

The clause as a locus of grammar and interaction



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ABSTRACT This article draws on work at the interface of grammar and interaction to argue that the clause is a *locus* of interaction, in the sense that it is one of the most frequent grammatical formats which speakers orient to in projecting what actions are being done by others' utterances and in acting on these projections. Yet the way in which the clause affords grammatical projectability varies significantly from language to language. In fact, it depends on the nature of the clausal grammatical formats which are available as resources in a language: in some languages these allow early projection in the turn unit (as in English), in others they do not (as in Japanese). We focus here on these two languages and show that their variable grammatical projectability has repercussions on the way in which three interactional phenomena – next-turn onset, co-construction, and turn-unit extension – are realized in the respective speech communities. In each case the practices used are precisely the ones which the clausal grammatical formats in the given language promote. The evidence thus suggests that *clauses* are interactionally warranted, if variably built, formats for social action.

KEY WORDS: *clause, co-construction, grammatical format, next-turn onset, projectability, turn-unit extension*

1. Introduction

In this article, we are interested in how the study of language and the study of interaction can mutually inform one another. We focus especially on what the study of interaction can contribute to an understanding of linguistic 'structure', as part of an enterprise that is coming to be known as 'Interactional Linguistics'. But instead of taking 'linguistic structure' for granted, we wish to problematize it, to come closer to an understanding of what the nature of the orderliness that linguists call 'structure' is. We will show that the study of interaction has everything to do with the answer to this question.

At the heart of 'linguistic structure' is what linguists call 'grammar', by which we mean regular patterns at the level of sounds, words, and larger units such as phrases, clauses, and sentences. It is not an exaggeration to observe that many of the findings in Interactional Linguistics have contributed to a radical new understanding of the nature of 'grammar', in large part due to Duranti's Thesis 1 (this special issue), 'the primacy of interaction'. As Schegloff has pointed out (1996b), it is in interactional settings that we can see grammar 'at work', and can thus begin to appreciate what 'grammar' must be understood to be. Three major contributions to a new understanding of grammar have arisen from a focus on grammar at work.

The first contribution is the recognition that the routinized patterns that we call grammar exist because speakers need routinized ways to implement *actions*. In fact, the nature of the actions being implemented has been shown to have much to do with the grammatical shape that turn units take. Drawing on recent scholarship in Conversation Analysis, we find that certain kinds of action precipitate certain kinds of grammar. An obvious example would be the fact that certain types of questioning, as Heritage and Roth (1995) have shown, motivate non-interrogative syntax (see also Heritage, 2002; Schegloff, 1996b; Weber, 1993). The actions being implemented by grammar are also eminently *interactional*. This is because they are embedded in sequentially organized courses of action (Schegloff, 1995, 1996a, 1996b). These interactional dimensions can be seen to implicate grammatical choices at more subtle levels as well. For instance, the work of Fox (1986, 1987) has shown that the choice of a full Noun Phrase or a pronoun in English conversation is bound up with the display of the structure of conversational sequences.

A second, related, contribution to come from the analysis of grammar in interaction is the recognition that grammar is knowledge of how to *do* things (Bybee, 2002b) and how to do things *together* (Clark, 1992, 1996) – that is, it is *shared* knowledge in a very literal sense of the word. And since clauses are shaped in contingent situations of interaction, grammar is constantly being shaped and re-shaped, constantly undergoing revision and redesign as it is deployed in everyday talk. The work of Goodwin has shown that grammatical constructions as they emerge in conversation are sensitive on a moment-to-moment basis to aspects of verbal and non-verbal *reciprocity* (Goodwin, 1979, 1980, 1981, 1989, 1995). Grammar thus cannot be a wholly fixed property of individual human brains. Instead it must be thought of as *socially distributed* (Fox, 1994; Ochs et al., 1996; Schegloff, 1991), *emergent* (Helasvuo, 2001a, 2001b; Hopper, 1987, 1988, 1990, 1998), *responsive to contingency* (Ford, 2004), and thoroughly *temporal* (Goodwin, 2002; Hopper, 1992). Duranti's Thesis 3 notes the problematic relation of our enterprise to established disciplines. We might add in this respect that there are numerous researchers working in the field of linguistics who do not yet embrace this emergent view of grammar.

A third contribution of analyses of interaction to our understanding of grammar is the recognition that if linguistics is to provide an account of the way people really use language, then its perspective on the nature of grammar must

be both interactionally sensible and cognitively realistic. Duranti's Thesis 5, referring to 'units of analysis', brings us to the concept of *formats*, or *schemas*, as a valuable notion for the study of language in interaction. We've been struck by how strongly studies of conversational data support the position that speakers draw not only on lexical material, but also on formats which they use recurrently. These formats can be found at all levels of language organization: phonological, morphological, and syntactic. For example, one regular phonological format can be related to the generalization that English syllables often begin with the combination of sounds *sl-*, as in *slip*, *slide*, *sleep*, etc., or *sn-*, as in *snake*, *snap*, *snicker*, etc. With *b*, on the other hand, although words beginning with *bl-* are common, as in *black* and *blue*, there are no words beginning with *bn*. Phonological, morphological, and syntactic formats are widely studied within linguistics. It is these formats which are seen in an interactional linguistic perspective as resources or tools for contingently building turns at talk and implementing actions (see Ford, 2004, for valuable discussion).

Edelman (1992) suggests that the human brain is exquisitely adapted to remembering, storing, categorizing, and using routines that have proven useful for solving everyday problems. With frequent repetition, as synapses become strengthened, these routines become crystallized as habits, what we call 'formats'. Grammar can thus most fruitfully be seen as *procedural* knowledge (Bybee, 2002b), as a collection of *crystallizations of linguistic routines* (Bybee, 2001a, 2001b, 2002a, 2002b; Bybee et al., 1994; Haiman, 1994, 1998; Hopper, 1987, 1988, 1998). In other words, grammar is best understood as what has been ritualized from interactions, as a very loosely organized set of richly and complexly categorized memories people have of how they and fellow speakers have resolved recurrent communicative problems. Once again, what is fascinating about these grammatical formats is the ways in which they are tied to certain types of social actions and specific sequential contexts.

When we talk about language in interaction, then, we are not so concerned with staking out a new 'subdiscipline' as we are with discovering the nature of grammar seen as social action and interaction. We are interested in learning more about *grammatical formats as interactional practices*,¹ as sedimented ways of resolving recurrent communicative problems. Being linguists, we are also concerned to investigate interactional grammar in as wide a variety of languages as possible. This is because we observe that the set of tools each language offers its speakers is different. Consequently, we find ourselves asking how the same communicative problems, assuming these to be more or less universal, shape different types of grammatical solutions. We ask this not only because we are curious (we are this too!), but also because we wish to explore and understand how grammar is *shaped* by interaction. How much variability is possible? What are the limits of variability? Conversely, we find ourselves asking to what extent the different grammars we observe in the languages of the world themselves shape interactional practices. Here too the ultimate question for students of language in interaction is, How is interaction shaped by grammar?

That is, taking a cue from Levinson (this special issue), we might liken the relationship between grammar and interaction to the reflexive relationship between kinship systems and interaction. Both grammatical systems and kinship systems are inherently contested and ‘fuzzy’: both systems arise from interaction. But then they come to have an emergent, if loose, structure of their own which can in turn influence the way interactions crystallize into recurrent patterns. In the case of talk-in-interaction, this means that, for example, different patterns of turn and sequence organization, repair, overlap behavior, and turn extension emerge in different languages partly due to the systematic grammatical regularities in each language (Du Bois, 1987, 2001; Hopper, 1987, 1988, 1998).

We would like to illustrate some of these points now by showing how they bear upon one kind of linguistic ‘structure’ found in interaction, the clause, using data from our own and others’ research.

2. *Interaction and the ‘clause’*²

Perhaps the most central task facing people talking together is that of figuring out what actions the utterances of others are implementing. This question is crucially dependent upon what counts as an utterance. Based on a lifetime of experience with a language, speakers come to be able to project the trajectory of an utterance in progress, what it will take for that utterance to come to completion (Goodwin, 1979, 1980, 1981, 1986, 1989, 1995), and thereby to project what action is being implemented by that utterance in the given context. One of the primary findings of studies of language in interaction is that *grammar* plays a major role, arguably *the* major role, in enabling this projection.³

Now, as Sacks et al. (1974) have pointed out, places where speakers routinely behave as though another’s turn has ended are precisely ‘the possible completion points of sentences, clauses, phrases, and one-word constructions’ (p. 721).⁴ That is, it turns out that no matter what language we look at, the stretches of talk which are routinely projected and treated as *complete* in talk-in-interaction are *grammatical formats*. And we observe that one of the most frequent types of grammatical format regularly taken to be complete in the languages we have looked at is a format consisting of particular predicates (in English these are verb complexes) and the phrases that ‘go with’ it. Linguists will recognize this unit of [predicate + phrases that accompany it] as the ‘clause’. With Schegloff (1996a, 2001b (see note 1)), then, we are claiming that the favorite unit of linguists, the *clause*, is a unit of interaction, but, following Helasvuo (2001a, 2001b, [2003]), we wish to go one step further and claim that the clause is in fact the *locus* of interaction in everyday conversation.⁵ In fact, no matter what language we consider, the clause is one of the most frequent formats which speakers orient to in projecting what actions are being done by the utterance of others, and in acting on these projections (Auer, 1992, forthcoming). So the clause can be thought of as a crystallization of solutions to the interactional problem of signaling and recognizing social actions.

Why and how does the clause represent a solution to this problem? We suggest that the answer may be that the *predicate*, the sine qua non of clause formats, is the element that enables recipients to know what social action is being carried out by a given utterance in a given sequential context. This means that the clause is precisely that unit which permits significant projectability. (Tanaka (1999) persuasively makes this argument for Japanese; we are extending her argument to suggest that the clause is a locus of significant projectability for all languages.) Indeed, what characterizes clause-size formats is the fact that their key element is a predicate. Knowing how to anticipate where a predicate is likely to occur, and sometimes even what the nature of that predicate is likely to be, is what allows for more or less predictable trajectories. Orienting to predicates, would-be next speakers can monitor the course of an utterance in progress for its projectable completion and thus be in a position to recognize the social action it is implementing. *The clause, then, with its crucial predicate, appears to be a unit which facilitates the monitoring of talk for social actions.*⁶

Interestingly, however, the way in which clauses afford grammatical projectability varies significantly from language to language. In this article, we will only focus on English and Japanese, but we hope that our treatment of these two typologically different languages will suggest directions for future research with interactional data from many other languages.

2.1 THE CLAUSE IN ENGLISH

To take English as a first example (as Clark and colleagues (<http://www-psych.stanford.edu/~herb/>), Ford and Thompson, 1996, Helasvuo, 2001a, 2001b, and Ono and Thompson, 1995, 1996, have shown), conversational data are rich with evidence that speakers organize their interactions around the completion of clause formats. These formats tend to be alike: a ‘subject’ noun phrase (‘NP’) – most typically a pronoun (Du Bois, 1987, 2001; Givón, personal communication; Scheibman, 2002) – is followed by a verb complex and possibly other items that strongly tend to occur with that verb complex, such as an ‘object’ noun phrase, a prepositional phrase, adverb, or adverb phrase.

The extract in (1) illustrates common clause-size formats for English. Here Alice is complaining about how hard it is for her and her husband Ron to live with another couple. We include the entire sequence for discussion purposes, but lines 12–15 constitute the part we’re interested in at the moment:

(1) A Tree’s Life (59.02)⁷

[Transcription follows the conventions of Du Bois et al. (1993); see the Appendix for a summary. Each line represents an intonation unit.]

- 1 ALICE: ... god I still can’t believe Tim bitching around and,
- 2 .. he lied too.
- 3 ... he said that he talked to Ron,
- 4 and all this other shit?
- 5 MARY: about what.

- 6 ALICE: ... about % ... the way ... they were feeling,
 7 ... of them being the only ones cleaning the house,
 8 and all this other shit?
 9 ... (H) I mean what they don't realize,
 10 is like,
 11 ... shit,
- Subj. NP Verb (complex) Prep. Phrase
- 12 → when Ron gets home from wor=k,
- Subj. NP Verb (complex) Prep. Phrase
- 13 → ... I wanna spend time with Ro=n,
- Subj. NP
- 14 → because Ron,
- Verb (complex) Prep. Phrase
- 15 → ... usually doesn't get home till (@)nine or ten.
- 16 MARY: ... yeah.
 17 ALICE: unlike Tim,
 18 he has to w=ork,
 19 for every little dime that he makes.
 20 ... You know?
- 21 MARY: .. [Yeah=].
 22 ALICE: [He doesn't] get any breaks.
 23 MARY: ... Yeah%,
 24 ... Tim is on salary=,
 25 and he can take lea=ve,
 26 and,
 27 ALICE: Mhm,
 28 ... and [he earns] lea=ve,
 29 MARY: [he's] –
 30 ALICE: ... he gets sick leave,
 31 ... we don't get shit.
 32 MARY: ... (TSK) I don't know.
 33 ... (H) ... It is really hard living with another couple.

We note that most of the turn components in this extract are clause formats. But if we focus our attention just on the part of Alice's complaint in lines 12–15, we can see that this is a *compound* turn format, whose components are clauses, consisting of the Subject NP, then the verb complex, and then the NPs and prepositional phrases that go with it. The clause in line 13 is a potential turn unit in itself, but it is latched prosodically to the clause in lines 14–15, which provides a potential final component for this turn-in-progress, and indeed, by the time it ends, the complaint it is carrying is treated by both Alice and Mary as finished. Mary registers Alice's complaint with a minimal acknowledgement in line 16,⁸ prompting Alice to extend her complaint in subsequent talk (which she does by adding further clauses). Our point here is to demonstrate the salient role that the clause format plays in turn design, and to observe that English clause formats

have the characteristic shape shown in lines 12–15. This means that when an English speaker hears an NP near the beginning of a turn unit, s/he can predict that a verb complex is likely to follow, and upon hearing that verb complex, can narrow down the range of types of linguistic elements that it would take to complete the clause in context and thus to bring the turn unit to a point of possible completion.⁹

As this extract shows, in clausal English formats the predicate tends to occur relatively early, with NPs and other elements that it projects following it. It is based on this kind of recurrent orderliness that Schegloff (1987, 1996b) has proposed that the *beginning of the turn* in English is a key locus for projectability, and later research has confirmed this. In other words, we could say that the recurrently regular syntactic resources deployed by speakers of English tend to permit *early projection* of turn trajectories.

In addition to clause-size patterns, we also find recurrent types of words and phrases, which play a crucial role in projectability in English. Prosodic patterns combine with these lexical, phrasal and syntactic patterns to allow predictions about probable trajectories.¹⁰

2.2 THE CLAUSE IN JAPANESE

When we turn to other languages, what we find is the same principle of projectability, but which may play itself out in formats revealing a quite different clausal organization. In Japanese, for instance, we find the clause, understood as [predicate + phrases that accompany it], playing a major role in speakers' ability to project what the turn is doing, but the clause is built according to different principles.

The work of Fox et al. (1996), Hayashi (1999, 2001, 2003, 2004) and Tanaka (1999, 2000, 2001a) shows that Japanese speakers recurrently design turns such that NPs and adverbial elements – should they occur – are found *before* the predicate. In addition many referents are inferred rather than explicitly mentioned. So in Japanese there is little indication of where the clause is going until the predicate occurs. Instead, the turn unit is built up bit by bit in an incremental fashion, resulting in what these researchers have called, in contrast to English, '*delayed (or late) projectability*'.

On the other hand, Japanese has a set of *utterance-final elements*, particles and other morphemes, which are crucial for the interpretation of the epistemic/evaluative stance the speaker is taking towards the material, and which follow the predicate. Together with the predicate, these utterance-final elements mark the turn as complete and ready for speaker transition.¹¹ Turn completion in Japanese thus overwhelmingly coincides with grammatical, typically clausal, completion, that is the predicate together with the optional utterance-final elements (see Matsumoto, 1995, and Tanaka, 1999, for quantitative support).

As a representative example, let's consider extract (2) from Tanaka (1999: 40) (transcription as in original, where = = indicates latching of two turns with no intervening pause):

(2) (Telephone conversation)

- 1 → Y: >Getsuyoobi ni wa ikeru to omou – n n da yo=
Monday P TOP can go QUOT think – NZR COP FP
 ‘((I)) **think** ((I)) can go on Monday’
- 2 =kokontokoro chotto sa [dearuiteta [mon de sa:-
these days little bit FP going out VN since FP
 ‘but since ((I))’ve been running around a bit these days’
- 3 K: [‘N [‘N
 ‘Yeah’
- 4 Y: nakanaka [yorenakute<]
rather can’t stop by
 ‘It’s been rather difficult to stop by’
- 5 K: [Warui ne]
bad FP
 ‘Sorry for the trouble’
- 6 Y: Uun
 ‘Not at all’

Focusing on line 1 of this example, Tanaka points out that the unit begins with a phrase *getsuyobi ni* ‘on Monday’ marked by a topic marker (TOP), often found with expressions of time or location or other frame-setting expressions; next comes the predicate *ikeru* ‘can go’ followed by a quotative marker *to* (QUOT), which tags the material preceding it as reported talk or thought. That is, the quotative marker *to*, in tagging the preceding material as a quote, projects a verb of saying or thinking to follow. Finally, in the event, comes the main predicate *omou* ‘think’. The last three morphemes are particles which form a phrase with *omou* ‘think’, and can be considered together with it as indicating an epistemic or evaluative stance toward the earlier material, namely that the speaker is expressing a willingness to run the errand in question on Monday and is reassuring her interlocutor about this. As Tanaka notes (1999: 106–7), the positioning of *omou* ‘think’, together with its particles, reveals that the point at which the action of this turn, namely the display of a stance, is accomplished comes relatively late.¹² Compare this with the English translation where *think* comes early in the clausal unit.

This difference in the clausal grammar of these two speech communities has strong implications for other aspects of social interaction. Whereas English grammar typically allows early projection of the social action that might be being done by that turn, the grammatical organization of Japanese means that full import of the social action being ‘carried’ by that turn may not be projected or known until later in that turn. So we might expect to find interactional patterns or practices in these two speech communities reflecting this difference in projectability, and indeed, this is what we do find. As we shall show below, next-turn onset, co-construction, and turn-unit extension – to mention only three interactional phenomena – all are realized differently in Japanese as opposed to English.

3. *Interactional evidence for the clause as a locus of interaction*

So far we have claimed that the clause, understood as [predicate + phrases that accompany it], underlies recurrent practices in talk-in-interaction, but that these practices differ in ways that reflect the differences in clause grammar from one language to another. Our evidence for this claim comes from three practices which reveal speakers' *orientation* towards the clause. In other words, we aim to show that speakers regularly behave in certain ways that suggest they are orienting to turn gestalts that have clausal organization.

3.1 NEXT-TURN ONSET

Strong evidence supporting the hypothesis that the clause is an interactionally relevant unit comes from the way would-be next speakers position legitimate incomings with respect to the turn underway. We find that orderly next-position incomings are routinely placed *at the completion* of a clause rather than anywhere *before* its completion.¹³ This observation holds across the two typologically unrelated languages we are considering here, although what counts as a possibly complete clause in each case varies significantly. To see what this means for English, for instance, let us return to example (1) from above:

(1) A Tree's Life (59.02)

- 9 ALICE: ... (H) I mean what they don't realize,
 10 is like,
 11 ... shit,
 12 → when Ron gets home from work,
 13 → ... I wanna spend time with Ron,
 14 → because Ron,
 15 → ... usually doesn't get home till (@)nine or ten.
 16 MARY: ... yeah:.

We observe that Mary's response (line 16) to Alice's complaint in lines 9–15 is positioned at the end of the clause *Ron, ... usually doesn't get home till nine or ten*. It is not positioned after *Ron* (line 14), although Alice's pause in line 15 might have provided Mary with an opportunity to come in. This, we suggest, can be related to the fact that on the occurrence of *Ron* the clausal unit is not yet complete. (The argument here is not that at the completion of every clause there will be a speaker transition, but only that when speaker transition does occur, it will routinely be placed respecting a clause boundary.) In order for the unit begun in line 14 to become possibly complete and therefore enable the listener to discern the social action it is performing, a predicate – and in the context of the predicate chosen for this situation, some further specification of that predicate – is due. Once the expected items have been produced, the complaint Alice is adumbrating becomes clear, and a next-turn response to it can, and does, legitimately set in.

In Japanese, on the other hand, as we have noted, clauses are organized rather differently, not only because their elements are positioned such that their

main predicate comes late rather than early in the unit, but also because referents associated with the predicate – e.g. subjects and objects – can remain unexpressed. The following example demonstrates this:

(3) Tanaka (1999:114) (unexpressed elements have been placed in double parentheses in the English gloss)

K and Y have been talking about some strawberry jam that K had previously made for Y.

- 1 → K: >tabeta?<=
eat-Past
 'Did ((you)) eat ((it))?'
 2 → Y: =>tabeta<
eat-Past
 '((I/we)) ate ((it))'
 3 → oishikatta yo=
delicious-Past FP
 '((It)) was delicious'
 4 K: =Honto
 'Really?'

Following Tanaka, we notice here that following K's production in line 1 of the simple predicate *tabeta*, the past tense form of the verb 'eat' in Japanese, the floor shifts smoothly to Y. Although the action of eating clearly has an eater and something that is eaten, these entities do not need to be expressed in order for the unit to reach possible completion. Similarly, in line 3, it is sufficient for Y to say *oishikatta* 'was delicious'; she does not say what was delicious, and indeed, for many speakers, this would be the only natural expression in this context.¹⁴ Her unit is therefore possibly complete once the predicate has been produced,¹⁵ and K's response in line 4 is positioned accordingly. In other words, the next speaker (both Y in line 2 and K in line 4) waits for the predicate before responding but does not wait for further constituents to be produced: next-turn responses come *no sooner than* but also *no later than* the (final) predicate.

A comparison of the English and Japanese examples reveals that in each case next speakers are orienting to the clause, but that what contributes to a possible clausal format differs from language to language. A clause in both languages requires some kind of predicate, but whereas with certain English predicates speakers also expect certain arguments to be expressed (as a rule the subject before, and all other arguments after, the predicate), Japanese speakers do not necessarily expect clausal referents to be made explicit.¹⁶ In both cases, however, speakers' orderly placement of next turns shows that they are orienting to possible *clausal completion in the current turn*.

This observation holds true even for those cases in which a current speaker goes on to append material after a point of possible clausal completion:¹⁷ would-be next speakers routinely orient to the potential clause boundary by coming in at this point, although they may inadvertently find themselves in overlap with the current speaker. As Jefferson (1973) and others have pointed out, elements

positioned *post*-possible completion are more vulnerable to overlap than, say, elements positioned *pre*-possible completion. And this appears to be a robust finding regardless of language. But once again the *type* of element which routinely gets post-positioned varies considerably from language to language. For English, for instance, Sacks et al. (1974) and Schegloff (1996b) have pointed to the prevalence of tag questions, address terms, politeness markers and the like in this position. Ford et al. (2002) point out that English increments typically involve adverbial constituents. We note that all of these elements – although they can in principle be placed within the clause – are more typically positioned at its edges. This reflects the fact that they are external to the clausal format. And they are frequently overlapped by an incoming next speaker. Here is an example from our data collection:

(4) Carsales 5 (Ono and Thompson, 1995: 248)

- 1 G: .. (H) the only thing you can do is be the best you can.
 2 .. [right]?
 3 D: [but definitely].

In this example, G comes to a point of possible completion at the end of his clause in line 1. It is just at this point that D concurs with *but definitely*, but inadvertently, D's turn unit overlaps with the tag *right* (as shown by the brackets), which G has just appended at the same time to his possibly complete clause in line 1. Yet D's turn is exquisitely 'well-placed' in the sense that it comes just at the end of a clausal format with prosody suggesting completion of a turn. This is reflected in the fact that none of the characteristic speech perturbations found to accompany violative incomings are present here (French and Local, 1983; Schegloff, 1987).¹⁸

Japanese speakers are also observed to position elements after a clause which is potentially complete, i.e. after the production of a final predicate and optionally one or more utterance-final elements. However, the post-positioned elements typically instantiate syntactic constituent types which are rather different from those found in this position in English: according to Iwasaki and Ono (2001), they may be not only adverbials as in English, but also subjects and objects. Even though these post-positioned elements are not always set off by a prosodic break from the possibly complete clause itself, strikingly, next speakers regularly position their incoming with respect to the clause boundary – and not with respect to the post-positioned elements (Hayashi, 2003; Tanaka, 1999). Here is an example which illustrates this:¹⁹

(5) Tanaka (1999: 117f.) (orthography slightly modified)

(H is talking about a wedding reception he went to, which was attended by many people of high social standing, where he felt totally out of place)

- 1 H: =hijooni:: (.) uitotta n desu kedo
 extremely stood out N COP CONJ
 '(I) really stood out'

- 2 → [watashi tte..hh e(h)e.hh
 I ADVP
 ‘as for me .hh e(h)e .hh’
- 3 → I: [iya sonna koto nai n chau?
 no such thing not N different
 ‘No, that couldn’t be, could it?’

H’s turn unit comes to a point of possible completion with the predicate *uitotta*, the past form of the verb ‘stand out’, and several utterance-final elements (line 1). Although H goes on to produce further post-positioned constituents *watashi tte* (line 2), in this case a previously unexpressed subject plus an adverbial particle, his interlocutor orients to the possible clausal completion at the end of line 1 by positioning a response immediately thereafter (line 3). Speaker I’s incoming turn and speaker H’s post-positioned constituents consequently end up being in overlap.

In sum, we have tried to make two points in this section. First, the positioning of legitimate incomings by next speakers in both English and Japanese shows an orientation to the clause as a possible turn constructional unit. Second, what counts as a possibly complete clause is significantly different in the two languages – and speakers’ behavior in each language reflects these typologically different grammatical formats. Clausal formats in English require certain accompanying referents (such as subjects and objects) to be expressed; clauses in Japanese typically do not. Next speakers in both languages make legitimate incomings when the *clausal exigencies* in each case have been met. We have focused on a single speaker’s production of a minimally complete clausal unit in this section. In the following sections we turn to the joint production of (minimal) clausal units and to the extension of clausal turn units in the two languages.

3.2 JOINT UTTERANCE COMPLETION

Another primary piece of evidence for viewing the clause as a locus of interaction comes from the well-known ability of participants to collaborate in completing the turns of others (Ford et al., 2003; Hayashi, 1999, 2001, 2003; Hayashi and Mori, 1998; Helasvuoto, 2001b; Lerner, 1991, 1996, 2004; Lerner and Takagi, 1999; Mondada, 1998; Morita, 2002; Ono and Thompson, 1995; Szatrowski, 2002a, 2002b). From the examples and discussion of these authors, it is clear that speakers are strongly clause-oriented in jointly constructing utterances. That is, what second speakers tend to add to a first speaker’s contribution is either (1) the second clausal component of a multi-clausal unit or (2) the last word or two of a mono-clausal unit. To be able to do this, speakers must rely on their knowledge of clausal formats (as derived from their extensive experience).

Extract (6) illustrates the collaborative construction of what Lerner calls a ‘compound TCU format’, consisting of a ‘preliminary component’ and a ‘secondary component’:

(6) Lerner (1991: 445) [here (.) indicates a very short pause]

- 1 → R: if you don't put things on yer calendar [preliminary component]
 2 (.)
 3 ⇒ D: yer outta luck. [secondary component]

Extract (7) illustrates so-called 'terminal item completion':

(7) (Garrison Keillor, DAT 012)

- 1 S: and he said the only thing worse
 2 than second hand smug-
 3 God!
 4 second hand smoke is (.)
 5 <moral smugness>
 6 J: hah hah hah
 7 → S: which is again really
 8 ⇒ J: accurate
 9 S: yeah

We note that the grammatical formats which permit both kinds of joint turn production are profoundly clausal in nature:

- (8)
- | | | | | |
|------------|---------------|---------------------|-----------|---------------------|
| | <u>SubjNP</u> | <u>Verb complex</u> | <u>NP</u> | <u>Prep. Phrase</u> |
| [clause 1] | if you | don't put | things | on yer calendar |
| | <u>SubjNP</u> | <u>Verb complex</u> | | |
| [clause 2] | yer | outta luck. | | |

and

- (9)
- | | | |
|----------|---------------|--------------------------|
| | <u>SubjNP</u> | <u>Verb Complex</u> |
| [clause] | which | is again really accurate |

In Japanese we also find speakers jointly producing a turn-at-talk, but as Hayashi (2003) shows, co-construction in this language is typically 'delayed'. If a compound TCU is in the process of emerging, a Japanese co-participant may supply the secondary component, but typically only following a noticeable pause and often accompanied by an acknowledgement token:

(10) Hayashi (2003: 83):

- 9 → Kanji: .hh anmari komakai chekku made shi[tetara:
 too much detailed check even do:if
 ".hh if ((they)) check in too much detail,"
 10 ⇒ Muneo: [()]
 11 ⇒ Muneo: u :: n.
 "Uh huh."
 12 Yurie: [u : :: n.
 "Uh huh."

- 13 Kanji: [nanka ::
“like,”
- 14 ⇒ Muneo: gisugisu shi[chau shi ne.]
stiff do and FP
“((the relationship among the employees)) will become awkward, right?”
- 15 Kanji: [u :::::::n.]
“Yeah”

In line 9 of this example, Kanji produces the first part of a conditional sentence format *anmari komakai chekku made shitetara*: ‘if they check in too much detail’, a ‘preliminary component’ of a ‘compound TCU format’ in Lerner’s terms. Muneo provides minimal acknowledgements in lines 10 and 11 before proceeding to co-construct the format by providing a secondary component in line 14. This pattern stands in marked contrast to English co-constructions, where it has been remarked that speaker transitions in joint turn construction are, as a rule, seamless (Falk, 1980; Szczeppek, 2003).

Much more frequently, however, Japanese co-participants who co-construct another’s turn supply only the terminal element of an emerging mono-clausal unit:

(11) Hayashi (1999: 479):

- 1 H: asoko o:: (0.2) teteteto orite[itta]ra shoomen ni:.=
there O [mimetic] go.down:if front in
“If you go down there, in front of you,”
- 2 K: [u:n]
“Uh huh.”
- 3 K: =u:n.
“Uh huh.”
- 4 H: denwa ga- ano mi[dori] no denwa ga:[:]
phone SB uhm green LK phone SB
“Phones, uhm, green phones”
- 5 → K: [aru] [a]ru aru
exist exist exist
“are there.” “are there, are there.”

In line 4, H says ‘phones, uhm, green phones’. In line 5, K then produces a predicate (the verb *aru*) that grammatically completes the emerging clause and turn.

Thus, as Hayashi argues, although speakers of both languages engage in the joint production of clausally formatted turns, Japanese co-productions are ‘delayed’ in comparison to English ones, because secondary components of compound TCUs are regularly produced only after a pause and optionally after a continuer, and because terminal-item co-construction of monoclausal units typically involves only the terminal item, which is generally the predicate

(Hayashi, 2003). Arguably 'delayed' co-construction in Japanese can be traced back to the 'delayed projectability' of its grammatical formats: it is simply not apparent until late in the turn what it will take for a clausal format underway to be complete.²⁰

What these examples show, then, is that the grammar of a language constrains the types of formats available to speakers for resolving communicative and interactional problems. The recurrent patterns revealed by the data in co-construction reflect the kinds of grammatical formats available for speakers, and, as we have seen, these grammatical formats vary in terms of whether they facilitate early or late projection.

3.3 TURN UNIT EXTENSION

As a final piece of evidence for the interactional and cognitive relevance of the clause, we would like to consider the phenomenon of 'incrementing' or TCU continuation (Auer, 1996; Ford et al., 2002; Goodwin, 1981; Schegloff, 1996a, 2001a). What our cross-linguistic research is showing is that although all speakers, regardless of language, on occasion need to continue a possibly complete turn by extending it, the recurrent grammatical strategies they use to do so differ from one language to another. The way speakers do turn unit extension in all languages, however, tends to involve an orientation to clausal formats.²¹

Following Schegloff (1996a), we will define turn unit extension as syntactically dependent material placed after the possible end of a turn-constructional unit.²²

In English, turn unit extensions or 'increments' strongly tend to involve a piece of language that has the structure of a recurrent phrase (or clause) in the language, and which in other contexts may appear in final position *within a single turn unit*.

Consider, for example, the increment in (12), which ensues when the speaker Guy asks a question in the service of a request, but does not get an immediate reply:

(12) Nbi-1²³

- | | | |
|---|--------|--|
| 1 | Guy: | W'why don'I: uh (0.6) I'll call uh (.) |
| 2 | | Have you got(.) uh: Seacliffs phone number?h |
| 3 | | (1.1) |
| 4 | → Guy: | by any chance? |
| 5 | | (0.3) |
| 6 | Jon: | Yeeah? |

The unit *by any chance* in line 4 is not produced here as part of the turn unit *Have you got Seacliff's phone number?* in line 2. Instead, once the longish pause of more than a second has made it clear that no answer is immediately forthcoming, it is 'tacked on' to the prior unit, perhaps to modulate the relative abruptness of the requesting action it was implementing (that is, relative to the offering action of

line 1). This ‘increment’ provides another point of possible completion, which Jon, the next speaker, utilizes for his reply. We note that the expression *by any chance* is a recurrent phrase of English and one which appears within a single *clausal* turn unit in precisely this position on other occasions, as is shown by the extract in (13):

(13) Nbi-1

- 1 Guy: Is Cliff dow:n by any chance?
2 =diyuh know?

In other languages, however, this kind of turn unit extension is much less common, if not unknown. In Japanese, for example, grammatical formats in which such phrases typically occur at the ends of clauses are rare.²⁴ Recall that in Japanese, clausal turn units are built up with adverbials and predicate-accompanying NPs occurring *early* and the predicate occurring *late*. In addition, as we have noted, the referents in a Japanese clause are regularly unexpressed (see example (3) earlier).

Given the fact that referents are generally not mentioned, it is not surprising that a frequent strategy for extending a turn unit in Japanese is to ‘fill in’ a Noun Phrase which could have appeared early but didn’t. Example (14) is taken from our data (Couper-Kuhlen and Ono, forthcoming), *Akichan* being a female given name:

(14) Ryokoo 6

- 1 R: soshitara @ oo- asoko ikanakatta – n da tte.
 then Au- there go:not:PAST NZR COP I.hear
 ‘I hear (she) didn’t go (to) Au- there then’
- 2 → R: **[oosutora]ria, akichan**
 Australia
 ‘Australia’ ‘Aki’
- 3 H: [doko e]?
 where to
 ‘to where?’

In this example, speaker R constructs a clausal turn unit in line 1 which can be taken as grammatically, prosodically, and interactionally complete, although it does not specify who is not going, nor where they are not going. Speaker R, however, perhaps intimating a problem – and in overlap with H’s initiation of repair (line 3) – continues his turn in line 2, ‘filling in’ the unexpressed referents in line 2. We note that these noun phrases are not marked for finality by the typical ‘finality-marking’ final particles (Tanaka, 1999): in fact, they would not be found in this position in single clausal turn units on other occasions. *Oosutoraria* ‘Australia’ specifies *asoko* ‘there’ in line 1, *Akichan* would be located where the @ symbol occurs in line 1. Both elements would *precede* the verb *ikanakattan* ‘did not go’ and the other utterance-final elements.²⁵

In (14), then, the current speaker comes to a point of possible turn completion, ending with a typical set of utterance-final elements, and then goes on to add an extension. But in Japanese, unlike the typical situation in English, this extension is *not* an element that would be found in final position in a single clausal turn unit, because speakers would not have heard such an element in this position in a single turn unit. Rather it is a non-final element that was unspecified in the preceding turn unit. So, this (Japanese) way of using grammatical strategies as a resource for turn-unit extension is radically different from the way in which speakers of English typically do 'adding on'.²⁶ And we are suggesting that this difference has everything to do with the clausal formats that experience has shown have been the most successful in their respective communities. The differing strategies for turn unit extension reflect the differing way in which clausal turn units are built up in these respective languages. At the same time they underline the tight relationship between the available grammatical resources in a language and the regular responses to interactional demands that speakers find themselves making day in and day out.

4. Conclusion

In this article we hope to have shown what happens when we look at grammar as action and interaction. We find that grammar must be thought of as distributed and emergent, and that its units of analysis are *formats* – patterns or templates – which can be thought of as crystallizations of common solutions to communicative problems and interactional tasks.

We have singled out the most prominent of these format types – the clause – and have shown how it saliently serves as a resource for constructing turns at talk and for projecting possible completion. At the same time, by examining English and a typologically quite different language, Japanese, we have shown that exactly *how* the clause affords projectability is different from language to language. In fact, the type of projectability depends crucially on the nature of clausal grammatical formats which are available as resources: in some languages these allow early projection in the turn unit, in others they do not.

Variable projectability in the clause has repercussions on interactional practices. We have examined three situations where there is a noticeable difference: next-turn onsets, co-construction, and turn-unit extension. In each case we have seen that the practices used are precisely the ones which clausal grammatical formats in the given language 'license' (to use a stylish word). In other words, addressing Duranti's Thesis 6, the need for explicit evaluative principles, our research shows that the (variably projecting) clausal formats are precisely the ones we find speakers operating with. This evidence suggests to us that *clauses* are interactionally warranted units.

Our more general point here is that conversational data give us valuable evidence that it not only makes sense to talk about grammar, or linguistic 'structure', but that understanding this structure must come from studying the

regularities in the practices engaged in by people talking to each other. Another way to put it is that a model of linguistic ‘structure’ must be no more and no less than a model of the way *often-used formats* are acquired, stored, processed, and used as resources by speakers in the everyday business of communicating. What scholars of language in interaction are trying to do is to understand what kinds of formats speakers are operating with and the ways in which these formats work in everyday interactions.

APPENDIX 1: TRANSCRIPTION CONVENTIONS

.	final intonation unit
,	continuing intonation unit
?	appeal intonation unit
–	truncated intonation unit
.. or (.)	short pause
...	medium length pause
(x.x)	pause of x.x seconds
%	glottal catch
(H) or .hh	inhalation
=	lengthening (except where indicated)
[]	speech overlap
(TSK)	alveolar click
@ /hh/heh	laughter
> <	faster rate
underlining	extra amplitude or intensity

APPENDIX 2: GLOSSING CONVENTIONS

ADVP	adverbial particle
FP	final particle
LK	linking morpheme
N	nominalizer
O	object marker
P	particle
QUOT	quotative particle
SB	subject marker
VN	verb nominalizer

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NOTES

1. We are indebted to Schegloff for pointing out (e.g. 1996a, 2001b) that grammatical units must be understood to have emerged from the exigencies of talk-in-interaction:

'units such as the clause, sentence, turn, utterance, ... *all* are in principle *interactional units*' (emphasis original) (2001b: 235).

2. For us, and for most other empirical linguists working from usage data, 'clause' is understood as [predicate + phrases that accompany it], while 'sentence' is a term reserved for a unit that can consist of either a clause or a combination of clauses.
3. This article is thus a further effort in a series of interactional linguistic articles responding to the challenge launched by Sacks et al. (1974) when they wrote 'How projection of unit-types is accomplished ... is an important question on which linguists can make major contributions' (p. 703: n. 12). See also Auer (1996), Ford and Thompson (1996), Hayashi (1999, 2003, 2004), Kim (1999), Selting (1996, 2000), Steensig (2001), and Tanaka (1999, 2000, 2001a, 2001b).
4. This quote reflects the distinction we drew in note 2 between 'clause' and 'sentence'; we observe, however, that this distinction is sometimes not made by other researchers in the analysis of conversation.
5. Helasvuo (2001a, 2001b) focuses on the 'clause core' (that is, the predicate and its 'core' arguments) as especially important for interaction in both Finnish and English, and we agree that there are ways in which the clause core functions significantly in interaction. However, since we are interested in projectability here, we will consider many aspects of clause organization, in addition to the 'core'/'non-core' distinction, which allow speakers to project turn gestalts.
6. It is well known that many turn units and turns do not consist of clauses in themselves. However, it is striking that most of these are constructed *with reference to* a nearby verb or predicate. A simple example would be a question-answer pair in which the answer is not itself a clause, but is understood with reference to a prior clause, as in this sequence from our materials:

- | | |
|--------------|---------------------------|
| (i) Melissa: | (H) what day is tomorrow? |
| Brett: | ... the twenty-ninth. |

Here, the turn which carries out the social action of responding to the question consists, obviously, of a Noun Phrase (NP), which constitutes the answer precisely because it is construed with reference to the immediately preceding clause, canonically constructed according to the English grammatical format involving a subject NP and a predicate nominal. We won't be able to pursue this any further here; we simply note that the prevalence of this type of turn strengthens our claim of the centrality of the 'clause' as an interactional unit.

7. Most of our English examples come from the Corpus of Spoken American English, Part I (Du Bois, 2000); for transcription conventions, see Appendix 1 and Du Bois et al. (1993).
8. If Alice's turn is a complaint about a non-present third party, it should make some co-complaining or expression of congruent affect on the part of her interlocutor relevant next (Günthner, 2000). What Mary does in line 16 is hardly this, however, which may be what prompts Alice to specify a further aspect of the situation which she finds complainable.
9. Once this clausal and actional projection has been made, the speaker need not wait until the actual unit end has been reached, but may opt to come in immediately, thus producing recognitional overlap with the ongoing (but predictable) completion of the unit (Goodwin and Goodwin, 1987, 1992; Jefferson, 1973). We return to this point below.
10. We note, however, that the prosodic issues are complex. What seems clear is that emerging prosodic contours are routinely judged by interlocutors as to whether they are possibly whole *gestalts* or not; what may not be so clear is at what exact point in

- an emerging contour prosody allows judgments about a speaker's intention to continue. See Szczepiek Reed (2004) for discussion.
11. Although in Japanese recipients frequently provide continuers following the incremental bits being used to build a turn, substantive responses are typically reserved for (projected) turn completion (Hayashi, 2003; Tanaka, 1999).
 12. We believe that this utterance could be analyzed as conveying more than one action, but we emphasize Tanaka's point that the stance-taking predicate, that is, the primary indicator of the way the utterance is to be taken, is reserved for final position.
 13. We exclude for the moment so-called recognitional onsets, where a next speaker comes in as soon as the trajectory of a turn has been recognized (Jefferson, 1983), and concurrent displays of reciprocity such as those Goodwin and Goodwin (1987, 1992) have described.
 14. It is particularly striking that line 2 is grammatically identical to line 1, yet the two utterances are performing two quite distinct social actions. As Tanaka does, we take this to underscore the heavy reliance on inference in referring in Japanese.
 15. In the case at hand its completion is also signaled by the final particle *yo*.
 16. If the arguments were made explicit, they would tend to appear as a rule before the predicate (Tanaka, 1999).
 17. This can occur with or without a prosodic break at the possible clause boundary.
 18. See also the examples cited in Sacks et al. (1974: 704f.).
 19. See Ono and Suzuki (1992) for further discussion of elements that can follow the predicate in Japanese conversation.
 20. In addition, because Japanese is a postpositional language, markers of clausal 'subordination' appear in final position in the clause. This means that preliminary components are not identifiable as such until late in the clause, thus accounting for the delay encountered in co-constructing compound TCU formats.
 21. As Schegloff notes, 85 percent of the increments he found are added to host turn units that are clauses (2001a: 9).
 22. Schegloff's definition of 'increments' is: elements of talk added to the TCU and the turn which re-occasion possible completion; that is, which constitute extensions to the TCU or the turn . . . and which themselves come to another possible completion of the TCU or turn (1996b: 90).
 23. For extracts (12) and (13), the following transcription conventions hold:
 - : lengthening
 - (x.x) pause of x.x seconds
 - (.) very short pause
 24. See Couper-Kuhlen and Ono (forthcoming), Hayashi (2003), and Tanaka (1999) for further discussion of turn-unit extension in Japanese.
 25. See Kim (forthcoming) for an enlightening discussion of a similar situation in Korean.
 26. We do not wish to claim, however, that every turn extension in Japanese is of the type that would never occur in turn-final position. See Tanaka (1999) for further discussion.

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