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### When to make the sensory social: Registering in copresent openings

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**When to make the sensory social: Registering in copresent openings<sup>1</sup>**

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## ABSTRACT

This article provides the first detailed empirical analysis of naturally-occurring videorecorded openings during which participants make the sensory social through the action of *registering* – calling joint attention to a selected, publicly perceivable referent so others shift their sensory attention to it. Examining sequence-initial actions that register referents for which a participant is regarded as responsible, this study elucidates a systematic preference organization which observably guides when and how people initiate registering sequences sensitive to both referent ownership and referent value. Analysis shows how choosing to register an owned referent puts involved participants' face, affiliation, and social relationship on the line.

Keywords: joint attention, noticing, conversation analysis, video, openings, preference, face, self

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<sup>1</sup> This article began in 2005 as a chapter written for my dissertation (Pillet-Shore 2008), and I've been collecting and analyzing additional cases of the focal phenomenon ever since. I presented versions of this analysis at the 2017 International Pragmatics Conference in Belfast, Northern Ireland, and the 2018 International Conference on Conversation Analysis in Loughborough, England. I am grateful to Manny Schegloff for discussing this project with me in its earliest stages. I also thank Lucas Seuren for offering helpful comments, and Saul Albert, Mick Smith and members of the Tufts University Human Interaction Lab for giving me the opportunity to present some of this article's data to them in November 2018. Correspondence to: Danielle Pillet-Shore, Department of Communication, University of New Hampshire, Horton Social Science Center, 20 Academic Way, Durham, NH 03824, USA. Email [Danielle.pillet-shore@unh.edu](mailto:Danielle.pillet-shore@unh.edu)

### **When to make the sensory social: Registering in copresent openings**

Human experience is grounded in its shared nature (Moore & Dunham 1995). To “construct and coordinate the shared social realities that comprise everyday life” (Bruner 1995:11-12), we must be able to establish joint attention, knowing together that we are attending to the same referent (Carpenter & Liebal 2011:159-160; Tomasello 1995). This article examines a basic and pervasive communicative action through which people establish joint attention: the action of *registering*. *Registering* refers to the linguistic and embodied ways that people interacting face-to-face<sup>2</sup> call joint attention to a selected publicly perceivable referent so copresent others shift their attention to it (Schegloff 2007; Pillet-Shore 2005; 2017; 2018a). Through this action, interactional coparticipants invoke a present, personal perceptual experience so they may immediately share it, thereby making the sensory social.

A prolific site for (producing and examining) the social action of registering is the opening phase of face-to-face interaction, since the beginning of a copresent encounter is a time of heightened exposure to novel sensory stimuli and also a time of heightened self- and other-awareness and attentiveness (Pillet-Shore 2008; 2018a). During openings, participants observably display that they are monitoring for diverse and distributed manifestations of the self, including presentation of participants’ bodies (e.g., how persons look, smell, sound) as well as participants’ self-extensions, like living quarters (e.g., how a person’s residence looks and smells; Pillet-Shore 2017; 2018a; Schegloff 2007:86-88) and other beings for whom one is regarded as responsible (e.g., pets, young children; Pillet-Shore 2017; 2018a). Based on a conversation analytic (CA) examination of naturally-occurring videorecorded openings, this

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<sup>2</sup> Registering is not confined to face-to-face interaction. Among others, Drew & Chilton (2000) and Schegloff (2007) mention registering (or vernacularly, “noticing” – see Background discussion) actions in their analyses of recorded telephone conversations.

article examines sequence-initial registering actions, closely analyzing when people choose to audibly point to a publicly perceivable referent, including visible, audible, palpable, and olfactible features<sup>3</sup> of the setting and its participants (Pillet-Shore 2018a).

Excerpts 1 and 2 exemplify this article’s focal phenomenon (with an arrow → pointing to the sequence-initial registering utterance, and **bold** indicating actions constituting the larger registering sequence).<sup>4</sup> In Excerpt 1, Jill is entering her friend Gina’s apartment. While still at the door’s threshold (Fig.1.1), Jill delivers a registering utterance starting at line 6:

(1) [F12GM-1] (simplified)  
 01 ((Gina opening locked/opaque door))  
 02 Gina: Hell:a[w::?  
 03 Jill: [Hi:ee=  
 04 Jef: =Hello:,  
 05 Jill: Wahs: ↑u::p. ((Gina splaying arms to hug Jill))



Fig.1.1

+fig.1.1  
 06 Jill: → Mm::=It smells+ so go:od in he[re.  
 07 Gina: ((Gina, Jill hugging)) [Welcom:e,  
 08 Jill: **Is that [you?=or:=**  
 09 Shi: [H(h)ey,  
 10 Gina: =He:y, **Might be thuh candle,**

Audibly pointing to her own sensorial experience of perceiving a good smell via the “evidential” verb “smells” (Chafe & Nichols 1986), Jill thereby calls others’ attention to this olfactible referent.

<sup>3</sup> People are more likely to register tasteable referents outside of the opening phase of interaction, often mid-encounter (e.g., while cooking, eating, drinking; cf. Mondada 2019).

<sup>4</sup> Data in this article also use: an exclamation point “!” following an abruptly punctuated sound, an asterisk “\*” to indicate onset of visible conduct described inside double parentheses “(( \* ))” and a plus “+” to denote the moment in the transcript that a video frame grab figure occurs.

When a person initially registers a referent apparently using one sense, that action can occasion participants to successively engage in a multisensorial experience with that referent. Excerpt 2 shows pre-present Sally enthusiastically greeting her Mom at the entrance to her apartment. As Sally lifts her head from Mom's shoulder so she can gaze at her face, she delivers a registering utterance starting at line 8, audibly pointing to her visual perception (via evidential verb "lo(h)oks"; *ibid*) of Mom's change in hairstyle since they last saw one another (lines 14-15, 18-19). During this time, Sally concurrently touches Mom's hair (Fig.2.3, 2.4), an action Mom mirrors by then touching her own hair (Fig.2.4):

(2) [F18ST]

01 ((Sally opening locked/opaque door))  
 02 Mom: [f↑Hi:e::: ((Sally shoots arms up in "V"))  
 03 Sally: [.hhh! fhihh! heh +heh  
 +fig.2.1



Fig.2.1

Fig.2.2

Fig.2.3

Fig.2.4

... ((8 lines omitted - Mom, Sally hugging))  
 04 Sally: [huh hmm hmm mpwh! [.hh ((Sally kissing Mom))  
 05 Mom: [My beautif#ul +g#ir::l,=  
 +fig.2.2  
 06 Sally: =hmm ((Sally, Mom sustaining head-to-neck hug))  
 07 Mom: How are y#o:u, ((Sally lifts head to gaze at Mom))  
 +fig.2.3  
 08 Sally: -> .hh f↑Your +hair lo(h)oks s(h)o:  
 09 c(h)u(h)::t(h)e[hheh ((Sally touching Mom's hair))  
 10 Mom: [You like it?  
 11 Sally: .hh °Yeah.° ((Mom, Sally hugging))  
 12 Mom: It's not really that- °I-° No one's no:ticing  
 13 it.=I [don't think,  
 14 Sally: [What do you me:an.=It was so: lo:ng  
 15 [last time I saw you.  
 16 Mom: [Well, actually dad noticed it.=I guess that's  
 17 a plus.=Right,

18 Sally: M- It was really long >last time I sa:w you<=Me:ember  
 19 [I said that?<  
 20 Mom: [But I was like \*wo:rking with people yestaday=They  
 21 didn't even say anyth+ing. ((\*Mom touches her own hair))  
 +fig.2.4  
 22 Sally: M#mm.  
 23 Mom: I was like fmaybe I don't look different,

Excerpt 2 thus shows how Sally's action of calling attention to a visible and palpable referent engenders a joint multisensorial experience<sup>5</sup> (cf. Mondada 2019). Furthermore, this sequence shows a participant's use of the vernacular metalinguistic term "noticing" (line 12; see Background) to refer to the action that this article terms *registering*, evidencing participants' orientation to the importance of this social action being done – or not done (lines 12-23) – in everyday life.

## Background

Much of the research on joint attention has been conducted in laboratory settings, primarily focusing upon human infants' abilities to follow an adult's eye gaze to an inanimate object (e.g., Moore & Dunham 1995; Carpenter & Liebal 2011). Noting that these psychological studies take "as unproblematic how parties coordinate their actions in the first place such that a joint attention event is achieved, and moreover, achieved for a particular social purpose," Kidwell & Zimmerman (2007:594) examine episodes of videorecorded, naturally-occurring interaction within infant-toddler daycare centers, explicating how children aged 1-2½ years coordinate joint attention to an object.

There is ample interaction analytic literature investigating recorded encounters in which adult participants call joint attention to a publicly perceivable referent. The many contributions to this body of work, however, use different terms to refer to what is apparently the same (or at

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<sup>5</sup> Excerpt 10 is another exemplification of a registering sequence occasioning a joint multisensorial experience.

least very similar and overlapping) underlying social action. In addition to CA work's use of the term *registering* (Schegloff 2007:82-88; Pillet-Shore 2005; 2017; 2018a; Hoey 2018; Steensig et al., 2015), other extant terms include: *noticing* (Goodwin & Goodwin 2012; Kääntä 2014; Keisanen 2012; Laanesoo & Keevallik 2017; Sacks 1992; Schegloff 1988; 2007; Stivers & Rossano 2010:9; Szymanski 1999), *announcing* (Schegloff 2007; Stivers & Rossano 2010:9), *setting talk* (Maynard & Zimmerman 1984:304), *comments on the physical surroundings* (Keevallik 2018), and *local sensitivity* to elements in participants' field of perception (Bergmann 1990:207).<sup>6</sup> Among these, the term *noticing* is most common and recognizable, since the earliest CA works (Sacks 1992 II:87-97; Schegloff 1988:119-131) used this vernacular metalinguistic term (Levinson 2013:122) to invoke and parlay "the reader's experience" without having to offer a definition, explanation or evidence (Schegloff 2007:88).

The fact that scholars have used disparate terms poses a problem for scientific consistency, compromising our ability to build upon past research and refine and advance our understanding of how and when people do this ubiquitous and versatile (Albert & Smith 2018) communicative action. Furthermore, extant work has not clearly explicated what might make an action recognizable (to participants, and then to analysts) as "noticing" versus "announcing" a here-and-now referent.

In prior work most directly relevant to the present investigation, Schegloff (2007:82-88) uses the terms "registering," "noticing," and "announcing":

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<sup>6</sup> Among these studies, Maynard & Zimmerman (1984) is distinctive in not analyzing naturally-occurring recorded interactions, but rather examining recordings of college student dyads in a lab experiment, finding that participants initiated topics using what they termed "setting talk" – referring to an element of the immediate laboratory environment. This article doesn't use the term "setting talk" because in my data set the action of registering does not necessitate talk; people can use directed gaze, a deictic gesture, and/or laughter to initiate registering; and registering is not limited to referents tethered to the setting – participants call attention to publicly perceivable features of the setting and participants in the same sequential and overall structural position.

In achieving the official and explicit registering of some feature of the environment of the interaction affiliated to or identified with one of the participants – and ‘positively valued’ features in particular – there appears to be a preference for noticing-by-others over announcement-by-‘self’ (where ‘self’ is the one characterized by the feature). (p.82)

Consistent with Schegloff, the present research uses “registering” as an umbrella term encompassing the difficult to disaggregate actions of “noticing” and “announcing” (Pillet-Shore 2018a), since analysis of my data set shows that participants can register in a way that resists neat and defensible categorization as either “noticing” or “announcing.” For instance, in Excerpt 3 shortly after Hilly enters her friends’ apartment, previously-present resident Ryan registers a bug on the ceiling at line 7:

(3) [Clover4-21b]

01 Hal: =HHAH hah .hhh! I was just like ↑where is Hilly+=  
+fig.3.1

02 Hal: =[THat bitch¿

03 Byl: [THAT bitch right as thuh door opened.=

04 [That was

05 Hy?: [Hhuh huh huh=  
+fig.3.2

06 Byl: =fab+ulo[us::.. ((Ryan gazing upward at ceiling))

07 Rya: -> [There’s a bug on our ceiling.

08 (0.3)/((Hal, Cha, Byl shift gaze to follow Ryan’s gaze))

09 Rya: +hhhhih!  
+fig.3.3



Fig.3.1

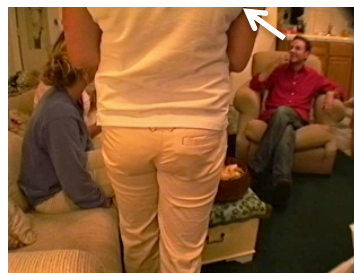


Fig.3.2

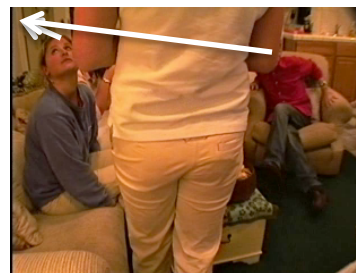


Fig.3.3

10 Hal: [It’s been there fer like=  
11 By?: [Oh that’s- that’s-  
12 Hal: =[two da:ys.  
13 Cha: [Tho:se things are [evrywhere,

Ryan’s registering actions, including his utterance, gaze (Fig.3.2), and body lean (Fig.3.3)

occasion his coparticipants to suddenly shift their gaze and joint attention to follow Ryan’s gaze



to his selected, publicly perceivable referent (Fig.3.3). But is Ryan is *noticing* and/or *announcing* the bug? This article specifically does *not* try to disentangle these actions; the reasons for this becoming clear when we consider this issue rhetorically.

Past work implies that “noticing” is a recipient-directed (Keevallik 2018) and/or other-attentive action, whereas “announcing” is a self-attentive action. But how might that conceptual self/other distinction apply to Ryan’s line 7? Past work also implies that, whereas “announcing” is done by speakers displaying a knowing epistemic stance, “noticing” applies when the referent is suddenly perceivable (which is often correlated with speakers displaying an unknowing-to-knowing epistemic stance, e.g., via turn-initial reaction token; Heritage 1984:286-7; Wilkinson & Kitinger 2006). But how might this conceptual distinction apply to Ryan’s line 7, or more generally to cases when a participant does not (e.g., due to in-progress talk) interactionally register a target referent at the moment s/he perceives that referent?

In the seconds leading up to line 7, Ryan’s head/gazing movements suggest he may have first visually perceived the bug on the ceiling during Hal’s utterance at line 1 (Fig.3.1). At the same time, Ryan does not produce a reaction token, and he’s been seated in his apartment with possible visual access to this referent for some time. Moreover, at lines 10 and 12 his roommate Hal sanctions him for his referent’s lack of novelty.

Another exemplar resisting neat and defensible categorization as either “noticing” or “announcing,” Excerpt 4 represents cases in my data set in which people register newcomers’ arrivals, as Ann does at line 3:

**(4)** [Study Group]

01 Mik: I didn't do research on actual intimacy.=But I'm hoping  
02 thet that's what +Haley kinda does.\*+=It's- (.)  
+fig.4.1 +fig.4.2



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03 Ann: -> ↑There she is, ((*Ann shifts gaze up to arriving Hal))
04 Hal:   He:llo:,,= ((Mel, Mik shift gaze to arriving Hal))
05 Mel:   =He:y. Haley,
06 Mik:   [+HE:y,=There she i:s.
          +fig.4.3

```

During Mike’s utterance at line 2 (\*Fig.4.2), Ann shifts her gaze up toward the arriving newcomer Haley – an apparent initial sighting (Pillet-Shore 2018a) that directly precedes line 3, and occasions her coparticipants to suddenly shift their gaze and joint attention to follow Ann’s gaze to her selected, publicly perceivable referent (Fig.4.3). It’s plausible that Ann’s “noticing” Haley’s arrival, because she visibly appears to have just spotted an other-regarding referent, and audibly uses discovery prosody (cf. Goodwin 1979). At the same time, it’s also plausible that Ann’s “announcing” Haley’s arrival, since she does not display a change-of-state in knowledge (Heritage 1984:286-7) or use a reaction token (Wilkinson & Kitzinger 2006), and she uses a third-person reference form to refer to the arriver, addressing her utterance to pre-present others.

While Excerpts 3 and 4 illustrate why this article does not use the vernacular metalinguistic terms *noticing* and *announcing*, what *is* clear from these excerpts – and all of my cases – is that this article’s target action *registers* the referent, causing other participants to observably shift their sensory attention to it. Thus, this article uses the term *registering* to name the basic underlying social action for what it’s apparently designed to do – to call joint attention to a selected publicly perceivable referent (rather than varying the name of the action depending upon what the referent is, or which participant does it).

Like Schegloff (2007), this article analyzes people registering referents affiliated to or identified with (at least) one of the participants, which I’ll call *owned referents*. This is

distinctive from most other extant work, which predominantly examines unowned referents (for review, see Keevallik 2018). At the same time, this article fills a gap in Schegloff's work. When discussing "occasions on which someone has a new article of clothing, a new hairstyle, a new object in, or arrangement of, living quarters, etc., which is not registered by an interactional co-participant," Schegloff admitted he had "no taped instances" "at hand" (ibid:86), noting that his comments were meant "to stimulate" subsequent "inquiry" (ibid:88). But no study has yet investigated or demonstrated Schegloff's (2007:82) aforementioned claim about a possible preference organization (Pillet-Shore 2017) operative during registering sequences. This article fills this lacuna.

After describing the data and method for this research, this article's Findings section provides the first detailed empirical investigation of naturally-occurring videorecorded sequences of copresent openings in which participants register owned referents. Analysis demonstrates that participants produce and understand sequence-initial registering actions sensitive to the target referent's ownership and value in a patterned, methodical way constituting a systematic structural preference organization. This preference organization is evidenced across four subsections showing four key findings: (1) non-owners register positively-valued referents early and straightforwardly; (2) owners register negatively-valued referents early and straightforwardly; (3) owners delay registering positively-valued referents, and design their registering utterances to be nonvalenced; (4) when non-owners design their registering utterances to be nonvalenced – delaying/withholding a stance display – owners regularly account for the target referent. This section concludes with a deviant case analysis in which a participant produces a sequence-initial registering action in a way that apparently departs from other

collected cases – an exceptional case that still shows evidence of participants' orientation to the normativity of this preference organization.

## DATA AND METHOD

This study is part of a larger project in which I am examining how people open face-to-face interaction as newcomers arrive to a variety of residential and institutional settings (Pillet-Shore 2008; 2018a). I collected a data corpus involving over 435 residential encounters (e.g., friends, family, roommates coming home or coming over) and 96 workplace encounters (e.g., in schools, break rooms, restaurants, salons, gyms) with the informed consent of participants, and I anonymized all participant identifiers. My analysis of over 107 hours of naturally occurring videorecorded data yielded 542 copresent openings between English-speaking persons (on the west and east coasts of the United States) coming together to socialize and do work. Using the methods of conversation analysis, I examined all registering sequences that occur in my corpus. I developed the details of my analysis for this article by closely examining 75 registering sequences occurring within the first 60-seconds of a participant's arrival.<sup>7</sup> Transcripts follow conversation analytic conventions (using the system developed by Gail Jefferson) and, when IRB-permitted, include video frame figures showing key visible conduct.

## FINDINGS

### Selecting how, what, and when to register

Registering is one way of making reference in interaction. As with other referential actions (cf. Enfield 2013), registering involves selection of: *what to register* from among a vast

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<sup>7</sup> While most arrivals in my data set show participants entering from outside into an interior space, a few cases show arrivers entering a common room after waking from sleep in a nearby bedroom.

number of perceivable, registerable stimuli; *how to register* from among a variety of different possible multimodal (linguistic and embodied) methods; and *when to register*.

Regarding *how to register*: Sequence-initial registering actions can be done through various design formats. For example, participants can design their registering utterances with or without evidential verbs (Chafe & Nichols 1986), as positive or negative observations (cf. Schegloff 1988), with or without reaction tokens (cf. Wilkinson & Kitzinger 2006), as primarily lexicalized or embodied (e.g., directed gaze + laughter/object showing), with declarative or interrogative grammar, and with or without explicating a positive(+) or negative(-) stance toward the referent (see analysis of Excerpts 5-9 and 12-15 below).

Regarding *what to register*: people can register referents that are either owned or unowned. An unowned referent is not affiliated to any of the participants – it’s an impersonal referent for which no participant is regarded as responsible (e.g., the weather).<sup>8</sup> But as mentioned earlier, this article analyzes people registering owned referents – referents for which a participant *is* regarded as responsible. In naturally-occurring encounters where participants orient to the setting as belonging to someone, *me* and *mine* are mingled (Lancaster & Foddy 1988).<sup>9</sup> Thus, this section examines cases of people calling joint attention to publicly perceivable

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<sup>8</sup> Excerpt A shows Whitney registering an unowned referent at line 1:

(A) [UT-1]  
 01 W: -> =>fAt least< \*you get thuh vi:ew::? = ((\*W gazes/gestures with  
 02 rt. hand first to R, then to window; returns gaze to R;  
 03 R’s gaze follows W’s gesture to window, then returns to W))  
 04 R: =fUh hu:[h?=fThis is very nic:e.  
 05 W: [fOf thuh mount(h)ains?=hih hih hih huh

By registering the view through the window (which is related to the weather, and is treated as out of participants’ accountable control) of the university’s borrowed meeting room (it’s not Whitney’s personal office), Whitney registers an unowned referent.

<sup>9</sup> This article’s findings empirically demonstrate several authors’ claims that the self is distributed and heterogeneous – e.g., an assertion made by James (1890:291) as cited in Lancaster & Foddy (1988) highlights the difficulty in distinguishing between me and mine: “In its widest possible sense, a man’s *self* is the sum total of all that he can call his, not only his body and his psychic powers, but his clothes and his house, his wife and children, his ancestors and friends, his reputation and works.”

manifestations of the self, including not only how participants look (including hairstyle, clothing), smell, and sound, but also cases of people registering participants' self-extensions, like living/working/traveling quarters (e.g., how a person's residence/office/car looks and smells), chosen or prepared offerings to fellow participants (e.g., gifts, foods), and other beings for whom one is regarded as responsible (e.g., how pets/young children look).

Regarding *when to register*: Broadly, people can register during different phases of interaction, including openings, closings, and in between (at places of possible sequence completion, including as a way of resolving a lapse in conversation; Hoey 2018). This section focuses on registering during openings, since this constitutes the majority of cases in my data set.<sup>10</sup> More specifically, this section demonstrates that people time and design their sequence-initial registering actions in a systematic way constituting a structural preference organization – regular properties of turn and sequence construction through which participants manage courses of action that either promote or undermine social solidarity (Heritage 1984; Schegloff 2007; Pillet-Shore 2017).

### **When to register an owned referent: A structural preference organization**

Choosing to register an owned referent observably puts “face” (participants' interdependent, public images of self; Goffman 1967; Brown & Levinson 1987), “affiliation” (participants' continually updated displays of being ‘with’ or ‘against’ one another; Sidnell 2010), and thus the relationship of involved participants on the line. Empirically examining the theoretical notions of face-preservation and face-threat, CA work on “preference organization” elucidates how people systematically time and design their actions when there are alternative

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<sup>10</sup> My data set includes non-opening cases of registering, analysis of which shows participants to produce and understand sequence-initial registering actions consistent with the structural preference organization outlined in Table 1.

relevant actions possible (Heritage 1984; Schegloff 2007; Pillet-Shore 2017). This section demonstrates that sequence-initial registering actions can be done either: (i) sooner, with “preferred” design – close to initial perceptual exposure (Schegloff 2007:86) and at the earliest moment in the interaction when that registering action may be initially relevantly performed (cf. Pillet-Shore 2018a) – and straightforwardly (without mitigation, qualification, account, uncertainty); or (ii) later, with “dispreferred” design – delayed relative to points in the interaction when that registering action might otherwise have been initially relevantly performed (Pillet-Shore 2017; cf. Robinson & Bolden 2010:503).

The ensuing analysis shows that participants produce and understand sequence-initial registering actions sensitive to the target referent’s *ownership* (is owner or non-owner registering it?) and *value* (are participants displaying a positive(+) or negative(-) stance toward it?),<sup>11</sup> constituting the structural preference organization outlined in Table 1. Each of the next four subsections demonstrates one cell in Table 1.

TABLE 1. *Preference organization when registering an owned publicly perceivable referent.*

	REFERENT (+)VALUED	REFERENT (-)VALUED
REGISTERING ‘YOURS’	preferred	dispreferred
REGISTERING ‘MINE’	dispreferred	preferred

**1. Registering ‘your’ (+)valued referent.** Participants design *registering ‘yours’* actions as preferred when they orient to the referent as positively (+)valued (praiseworthy). In other words, non-owners regularly register positively-valued referents straightforwardly and at the earliest moment in the interaction when that registering action may be initially relevantly performed.

<sup>11</sup> Though it’s possible to register in a lexically nonvalenced way (without explicating a +/- stance), nonvalenced registering utterances are a regular part of dispreferred design: either when registering ‘my’ (+)valued referent (see Excerpts 12-13); or when registering ‘your’ (-)valued referent (see Excerpts 14-15).

This preference is observable when non-owners register some positively-valued referent on their recipient's body or in their recipient's personal territory.

We can see this preferred design in Excerpt 5 as Alec is entering his friend Linda's apartment. While still at the door's threshold (Fig.5.1), Alec does a registering 'yours' action about a referent (on Linda's shirt) toward which he displays a positive stance at line 4:

(5) [LMG11-27-04]  
 01 ((Linda opening opaque door))  
 02 Linda: =\*He:llo:[:::~? ((\*Linda and Alec enter mutual gaze))  
 03 Alec: [Hi: the:re,=It was open  
 04 -> downstairs-[=<Oh my gosh.>=Yer tee shirt is so: +cute,=  
 05 Linda: [Oh good. +fig.5.1



Fig.5.1



Fig.5.2 Alec's referent

06 Daisy: =fI know=[I said that thuh last time I saw th#et?=-  
 07 Linda: [Oh my lucky kitty? ((patting her shirt))

Just after greeting Linda and accounting for how he got through the locked gate downstairs (lines 2-3), Alec registers his visual perception of Linda's T-shirt, which features a maneki-neko (lucky kitty) graphic (Fig.5.2). Alec indexes his realization of the referent through his "<Oh my gosh.>" reaction token (Wilkinson & Kitzinger 2006), rushing to explicate his target referent ("=Yer tee shirt") and then display a positive stance toward it (smiling as he gazes at it and assesses it as "so: cute"). Alec uses his registering as a vehicle for complimenting Linda as the owner of the referent (Pillet-Shore 2015a). As Alec says the evaluative term "cute," Linda gazes down (Fig.5.1) to her own chest, subsequently patting the graphic on her shirt as she delivers her utterance at line 7. Excerpt 5 thus shows Alec designing his *registering yours* action as preferred,



timing it to start at the earliest relevant moment in the emergent encounter (Pillet-Shore 2018a) and as *close as possible* to his apparent initial perceptual exposure to the referent (Schegloff 2007:86). Furthermore, Alec designs his utterance straightforwardly – without mitigation, qualification, account or uncertainty.

This preferred design is also exemplified in Excerpts 1 and 2, which both show participants doing a registering ‘yours’ action while displaying a positive stance, timing this action to start at the earliest relevant moment in the emergent encounter (while still at/near the door’s threshold and just after greetings) and very close to initial perceptual exposure. Excerpts 1, 2 and 5 also show non-owners producing their sequence-initial registering utterances with preferred design features, delivering them straightforwardly (without mitigation, qualification, account, or uncertainty). And in each case, the non-owner uses the registering action as a vehicle for complimenting the owner of the referent.

We can also see this preferred design in Excerpt 6, which is distinctive (from Excerpts 1, 2 and 5) in showing a non-owner delivering a registering utterance composed of multiple turn-construction units (TCUs). In Excerpt 6, arriving guest Jess is entering the apartment of three friends when she does a registering ‘yours’ action, audibly pointing to her perception of Bri’s change in hairstyle since the last time they saw one another. About 1-second after she first gazes toward seated Bri (Fig.6.1), Jess does a double-take (Fig.6.2) as she produces her sequence-initial registering utterance starting at line 4:

```
(6) [S10RG-2]
01 Jess:      h[eh heh ((Jess gazing to Bri; Bri waving to Jess))
02 Bri:       [↑H[iee:::=
03 Kay:       [↑Hi+:::=
               +fig.6.1
```



Fig.6.1



Fig.6.2

```

04 Jess: -> =.hh OH+ my God=<Yer hai:r,>= ((to Bri))
              +fig.6.2
05 Bri:     =Yea:h,=[It's shorter,
06 Jess:     [I lo:ve it hhh=
07 Jess:     =[huh huh!
08 Bri:     [huh huh huh ((Bri rises from seat, moves toward Jess))

```

After producing a reaction token (“OH my God”), Jess registers the target referent (“<Yer hai:r,>”) in a lexically nonvalenced way at line 4 (naming the referent “<Yer hai:r,>” without explicating a +/- stance toward it; though her smiling and discovery prosody may constitute positive audiovisual prosody; cf. Pillet-Shore 2012). Then at line 6 Jess explicitly articulates her positive stance toward the target referent (“I lo:ve it”).

Excerpts 7-9 also show non-owners delivering a multi-TCU registering utterance in which they first register the target referent in a lexically nonvalenced way (bolded), and then rush-through the next transition-relevance place (TRP) to explicitly articulate a positive stance toward the target referent:

```

(7) [Study Group]
01 ML: -> °(You)° dy:e your ha:ir!=It looks cute.
02 HA:   Yeah.huh
03 ML:   I li:ke it.

(8) [Election04]
01      (1.0)
02 J2: -> Oh my god,=You have a million ga:mes.=I like ya arready.=
03 PA:   =h[hh!
04 TE:   [huh [huh
05 J2:   [I love games.=

```

(9) [Thanksgiving2001]

01 B: -> It's good to see- Yer ha:ir is so° sho↑rt.=I lo↑ve it.=  
02 J: =Yeah?

Thus Excerpts 6-9 show that/how speakers can register a referent *without* articulating a valenced-stance toward it (for further discussion of this observation, see Excerpts 12-13, and 14-15); and that each non-owner rushes to immediately append an explicit articulation of a positive stance toward the target referent. Furthermore, this entire subsection shows that a non-owner of a positively-valued referent can initiate a registering sequence as a vehicle for complimenting a fellow participant.

**2. Registering 'my' (-)valued referent.** Participants design *registering* 'mine' actions as preferred when they orient to the referent as negatively (-)valued (criticizable or complainable; Pillet-Shore 2015b). In other words, owners regularly register negatively-valued referents straightforwardly and at the earliest moment in the interaction when that registering action may be initially relevantly performed. This preference is regularly observable when owners register some negatively-valued referent on/about their own bodies or in their own personal territories – a referent that, though not being newly encountered by that speaker/owner, is newly perceptible to coparticipants.<sup>12</sup>

We can see this preferred design in Excerpt 10. Shortly after arriving to her friends' apartment, Hailey (H), who's wearing shorts, registers a referent on her own body, toward which she displays a negative stance at line 9-11:

(10) [F12AW-2] (simplified)

01 H: fHey Georgy,=  
02 G: =°Hey° Hailey,  
03 H: .hh hhohh! Ohh m(h)y(hh) g(h)od< ((sitting down))

<sup>12</sup> Reconsidering Excerpt 3, if participants orient to a bug on one's residential ceiling as negatively-valued (e.g., implying a lack of cleanliness), then Ryan's registering at line 7 may be a case of registering 'my' (-)valued referent with preferred design: Ryan produces his registering straightforwardly and at the earliest moment in the interaction when it can be initially relevantly performed.

04 H: I'm dying: ((leaning forward, hugging bag on lap))  
 05 A: Squeeze in with George and Ka:y. ((to L, pointing to couch  
 06 on opposite side of room))  
 07 L: O::h. (.) Y#eah,=Well:, (.) ((**H's hands rubbing her shins**))



Fig.10.1



Fig.10.2

08 A: Yeah=n+We:ll, ((**H's hands rubbing her shins**))  
 +fig.10.1  
 09 H: -> °Also \*my legs are s(h)o= ((\*reaching in bag on lap))  
 10 =goddamn hairy I gotta fp(h)ut ^the(h)se=  
 11 =[o(h)n(hh)° ((^holding up pants just lifted out of bag))  
 12 A: [hah hh hah .hhh! Yer just with us=It d(h)oesn't  
 13 m(h)att(h)er huh hah .hhh!  
 14 L?: huh [heh  
 15 A: [George doesn't [care::,  
 16 H: [Geo:rge.=Come feel these.[hhh  
 17 A: [heh hih=  
 18 L: [(Look at) mine ((L lifting legs to display shins))  
 19 A: =[hih [heh heh ( )  
 20 G: [What?  
 21 L: ↓Oh: Fe#el m#i:+ne. ((L touching her own shin))  
 +fig.10.2

During the utterances at line 7-8, Hailey touches her own legs/shins (Fig.10.1), the apparent moment of her locally initial perceptual exposure to the (personally palpable) target referent. Then, starting at line 9 Hailey calls her coparticipants' attention to her legs as being "so goddamn hairy," a registering that also does self-criticizing/self-deprecating. She times her delivery of this utterance as close as possible (given others' talk) to her apparent perception of feeling her "hairy" legs, and produces this utterance with preferred design, delivering it straightforwardly (without mitigation, qualification, account or uncertainty). Hailey thus preemptively registers a visible, and possibly palpable referent on her body that could have been registered by others, and uses infiltrating laughter to invite them to laugh with her, transforming a potential for criticism-by-other into an interactional opportunity for affiliation around a self-criticism. Moreover, Excerpt 10 (like Excerpt 2) shows how Hailey's action of registering a

possibly visible/palpable referent occasions a joint multisensorial experience: while no one else touches Hailey’s legs, at line 16 Hailey mock invites George (the lone male in the room) to “Come feel these,” and Lisa responds (at lines 18 and 21) by displaying and touching her own shin (Fig.10.2), thereby affiliating with Hailey by claiming to also have hairy legs.

This preferred design of registering ‘my’ (-)valued referent is also exemplified in Excerpt 11, in which Emma’s welcoming her Dad into her new apartment after recently relocating from a smaller, run-down apartment. After invoking the reason for their encounter (Dad seeing her new residence for the first time) at line 8 by registering the entire space (and Dad positively assesses it at line 11), Emma starts an utterance comparing this place to the last, but then self-repairs in the middle of line 13 to register a visible, negatively-valued referent:

```
(11) [F15EA]
01      ((Emma opening opaque door))
02  Dad:  [He::y
03  Emma:  [Hello:ɛ
04          (1.0)/((Dad/Emma move into hug))
05  Dad:  >How are ya< honey?= ((Dad, Emma hugging))
06  Emma:  =hhhHi(hh) ((breathy))
07          (1.0)/((Dad pats, rubs Emma’s back as they hug))
08  Emma:  .hh hh *So this is i:t.hh= ((*hug disengage; Emma turns
09          away from Dad, gesturing with right hand toward
10          inner apartment))
11  Dad:  =Very ni:ce,
12  Emma:  .hh Ye:ah(h).=It’s hh much bigger than .hh
13      -> >last wa-<=*It’s ptch! <ve:ry ((*Dad, Emma gaze to couch))
14          messy[:,>=This=
15  Dad:  [Yea:h
16  Emma:  =is[: (.) kinda- fYeah=°Well.° .hhh
17  Dad:  [f↓No::
```

Through Emma’s utterance at lines 13-14, she registers her apartment’s “messy” appearance – a negatively-valued, potentially criticizable referent (particularly by a parent to a child). Emma times her registering to coincide with Dad’s initial gaze toward her visibly untidy couch, apparently using it not only to self-deprecate but also (and more importantly) to preempt her Dad from possibly registering the messiness first (cf. Pillet-Shore 2015c). And Emma produces this

registering utterance with preferred design features, delivering it straightforwardly (without mitigation, qualification, account, or uncertainty).

This section thus shows that an owner of a negatively-valued referent can initiate a registering sequence as a vehicle for both self-deprecating and preempting a fellow participant's potential criticism/complaint.

**3. Registering 'my' (+)valued referent.** When owners of a positively-valued referent initiate a registering sequence, they observably delay this action relative to points in the interaction when they might otherwise have initially relevantly performed it (Pillet-Shore 2017; cf. Robinson & Bolden 2010:503), thereby treating this action as dispreferred. Furthermore, they routinely design their sequence-initial registering utterances so they are specifically nonvalenced, thus allowing a non-owner to be first to articulate a (positive) stance toward the target referent.

These dispreferred design features are exemplified in Excerpt 12. After waking up on Saturday morning, 12-year-old Layla enters her living room (at line 3) to find her neighbor and nanny Addison playing a board game with her younger sister Sue. Layla's had a hair cut in the week since she's last seen Addison. As Layla first becomes visible (Fig.12.1), she runs both of her hands through her hair, displaying its freshly cut ends. After briefly gazing up at Layla to greet her at line 4, Addison returns her gaze down to the game. About 44-seconds later, after Layla's sat down on the floor to watch the others play, she once again touches her hair at lines 12 and 13 as she addresses her talk at line 14 to Addison. But it's not until line 27 that Layla explicitly registers the change to her hair, exactly 60-seconds after she's established copresence with Addison:

(12) [S17AD]

01 Su:       One,=two,= ((Su tapping pawn on game board))  
02 Su:       =thr[ee,= ((Su, Ad gazing down at *Sorry!* game board))

03 La: [Hi: ((Layla audibly entering room from off screen))  
 04 Su: =fou:r\*ɪ= ((\*Ad shifts gaze up to Layla))  
 05 Ad: =↑Hi:,\* ((\*Ad returns gaze down to board game))  
 06 Su: Five,=six,=seven:-  
 07 (0.2)/((Su placing pawn; Layla enters frame))  
 08 La: .nhh!+ ((Layla runs hands through her hair, displays ends))  
 +fig.12.1



Fig.12.1

09 (0.5)  
 10 Su: You:r turn, ((to Ad; Ad starts moving pawn))  
 11 (0.8)/((Su shifts gaze to Layla; Ad gazing down to game))  
 ... ((41-sec omitted; Ad explains camera to Layla, continues  
 ... playing board game with Su))  
 12 Su: t(h)ome\*work. ((\*Layla bringing hands to her hair))  
 13 [((Layla runs hands through her hair, displaying ends))  
 14 La: [I: don't think you're gonna wanna turn this in,  
 15 Su: [I °(got s::ix)°  
 16 Ad: hhh [hm hm  
 17 La: [hh .hh=  
 18 Su: =One,=two,=th[ree,=four >blah=blah< blah,=  
 19 Ad: [.hh Yihknow,  
 20 Su: =five six seven:: ((Su moving pawn))  
 21 Ad: °This is something- This is something=  
 22 Ad: =\*el[s:e.° ((\*Ad reaches for card on game board))  
 23 La: [hh!  
 24 Su: hih hih hih .hh!  
 25 (.)/(Ad places card down onto game board))  
 26 Eleven,= ((Ad gazing down at game board))  
 27 La: -> =I cho:pped my hai:r.hh\*  
 28 (.)/(Ad shifting gaze from board game to Layla))  
 29 Ad: It looks so go:od! ((Ad/Layla in mutual gaze))

Layla observably delays her registering utterance relative to Addison's initial perceptual exposure (as early as line 4; Schegloff 2007:86) and relative to earlier points in the opening phase when Addison might have relevantly registered her hair cut. During this time, Layla displays the freshly cut ends of her hair twice (lines 8, 12-13), apparently to enhance the opportunity for Addison to do the preferred alternative (of registering *your* +valued referent). Moreover, in the way that Layla designs her sequence-initial registering utterance at line 27, she

specifically avoids articulating a valenced-stance toward her own hair, allowing her recipient Addison to be first to articulate a positive stance toward the target referent at line 29.<sup>13</sup>

We can see a similar pattern in Excerpt 13. Dave has arrived to his neighbor Cookie's house for a holiday party 40-seconds before line 1. After Cookie's small dog Bailey (a miniature poodle) puts his front paws up on Dave's side (line 1), Dave attends to the dog, lifting and hugging him as he addresses him by his nickname "Bay leaf" (line 2):

```
(13) [Holidayc-1]
01          ((dog Bailey puts front paws up on Dav's side))
02 Dav:      Awo:h,=Good heavens Bay leaf?=((Dav lifts Bailey))
03 Coo:      =nhhm!
04 Cla:      hhhh!
05 Dav:      [Come (on/here)= ((Dav hugging Bailey))
06 Ale:      [Bay leaf,=
07 Cla:      =O:h B(h)ay lea[f?
08 Coo: ->          [Look.=He's dre:ssed up.
09 Cla:      [Aw:, ((Coo pointing to Bailey's collar))
10 Coo:      [Did you notice his outfit?=
11 Dav:      =Uh- Di:d I. Why do you think I'm holding him.=
12 Coo:      =Lookit.=
13 Cla:      =hhhhhhh!
14          ((Cla claps twice))
15 Dav:      Hoping [someone will take my picture.
16 Coo:      [Bailey loves (him).
```

Though the dog's action at line 1 initially attracts Dave's attention, Cookie's actions starting at line 8 register a more refined referent: how she has adorned her dog. Cookie's utterance at line 8 is a directive ("Look") followed by a formulation of the dog ("He") as "dre:ssed up" – thus Cookie designs her registering utterances so they are specifically nonvalenced (describing, not assessing) and omit explicit reference to herself as the person responsible for adorning the dog. At line 10, Cookie also formulates the action she's now asking Dave to do as one that he could (and perhaps should) have already done (at least cognitively, if not socially). She thereby

---

<sup>13</sup> See also Excerpt 11-line 8 and Excerpt 13-line 8. I've found that this preference organization of registering an owned referent also applies outside of the opening phase of interaction, during "ongoing states of incipient talk" (Schegloff & Sacks 1973; Schegloff 2007).



registers his failure to register the dog's "outfit" (cf. Schegloff 2007:86).<sup>14</sup> By line 8, Cookie has allowed 46-seconds to elapse since Dave's arrival, time during which Dave has attended to her dog several times (and yet has not registered his outfit). Thus, Cookie observably delays her registering, evidence of her orientation to this action as relatively dispreferred.<sup>15</sup>

This section thus shows that, when an owner of a referent initiates a registering sequence with an utterance designed to be nonvalenced, participants are likely to infer that the owner is fishing for a recipient's positive stance-display toward that referent.

**4. Registering 'your' (-)valued referent.** When non-owners of a negatively-valued referent initiate a registering sequence, they routinely design their sequence-initial registering utterances to be nonvalenced. Though we've already seen cases of speakers uncoupling their registering action/TCU from their stance-displaying action/TCU (Excerpts 6-9 showed non-owners first registering the target referent in a lexically nonvalenced way, and then rushing-through the next TRP to explicitly articulate a *positive* stance toward it), Excerpts 14-15 below show non-owners doing a nonvalenced registering TCU as a stand-alone action (choosing to *not* rush-through the next TRP to start a next TCU, and withholding/delaying a lexicalized stance-display). And in each case, the owner of the target referent uses their next turn to account for it.

<sup>14</sup> Dave designs his response at line 11 to sound playfully indignant, treating it as obvious that he has not only 'noticed', but is already responding to and acting upon that 'noticing' by showing affection to the dog.

<sup>15</sup> Excerpt B shows the very next guest to arrive to Cookie's house for this same holiday party. Tellingly, this arriver (Deanne) registers how Cookie's dog Bailey is adorned very early and straightforwardly, starting at line 5 while still at the door's threshold:

**(B)** [Holidayd-1] (simplified)  
 01 ((knock knock knock))/((Dea at Coo's ajar front door))  
 02 Coo: ↑A::H.  
 03 (0.5)/((dog Bailey runs to Dea at door))  
 04 Dea: Oh hi Bailey?Hi::ee. Hi:hih(you) hih hih=  
 05 -> =Goodness that's so cute?=Looket shyer ne:cklace.=  
 06 Dea: =heh heh heh He's so festive. ((gazing to Coo))

So it seems that this next arriver does the more preferred registering 'your' (+)valued referent action with preferred design (consistent with Excerpts 1, 2 and 5-8).

In Excerpt 14, moments after arriving to her home and greeting her daughter's friend Elsa, Mom shifts her attention to greeting her college-aged daughter Kelly, who's visiting home before leaving with Elsa for a Spring Break trip to Florida. As Mom walks toward Kelly, she lowers her gaze from her daughter's face to her chest (Fig.14.1), embodying a registering action as she delivers a quiet nonvalenced utterance (line 2) that registers her entire daughter as referent. Over 1-second elapses between the end of Mom's utterance at line 2 and the start of her utterance at line 6, time during which she does not start a next TCU to lexicalize a stance-display toward her target referent:

(14) [S12KA-2]

01 (0.5)/((Mom approaches Kel, gazing to Kel's chest))  
 02 Mom: -> °Look at +chyou::° ((Mom splays arms))  
 +fig.14.1



Fig.14.1

Fig.14.2

03 (1.0)/((Mom and Kel hugging))=  
 04 =pwtch!= ((Mom's kiss on Kel's cheek sound))  
 05 =((Mom squeezes Kel tighter during hug))=  
 06 Mom: =**Don't go any ta:nner,**+  
 +fig.14.2  
 07 Kel: \***Mom it's fake.=It's spray.**= ((\*hug disengage))  
 08 Els: =**Why [would you spray tan before we go.**  
 09 Mom: [Oh.  
 10 Kel: **So I will be ta(h)nhh**

Through her utterance at line 6, Mom issues a directive that constitutes an implied registering and criticism of how tan Kelly's skin looks. This encounter occurs in late-winter in the Northeastern U.S., and Mom's manifest concern is that her daughter looks (too) tan as a result of exposure to UV rays from tanning lamp/bed salons, which increase the risk of skin cancer. From the moment of initial perceptual exposure, Mom delays making this specific referent explicit,

and she also avoids articulating a negative-stance toward this referent, both of which show her orientation to her actions as dispreferred and face-threatening. And Kelly responds by providing an account (line 7) for the target referent (her skin color) which displays her orientation to, and aims to assuage, her Mom's implied concern ("It's spray" conveys that her tan is not from UV rays). At line 8, Elsa delivers a *why*-type interrogative (Robinson & Bolden 2010) that solicits further account from Kelly, thereby continuing a criticizing sequence.

Excerpt 15 further exemplifies this pattern. As Jane (J) arrives to her friends' apartment, her pre-present roommate and closest friend Alice (A) initiates a registering sequence at line 4 with a turn composed of a reaction token and an explication of her target referent, thereby registering Jane's all-gray outfit through a lexically nonvalenced utterance. Kate then echoes Alice's registering by defining it (line 5) in a nonvalenced way, and all participants smile/laugh, using their actions to tease/criticize Jane for her monochromatic clothing (cf. Haugh 2017).

(15) [F17AT-1]

```
01 E:      He:[:y,
02 J:      [He::y=Wha:t's up guy:s[:?
03 K:      [fHe::[:y
04 A: ->                                     [O::+h the gro:utfit.=
                                                +fig.15.1
05 K:      =Gray on gra[y:,
06 E:      [hh +hih hih hah hah+
                                                +fig.15.2         +fig.15.3
```



Fig.15.1



Fig.15.2



Fig.15.3

```
07 J:      .hhh! I litera[lly?=  
08 ?:      [heh hih heh  
09 J:      =was about to walk over,=>an I was like<  
10        ah: no: like (.) [I need a sweatshirt.=  
11 A:      [((cough))  
12 E:      =[hhah hah
```

13 K:        =[hah hah hah                    hah hah hah  
 14 J:        =[A(h)nd th(h)is i(h)s (h)all I cou(h)ld f(h)i:nd=  
 15 J:        =.hh[h  
 16 A:            [You're [ridiculous  
 17 J:            [Is it ba:d,

After Jane initially responds with a proud display gesture (Fig.15.2) and laughter, she accounts for the target referent (lines 7, 9-10, 14). By then asking “Is it ba:d,” at line 17, Jane demonstrates her orientation to her interlocutors’ nonvalenced registering actions as implying a negative stance.

This section thus shows that, when a non-owner of a referent initiates a registering sequence with an utterance designed to be nonvalenced (registering the referent without expressing a clear +/- stance toward it), participants are likely to infer that the non-owner is implying and eliding a negative stance toward that referent, *and* its owner.

### Deviant case analysis

While the foregoing analysis has shown that/how participants produce and understand sequence-initial registering actions consistent with the structural preference organization outlined in Table 1, Excerpt 16 offers an opportunity for a deviant case analysis. Shortly after entering his friends’ apartment, Greg initiates a registering sequence starting at line 8:

(16) [F12AW-1]  
 01            ((Ali opening locked, opaque door))  
 02 Ali:        [He:llo:,:=,  
 03 Greg:       [Hello,  
 04 Greg:       =>How co:me we don't have broomball tonight.=  
 05            ((Greg standing in ajar doorway))  
 06 Lis:        =Hi:e:,:=,  
 07 Ali:            [It's tuhmorrow.= ((Ali sits on couch))  
 08 Greg: -> =This room smells:. ((Greg closing door))  
 09 Ali:        Wha(h)t?=  
 10 Greg:        =E:W:+:.=.nhh! ((sniff))  
               +fig.16.1



Fig.16.1

```

11          (0.2)/((Greg walking from door to window))
12 Greg:    Open a window.
13 Lis:     °Yeah=will you¿°
14 Greg:    Gross. ((Greg at window, opening it))
15 Greg:    .hh [Ih-
16 Ali:     [°Oh my god<=That's bad.=[If- (I can't smell)
17 Greg:     [Smells like Tyler's room.
18 Ali:     hhh! fWh(h)[at?
19 Lis:     [I don't (even) know what it i:[s.
20 Greg:     [((throat clear))
21 Ali:     O:h no:.=That's bad.hh
22 Greg:    E::[w. ((Greg opening 2nd window))
23 Lis:     [°Did Kayla puke yesterday?°

```

With his declarative, “This room smells:,” Greg registers his sensorial experience of perceiving an olfactible referent. While he doesn’t use a clear evaluative term (e.g., “stinks”), the verb “smells” idiomatically connotes a bad odor – a negatively-valued referent. Moreover, as an arriving visitor to his friends’ residence, Greg is a non-owner of this referent. And yet, rather than designing his registering ‘yours’ action as dispreferred (by delaying it, and/or producing it non-straightforwardly with mitigation, qualification, or uncertainty) he delivers it early (close to apparent initial perceptual exposure) and straightforwardly, in effect doing a face-threatening/dispreferred action with preferred design (Pillet-Shore 2017).

Resident Ali responds at line 9 with an “open” class repair initiator (Drew 1997), treating Greg’s preceding action – which constituted an abrupt topic shift – as problematic, but leaves unclear if the problem is one of hearing, understanding, or affiliation. At line 10, Greg displays a clear negative stance and then audibly sniffs, moving toward the apartment’s windows as he

delivers the directive at line 12. By opening two windows (at lines 14 and 22), Greg moves to remedy the complainable smell.

Given the structural preference organization outlined in Table 1, how can we explain Greg's registering actions in Excerpt 16? First, olfactory fatigue is apparently at work: the residents' subsequent talk (line 16-23 and beyond) reveals that, after their prolonged exposure to this odor they're unable to detect it, thus precluding the possibility that they can preemptively register (or remedy) the smell. Greg's registering actions may thus be articulating a trouble relevant to his recipients, formulating it as a shared adversity/witnessing (cf. Sacks 1992 I:236-246). Second, the target referent in this case is communal: four college students share this apartment, thus creating a diffusion of responsibility around who owns the referent (see line 23). And third and perhaps most importantly, these participants orient to one another as having a very relaxed, close relationship: ethnographically we know that Greg is a frequent visitor to this residence, a familiarity he embodies through his entitled (non-deferential) action of opening his friends' windows. Thus Excerpt 16 shows how people can use registering actions to display a high degree of social closeness/intimacy: When participants orient to one another as having a casual, unguarded and highly familiar relationship, they may perform dispreferred/face-threatening actions with relatively preferred design. Indeed, as suggested by Pillet-Shore (2017), this may be a key method for constituting social closeness/intimacy. So it seems Excerpt 16 is an exception that still proves the rule.

## CONCLUSIONS

This article has provided the first detailed empirical investigation of naturally-occurring face-to-face openings during which participants do the action of *registering* – calling joint

attention to a selected, publicly perceivable referent so others shift their sensory attention to it. Through this action, interactional coparticipants make the sensory social by invoking a present, personal perceptual experience so they may immediately share it. Closely analyzing sequence-initial actions registering owned referents (for which a participant is regarded as responsible), this study has elucidated a systematic structural preference organization that observably guides when and how people initiate registering sequences sensitive to both referent ownership and referent value.

This article has shown evidence of this preference organization through four key findings. First, analysis revealed that non-owners register positively-valued referents early and straightforwardly (preferred design) – a key method for doing a sequence-initial complimenting action (cf. Pillet-Shore 2015a). Second, data demonstrated that owners register negatively-valued referents early and straightforwardly (preferred design) – a key method for doing a sequence-initial self-deprecating action that can work to preempt another’s criticism/complaint (cf. Pillet-Shore 2015b; 2017). Third, this article showed that owners delay registering positively-valued referents, and design their registering utterances to be nonvalenced (dispreferred design) – actions that fellow participants are likely to orient to as fishing for a another’s positive stance-display toward the target referent. And fourth, this study demonstrated that, when non-owners design their registering utterances to be nonvalenced – delaying/withholding a stance display – owners regularly account for the target referent (dispreferred design); thus, participants orient to a non-owner’s nonvalenced registering as implicitly criticizing the referent and its owner.

By concluding with a deviant case analysis, this article showed that people can, of course, depart from the structural preference organization outlined in Table 1. But when they do, their actions are inference-rich and accountable, engendering fellow participants to wonder “Why that

now?” (Schegloff & Sacks 1973:299; Schegloff 2007:2), which can lead to negative inferences. Indeed, this deviant case still showed evidence of participants’ orientation to the normativity of this preference organization, further illuminating how choosing to register an owned referent puts involved participants’ face, affiliation, and social relationship on the line.

The findings of this research contribute to several bodies of work, including recent studies exploring the senses and multisensoriality in interaction to describe how people make their sense perceptions relevant and accountable to fellow participants. Moreover, this article complements and extends conversation analytic work on preference organization (Heritage 1984; Schegloff 2007; Pillet-Shore 2017), particularly of sequence-initiating actions (for review, see Pillet-Shore 2017). This article also advances the social scientific literature on joint attention (e.g., Moore & Dunham 1995) and the openings of interactions (for review, see Pillet-Shore 2018a). By registering referents during conversational openings, participants not only move to solve the practical problem of topic initiation (what to talk about early in an emergent encounter); they also – and perhaps more importantly – move to (re)constitute their social relationship.



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