ENTICING A CHALLENGEABLE IN ARGUMENTS: SEQUENCE, EPISTEMICS AND PREFERENCE ORGANISATION

Edward Reynolds

Abstract

This article reports on an interactional practice found in one form of adversarial talk, arguments during protests, where participants work to 'entice' a particular answer from an opponent using an uncontroversial questions in order to challenge the opponent on the basis of their own answer. Based on a collection of arguments during protests posted to YouTube, this article uses conversation analysis (CA) in order to investigate the way in which participants employ these uncontroversial questions as 'pre-challenges', using speaker selection, recipient focused topics and a moral ordering of talk to work to obligate a particular answer from the recipient. The results of the analysis illustrate several ways in which participants manipulate epistemics, speaker selection, and recipient design as resources for enacting social conflict.

Keywords: Questions; Arguments; Conflict; Epistemics; Conversation analysis.

1. Introduction

The oppositional nature of arguments has been examined in detail by researchers investigating interaction during arguments, disagreements and other adversarial forms of talk (Schiffrin 1984; Maynard 1985; Coulter 1990; Vuchinich 1990; Hutchby 1996a; Muntigl and Turnbull 1998). These studies reveal some of the ways in which arguments are constructed through strings of utterances that oppose, counter, reject or deflect prior utterances, thereby forming chains of oppositional utterances (Schiffrin 1984; Maynard 1985; Coulter 1990; Vuchinich 1990; Hutchby 1996a; Muntigl and Turnbull 1998). In contrast to these studies, the current investigation of arguments during protests presented herein yielded recurring examples of a practice in which participants ask uncontroversial questions which do not transparently oppose the stance of addressed speaker, instead working to establish a basis for a later oppositional action.

A canonical instance of this sort of uncontroversial question is presented in example 1, in which DC is arguing with a protester (P1) about whether or not to advise women that the birth control pill is dangerous to their health.

(1) (Case 1 'Argument with Anti-birth Control')[1]
URL: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tC6GxktGdww [05:19–05:37]

```
92. DC:    what's poisonous for one plant- for one creature,
93.        may not be foo:d for another.=
94.        [you ca:n't destroy all the food.]
95. P1:    [>but we're talking about< <human beings.>]
96.        we're not talking about destro:ying anything.
97.        you're ju:mping to conclu[sions.   ]
98. DC: →                          [>let me a]sk you
99.        something.=do you eat eggs.<
100.       (2.0)
101.P1:    <yes.>
102.DC:     that's a fe:tus. couldn't it be¿
103.        if there's a blood thi:ng
104.       [it's- >it's a foetus.<]
105.P1:    [< we  are  talking >] about <the pi:ll ki:lling
106.       wo:men.>you're going off topic.>we're talking about
107.       the< PI::LL being harmful to women.=
```

At lines 92–94, DC enacts the sort of oppositional action that characterises disputes or arguments as previously described by Coulter (1990) and Maynard (1985). However, in line 98–99, DC asks an uncontroversial question 'do you eat eggs?', departing momentarily from the antagonistic tone of the prior turns. This raises the question what do these uncontroversial questions achieve and how do they work to achieve it? It is these uncontroversial questions and how participants in these arguments use such turns that this article will address.

Gruber (2001) identified a similar practice of questioning during arguments which relies on exactly this sort of uncontroversial question in order to interactionally manoeuvre an opponent into place for a challenge. He illustrated how one participant uses an uncontroversial question to entice a position from a participant who had not yet disclosed their point of view. Although, Gruber's example, in comparison with example 1 above, has a less clear link between the enticed answer and the attack, because in his example the challenge comes after some intervening talk and does not appear to directly relate to the enticed answer. Nevertheless, Gruber's single case provides a starting point for the current investigation of how participants in arguments use enticing questions. Thus, the current investigation elaborates Gruber's (2001) research using conversation analysis (CA) to examine in detail the way in which participants enact uncontroversial 'enticing questions' as a basis for further action.

The current investigation draws on a collection of arguments drawn from videos of protests posted by users to the social media website YouTube (www.youtube.com). The 15 cases themselves are all taken from videos of protests conducted in public which have been recorded, either by the protesters themselves, or by individuals arguing with the protesters and then subsequently uploaded to YouTube. Screenshots and links to the original videos of these arguments are given in the analysis following in addition to the transcripts themselves.

Drawing on the prior work on questions in adversarial talk this article describes the

---

[1] An abridged version of the CA transcription notation, drawn from Schegloff (2007) is presented at the conclusion of this article.

practice of 'enticing a challengeable' illustrating the work that these uncontroversial enticing questions enact as a part of this practice. The analysis focuses on the way in which participants employ speaker selection and epistemic rights to entice a response from the answerer (section 3), and how participants structure these uncontroversial questions to prefer a particular answer in response, leveraging a moral organisation to apply interactional pressure to the recipients (section 4). The analysis ends in section 5 with a presentation of how participants attend to alignment with the current course of action when moving into 'enticing a challengeable'. To begin then we start with a brief background on the work to date by CA that may bear on enticing a challengeable.

2. Conversation analysis on questions in arguments

Questions are a rich resource for participants in antagonistic environments to achieve their interactional goals. Research in CA has shown how participants can deploy: 'wh-questions' used to launch challenges (Koshik 2003; Heinemann 2008), 'known-answer' questions to embody presuppositions (Levinson 1992; see also Mehan 1979; Koshik 2002 and Schegloff 2007 for non-antagonistic environments), and complain through the use of questions (Monzoni 2008; Dersely and Wootton 2000). However, beyond these cases the literature on adversarial talk in CA is somewhat scarce (Schegloff 2007: 73) thus, the practice of how a challenge is enticed by these uncontroversial questions may shed light on some of the organisational features of talk in conflict.

While Gruber's (2001) description does not explicitly address how questions may be framed in order to entice answers from opponents, the practice he describes does bear resemblance to the epistemic features of known-answer questions used by teachers (Mehan 1979), lawyers (Levinson 1992) and police (Stokoe and Edwards 2008, 2010) to do sequential groundwork in institutional interactions. Mehan (1979) detailed the way in which teachers can ask questions to which they already know the answers in order to test students' knowledge. Similarly, Levinson (1992) showed how lawyers use known-answer questions to make assumptions available to jurors, without having to make explicit accusations, enticing a possibly damaging answer within the limits on interactions in the courtroom (see Atkinson and Drew 1979). Stokoe and Edwards (2008, 2010) detail police use of 'silly questions', with known-in-common answers, employed to obtain reformulated statements from suspects under interrogation. This research illustrates the way in which known-answer questions are used by participants to set up information for a range of interactional purposes.

CA has also been used to investigate the ways in which participants set up information in less adversarial interactions. Early in CA's development, Schegloff (1980) investigated the phenomenon of 'pre-sequences'; turns at talk (often questions) used prior to an action in order to establish information required for that action. He gives examples such as 'pre-requests', (e.g. 'remember the blouse you made me?') used to prepare a subsequent request, (e.g. to have some button holes made in the blouse). Monzoni (2008) built on Schegloff's work detailing an interactional practice of question-answer-complaint similar to Gruber's (2001) enticing questions. Monzoni (2008) illustrated how 'pre-complaints' and their subsequent answers work to provide a basis to launch a complaint. She described how participants ask questions, subsequently displaying that the answers are already known and are the basis for a complaint. She gives examples such as 'how many eggs have you put [in the dough]' and whereby the

answer ('three') is the basis upon which to launch a complaint ('well I put one in') (Monzoni 2008: 82). Stokoe and Edwards (2008, 2010) investigation of silly questions also detailed the three part nature of such sequences, exhibiting a three part [silly question+known-answer+ reformulation] structure. Both pre-complaints and silly questions which parallel the three part [enticing-question+known-answer+attack] structure identified by Gruber (2001).

This literature on questions in arguments provides a background to the analysis of enticing a challengeable, illustrating the way in which questions during arguments are typically controversial and not designed to 'do questioning'[2]. Building on the three part structure identified in the research presented above the current investigation develops Gruber's (2001) single case further, to explore the various features of enticing a challengeable. Based on the analysis this article illustrates the way in which participants use speaker selection, rights to information and personalising the argument in order to prepare a basis for next actions, enacting strategic adversarial work during arguments.

3. Sequence structure, speaker selection and epistemic obligations

To unravel the practice of enticing a challengeable, beginning with the sequential organisation, case 1 is re-introduced here in example 2 below. In example 2, DC is arguing with several people conducting a protest to highlight the risks that they believe the contraceptive pill poses to women. Prior to the excerpt presented in example 2, DC has taken issue with the religious nature of the protest, in response to which the protesters have asserted their stance is that 'the pill kills women'. This difference in positions forms the basis of the argument below.

(2) (Case 1 'Argument with Anti-birth Control')
URL: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tC6GxktGdww [05:19–05:37]

```
92. DC:    what's poisonous for one plant- for one creature,
93.        may not be foo:d for another.=
94.        [you ca:n't destroy all the food.]
95. P1:    [>but we're talking about< <human beings.>]
96.        we're not talking about destro:ying anything.
97.        you're ju:mping to conclu[sions.   ]
98. DC: →                          [>let me a]sk you
99.     → something.=do you eat eggs.<
100.       (2.0)
           [screenshot- Figure 1 at line 100]
101.P1: → <yes.>
102.DC:→ that's a fe:tus. couldn't it be¿
103.        if there's a blood thi:ng
104.       [it's- >it's a foetus.<]
105.P1:    [< we  are  talking > ] about <the pi:ll ki:lling
106.       wo:men.>you're going off topic.>we're talking about
107.       the< PI::LL being harmful to women.=
```

---

²Heritage and Clayman (2010) and Raymond (2003) differentiate between interrogatives, utterances using a 'question format' that do not work to find something out, and 'doing questioning', utterances designed to find things out.

Figure 1 – Gestural hold by P1 at line 100

At line 98, DC begins with 'let me ask you something'; a type of 'pre-pre' (Schegloff 1980) used to set up interactional space for a longer sequence. DC continues in line 98–99 with 'do you eat eggs' a question enacting conditional relevance (Schegloff 1968, 2007) projecting that an answer ought to follow. The design of DC's question as a 'yes/no interrogative' also projects that a type-conforming answer ought to come in the form of a yes or a no (Raymond 2003), tilted using the positive 'do you', towards a yes-type response (Koshik 2002). At line 100, (figure 1) P1 visibly holds her body, orienting to some problematic in the change in trajectory in the argument and it is during this hold that a 2 second pause develops further orienting to some trouble in the question. This bodily hold, and pausing, works to treat the question as not relevant to the current course of action. Despite this she nevertheless confirms that she does eats eggs in line 101, providing a basis for DC's challenge at lines 102–104, that since she eats eggs, she could be eating foetus's also. DC's challenge treats P1 as someone who ought to respect foetuses because of her current protest opposing the pill. In other words, in example 1 DC uses his pre-pre at line 98 to make interactional space for his pre-challenge at lines 98–99 ('do you eat eggs') and then uses P1's answer in line 101 to mount a challenge on P1's position in lines 102–104.

As illustrated in example 2, based on analysis of the 15 cases, the practice of enticing a challengeable appears to be comprised of three parts[3]. It begins with a pre-challenge, which works to obtain an uncontroversial and known-in-common answer. Then a response to the pre-challenge - the known-in-common answer - is given by the opponent. Finally, based on this the challenge is initiated.

Having described the sequential organisation of the practice of enticing a challengeable analysis now turns to two further features that are used to entice a challenge, speaker selection and knowledge management (epistemics). In the next

---

[3] The fourth possible part, a response to the challenge appears to work in the same way as a response to any form of challenge, for reasons of space this is not dealt with here.

section analysis focuses on these two methods which members use to construct enticing questions.

Speaker selection provides an important basis for enticing a challengeable, in each case the enticing questions are designed to select the recipient as the next speaker, rather than allowing anyone to potentially take a turn at talk. The way in which participants use speaker selection and recipient design also displays an organisation of epistemic rights that works to obligate an answer from the recipient. Example 3 below illustrates this speaker selection and organisation of epistemic rights in detail.

Example 3 is drawn from a video recording of protest about the second Iraq war. A supporter of the Iraq war (Rep) has given a pro-war speech in front of an anti-war protest and is now being heckled by the crowd. As depicted in figure 2, two protestors (P2 and P3) are part of a larger group milling near Rep. In figure 2, P2 is standing to the left, P3 in the middle and Rep to the right. An argument begins at line 3 when a protestor (P2) delivers a pre-challenge.

(3) (Case 2 'Argument with Republicans')
URL: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HLAXe6R6CP8 [02:07–02:22]

```
1. Rep:    I support his [position.
2. P2:                 [>wai- wai-< (you guys are-(-----)  (0.3)
3.      →  you go to college?=
4. P3:       =Respect [your   ][li:ves.
5. Rep: →            [↑Ye:ah¿]
6.                         [(0.5)
7. P2:      whe:re.
8.          (0.6)
9. Rep:     george wa:shington.
10. P2:     There you go, that's the pro:blem.
11. Rep:   ↑Why?
12. P2:  → upper middle class ki:ds don't go out
13.         an- (.) fight this [wa:r ma:n.
14. Rep:                      [↑D'you know me?
15.         (0.2)
16. Rep:    you know me?
17.         (1.2)
18. Rep:    how do you know if I- <how do you know I'm upper
19.         mid[dle class.
20. P2:        [I spent fifteen yea:rs in the navy, (.)
21.            [(I spent forever) (---)  [I'm te:lling ya (.)
22. Rep:       [my dad spent thirty   f[i:ve years in the navy.
23. P2:     =<upper cla:[ss   w h i: t e ,   ki:ds,  >]
24. Rep:               [my dad's a captain in the nav]y.
25. P2:     =in privileged universities don't ↑go to war¿
26.         (0.5)
```

Figure 2 – 'you go to college' line 3

At line 3, P2 asks 'you go to college' using 'you' to select Rep as the next speaker (Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson, 1974: 704). Thus selected, Rep has the right and obligation to speak next in order to provide the answer which he does in line 5. At line 10, uses 'that' as a part of a 'prospective formulation' (Goodwin 1996) to index an as yet unexplicated 'problem', connecting Rep's response of line 9 with the upcoming challenge in lines 12–13. Thus, Rep has been selected as the recipient of the pre-challenge sequentially obligating a response and had his subsequent response connected to the eventual challenge.

The second feature of pre-challenges which 'entices' an answer is found in the epistemic rights regarding the answer. Comparison between the pre-challenge in line 3 and the challenge in lines 12–13 in example 3, contrasts the way in which participants orient to who has rights to make assertions about a person. In line 3, P2 uses a recipient-focused topic[4] (Schegloff 2007: 170), asking Rep a question to which only Rep has rights to the answer, deferring to Rep's right to know about his own biography. Subsequently, in lines 12–13, P2 treats 'going to George Washington College' as placing Rep in the category[5] 'upper middle class kid'. Rep treats P2's rights to do that as problematic with the retort at lines 14–19, 'you know me? how do you know if I'm upper middle class' treating P2 as without the proper entitlement to make the

---

[4] Recipient focused topics are one particular feature of 'recipient design', a basic feature of talk where participants tailor their utterances to match the knowledge, rights and responsibilities of the recipient (Heritage and Goodwin 1990; Watson 1997). The recipient design and its implications for the organization of enticing a challengeable will not be dealt with here for reasons of space.

[5] The notion of categories of person in the field of ethnomethodology, and their use by participants as an interactional resource, is drawn from Sacks (1992) and exemplified in the field of Membership Categorisation Analysis (Hester and Eglin 1997, Housley and Fitzgerald 2002). The use of categories, and the moral (see Jayyussi 1984) and epistemic (see Sharrock 1974) impacts that has on this interactional practice will not be dealt with here for reasons of space.

categorisation[6]. The difference between these turns at line 3 and lines 12–13 highlights the way in which participants orient to rights to information. At line 3 P2 treats Rep as the entitled person to know about whether he went to college, however, at lines 12–13 P2 categorises Rep as 'upper middle class' (evidenced in Rep's response in lines 18–19), knowledge which Rep treats P2 as not entitled to knowing. P2's question design also projects an epistemic gradient (Heritage and Clayman 2010) - a display of relative difference in knowledge - which treats Rep as having primary epistemic rights to the answer. Thus, using the recipient focused topic with an epistemic gradient Rep is also epistemically obligated to provide a response, because as lines 14–19 illustrate, P2 is not treated as having the rights to provide that answer. In example 3, P2 uses these two features of talk; speaker selection and recipient designed topical selection, temporarily orienting to an organisation epistemic rights convenient to his purposes in order to obligate a response to the pre-challenge.

In the data collected there is a single case out of the 15 cases where what appears to be designed as a pre-challenge does not use recipient-focused topic. The participant in this case appears to be enacting something similar to enticing a challengeable, and thus it is not treated in the data collected as a deviant case, however as a 'three part challenge' without the recipient focussed topic, example 4 does highlight how useful recipient focussed topics are when enticing a challengeable. This single aberrant example is presented next in order to illustrate the utility of the recipient focus in enticing questions.

Drawn from the same argument as example 1, the events presented in example 3 below occur several minutes later, after some argument about whether the protest about the pill is religious or not. DC has challenged the teachings of the bible whether 'we can breed as much as we want' and this subsequently leads into his 'pre-challenge' at line 134.

(4) (Case 1 'Argument with Anti-birth Control')
URL: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tC6GxktGdww [06:18–06:27]

```
130.P2:    did you know that?
131.       mo::st people don't know that.
132.DC:    so it's a carci:niogen.
133.       (0.3)
134.DC:    what's the average lifespan of a human.
135.       (0.8)
136.P2:    depends on the country.
137.       (0.6)
138.DC:    yA:y- humans usually only used to live <thirty years.>
139.       (0.4)
140.DC:    SO: >anything over that is an extension of life.<
141.P3:    so tell us how you feel about this sir.
142.       how do you feel about the birth control pill.
143.       (1.0)
```

---

[6] In walking through a mall I encountered a similar organization of rights in what appeared to be a similar practice, where a salesperson asked me 'if I watch television', something which, on discussion with the salesperson, was designed such because most people do watch television, but that people object if you simply assume they do.

DC's turn at line 134 acts as a pre-challenge to set up the 'average lifespan' as the basis for his challenge upcoming in line 138. However, this time P2 does *not* treat DC's question as straightforwardly answerable, with her response 'depends on the country' which undermines DC's question by making the basis of it problematic. By treating the basis of DC's question as non-straightforward, rather than as a known-in-common answer question, P2 undermines DC's work to setup the information required for his challenge. DC orients to the additional work now required to make his challenge by providing the answer himself. However, DC's failure to secure a challengeable response now means that DC is making a series of claims, rather than challenging something the opponent has said (as shown in examples 1 and 2).

Example 4 is different from examples 1 and 3 because it lacks the 'enticing' features involved in speaker selection and epistemic obligations. In example 4 DC does not select a next speaker, passing speaker selection to the other participants (P1, P2 and P3) and nor does he make use of a recipient focused topic. Without these two enticing features his opponents are able to co-opt his sequence treating his challenge as sequence-final, thereby weakening the interactional force of the challenge. Comparison between examples 3 and 4 highlights the importance of basing a challenge on the opponent's enticed response. In example 3, P2 uses speaker selection and a recipient focused topic to obtain a particular response from Rep and is then able to make a personal challenge against Rep based on Rep's own answer. However, in example 4 which does not include speaker selection or a recipient focused topic, DC claim about 'living over thirty years' is ignored by P3 (and P2), as P3 initiates a new sequence. In examples 1 and 3, by making the question about the respondent, in a simple yes/no format, and selecting the opponent as the recipient, the challenger is working to ensure that the opponent provides the known, non-controversial pre-challenge response. DC's failed attempt at something akin to enticing a challengeable in example 4, lacking these two features, highlights the significance of speaker selection and recipient focused topics in making an uncontroversial (and therefore successful) pre-challenge.

As recipient-focused topic questions, the pre-challenges in examples 1 and 3 make the challenges personal. Having been selected as the speaker, and requesting information only the opponent has rights to - the opponents are now in a position where they are specifically invested in the challenge. Thus, it is not just the opponent's position that is challenged, it is the opponent themselves who is attacked in the challenges - the basis of this personal challenge is uncontested, because the opponent was enticed into providing it.

As illustrated above, speaker selection and recipient focussed topics work to entice a challengeable from the opponent and to personalise the subsequent challenge. However, as the next section will show, the pre-challenges are also constructed to prefer a particular response in order to obtain the challengeable drawing on a moral organisation of talk to apply interactional pressure to the recipient. The next section investigates the way in which participants use the preference organisation of pre-challenges and this moral ordering of talk in order to obtain a known-in-common answer.

4. Working up the known-in-common answer

Examples 1–4 have already presented instances of how pre-challenges appear to work in

a similar way to 'known-answer questions' (Mehan 1979; Levinson 1992; Stokoe and Edwards 2008, 2010). Similar to the practice these authors describe, the questions used by participants in these pre-challenges have a 'known in common' quality to them, whereby the question asker is not seemingly working to find out the answer, they are simply working to establish that what might be otherwise taken for granted, is in fact the case. An example of this is present in example 5, where a participant trades on a co-participant's visibly white skin to make a question about ancestry into a pre-challenge.

The excerpt in example 5 is from an interaction between 'M1'- a 'Minuteman' from an organisation protesting against illegal immigration - and an individual named 'Naui' from an organisation called 'Mecha' which advocates for indigenous land rights in the US/Mexican border area.

(5) (Case 3 'Mecha and Minutemen')
URL: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RnhrZ9LU2Xc [01:27–02:05]

```
20. Naui: → ok.=your ancestors >where did they come from.<
21. M1:      where'd my ancesto:rs come [from?]
22. M2:                                 [don't talk] to this [guy.]
23. Naui:                                                    [yes.]
24. M2:      don't talk to him.
25.          (1.5)
26. M1:      where did your ancestors come from.
27. Naui:    from the land.=>from this land right here.<
28.          [where'd your ancestors] come-
29. M1:      [(              )]
30. M2:                [(don't)]
31. M1:      what.
32. M2:      talk to (this      )
33. Naui: → where'd you ancestors come from. the-
34.           from europe right?
35. M1:      >right.<
36. Naui: → a:nd >they had to get here.<
37. M1:      *↑yAyh. >they ↑cAme here.<*
38. Naui:    how.
39.          (0.5)
40. M1:      by ↑boat.
41.          (0.8)
42. Naui: → and who:- >who was here< before the
43.           europeans were here.
44.          (0.7)
45. M1:      >INdians.<
46. M?      [>no one will make money of the (  )]
47. Naui:   [ ok.   and-                  and]
48. M1:      aright
49. Naui:→  so who:(0.4) invaded thei:r territory.=
50.          =our territory.
51.          (0.5)
52. M1:       are you indian?=
53. Naui:    =huh?=
54. M1:      =are you indian?
```

At line 20, Naui asks the M1 where his ancestors come from and after a counter-question from M1, Naui repeats the pre-challenge in lines 33–34. With his repeat Naui is chasing the absent response, this time adding an increment that M1's ancestors are European with the tag question 'from europe right?'. In lines 33–34 the positive polarity tag question prefers agreement (Koshik 2002) which it receives with M1's response at line 35. The reformulated tag-question version of the pre-challenge at lines 33–34 reconstructs the pre-challenge as a known-in-common answer question by projecting a candidate answer (Pomerantz 1988). Thus, Naui's reworking of the pre-challenge displays the way in which the pre-challenge is designed to prefer a single short answer.

In moving from a 'wh-question' to a tag question Naui is interactionally displaying that he already 'knew' the answer to the question, in addition to the 'perceptually available' (Jayussi 1984) evidence in front of him. Figure 3 provides further evidence of why Naui might show he knows that M1's ancestors are from Europe.

Figure 3 – Showing M1's skin tone.

As is visible in figure 3, in his reformulation Naui is treating M1 as 'European', categorising M1 on sight (Paoletti 1998) orienting to M1's white skin colour as a mutual resource for understanding that M1's ancestors would come from Europe. Thus, the pre-challenges do not work to find something out, rather they work to provide for the conditional relevance of a particular answer, regardless of the knowledge state of the question-asker.

As a part of the practice of enticing a challengeable pre-challenges trade on common behaviours ('eating eggs'), or visibly available resources (skin colour, standards of dress), in order to ask questions loaded with a moral organisation (Jayussi 1984) that would render the recipient accountable (unreasonable/argumentative) if they fail to conform with the questions design. As part of this uncontroversial construction of the pre-challenge, as we saw in section 3, the pre-challenges are designed as questions in order to remain sensitive to the epistemic rights of the various parties; despite the actual distribution of knowledge in these questions appears being very different than normal questions (c.f. Heritage and Clayman 2010). Similar to the known-in-common function of silly questions in police interviews (Stokoe & Edwards 2010: 137) the known-in-common character of these pre-challenges makes providing anything other than the projected answer exceedingly difficult for the answerer - even when the question asker and recipient are arguing! However, while it may be difficult, not

conforming to the pre-challenge is not impossible, thus an example this is presented next where the consequences of 'calling their bluff' in the pre-challenge are explored.

   In example 6, DC gives a non-conforming response to P1's pre-challenge which results in the interactional trouble displayed in the subsequent talk. Example 6 is from case 1, in which DC and protesters are arguing about whether or not the protest is a religious one. This excerpt in example 6 occurs prior to example 1.

(6) (Case 1 'Argument with Anti-birth Control')
51. DC: [you do at home and pray.]
52. P2:   [just because you don't] [agree with-]
53. P1:   [so you're against]
54.   public displays of re- religiosity?=
55. DC: =oh I just think that this is a religi- <u>now</u> it
56.   becomes a religious issue.
57.   [y'know.]
58. P1:   [no it] doesn't.
59. DC: ye:s it [does. see look at that.]
60. P1:   [>just because some people< pray] doesn't
61.   make it all [religious.]
62. DC: [>they're prayin.<]
63.   yeah well (.) to me it does.
64.   it's very [connected.]
65. P1: →   [>are you<] <u>anti</u> religion.
66.   (0.5)
67. DC: →I'm an <u>atheist</u> myself. yes. °I don't [beli]eve in god.°
68. P1:   [so<u>:</u>]
69.   but- but- don't you respect- don't you tolerate (.)
70.   their religion.=
71. DC: =no I <u>don't</u> tolerate other peoples religion.
72.   =because it's unsu[stainable.]
73. P2:   [>you don't tolerate it?]=
74. DC: =no.
75. P1:   >>what you ↑m<u>ea</u>n it's unsustainable.<<

   In lines 52–64 the argument transitions through discussion regarding DC thoughts on public displays of religion as he begins treating the protest as a 'religious issue'. It culminates in line 65 with P1's question 'are you anti-religion', in which she is orienting to American norms of freedom of religion, and expression, in an attempt position DC such that a 'yes' answer would paint him in a bad light. In this context P1's use of the negative form of 'anti' works as a 'reversed' polarity question which works to prefer a 'no' response (Koshik 2002). In line 67, DC instead orients to the dispreferred response, prefacing his reply 'yes', with the account 'I'm an atheist myself'. In lines 66–67, DC's account, and the pause prior to responding, both work to show that the upcoming response will be a dispreferred one (Pomerantz 1984; Schegloff 2007). The protesters also treat his response as accountable, working to seek confirmation that DC does tolerate religion with 'but don't you tolerate it' (line 69) this time preferring a yes-type answer. P1's confirmation seeking question also shows P1 assuming that DC does tolerate religion. Instead, DC reiterates that he in fact doesn't tolerate religion, confounding P1's assumptions. As a result of his answer and the subsequent questioning DC has come off as both 'intolerant' and 'anti-religious' based on the assumptions built

into the protestor's questioning. Thus, in addition to the accounting and mitigating work enacted by DC as a part of providing a dispreferred response, the additional confirmation the protesters seek subsequent to his response illustrate the taken for granted moral assumptions embedded in the enticing question.

In comparison with examples 1–3 and 5, case 6 reveals the additional interactional work that is required to not conform with the pre-challenge, and details some of the ways in which pre-challenges can be structured as known-in-common. These questions appear to be deployed from stock cultural knowledge, or visibly available resources about what 'anyone' might do, be or think. The consternation displayed by the protestors at DC foiling their taken for granted assumption highlights the way in which pre-challenges leverage a moral organisation of talk (Jayussi 1984) effectively raising the interactional stakes (Edwards and Fasulo 2006) in order to entice a challengeable from their opponent.

Thus far this article has explored the way in which the moral and preference-organisational structures of the pre-challenge work to obligate one particular known-in-common response. Section 3 also illustrated the way in which epistemics and speaker-selection are employed in order obligate an answer from a selected recipient. However, despite all the interactional pressure going into securing a particular answer the pre-challenges are transparently benign questions ('did you go to college?', 'you eat eggs?') which occur in an otherwise antagonistic environments (Hutchby 1996a 1996b; Maynard 1985; Coulter 1990; Vuchinich 1990). Participants in these arguments typically otherwise construct antagonism with challenges, assertions and insults, responding with evasions/deflections and counters, all orienting to the oppositional organisation of arguments described by this prior research. This raises an important question; how does enticing a challengeable impact the trajectory of arguments? Surely if participants are engaged in a string of oppositional arguments then extra work is required to manage the suddenly uncontroversial enticing pre-challenges? Hence, the next section investigates the topical impact of pre-challenges and the steps participants take to manage such uncontroversial pre-challenges.

5. Managing the topic prior to pre-challenges

In many, but not all, cases participants appear to use 'preliminaries to preliminaries', or pre-pres (Schegloff 1980) to manage the topical impact of the pre-challenge. In the form of 'let me ask you a question' or similar, pre-pres are used to create interactional space for an incongruous pre-challenge which might otherwise seemingly divert from the course of action at hand. A demonstration of the topical organisation of pre-challenges and the placement of pre-pres is presented below with an extended transcript of the enticing sequence from example 1 again as example 7.

(7) (Case 1 'Argument with Anti-birth Control')
URl: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tC6GxktGdww [05:14–05:37]

```
88. P1:     [>we're talking about<]=
89. DC:     [they try to get rid of all]
90. P1:      =<info:rmed consent.> >people should kno:w
91.          what they're putting in their mouths,<
92. DC:     what's poisonous for one plant- for one creature,
93.          may not be foo:d for another.=
94.    →    [you ca:n't destroy all the food.]
95. P1:     [>but we're talking about< <human beings.>]
96.    →    we're not talking about destro:ying anything.
97.          you're ju:mping to conclu[sions.
98. DC: →                              [>let me a]sk you
99.          something.=do you eat eggs.<
100.         (2.0)
101.P1:     <yes.>
102.DC: →   that's a fe:tus. couldn't it be¿
103.          if there's a blood thi:ng
104.         [it's- >it's a foetus.<]
105.P1:     [< we  are  talking >] about <the pi:ll ki:lling
106.         wo:men.>you're going off topic.>we're talking about
107.         the< PI::LL being harmful to women.=
```

At lines 88–90, P1 provides a formulation of 'what we're talking about', using 'we' to index the protestors collected together to protest the issue of the 'pill killing women'. DC challenges P1's position, continuing his line of argument that what's 'poisonous' to creatures varies, and asserting in overlap that 'you can't destroy all the food'. P1 counters with 'we're not talking about destroying anything' (line 96), prompting DC's pre-pre 'let me ask you something'. DC's pre-pre works to make the following pre-challenge hearable as preliminary to the challenge (lines 102–104) and suspends the on-topic business until the question is complete, thereby mitigating the disjunction between 'destroying all the food' and whether P1 eats eggs, by projecting that an upcoming on-topic question will be asked. Thus, in example 8, prior to enticing a challengeable DC employs a pre-pre to show that his pre-challenge is aligned with the course of action.

Conversely, the topical organisation of enticing questions is highlighted in sequences where the pre-pre is absent because the pre-challenge matches the course of action at hand. This is illustrated in the following excerpt from example 8. Drawn from the same argument presented in case 4, example 4, above - example 8 is taken from the stretch of talk just prior to example 4.

(8) (Case 4 'Mecha and Minutemen')
URL: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RnhrZ9LU2Xc [01:27–02:05]

```
5. Naui:    why are you a minuteman.
6.          (1.2)
7. M1:      because. why- why am I a minuteman?
8. Naui:    yeah.
9. M1:      because illegal immigration to anybody's house;
10.          >should be stopped.<
```

11.   (2.5)
12. Naui: >ANybody's house. <=
13. M1:   =anybody's house.=If I were to come in to your
14.   house and it wasn't legal, (0.6) you know
15.   what the first thing you'd want me to do is?=
16. Naui: =ok.
17. M1:   >leave.<
18.   (0.4)
19. M1:   ah hah hah.
20. Naui: ok.=your ancestors >where did they come from.<
21. M1:   where'd my ancestors come [from?]

The topic of immigration is introduced by M1 at lines 9–10 and elaborated at lines 13–5, and 17, in his response to Naui's confirmation. Thus, Naui's pre-challenge as to the origin of M1's ancestors is topically relevant by virtue of immigration having already been introduced into the interaction. Examples 7 and 8 highlight the way in which participants deploy a pre-pre as a resource in order to manage the disjunctive nature of pre-challenges relevant to the current course of action.

The management of the course of action using a pre-pre turn when enticing a challengeable is illustrated plainly in example 9, which is drawn from an argument about the legality and morality of gay marriage. V is challenging a sign that C1 is holding (pictured in figure 4).

(9) (Case 5 'National Security')

21. V: tha:t's the stupidest >thing I've seen.<
22.   (2.0)
23. V: and you have NOTHing to back that up.
24.   (2.5)
25. C1:   bible teaching.
26. V: the bible is a boo:k, written by a ma:n.
27.   there's a lotta books.
28. C1: → let me ask you a question.=you have a college
29.   education?
30. V: yes I ↑do.
31. C1: → did you study >books,< or did you read messages
32.   in the sky:?
33. V: I read [ma:ny books.]=
34. C1:   [then etched in the earth.]
35. V: → =>I read [ma:ny books.<]
36. C1:   [you read books.]
37. V: written [by::] men.
38. C1:   [>do you burn-<]
39. C1: → YES.=>so you live your life by that right?<
40. V: >No:.<=
41. C1:   =>↑Yes you do:.<
43.   oh so you live your life by conscience?

Figure 4 – Contested sign

At line 28 during the argument C1 uses 'let me ask you a question' to introduce the pre-question 'you have a college education' which forms the basis of C1's subsequent pre-challenge at lines 31–32. The pre-pre in line 28 allows a shift from V's accusation that the sign is 'stupid' to the topic of V's education. C1's pre-question at line 28 is aligned with the course of action and C1 is using the pre-pre to display that the following turn (the pre-question) is required for a later utterance. Similar to example 8, C1 uses the 'let me ask you X' form which avoids the need for a go ahead from V (Schegloff 1980, Schegloff 2007). In addition, C1's pre-challenge about books at line 31 is on topic and so C1 does treat a pre-pre as necessary to fit the pre-challenge to the course of action. Thus, in example 10, there is a chain of preliminaries: a pre-pre sets up a pre-question, which further sets up a pre-challenge, demonstrating how, within the same sequence, pre-pres are used to manage alignment to the course of action.

As highlighted above participants who are working to entice a challengeable are sensitive to ensuring the enticing sequence fits into the course of action, using pre-pre's or pre-sequences as resources to create a 'buffer' to allow for the uncontroversial enticing question in the adversarial environment. Participants engage in delicate interactional work in order to fit an uncontroversial pre-challenge into an antagonistic form of talk, in order to deploy the sequential, epistemic, preferential and moral resources that work to entice a challengeable.

6. Conclusion

In the data presented herein participants employ pre-challenges with recipient-focused topics, which select the opponent as the next speaker, in order to entice their opponent into providing the basis for the challenge. Using preference organisation and known-in-common questions participants leverage a moral ordering of talk in which a conforming answer is very easy to give, and a non-conforming answer is very hard. It is through this use of recipient focused topics, speaker selection and uncontroversial morally-loaded questions, that participants undertake manipulative interactional groundwork in order to obtain a particular prefigured response. The practice of enticing a challengeable

therefore operates as a 'wolf in sheep's clothing', using uncontroversial pre-challenges to topically position the respondent for a challenge. Thus, despite the uncontroversial nature of pre-challenges they are still thoroughly oriented to an adversarial form of talk.

The current investigation has also raised questions which remain unanswered with respect to the practice of enticing a challengeable namely; the talk used to connect and formulate the final challenge (using 'so' etc), the categorisation work employed ('upper middle class kid' from example 3) and the full detail of the embodied response to enticing questions (the bodily hold from example 1). This practice thus represents a rich further source for the investigation of the the rights and responsibilities to the knowledge involved in arguments in protests, the on-sight categorisation that participants use as part of enticing a challengeable (as was evident in example 5) and the personal-abstract dimension involved in challenges (illustrated with example 4). It would also be important to investigate whether this practice is confined to protests, or whether examples can be found in other contexts, such as arguments on political broadcasting, between other collected groups in conflict (such as sports fans or ethnic groups) or perhaps in legal environments. Thus, further analysis of this practice could potentially illustrate the operation of multiple orders of organisation at the categorical and multimodal levels in a wider variety of environments.

As these enticing sequences use uncontroversial questions as a part of enacting conflict, it would seem then that 'opposition' and 'agreement' are not as straightforward as they first might appear, and only serves to underscore how much work CA has yet to do on the investigation of arguments and conflict. This investigation of the practice of enticing questions during these arguments in protests has highlighted that there is an undocumented wealth of interactional practices to be found where people argue, dispute and otherwise conflict with each other.

Transcription Symbols
The transcriptions symbols presented below are adapted from Schegloff (2007) and Jefferson (2004).

hello.	falling terminal
hello;	slight fall in terminal
,	slight rise in terminal
¿	rising intonation, weaker than that indicated by a question mark
?	strongly rising terminal
=	latched talk
hel-	talk that is cut off
HELLO	talk is louder than surrounding talk
°hello°	talk is quieter than surrounding talk
↓↑	marked falling and rising shifts in pitch
he͟:llo	slight fall in pitch
he͟:llo	slight rise in pitch
**	creaky voice
he::llo	an extension of a sound or syllable
he͟llo	emphasis
(1.0)	timed intervals

(.)	a short untimed pause
.hh	audible inhalations
hh.	audible exhalations
[ ]	overlapping talk
( )	uncertainty or transcription doubt
(( ))	analyst's comments

Acknowledgements

References

Atkinson, Maxwell, and Paul Drew (1979) *Order in Court: The Organisation of Verbal Interaction in Judicial Settings*. London: Macmillan.

Clayman, Steven, and John Heritage (2002) *The News Interview: Journalists and Public Figures on the Air*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Coulter, Jeff (1990) Elementary properties of argument sequences. In George Psathas (ed.), *Interaction Competence*. Washington: University Press of America, pp. 181–203.

Dersley, Ian, and Anthony Wootton (2000) Complaint sequences within antagonistic argument. *Research on Language and Social Interaction* 33: 375–406.

Edwards, Derek, and Alessandra Fasulo (2006) "To be honest": Sequential uses of honesty phrases in talk-in-interaction. *Research on Language and Social Interaction* 39: 343–376.

Goodwin, Charles (1996) Transparent vision. In Elinor Ochs, Emmanuel Schegloff, and Sandra Thompson (eds.), *Interaction and Grammar*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 370–404.

Gruber, Helmut (2001) Questions and strategic orientation in verbal conflict sequences. *Journal of Pragmatics* 33: 1851–1857.

Goodwin, Charles, and John Heritage (1990) Conversation analysis. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 19: 283–307.

Heinemann, Trine (2008) Questions of accountability: Yes--no interrogatives that are unanswerable. *Discourse Studies* 10: 55–71.

Heritage, John (2002) The limits of questioning: Negative interrogatives and hostile question content. *Journal of Pragmatics* 34: 1427–1446.

Heritage, John, and Geoffrey Raymond (2005) The terms of agreement: Indexing epistemic authority and

subordination in assessment sequences. *Social Psychology Quarterly* 68: 15–38.

Heritage, John, and Steven Clayman (2010) *Talk in Action: Interactions, Identities, and Institutions*. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell.

Hester, Stephen, and Peter Eglin (1997) *Culture in action: Studies in membership categorization analysis*. Washington, D.C.: University Press of America.

Housley, William, and Richard Fitzgerald (2002) The reconsidered model of membership categorization analysis, *Qualitative Research* 2: 59–83.

Hutchby, Ian (1996a) *Confrontation talk: Argument, asymmetries and power on talk radio*. Hilldale, N.J.: Erlbaum.

Hutchby, Ian (1996b) Power in discourse: The case of arguments on a British talk radio show. *Discourse & Society* 7: 481–97.

Jayyusi, Lena (1984) *Categorization and the moral order*. Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Jefferson, Gail (2004) Glossary of transcript symbols with an introduction. In Gene Lerner (ed.), *Conversation Analysis: Studies from the first generation.* Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, pp 13–31.

Koshik, Irene (2002) A conversation-analytic study of yes/no questions which convey reversed polarity assertions. *Journal of Pragmatics* 34: 1851–77.

Koshik, Irene (2003) Wh-questions used as challenges. *Discourse Studies* 5: 51–77.

Levinson, Stephen (1992) Activity types and language. In Paul Drew, and John Heritage (eds.), *Talk at work: Interaction in institutional settings*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 66–100.

Maynard, Douglas (1985) How children start arguments. *Language in Society* 14: 1–29.

Mehan, Hugh (1979) *Learning lessons: Social organization in the classroom*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

Monzoni, Chiara (2008) Introducing direct complaints through questions: The interactional achievement of "pre-sequences". *Discourse Studies* 10: 73–87.

Muntigl, Peter, and William Turnbull (1998) Conversational structure and facework in arguing. *Journal of Pragmatics* 29: 225–256.

Paoletti, Isabella (1998) Handling "incoherence" according to speaker's on-sight categorization. In Charles Antaki, and Sue Widdicombe (eds.), *Identities in Talk*. London: Sage, pp. 171–190.

Pomerantz, Anita (1984) Agreeing and disagreeing with assessments: Some features of preferred/dispreferred turn shapes. In J. Maxwell Atkinson, and John Heritage (eds.), *Structures of Social Action: Studies in Conversation Analysis*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 57–101.

Pomerantz, Anita (1988) Offering a candidate answer: An information seeking strategy. *Communication Monographs* 55: 360–73.

Raymond, Geoffrey (2003) Grammar and social organization: Yes/no interrogatives and the structure of responding. *American Sociological Review* 68: 939–67.

Sacks, Harvey (1992) *Lectures on conversation*. 2 vols. Jefferson, Gail (ed.) with introductions by Schegloff, Emmanuel. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Sacks, Harvey, Emmanuel Schegloff, and Gail Jefferson (1974) A simplest systematics for the organization of turn-taking for conversation. *Language* 50: 696–735.

Schegloff, Emmanuel (1968) Sequencing in conversational openings. *American Anthropologist* 70: 1075–95.

Schegloff, Emmanuel (1980) Preliminaries to preliminaries: "Can I ask you a question?". *Sociological Inquiry* 50: 104–52.

Schegloff, Emmanuel (2007) *Sequence Organization in Interaction: A Primer in Conversation Analysis*, vol 1. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Schiffrin, Deborah (1984) Jewish argument as sociability. *Language in Society* 13: 311–335.

Sharrock, Wes (1974) On owning knowledge. In Roy Turner (ed.), *Ethnomethodology: Selected readings*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, pp. 45–53.

Stokoe, Elizabeth, and Derek Edwards (2008) "Did you have permission to smash your neighbour's door?" Silly questions and their answers in police–suspect interrogations. *Discourse Studies* 10: 89–111.

Stokoe, Elizabeth, and Derek Edwards (2010) Asking ostensibly silly questions in police-suspect interrogations. In Alice Freed, and Susan Erlich (eds.), *Why do you ask: The functions of questions in institutional discourse*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 108–133.

Vuchinich, Samuel (1990) The sequential organisation of closing in verbal family conflict. In Allen Grimshaw (ed.), *Conflict Talk*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 118–139.

Watson, Rod (1997) Some general reflections on 'Categorization' and 'Sequence' in the analysis of conversation. In Stephen Hester, and Peter Eglin (eds.), *Culture in action: Studies in membership categorization analysis*. Washington, D.C.: University Press of America, pp. 49–76.

EDWARD REYNOLDS completed a Masters in Applied Linguistics at the Australian National University with a conversation-analytic study of lies. Coming from a background in the Australian Government his interest was in 'cues to deception' and interrogative interviewing techniques. His research on lies published in Reynolds & Rendle-Short (frth) served to critique the simplistic methods traditionally used to investigate lies, providing a naturalistic CA analysis of lies. His current Ph.D. research is focusing on the interactional mechanics of group conflict, in particular the practice of 'enticing a challengeable'. In his current research he intends to study this one practice from multiple ethnomethodological perspectives, drawing on conversation analysis, membership categorisation analysis, analysis of embodied conduct, interactional linguistics and 'mode-free' analysis to demonstrate how participants use a variety of tools at their disposal to enact this one adversarial practice. He is also collaborating with Maryanne Theobald on the analysis of children's second stories in the playground and Richard Fitzgerald on the analysis of how the host constructs an argument (between participants) on the Jeremy Kyle show.
Address: School of Journalism and Communications, The University of Queensland, Brisbane, Queensland, Australia. E-mail: edward.reynolds@uqconnect.edu.au