification of the
20                    (.)                                 starting  point of the
                                                          repair
21       Cus:    [For  whe-]

22       Rep:    [From thuh]time that it's logged into our

23               system.>It wuz< logged in on: uh: three

24               twenty one.

25               (.)

26       Cus:    Three twenny one.

27       Rep:    °Mm hm.°

28       Cus:    °Yeap°=.hh An:d went tuh a threet-

29               technician on three twenny six.

30       Rep:    Mm hm.

31               (1.2)

32       Cus:    It takes ten ta twenny da:ys.

33               (.)

34       Cus:    Okay.

35               (.)

36       Rep:    [Okay?     ]

37       Cus:    [Thank you.]

38       Rep:    Yer wel:come.
```

The Customer displays a possible problem with the organizational status answer

by initiating repair with a partial questioning repeat which targets the amount of time for

the repair as problematic, "Ten ta twenny da:ys?" (line 16). By designing her repeat of

the number of days to end with a strong rising intonation the Customer communicates

surprise. In addition, the questioning repeat embodies a possible complaint about a long

amount of time before his repair is completed. The Representative does not take up the

possible complaint and treats the Customer's repeat as a request for confirmation when she produces, "Mm hm. Ye:s." (line 17).

After the long 1.2 second of silence (line 18), the Customer recompletes his turn at line 16 with an increment "From: resu- from receipt." (line 19) which proposes a starting point from which to calculate the estimated repair completion time. By proposing a starting date for the repair as from the time the organization received his equipment, it is possible that the Customer initially understood the starting point as from the time the equipment was assigned to the technician, which is what the Representative reported as the current repair process status. With this increment, he readjusts his understanding of the point from which to calculate the estimated repair completion time, from which he can project a practical status. Thus, this instance shows that the Customer's ability to infer a delivery time is possibly complicated by Customers misunderstanding the point from which the repair process actually begins (e.g. from the time it is received vs. the time it is given to the technician). Notice that, similar to Extract 5.8 (above), after the Representative clarifies the repair starting date, "From thuh time that it's logged into our system.>It wuz< logged in on: uh: three twenty one." (lines 22-24), the Customer seeks reconfirmation of several organizational resources before treating the organizational status answer as sufficient when he produces, "Okay." (line 34).

In Extract 5.9 (below), after the completion of the organizational status, the Customer registers and accepts the organizational status with a sequence-closing move and then continues the activity by pursuing additional resources necessary to be able to infer the delivery time.

Extract 5.9 Sta 102

```
01           ((Ring))

02    Rep:   Jack Camera. Kendra speakin'.

03           How may I help you?

04    Cus:   .hh Ah yes. I was callin' to check on

05           thuh r'pair status?

06           (.)

07    Rep:   What's thuh repair number?

      ((Representative locates Customer's order))

13    Rep:   It looks like they're sending that

14           out ta th' manufacturer fer repair-

15           .hh repair.=They have uh uhm: See See Dee

16           recall on that u-

17    Cus:   Uh huh:

18    Rep:   Unit¿

19    Cus:   Okay.=

20    Rep:   =So they have to send that out to uhm:

21           Canon for repair.

22    Cus:   .hh Okay. Do you: d'- know how long

23           that's gonna take?

24           (.)

25    Rep:   Uhm:: Canon: I believe is runnin'

26           approximately two: three weeks. Uhm::

27           lemme jus' double check that.

28    Cus:   Okay.

29           ((Actual hold time not available))

30    Rep:   Ma'm?
```

> "Okay" + "and" – accepts response then continues by pursuing additional resources

```
31      Cus:    Yea:s.

32      Rep:    It runs approximately two ta three weeks.

33  >   Cus:    Ok↑ay↓. An' will they ship back directly

34  >           from thuh: (.) manufac[turer]

35      Rep:                          [They']ll ship it back

36              to us an then we'll ship it to you.

37      Cus:    ↑Okay.↓ Thank you very much.

38      Rep:    Okay. Yer welcome.

39      Cus:    Bah bye.

40      Rep:    Buh bye.
```

The Customer shows that she accepts the Representative's response to her repair status inquiry as complete and proposes possible sequence closure when she produces an emphatic, "Ok↑ay↓." (line 33). Beach (1993) argued that turn-initial "okay's" can mark an "on topic" shift to a next matter of business (p. 338). In this instance, the Customer's "Ok↑ay↓." (line 33) accepts the just prior talk and treats it as having answered her inquiry, and then she immediately continues her turn by asking about the shipping arrangements for her repair, "An' will they ship back directly from thuh: (.) manufacturer" (lines 33-34). The Customer designs her inquiry about shipping as an "and" prefaced question which is hearable as next question in a line of questioning (Heritage & Sorjonen, 1994), and forwards the progression of the course of action by pursuing additional information necessary to be able to infer the delivery time. By asking about the shipping arrangements, and presumably how the equipment will ship back to her, the Customer shows that 1. she treats organizational status as not containing the

resources necessary for her to infer a delivery time and 2. that she treats the organizational status as having a bearing on the delivery time.

The Representative responds to the Customer's inquiry by reporting the shipping procedure for equipment that is sent out to a third party manufacturer, "They'll ship it back to us an then we'll ship it to you." (lines 35-36). Within her response the Representative shows that she understands that the Customer is pursuing a resource to be able to infer the delivery time because she reports that after the organization receives her equipment, that the equipment will then be sent back to her. After the Representative's response is complete, the Customer registers and accepts the organizational status and moves to close the call (line 37).

In this section I have demonstrated that Customers recurrently treat organizational status for how it bears on the delivery time for their equipment. When Representatives' organizational status answers contain sufficient resources for Customers to infer a delivery time, Customers treat the organizational status answer as being sufficient for "all practical purposes" and produce sequence closing "okay's" followed by requests for confirmation or reformulations of organizational status (Extracts 5.1-5.3), or take up a particular stance towards the organizational status answer through assessments and complaints (Extracts 5.4-5.5). When Representatives' organizational status answers do not contain sufficient resources for Customers to infer the delivery time, Customers recurrently pursue the organizational status-based resources necessary for them to be able to infer the delivery time (Extracts 5.6-5.9). All of this evidence suggests that Customers recurrently treat organizational status for how it bears on the delivery time, or when they will receive their equipment back from the repair shop.

This section raises the question: If Customers recurrently treat organizational status for how it bears on the delivery time, then why do Customers not overtly ask when they should expect the return of their equipment when they inquire about the status of their repair? One possible explanation is that when speakers seek information, such as when Customers call to inquire about the status of their repair, they typically avoid asking recipients something they presume they cannot provide. As Pomerantz (1988) suggested, "a speaker unavoidably builds into a an information-seeking question an expectation that the recipient should know, may know, probably does not know, etc. the sought-after information." (p. 366). Given that Customers treat organizational status for its deliver time implications, it is possible that Customers orient to the delivery of their equipment as wholly contingent on the organizational status, which Representatives may not know in advance, and thus may not be able to provide. In extremely rare cases (as will be shown in Extracts 5.10-5.14 below) customers do overtly ask for the delivery time of their equipment, but this appears to be a norm-violative practice associated with complaining.

Representatives Appear to Understand that Customers Treat Institutional Status for How it Bears on Delivery Time

In the previous section it was demonstrated that Customers regularly treat organizational status for how it bears on the delivery time of the equipment. This section demonstrates Representatives' understanding of this customer orientation. In the following instance, the Representative displays her understanding that the Customer treats the organizational status for how it bears on the deliver time by providing additional resources for a possible calculation of the delivery time of their equipment.

Ex 5.10 Sta 97

```
01              ((Ring))

02      Rep:    Jack Camera. This is Tara speaking. May I help you?

03              (0.2)

04      Cus:    Yes. Do you speak Spanish.

05              (.)

06      Rep:    Uh:m no.=But I can get somebody on thuh

07              line who does?

08      Cus:    Oh >no no no< uh there's no problem.

09      Rep:    [°Oka-°]

10      Cus:    [.hh  ] I just want check it=ou:t a

11              repair status of uh camera¿

12              (.)

13      Rep:    Okay. Uhm Do you have thuh repair

14              authorization number?

        ((Representative locates Customer's order))

19      Rep:    Kay. It wuz entered into our system on

20              thuh thirtieth of: Mar:ch¿

21      Cus:    Mm hm.=

22      Rep:    =.hh An:d on thuh second which was on uh m-

23              last Monday, .hh it was sent out to

24              Nikon manufacturer fer thuh repai:rs¿

25      Cus:    Mm hm.

26      Rep:    An:d Nikon normally takes about ten ta

27              fifteen business days fer their turn

28              around time.

29              (.)

30      Cus:    Ten ta fifteen da:ys.

31      Rep:    From thuh second. Yes.
```
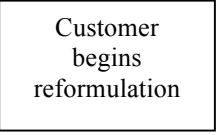
```
32      Cus:    O:kay.=

33      Rep:    =And then they would send it back to us

34              and we'd send it back to you.

35   >  Cus:   Okay. So you'll ta:ke uh:m

36      Rep:    It co[uld  ]be uhm

37      Cus:         [°li-°]

38 >>   Rep:    'bout [thee end] of thuh month=

39      Cus:          [(       )]

40 >>   Rep:    that you'd receive it back or thuh

41 >>           beginning of next. d'pending on

42              if there's any problem with thuh

43              repairs.

44      Cus:    O:kay.45      Rep:      Okay?

46      Cus:    Okay thank you.

47      Rep:    No problem.

48      Cus:    Buh bye.

49      Rep:    Bye:
```
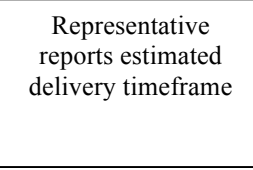
Customer begins reformulation

Representative reports estimated delivery timeframe

The Representative produces her organizational status answer as complete (line 28) and after a beat of silence (line 29) the Customer registers the Representative's response by repeating (Goldberg, 1975) the amount of time for the repair, "Ten ta fifteen da:ys." (line 30). The Representative treats the Customer's turn as seeking clarification and adds an increment to the Customer's time formulation with, "From thuh second." (line 31). With this increment the Representative recompletes the Customer's confirmation by including the date from which the Customer should calculate a timeframe for the completion of the repair. This increment is immediately followed by, "Yes." (line 30) which confirms the Customer's understanding of the number of days before her repair is complete. The Customer then registers and accepts the

Representative's response, and treats the organizational status answer as now complete when she produces, "O:kay." (line 32).

The Customer's "okay" is a third positioned item which could propose sequence closure. However, the Representative builds her next unit of talk as a continuation and goes on to report the next step beyond the completion of the repair, which is shipping the equipment back to the Customer, "And then they would send it back to us and we'd send it back to you." (lines 33-34). By reporting that the organization will send the equipment back to the Customer (line 31), the Representative indicates that she hears the Customer's repeat as possibly seeking confirmation of resources necessary to infer the delivery time.

As demonstrated in the previous section (Extracts 5.1-5.3), when the organizational status answer contains sufficient resources for Customers to infer a delivery time, they will treat the organizational status answer as sufficient and then go on to seek confirmation of their understanding of a delivery time for their equipment. In this instance, this is what the Customer does next.

After the Representative provides the additional resources (the "formula" for calculating a completion time and the shipping process) the Customer treats the organizational status answer as complete and sufficient by producing, "Okay." (line 34), and then immediately goes on to reformulate the organizational status answer, "So you'll ta:ke uh:m" (line 34). Although the Customer abandons her turn in progress after she initiates a word search with, "uh:m" (line 34), the Representative shows that she hears the Customer's projection of a reformulation as on her way to producing a deliver time when she reports when the Customer should receive her equipment, "It could be uhm 'bout thee end of thuh month that you'd receive it back or thuh beginning of next. d'pending on if

there's any problem with thuh repairs." (lines 36-43). By reporting an estimated

timeframe for when the Customer should receive her equipment, the Representative

indicates that she knows the Customer is analyzing her organizational status answer for

its delivery time implication.

     In this next instance the Representative treats the Customer's weak acceptance of

the organizational status as orienting to the insufficiency of the organizational status

answer for being able to infer a delivery time.

Extract 5.11 (Sta 82)

```
01     Rep:    Jack Camera. This is Tara speaking.

02             May I help you?

03             (0.2)

04     Cus:    Yeah. Uh: I'm tryin' (.) find out wh-

05             what thee: uh (0.2) repair status is:.

06             Of my camera that I sent back about

07             six ta seven weeks ago.

08             (.)

09     Cus:    An' uh:: uh th' I jus' keep getting

10             thuh same message on thuh website

11             that it's (0.2) at Canon. There's no::

12             uh n-n- no: uh uh indication of when

13             it's gunna be finished.

14             (0.2)

15     Rep:    Kay. Do you have th' r'pair number?

       ((Representative locates Customer's order))

18     Rep:    Okay. Canon started on thuh repairs as

19             of th' fi:fth?
```

```
20      Cus:    >'Scuse m[e.< ]

21      Rep:            [An:d]

22              (.)

23      Rep:    Yeh. Uhm: Canon sta:rted on thuh r'pairs

24              as thuh fi:fth. of this month?

25      Cus:    Yea:p.

26      Rep:    .hh An:d (.) they normally take

27              approximately ten business days fer

28              their repai:rs=and then send it back

29              to us.

30              (.)

31  >   Cus:    Uh huh.=

32 >>   Rep:    So: (.) ten business days from thuh

33 >>           fifth=it should be back to us.

34      Cus:    'Ka[y.]

35 >>   Rep:      [So] probably by: thee end of next

36 >>           week we should- uhm: they should be

37 >>           completing it and sending it back to

38 >>           us, .hh [an' t]hen=

39      Cus:            [Kay. ]

40      Rep:    =as soon as we get it back we turn it

41              around and send it out to you.

42              (.)

43      Cus:    Kay. So I should look for it in about

44              two weeks.

45              (.)

46      Rep:    Yes. Most likely. Yes.
```

Representative goes on to report additional resources

The Representative produces her organizational status answer as complete after she reports the estimated completion time for the Customer's repair (lines 26-29).

Evidence that the Representative treats her response as complete is that she remains silent (line 30) after she produces the organizational status answer. The Customer shows that he registers what the Representative has reported so far when he produces, "Uh huh." (line 31), which is a weak acceptance of the organizational status answer. The Representative treats the Customer's weak acceptance as taking the stance that the organizational status answer is somehow insufficient. Evidence for this observation is the fact that when she speaks next, she formulates an upshot of the organizational status answer and then goes on to report additional organizational status-based resources for the Customer to be able to infer the delivery time (for a complete analysis of these organizational status-based resources see analysis in Extract 5.1 for the Okay + Reformulation).

Further evidence to support the claim that the Representatives understand that Customers are inspecting the organizational status answer is that at the end of the Representative's turn, she reports the next step beyond the repair process which is sending the equipment back to the customers, "as soon as we get it back we turn it around and send it out to you." (lines 40-41). By reporting the last step of the process as sending the equipment back to the customer after having provided all the of resources the Customer would need to be able to infer the practical status, the Representative displays her understanding that what the Customer wants to know is when he can expect his equipment back from the repair shop.

Representatives Resist the Provision of a Delivery Time

Customers regularly treat organizational status for how it bears on the delivery time (Extracts 5.1-5.10), and Representatives understand that customers do so (Extracts 5.10-5.11). Given the preference for offering information to others versus others having

to request it (Schegloff, 2007), the following question emerges: Why do Representatives

not offer/volunteer a delivery time for when Customers should receive their equipment?

Before providing an answer to this question (which I do at the conclusion of this chapter),

this section demonstrates that Representatives do, indeed, resist the provision of a

delivery timeframe.

In this instance, the Representative resists taking up the delivery time implication

that the Customer's complaint about the organizational status answer makes available.

Extract 5.12 Sta 13

```
01              ((Ring))

02      Rep:    Jack Camera. Kendra speakin'.

03              =How may help you.

04              (0.5)

05      Cus:    Check on uh repai:r plea:se.

06              (0.5)

07      Rep:    M'kay what is yer repair number.

        ((Representative locates the Customer's order))

11      Rep:    Okay sir.=That has bee:n assigned to

12              a technician tuh work on:¿ .hh repairs

13              usually run approximately ten tuh uh

14              twenny business days.

15              (1.2)

16  >   Cus:    Ten ta twenny da:ys?

17  >>  Rep:    Mm hm. Ye:s.            Representative's
                                        resistance

18              (1.2)

19      Cus:    From: resu- from receipt.

20              (.)

21      Cus:    [For  whe-]

22      Rep:    [From thuh]time that it's logged into our
```

```
23              system.>It wuz< logged in on: uh: three

24              twenty one.

25              (.)

26    Cus:      Three twenny one.

27    Rep:      °Mm hm.°

28    Cus:      °Yeap°=.hh An:d went tuh a threet-

29              technician on three twenny six.

30    Rep:      Mm hm.

31              (1.2)

32    Cus:      It takes ten ta twenny da:ys.

33              (.)

34    Cus:      Okay.

35              (.)

36    Rep:      [Okay?     ]

37    Cus:      [Thank you.]

38    Rep:      Yer wel:come.
```

The Representative produces her organizational status answer as complete (line

14) and waits for the Customer's uptake of the organizational status answer by remaining

silent during the long 1.5 seconds of silence (line 15). The Customer then initiates repair

by producing a partial questioning repeat, "Ten ta twenny da:ys?" (line 16), which

indexes possible disagreement with what the Representative reported as the estimated

time for the completion of his repair. As shown in the previous sections, the estimated

repair completion time is a resource that Customers use to infer a delivery time for their

equipment. As shown in the previous section, Representatives understand that Customers

treat the organizational status for how it bears on the delivery time. Given the prior

evidence that Representatives know that Customers are doing some inferential work to

understand a delivery time, here when the Representative treats the Customer's repeat of

the time formulation as merely a request for confirmation, "Mm hm. Ye:s." (line 17), it is

hearable as resisting the provision of a delivery time for his equipment.

There are a number of places in this call where the Representative could provide

the delivery time, but resists. For example, a first place occurs when the Customer speaks

next, proposing his candidate understanding of the starting date of his repair, "From:

resu- from receipt." (line 19), the Representative responds by providing a resource, the

date the equipment was entered into the repair tracking system, from which the Customer

can infer the delivery date, "From thuh time that it's logged into our system.>It wuz<

logged in on: uh: three twenty one." (lines 22-24). Second, after the Customer registers

the starting date of the repair date by repeating (Goldberg, 1975), the Representative

treats the repeat as a request for confirmation, "°Mm hm.°" (line 27) and produces a

minimal response. Third, when the Customer reports the date that he knows is equipment

went to the technician (presumably from either a prior call or the organization's website),

"°Yeap°=.hh An:d went tuh a threet- technician on three twenny six." (lines 28-29), he

shows that he is doing the inferential work of tracking the progress of his equipment

through the repair process presumably to calculate when the repair will be complete. Here

is another opportunity for the Representative to report an estimated timeframe for the

delivery of his equipment, yet she treats the Customer's tracking as merely seeking

confirmation of his understanding of a status point within the repair process when she

says, "Mm hm." (line 30). After a long 1.2 seconds of silence (line 31) the Customer

registers his understanding of the amount of time it will take for his repair to be complete

when he says, "It takes ten ta twenny da:ys." (line 32). Notice there is a beat of silence

(line 35) where the Representative could take a turn and provide the Customer with a

timeframe for the practical status. The Customer then treats the organizational status as complete and sufficient when he produces, "Okay." (line 34) and then the Representative moves to close the call.

In this instance, after the Customer invokes the relevance of a delivery time by questioning the amount of time it would take for the organization to complete his repair, the Representative enacts resistance to providing the customer with the timeframe by treating his pursuits as either requests for confirmation, or seeking clarification about the organizational status response. Although the Representative displays some understanding that the customer is doing the inferential work to calculate a delivery timeframe, she embodies a resistance to providing the delivery time by either using organizationally provided resources, or producing minimal confirmations in places where she could provide a timeframe for the delivery of his equipment.

Representatives' resistance is highlighted in cases where customers overtly ask when they will receive their equipment back as part of their repair status inquiry. In each of these cases there is evidence, in the Representatives' answers, that Representatives withhold a delivery time.

In Extract 5.13 (below) the Customer asks for the delivery time as part of his repair status inquiry when he says, "when I can I expect it ba:ck." (lines 8-9). Here the Representative responds to this explicit request for a delivery time with an organizational status answer.
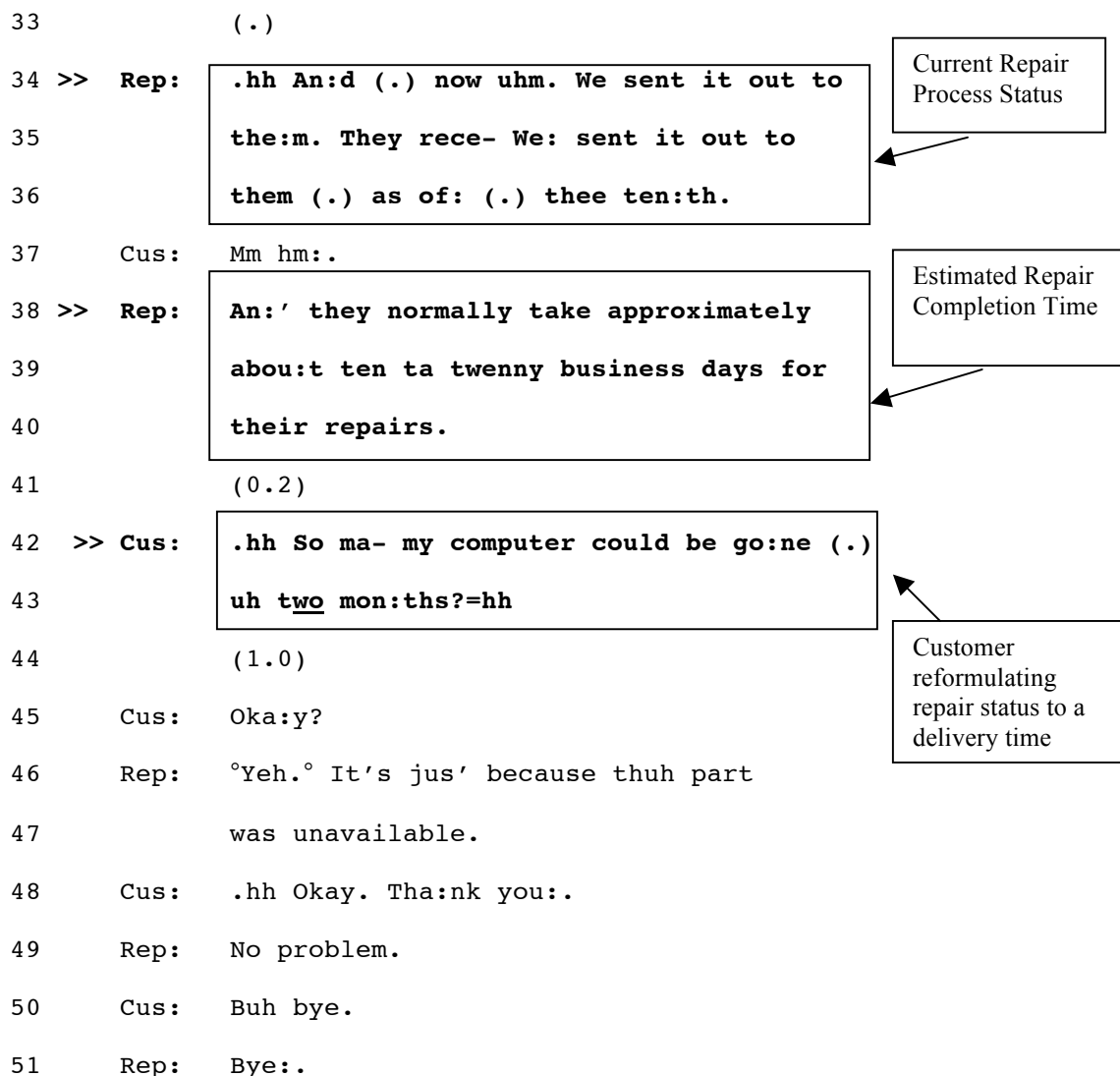
<u>Extract 5.13   (Sta 48)</u>

```
01     Rep:   Jack Camera.=This is Tara speaking.
02            =May help you?
03     Cus:   .pt ,hh Uh Yehs. I wuz jus' uh-
```

```
04              Uhm my (.)  computer's been there

05              fer about a mon:t.>Well< it's been a

06    >         little over a month.=An' I was

07    >         kinda checkin' ta see: .hh what's

08    >         goin' on:, an'(.) when can I expect

09    >         it ba:ck.

10    Rep:      Su:re. Do you have a r'pair authorization

11              number?

12    Cus:      It's two three one:. (0.2) Two seven fou:r.

13              (0.5)

14    Rep:      It's with thee uhm: eh- Manufacturing

15              d'partment.=Uhm just a moment?=

16    Cus:      =Oka:y.

17              ((Actual hold time not available))

18    Rep:      H'lo?

19              (0.2)

20    Cus:      Ye:s.

21    Rep:      Okay. .hh Uhm: (.) Thuh par:t wuz

22              unavailable. We had it on order f-

23              we had part >a part< on order a bad

24              s:- uh well a see pee ewe:. (CPU)

25              on order.

26    Cus:      [Mm hm.]

27    Rep:      [.hh   ] an': thuh part was not coming

28              in to us,

29    Cus:      Mm h[m.]

30    Rep:         [ S]o we sent it out to a

31              manufacturer,=ta do thuh r'pai:rs¿

32              .hh Uhm because thuh part was unavailable.
```

Explicitly asks for a delivery time of his equipment

```
33                    (.)

34 >>  Rep:    .hh An:d (.) now uhm. We sent it out to

35              the:m. They rece- We: sent it out to

36              them (.) as of: (.) thee ten:th.

37     Cus:    Mm hm:.

38 >>  Rep:    An:' they normally take approximately

39              abou:t ten ta twenny business days for

40              their repairs.

41                    (0.2)

42 >>  Cus:    .hh So ma- my computer could be go:ne (.)

43              uh two mon:ths?=hh

44                    (1.0)

45     Cus:    Oka:y?

46     Rep:    °Yeh.° It's jus' because thuh part

47              was unavailable.

48     Cus:    .hh Okay. Tha:nk you:.

49     Rep:    No problem.

50     Cus:    Buh bye.

51     Rep:    Bye:.
```

Current Repair Process Status

Estimated Repair Completion Time

Customer reformulating repair status to a delivery time

The Representative begins her response to the Customer's inquiry by providing an account as to why the Customer's repair is taking a long time (lines 21-32). Then the Representative continues her turn and goes on to report the first component of the organizational status, the current location of the Customer's equipment within the repair process, ".hh An:d (.) now uhm. We sent it out to the:m. They rece- We: sent it out to them (.) as of: (.) thee ten:th." (lines 34-36). By reporting the first component of the organizational status, the Representative treats the Customer's delivery time request as a repair status inquiry. This is further supported by the fact that after the Customer

produces a continuer, "Mm hm:." (line 37), the Representative continues her turn by reporting the second component of organizational status response which is the estimated repair completion time, "An:' they normally take approximately abou:t ten ta twenny business days for their repairs." (lines 38-40). As shown in previous sections, the organizational status answer contains resources for customers to infer the delivery time, and Representatives know that Customers do this. Within the Representative's organizational status answer, she includes two such resources, the date that the equipment was sent to the manufacturer, and the estimated time for the completion of the repair. With these resources, the Customer has what he needs in order to infer a delivery time.

The Representative designs this last unit of talk as possibly complete by ending with a downward, final intonation which claims turn completion, and treats her response to his repair status inquiry as complete by remaining silent at line 41. By designing her turn to communicate that her response is now complete, she treats the organizational status answer as a complete and relevant response for the Customer's delivery time request. In this instance, the Customer is also silent during the gap at line 41 which projects possible trouble. However, in his next turn and as seen in Extracts 5.1-5.3, the Customer reformulates an upshot of the organizational status to a delivery timeframe when he says, ".hh So ma- my computer could be go:ne (.) uh two mon:ths?=hh" (lines 42-43).

When Representatives are faced with Customers' explicit delivery time inquiries, they have the resources available to provide Customers with an estimated timeframe for the return of their equipment. However, Representatives may have reasons for not providing Customers with a specific delivery timeframe such as that the organization

does not want to be held accountable for specific return dates. In order to assist

Customers, Representatives can indicate that they are reporting as much information as

they have about the Customer's repair order. Extract 5.14 is an instance of the

Representative enacting "all that she has" by reporting as much as she knows about the

current repair process status.

Extract 5.14 Sta 59

```
01              ((Ring))

02      Rep:    Jack Camera=this is Tara speaking.=May I help you?

03      Cus:    Yeah. Hi=ya:. I: ha:ve sent in uh my: uh laptop

04              computer. >Twenty days ago¿< .hh

05      Rep:    Mm hm

06      Cus:    An:d uh: .hhh you:r uh website it shows that

07  >           it still in li:ne. So I wanna kno:w know-

08  >           eh e- even in ball park number when:

09  >           I can expect my (.) .hh uh: laptop back¿

10      Rep:    °Sure.° Can I have thuh repair number?

11              (.)

12      Cus:    Uh: Work order number:¿ >Of thuh work?<

13      Rep:    Yes.

14      Cus:    Okay, it is two three three:. Six four one.

15              (.)

16 >>   Rep:    Okay. It was uhm: entered inta thuh

17 >>           system on thuh fifth, which was on:

18 >>           uhm: y'know th- on Thursda:y¿ .hh So it's

19 >>           bee:n (1.2) five busine- five business

20 >>           days that's been in li:ne, (.) an:d right

21 >>           now (.) y'know thuh repairs are taking

22 >>           approximately between fif- uh: fifteen
```

Explicit delivery time inquiry

Reporting all that she has available

```
23 >>          ta twenny business days.

24    Cus:    .hh Uh: but you receipt- thuh my uh:

25            Ewe Pee Ess (UPS) record shows that you

26            received it uh: Mar:ch .hh twenny six.=hh
```

In this instance the Customer begins his reason for calling by reporting when he sent his equipment in for service and that he knows the current repair process status from the organization's website, "I: ha:ve sent in uh my: uh laptop computer. >Twenty days ago¿< .hh An:d uh: .hhh you:r uh website it shows that it still in li:ne." (lines 3-4 and 6-7). By indicating that his equipment has been in service for what inferrably he takes to be an unreasonable amount of time, the Customer provides the grounds for calling the organization about his repair order. After he reports what he already knows about his repair, he explicitly requests a timeframe for when he can expect to receive his equipment, "So I wanna kno:w know- eh e- even in ball park number when: I can expect my (.) .hh uh: laptop back¿" (lines 7-9). With this inquiry, the Customer makes relevant a response that includes a delivery timeframe for his equipment.

The Representative responds to the Customer's inquiry as a repair status inquiry by reporting the organizational status answer as a response. A closer examination of her response, however, indicates that she attends to the Customer's request for a delivery time by designing her reports so as to include specific details about the status of his repair, which in turn provides him with sufficient resources for being able to infer when he should receive his equipment back. For example, within her report of the past repair process status she reports the date that the equipment was logged into the repair tracking system, "It was uhm: entered inta thuh system on thuh fifth, which was on: uhm: y'know th- on Thursda:y¿" (lines 16-18). As shown in previous examples, the starting date of the

repair is a resource that Customers use to be able to infer a practical status time. Within the Representative's report of the current repair process status, she reports how long the Customer's equipment has been in the current location, "So it's bee:n (1.2) five busine- fi̱ve business days that's been in li:ne," (lines 18-20). Again, this report provides the Customer with a resource for being able to understand what this means in terms of the delivery time. Finally, the Representative reports the estimated amount of time it will take to complete the Customer's repair, "right now (.) y'know thuh repairs are taking approximately between fif- uh: fifteen ta twenny business days." (lines 20-23). With this last component, the Representative provides another resource for him to be able to infer the delivery time for the return of his equipment.

In both Extracts 5.13-5.14, the Representatives treat the explicit request for a delivery time, when customers will actually receive their equipment back from the repair shop, as a routine repair status inquiry. In each of these cases when Representatives report the organizational status as a response to a delivery time request, they treat their response as sufficient for what the Customers' requests make relevant. Thus, Representatives display a resistance to providing more than what they could know about the Customer's repair order and thus avoid producing a conditionally relevant response to delivery time inquiries. Rather, Representatives stick with the information they have available, which is what the organization provides, and respond to delivery time inquiries with the resources necessary for customers to be able to infer when they should receive their equipment back from the repair shop.

Discussion

In this Chapter I have shown that when Customers call the repair shop to inquire about the status of their repair, Customers treat the organizational status answer for how it bears on the delivery time for the return of their equipment. This study described the inferential work Customers do in order to calculate an estimated timeframe for the return of their equipment, and we saw that when Customers have the resources to be able to infer a delivery time, they do. However, in cases where Customers may not have all the resources they need, they will pursue the necessary resources in order to be able to do the inferential work. This suggests a strong Customer orientation to the relevance of being able to infer a delivery time based on the organizational status answer.

Through this inferential work, we learned that when Customers have the resources they need to infer a delivery time, they treat the organizational status answer as sufficient *and* complete. This tells us something about the differences between what participants orient to as a complete responding action, in contrast to a sufficient and complete responding action to an inquiry. For example, as shown in Chapter four the two-component repair status response is treated as complete after the second component. In this current chapter, we see that there is a possibility that the two-component response might not be a sufficient response after the second component (at least from the Customer's perspective), despite being treated as complete. That is, Customers treat the response as complete after the second component, but not always sufficient for what they need in order to be able to infer the delivery time. This was seen in Extracts 5.6-5.9, where Customer oriented to the organizational status answer as not containing sufficient resources for inferring the delivery time. In contrast, in Extracts 5.1-5.5 Customers did

treat the organizational status answer as complete and sufficient as Customers had the resources necessary to infer a delivery time for their equipment.

This still leaves open the question: If Customers want to know when they should receive their equipment back from the repair shop, why do they not just ask for it? As indicated earlier, one possible reason is that information seekers normally do not ask for things they presume others do not know, or cannot provide. This is possibly the case here given that the delivery time is contingent on the organizational status answer, which neither the Representative nor the Customer could know in advance. However, there is evidence that Representatives know that Customers are treating the organizational status answer for how it bears on the deliver time, and as we have seen Representatives do have the resources for providing a delivery time to Customers as part of their response to repair status inquiries.

This raises the second question that emerged in this study, which is why do Representatives not offer a timeframe for when customers should receive their equipment back from the repair shop? First, the organization has good reasons for not wanting Representatives to include a delivery time as part of their response. Given the nature of this particular industry, the electronic repair industry, the amount of time it takes to complete a repair is often unpredictable. If equipment requires additional parts, needs to be sent to a third party facility, or if the repair is complicated, then it can take much longer to repair than the Representative's estimated repair completion time. Second, if the organization did report a specific delivery time, then the Customer could hold the organization accountable if they do not meet their reported timeframe. This can lead to a possible increase in Customer complaints and dissatisfaction with the service, and has

implications for the organizations' overall image. Finally, guaranteeing timeframes for repair completion also places higher expectation on the productivity of the technicians doing the repairs, and could lead to an increase in the number of return repairs that need to be corrected, thus costing the organization additional resources in correcting mistakes.

In terms of the interaction between Customers and Representatives, this chapter shows that there is an asymmetry between Customer goals and the goals of the organization. Where Customers indicate that they are treating the organizational status answer for its delivery time implication, they embody a goal of wanting to know when they will receive their equipment back. However, as we have seen, Representatives recurrently resist providing Customers with a timeframe for when they should receive their equipment back from the organization. It appears that when Customers do the work to infer a delivery time, this inferential work provides a solution to the problem of a potential misalignment between Customers and Representatives. That is, when Representatives' organizational status answers contain sufficient resources for Customers to infer a delivery time, Customers accept the organizational status answer by treating it as a complete *and* sufficient response to their repair status inquiry.

CHAPTER SIX

FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

Findings

In this study, through a detailed analysis of customer service interactions, I described how participants jointly construct one type of organizational structure, a multi-componential response to repair status inquiries. The findings in this study contribute to our understanding of action, and the organization of action, within a customer service interaction. I showed that both Customers and Representatives, independent from one another, orient to responses to repair status inquiries as normatively containing two different types of status as a single response to a repair status inquiry (current repair process status and estimated repair completion time). Furthermore, I demonstrated that customers treat these organizational responses as a resource for how they bear on a third status, the delivery time, which they are able to infer from Representatives' responses. Thus, findings in this study lead to a description of how members of an organization manage the distribution of organizational knowledge with an organizational "outsider." In what follows I briefly summarize the key findings in this study.

Findings include the discovery that the conditionally relevant response to repair status inquiries contains two components, each reporting a different type of status, as a single response: 1. current repair process status 2. estimated repair completion time. In the calls examined for this study, overwhelmingly both Representatives and Customers displayed an orientation, independent of one another, to this organizational structure. I described how Representatives design their talk to include both of these components as a

single response to repair status inquiries, thus displaying their orientation to the normative structure of responses to these inquiries. Furthermore, I demonstrated that when Representatives produce the first action as a complete response to repair status inquiries, Customers hold Representatives accountable for the second action, and in so doing display their expectation that a second type of status is due.

Implications

The findings in this chapter contribute to our understanding of both turn-taking organization and sequence organization. First I will talk about the contribution this study makes to knowledge about turn-taking organization. Conversation analytic research has established that speakers have the right to produce one turn constructional unit within a turn at talk before a next speaker begins (Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson, 1974). However, there are also times when speakers may produce more than one turn constructional unit within a single turn, for example when telling a story or making a list. Generally, multi-unit turns are rare in ordinary conversation and when they occur, they are a type of interactional achievement (Schegloff, 1987b). Furthermore, and as indicated in Chapter Two, research suggests that the producer of the multi-unit turn (same speaker) uses particular practices to achieve them. With the exception of story prompts, where another speaker asks someone else to tell a story (Lerner, 1992), there is very little research available on other ways in which multi-unit turns come to be produced. This study contributes to the body of research on turn-taking by discovering one type of action, status inquiries, that makes relevant a response that contains two separate actions, produced as a single response. Thus we see another way that multi-unit turns can come to be produced in interaction. However, it is theoretically possible that a multi-action

response could be produced in one TCU. This does not occur in my data set. Future research, drawing on a larger data set, may discover instances where a response to a repair status inquiry is produced in one TCU.

Now I turn to the contributions this study makes to our understanding of sequence organization. Turns at talk are also the vehicle through which actions are built (Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson, 1974; Schegloff, 1997). Repair status inquiries are organized by an adjacency pair sequence where the Customers' repair status inquiry is a first pair part initiating action that makes a particular type of response relevant. Previous research in other customer service contexts has found that the Customer's first pair part initiates can be expanded through multiple components over the course of several sequences (Lee, 2009). These findings contribute to our understanding of the sequential structuring of Customer's initiating action that involves requesting in a service encounter. The findings of this current study contribute to this line of research by demonstrating how Customers' inquiries for the service of seeking a repair status update makes relevant a multi-componential response. As indicated in Chapter Two, when a recipient of a first pair part produces a response, the speaker of the first pair part must analyze how that response is an answer to the action they initiated. This study found that participants orient to the responding action to repair status inquiries as making relevant two different types of statuses as a single response: a. current repair process status b. estimated repair completion time.

The second analytic chapter (Chapter Five) builds off the first by describing how customers treat the normative organizational status response. Findings in this chapter include a description of how Customers treat the organizational status response for how it

bears on another type of status, the delivery time of Customers' equipment. As demonstrated in this chapter, when Customers have the resources they need to be able to infer the delivery time, they treat the Representatives' response to their inquiry as a sufficient and complete response for what they want to know. However, when Representatives' responses do not contain sufficient resources, Customers will pursue the resources they need in order to be able to infer a delivery time for the return of their equipment. Furthermore, as demonstrated in this chapter, not only do Customers do the inferential work to determine a delivery time, Representatives understand that Customers are monitoring their organizational status answer for how it bears on when they should receive their equipment back from the repair shop.

This raises two possible questions: first, if Customers want to know a delivery time, why do they not ask for it? and second, if Representatives know that Customers want to know a delivery time, why do they not provide it? Based on participants' conduct, what is being managed through this inferential work is the delicacy of extracting organizational knowledge. To address the first question, one possible reason why Customers do not ask when they should receive their equipment back is because they treat the organizational status answer as all that the Representative knows about their repair order. As indicated by Pomerantz (1988), information seekers typically do not ask for things they presume others cannot provide. That is, Customers treat the delivery time as contingent upon the organizational status, which is not something Representatives could know in advance. These findings suggest that knowledge is managed incrementally. Interactants seem to be oriented to a stepwise build-up of what is known, and ask for the "lowest" amount of information first – what is most easily presumed to be

knowable (what the organization knows about the current status of the repair). Once that has been established, Customers advance to less "knowable" matters, such as when the repair is likely to be completed. Further, they appear to show an orientation to the incremental establishment of what is knowable in the ways in which they formulate their inquiries, as the discussion in Chapter Five lays out. In asking tentatively and incrementally in these ways, Customers display the assumption that if the Representative had the information, she would already have shared it.

Now to the second question of why Representatives do not provide a delivery timeframe for the return of Customers' equipment. Even in rare cases where Customers explicitly ask when they can expect their equipment back, Representatives resist reporting a delivery timeframe. As described in Chapter Four, the second action component of the Organizational response to repair status inquiries, the estimated repair completion time, is designed to provide Customers with projected timeframe for the completion of their repair. When Representatives report an estimated repair completion time, they design their response as ambiguous, *these repairs are taking ten to fifteen business days,*" which in turn allows Customers to interpret what the repair timeframe could mean for them in terms of the completion and return of their equipment. As Eisenberg (1984) indicated, "ambiguity is used strategically to foster agreement on abstractions without limiting specific interpretations" (p. 231). By designing their responses to repair status inquiries as non-specific, Representatives can provide Customers with a timeframe for the completion of their repair without putting the organization in a position of committing to an exact completion date.

The reason Representatives resist reporting a specific repair timeframe may be that they do not want to be held accountable for an exact delivery time in the event that the repair is delayed. If the organization cannot meet the repair deadline for an exact return date, this could lead to additional problems in terms of more customer complaints, customer dissatisfaction, and a poor corporate image within their industry. That is, institutional reasoning seems to shape Representatives' apparent resistance to providing a specific date for the return of a repair, and using strategic ambiguity (Eisenberg, 1984) by designing the estimated repair completion time as non-specific addresses the problem of meeting the needs of the customer without placing unrealistic demands on the organization's repair process system. By examining how Representatives design their responses to repair status inquiries, and resist the provision of the delivery time, we can see how organizational member use strategic ambiguity to accomplish specific tasks such as responding to customers' information seeking activities.

Within organizational communication research there has been a move towards building a theory of organizational discourse by looking at how organizational processes and constructs are built through discourse (Putnam & Fairhurst, 2001). Using a conversation analytic method, where actual interaction that take place within an organization is examined, provides insight into how members construct a particular type of organizational structure, and contributes to this call for research that seeks to better understand the use of discourse in organizations. The findings within this current study demonstrated how interaction shapes organizational structures, such as responses to repair status inquiries. Although it can be argued that customer service representatives are trained to provide a certain type of organizational response, this study demonstrated that

customers also display an expectation of what constitutes a sufficient answer to their repair status inquiry and treat the Representatives response as insufficient when the second action component is not forthcoming. Thus this study shows how responses to repair status inquiries are jointly produced by the Representative and the Customer, and how the action of inquiring and responding to repair status inquiries can be interactionally complex.

As indicated earlier (see Chapter Two), structuration theory indicates that these organizational structures are shaped by both the communicative practices members use within interaction and the procedures provided by the organization for managing a particular type activity. By examining naturally occurring customer service interaction, this study has demonstrated what enacting organizational structures could look like in actual interaction. Findings indicated that the normative organizational structure for responding to repair status inquiries is composed of two separate actions, a report of a current repair process status, and an estimated repair completion time, produced as a single response (see Chapter Four).

When Customers treat this organizational status answer for what it means in terms of the delivery time, and go on to pursue this third type of status (see Chapter Five), we can see how they appear to push back on the normative organizational structure to pursue something beyond what the Representative (or the organization) is prepared to provide. When Representatives resist providing the delivery time status their resistance provide some evidence, and a better understanding, of what upholding a normative organizational structure might look like in actual interaction. Furthermore, structuration theory not only provides a theoretical framework for understanding how organizational structures are

produced, shaped, and enacted, but it also provides a theoretical framework for understanding how organizational structures can change. In cases where Customers push back on the normative organizational structure to pursue the delivery time status, we can see how participants can reshape such structures through different types of social action.

This study examined one type of customer service interaction, customer service encounters, which receive little attention in organizational communication research. As indicated in Chapter Two, customer service encounters are typically viewed as impersonal and Customers' service needs are met through standardized procedures. Using conversation analysis to examine naturally occurring customer service calls offers a detailed description for how organizational members produce and enact organizational structures, and provides an interactive communication perspective on what is sometimes relegated merely to "scripts." This study demonstrated that answering Customers' inquiries in a service encounter is a complex interactional achievement, where participants use different practices in talk to achieve specific task related goals. As Boden (1994) argued, "the very constitution of organizations depends on the production of local knowledge through local language practices" (p. 75). By examining actual customer service calls, this study offers some insight into the assumptions people make when dealing with organizational knowledge (Pomerantz, 1988), demonstrates how organizational structures are also built through social actions (such as inquiries), and advances our understanding of the organization of responding actions.

Limitations

The findings of this study are rather robust. With the exception of instances where there was "no status" to give (e.g. customers' equipment was not entered into the repair tracking system), in each of the cases examined, participants displayed an orientation to the two component organizational status response. However, a limitation of the study is that there were a comparatively small number of calls examined. A larger data set may yield different permutations of the data. A second limitation is that I have not compared my findings to ordinary talk. Examining ordinary talk where speakers initiate a "status" inquiry, such as "when are you coming home tonight," may provide additional findings about the organization of responses to status inquiries. There is reason to believe that within everyday, non-institutional talk, a "delivery time" would be reported as part of the status inquiry response. If this is the case, then that provides additional evidence for making a claim about the organizational resistance to providing a delivery time.

Future Directions

As noted in the discussion of the limitations of this study, future research would benefit from a larger data set, and from comparison with status inquiries in ordinary conversation. Further exploration of the ways in which the initiating actions of status inquiries themselves are composed would be of interest, as it may be that different formats for status inquiries might have an impact on responses to status inquiries. (Although in the current data set this does not appear to be the case, a larger data set, and a comparison data set from ordinary conversation might yield different results). Further exploration of the multi-unit turn format through which responses to status inquiries are composed will shed light on how multi-unit turns are made relevant, how they are

composed, and the conduct of the recipient of a multi-unit turn. Future research on this data set will also yield interesting findings regarding sequence organization. While Pomerantz (1978) has shown how responses to compliments *may* be composed of more than one component (e.g., a thank you and a second assessment), the current study showed second pair parts that *normatively* consisted of two components, each reporting a different type of repair status update. Further, the third action (delivery time) that was recurrently sought by the Customer suggests that there is further work to be done regarding the structure of multi-componential responding actions. The robust findings of this study regarding how organizational structure and agency come together to enact an institutional practice suggest that close examination of actual communication practices within an organizational setting can yield findings that may have real implications for best practices in customer service.

Appendix A

Transcription Symbols

.   A period indicates a stopping fall in tone, not necessarily the end of a

        sentence

,   A common indicates "continuing" intonation, not necessarily between

        clauses of sentences.

¿   An inverted question mark indicating a slightly rising inflection

?   A question mark indicates a rising inflection, but not necessarily a

        question

::   Colons indicates an extension or stretching of the sound

[ ]   Square brackets indicate the beginning [and ending] of overlapping talk

_   Underlining shows stress on the word or sounds

=   An equals sign indicates utterances that are linked or latched together with

        no beat of silence between

(0.)   Indicates a pause or gap in tenths of seconds

hh   Indicates audible aspirations or a period followed by .hh indicated

        inhalations inserted in the speech where they occur.

> <   When part of an utterance is delivered at a pace quicker than the

        surrounding talk, it is indicated by being enclosed between "less than"

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