

AGGRAVATED CORRECTION AND DISAGREEMENT IN CHILDREN'S CONVERSATIONS *

Marjorie HARNESS GOODWIN

This paper investigates features of “aggravated” correction and disagreement in the naturally occurring conversations of urban black children, ages 4–14. Intonation contours, turn shapes, and the patterning of sequences demonstrate an orientation toward displaying rather than mitigating expressions of opposition with previous utterances. It is argued that such phenomena are constructed through systematic selections of alternatives to procedures for constructing agreement and for accomplishing repair in adult conversation.

1. Introduction

Within conversation participants may elect to perform speech actions in either “mitigated” (Labov and Fanshel 1977: 84–86) or modulated ways, or alternatively in an “aggravated” (*ibid.*) or unmodulated fashion. For example, to take the most studied of all speech actions, a directive may either be formatted as a request for information (“You using the wire cutters now?”) or as an imperative (“Gimme the wire cutters!”). This paper investigates aggravated ways of dealing with two related activities – correcting and disagreeing – in the conversations of urban black children. In all, over 175 correction and disagreement sequences form the basis of the present study, drawn from 200 hours of transcribed conversations which took place as children conducted their play activities among themselves over a period of a year and a half.

Within conversation there are ways of performing activities such as initiating “repair” (Schegloff et al. 1977) or providing correction of another’s speech which can either propose initial speaker’s competence to perform the correc-

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Author’s address: M. Harness Goodwin, Dept. of Anthropology, University of South Carolina, Columbia, SC 29208, USA.

tion him/herself or indicate lack of confidence in such ability. Those forms which question rather than assert that a repair is in order or allow initiator of the trouble source to him/herself correct the utterance are performed in what I would call a mitigated or modulated way, in contrast to forms which blatantly signal the need of a correction or perform that correction themselves, which I would term aggravated or unmodulated. With respect to a related activity, disagreement, a speaker may take up a position of opposition with respect to the entire action put forward by prior speaker either in a way which defers the expression of disagreement and modulates it or by openly and immediately indicating a counter-position in an aggravated or unmodulated fashion.

As Goffman's (1967, 1971) analysis of face to face communication has argued, much of adult conversation has as an underlying concern deference to the other party in interaction and watchful concern that potential discord does not emerge as an explicit feature of encounters. By way of contrast, conflict is not at all uncommon in the interaction of children (Goodwin 1980, 1982) and can provide a primary way of dealing with coparticipants in interaction. Of course underlying differences in the continuum of mitigated and aggravated language forms can be attributed to the norms governing situationally appropriate language usage, regardless of the age-culture of participants, as Ervin-Tripp (1976), for example, has argued.

2. Other-initiated repair in adult conversation

In adult conversation, Schegloff et al. (1977) have argued that there is a preference for self-correction: that is, the party who produces a turn with a trouble source generally corrects it him/herself. When party other than speaker, "other", initiates a repair such a turn generally is occupied with little else than pointing to a trouble source; the competence to correct a trouble source is attributed to speaker by other. Even though other could provide the repair, he/she allows speaker another opportunity to do the correction him/herself (Schegloff et al. 1977: 377). Consider the following example, transcribed according to the Jefferson system [1] in which punctuation markers are used for indicating intonation rather than as grammatical symbols:

(1) GTS:II:2:54

A: 'E likes that waider over there, A: Trouble source

B: Wait-*er*? B: Locate trouble

A: Waitress, sorry, A: Provide remedy

[1] Data are transcribed according to the system developed by Jefferson and described in Sacks et al. (1974:731–733). A simplified version of this transcription system appears in the appendix.

Two important features characterize this other-initiated repair format. First, the operations of locating the repairable and supplying a candidate repair are separated in distinct turns. Second, a particular form of intonation contour is utilized. Rising intonation (33↑) is used over the term singled out for revision, as indicated by the question mark following “er”. This intonation contour displays an action of uncertainty and requests that speaker assist in clarifying what is constructed as a problem.

3. Aggravated partial-repeat correction formats in children's conversation

In contrast to repair operations performed in adult conversation in a mitigated way, among children, pointing to the trouble source and supplying the correction may be collapsed into a single turn. Two progressively more aggravated strategies for dealing with a trouble source in prior speaker's talk are shown in the following example:

(2) 10-19-70-92 ((singing a line from “I'll Be There” by the Jackson Five))

1. A: You and I must make a pack, We must bring star: // *va*:
2. B: Star*va*:tion,
3. C: Star*va*tion,
4. D: Star*va*tion, boy it's *sal* // *va*tion.
5. A: *Sal*vation.

In lines 2 and 3 two recipients of A's singing provide instances of aggravated forms of initiating a repair. They single out the part of prior speaker's utterance which contains the trouble source through contrastive stress and utilize falling rising (312↑; Gunter 1974:61) intonation instead of rising intonation. Rather than proposing claimed trouble in understanding, which occurs with rising intonation, falling rising intonation displays challenge; it marks that recipient considers a part of prior speaker's utterance unmistakably incorrect. When such forms are used alone, however, in that they merely *point to* trouble source, they permit initial speaker to provide a correction him/herself:

(3) 9-15-70-1 ((discussing a dog))

- A: I play with Alfie *all* the time.
 B: You *like* Ralphie donchu.
 C: *Ralphie*,
 A: *Ralphie*,
 B: *Alfie*. *Alfie*.

(4) 9-3-71-9

A: You keep your clothes *on*.

B: I do *not*. I change every week. What chu talkin about.

C: Every week,

D: Every week, heh heh heh

B: I mean every *day*.

(5) 9-19-70-3 ((discussing bikes))

A: This gear hard to push. Just ride this gear.

B: Gear, What chu talkin about // gear.

A: I mean um *brake*.

In contrast to examples 3–5 in which initial speakers (*A*) provide the correction themselves, in line 4 of example 2, *D* hearing the trouble source not only indicates what is in error; he also provides the remedy for the trouble in *A*'s initial utterance himself:

A: trouble source

D: [point to trouble source] + [provide remedy]

Rather than proposing the competence of the party whose turn contains the error to self-correct, turns such as this one propose self's incompetence. By producing a second part of the turn, other does not leave a specific place for self to come in with the remedy. Nevertheless, because the first component of *D*'s turn in example 2 provides merely a pointing to prior speaker's incompetence, it is possible (though admittedly rare in my data) for self to attempt to come in and provide a correction simultaneous to other.

In the following in line 3 a partial repeat, signalling the trouble source, occurs as the first part of *B*'s turn. This is followed by the initiation of another possible element in a correction sequence, a contradiction ("It's not-"), which even more blatantly indicates that prior speaker is in error. Finally following these two elements, a correction occurs:

(6) 10-19-71-6

1. A: Come in the house again tonight. Big love sick chair in there, They layin

2 on // there,

3. B: Love sick chair, It's not- It's called [love. It's not no love sick chair.

4. A: [Love chair.

B's turn contains multiple elements: [partial repeat] + [contradiction] + [correction] + [restated contradiction]. Although there is no pausing or space following each of these elements, explicitly calling for a turning of the utterance over to prior speaker, in that the correction is delayed by the partial

repeat and contradiction, *A* can come in after the first two elements at the same time as *B* in a collaborative:

B: It's called /love.

A: Love chair.

Note, however, that in this example, despite the fact that self (*A*) provides the correction simultaneously with other, the rest of other's turn overrides the collaborative correction with a restatement of contradiction. Thus, not only is self's remedy overlapped by other's subsequent talk, but other is noticeably passing the opportunity to have the sequence terminated in the preferred self-outcome pattern and actively working to maintain a state of contradiction.

Alternative trajectories for the sequencing of corrections permit further examination of the relative arrangement and structural equivalences of correction sequence elements. An expansion of the [partial repeat] + [contradiction] + [correction] sequence we have just examined in (6) is provided in the following (7) when after the partial repeat, initial speaker chooses not to self-correct and persists with her initial version until the correction occurs. In this example the correction sequence begins when recipient *B*, hearing error ("I got these on April the twenty seventh last summer") produces a repeat of what prior speaker had said which was in error, followed by a request for verification, using falling rising intonation (line 3). Speaker *A* then (in lines 4 and 5) recycles her initial utterance with the trouble source unchanged. Recipient *C*, who also finds error in *A*'s utterance, then provides the next element in the progressively more aggravated correction sequence (line 6) – "April isn't summer!" – which is similar to "It's not-" in example 6. As *B* continues with the correction sequence, initiating the correction, *C* enters with another explicit contradiction – "No it's not!" – answering *A*'s recycled insistent version of line 5. Then both *B* and *C* provide the replacement item simultaneously in lines 9 and 10. Only then does *A* concede to the correction, with an accounting for her initial description:

(7) 6-3-71-6 ((discussing shoes))

1. *A*: I had mines last um- April. I got these on April the twenty seventh
2. last summer. And I pays for them. And I went over // where we live.
3. *B*: April is summer huh,
4. *A*: April the twenty seventh- last summer. That's in April.
5. April is in the summer!
6. *C*: April isn't summer!
7. *B*: It's i//n the- it's in the
8. *C*: No it's not!
9. *B*: spring time!
10. *C*: spring.
11. *C*: Well I got these in the spring. Cuz it was might hot that day.

This sequence, like example 6, shows a progression towards ever more aggravated types of correction moves:

2. A: trouble source
3. B: repair initiation
- 4/5. A: repeat of initial trouble source without remedy
6. C: contradiction
7. B: correction initiation
8. C: counter to trouble source repeat of lines 4–5
9. B: correction
10. C: correction
11. A: acknowledgement of correction with justification

In sequences such as 6 and 7 where partial repeats and contradictions both occur, partial repeats precede contradictions. Such an ordering allows for the possibility of self-correction even though initiator of the correction sequence might not leave an explicit turn transition space (as in 6) or trouble source initiator may choose not to supply correction, given a slot to provide such action (as in 7).

4. Aggravated contradiction and replacement correction formats

Two alternative formats for correcting prior speaker's talk which omit the partial repeat, viz. contradiction and replacement, will now be discussed. Both of these formats can be considered more aggravated than the partial repeat formats discussed above in that they provide unquestionable opposition to a prior turn.

Different ways of performing the same activity of contradicting an item in prior speaker's talk through negation are indicated in the following example, in which simultaneous talk by two recipients to initiator of the trouble source occurs:

(8) 10-20-70-82

A: She only in the seventh grade and look like she in the // tenth grade.

B: UH UH. SHE IN THE TENTH GRADE OR ELEVENTH.

C: [She ain't in no seventh grade.

B: [Her sister in eighth.

C: [She's in the *ele*venth grade.

A: OH:: no: it's a- it's *a*nother girl look like she did.

In this fragment, "UH UH" signals immediately the negative position being taken with regard to prior speaker's talk. It is followed by a correction within

the same turn. *C*'s utterance, which occurs at the same time as *B*'s, also provides a contradiction. As *B* and *C* continue to talk simultaneously, *B* provides a possible explanation for *A*'s initial reading of the situation and *C* goes on to make her version of the correction. Here, as in example 6, pointing to trouble source and providing correction occur within the same turn-space. However, without the partial repeat preface, no opportunity for "self" to correct prior to the contradiction is provided.

Although example 8 precedes correction with a contradiction, such moves may be eliminated altogether from a correction sequence, by making use of a procedure Halliday and Hasan (1976:145) call "substitution", or "the replacement of one item in a sentence by another having a similar structural function". With replacement there is no longer need of first pointing to the element of an utterance for which an alternative version is provided. The utterance correcting a prior one frequently maintains a shape similar to that of the prior utterance with the exception of the item being replaced, produced with emphatic stress, and thus marking it as alternative to a similar item in the preceding utterance. Such a format contrasts with adult talk in which a non-accented or non-salient intonation is used over expressions of disagreement (Yeager 1974). For example:

(9) 10-19-70-144

A: Get your four guys, ((directed to *C*))

B: → You get *three* guys. ((talking to *C*))

A: I mean three guys.

(10) 9-23-70-19 ((While playing 'dead blocks' *A* thinks *B* must go backwards from 15 because he first thinks that *B* has hit an opponent's checker.))

A: You go to fourteens dummy.

B: → I go to my *sixteens*.

A: You do not cuz you hit him. *Oh*: that's right. You missed him.

(11) 9-23-70-11 ((playing 'dead blocks' or 'coolie'))

A: Man I'm in the hottest spot in town! The kula!

B: → heh heh! You mean you in the *coldest*.

A: The *hottest* man. Cuz I wanna get out!

(12) 11-2-71-7 ((*A* is answering an accusation from *B*))

A: And that happened *last* year.

B: → That happened *this* year.

A: *Last* year. Cuz I was in the sixth grade then.

- (13) 10-24-70-26 ((arguing about how many children *B* has playing house))
A: You only got three.
B: → I got four.
A: You only got three.
B: I got four. ((pointing to doll which is also considered a child))
A: Oh that's right.

As Jefferson (1978) has noted, correction sequences may take different trajectories. An "XYX" sequence can develop in which initiator of the trouble source accepts the correction (as in 9 and 10). Alternatively, as in examples 11 and 12, trouble source initiator may decline to accept the correction and an "XYX" sequence can ensue. Of course either of these sequences can be expanded into a longer series of turns, as in example 13, which exhibits an "XYXYX" pattern. Here the expansion of the sequence occurs until initial speaker is provided with evidence for an alternative version of experience, when *B* points to a doll which can also be considered a child.

Other-corrections in conversations examined by Schegloff et al. (1977:378) are modulated by paralinguistic markers of various sorts such that they are performed jokingly rather than seriously. Example 11 in the data set above provides an instance of such activity, in that laughter precedes the correction. However none of the other examples contain such forms of modulation, but rather are constructed as outright disagreements with prior speaker's talk.

Jefferson, in her discussion of "exposed" correction (1978) states that a class of activities she calls "accountings" occur in conjunction with other-correction. She states (1978:3):

In the course of the business of correcting we can find such *attendant activities* as, e.g., 'teaching' ("You speak of electric motor and a gasoline engine"), 'complaining' ("You always say X"), 'admitting' ("I didn't get it right"), 'explaining/defending' ("I thought that's right"), 'forgiving' ("That's alright I forgive you"), – and in other materials, 'accusing', 'apologizing', 'ridiculing', etc. That is, the business of correcting can be a matter of not merely putting things to rights...but of *specifically addressing lapses in competence and/or conduct*.

With examples 9–13, correction is, as for Jefferson (1978), not simply a matter of setting the record straight about something which can be construed as an objective event in the world, such as the pronunciation of a word or a particular phrasing. These examples are, however, devoid of 'accountings'. Instead, corrections are counter moves opposing prior moves which themselves are part of a game of contest. For example, in (9) *A*, a member of *B*'s team, has made a move to another, *C*, to progress to a new phase of the game, selecting teammates. *B*, by countering, not only tells *C* what the appropriate number of selected teammates should be, but also puts *A* in his place for having issued the directive in the first place. By way of a second example, in (12) *B*'s correction finds error in *A*'s prior defense to an accusation initiated

by *B*. The fragment in example 10 occurs in the midst of a game in which participants are constantly cheating and redefining the rules of the game. Finally, example 13 is only the tail end of a series of moves in which there is disagreement about how many children the mother of playing house has.

The situation in which the corrections of examples 9–13 occur is one of contest. It is thus quite different from that which prevails amidst most adult correction sequences. Jefferson (1978) discusses how ongoing activities can get disrupted when unembedded forms of other-correction (which she analyzes as “exposed”) with their characteristic attendant “accounting” activities become the official business on the floor. Whatever else was going on prior to the correction is discontinued as participants play out the correction sequence. In the cases of 9–13, however, the activity of challenge, in one form or another, is what constituted the prior ongoing activity. Therefore, other-correction is a continuation, rather than a disruption of an ongoing activity of challenge/counter challenge. Rather than removing participants from the business at hand in a kind of “side sequence” (Jefferson 1972), corrections provide a solution to how to continue what participants were up to all along, while creating a new focus of interactive discord.

One final important feature of all the examples considered thus far deserves mention. In each case there is at some point recognition of the need for correction to occur, either through initial speaker of the trouble source providing a correction or acknowledging the correction of other (*B*), or through other not pursuing a counter following an explanation provided by *A* (as in examples 11–12). Such actions provide a sense of closure to the sequence as participants work towards setting the record straight; correction sequences are therefore contrastive with children's disagreements in which reaching an outcome is much less clear-cut (Goodwin 1982:87–88).

5. Mitigation in disagreement sequences among adults

Having examined some of the techniques for accomplishing aggravated other-correction I now want to examine the relationship of children's forms of aggravated disagreement to ways in which adult disagreement is performed. Within adult conversation a preference structure, the preference for agreement (Sacks 1973) may be seen to influence both the shape of sequences and of turns in a disagreement. Disagreements are expected to occur in certain environments (i.e., as responses to self deprecations, compliments, accusations, criticisms, and apologies (Pomerantz 1975:7)). However, as Sacks (1973) and Pomerantz (1975, 1978) have argued, massively throughout conversation agreements are organized as preferred activities and disagreements as dispreferred activities.

In that disagreements are treated as actions to be deferred prior to actual

expressions of disagreement, forms expressing “predisagreement” (Sacks 1973) occur. These ‘prefaces’ are then followed by statements of disagreement within the same turn: [preface]+[disagreement]. One major type of disagreement preface is an agreement. For example:

(14) SBL:L.-3

A: She doesn't uh usually come in on Friday, does she.

B: Well, Yes she does, sometimes,

The preface in *B*'s utterance, in this case “well”, is then followed by a disagreement.

Alternatively a strategy of delay may be used to withhold disagreement. Note for example the following (0.7) pause following speaker *A*'s assertion, which remains unanswered until he provides an explicit request for confirmation following the pause:

(15) G.26:(Y)7:30

A: *You* could live in thi- in this area. I believe you c'd *really* live in this area inna tent.

(0.7)

A: Y'know?

B: I think you'd if- if- if (you did it you'd be) ro(h)bbbed,

Not only is disagreement here delayed, but response to *A*'s utterance is marked as delayed by *A*'s recompletion of his turn. In addition, it is modulated by the preface “I think” and a clause using the conditional “if”, which references possible rather than actual events. Thus, even though disagreement is done, this turn in several different ways displays an orientation to disagreement as a dispreferred activity.

A second way in which disagreement may be delayed is through the use of questioning repeats, partial repeats, requests for clarifications (forms also used for making other-initiated repair) which occur as pre-disagreement turns. For example:

(16) G.76:67

A: Seven sat on uh: *one* side, and eight on the other side. There were f-
*fif*teen.

B: → In a *one* forty *one*?

A: Well they h- it was a cargo plane, and // they had had

B: → °Really?

A: This cargo // except up in the front our suit-

C: Oh it was-

B: Oh: *OH::*,

As examples 14–16 illustrate, components such as agreement prefaces, gaps and pre-disagreements demonstrate an orientation towards the preference for agreement in that they constitute ways of delaying disagreement from early positioning.

6. Aggravation in children's disagreements

The shapes of turns in which disagreement is being done as an aggravated activity as well as the sequencing of such turns are quite different. Several different formats for marking explicit disagreement will be considered prior to a discussion of such turns' possible trajectories.

First, the initial part of an aggravated disagreement turn may make use of elements associated with aggravated forms of correction, immediately followed by a disagreement *within the same turn*. For example, a partial repeat using falling-rising intonation (itself an aggravated intonation contour) may initiate a turn containing other disagreement components:

(17) 8-2-71-12

A: We found a frog.

B: → A *frog*, Y'all did not.

(18) 8-2-71-4

A: Y'all gonna walk in it?

B: → Walk in it, You know where that water come from? The *toilet*.

(19) 10-26-70-7 ((Girls have been discussing why A doesn't have a sweater on))

A: My mother don't want me to dirty all a my clothes up.

B: → Dirty em all *up*. Would your mother rather have you come down with pneumonia than dirty all of your clothes?

In these examples, B does not leave a turn space following his/her partial repeat but rather provides a contradiction (17) or an explanation for the challenge (18–19) immediately afterward.

Other elements which can be used to initiate disagreement include wh-terms + partial repeats with falling intonation (indicated by a period):

(20) 10-12-70-12

A: Terry go and get your pick.

B: → *What* pick. I'm not goin in the house now.

(21) 6-3-71-12

A: And Sunday when we go down there we got to Jerry Corner and get all them pretzels, tch! Buy some yarn and everything.

B: → *What* pretzels. You don't know what you talking about.

(22) 9-23-70-7

A: When it snows outside where y'all have gym at.

B: We don't have no gym.

C: In the basement.

B: → *What* basement. No we ain't.

Disagreements with accusations characteristically are prefaced by "who", produced with falling intonation; the primary force of denial is to call into question the applicability of the accusation for the person to whom it is addressed:

(23) 10-12-71-39

A: Why y'all fightin.

B: → Who. I ain't fightin *nobody*.

(24) 10-19-70-69

A: Oh that's right. He was gettin ready to beat your butt that night. I remember.

B: → Who. Nope. = He didn't *do* nothin.

(25) 10-12-71-85

A: How come y'all wanna fight *me* all the time.

B: → Who all us. Who gonna fight you what you say. You stand there lyin back.

The terms "what" and "huh", produced with rising intonation, are also used as disagreement prefaces:

(26) 10-7-70-10

A: Go inside. He might be up Raymond.

B: → Huh? *He* ain't up. He just went to sleep.

(17) 9-28-70-40 ((discussing what types of soda bottles may be used to make glass rings))

A: Can't use this kind.

B: → What? We already- sh- Candy show him them things.

(28) 11-11-70-7 ((discussing a child who is being fostered))

A: Her mother didn't want her.

B: → Huh? She said cuz her sister ran away an she ain't have nobody to take care of her while she go to work so.

Turn-initial prefaces can be characterized by three different intonation contours, depending upon their semantic content. These elements are not unlike predisagreement moves in that they defer a move of opposition by placing various other-initiated repair-like components in the beginning of the turn. However initiator of the correction moves so quickly to the disagreement or counter that no turn space is provided by the party disagreeing for initial speaker to come in with a revision or restatement of his/her initial statement. Rather both the initial part of the turn marking disagreement and the disagreement are produced as a single unit.

Increasingly more aggravated types of disagreement may be produced by omitting any prefaces with other-initiated, repair-like elements. A format for immediately displaying disagreement is provided in moves which unequivocally signal opposition in turn initial position through expressions of "polarity" (Halliday and Hassan 1976:178):

(29) 10-31-70-5

A: It look like you was only playin with him, the way you was fightin.

B: → *No!* He come over there throwin punches so I threw em back!

(30) 10-12-71-105 ((arguing about who called a fight))

A: Then tomorrow *she* the one who called it.

B: → *Uh* uh. You honey.

(31) 10-21-70-3

A: You didn't have to go to school today, did you.

B: → Yes we *did* have to go to school today.

The effect of opposition markers such as "yes", "no", and their equivalents as well as tokens of disbelief such as "*Ah:*", is to bracket the entire utterance as polar in relation to that which is preceded by it. In fact such terms may be themselves constitute a turn:

(32) 9-25-70-6 ((B's cat walks by))

A: Oh what's his name.

B: Puff.

A: → *Uh uh:*,

B: It is *so* her name.

(33) 3-23-71-3

A: She went with Freddy didn't she. And *you* wanted to go with Freddy.

B: → *Ah:*,

A: You did *one* time.

B: Yeah, *one* time. (1.2) Then you had to open *your* big mouth.

In examples 32 and 33 disagreement is accomplished as the exclusive business of the turn; next utterances following "uh *uh:*", or "*Ah:*", provide counter moves in reply, thus demonstrating that the action performed in prior moves was itself considered a disagreement.

In contrasting examples 17–28 with examples 29–33 it is possible to see moves towards progressively more aggravated forms of disagreement. In 17–28, the initial component of the turn possesses semblances of other-initiated repair. However the falling-rising intonation contour over the partial repeat and the falling intonation contour over the "wh" + partial repeat and "who" prefaces contrast with rising intonation used in other-initiated repair which makes of the component an understanding check rather than a challenge. In addition, because no turn space is provided by party disagreeing for a response the turn moves quickly to a refutation of or counter to the *action* proposed by prior speaker. In examples 29–33, by way of contrast, opposition is immediately signaled with respect to prior action. The shape of these aggravated disagreement turns is such that they do not permit prior speaker to make any move relevant to them prior to their completion.

7. Trajectories of aggravated correction and disagreement sequences

As was stated earlier, correction and disagreement are related kinds of next moves to prior moves in that they challenge either an element in prior speaker's talk or the action put forward by prior speaker. I earlier argued that because the subject matter of a correction sequence frequently is some type of objectively definable event in the world, especially when pronunciation or word selection is at issue, it is possible for correction sequences to move towards closure of some sort with relatively few turns. It may also be the case that with the activity of correction, generally much less of the "self" is invested than with disagreement, when one's perspective on the world, one's position of relative power or one's character is at stake. Nonetheless, as we shall see with the final example of this paper, example 39, correction sequences can indeed span several turns.

Examples of trajectories of adult or mitigated disagreement in the data of Schegloff et al. (1977) show movement towards termination of the sequence occurring rather quickly. A predisagreement move, for example, can itself function to solicit from prior speaker revision of a prior position:

(34) CKHQ:1:127

A: He's not *up* there.

B: 'S *not* up there? Predisagreement

A: I ain't seen im up there. Revision

After predisagreement moves have been provided, however, prior speaker need not modify his/her position and disagreement can become explicit, as occurs frequently in children's argumentative sequences:

(35) 10-19-70-69

A: Who ran down there to *save* your butt.

B: *Who*, who ran down to save *my* butt, Predisagreement

A: That's *right*! Backdown refusal

B: *Nobody* saved *me*. Disagreement

In the following A has been talking about Teresa Smith. In line 1 he states that she is a good fighter:

(36) 10-13-70-8

A: That girl could *bang*.

B: Who. = Teresa? Predisagreement

C: Teresa *Smith*? Predisagreement

A: Yeah: she // could *bang*. Backdown refusal

C: Ah:, Disagreement

B: I bet chu *I* could beat her. Disagreement

Predisagreements can thus lead to either revisions (34) or refusals to back down (examples 35–36), in which case participants display their orientation towards maintaining rather than closing down a continued series of disagreement turns.

In slightly more aggravated sequences outright opposition moves, rather than predisagreements occur. Justifications, as in line 5 of (37) below, which attempt to persuade the other party to accept one's perspective may work to move the sequence towards its termination:

(37) 9-25-70-6 ((continuation of example 32))

1. A: Oh what's his name.

2. B: Puff.

3. A: Uh *uh*:,

4. B: It is *so* her name.

5. A: What's the name (0.3) Mr. Ray said (0.3) it was sompm, *Didin* or somp'm.

6. B: Who?

7. A: *Didin*. He called him *Didin*.

8. B: Puff. Oh wait. Sh- he call him *Didn't*. (0.6) That's what my mother call him.

In their most aggravated forms, however, disagreements are devoid of any explanations:

(38) 10-19-70-28

A: I'm on Michael side.

B: No you not.

A: Yes I is.

C: No you *ain't*.

B: Yeah? You gonna get shot too you come here.

In this sequence, opposition is displayed through terms of polarity in the second through fourth turns at talk as, in turn, speakers disagree with prior utterances. These turns are not occupied with providing accounts or justifications for positions taken; instead they are occupied solely with displaying a position of opposition. In Piaget's terms the sequence shifts from a "primitive argument" or opposition between assertions (Piaget 1926:66) to a "quarrel" in the fifth turn, a quarrel being a type of dispute in which divergence in opinion and actions are "accompanied by actions or promises of actions" (Piaget 1926:66).

Sequences of "primitive argument" (which occur even among children ages 12 and 13) maintain a clear orientation towards aggravation despite, in some cases, the attempt of a disinterested third party to close it down. In the following the color of Johnny's bike, which is an orangey gold, is disputed.

(39) 9-15-70-11 ((Johnny's bike is leaning against a tree where the children are seated))

1. A: Donchu got a bike Sharon.
(0.3)

2. B: Yes.
(0.4)

3. A: What color you got.

4. B: It's something like Johnny bike.

5. It's hot hot ()

6. C: [Johnny's bike is orange you egg.

7. D: Is- this is *gold*.

8. C: Johnny's bike is orange.

9. D: = [Gol:d.] =

10. B: = [Gol:d.] =

11. C: = It's orange. =

12. D: = [Gol:d.] =

13. B: = [Gol:d.] =

14. C: Johnny's bike is orange.

15. D: Gold.

16. C: It's *orange*.
17. D: No Terry.
18. C: Is Johnny's bike *orange*,
(0.4)
19. D: Gol:d.
(0.4)
20. C: *Orange*.
21. D: It's gold.
22. A: It's mix_{ed}.
23. C: [OR::ANGE::,
24. D: Gol:d 'hh
25. C: *Or*:ange,
26. B: Gol::d.
27. D: [GOL::D.
28. A: It's more_{orange}.
29. D: [Gol::d.
30. C: eh- now!
31. B: GOLD.
32. D: [GOLD.
33. C: It's *orange*.
34. B: Two_{against two}.
35. D: [Gold.
(1.0)
36. D: Two against two_{we won}.
37. [It's *orange*.
38. B: It's gold.
39. D: Two against two_{we won}.
40. C: [Who beat *who*
41. A: (), girl got // on top,
42. D: ((chanting)) Two against- [Two against two we won,
43. [I betcha I c'd ()
44. A: I'll bring- I betcha I'm the only one three a them gonna ask ta
45. bring *Alfie* out she bring it out to me. 'hh I play with *Alfie all*
46. the time.
47. B: You like *Ralphie* donchu.
48. C: *Ralphie*,
49. A: *Ralphie*,
50. B: *Alfie. Alfie.*

With this example the similarities between correction and disagreement become even more apparent. The moves which oppose prior moves in this sequence have characteristic features of one word replacements or substitutions as in correction sequences. However, the sequence does not terminate quickly,

as correction sequences generally do, but rather spans many turns, and even has the appearance of a dispute. Moreover, it is the entire activity of *B*'s turn in line 4 – the assertion that the bike is like Jonny's (and therefore gold from *B*'s perspective) – rather than a descriptive element in *B*'s talk that is called into question. From the participants' perspective the event at issue is not one which can be decided upon in any objective fashion, because alternative perceptions of the event in front of them are maintained (and maintained tenaciously).

After these prefatory remarks, I want to examine more closely how aggravation in this sequence is constructed. In this fragment opposition begins in line 6 when *C* disagrees with *B* about the color of the bike in front of the group:

Johnny's bike is orange you egg.

This utterance is constructed out of a replacement or substitution for a prior description and an insult person descriptor, "You egg". Generally substitutions of this sort follow descriptions within prior turns which are unequivocal, as in examples 9–13. The disagreed-with description in example 39, however, is somewhat ambiguous. *B*, in line 4, states that her bike is "something like" the color of Johnny's. *C*, however, replies with a move which is strongly contrastive with *B*'s; though *B*'s move is designed to permit differences without promoting disagreement, *C* actively works to display disagreement.

Forms of aggravated disagreement occur repetitively throughout the dispute. In line 7 stress is placed on the word "gold" which is formulated as a word to be heard as a substitution for "orange". The turn begins with the verb "is", one of the standard techniques used to construct questions in English, and also a standard technique for modulating both other-correction and disagreement. This form is, however, withdrawn and is, in fact, displayed as being withdrawn in favor of the more exposed nonquestion form. An opportunity for less aggravated disagreement is thus explicitly rejected. Numerous other one-word replacements follow; they occur as the only part of the turn, are accented, and some are produced as screams, as indicated by capital letters in the transcript.

One further argument that an orientation towards disagreement can be observed in this sequence is provided by examination of a rejected move towards reconciliation. *A*, in line 22, state "It's mixed". Such a description could possibly lead to a resolution, in that this description admits the validity of both positions in the dispute. Instead, however, it is overlapped by *C*'s screamed "OR::ANGE" in line 23, a one-word replacement marked by increased volume and elongation of sounds. Further rounds of one-word replacements follow, and when *A* enters a second time, line 23, with "It's more orange" he sides with one of the parties against another.

With regard to this fragment a number of observations can be made. A statement allowing considerable room for variation in its interpretation is

selectively heard as erroneous and answered with an argumentative next action. Throughout participants make use of highly aggravated rather than modulated forms of opposition. Once disagreement has begun, an attempt by a third party to move towards reconciliation is explicitly rejected. The party who might himself have effected a compromise, instead promotes further argumentation. Finally, with regard to the content of this fragment we can notice that when, after one sequence of disagreement has been closed, as in line 43, another exposed other-correction sequence is entered into in lines 48 and 49, as a new "round" of argument begins.

8. Conclusion

Garvey (1977:43) has noted that within conversation children play with the conventions that guide sequencing moves. Cycles of "assertion-counter-assertion exchanges" (Garvey 1977:43) or "repetitions" (Brenneis and Lein 1977:56) have been found to be characteristic of children's disputes. Such recyclings of utterances in the absence of "justifications" (as distinguished from recyclings of a position or thesis) have, however, been reported to be a dispreferred procedure for constructing arguments among adults (Coulter 1979). Researchers in discourse analysis have generally considered disagreement something speakers in conversation try to avoid (Labov and Fanshel 1977:84; Brown and Levinson 1978:118) and conversation analysts have argued that self-correction is preferred as the outcome in repair sequences (Schegloff et al. 1977). Within children's conversation, however, aggravated disagreement are activities that participants work to achieve in their own right, as evidenced by features such as intonation contours, turn shapes and patterning in sequences of talk which display rather than put off the expression of opposition.

Appendix

The following is a simplified version of the system for transcribing utterances developed by Jefferson (Sacks et al. 1974:731–733). Only those symbols relevant to the present analysis are included.

1. Sequencing	Instance	Explanation
//	P: THAT LADY GONNA BEAT	Double obliques or brackets indicate the point at which a
[	YOUR // BUTT!	current speaker's talk is over-
	S: I WANT-	lapped with the talk of another.
	P: THAT LADY GONNA BEAT YOUR BUTT!	
	[	
	S: I WANT-	

=	C: Johnny's bike is orange. = D: = Gol:d.	The equal signs indicate "latching"; there is no interval between the end of a prior and start of a next piece of talk.
(0.0)	A: Donchu got a bike Sharon. (0.3) B: Yes.	Numbers in parentheses indicate elapses time in tenths of seconds.
2. Sound Production		
? ! , .	A: Oh what's his name. C: Is Johnny's bike orange,	Punctuation markers are not used as grammatical symbols, but for intonation. A period indicates falling intonation. A comma is used for falling-rising intonation. Question marks are used for rising intonation.
:	C: You was up there r:un-nin, D: Gol::d.	Colons indicate that the prior syllable is prolonged. Multiple colons indicate a more prolonged syllable.
<i>Italics</i>	P: <i>They ain't Spanish,</i>	Italics indicates various forms of stressing, and may involve pitch and/or volume.
-	C: And we was- (0.5) and wh-	The dash indicates a cut-off of prior word or sound.
°	wh- what was he <i>doin</i> , B: °Really?	The degree sign indicates that the talk it precedes is low in volume.
UC	P: They TALK PORTaric-can.	Upper case indicates increased volume.
(hh)	C: So you would spend twenty five cents fo(hh)r so(hh)me grits,	The [(h)] within parentheses indicates explosive aspiration, either laughter or breathlessness.
3. Reader's guides		
()	P: (take my place)	Single parentheses indicate transcribers are not certain about words contained therein.
(())	D: ((chanting)) Two against- Two against two we won,	Materials in double parentheses indicate features of the audio materials other than actual verbalizations.

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Marjorie Harness Goodwin (b. 1944) received her doctorate in anthropology from the University of Pennsylvania. She is presently an associate professor in anthropology at the University of South Carolina. Articles of related interest include 'Processes of dispute management among urban black children', *American Ethnologist* 9:76–96 (1982) and 'He-said-she-said: formal cultural procedures for the construction of a gossip dispute activity', *American Ethnologist* 7:674–695 (1980).