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Abstract

This article extends prior conversation analytic research on the preference organization of sequence-initiating actions. Across two languages (English and Russian), this article examines one such action: explicitly soliciting an account for human conduct (predominantly with *why*-type interrogatives). Prior work demonstrates that this action conveys a challenging stance towards the warrantability of the accountable event/conduct (Bolden and Robinson, forthcoming). When addressees are somehow responsible for the accountable event/conduct, explicit solicitations of accounts are frequently critical of, and thus embody disaffiliation with, addressees. This article demonstrates that, when explicit solicitations of accounts embody disaffiliation, they are systematically 'withheld' and, thus, can be characterized as 'dispreferred' actions. This article also examines: a) deviant cases, where account solicitations are *not* withheld, which is a practice for embodying aggravated disaffiliation; and b) negative cases, where account solicitations actually embody *affiliation*, and as such are typically treated as preferred actions and not withheld.

Keywords

accounts, conversation analysis, disaffiliation, other initiation of repair, preference, transition space

One of Goffman's (1967, 1983) most profound suggestions was that the organization of human interaction (what he called *the interaction order*) promotes social affiliation in human relationships at the expense of disaffiliation (and thus social conflict) (Clayman, 2002;

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Enfield, 2006; Rawls, 1987). Some of the strongest empirical support for this claim has come from conversation-analytic investigations into preference organization (e.g. Clayman, 2002; Heritage, 1984b; Lerner, 1996a; Pomerantz, 1984; Robinson, 2004; Sacks, 1987; Schegloff, 2007). Using conversation analysis, the present article extends this research by documenting the preference organization of a sequence-initiating action, that of explicitly soliciting an account for human conduct with *why*-formatted interrogatives. We demonstrate that, when explicit solicitations of accounts embody disaffiliation with addressees, they are systematically withheld and, thus, can be characterized as ‘dispreferred’ actions.

In conversation analysis, preference organization refers *not* to the subjective feelings or psychological preferences of individual interactants, but rather to public forms of conduct that are thoroughly institutionalized and largely normative, and that systematically promote certain interactional outcomes over others (for review, see Clayman, 2002; Heritage, 1984b; Schegloff, 2007). One pervasive outcome that preference organization promotes is social affiliation in human relationships (rather than disaffiliation).¹ From a conversation-analytic standpoint, affiliation and disaffiliation have been theoretically conceptualized in terms of Brown and Levinson’s (1987) notion of face preservation/threat (Clayman, 2002; Heritage, 1984b; Holtgraves, 1992; Lerner, 1996a).² Many action types – in both sequence-initial and sequence-responsive positions – involve at least two relevant alternatives that are asymmetrical in that one promotes affiliation while the other promotes disaffiliation: for example, agreeing (versus disagreeing) with an assessment, accepting (versus refusing) an invitation, granting (versus rejecting) a request, and allowing others to correct themselves (versus correcting them).

Perhaps the central methodical feature of preference organization that promotes affiliation is that the linguistic realization of dispreferred actions is non-contiguous (Sacks, 1987) with, or ‘withheld’ relative to, points in interaction where they might otherwise be initially relevantly performed (at least in terms of the rules governing turn taking and action sequences). For example, based on the conditional-relevance rule (Schegloff and Sacks, 1973), at the first transition-relevance place (Sacks et al., 1974) of a sequence-initiating action (i.e. of a first-pair part of an adjacency pair sequence; hereafter, FPP), the selected speaker is normatively obliged to begin responding (with a type-appropriate second-pair part). Dispreferred sequence-responding actions (hereafter second-pair parts, or SPPs) are typically non-contiguous with FPPs, or ‘delayed’ in a variety of ways: with silences, turn pre-beginning conduct (e.g. breathing, *uhm*, etc.; Schegloff, 1996b), turn-initial particles (e.g. *well*; Schegloff and Lerner, 2009) and other haltings of a turn-constructive unit’s progressivity (Lerner, 1996b), expressions of appreciation (e.g. ‘That’s nice of you to ask’), apologies (Robinson, 2004), disclaimers (e.g. ‘I don’t know’), accounts (Scott and Lyman, 1968), and so on (Schegloff, 2007). Although some of these practices themselves function to mitigate threat to addressee’s face (such as *inability accounts*; Heritage, 1984b), as institutionalized features of preference organization they also project (and thus make socially available) the possible imminent production of a dispreferred SPP, which provides both potential offenders and offendees with interactional opportunities to generate, negotiate, and/or produce more affiliative alternatives. For example, in the silence that follows an invitation, the inviter can encourage acceptance (the preferred/affiliative alternative) by ‘sweetening the deal’, or mitigate the upcoming rejection (the dispreferred/disaffiliative alternative) by re-issuing the invitation with a turn format that anticipates (i.e. prefers) rejection (Davidson, 1984; Schegloff, 2007).

Compared to research on the preference organization of SPPs (which has spanned many action types, contexts, and languages), relatively little has been done on the preference organization of FPPs. Again, though, a recurrent finding is that disaffiliative FPPs are dispreferred. This was suggested early on by Pomerantz (1978), who noted that actions that attribute blame to addressees, such as accusing, blaming, complaining about, and criticizing addressees, are dispreferred (also see Drew and Walker 2009 Schegloff, 2005). Regarding FPPs, the most established finding is that correcting others is dispreferred relative to allowing others to correct themselves (Schegloff et al., 1977). Other dispreferred FPPs appear to include: 1) requesting an object of value versus having it offered (Lerner, 1996a; Pillet-Shore, 2008; Schegloff, 2007; Taleghani-Nikazm, 2006); 2) giving unsolicited advice (Heritage and Sefi, 1992); 3) announcing positively valenced aspects of oneself (e.g. 'I got a new haircut') versus having them noticed by others (e.g. 'Nice haircut') (Schegloff, 2007); 4) self-identifying (versus being recognized) in the context of telephone conversation openings when it is relevant for the speakers to recognize each other (Schegloff, 1979, 2007); 5) newcomers introducing themselves to already present unfamiliar persons (e.g. 'I'm Jeff') when one of those persons is relevantly able to introduce the newcomer (Pillet-Shore, 2008); and 6) newcomers requesting a formulation of the group's previous activity (e.g. 'What are you guys talking about?') versus having this information offered (Pillet-Shore, 2008).

Analogous to dispreferred SPPs, a systematic feature of dispreferred FPPs, and evidence for their dispreferred status, is that they are 'withheld' relative to points in interaction where they might otherwise be initially relevantly performed.³ This withholding provides interactional space for the generation of more affiliative outcomes. For example, Schegloff et al. (1977) demonstrated that, after a 'repairable' bit of talk is brought to a transition-relevance place, other speakers frequently withhold talking, and thus relevantly withhold correcting the other, by allowing for a gap of silence that is longer than a normal transition space (Jefferson, 1984; Sacks et al., 1974) and/or by initiating repair. Both of these practices can project repair-related trouble and tacitly elicit/solicit the more affiliative alternative action of speakers correcting themselves. Likewise, requests are often withheld in favor of, for example, pre-request sequences (such as, 'Are you still reading that book?') that can lead to preemptive offers (e.g. 'No, would you like it?'), eliminating the need for issuing the dispreferred request (Lerner, 1996a; Sacks, 1992; Schegloff, 2007). Similarly, at least one type of pre-sequence, the *pre-delicate* sequence (e.g. 'Can I ask you something?'), is tailored to disaffiliative FPPs, such as making especially imposing requests, inquiring about sensitive subjects, and criticizing or challenging addressees (Schegloff, 1980). In a similar vein, Pomerantz (1980) observed that interlocutors may use 'my side tellings' as a 'fishing device' to initially avoid doing more explicit disaffiliative actions (such as, accusations and complaints), and only proceed to such disaffiliative actions when the fishing device fails to produce the fished-for response. Heritage and Sefi (1992) demonstrated that explicit unsolicited advice is frequently 'worked up to' through, and thus withheld in favor of, advice-givers' questions that publicly expose and confirm a problem. Finally, Monzoni (2008) showed that speakers' disaffiliative, explicit challenges of their addressees' behavior are frequently preceded by questions that work to expose the behavior as problematic (e.g. 'What are you doing?' while observing the addressee's actions).⁴

This article extends prior research on the preference organization of FPPs. We examine one such action: explicitly soliciting an account for human conduct with a *why*-type interrogative in two languages, English and Russian. Bolden and Robinson (forthcoming) demonstrated that account solicitations of this sort convey a challenging stance toward the accountable event (indexing a claim that the accountable event does not accord with common sense and is, thus, possibly inappropriate or unwarranted) and communicate a critical stance toward the agent(s) responsible for its production.⁵ When the person somehow responsible for the accountable event is the addressed recipient, explicit account solicitations are commonly disaffiliative actions,⁶ and, for this reason, frequently adumbrate additional negatively valenced actions, such as complaining, criticizing, and blaming (Bolden and Robinson, forthcoming).⁷ This article argues that disaffiliative explicit solicitations of accounts are dispreferred FPPs.

Our primary evidence for this argument is that disaffiliative account solicitations are systematically ‘withheld’ (see again note 3). In order to demonstrate ‘withholding’, it must be established that an account from one interlocutor is relevantly ‘due’ at some point in interaction, and that an explicit solicitation of an account by another interlocutor is withheld relative to that point (for a discussion of grounding negative observations, see Schegloff, 2007). In order to satisfy this burden of proof, we concentrate our evidentiary attention on action environments in which the production of an account for human conduct is strongly relevant (and, in some cases, even normatively due), such as turns involving dispreferred and disaffiliative SPPs (for adjacency pair sequences, see Schegloff, 2007). Early on, Heritage (1984b) observed that such dispreferred SPPs normatively include affiliatory accounts for producing the dispreferred/disaffiliative response. Other such environments include announcing accountable news (Jefferson, 1981; Maynard, 2003). Focusing on these two contexts, we demonstrate that explicit account solicitations are recurrently withheld relative to initial points in interaction where they might otherwise be relevantly produced. Finally, we examine two classes of cases in which explicit solicitations of accounts are *not* withheld yet nonetheless ‘prove the rule’, those being account solicitations that: a) are designed to violate preference norms in order to enact aggravated disaffiliation (i.e. deviant cases); and b) embody affiliation (rather than disaffiliation) with addressees (i.e. negative cases).

The data and methodology

This article presents results of a conversation analytic cross-linguistic ‘co-investigation’ (Lerner and Takagi, 1999) of account solicitations in two languages, English and Russian. The data are drawn from recordings of naturally occurring interactions among friends and family members. English language materials consist of 360 telephone recordings and 29 video recordings; Russian language materials consist of 180 telephone recordings and 30 video recordings. All data were transcribed using the standard conversation analytic transcription conventions (e.g. Atkinson and Heritage, 1984) with some modifications for the Russian language (Bolden, 2008). The analysis presented here draws on a collection of approximately 350 English language and 150 Russian language instances of the action of explicitly soliciting an account, which were implemented through *why*-type

turn formats (such as, *why, how come, what . . . for*, in English, and *pochemu* and *zachem* in Russian).⁸ This article does not analyze *why*-formatted turns that do not involve the action of soliciting an account, such as those turns that implement suggestions, offers, or invitations (e.g. ‘Why don’t you come over?’) or ‘go-aheads’ to actions that initiate preliminary sequences, such as pre-informings (e.g. ‘Do you know why she got fired’ -> ‘Why?’) (re: pre-sequences, see Schegloff, 2007; Terasaki, 2004).

Following the conversation-analytic approach to cross-linguistic or cross-cultural research (Schegloff, 2009; Sidnell, 2009), account solicitations in the two languages were analyzed independently. Our goal was to examine how interlocutors in each speech community accomplish this action in local interactional and sequential contexts, rather than to compare Russian to English usages (or vice versa). This co-investigation revealed uniformity in how English and Russian speakers deploy explicit account solicitations, which suggests a wider cross-linguistic or cross-cultural applicability of our findings. In this article, we draw equally on the two languages to demonstrate that disaffiliative, explicit account solicitations are dispreferred FPPs. This article is, however, not comparative or comparativist by design (see Schegloff, 2009 for a discussion of different approaches to comparative research).

Explicit account solicitations are typically withheld

In this section, we demonstrate that explicit account solicitations are typically withheld. As evidence, we focus on action environments in which the production of an account for human conduct is relevant (and, in some cases, normatively due), including dispreferred and disaffiliative SPPs and announcements of accountable news.

Dispreferred and disaffiliative second-pair parts (SPPs)

Heritage (1984b) observed that dispreferred and disaffiliative SPPs, such as declinations of offers and refusals of invitations, normatively include affiliatory accounts for producing the dispreferred response.⁹ Speakers of dispreferred SPPs routinely elaborate their responses with accounts, explanations, excuses, and the like (Schegloff, 2007), which supports the claim that accounting/explaining is a normative component of such responses. We begin this subsection by briefly presenting evidence for this claim, and then proceed to examine the deployment of explicit solicitations of accounts in the environment of ‘missing’ accounts.

The claim that accounts normatively accompany turns involving dispreferred and disaffiliative SPPs is initially supported by the fact that, after producing conditionally relevant SPPs, and thus at places where these turns might otherwise be transition relevant (Sacks et al., 1974), SPP speakers recurrently continue speaking and produce accounts. For example, see Excerpt 1, which is taken from a British English conversation between Edgerton and his friend Michael. (This case was presented by Heritage, 1984b: 271.) As context, Michael’s wife recently injured her back. At lines 1–2, Edgerton offers his (family’s) assistance: ‘>can we do< any shopping for her:, or some thing like tha:t?’.

Excerpt 1: Shopping [Heritage:0II:2:Call 4]

- 01 EDG: I mean >can we do< any shopping for her:, or
 02 something like tha:t?
 03 (0.6)
 04 MIC: Well (.) that's mo:st ki:nd Edgerton, .h at thuh
 05 mo:ment no: because we've still got two bo:ys
 06 at home.
 07 EDG: Q:f course.

Michael's initial, relevant response to Edgerton's offer is: 'at thuh mo:ment no:.' (lines 4–5). Our focus is on the fact that, while the completion of this turn constructional unit might otherwise bring Michael's turn to a place of transition relevance (Sacks et al., 1974), Michael continues speaking. Edgerton similarly orients to a lack of transition relevance by not coming in to speak after 'no:.'. Michael continues to provide an account for why he declined Edgerton's offer: 'because we've still got two bo:ys at home' (lines 5–6).

The claim that accounts normatively accompany dispreferred and disaffiliative SPPs is further supported by the fact that, when SPP speakers do not immediately follow the conditionally relevant response with an account, FPP speakers frequently withhold taking a next turn of talk – which produces a gap of silence that is longer than a normal transition space (Jefferson, 1984) – and SPP speakers frequently then proceed to produce accounts. In these cases, it is arguable that both interlocutors orient to the relevance of an account being due. For example, see Excerpt 2. Geri and Shirley are talking about a third party's mother who, according to Shirley, 'is terminal . . . [with] fifty percent chance of [living] three years' (data not shown). At lines 1–2, Geri's question, '.hh Well will thuh remai:ning three years uhm see her in pai:n?' linguistically presupposes that the mother is not currently in pain (which turns out to be incorrect).

Excerpt 2: Pain [Gerri & Shirley]

- 01 GER: .hh Well will thuh remai:ning three years uhm see
 02 her in pai:n?
 03 SHI: .hh She already is in a great deal of pain.
 04 (0.7)
 05 SHI: >'Cause she< has thuh chemotherapy an' thuh radi:ation.

Shirley's non-conforming (Raymond, 2003) answer – '.hh She already is in a great deal of pain.' (line 3) – is a type of counter-informing (Heritage, 1984a; Robinson, 2009) that embodies her disaffiliation with Geri by rejecting her question's presupposition in an unmitigated fashion. (Shirley's answer additionally asserts her epistemic authority over Geri regarding the mother's physical condition.) Shirley produces '.hh She already is in a great deal of pain.' with a final-falling intonation contour (marked with a period on the transcript after 'pain') that projects possible turn completion, and then stops talking (see the silence at line 4). Our focus is on the fact that, in a turn-taking environment where

Geri has a right to speak next (Sacks et al., 1974), she refrains from speaking, which results in a long 0.7 second gap (line 4). Furthermore, Shirley eventually continues speaking and produces an account for her non-conforming response: '>'Cause she< has tuh chemotherapy an' thuh radiation.' (line 5). In this case, Geri's withholding speaking in the gap of silence at line 4 appears to index some type of 'trouble' with Shirley's answer-turn-so-far (Schegloff et al., 1977), and tacitly elicits an account.

Withholding speaking at a transition-relevance place after a SPP is perhaps the least interactionally imposing practice, but nonetheless a practice, for holding the SPP speaker accountable for producing a 'missing' account (in contexts where accounts are relevantly due). Relative to other practices (discussed immediately below), these gaps of silence provide the SPP speaker with the most autonomy in terms of furnishing the account, and allow for the account to ultimately be produced normatively, that is, in the same SPP turn (i.e. the transition-space 'gap' being turned into a 'pause'; Sacks et al., 1974).

Withholding speaking at a transition-relevance place after a SPP might be a first-order tacit practice for eliciting a missing account. A second-order category of practices (that tend to follow such gaps of silence) involves sequence post-expansion (Schegloff, 2007). One such practice is other-initiation of repair (e.g. Schegloff et al., 1977). For example, see Excerpt 3, which is drawn from a call between two friends, Mary and Alan, who are discussing a non-present third party Rob.

Excerpt 3: Nice person [Kamunksy:3]

- 01 MRY: >Well I< know him from sight I u=-he doesn' kno:w me.
 02 (.)
 03 ALA: Oh:.
 04 (.)
 05 ALA: He'll get tuh know you (won't).=[h]
 06 MRY: [H]e se[ems like]
 07 ALA: [Ihh]
 08 MRY: he's really a nice person.=
 09 ALA: =Yeh he's okay.
 10 (0.4)
 11 MRY: (Eh) He's okay,
 12 ALA: Well he's quiet. but he's okay.
 13 MRY: 'Ea:h that's what everybody tells me he's really
 14 quiet.
 15 ALA: Mm hm

At lines 6–8, Mary assesses a non-present third party: 'He seems like he's really a nice person.' Given the epistemic asymmetry (see e.g. line 1) between Mary (as less familiar with Rob) and Alan (as more familiar with Rob), Mary's assessment strongly makes relevant a response (Pomerantz, 1984; Stivers and Rossano, 2010). Rob responds with an abbreviated agreement, 'Yeh' (line 9), which he immediately follows with an assessment, 'he's okay.' (line 9). Here, the term *okay* is a downgraded assessment (Pillet-Shore, 2003) that disaffirms Mary's positive assessment of Rob as 'really a nice person' (line 8). In sum,

Alan's response is dispreferred and disaffiliative (Pomerantz, 1984; Robinson, 2009). In the following gap of silence (line 10), where it might otherwise be relevant for Mary to speak, it is arguable that Mary waits for (i.e. tacitly elicits) an account, and Rob withholds one. Eventually, Mary initiates repair on Alan's downgraded/disaffirming assessment by repeating 'He's okay,' (line 11) with final-rising intonation (symbolized in the transcript by the comma) (Jefferson, 1972; Schegloff et al., 1977). Alan treats Mary's repair initiator as soliciting an account by explaining the knowledge-based grounds for his downgraded assessment. First, Alan produces a negative characterization of Rob: 'Well he's quiet.' (line 12). Second, Alan uses the contrast marker *but* to frame his negative characterization as not impugning his initial assessment of Rob: 'but he's okay.' (line 12).

To summarize, Excerpts 1–3 (above) provide evidence that dispreferred and disaffiliative SPP actions normatively involve the production of accounts. If SPP speakers withhold accounts, FPP speakers have a range of (non-mutually exclusive) practices for *tacitly* eliciting/soliciting them, including allowing for gaps of silence at transition-relevance spaces and initiating repair.¹⁰ These practices are tacit relative to that of explicitly soliciting an account, which publicly exposes an account as being 'missing' and holds SPP speakers accountable for its production.

Given that dispreferred/disaffiliative SPP actions normatively involve the production of accounts, we now demonstrate that *explicit* solicitations of accounts – which might otherwise be relevantly produced at the first possible place that accounts are 'missing' but 'due' – are systematically withheld in favor of tacit practices for eliciting/soliciting accounts. This stands as evidence that explicit solicitations of accounts in the form of *why*-type interrogatives are dispreferred FPPs. For example, see Excerpts 4 and 5 below. In both cases, an explicit solicitation of an account is withheld in favor of 'not talking' at the transition-relevance place, which results in a gap of silence. In both cases, the SPP speaker merely re-completes her initial SPP response, which projects turn completion (and perhaps embodies resistance to the production of an account). Excerpt 4 is drawn from a phone conversation between two Jewish women. At line 1, Abby informs Bonny about relatives who are visiting. At line 7, Bonny follows up with an inquiry into whether or not Abby has invited the relatives to her home to celebrate the Jewish Sabbath day of rest (which begins every Friday at sundown, and which Bonny refers to as 'Sha:bbos').

Excerpt 4: Shabbos [CH 4629]

- 01 ABB: °An'-° An' Esther's inlaws are here now.
 02 (0.5)
 03 BON: Oh right. I forg_o:t.
 04 ABB: Mm=hm:,
 05 BON: [(Oh(h) ge(h)]e(h)
 06 ABB: [()]
 07 FPP> BON: .hhh Are you ha_ving them for Sha:bbos?
 08 SPP> ABB: N:o:,
 09 (.)

- 04 FPP> GEN: A vam net/ da/
PRT you no yes
And you didn't, did you
- 05 SPP> AGN: Net/
no
- 06 (0.2)
- 07 AGN: [Net/
no
- 08 GEN?: [tkl!
- 09 (0.5)
- 10 WHY>GENGRI: >A pach^emu< net ta/ Pachemu net/
PRT why no PRT why not
Why not? Why not
- 11 AGN: Nu ladna/ Eta uzhe tagda kagda konchish krasit' mashinu
PRT okay that already then when end paint car
Okay/ When you finish painting the car¹²
- 12 pagavarim [pachemu net/=ladna?/
will-talk why not okay
we'll discuss why not/ Okay

In response to Agnesa's inquiry about the ballet (line 1), Gena emphatically asserts that he and his wife *did* like it: 'Nam panravilsja' ('We liked it'; line 2). The contrastive stress on 'We' (symbolized in the transcript by underlining) displays Gena's expectation that Agnesa *did not* like the ballet. Agnesa treats Gena's response as news with the news-maker 'Da,' (translatable as 'Really?' or 'You did?'; line 3) (Heritage, 1984a; Jefferson, 1981). Gena then issues a reciprocal inquiry about Agnesa's opinion of the ballet – 'A vam net/ da,' ('And you didn't, did you'; line 4) – as a way to prompt Agnesa to explain her dislike of the ballet. Gena's reciprocal inquiry, as a negative assertion plus a tag question, embodies cross-cutting preferences (Schegloff, 2007). On the one hand, it is syntactically formatted to prefer a *disconfirmation* (Sacks, 1987), which would endorse Gena's and Agnesa's contradictory positions regarding the ballet. On the other hand, as an action, it prefers *confirmation*, which would reject such a contradictory stance and thereby bring their positions more into alignment. As Schegloff (2007) demonstrated, in the case of cross-cutting preferences, those of action tend to supersede those of syntax. Agnesa's disconfirmation ('Net' – 'No' in line 5) is, thus, a dispreferred and disaffiliative action that should, normatively, be accounted for in the same turn (see again note 11). Similar to Abby's response in Excerpt 4 (at line 8), Agnesa's response is followed by a gap of

silence (i.e. the 0.2-second silence at line 6), after which Agnesa re-completes her disconfirmation: ‘No’ (line 7). Agnesa’s recompletion displays her stance that she is complete with her SPP *turn* (Raymond, 2000). After another gap of silence at line 9, which constitutes yet more withholding on Gena’s part, Gena explicitly solicits an account: ‘>A pach^emu< net ta/ Pachemu net/’ (‘Why not? Why not’; line 10). Given Gena’s and Agnesa’s contradictory positions regarding their liking of the ballet, Gena’s account solicitation embodies disaffiliation and conveys a challenging stance towards Agnesa’s opinion. The challenging stance is underlined by Gena’s repeated and emphatic delivery of this account solicitation (see, for example, the marked stress and the pitch peak on line 10). Note as well that the first formulation of the account solicitation, ‘>A pach^emu< net ta’, contains the (untranslatable) particle ‘ta,’ which underscores the action’s late placement within the unfolding course of action (Bolden, 2005, 2009).

In Excerpts 4 and 5 above, recipients of dispreferred SPPs withheld explicit solicitations of accounts by leaving a gap of silence and, thus, allowing SPP speakers to provide an account. In Excerpts 6 and 7 below, recipients of dispreferred, unaccounted-for SPPs first initiate repair on the SPP and only then pursue an account with an explicit solicitation. Excerpt 6 is drawn from a call between two girlfriends, Geri and Shirley. Prior to line 1, Shirley announced that she received a very low score on the Law School Admission Test (LSAT), which she then characterized as being ‘very bad’ (data not shown). At line 1, Geri asks Shirley if she is going to retake the test.

Excerpt 6: LSAT [Gerry & Shirley]

(1:15)

- 01 FPP> GER: So you g'nna take it aga:i[n?]
 02 SPP> SHI: [N]o.
 03 (0.4)
 04 GER: No:?
 05 SHI: °No.°
 06 (0.2)
 07 WHY> GER: Why no:t.=
 08 SHI: =.hhh I don't really wan' to.
 09 (.)
 10 GER: You don' wanna go through all thuh ha:ss[le(s)?]
 11 SHI: [.hhh] I=don'
 12 knɔw Geri.

Geri’s question, ‘so you g’nna take it aga:i[n?’ (line 1), is in the form of a prosodic interrogative that is grammatically designed to prefer a *yes*-type answer. Moreover, the declarative syntax (i.e. *You are going to . . .*) versus interrogative syntax (e.g. *Are you going to . . .*) conveys Geri’s high degree of epistemic access to the situation and her strong expectation for an affirmative response (Heritage, 2007; Raymond and Heritage, 2008). Given Geri’s question and its design, Shirley’s immediate negative (i.e. dispreferred), disconfirmatory answer (line 2) embodies a counter-informing (Heritage, 1984a) that makes relevant a reconciliatory account/explanation from Shirley (Robinson, 2009)

(see again note 11). However, Shirley produces ‘No.’ as a complete answer (see the final intonation symbolized in the transcript by the period).

After a 0.4-second gap of silence at line 3, wherein it is arguable that Shirley withholds an account, Geri initiates repair on Shirley’s dispreferred answer by repeating it with rising intonation (Jefferson, 1972; Schegloff et al., 1977): ‘No:?’ . Shirley continues to withhold an account (and to hold on to her position) by simply confirming: ‘°No.°’ (line 5). After another gap of silence (line 6), Geri explicitly solicits an account with ‘Why no:t.’ (line 7). Geri’s account solicitation, which is withheld across lines 3–6, is disaffiliative because it challenges the warrantability of Shirley’s decision to not retake the test (Bolden and Robinson, forthcoming).¹³

In Excerpt 7 (from a Russian telephone conversation), an explicit solicitation of an account is similarly withheld in lieu of other-initiation of repair. Rima is talking to her adult son, Michael, who is currently at work. At line 1, Rima initiates a new topic with an inquiry into Michael’s work hours.

Excerpt 7: Working [RP23]

(3:50)

- 01 FPP> RI: A ty sědnja da katōrava chasu/ da des’ti?/
PRT you today till which hour till ten
Today you’re working till when/ till ten?
- 02 (0.4)
- 03 SPP> MI: Ne:t/ sědnja da devjati/
no today till nine
No/ today till nine
- 04 RI: ↑Da devjati vabsche?/
till nine generally
Only till nine?
- 05 MI: ↑°Mm hm̩:°/
- 06 WHY>RI: A kak tak/=ty sě`odnja ↑ra?n’she↓ ustroilsja/da,/
PRT how so you today earlier arranged yes
How come/ you arranged for earlier today, right
- 07 MI: Hm: Sevodnja da/=U menja (de-) udasca ran’she °°ujti°°/
today yes with me manage early leave
Today yes/ I’ll manage to leave earlier

At line 1, Rima initially formulates a type of *wh*-question (‘Today you’re working till when’), but then continues, past a point of possible completion, to reformulate her question by replacing ‘till when’ with ‘till ten?’, which proposes a candidate time for (dis-)

confirmation. Rima's reformulated question conveys her expectation that Michael will be working 'till ten' and, thus, prefers a confirming/agreeing response. After pausing for 0.4 seconds (line 2), Michael produces a dispreferred disconfirmation: 'No/ today till nine' (line 3). Michael's response is a type of counter-informing (Heritage, 1984a; Robinson, 2009) that arguably fails to include an account for the discrepancy between it and Rima's expectation (see Robinson, 2009). At line 4, Rima enacts surprise (Wilkinson and Kitzinger, 2006) at Michael's response by initiating repair on it with a modified (i.e. 'Only . . .') partial repeat (i.e. 'till nine?'), and by producing it with both rising (Jefferson, 1972) and 'astonished' intonation (Selting, 1996). (In this case, Rima uses a markedly higher pitch, symbolized in the transcript by the upward arrow, '↑*Da devjati vabsche?*'/'Only till nine?' at line 4.) Rima's repair initiation tacitly provides Michael an opportunity to account for his dispreferred SPP (as Alan did in Excerpt 3, line 12, above). However, Michael simply confirms with a quiet, close-mouthed ('occluded'; Jefferson, 1981) confirmation token, '°Mm hm_i°' (line 5), that indicates that no further elaboration will be provided. At this point, Rima explicitly solicits an account with '*A kak tak*' ('how come' – line 6). Rima's account solicitation, which is withheld across lines 4–5, takes up a challenging stance toward the warrantability of Michael's response (at line 3) and, thus, a disaffiliative stance toward Michael (Bolden and Robinson, forthcoming). To mitigate this stance, Rima rushes through (Schegloff, 1987) to provide a candidate account that would 'make sense' of the situation ('you arranged for earlier today, right'; line 6).

To conclude, this first analytic subsection examined one environment – dispreferred and disaffiliative SPP turns – where accounts are normatively due. We demonstrated that, when SPP speakers fail to produce accounts, FPP speakers systematically withhold explicitly soliciting an account and, instead, first deploy a variety of (non-mutually exclusive) tacit practices for eliciting/soliciting accounts, such as 'not talking' at the transition-relevance place (which produces an accountable gap of silence) and/or initiating repair. One explanation for such withholding is that, relative to these tacit practices, an action of soliciting an account explicitly is more disaffiliative because it holds SPP speakers accountable for producing an account.

Announcements of accountable news

In the previous sub-section, we examined the environment of dispreferred and disaffiliative SPP turns because they are ones in which accounts are normative. If these SPP turns do *not* contain accounts, they establish the relevance of account solicitations by others in the next turn, and thus provide an empirical basis for claiming that explicit account solicitations are 'withheld' past that point. Although there are other environments where accounts are strongly relevant, these environments are less well documented by prior research. One such environment appears to be the action of announcing, where the announced news is accountable from the perspective of the news recipient, such as the news running counter to actual or common-sense knowledge (Schutz, 1962). (Note that announced news is not always accountable, as in the case of expectable good news.) Prior research has shown that, when announcements are produced as FPP actions, they frequently set in motion the following sequential trajectory: 1) announcement; 2) announcement response; 3) elaboration; and 4) assessment (Jefferson, 1981; Maynard, 2003).

When the announced news is accountable, accounts frequently follow the ‘announcement response’ as the ‘elaboration’ of the announcement. For instance, see Excerpt 8, which is drawn from a call between Leslie and her mother. At line 1, Leslie announces that she is ‘going to=a funeral on Tuesday,’ which is accountable bad news (Maynard, 2003).

Excerpt 8: Funeral [Holt:X:C:1:1:6]

- 01 LES: Well I'm I'm s:- (.) proba'ly going to=a funeral on Tuesday,
 02 (0.2)
 03 MOM: Oh dea:[r.]
 04 LES: [-h]h=uh ((cough)) .hh Do=you remember- you know
 05 Philip Co:le, you know he had this v_{er}y: goo:d.hhhh v_{er}y
 06 busy little m_other that was al[ways-]
 07 MOM: [Oh:]: ye[s.]
 08 LES: [bu]sy doing thi:ngs,
 09 'n:d (.) she di::ed.
 10 MOM: Aw::

Our focus is on the fact that, after the mom responds to Leslie’s announcement, registering it as bad news with ‘Oh dea:r.’ (line 3), Leslie produces an account for attending the funeral (lines 4–9). This excerpt supports the argument that (at least sequence-initiating) announcements of accountable news make relevant the production of an account for the news, by the announcer, at least in the turn after a response that treats the announcement as news, thereby providing a space for the announcer to ‘elaborate’ (e.g. after a ‘news-mark’; Jefferson, 1981). In this context, it is arguable that the *lack* of an account in this third-turn position raises the relevance of an account solicitation by another speaker, which provides analytic grounds for determining if an account solicitation is withheld. Below we demonstrate that disaffiliative account solicitations are dispreferred actions because they are systematically ‘withheld’ in this environment (just as they were in the aftermath of dispreferred SPPs), with tacit practices for eliciting/soliciting ‘missing’ accounts being deployed first.

Excerpt 9 is drawn from a Russian conversation between Sofya and Rima. Talking about her young son, who has been playing outside, Sofya announces that he is ‘*x_ot' vyzhima:j*’ (‘soaking wet’; line 11). Sofya’s designs her as being accountable, first, by prefacing it with ‘if you only saw him now’ (lines 4–5) – which projects a description of an unbelievable state of affairs – and, second, by describing her son’s condition/appearance in an exaggerated, idiomatic fashion (‘soaking wet’ at line 11).

Excerpt 9: Soaking Wet [RP 19]

- (5:05)
 01 SOF: Vot/ On >u (na)< d_{ve} ve:schi o_{chen} n_ravica=ghulja,t'/
 PRT he with two things ver liked being_outside
 There are two things he really likes – to play outside
 02 (0.2)

- 03 RIM: Ah-heh-heh/ I na kamp'juter [e side(t')/
and on computer sit
And to be on the computer
- 04 SOF: [I na kamp'jutere/<Vot esli b vy evo
and on computer PRT if PRT you him
And the computer/ If you only
- 05 schas vi,deli/
now saw
saw him now
- 06 RIM: Uh huh,/
- 07 (.)
- 08 SOF: Ja evo prevela?./
I him brought
I brought him home
- 09 (.)
- 10 RIM: Mm hm,/
- 11 SOF: Eta (.) xot' vyzhima:j/
PRT PRT press-out
(He's) soaking wet
- 12 (.)
- 13 RIM: D(h)a(h),/
yes
Really
- 14 SOF: On na stol'ka mo:kryj,/ mo:kryj/
he on such wet
He is wet to such a degree
- 15 (.)
- 16 RIM: Mm hm,/
- 17 (0.8)
- 18 SOF: Vsë:/ i rubashka:./
everything and shirt
Everything, his shirt,

- 19 (1.0)
- 20 SOF: i ma:echka,
and undershirt
his undershirt,
- 21 (.)
- 22 RIM: Mm hm,/
- 23 (1.0)
- 24 RIM: A pachemu/=On no?sica ochen?/da?/=
PRT why he runs very yes
Why/ He runs around a lot, right?
- 25 SOF: =^o↑Kane:shna↓^o/
Of course
- 26 (1.0)

In response to Sofya's announcement (at line 11), Rima produces a laugh-infused newsmark (Heritage, 1984a; Jefferson, 1981), '*D(h)a(h)*,' (translated as 'really?' or 'he is?'; line 13), which provides Sofya an interactional space to 'elaborate' on her news, including the possibility of accounting for it. Rather than providing an account, Sofya continues by re-iterating her 'soaking wet' description of her son with '*On na stol'ka mo:kryj.*' ('He is wet to such a degree'; line 14), which, in Russian, is a designedly incomplete turn component that projects further talk. Following a continuer (Schegloff, 1982) from Rima (line 16), Sofya goes on to document her idiomatic description by listing specific items that are wet: 'Everything, his shirt, . . . his undershirt,' (lines 18–20). At line 22, Rima produces another continuer, 'Mm hm,' which continues to treat Sofya's prior turn as not yet complete. The long, 1.0-second silence at line 23 can be characterized as Rita waiting for Sofya to continue speaking and Sofya refraining from doing so. Important for our argument, in Sofya's interactionally generated turn across lines 14–23, she does not produce an account for her son being 'soaking wet', despite the designed accountability of this news, and despite Rima having tacitly provided Sofya with several opportunities to provide an account (e.g. Rima's newsmark at line 13, and the continuer at line 22). Across these opportunity spaces, it is arguable that Rima withholds an explicit account solicitation, which she ultimately produces at line 24: '*A pachemu*' ('why').

Rima's explicit account solicitation is hearable as a criticism of Sofya and is, thus, a possibly disaffiliative action. Sofya, as the mother, is possibly responsible for her son being 'soaking wet', and Rima's account solicitation takes up a stance that the son's condition is problematic and in need of explanation (Bolden and Robinson, forthcoming). Note, then, that immediately after soliciting the account with '*A pachemu*' ('why'; line 24), Rima continues speaking and requests confirmation of a candidate account that attributes responsibility for the son's wetness to 'normal' or 'expected' child behavior

(and thus indirectly exonerates Sofya): ‘He runs around a lot, right?’ (line 24). Sofya responds with ‘^o↑*Kane:shna*↓^o’ (‘Of course’; line 25), a non-conforming answer (Raymond, 2003) that treats Sofya’s candidate account as obvious. If Sofya orients to an account for her son’s wetness as being obvious, it might explain why she does not produce one earlier.

For a second example, see Excerpt 10, which is drawn from a call between Hyla and her long distance boyfriend Rich. At line 1, in a disjunctive topic shift (Jefferson, 1978), Rich announces: ‘The other night (I)- I went to work at midnight.’ Rich’s news is accountable at least because it contradicts a commonsense understanding that people do not normally *begin* work at midnight. Rich also designs the news to be accountable by placing contrastive stress on the word *other*, ‘The other night’ (symbolized in the transcript by underlining), which indicates that beginning work at midnight is atypical for him.

Excerpt 10: Work at midnight [Hyla & Rich]

(17:10)

- 01 RICH: The other night I=w- I went to work at midnight.
 02 (0.7)
 03 HYLA: A:t midni:ght?
 04 RICH: S:ure.
 05 (1.4)
 06 RICH: Wh’t=th‘ hell. I mean you kn[ow]
 07 HYLA: [Why]:: hhhh
 08 (.)
 09 RICH: Well=if you have something turned on twen’y four hours
 10 a day it doesn’t matter when you go=tuh look.

Because Rich’s announcement (line 1) makes a response by Hyla conditionally relevant (Schegloff and Sacks, 1973), the relatively long 0.7-second silence at line 2 is characterizable as Hyla not responding, which can project possible repair-related trouble with Rich’s announcement (Schegloff et al., 1977). Hyla eventually initiates repair with ‘A:t midnight?’ (line 3), which targets the preposition *at* as the repairable (by placing stress on it), which is precisely the component that makes Rich’s news accountable. (An alternative preposition that would make Rich’s news more commonsensical would be *until*: ‘I went to work until midnight’.) Insofar as Hyla’s partial-repeat-based repair initiator displays that she heard and understood the word ‘at’, Hyla’s repair initiator problematizes Rich’s use of ‘at’ (Schegloff et al., 1977), and thus provides Rich with an opportunity to self-correct, back down from, or account for his use of ‘at’. Instead, Rich merely responds with the confirmation token ‘Sure.’ (line 4), which defends his use of ‘at’ by treating it as unproblematic and thus resists Hyla’s initiation of repair by treating it as unfounded.

Given that the repair sequence at lines 3–4 merely delayed Hyla’s conditionally relevant response to Rich’s announcement (Schegloff, 2007), the long, 1.4-second silence at line 5 is again characterizable as Hyla not responding, which re-projects her ‘trouble’ with Rich’s news. This trouble is oriented to by Rich, who continues to resist giving an account (and, thus, claims that beginning work at midnight is not accountable): ‘Wh’t=th‘ hell. I mean you know . . .’ (line 6). In doing so, Rich orients to Hyla’s initiation of repair (at line 3) as soliciting an account. In sum, it is arguable that an account by Rich was

relevant at least at lines 4, 5, and 6. Relative to Hyla's provision of tacit opportunities for Rich to provide an account, such as her repair-initiator at line 3 and silence at line 4, Hyla's explicit account soliciation, 'Why:.' (line 7), can be characterized as having been withheld. Hyla's explicit account soliciation embodies a criticism of Rich, and thus disaffiliation, in that it challenges the 'common-sensibility' of *beginning* work at midnight (Bolden and Robinson, forthcoming).

For a final example, see Excerpt 11. As context, Ron and Catherine are housemates, and Catherine is currently out of town. In Catherine's absence, Ron has had to deal with a flea infestation at their home. At line 9, Ron announces that, in Catherine's absence, he (and a third party) subjected Catherine's clothes to a flea bomb (a chemical spray): 'We did o:pen (.) thuh ba:g though with all thuh=hhhhh- uh- well with all your clo:thes.' (lines 9–10).

Excerpt 11: Fleas [CH 4927]

(0:40)

01 RON: .hhh Well we got rid of the flea:s finally.

02 CAT: .h Oh:.. You're a doll.

((six lines omitted))

09 RON: We did o:pen (.) thuh ba:g though with all thuh=hhhhh- uh- well
10 with all your clo:thes.

11 (0.4)

12 RON: [.h h h h[h]

13 CAT: [.hh (.) [Wh]at.=nah- eh- nah- you didn't bo:mb (1.0) thuh

14 clo:thes=

15 RON: =°u- u-° We di:d.

16 CAT: Why:.=

17 RON: =Because thuh risk was too big that the:re <might be fleas> in

18 there. you know, an' .hhhhhhhhhhhhhh- h- an' after all that=I

19 mean y-=you didn't see it. (.) any of it.

Ron's decision to intentionally expose Catherine's clothes to toxic chemicals is vernacularly problematic, and thus accountable. Moreover, Ron designs his announcement as being accountable in at least two ways. First, he uses the word 'though' ('we did open the bag *though*'), which indexes a concession that, under normal circumstances, 'bombing' clothes is problematic (Barth-Weingarten and Couper-Kuhlen, 2002). Second, the use of the extreme-case formulation (Pomerantz, 1986), 'all your clo:thes' (line 10) casts the reported action as constituting particularly bad news for Catherine.

Ron's bad-news announcement is both syntactically and intonationally possibly complete (Sacks et al., 1974) after 'clo:thes' (line 10), at which point Cathy is obligated to respond (Schegloff and Sacks, 1973). Cathy pauses for 0.4 seconds (line 11), which indexes possible 'trouble' with Ron's news. At line 12, Ron breathes in for approximately 0.5 seconds, which possibly projects that he will continue speaking.

Simultaneously, Cathy breathes in, pauses, and then initiates repair on Ron's informing: 'What.=nah- eh- nah- you didn't *bə:mb* (1.0) *tuɦ clə:thes*' (lines 13–14). This request for (dis)confirmation registers/enacts Cathy's disbelief of Ron's news and, with a negative formulation ('you didn't'), conveys her critical stance towards Ron's actions (Schegloff, 1988). Although an account could be relevantly produced in response to Cathy's critical assertion, Ron simply confirms with 'We *dɪ:d*.' (line 15), which is a repetitional response that asserts his authority or right to have flea-bombed Cathy's clothes (Heritage and Raymond, 2005). The downward final intonation as well as the stretch on '*dɪ:d*' project turn completion (rather than expansion) and indicate Ron's resistance to providing an account for his actions.

Cathy then goes on to explicitly solicit an account with an emphatic '*Why:*.' (line 16). This question conveys Cathy's challenging stance towards Ron's actions and is, thus, disaffiliative (Bolden and Robinson, forthcoming). Our focus is on the observation that Cathy's explicit account solicitation is only deployed after Ron (who is responsible for the accountable bad news) has 'passed on' several opportunities to offer an account (i.e. silence at line 11 and the confirmation at line 15). In response to the explicit account solicitation, Ron produces a defensive account that presents his actions as reasonable ('*tuɦ rɪsk* was too big . . .' at line 17) and Cathy's challenge as unfounded ('you didn't see it. (.) any of it.' at line 19). Thus, in this case, just like in Excerpts 9 and 10 above, the announcer (here, Ron) designs his news as 'begging' an explanation, but then, given opportunities to furnish an account, fails to do so, until the addressee (Cathy) finally directly solicits it with a *why*-type interrogative.

To summarize, the cases presented in this section demonstrate that, when accounts are relevantly 'missing' – for example, in the wake of dispreferred and disaffiliative SPPs, or in the wake of announcements of accountable news – recipients commonly pursue such accounts via a range of practices, such as withholding speaking at transition-relevance places, initiating repair, or explicitly soliciting an account with a *why*-type interrogative. Among these practices, explicit account solicitations are deployed only after related tacit practices fail to solicit an account. The withholding of explicit account solicitations is evidence that they are dispreferred FPPs.

When explicit account solicitations are not withheld

In this section, we discuss cases where explicit solicitations of accounts are positioned immediately after the initial transition relevance place of an accountable action, and thus are *not* withheld. Rather than standing as counter-evidence, these cases actually support our argument in two ways. A first set of cases are 'deviant' ones (for a review, see Maynard and Clayman, 2003); that is, explicit account solicitations that embody disaffiliation and are dispreferred, but are nonetheless positioned contiguously with (i.e. immediately following) an accountable action. We argue that, in each deviant instance, the account solicitation is designed to violate the norms of preference organization in order to enact aggravated disaffiliation. A second set of cases are 'negative' ones (Schegloff, 1996a; Silverman, 2001): In these cases, explicit account solicitations do *not* embody disaffiliation, but rather *affiliation*. Here, account solicitations are *preferred* FPPs that are normatively positioned contiguously.

Deviant cases: Enacting aggravated challenge

Our data contain ‘deviant’ cases (Maynard and Clayman, 2003) where explicit account solicitations embody disaffiliation but are nonetheless *not* withheld. These cases, however, support rather than invalidate our argument because, in each case, it can be argued that these contiguously positioned (Sacks, 1987) account solicitations violate the norms of preference organization in order to enact ‘aggravated’ disaffiliation (relative to that enacted by withheld solicitations). These ‘early’ account solicitations are often produced in environments of ongoing disputes (e.g. Dersley and Wootton, 2001; Goodwin, 1983a; Hutchby, 1996; Kotthoff, 1993), for example, when interlocutors have already disagreed with each other multiple times on a same issue. In what follows, we show that deploying such account solicitations ‘early’ (i.e. contiguous to accountable action) is one way to aggravate the challenging stance conveyed through them and, thus, to enhance their status as disagreements and/or criticisms.

For the first of two examples, see Excerpt 12, which is drawn from a face-to-face Russian interaction involving Ella, her grandmother (GMA), and her grandfather Abram (GFA). Prior to this excerpt, Ella and her grandfather had started to play a game of cards when her grandmother came in and demanded that he change his socks, which she wants to wash because they are, in her words, ‘smelly’ (data not shown). The grandfather has so far refused to surrender his socks. By line 1, the grandmother and grandfather are in a ratified argument, suggested by her expression of exasperation, ‘Oy’ (line 1) and aggressive dismissal of his objections to her demands: ‘Abram . . . You shut up’ (lines 3–5).

Excerpt 12: Socks [O 20a]

(3:15)

01 GMA: *Oj:/*
oy

02 (.)

03 GMA: *Abram/*
NAME ((of grandfather))
Abram

04 (0.2)

05 GMA: *Zamalchi ty [pɔlnastju/]* ((tearful))
shut-up you completely
You shut up

06 GFA: [Ja ne [ma]ghu naski pere[adevat’/]=
I not can socks change
I cannot change the socks

- 07 ELL: [Oke- [Oke::j/]=
oka- okay
- 08 ELL: =[Vsɛ̃:/
all
That's it
- 09 GFA: =[tak[()]
so ()
- 10 GMA: [P a]chemu/
Why
- 11 (0.4)
- 12 GFA: Pat`musht` (.) naghām ()/
because legs
Because my legs ()
- 13 (0.2)
- 14 GMA: [(Ne nada)] Patamushta le::n`/
no needed because lazy
Come on, because you're lazy
- 15 ELL: [Ba:b`shka/
grandma

In the context of a ratified argument, the grandfather claims his inability to change his socks: 'I cannot change the socks' (line 6). This claim is accountable because there is no *prima facie* reason why he would be unable to change his socks. The grandfather orients to the accountability of his claim by continuing speaking with 'tak ()' ('so ()' at line 9), which is possibly the beginning of an account. In overlap with, and possibly interruptive of, the grandfather's turn (at line 9) – that is, contiguous to it, or without being withheld – the grandmother explicitly solicits an account for the grandfather's claim: 'P_achemu' ('Why'; line 10). The grandfather treats her *why* as an account solicitation by beginning to provide an account: '*Pat`musht` (.) naghām*' ('Because my legs ()' at line 12). Some evidence (albeit *post hoc*) that the grandmother's account solicitation embodies aggravated disaffiliation is that she dismisses the grandfather's account (offered at line 12) with 'Come on' (line 14) and insults him by pejoratively offering (in a serious/non-teasing manner) an alternative account: 'because you're lazy' (line 14).

For a second example of a contiguously placed account solicitation, see Excerpt 13, drawn from a face-to-face interaction between three friends. At line 1, Beth begins to launch a story, '(Last) summer . . .', but interrupts it to initiate a search for the name of one of the protagonists: 'with h Ph:i:l, an' (2.0) . . . what's her name' (lines 1–5) (re: word

searchers, see Goodwin, 1983b; Goodwin and Goodwin, 1986). In response to Abby's instruction to 'Describe.' (line 6), Beth offers a description of the person whose name she is searching for: '>Everyone loves her,<' (line 8).

Excerpt 13: Betty [GB07–4]

(23:00)

- 1 Beth: (Last) summer with h Ph:i:l, an' (2.0) like >I thin' it<
 2 was (2.0)
 3 Beth: °What's her name°
 4 (1.8)
 5 Beth: What's her name?=
 6 Abby: =Describe.
 7 (1.0)
 8 Beth: >Everyone loves her,<
 9 (0.5)
 10 Cath: Betty=
 11 Abby: =Betty. .HH Heh-heh-heh [.hh
 12 Beth: [Betty.
 13 Abby: ([)
 14 Beth: [heh-[heh- heh- heh]
 15 Cath: [I don't love 'er], I can't sta:nd her.=actual[y.
 16 Beth: [Why:.:.=
 17 Cath: =I don't like her at a:ll.
 18 Beth: Do=yu- (v) talk to her ever?
 19 (0.2)
 20 Cath: Barely.
 21 Beth: So why don't you like h(h)er(h).
 22 (.)
 23 Cath: 'Cz she's too ni:ce.
 24 (0.8)
 25 Beth: The- the only people who don't like her people who said
 26 (.) that- she's too nice.

After the name search is resolved (lines 10–12), Cathy asserts a position that contradicts that of, and thus embodies disaffiliation with, Beth: 'I don't lov'er, I can't sta:nd her.=actually.' (line 15). The action of producing this type of counter-position normally includes the provision of an account (Robinson, 2009). Additionally, Cathy's contradiction is designed to be accountable through an extreme-case formulation (Pomerantz, 1986), 'I can't sta:nd her', and through an incremental addition of 'actually' (Clift, 2001).

Our focus is on the fact that Beth immediately¹⁴ (i.e. in overlap with the final sound of Cathy's turn at line 15) and explicitly solicits an account for Cathy's position: 'Why:.:.' (line 16). There are at least two pieces of evidence that Beth's account solicitation enacts a stance of aggravated challenge. First, Cathy responds to the account solicitation as a challenge by essentially reaffirming, and thus defending, her initial position (i.e. *I can't stand her*): 'I don't like her at a:ll.' (line 17).¹⁵ Second, Beth continues to challenge

Cathy's reaffirmed position by challenging its grounds: 'Do=yu- (v) talk to her ever?' (line 18). This question is tilted (with the negative polarity marker 'ever') towards a *no*-type answer (Heritage, 2002; Schegloff, 2007), a response that would constitute self-indictment by Cathy. After Cathy responds with 'barely' (line 20), thus, in effect, confirming that she has little grounds for her opinion, Beth pursues her initial account solicitation (at line 16), which Beth never 'answered': 'So why don't you like h(h)er(h).' at line 21). The fact that Cathy pursues an answer to her initial account solicitation is some (albeit *post hoc*) evidence that she orients to her initial *why*-interrogative (at line 16) as having implemented the action of soliciting an account. At line 23, Cathy provides a defensively weak account for her position, 'Cz she's too ni:ce.', which Beth subsequently dismisses (lines 25–6).

Overall, Excerpts 12 and 13 above suggest that issuing an explicit account solicitation immediately following an accountable action – that is, contiguous to it, or without being withheld – can be a practice for enacting the stance of aggravated challenge/disaffiliation. In these cases, account solicitors violate the norms of preference organization in order to enhance their stance of disagreement and/or criticism.

Negative cases: *Affiliative explicit solicitations of accounts*

For some FPP actions, disagreement, rejection, or challenge is the *preferred* responsive stance, because such a stance is actually *affiliative*. For example, disagreeing with or rejecting self-deprecations (Pomerantz, 1984), disagreeing with a person's need to have apologized (Robinson, 2004), and refusing some types of overly charitable offers (Schegloff, 2007) are all affiliative, and thus preferred, responsive actions. Although explicit solicitations of accounts adopt a challenging/critical stance *toward the conduct/event to be accounted for*, they can be preferred when doing so enacts affiliation (rather than disaffiliation) with addressees. This is the case, for example, when accountable actions are addressees' reports of personal failures (Bolden and Robinson, forthcoming). One type of evidence for this claim is that, in these contexts, explicit solicitations of accounts are produced contiguously (i.e. are not withheld) because they are preferred actions.

In Excerpt 14, an explicit account solicitation is used to reject a formulation of personal failure. As context, Greg and Sasha are two friends who regularly call each other just 'to catch up' (Drew and Chilton, 2000), apparently alternating who calls whom. This time, Greg is the caller. At line 2, Sasha preempts the call's first topic (Schegloff, 1986) to report that he was going to be the one to call Greg: 'I was going to call you' (with the contrastive stress on *you*, symbolized in the transcript by underlining). This formulation presents Sasha's not initiating the call as a failure on his part.

Excerpt 14: Calling [NG3–12]

- 01 GRE: Privet/
hi
- 02 SASH: Privet/=a ja sabiralsja tebe zvanit'/
hi PRT I was-going you call
Hi/ I was going to call you

- 03 GRE: Nu zachem zhe/
PRT what-for PRT
Why ((or “Why should you”))
- 04 SASH: A:?:/
- 05 GRE: Zachem zhe/
what-for PRT
Why ((or “Why should you”))
- 06 SASH: Nu kak zach[em/sh`o zachem/ sh`o i ty zvoni,sh/=
PRT how why what why what and you call
What do you mean why/ The same reason as you call
- 07 GRE: [Ty-
You-
- 08 SASH: =prosta uznat’ [kak
simply learn how
just to find out how
- 09 GRE: [Ty zvani] v proshlyj ras/
you called in last time
You called last time

Our focus is on the fact that Greg immediately (i.e. contiguously) explicitly solicits an account for Sasha’s reported unrealized intention: ‘*Nu zachem zhe*’ (translatable as ‘Why’, ‘Why should you’ or ‘What for’; line 3). Greg’s account solicitation affiliates with Sasha because it challenges the warrantability of – and, thus, effectively discounts – Sasha’s formulation of personal failure. This claim is partially supported by the fact that Greg subsequently disattends Sasha’s account (produced at lines 6–8) and overtly exonerates him by stating ‘You called last time’ (line 9), thereby implying that it was his (i.e. Greg’s) turn to call. Note that Greg begins his exoneration at line 7, ‘*Ty-*’ (‘You-’), in response to Sasha’s in-progress ‘*Nu kak zachem*’ (‘What do you mean why’); Here, Greg claims that his account solicitation was implemented to discount Sasha’s formulation of personal failure.

In Excerpt 15, an account solicitation is used to embody affiliation by challenging/ criticizing the addressee’s report of her husband’s possible insensitive (i.e. disaffiliative) conduct toward her. This excerpt, drawn from a call between two women, begins with Rea projecting the announcement of personal good news, ‘I have moved up in my li:fe.’, and then announcing her imminent job promotion: ‘I’m going to be tuh (cano:mis.) . . . sta:rtng: nex-’ (lines 3–5). With ‘O(h)h my- (.) GO::D.’ (line 6), Cindy not only claims receipt of the news, but aligns with it as being good news for Rea (Maynard, 2003). After accounting for her new job (data not shown), Rea informs Cindy that she took a long

time to decide to accept it: ‘It took me almost all year to decide.’ (line 7). Rea continues to note that her husband, Juda, is opposed to her decision: ‘Juda’s very against i:t?’ (lines 7–8). Pragmatically, it is inferable that Rea’s husband’s opposition is at least partially responsible for her struggle to make a decision (Levinson, 2000).

Excerpt 15: New Job [CH:4459]

(5:45)

- 01 REA: I have moved up in my li:fe.
 02 (0.2)
 03 REA: I’m going to be thuh (cano:mis.)
 04 (.)
 05 REA: sta:rtiŋ[: nex-]
 06 CIN: [hh O(h)]h my- (.) GO::D.
 .
 . ((16 lines omitted; Rea accounts for promotion))
 .
 07 REA: It took me almost all year to decide. Juda’s very
 08 against i:t?
 09 CIN: Why:[::]
 10 REA: [And I]m even doing it without him: being:: (.) for
 11 it an’ we fought a lot a(h)bout it,,hh I’ll tell you why.
 12 it’s a jo::b (.) that... [[is difficult and thankless]]

Rea’s informing that her husband continues to oppose her decision to accept the new job (i.e. ‘Juda’s very against i:t?’; lines 7–8) is hearable as a potential complaint against him as it casts her husband as being obstructive and unsupportive (note the use of the intensifier ‘very’ at line 7), especially in light of Rea’s own positive valuation of the new position (line 1). In this sense, the husband’s conduct is disaffiliative toward Rea and accountable. (Later in the conversation, Rea reports that her husband believes that the new position is ‘difficult’ and ‘thankless’, which potentially recasts his opposition as being protective of Rea, but this context is not yet available to Cindy at line 9.)

Contiguous with Rea’s ‘Juda’s very against i:t?’ (lines 7–8), Cindy explicitly solicits an account of the husband’s conduct with an emphatic ‘Why:::.’ (line 9). Cindy’s account solicitation challenges the husband’s opposition to Rea’s new position, which adumbrates a criticism of the husband (Bolden and Robinson, forthcoming). In doing so, Cindy indirectly supports Rea’s decision to accept the new position, aligns with Rea’s complaint about the husband, and, thus, affiliates with Rea (see Drew and Walker, 2009).

Overall, Excerpts 14 and 15 above supply evidence that, in the environments where taking up a challenging stance towards some accountable conduct enacts affiliation with addressees, the action of explicitly soliciting an account is typically not withheld, and thus operates as a preferred action.

Discussion

This article examined the preference organization of one kind of first-pair part (FPP) action: explicitly soliciting an account (with a *why*-type interrogative). Prior work on explicit account solicitations showed that they simultaneously convey a challenging stance towards the warrantability of an accountable event/conduct (Bolden and Robinson, forthcoming). When addressees of account solicitations are somehow responsible for the accountable events/conduct, account solicitations frequently take a critical, and thus disaffiliatory, stance toward addressees. This article presented conversation analytic evidence that disaffiliative explicit account solicitations are dispreferred FPP actions in both English and Russian conversation. In order to demonstrate this, we examined several sequential contexts in which accounting is relevant (i.e. in the aftermath of dispreferred/disaffiliative SPP actions and announcements of accountable news) and showed that, when accounts are ‘missing’, they are first elicited *tacitly* (e.g. through withholding talking at transition-relevance places or initiating repair), and only then *explicitly* (e.g. via *why*-type interrogatives). In other words, the action of explicitly soliciting an account appears to be systematically ‘withheld’. Such withholding is the hallmark of dispreferred actions because it provides preemptive opportunities for the preservation of affiliation, or at least the mitigation of disaffiliation. We also examined two classes of negative cases in which explicit account solicitations are *not* delayed, but nonetheless provide supportive evidence for our argument. First, when disaffiliative explicit account solicitations are not withheld – that is, when participants arguably violate the norms of preference organization – explicit account solicitations are oriented to as enacting aggravated disaffiliation (relative to when they are withheld). Second, explicit account solicitations tend to *not* be withheld when their challenging stances embody affiliation with addressees, and thus when explicit account solicitations are preferred actions, for example, in response to announcements that possibly index speakers’ personal failings.

Descriptions of the social organization of dispreferred FPPs contribute to several threads in conversation and discourse-analytic work. First, our analysis expands our understanding of context and, thus, our ability to adequately characterize action. Conversation analysis is centrally concerned with what Schegloff (2007) called the problem of action formation: ‘[H]ow are the resources of the language, the body, the environment of the interaction, and *position in the interaction* fashioned into conformations designed to be, and to be recognizable by recipients as, particular actions’ (p. xiv, emphasis added; see also Schegloff, 1995). The notion of ‘position in the interaction’ refers to a type of context that is highlighted by conversation analysis, that being ‘the immediately local configuration of preceding activity in which an utterance occurs’ (Drew and Heritage, 1992: 18). Because dispreferred FPPs are normatively withheld, their character as actions is different depending on their positioning relative to prior sequences of action. For example, our analysis indicates that, when explicit solicitations of accounts are *not* withheld, they embody an aggravated stance of challenge/disaffiliation. This suggests that an adequate analysis of *any* FPP – and perhaps especially disaffiliative ones – requires an understanding of their preference organization.

Second, our analysis of disaffiliative initiating actions puts additional interactional flesh on the theoretical frame initiated by Goffman (1967) – and extended by Brown and

Levinson (1987) – regarding the interaction order being designed to promote affiliation (over disaffiliation) in social relationships. It may be that all FPPs that embody socio-relational disaffiliation between speakers' and their addressees are dispreferred, but, of course, this needs to be empirically verified. Future research needs to refine an emic (i.e. members' versus theoreticians'), interaction-based, and hopefully cross-cultural conceptualization of what it means for a FPP to be disaffiliative. Although theories that have so far informed a conceptualization of affiliation/disaffiliation (such as, politeness theory by Brown and Levinson, 1987) have been (and may continue to be) useful, a distinct trajectory of research would be to inductively generate such a conceptualization from a catalogue of empirically documented instances.

Notes

1. There are other outcomes that preference organization promotes simultaneously, but not necessarily equivalently. For example, although there is a preference for sequence-responding actions to be *aligned* (Schegloff, 2007) with the *turn design* of sequence-initiating actions, such as the preference for producing *yes*-type answers to *yes/no*-interrogatives (Raymond, 2003), when at odds, the preference for *affiliation* appears to take precedent over that of *alignment* (Schegloff, 2007).
2. Importantly, we are talking about theoretical conceptualization, not emic operationalization. Much more research needs to be done toward understanding what participants in interaction orient to as affiliation/disaffiliation.
3. We characterize dispreferred FPPs (versus dispreferred SPPs) as being 'withheld' versus 'delayed' (a term that has been used in the CA literature; Schegloff, 2007) because 'delay' might imply that dispreferred FPPs were conditionally relevant (versus merely relevant) at some point in interaction (Schegloff and Sacks, 1973). The term 'delay' is more appropriate for dispreferred SPPs, which *are* made conditionally relevant by their FPPs.
4. See, as well, footnote 4 in Drew and Walker (2009):

In a much larger collection, which Gail Jefferson assembled, of over 200 'dis-ings' (disagreements, discord, complainings, disputes, etc.), every case of what came to be an explicit expression of disagreement, etc. was found to be incipient in the prior talk. Even the handful of cases (about 5) which seemed to be 'initial actions', turned out, on closer inspection, to be adumbrated in the talk leading up to the overt disagreement, dispute or whatever. [. . .] we began to formulate the hypothesis that such actions as complainings, disagreements and other such dis-ings' are never 'initial' actions in a sequence. (p. 2405)

5. Bolden and Robinson's (forthcoming) arguments are based on mundane interactions among adult friends and family members. In contexts where participants have (highly) divergent access to, and rights to know about, accountable events (e.g. interactions between students and their teachers, or young children and their parents), explicit account solicitations might be treated differently.
6. There are exceptions to this generalization, as discussed below (see 'Negative cases: Affiliative explicit solicitations of accounts').
7. These findings are supported by those of Koshik (2003, 2005), who also examined English data, of Egbert and Vöge (2008) for German, of Sterponi (2005) for Italian, and of Yoon (2007)

for Korean. However, while Bolden and Robinson (forthcoming) analyzed *why*-interrogatives that primarily implement the action of soliciting an account, Koshik (2003, 2005) and Yoon (2007) examined *why*-interrogatives that primarily implement the action of challenging/criticizing. Egbert and Vöge (2008) and Sterponi (2005) asserted that German and Italian, respectively, have different lexical forms of *why* that are dedicated to alternative actions (i.e. genuine solicitations of accounts versus challenging/criticizing).

8. In both English and Russian, different forms of account solicitations may have somewhat different usages. Further research is needed to investigate the possible differences.
9. Our reference to ‘dispreferred *and* disaffiliative’ SPPs is an attempt to be analytically cautious. In fairness, Heritage (1984b) only makes reference to ‘dispreferred’ SPPs, but all of his examples also embody disaffiliation, such as rejecting an invitation or offer. It may be that all ‘dispreferred’ SPPs are normatively accompanied by accounts, regardless of whether or not these SPPs also embody disaffiliation (recognizing that ‘(dis)preference’ and ‘(dis)affiliation’ are separate and non-mutually exclusive aspects of action). However, this has not yet been systematically demonstrated. For now, there does seem to be evidence that at least ‘dispreferred and disaffiliative’ SPPs are normatively accompanied by accounts.
10. This is not an exhaustive list. FPP speakers may also, for example, elicit accounts through ‘weak’ acknowledgements, ‘news-markers’ (Jefferson, 1981), and ‘my side tellings’ (Pomerantz, 1980).
11. Insofar as dispreferred SPPs are normally delayed (for example, by pausing, breathing, etc.) in order to promote interlocutors’ alignment/affiliation (Schegloff, 2007), producing a dispreferred SPP without delay is ‘adversarial’, which is itself accountable. Although more research is necessary, responding in this fashion may be a way of ‘doing being defensive’.
12. Gena was in the midst of car repairs when Agnesa called.
13. Although Shirley answers by providing an account, ‘I don’t really wan’ to.’ (line 8), this is a ‘personal desire’ account, which is rare compared to an ‘(in)ability’ account (re: different types of accounts, see Heritage, 1984b). Geri treats Shirley’s ‘personal desire’ account as being insufficient when Geri produces an ‘inability’ account for confirmation: ‘You don’ wanna go through all thuh hɑ:ssle(s)?’ (line 10).
14. Technically, the initial transition-relevance place in Cathy’s turn is after ‘I don’t lov’er,’ and thus Beth’s account solicitation is delayed by Cathy’s second turn unit: ‘I can’t sta:nd her.=actually’. Note, though, that Beth is laughing during Cathy’s production of ‘I don’t lov’er,’ (see line 14).
15. It is possible, but analytically difficult to argue, that Cathy’s subsequent ‘I don’t like her at a:ll.’ is a slight back-down from her initial ‘I can’t sta:nd her’. While ‘I don’t like her’ seems to be a back-down relative to ‘I can’t sta:nd her’, the addition of ‘at a:ll’ (i.e. ‘I don’t like her at a:ll.’) works to upgrade her position. The possibility that Cathy might be responding to Beth’s ‘early’ account solicitation with a back-down is in line with our argument that Cathy orients to the account solicitation as embodying a stance of aggravated challenge.

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