

**Taking Grammar into the Field: English Zero
Anaphora in Ordinary Conversation**

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Abstract

This dissertation seeks to situate a description of English 'subjectless', or zero anaphoric, turn constructional units (TCUs) in an understanding of grammar as an interactional phenomenon designed in particular sequential environments to accomplish social actions. The primary site of natural language is ordinary conversation, in which it is widely observed that people do not always speak in full, grammatical sentences. While traditional grammars and generative approaches tend to describe syntactically incomplete utterances, i.e., fragments, as elliptical forms of longer strings, the systematic use (or omission) in particular sequential environments of lexical, phrasal, and clausal elements can be understood as being part of what Schegloff (1996a) termed a *positionally sensitive grammar*. In other words, linguistic constructions are designed to be apposite for the sequential environments in which they occur, to perform actions, and to be understood and responded to by recipients as being the appropriate form for that position. Several practices of zero anaphora will be explored using the methodology of conversation analysis (CA): the use of zero anaphora in 'troubled' environments, including complaints and other-initiations of repair (OIR) in sequences of disagreement (i.e., *negatively-valenced* actions according to Schegloff, 1997), and the use of zero anaphora in topic closure and topic transition sequences, specifically in TCUs that act as summaries, upshots, and/or 'concluding resignations'. The recurrent use of zero anaphora in specific sequential environments suggests that such syntactic incompleteness is not random or an error, but rather, that it is employed systematically as a turn design feature in conversation to achieve interactional aims.

Keywords: conversation analysis, fragment, zero anaphora, topic

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Declaration

I declare that this thesis is a presentation of original work, and I am the sole author. This work has not previously been presented for a degree or other qualification at this, or any other, university. All sources are acknowledged as references.

1.1 Introduction

When we study grammar, we are investigating the structure of language, that is, how morphemes are combined to form words (morphology), and how words and phrases are combined to form larger units, such as clauses and sentences (syntax). From a transformational and generative tradition, utterances are studied in isolation from the wider interactional context in which they may occur. But is grammar only, or even best understood and investigated as, an autonomous, inherent cognitive system? Both de Saussure (1959) and Chomsky (1965) held *langue* and “competence” respectively, i.e., language ability, as more relevant for linguistic inquiry than *parole* and “performance”, i.e., actual speech. This preference has generally held sway in the field of Linguistics, and there is much to be gleaned from these inquiries. However, the study of grammar in everyday talk was side-lined, as ordinary conversation was deemed too “chaotic and disorderly” (ten Have, 2007, p.3) to merit analytic focus.

The emergence of conversation analysis (CA), a research methodology that uses recordings and transcriptions of actual speech as the basis for analyses, has allowed the ‘messiness’ of conversation to be captured at a particularly fine level of detail. In contrast to previously held assumptions about its chaotic nature, analyses of “talk-in-interaction” (Schegloff, 1987, p.207) reveal its ordered systematicity. Even though the CA methodology was not developed initially to study language or grammar – indeed, Sacks’ methodological focus on tape-recorded conversation was responsive to shortcomings in current sociological approaches (Heritage, 1984, p.234-235) – there has been a mutual influence between the fields of CA and Linguistics. From a CA perspective, rather than being seen as an “internally coherent structure which is best understood as a self-contained system” (Ochs, Schegloff, and Thompson, 1996, p.i), the grammar of an utterance is taken to be “determined by [its place]... in a sequential environment” (Maynard, 2013, p.25). Furthermore, “[g]rammatical description is always in the service of the examination of interactional practices” (Mazeland, 2013, p.476) for conversation analysts. Indeed, Hopper (2008) goes so far as to posit the notion of *emergent grammar*, i.e., that grammatical forms become sedimented through repeated use and routinisation in interaction, rather than being based in an innate, abstract system. Even when interlocuters use constructions that are ungrammatical according to normative rules, it is the way interlocuters design their turns-at-talk that they are able to “accomplish the myriad of social actions that they do” (Maynard, 2013, p.24). Furthermore, Schegloff’s (1996a, p.110) notion of *positionally sensitive grammars* means that a speaker’s use of grammatical resources is contingent on where an element occurs in the current turn, sequence, and /or overall project,

and what the element is designed to achieve, interactionally, at that moment in the interaction. Thus, it is by studying grammar *in situ*, rather than in isolation from its conversational habitat, that we can understand grammatical structures as temporally unfolding, interactional resources designed in response to what has come before and what is projected to come next, to achieve interactional aims.

My study began with an interest in syntactically ‘incomplete’ turns-at-talk that are treated as interactionally complete and fitted to the sequential positions in which they occur. Such fragments, or ‘elliptical’ utterances, occur regularly in conversation. Even though they lack normatively required grammatical elements, and thus, appear to flout a formal grammar, they are treated as interactionally apposite – an intriguing finding that illustrates the necessity of understanding grammatical practices as interactional resources. Focusing on one syntactically ‘incomplete’ construction, my main research aim has been to elaborate on the grammatical description of English zero anaphora, i.e., the omission of the grammatical subject, to show how this practice is fitted to particular sequential environments and is employed systematically as an interactional resource in ordinary conversation. Following Schegloff’s (1996a) *positionally sensitive grammars*, the following inquiry investigates the relationship between a particular grammatical form, i.e., English zero anaphora, the sequential positions in which it occurs, and the actions being performed. The research questions I address are stated below:

- (1) What recurrent instances of zero anaphora can be identified and where do these occur sequentially?
- (2) What interactional functions are accomplished using zero anaphora in these positions?

I use the methodology of CA to analyse the distribution and interactional functions of zero anaphora in ordinary conversation. Building on previous findings regarding English zero anaphora in conversation (in Oh, 2005, and Oh, 2006), this dissertation identifies two additional environments (and several practices within those environments): the use of zero anaphora in ‘troubled’ environments, specifically in complaints and other-initiated repair (OIR) in sequences of disagreement, and the use of zero anaphora in topic closure and topic transition sequences. Its interactional functions are diverse but seem to have a consistent association with the action being performed and the sequential positions in which they occur. For example, zero anaphora may be used to downgrade agentive responsibility in accusations and expressions of moral indignation and do mild pushback in OIRs that occur in disagreement sequences, while zero anaphora in topic terminating positions may be used to mark maximum continuity at the climax of a sequence, including informings, complaints, and

a word search sequence, allowing the interlocuters to orient to topic transition. Thus, English zero anaphora, which has been dismissed in past linguistic traditions as being a feature of disorderly talk or a case of something 'missing', is shown to be employed systematically for interactional purposes, and as a result, worthy of investigation in its home environment of ordinary conversation.

1.2 Organisation of the Dissertation

The dissertation is organised into six chapters. In this introductory chapter I have sought to describe why it is worthwhile to study grammar *in interaction*, and how studying zero anaphora can yield insights into the positionally sensitive and interactionally apposite nature of grammatically 'incongruous' constructions. Chapter 2 describes the CA methodology used to conduct this study. I also state the corpora from which the data were taken, the method used to transcribe the data, and how the direction of the research developed, as well as how the data collection was compiled. Chapter 3 reviews key literature on grammar in interaction – in particular, fragments, ellipsis, and anaphora in English – and outlines previous studies on zero anaphora in various languages, including English, to show where the dissertation fits into the current understanding of zero anaphora in everyday talk. I then discuss literature on complaints, repair, agency, and closings, which will be pertinent to the subsequent analyses. Chapter 4 analyses the use of zero anaphora in 'troubled' environments, including complaints and OIR in sequences of disagreement. In chapter 5, I explore instances of zero anaphora in topic closure and topic transition sequences, most notably in summaries, upshots, and/or 'concluding resignations' that orient to topic closure. Chapter 6 includes a discussion of the main findings, provides concluding comments, and states possible directions for further research.

2.1 The CA Methodology

In the latter half of the 20th century, the study of conversation became a focus of scientific inquiry, with a shift from regarding language as descriptive (according to realist theories of language) to a view of language as performative, that is, as used to *do* things in interaction (see Austin, 1962). The term conversation analysis (CA) refers to the tradition of analytic work developed by Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson in California in the 1960s. Sacks and Schegloff were graduate students at Berkeley, where Goffman's study of face-to-face interaction was an emergent area of research – a study of what he termed “the interaction order” (Goffman, 1983, p.2). Garfinkel's ethnomethodology, i.e., the study of how people make sense of their social world, was another principal influence on the development of CA. While sociologists, in line with Durkheim, taught that social realities are a “fundamental principle”, Garfinkel viewed them as “an ongoing accomplishment of the concerted activities of daily life”, in other words, “a fundamental phenomenon” (Garfinkel, 1967, p.vii).

Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson also diverged from established approaches in sociology. For example, researchers would posit sociological concepts and generalised descriptions of everyday talk that were vague and idealised, and not directly linked to specific instances (Heritage, 1984, p.234). It was Sacks' study of telephone call recordings at a suicide prevention centre that formed the basis of the CA approach, a methodological choice responsive to these perceived shortcomings. Tape-recorded conversation was chosen as the object of study not due to an interest primarily in language, but because the recordings could be used as a reliable source of data to better understand social action (Sacks, 1984, p.26). As Sacks (1984, p.26) states:

...sociology could not be an actual science unless it was able to handle the details of actual events, handle them formally, and in the first instance be informative about them in the direct ways in which primitive sciences tend to be informative, that is, that anyone else can go and see whether what was said is so.

Thus, CA emerged: a methodology that uses naturally occurring data and considers social interaction to be “organizational and procedural” (ten Have, 2007, p.9-10). Heritage (1984, p.241) states three main assumptions of CA: (1) “interaction is structurally organised; (2) contributions to interaction are contextually oriented; (3) these two properties inhere in the details of interaction so that no order of detail can be dismissed, *a priori*, as disorderly, accidental, or irrelevant.” This means that conversation is assumed to have structure, to be coherent and organised, and utterances are seen as emerging from prior contributions, such

that an understanding of the current turn-at-talk is dependent on the surrounding linguistic and interactional context. Furthermore, the minute details of the talk may be relevant for understanding the interactional mechanisms at play. Hence, it is important to capture the intricacies of talk-in-interaction when transcribing data.

The sequential organisation of talk-in-interaction was a foundational and novel idea in CA research that emerged directly as a result of the data being interactional. Sequential organisation refers to “any kind of organisation which concerns the relative positioning of utterances or actions” (Schegloff, 2007, p.2), including the turn-taking system, i.e., one person talking at a time and formatting their utterance to show that it is responsive to what has come before (Schegloff, 2007, p.1), as well as the organisation of broader structural features of conversation, e.g., the positioning of farewell sequences towards the end of a conversation (example from Schegloff, 2007, p.2). A key understanding in CA is that the sequential positioning of utterances determines their meaning, i.e., the actions they “actually [perform]” (ten Have, 2007, p.6). Utterances are taken to be “*context-shaped* and *context-renewing*” (Heritage, 1984, p.242) in that they emerge from and are dependent on their sequential position in the talk, and update and advance the interaction as it temporally unfolds, responsive to what has come before while also projecting possible next actions. Thus, interlocutors must grapple with the perennial question about utterances in interaction: “why that, now?” (Schegloff and Sacks, 1973, p.299). In terms of zero anaphora in the current study, we may ask: why was the subject omitted in *that* sequential position, when the speaker could have used the full syntactic form, and, as a result, what is zero anaphora *doing*, interactionally, in the positions in which it occurs?

Today, CA is a burgeoning research methodology that is used to analyse talk in many contexts, including ordinary conversation, educational, medical, and courtroom settings, and anywhere else in which language is used in a social context. Due to technological advances, both video and audio data are collected, allowing analysts to capture not only speech but also other modalities such as body position, gaze, gesture, etc. My main impetus for choosing this methodology lies with my interest in studying grammar *in interaction*. CA is a useful research method since its primary data is talk in naturally occurring interaction, and the way analyses are done addresses the positionally sensitive nature of grammatical constructions employed in ordinary conversation.

2.2 Data Collection and Transcription

The data are in American and British English and include face-to-face interaction from 8 videos from a corpus compiled by Giovanni Rossi in 2011, 15 telephone calls from the Holt

corpus, and 1 American telephone call (Hyla & Nancy). Using Jefferson's transcription method (see transcription conventions in the Appendix on p.73), I transcribed approximately 12 excerpts (1-2 pages each) from 8 randomly selected Rossi corpus videos to generate data for my research. Although my general research topic was decided (i.e., grammar in interaction), the specific focus of my research had not been identified at this point. Hence, I also selected a random sample of 15 telephone calls from the Holt corpus and 1 American telephone call (Hyla & Nancy) to investigate possible interconnections between grammar and interaction, but with no specific grammatical phenomenon in mind. As a result, my eventual collection of zero anaphora cases was generated from an open set of randomly selected data excerpts.

I transcribed the data from the Rossi corpus videos, while recordings from the Holt corpus and Hyla & Nancy were originally transcribed by Jefferson. The transcriptions use modified standard orthography to represent words and sounds. The timing of the speech, including overlapping talk and pauses between and within turns, and some phonetic details of how the speech was produced, e.g., intonation, emphasis, sound stretches, loudness, etc., are visually represented on the page. The inclusion of these details allows analysts to notice intricacies of the talk that may have otherwise been overlooked or that seem "random or insignificant" (Atkinson and Heritage, 1984, p.12).

Through a process of 'unmotivated looking' (as stated in Clift, 2016, p.42; see also Sacks, 1984, p.27, i.e., "unmotivated examination of some piece of data"), rather than on the basis of any pre-determined hypotheses, I explored the data for any kinds of 'incongruous' grammatical constructions that seemed to flout a normative, idealised grammar. I did not begin with any expectations about what I would find, but rather, I merely noted what seemed grammatically incongruous. I found numerous syntactically incomplete turn endings, e.g., turn-final conjunctions such as *and*, *or*, and *but* that occur at transition relevance places (TRPs) (see Clift, 2016). The turn-final conjunctions I identified were not trail-offs but were uttered with prosodic and pragmatic completeness, i.e., they seemed to be designed as turn-final. These cases of syntactic incompleteness seemed to be an intriguing point of tension between rules stated in normative grammars and the interactional appositeness of these constructions in everyday conversation. I also found many cases of subjectless, or zero anaphoric, TCUs, in which the grammatical subject is not realised phonologically. These cases also seemed to sit at a similar point of tension between what is expected in normative English grammars and the appositeness of these syntactically 'incomplete' constructions.

I also considered TCUs in which both the subject and auxiliary verb were omitted from TCU-initial position, and found they occurred in similar sequential environments to the cases of

straightforward zero anaphora. Oh (2005, p.297) states that the subject and operator, i.e., auxiliary verb or *be*, can be omitted turn-initially in declarative and interrogative clauses. In this dissertation, I regard the omission of the subject as the necessary requirement for considering cases as instances of zero anaphora. Incidentally, auxiliary verbs may also be omitted with the subject for various reasons. For example, in English, auxiliary verbs can cliticise; thus, when the subject is omitted, the auxiliary may also be omitted for phonological reasons. Another reason concerns interrogative constructions, which require subject-auxiliary inversion. If only the subject were omitted, the auxiliary verb would be stranded; thus, for syntactic reasons, I found in my data that both the subject and auxiliary verb tend to be omitted in those constructions. However, I will not be exploring the omission of auxiliary verbs as a separate interactional phenomenon, given that the cases of subject and auxiliary omission seem to occur in similar positions as my cases of straightforward zero anaphora. Further research would be needed to clarify what exactly the omission of the auxiliary verb accomplishes at these positions.

Given that instances of zero anaphora were frequent enough and seemed like a promising avenue of research, I decided to collect cases of zero anaphora from my randomly selected excerpts of data. I will define zero anaphora in more detail in section 3.3, but the basic parameters used to identify instances of the phenomenon are as follows: TCUs with no phonologically realised grammatical subject (and sometimes no auxiliary verb), but which otherwise contain a verb and full argument structure. Furthermore, I only included instances that are treated by the interlocuters as being interactionally apposite rather than 'missing' something. I did not look through the data with any hypotheses about the sequential positions or action environments in which zero anaphora might occur; rather, I cast a wide net, identifying many cases in varied action and sequential environments. Several boundary cases were found, such as instances in which initial pronouns were almost audible but seemed to be swallowed or rushed through; I also found cases of sedimented, idiomatic zero anaphora, such as "See you later" and "Sounds good to me". However, the boundary phenomena will not be discussed due to the limited scope of the dissertation; instead, my focus is on core, straightforward instances of zero anaphora, as well as subject and auxiliary omission.

My collection came to consist of 50 (25 straightforward zero anaphora cases, 21 subject and auxiliary omission cases, and 4 boundary cases) randomly selected instances of zero anaphora. From this collection of 50 cases, I identified 3 main environments based on recurrent sequential positions and the action being employed: zero anaphora in responses to Specifying or Telling Questions, zero anaphora in 'troubled' environments, and zero anaphora in topic closure and topic transition sequences. Then, to demonstrate what differentiates zero anaphora as a marked grammatical construction from the normative anaphoric pattern, I

supplemented my collection with cases in which the subject *is* phonologically realised in environments akin to those I had identified. I added a total of 10 cases which *do* contain the grammatical subject to my collection. I stopped collecting zero anaphora cases at this point because, while not exhaustive, it was a sufficient number of cases for me to have identified recurrent patterns. Furthermore, my findings do not depend on the frequency of zero anaphora in the data, but rather, it is the interrelation of action, turn design (i.e., the occurrence or non-occurrence of zero anaphora), and the sequential environments in which they occur that are the focus of this analysis. Specifically, I describe what the interlocuters are doing interactionally by employing zero anaphora in the action environments and sequential positions that they do. In other words, I explore the pragmatic functions of zero anaphora.

The first environment I identified was the occurrence of zero anaphora in responses to questions that can be characterised as “Specifying Questions” (questions that normatively expect a shorter response that includes a specific fact/detail) or “Telling Questions” (questions that are oriented to a more extended response) (Thompson, Fox, and Couper-Kuhlen, 2015, p.16-49). Extract 1 shows a case illustrating one such zero anaphoric response to a Telling Question. In the majority of cases I found in this environment, though not all, the auxiliary verb was also omitted (as in extract 1).

Extract 1 [Holt:X(Christmas)1:Side 1: Call 1]

1 Les: .hhh How's your han: ↑:d?
 2 (.)
 3 Mum: → ↑U_h::: ↑getting on quite we:ll,
 4 (0.5)
 5 Mum: ↑Actually it wz still so painf'l I went t'see the doctor
 6 at beginning'v this wee:k a[n-
 7 Les: [O_h
 8 (.)
 9 Mum: He says it'll take ↑weeks.

In the extract, Leslie enquires about the state of mum’s hand: “.hhh How's your han: ↑:d?” (line 1), a question which orients to a more extended telling rather than seeking one piece of information. Leslie’s mum’s zero anaphoric turn (which also omits the auxiliary verb *be* in its present tense form), “↑U_h::: ↑getting on quite we:ll” (line 3), seems to project trouble via the hesitation particle “↑U_h:::” and its design as a minimal response, which receives no uptake from Leslie as a (0.5) second pause ensues (line 4). It would be interesting to investigate what the omission of the subject (and auxiliary verb) accomplishes in this sequential position, and whether, and in what way, it may be connected to the signalling of trouble. However, I decided to exclude a fuller consideration of these cases because: (1) zero anaphora in responses to questions seems better fitted to an analysis which includes consideration of other types of responses to show the paradigm in which zero anaphora figures as an option among

alternatives; and (2), the word count constraint and timeframe were insufficient for me to conduct this analysis.

Chapter 3 discusses background studies on fragments and (zero) anaphora, as well as research on complaints, repair, and closings (the environments in which zero anaphora was found to occur in the present study). The following analyses show that zero anaphora, a syntactically incomplete construction, may be employed by interlocutors in specific sequential positions and action environments to do interactional work. These two environments are the occurrence of zero anaphora in 'troubled' environments, including complaints and OIR in sequences of disagreement (chapter 4); and zero anaphora in topic closure and topic transition sequences (chapter 5).

3.1 Fragments in Interaction

Fragments are units of talk-in-interaction that are incomplete in some way. They can be pragmatically incomplete, in that the turn lacks the necessary elements to implement a social action, prosodically incomplete, i.e., lacking a final prosodic contour, or syntactically incomplete, i.e., lacking grammatical elements required by a normative grammar to produce a well-formed utterance (adapted from Conceptual paper on the topic for project work: *Fragments*, 2022). The focus of this dissertation is on syntactically incomplete fragments which have been analysed as elliptical from a traditional linguistic perspective. Ellipsis refers to “substitution by zero”, or, more colloquially, “something left unsaid’... ‘but understood nevertheless’” (as stated by Halliday and Hasan, 1976, p.142). Generative grammars typically describe syntactically incomplete utterances as elliptical forms of longer strings (for examples in the Principles and Parameters framework, see Hankamer, 1979; Wilder, 1995; Kennedy and Merchant, 2000). This common-sense intuition, shared amongst linguists such as Curme (1931) and Thrasher (1974), has also been applied to fragments in ordinary conversation, i.e., that they are “derived from full sentences by deletion” (Thrasher, 1974, p.7). Such fragments lack grammatically ‘required’ elements according to a normative grammar yet abound in everyday conversation and are often treated as apposite for the positions in which they occur.

From an interactional perspective, Selting (1997)¹ proposed that elliptical utterances arise from and are constrained by their sequential position, in line with Schegloff’s (1996a) notion of *positionally sensitive grammars*. Thus, an account of ‘ellipsis’ was deemed problematic because it assumes a relationship between elided utterances and their syntactically complete counterparts (i.e., that the elided forms are impoverished variants of the fuller forms) where there may be none (Selting, 1997). Given that different syntactic forms are selected in different sequential positions, activity and sequence were considered to be more salient concepts than ellipsis to describe the variation of syntactic forms in interaction (Selting, 1997, p.150). According to Deppermann’s (2020, p.287) notion of ‘lean syntax’, i.e., syntactic structures in which the full argument structure of the main verb is not fully instantiated, the variable realisation of verbal argument structures is “flexibly adapt[ed]... to the specific local interactive and bodily contingencies at hand”. Thus, interactional and material contingencies constrain the use of different syntactic forms in interaction. Moreover, Hopper (2011, p.36) states that “in many cases the usually assumed relationship between an elliptical and a full version should be reversed – it is the elliptical utterance that is basic, and the supposed fuller version has a special pragmatic function.” Indeed, Thompson et al. (2015) provide a wealth of evidence to show that responsive actions are designed in minimal and expanded syntactic

forms for special pragmatic functions, such as the use of Minimal Clausal forms for unproblematic responses to Specifying Questions, in contrast to Expanded Clausal forms employed in the same sequential environment to indicate trouble (Thompson et al., 2015, p.36-37). Furthermore, Raymond, Robinson, Fox, Thompson, and Montiegel (2020) found that the increasingly elliptical syntactic formats *do you want...?*, *you want...?* and *want...?* used to construct offers and requests are employed on a cline of minimality according to the strength of the speaker's stance. From the evidence presented in these studies, it seems that sequential position and the management of interactional contingencies are more relevant notions in understanding the use of fragments in interaction, in opposition to the view that elliptical utterances are derived from longer strings.

Following on from earlier suggestions that ellipsis is an inapposite term to understand fragments in interaction (i.e., Selting, 1997), Ono and Thompson (1997, p.481), in their description of zero anaphora in Japanese, claim that "most native speaker linguists seem to be uncomfortable with the idea that anything is 'missing' in utterances for which 'zero' has been postulated". While traditional grammars describe specific argument structures as being based on the type of 'event' denoted by a given predicate (Ono and Thompson, 1997, p.481), Ono and Thompson (1997) suggest that argument structure is a matter of pragmatics. Using the example of the predicate *taberu* 'eat' (from Hinds, 1982), they question what determines the obligatoriness of arguments. There must be an eater and what is being eaten, but why is the implement used to accomplish the eating not obligatory? It is argued that predicate meanings and their 'required' arguments are, through repeated associations with particular events over time, determined by use (Ono and Thompson, 1997, p.482-485). From this perspective, the 'zero' analysis is rendered unnecessary. Deppermann (2020, p.259) makes a similar claim rooted in evidence from corpus-based studies, i.e., even though valence grammar delineates argument structure in lexical entries, for the utterance to be intelligible in actual use, the instantiation of arguments tends to diverge from intuitions about which arguments are required in a context-free environment. As a result, the interactional setting of grammar *in situ* means that argument structure may be better understood in terms of repeated use and fittedness to interactional contingencies coordinated at specific interactional moments, rather than the abstract notion of arguments in valence grammar posited in a context-free environment.

In spite of these claims, I use the term 'zero anaphora' in this dissertation because my motivation for the study has been to identify syntactically incomplete utterances in order to explicate the mismatch between normative grammars and grammar *in interaction*, to show that syntactic incompleteness can be treated by interlocuters as being interactionally apposite. Furthermore, zero anaphora seems to be much more frequent in Japanese than in English –

although corpus-based studies may disconfirm this intuition. Nevertheless, a 'zero' analysis may be regarded as appropriate for English due to its infrequent occurrence, where the use of zero anaphora flouts a normative expectation for the inclusion of the grammatical subject in terms of repeated use, rather than flouting the rules of a normative grammar. Thus, the notion of ellipsis may not be particularly useful for considering fragments in interaction, and our primary consideration may be more fruitfully oriented to explicating their use as interactional resources.

One final thought about fragments in interaction relates to the interactional concept of a turn constructional unit (TCU) as opposed to the abstract notion of a sentence. Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson (1974, p.702-704) coined the term TCU to refer to units in conversation that "*can* constitute possibly complete turns" (Schegloff, 1996a, p.55), which end TRPs, at which point transition to another speaker becomes optionally relevant. The key is that turns-at-talk are produced incrementally in a moment-by-moment fashion, can be recalibrated in response to the local interactional context, such as gaze direction (see Goodwin, 1979), and are sensitive to the interactional contingencies coordinated at specific interactional moments, rather than being abstract, static entities (Schegloff, 1996a, p.55-56). TCUs can be composed of sounds, one-word utterances, phrases, clauses, or fragments, not all of which "fit phrasal or clausal [moulds]" (Mazeland, 2013, p.476). Indeed, a zero anaphoric TCU in English does not fit a normative sentential mould, yet it may sometimes be treated by interlocuters as being interactionally complete. For these reasons, the zero anaphoric linguistic units in the current study will be referred to as TCUs.

3.2 Anaphora

This dissertation seeks to describe the use of a particular fragmentary construction, namely, zero anaphora, in ordinary conversation. Before I introduce the concept of 'zero anaphora', it is worth defining the term 'anaphora' and reviewing the uses of various anaphoric and non-anaphoric forms in English to show how a description of zero anaphoric reference fits into the current understanding of English anaphoric reference in conversation more generally.

An anaphoric expression is a reference term that refers back to a previously introduced referent (i.e., its antecedent) in the conversational or other discourse context (Yule, 1996, p.22-23; Biber et al., 1999, p.234-235). Anaphoric reference terms are parasitic on the prior talk for the referent to be identified and are thus used to maintain discourse cohesion (Fox, 1987, pp.20-38; Halliday and Hasan, 1976; Schegloff, 1996b; Raymond, Clift, and Heritage, 2021). According to Fox (1987), the normative pattern for anaphoric reference in English conversation is for a full NP to be used when a referent is first introduced in the discourse,

while any subsequent mentions are done with anaphoric expressions, e.g., pronouns. By using a pronoun, the speaker “displays an understanding that the preceding sequence has not been closed down” (Fox, 1987, p.18); thus, anaphoric reference can also be said to contribute to continuity in discourse. In addition, Fox (1987, p.19) states that a full NP corresponding to a referent introduced in the prior talk can be used to display an understanding that the preceding sequence has been closed.

Several studies have explored the use of anaphoric and non-anaphoric reference terms in English conversation. Indeed, Fox (1987) discusses a range of other structural features of anaphora. For example, speakers can employ long-distance pronominalization, i.e., ‘return pops’, in which a pronoun that refers back to a referent introduced in a sequence prior to an unrelated immediately preceding sequence is used to return to that prior topic (Fox, 1987, p.30). Fox (1987, p.62-75) also acknowledges the influence of non-structural factors, such as disagreements, assessments, and overt recognitionals, which trigger the use of certain anaphoric devices where normatively, in terms of the structural patterns identified, a different form would have been expected to occur. Another deviation from these normative anaphoric patterns has been proposed by Raymond et al. (2021), i.e., that speakers may employ a non-anaphoric reference form subsequent to the mention of a full NP referring to the same entity in order to assert epistemic and deontic agency. Even when the referent is readily available in the prior discourse, a non-anaphoric reference form can be mobilised as a grammatical resource to mark the referent as a ‘first mention’, thus asserting their epistemic authority in mentioning the referent and attenuating the turn’s link to the prior sequence (Raymond et al., 2021). The data presented in Fox (1987) and Raymond et al. (2021) demonstrate that interlocutors orient to the use of anaphoric and non-anaphoric expressions in marked and unmarked forms in particular sequential positions, and that various interactional functions can be accomplished by virtue of adherence to or deviation from these normative patterns.

3.3 Zero Anaphora

We have seen that fragments may be interactionally apposite, i.e., designed to be fitted to the sequential positions in which they occur, to perform actions (in section 3.1). Furthermore, the distribution and interactional functions of various anaphoric and non-anaphoric forms in English were discussed in section 3.2. I am interested in an anaphoric device that occurs as a turn design feature of a fragmentary construction, namely, zero anaphora. I will begin by defining the term ‘zero anaphora’, and then outline previous studies that discuss the distribution and interactional functions of zero anaphora in other languages and in English.

The term ‘zero anaphora’ refers to when a previously mentioned referent that could occur in a particular grammatical slot in an utterance is not realised phonologically. Even though an overt reference term is omitted, zero anaphora is considered to constitute a valid referential option, given that the identity of the referent can usually be pragmatically inferred from the surrounding linguistic or situational context. The surrounding context is important because zero anaphora “clearly creates an expectation that the listener will be able to infer who or what the speaker intends to identify” (Yule, 1996, p.23). Referents can be omitted from different positions in the clause that have different grammatical functions, e.g., subjects, direct/indirect objects, etc., but in this dissertation, I use the term zero anaphora to refer exclusively to the omission of the grammatical subject.

Extract 2 illustrates a clear example of zero anaphora. In the extract, Leslie enquires after a mutual friend (Richard) (line 1), who has recently had an operation. Leslie’s mum informs Leslie about Richard’s walking ability (lines 5-6). She employs zero anaphora in line 9 by omitting the grammatical subject.

Extract 2 [Holt:1:1]
 1 Les: Is Richard al:ri:ght?
 2 Mum: We:ll they're giving 'i:m (this time) they're giv'n 'i:m:
 3 (0.7) Is ↓what love?
 4 Les: RIcha:rd
 5 Mum: Oh: well he's walking qui:te we:ll.'ee's still got a bit'v
 6 a limp
 7 (0.3)
 8 Les: Ye:s.
 9 Mum: → Still turns iz foot in a little bit. bu[t
 10 Les: [Oh: y|es

Mum’s addition of extra detail regarding Richard’s walking ability, i.e., that he “Still turns iz foot in a little bit.” (line 9), lacks a phonologically realised grammatical subject. The turn-initial element is the adverb “still”, which modifies the verb phrase “turns iz foot in a little bit.” but the grammatically required subject of the verb is not uttered. Nevertheless, the phrasal verb *turn in* requires an agent to perform this action. How then, does the addressee, Leslie, know to whom mum is referring? The referent can be inferred from the prior linguistic context, given that they are discussing Richard’s health and walking ability, and the most proximate referent is “he”, which refers to Richard.

Languages other than English do not always have an overt mention of the subject, and those that regularly and systematically omit the subject are referred to as pro-drop, i.e., the overt pronoun may be dropped. Pro-drop languages may have person and number inflections on the verb; thus, the pronominal subject can be gleaned from the verbal morphology, rendering its inclusion in subject position optional. In the example shown below, the Spanish sentence

“Voy al parque” does not require an overt subject to be expressed, given that the grammatical categories of person and number are inflected on the main lexical verb.

Example

Voy	al	parque.
<i>go (1st person sg.)</i>	<i>to (prep.) the</i>	<i>park</i>

I go to the park.

However, there are many pro-drop languages, such as Chinese and Thai, that do not have inflected verbs with rich morphological markings. Nevertheless, subject pronouns are regularly omitted in these languages, some interactional functions of which will be explored in section 3.3.1 below. English, also, does not have richly inflected verbal morphology, and is regarded as a non-pro-drop language. However, as this dissertation will explore, the subject may be omitted in English ordinary conversation for interactional purposes. Consequently, while the findings in this dissertation are relevant to English, the use of zero anaphora may operate quite differently in other languages that are typologically different.

3.3.1 Previous Studies on Zero Anaphora

The referential option of zero anaphora has been studied extensively in pro-drop and ‘topic prominent’ languages, i.e., languages with a topic-comment (or theme-rheme) structure, such as Chinese, Japanese, Thai, and Korean. It is the most common referential option in Chinese according to Li (1997) and Li and Thompson (1979). As a result of the frequent use of zero anaphora in these languages, a range of functions have been suggested. Firstly, it may be used for ‘topic continuity’ or in ‘topic chain’ constructions to link topically related ideas together (e.g., Chen, 1986; Givón, 1983; Givón, 1990; Hwang, 1983; Li and Thompson, 1981; Pu, 1989; Tsao, 1979). For example, Givón (1983) states that zero anaphora is used to maintain topic continuity and thematic coherence in units of discourse as an unmarked case that requires less processing power than full NPs. Secondly, Chanawangsa (1986) found that zero anaphora is used for cohesion in (written) Thai as a minimal form that makes the text more succinct as the zero anaphor can be pragmatically inferred from the surrounding linguistic context. Zero anaphora has also been shown to be used as a ‘return pop’ in Chinese (Tao, 1993; Tao, 1996), an analysis based on Fox’s (1987) discussion of English pronouns used to return to talk about an entity mentioned prior to the contiguously preceding sequence. In the case of a zero anaphor being used to accomplish a return pop, repetitions or other cues may be employed that enable the recipient to identify the referent, even when the grammatical subject is not phonologically realised. These functions cluster around the relevance of zero anaphora as a

referent-tracking device and are largely associated with its contribution to discourse cohesion and connecting back to prior talk.

Zero anaphora has also been studied in Finnish, a mixed language (i.e., neither pro-drop nor non-pro-drop) that allows the subject pronoun to be omitted only in certain persons and tenses. Couper-Kuhlen and Etelämäki (2015) explore the use of impersonal forms in modal constructions that can be treated as either directives or as epistemic judgments, due to the employment of zero anaphora. Zero anaphora has also been found to distribute the agency and experience of a therapist's response to a client's complaint in psychotherapy interactions (Etelämäki, Voutilainen, and Weiste, 2021). Thus, zero anaphora has been explored extensively in other languages, and seems to serve a range of interactional functions.

3.3.2 Previous Studies on Zero Anaphora in English

Despite zero anaphora being common in many languages, its status as a referential option in English has been debated. In traditional and generative grammars of English, and particularly in written forms of the language, finite clauses, excluding imperatives, require an overt subject (e.g., see Biber et al., 1999; Curme, 1931; Huddleston, 1984; Cook, 1988). However, the subject is often omitted in ordinary conversation. Given that normative grammars tend to preclude zero anaphora as a valid referential option in English, and that it is often seen as a "sloppy, or disorderly product of a casual way of speaking" (Oh, 2006, p.842), its function and distribution have not received much analytic attention.

The traditional explanation of English zero anaphora has been in terms of situational ellipsis (Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech, and Svartvik, 1985; Biber et al., 1999), i.e., that the interpretation of the referent depends on knowledge of the extralinguistic, or situational, context, rather than the linguistic context. Thus, the interpretation of an utterance such as, "Told you so", may be based on whether the speaker was speaking as part of a group, or individually, and thus the recipient would be able to disambiguate between the possible referential options, i.e., "(We) told you so" or "(I) told you so" respectively (example from Oh, 2005). An account of phonological reduction has also been stipulated. As Biber et al. (1999) assert, function words that have weak stress and low pitch, such as subject pronouns, are often omitted in natural speech provided the recipient(s) can recover the referent from the linguistic or situational context. Indeed, in describing 'subjectless' sentences, Thrasher (1974, p.9) states:

Whatever is exposed (in sentence initial position) and vulnerable (is one of our set of elements) can be swept away. If erosion of the first element exposes another vulnerable

element, this too may be eroded. The process continues until a hard (non-vulnerable) element is encountered.

This quotation illustrates well a dated linguistic understanding of English zero anaphora, i.e., that linguistic elements can be arbitrarily omitted if they are “vulnerable”, either phonologically or grammatically, able to be inferred, and thus, not ‘required’ in the context of fluent, natural speech. In contrast to this view, Oh (2005) and Oh (2006) were some of the first studies to treat zero anaphora as a legitimate referential device in English. She argued that zero anaphora may be employed as an interactional resource in particular sequential environments to achieve interactional aims, rather than being arbitrarily omitted due to the potential ‘vulnerability’ of grammatical subjects in ordinary conversation (Oh, 2005; Oh, 2006).

Oh (2005) and Oh (2006) identified five sequential environments in which zero anaphora recurrently features and the interactional functions accomplished at each environment. Firstly, she found that speakers use zero anaphora to link the current TCU to a prior TCU uttered by the speaker in close sequential proximity, so that the second TCU is understood as a second saying, i.e., an upgraded version, an expansion, or a follow-up, of the first TCU (Oh, 2005). The second finding was that zero anaphora can be used to mark a secondary level action. In particular, Oh (2005) identified the sequential environment of a word search sequence for a recognitional referent in which zero anaphora was employed in TCUs that offer descriptors of the referent to aid in the identification of the referent. She argues that the use of zero anaphora in this environment marks the project as a “supplementary– or secondary– action”, i.e., that what the speaker is doing is “not designed to be a major action of its own” (Oh, 2005, p.288). However, the notion of ‘levels of action’ seems somewhat problematic because the fact that these ‘subsidiary’ actions occur at all suggests the interlocutors view them as mentionables (Schegloff and Sacks, 1973), and their mention is significant enough to disrupt the progressivity of the talk. As Stivers, Enfield, and Levinson (2007, p.13) state, “speakers work to achieve recognition, even when this means delaying the progressivity of the interaction”. Nevertheless, these two interactional functions identified by Oh (2005) are both associated with the use of zero anaphora in subsequent positions, to achieve some kind of ‘secondness’ in different sequential environments.

The third function of zero anaphora, identified in Oh (2006), is when a speaker omits the grammatical subject during a turn that resumes a TCU after a parenthetical insert. This analysis, again, may be considered problematic because the resumptions she identifies may be better considered as instances of repair. The recycled elements are used to link back to the prior TCU, but the subject has been stated in the former version. Thus, I would be hesitant to label the repeated version as an instance of zero anaphora. Oh’s (2006) fourth finding is that

zero anaphora can be used to mark maximum continuity in a spate of talk, particularly in the climax of storytelling sequences. This finding links to the use of zero anaphora in other languages in terms of discourse cohesion (e.g., Givón, 1983). Finally, Oh (2006) also found that zero anaphora can be used to avoid a referential choice between various forms that could be employed in that position. The different referential options are linked to different stances, so by avoiding the choice between reference terms, the speaker can withhold commitment to a particular stance. The use of zero anaphora in this position may also allow the speaker to convey their utterance as being produced on behalf of the other speaker (Oh, 2006, p. 841). Thus, Oh (2005) and Oh (2006) show that English zero anaphora is systematically employed as a referential device in ordinary conversation to achieve interactional aims. The current study seeks to provide further evidence in support of this claim by showing two further environments in which English zero anaphora is used recurrently for interactional purposes: in 'troubled' environments and in topic closures that orient to topic transitions.

3.4 'Troubled' Environments, Topic Closures, and Topic Transitions

Having reviewed literature on fragments in interaction, anaphora, and zero anaphora, it is worth considering some background on 'troubled' environments, topic closures, and topic transitions in which instances of zero anaphora were found to occur in the current study. In particular, I describe complaints, the concept of 'agency' and how it relates to accusations and expressions of moral indignation, repair, and the closing of topics. Thus, we may understand better the use of zero anaphora as an interactional resource in these environments.

The 'troubled' environments identified include complaints and other-initiated repair (OIR) in disagreement sequences. A complaint can be defined as "an utterance or statement of grievance or injustice suffered" (s.v. "complaint, n." OED Online, 2022). However, complaints can be about much more mundane matters, such as the weather (a 'safe' topic according to Sacks, 1992) or other minor inconveniences. Drew (1998) outlines various practices that interlocutors employ to portray reported transgressions and the (mis)conduct of a non-present person as complainable, such as explicit formulations of the transgression and expressions of moral indignation at the offence committed. In the cases analysed in chapter 4, the complaints fall broadly into two categories: complaints about the weather and complaints about non-present persons. Zero anaphora appears to be recurrently associated with these environments of complaint and accomplishes a range of interactional functions at these positions.

The concept of 'agency' is shown to be relevant to complaint sequences. It was referred to in Enfield's (2011) elaboration of Heritage and Raymond's (2005) discussion on epistemic access and authority in assessment sequences. Heritage and Raymond (2005) proposed that merely

by speaking first, a speaker claims epistemic authority in their assessment. Enfield (2011) expands on this idea of epistemic rights to making an assessment by adding the concept of 'agency': "the type and degree of control and responsibility a person may have with respect to their design of communicative actions and other kinds of signs." (Enfield, 2011, p.304). He adds that "somebody will *commit* to the behaviour, taking responsibility for its causes and effects, including the appropriateness of its execution in a specific context" (Enfield, 2011, p.304). Thus, for Enfield (2011), a speaker does not only assert epistemic access and authority in making an assessment; they also display their responsibility and commitment, i.e., their agency, to making the assessment in the first place. Following on from Enfield's (2011) idea of agency, Thompson et al. (2015) argue that agentive forms can be used in responses to requests to upgrade compliance to the request by displaying their commitment to and responsibility for the completion of the action. For example, through an utterance such as "I will", a speaker asserts their agency through the subject pronoun *I*, i.e., the "wilful initiator of the action" (Biber et al., 1999, p.123), and their intention to complete the action, given that the modal verb *will* expresses volitionality (Thompson et al., 2015, p.240-241). While the omission of the subject is argued to distribute the agency and experience in affective accounts during clients' complaints to therapists in psychotherapy interaction in Finnish (Etelämäki, et al., 2021), in the current study, the omission of the grammatical subject is argued to downgrade an assertion of agency in accusations of misconduct and expressions of moral indignation by avoiding overt reference to the accused or the sufferer of the offence.

Next, other-initiations of repair (OIRs) were found to include a zero anaphor in some cases. Repair procedures are used to manage problems of speaking, hearing, and understanding in conversation, and interlocutors will halt the progressivity of the talk to resolve the trouble source (Schegloff, Jefferson, and Sacks, 1977). They can be initiated by the speaker of the trouble source (self-initiated repair), or by a speaker other than the person who uttered the trouble source (other-initiated repair). For Jefferson (1974), repair procedures are employed as an *interactional resource*, rather than being merely a matter of "getting things right" (Bergmann and Drew, 2018, p.6). It is through a preoccupation with maintaining coherence in the "conversational order" that speakers can pursue more delicate matters (Bergmann and Drew, 2018, p.6), particularly 'troubled' or *negatively-valenced* actions (Schegloff, 1997, p.531), such as disagreement and mild pushback. Kendrick (2015, p.181) notes that the practice of repair can be employed concurrently with the accomplishment of some other action, much like Schegloff's (2007, p.9) notion of TCUs acting as vehicles for other actions. In the case of the zero anaphoric OIRs, the action of repairing problems of understanding seems to be done as a vehicle for the more delicate matter of mild pushback in an overall environment of disagreement.

Finally, Drew and Holt's (1998) investigation of the distribution and interactional function of figurative expressions in topic terminating positions has been particularly insightful with regards to the current study. They argue that figurative expressions are employed as interactional resources to manage the summarising and closing of topics in the talk, and delineate the topic transition sequence in which such resources are employed (Drew and Holt, 1998). In the current study, the sequential environments identified in chapter 5 share many similarities with the transition sequences described in Drew and Holt (1998), and zero anaphoric summaries, upshots, and/or 'concluding resignations' are also shown to be employed as interactional resources that occur in terminating positions to orient to topic closure and topic transition.

4.1 Introduction

I identified two environments in which zero anaphora is systematically employed: zero anaphora in 'troubled' environments and zero anaphora in topic closures and topic transitions, specifically in TCUs that act as summaries, upshots, and/or 'concluding resignations'. 'Troubled' environments refer to any sequential environment in which the action employed is *negatively-valenced*, such as rejections, corrections (i.e., instances of repair), disalignments, etc. (Schegloff, 1997, p.531). Oh (2005, p.270-287) also finds an association of zero anaphora with negativity, but only when the zero anaphor is being used to mark the current TCU as a second saying. Thus, the present study expands on her finding by showing that zero anaphora is associated with a range of other 'troubled' environments. While the environment in chapter 4 is related to the 'troubled' actions being done, chapter 5 focuses on zero anaphora in the sequential environment of topic closure and topic transition. Thus, the environments discussed in these chapters are not mutually exclusive, given that 'troubled' actions may occur in closing positions.

The following chapter delineates the use of zero anaphora in complaints about the weather, in complaints about non-present persons, and in OIRs in disagreement sequences. Even though the range of actions being implemented in these TCUs is a bit eclectic, they cluster under the notion of 'trouble', much like Wittgenstein's (1958, p.17-18) notion of *family resemblance* for word meanings. Zero anaphora in complaints about the weather seems to be used for a variety of functions, including mitigating and downgrading. In complaints about non-present persons, zero anaphora may be used to downgrade agentive responsibility and commitment (as defined by Enfield, 2011) in accusations of (mis)conduct and expressions of moral indignation. In OIRs in disagreement sequences, it may be used to do mild pushback. Thus, I show that zero anaphora is a valid referential option in English that can be employed as an interactional resource in ordinary conversation.

4.2 Complaints

4.2.1 Complaints about the Weather

The first set of data extracts include instances of zero anaphora in complaint sequences. The first two extracts are complaints about inclement weather, while the rest are complaints about non-present persons. While the environment is 'troubled' in all of these cases, the interactional

functions seem to be diverse and vary depending on the action being accomplished by the zero anaphoric TCU.

In extract 3, a zero anaphor is employed as a turn design feature in a negative assessment. Leslie informs her mum that the rain and cold temperature prevented her from attending church that day (lines 1-2). Mum affiliates with Leslie's complaint about the weather in overlap with Leslie's continuing talk (lines 4-5); thus, the instance of zero anaphora occurs in an expanded repeat produced as a repair solution (line 7).

Extract 3 [Holt:2:9]

1 Les: .hh Oh I wz going t'go b't ah-ha didn't fancy getting wet
2 'n:: an' Mark said the church wz very cold t'day,
3 (1.2)
4 Les: But there weren't[many people th-]
5 Mum: [(C o : l d weeke]nd)
6 Les: Sorry?
7 Mum: → Been a co:ld u weekend.
8 Les: Ye:s. .hh There weren't many people at church because um
9 .t.hh the Vi:kings'n the Da::nes were having a battle: on::
10 u South Cabry Castle Hi:ll.
11 Mum: Oh: were they.

Leslie states that she was going to attend church but did not because she “didn't fancy getting wet” (line 1), the implication being that it was raining, and because Mark, Leslie's husband who did attend church that day and therefore would have epistemic primacy on the matter (as in Heritage, 2012), told her that the church was “very cold t'day,” (line 2). Leslie downgrades her access to assessing the referent, i.e., the cold weather, through her use of this indirect speech. These turns may be characterised as a complaint because Leslie states that inclement weather disrupted her regular activity of churchgoing. Furthermore, she employs the adjective *cold* in the indirect speech attributed to Mark, an adjective which in some cases carries negative connotations of discomfort, with the intensifier *very*, thus emphasising the negative effect of the weather on her churchgoing activities. After Leslie's informing and negative assessment (lines 1-2), there is a (1.2) second pause (line 3). In terms of the turn-taking rules, either speaker could self-select at this juncture (Clift, 2016, p.124). Leslie speaks first, adding an increment connected to her prior TCU with the contrastive conjunction “But” (line 4). However, mum also self-selects and begins speaking in overlap with the end of Leslie's turn to utter a “second position assessment” (Heritage and Raymond, 2005, p.16). Mum's assessment of the weather expresses agreement with Leslie's complaint by upgrading and strengthening Leslie's report that it was cold in church *today* by adding that it has been a cold *weekend*: “(C o : l d weeke)” (line 5) (Pomerantz, 1984), but in a mitigated way because it is a phrasal TCU rather than a full clausal form (see Heritage and Raymond, 2005). However, the overlap engenders a repair initiation from Leslie with the ‘open’ class initiator “Sorry?” (line 6) (Drew, 1997). Mum offers a repair solution in the form of an expanded repeat of her

phrasal assessment in line 5 that does not include the grammatical subject, i.e., the expletive *it*, nor the auxiliary verb *has*: “Been a co:ld u we:kend.” (line 7).

While mum’s second assessment is done with a phrasal TCU (line 5), she does not repeat the phrase in the contiguous slot provided by Leslie to produce a repair solution, but nor does she utter a syntactically complete turn that includes the grammatical subject. Instead, she employs a zero anaphor. Had she employed a fully sentential declarative assessment, this might be heard as an equivalent claim fitted to Leslie’s downgraded initial assessment of the weather (see Heritage and Raymond, 2005), and an assessment in its own right. Mum may be employing zero anaphora as a resource to downgrade the epistemic primacy of her assessment, thus maintaining her assessment as subordinate to Leslie’s initial comment about the weather in spite of the upgraded lexical item, i.e., the expansion of Leslie’s “t’day,” (line 2) to the broader term “weekend” (line 5), which is repeated in line 7. Therefore, such syntactic granularity seems to be positionally sensitive, and zero anaphora is shown to function as a downgraded form in a ‘troubled’ environment of complaint that occurs as a repair solution.

The following extract is also a complaint about the weather. However, the zero anaphoric TCU in this case acts as a qualifying statement in an environment of affiliation; thus, it is more of a boundary case to the other more explicit complaints. In the extract, mum produces a negative assessment about the weather (line 1), with which Leslie affiliates in the subsequent lines, e.g., by stating that the flowers are not coming out (line 4). Mum confirms Leslie’s statement (line 6), but then utters the zero anaphoric caveat that she has “Got a couple of daffodils out in the ga:rden” (line 8).

Extract 4 [Holt:1:8]

1 Mum: Terrible weather fer this time a'the ye[a:r,]
2 Les: [I kn]o:::w,
3 (0.3)
4 Les: I [mean flowers are not coming out are the:y.
5 Mum: [Mm:.
6 Mum: ^No::. No:.
7 (0.7)
8 Mum: → Got a couple of daffodils out in the ga[:rden] ()
9 Les: [Oh I]haven't,
10 (.)
11 Mum: Hm:. .h An' s'm cro:cuses [b't[not a lot at a:l[l.
12 Les: [.h [Yes [.h Well we
13 have snowdrops'n the cro:cuses look all battered,
14 (.)
15 Mum: Ye[s.
16 Les: [An' I've got a few scyllas ou:t.=
17 Mum: =Isn't it a shame.
18 Les: Ye:s.

Mum uses the negatively-valenced adjective “Terrible” (line 1) to assess the weather, characterising her turn as a complaint due to the presence of negativity. Leslie agrees: “I kno::w,” (line 2) and self-selects after a (0.3) second pause (line 3) with an elaboration on her turn: “I mean flowers are not coming out are the:y.” (line 4). Given that inclement weather and cold temperatures affect the blooming of flowers, her statement about the flowers provides evidence to support mum’s negative assessment about the weather, thereby affiliating with mum’s complaining stance. Leslie’s turn ends with a tag question, and mum demonstrates a preference for confirmation: “no:: No:.” (line 6). Then mum states that she has “Got a couple of daffodils out in the ga:rden” (line 8), omitting the self-referring pronominal subject *I* and the auxiliary verb *have*.

Her TCU in line 8 appears to be a direct contradiction to her prior turn in which she confirms Leslie’s statement that flowers “are not coming out” (line 4) because she states the presence of daffodils in her garden, which could be construed as a positive. However, the format of her turn, as well as its sequential position, suggests it is more of a caveat or qualification to her prior confirmation of Leslie’s statement about flowers. In terms of sequential position, mum’s turn occurs subsequent to her initial complaint about the weather (line 1), and directly after a (0.7) second pause (line 7) that follows her confirmation (line 6) of Leslie’s affiliative comment to that complaint (line 4). Thus, her statement about how many daffodils she has in her garden may be re-framed as a complaint in this sequential position, i.e., that “a couple of daffodils” is not that many. In terms of turn design, mum’s TCU is characterised as contrasting with Leslie’s turn rather than contradicting it. Firstly, the repetition of the preposition *out* sets up the contrast, while the phrase “a couple of” (line 8) is one item short of a three-part list, possibly employed to convey lack given that interlocutors orient to three-part lists as conveying completeness (Jefferson, 1991). In this case, her turn would express agreement with Leslie that flowers are not coming out. Given that the action being done is a caveat/qualification to the prior complaint, by omitting the subject in this environment, the speaker downgrades agentive commitment (as in Enfield, 2011) by omitting overt reference to the “wilful initiator of the action” (Biber et al., 1999, p.123), providing a mitigated form in contrast to her initial confirmation. Thus, her syntactic choice in line 8 seems to do mitigation and is a further example of zero anaphora occurring in the ‘troubled’ environment of a complaint.

4.2.2 Complaints about Non-Present Persons

The following cases also occur in the ‘troubled’ environment of complaints, but these concern the (mis)conduct and (rude) remarks of non-present persons. In particular, the zero anaphoric TCUs act as (1) accusatory remarks regarding the (mis)conduct of a non-present person, (2)

the (rude) remarks of non-present persons designed as reported speech, which act as the punch lines of their complaint narratives, and (3) “expressions of moral indignation” (Drew, 1998, p.309) in reaction to the (mis)conduct of a non-present person. Such characterisations of another’s behaviour or speech as transgressive or egregious and reactions of moral indignation towards such reported actions are common features of complaint sequences (identified in Drew, 1998), given that it is necessary to delineate how an individual’s behaviour or speech was in violation of some moral code, and thus caused “grievance or injustice” (s.v. “complaint, n.” OED Online, 2022), legitimising it as a complainable matter. I argue that zero anaphora is employed to downgrade the agentive responsibility and commitment to a course of action or affective stance (in line with Enfield, 2011), and may also downgrade the force of an accusatory comment in reported speech in complaint narratives, characterising the turns as insults via understatement.

In extract 5, I discuss a TCU that includes the grammatical subject in a complaint environment in which mum is detailing Mrs. Field’s treatment of a recently deceased mutual friend called Louisa, in contrast with a zero anaphorised version of the complaint. Given a lack of affiliation from Leslie, I argue that mum employs zero anaphora in a summary statement to downgrade the agency of the accusatory remark regarding Mrs. Field’s misconduct in contrast to an earlier, stronger version of the complaint that *does* include the third-person pronominal subject.

Extract 5 [Holt:X(Christmas)1:Side 1: Call 1_16.10]

1 Mum: ↑How dare she expect t'be there.
2 Les: I kno:w ye:s,
3 Mum: → [She wz so wicked to Lou:isa.]
4 (0.6)
5 Les: Mm hhm hm
6 Mum: All those years ago.
7 Les: Ye:s.
8 (.)
9 Les: O[↑ka:y love]
10 Mum: [(A : : s u]sual.) If Louisa had (know:n) she wouldn't
11 've uh (0.5) carted Missiz Field abou:t like she did (.)
12 all the ti:me,
13 (0.2)
14 Les: No:,
15 Mum: Taking'er to to:wn an' to do ()- do 'er shopping
16 (0.3) everywhere she wanted to go Louisa use to take'er
17 in th'ca:r,
18 (0.2)
19 Les: Ye:s th't's ri:ght,
20 Mum: Yep
21 (0.2)
22 Les: °M[m°
23 Mum: → [Got quite a lot'v (0.4) service out'v Louisa,
24 Les: Ye(h)es ↓hn hn↓ .hhhh
25 (.)
26 Mum: Okay love

Mum begins by expressing overt indignation at Mrs. Field's possible attendance of Louisa's funeral: "↑How dare she expect t'be there." (line 1), a negative stance which is hearable as a complaint. Complaint sequences have been treated as adjacency pairs in the literature (e.g., Drew, 1998; Pomerantz, 1984), to which either an affiliative or a disaffiliative response is made relevant. While Leslie expresses minimal agreement with mum's negative stance: "I kno:w ye:s," (line 2), she does not overtly affiliate with her complaint. Mum, pursuing an affiliative response, continues her complaint by portraying Mrs. Field's treatment of Louisa as reprehensible with a full sentential declarative assessment: "She wz so wicked to Lou:isa." (line 3). The inclusion of the adjective "wicked", denoting immoral or malicious behaviour, preceded by the intensifier *so*, characterises and intensifies Mrs. Field's conduct towards Louisa as egregious, and thus, complainable. In addition, mum's use of the pronominal subject "She" asserts the agency of Mrs. Field. In the context of a complaint, this assertion of agency can be understood in line with Enfield's notion of agency, i.e., that the accused person is responsible for and committed to their 'egregious' course of action, thus rendering it a complainable matter. However, after a (0.6) second pause (line 4), Leslie merely utters a continuer (line 5), but again, does not overtly affiliate with mum's complaint. Even after mum employs an increment to her complaint, i.e., the temporal phrase "All those years ago." (line 6), Leslie's minimal response "Ye:s." (line 7) does not affiliate with the strength of mum's complaint. Indeed, Leslie attempts to close the topic: "O↑ka:y love" (line 9) (see Schegloff and Sacks, 1973), but this is produced in overlap with mum's increment (line 10). Thus, mum continues her complaint, despite resistance to the project and a lack of affiliation from Leslie.

In the context of non-affiliation, mum elaborates the complaint, employing a conditional *if... then* statement (lines 10-12) to posit that Louisa would not have done errands and favours for Mrs. Field if she had been aware of Mrs. Field's character, i.e., that she was "so wicked" to her (line 3). Her use of the verb "carted" denotes conveying cumbersome objects with much effort (s.v. "cart, v." OED Online, 2022) and has negative connotations for both Mrs. Field and Louisa, i.e., that Mrs. Field was a cumbersome burden for Louisa, and that taking her around was a gruelling task. Furthermore, she uses extreme case formulations (Pomerantz, 1986): "all the ti:me," (line 12) and "everywhere she wanted to go" (line 16) to warrant the complaint by presenting the strongest case possible in order to portray the suffering Louisa endured as unfair or intolerable, and Mrs. Field's offence as immoral. Mum's listing of the tasks Louisa accomplished for Mrs. Field as an item-by-item account portrays them as endless, and thus a complainable matter. She begins with a generalised statement: "carted Missiz Field abou:t like she did (.) all the ti:me," (lines 10-12), which she breaks down into its component parts, i.e., where Mrs. Field took Louisa and for what purpose: "Taking'er to to:wn an' to do ()- do 'er

shopping” (line 15), and then broadens out to another generalised statement: “everywhere she wanted to go Louisa use to take'er in th'ca:r,” (lines 16-17). By employing a range of features, i.e., negative assessments, an item-by-item listing, extreme case formulations, and lexical items and idioms with negative connotations, mum is able to characterise Mrs. Field’s treatment of Louisa as egregious and thus, complainable. However, affiliation from Leslie is still lacking; after a (0.2) second pause (line 18), Leslie agrees minimally: “Ye:s th't's ri:ght,” (line 19) but her delay in responding and minimal agreement characterises her stance as non-affiliated to mum’s complaint (Drew and Walker, 2009, p.2412).

Mum summarises her complaint with a TCU that contains a zero anaphor: “Got quite a lot'v (0.4) service out'v Louisa,” (line 23). *Getting service out of x* is a figurative expression appearing in a topic concluding environment, which brings together mum’s item-by-item detailing of the favours Mrs. Field received from Louisa (lines 10-17); in this way, ‘getting service’ out of Louisa detaches from the empirical listing and appears as a generalised, summarising accusation that Mrs. Field took advantage of Louisa (see Drew and Holt, 1998). Furthermore, the figurative expression *getting service out of x* is typically reserved for inanimate objects; thus, mum is implying that Mrs. Field treated Louisa more like an object than a person, thus characterising Mrs. Field’s treatment as morally reprehensible. In this position, the zero anaphor may be employed as a downgraded form in contrast to mum’s earlier use of the subject in her complaining. In lines 1, 3, 10, 11, 16, mum has included the grammatical subject in her turns-at-talk, as is normatively required in English grammar. However, with a lack of affiliation from Leslie, mum employs a zero anaphor in line 23, removing overt reference to the grammatical subject and agent of the complaint, which, as a result, downgrades the strength of the accusatory remark. In terms of Enfield’s (2011) notion of agency, the agent is committed to and responsible for their course of action; thus, the accusatory character of the remark may be weakened by omitting reference to the agent because the commitment and responsibility of the agent, while implicit, are not phonologically expressed through stating the agent outright.

Leslie treats mum’s downgraded complaint as laughable, providing another minimal response: “Ye(h)es ↓hn hn↓ .h h h h” (line 24). By line 26, it is mum who initiates a closing sequence: “Okay love”, to which Leslie responds with a type-conforming response: “↑Bye then,” (line 27). In this sequence closing position, the zero anaphor is also argued to mark maximum continuity, but this will be explored in section 5.2. Suffice it to say, the lack of grammatical subject at the climax of a complaint in which the other interlocuter, i.e., Leslie, was displaying a non-affiliative stance, seems to indicate that such syntactic granularity is positionally sensitive. That is, mum may be omitting the subject in this position to downgrade the strength of her complaint in pursuit of an affiliative response from Leslie. Thus, zero

anaphora again appears in a 'troubled' environment, and seems to do interactional work in this position.

The following two cases contain instances of zero anaphora that occur in the reported (rude) remarks of non-present persons which act as the punch lines of the speakers' complaint narratives. These turns are designed as accusatory observations of behaviour that has been characterised as morally egregious in some way. It is argued that zero anaphora may be employed to downgrade the agentive responsibility and commitment (as defined by Enfield, 2011) of the accused person, thereby characterising the accusatory remark as more of dismissive observation of their behaviour, i.e., an understatement which thus carries an interactional import of insult.

In extract 6, Leslie's account portrays a reported remark from a mutual acquaintance as rude and unjustified, and thus, worthy of complaint. The punch line occurs at the climax of the complaint narrative and is delivered as the reported speech of Mr. R, in which Leslie designs his talk as an accusatory observation of her behaviour that does not include the grammatical subject (line 15).

Extract 6 [Holt: Christmas 1985: Call 4]

1 Les: And em: p ↑we (.) ↑really didn't have a lot'v cha:nge
 2 ↓that (.) day becuz we'd been to ↓Bath 'n we'd been:
 3 Christmas shoppin:g, (0.5) but we thought we'd better
 4 go along t'th'sale 'n do what we could, (0.2) we had↑n't
 5 Les: got a lot (.) of s:e- ready cash t'↑spe:nd.
 6 (0.3)
 7 Les: t[hh
 8 Joy: [Mh.=
 9 Les: =In ↑any ↓case we thought th'things were very
 10 ex↑pen↓sive.
 11 Joy: Oh did you.
 12 (0.9)
 13 Les: AND uh ↑we were looking rou-nd the ↓sta:lls 'n poking
 14 about 'n he came up t'me 'n he said Oh: hhello Leslie,
 15 → (.) ↑still trying to buy something f'nothing,
 16 (): tch!
 17 Joy: hh[hahhhhhh!
 18 Les: [↑hhohhh!
 19 (0.8)
 20 Joy: Oo[: : :]: L e s l i e
 21 Les: [↑Oo:.]ehh heh #heh]
 22 (0.2)
 23 Joy: ↓I:s[n ' t] [↓he
 24 Les: [↑What]do ↑y[ou ↑sa-:y.
 25 (0.3)
 26 Joy: ↓Oh isn't he ↓drea:dful.
 27 Les: °eYe--:s:°

Leslie reports that she did not have much money that day because she had just been Christmas shopping in Bath (lines 1-3), but that she still wanted to support the sale at the church fair (lines 3-4). She thus sets up a contrast between her willingness to support the church fair in spite of a lack of cash, and the subsequent (rude) remark attributed to Mr. R, portraying his comment as unjustified, and thus, complainable. There is an increased granularity in her telling as she states looking around the stalls (line 13), the manner in which she did so, i.e., “poking about” (lines 13-14), Mr. R’s approach (line 14) and the exact words of his insult as reported speech: “Oh: hhello Leslie, (.) ↑still trying to buy something f’nothing,” (lines 14-15). As granularity shifts can be used to signal the pre-climax or climax of a storytelling (Schegloff, 2000), Mr. R’s reported (rude) remark is thus designed to appear sequentially as the climactic utterance, or punch line, of the complaint narrative, and is crucially designed without the grammatical subject.

Mr. R’s (rude) remark (line 14-15) is designed as transgressive, unjustified, and thus, a matter of complaint through Leslie’s report and the composition of the remark itself. Firstly, Leslie portrays his approach as though he took initiative to deliver the insult. She states that “he came up t’me” (line 14), which conveys an intentionality to his actions that Leslie uses to contrast with his speech, i.e., “Oh: hhello Leslie,” (line 14), as if Mr. R was not expecting to see her there (given that “oh” can act as a change-of-state token to indicate surprise; see Heritage, 1984). The punch line itself includes the adverb *still*, which formulates the turn as an accusation by conveying regularity of misconduct (e.g., as in “You’re always doing that” or “You never put your things away”). In terms of its meaning, the idiomatic phrase *trying to buy something for nothing* is a highly conventionalised form of accusation. However, Leslie omits the second person grammatical subject in Mr. R’s reported speech, i.e., “(you’re) still trying to buy something for nothing”. The zero anaphor may be employed to downgrade the agentive responsibility and commitment (Enfield, 2011) inherent in the pronoun *you* and attributed to the recipient of the remark, namely Leslie. By omitting overt reference to Leslie, Mr. R’s comment appears as a downgraded form that decreases attribution of responsibility. However, the negative import of the idiomatic phrase, emphasised with the adverb *still*, imply a complainable aspect to Leslie’s conduct. Thus, while the lack of a subject pronoun characterises his remark as not assigning direct blame, it is the accusatory character of his comment that nevertheless carries an import of insult. As a result, Leslie’s zero anaphoric reported speech seems to be designed as an understatement that is delivered as an insult at the climax of her complaint sequence.

In extract 7, Leslie tells her mum about Prince Philip’s bad mood and resulting rudeness at a fair, i.e., that “he wz cū:rt, to everybody:” (line 10), including to her husband. She reports speech attributed to Prince Philip as a rude remark delivered at the expense of her husband

and the people at their stall at the climax of her complaint sequence in a turn that does not include the grammatical subject (line 22).

Extract 7 [Holt:X(Christmas)1:Side 1: Call 6]

1 Les: [A:nd he wz in a (.) ↑dread↓ful move. ↓he-
 2 a[n' (.) an' he went e-mood .hh an' he went fr'm sta:ll=
 3 Mum: [Mm
 4 Les: =to sta:ll in a .hh (.) a thundercloud, eh[h^heh!
 5 Mum: [()
 6 Mum: Oh dea[:r.
 7 Les: [An' a:fter he'd go:ne: they had t'go round t'th'
 8 stall holders 'n apologi:ze for him
 9 Mum: (Oh[)
 10 Les: [.p.hhhh becuz he wz cu:rt, to everybod[y:
 11 Mum: [We:ll- yes
 12 [an:'['e did it- (.) ↑ ()- W'[l 'e did it in=
 13 Les: [.hh [An' [u-
 14 Mum: =↑Chi::na too didn'e. [()
 15 Les: [ih↑Ye::s uhm--: u-Mark said eez
 16 not surprized that he:,hh that he behaved like tha:t?
 17 Mum: eh↑heh
 18 Les: .hhh An' he ↑came to their ↓sta:l[l? Ribold's sta:ll-
 19 [(door squeaks)
 20 (0.7)
 21 Les: and he- (.) they- (.) showed him ↓everything 'n 'e said
 22 → ↓huh. .hh making another desert I see,↓
 23 (0.5)
 24 Les: an' jus' stormed ↑off.
 25 (2.1)
 26 Les: So they were ↑not impressed↑ by Pr(h)ince Philip,hh
 27 Mum: (I'm) ↑sure they weren't hh::[: heh]↑heh[

Leslie gives an account of Prince Philip's behaviour (lines 1-4) that characterises his conduct as rude, i.e., that he went from stall to stall "in a .hh (.) a thundercloud" (line 4), a weather metaphor that suggests he was in a bad mood. She also states an explicit formulation of his misconduct: "he wz cu:rt, to everybody:" (line 10), and the fact that "they had t'go round t'th' stall holders 'n apologi:ze for him" (lines 7-8) which characterises his behaviour as transgressive, and thus legitimises his conduct as a complainable matter. There is a shift in granularity as Leslie approaches the climax of her telling (as in Schegloff, 2000), much like in the prior extract. Leslie states Prince Philip's approach to Ribold's stall (the stall for the company at which her husband works) (line 18), that "they- (.) showed him ↓everything" (line 21), and that his only (reported) response was the briefest cursory remark: "making another desert I see,↓" (line 22). The semantic content of the remark is itself disparaging, given that the company are agricultural machinery suppliers; thus, Prince Philip's remark accuses the company of causing environmental harm. Furthermore, the reported accusation appears to be designed as a dismissive observation, given that Leslie states that Prince Philip "jus' stormed ↑off." (line 24) in the turn that occurs after a (0.5) second pause contiguous to the reported speech. Thus, Leslie is portraying Ribold's stall as "[dismissed] from consideration as

insignificant” (s.v. “dismissive, adj”, OED Online, 2023) by Prince Philip. The zero anaphor seems to have a similar interactional function as in the prior extract, i.e., it may be employed to downgrade Prince Philip’s attribution of agentive responsibility and commitment (as in Enfield, 2011) to the company representatives in Leslie’s reported speech. While the reported remark does not assign direct blame, it is gratuitously accusatory. Thus, the reported speech is designed as an understatement which thus carries an import of insult, warranting Prince Philip’s reported speech a complainable matter.

The following two extracts contain expressions of moral indignation (a feature of complaints identified in Drew, 1998, p.309-311), i.e., when speakers express their affective stance towards the reported transgression. This further legitimises the (mis)conduct of the non-present person as a complainable matter and acts as “some index of the seriousness, at least of the perceived seriousness, of the offence” (Drew, 1998, p.309). While Drew (1998, p.309-311) contains multiple examples of such expressions that *do* include the grammatical subject², here I discuss a zero anaphorised version of such an expression that arguably appears as a marked form to do interactional work. In extract 8, Abi mentions a pasta ‘stealing’ incident that still frustrates her and employs zero anaphora in the second TCU of a multi-unit turn (line 4). The zero anaphor may be used to avoid overt reference to the speaker, i.e., the agent of the verb, which I argue downgrades Abi’s expression of moral indignation, minimising her expression of the perceived seriousness of the offence.

Extract 8 [RCE28]

1 Kat: ((click)) And Jim’s- you lived with him in fi:rst year.
 2 Abi: yea:h.
 3 (0.5)
 4 Abi: → (‘e) stole all my pasta. Still not let that go.
 5 [Huhaha:hh.
 6 Kat: [°Heha:hh°
 7 Kat: .hhh[hh
 8 Abi: [.hhhhh Ha:::h.
 9 (0.7)
 10 Kat: I don’t know why you ha(h)ven’t let tha(h)t
 11 go[(hh) hu:hha:h
 12 Abi: [uhu:huhaha:

Kate’s reference to Jim (line 1) occasions Abi’s reporting of Jim’s (mis)conduct towards her, i.e., that Jim, her past housemate, “stole” all her pasta (line 4). As Drew (1998, p.322) states, complaint narratives about the (mis)conduct of a non-present person are designed “to describe the other’s behaviour, in the circumstances, as having constituted a transgression.” In this case, Abi’s choice of the verb “stole” (line 4) characterises his action as morally reprehensible, and thus, worthy of complaint. She also employs the quantifier “all” (line 4), an extreme case formulation (Pomerantz, 1986) that enhances the unfairness of the situation, further warranting it a complainable matter. Abi follows up this initial TCU by stating that

she has “still not let that go.” (line 4). The adverb “still” (line 4) suggests this an ongoing source of frustration, further adding to the complainable nature of Jim’s (mis)conduct. In addition, the verbal idiom of *letting something go* denotes a person’s ability to move on and forgive past transgressions. Thus, Abi’s statement that she has “not let that go.” (line 4) expresses her resentment towards Jim, in that she has not forgiven him for his moral failing in ‘stealing’ her pasta. Furthermore, the self-referring pronoun *I* is neglected in favour of zero anaphora. In this expression of moral indignation, Abi selects the zero anaphoric form instead of the full syntactic form, i.e., “(I) still (haven’t) let that go.”.

There are a couple of interactional functions that zero anaphora may serve in this action environment. Firstly, Abi could be employing zero anaphora to mark maximum continuity (e.g., Givón, 1983; Oh, 2006). The zero anaphor in Abi’s second TCU may work to increase the connectedness of the two TCUs, i.e., the assertion of a complainable matter and Abi’s affective stance towards that event. While her TCUs are syntactically separate clauses not joined by a coordinating conjunction, e.g., *and*, Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech, and Svartvik’s (1972, p.592) suggestion that ellipsis in coordinated clauses signals “a closer connection between the content of the clauses” may be relevant in this case. That is, the zero anaphor, a fragmentary or ‘elliptical’ construction, may be employed as a syntactic turn design feature to signal the semantic relatedness of the two clauses. However, this case is less about the sequential linking of actions detailed in Oh (2006) and more about the connectedness of a particular event and its affective influence on the interlocuter. Secondly, Abi removes the overt agency of her frustration by omitting the first-person pronoun, thereby downgrading the agentive responsibility (Enfield, 2011) inherent in the use of a self-referring pronoun. In performing the action of expressing moral indignation in response to the detailing of a complainable offence, the use of a zero anaphor may be employed as a marked, downgraded form in contrast to the normative use of pronouns to express moral indignation in complaint sequences. In this case, a downgraded expression of moral indignation may be employed given the non-seriousness of the offence. Her dismissive tone in line 4 supports this interpretation, possibly suggesting that she is not making a serious accusation, but rather, a teasing comment about her past housemate and her inability to forgive him. Their shared laughter occurring immediately after Abi’s use of zero anaphora (lines 5-8), Kate’s expression of disbelief amidst an interspersion of laughter particles (lines 10-11), and Abi’s acknowledgement of Kate’s pushback via reciprocal laughter (line 12) suggest that the matter is not a serious one worthy of extreme frustration. Therefore, the zero anaphoric TCU (line 4) may be used to mark maximum continuity and to downgrade the agentive responsibility of the complaint.

In contrast to the prior case, the following extract includes an expression of moral indignation that *does* include the grammatical subject. I argued previously that the omission of the

grammatical subject during this type of action works to downgrade the strength and responsibility of agency exerted in the use of a subject pronoun. Thus, when the subject of the expression of moral indignation is phonologically realised, the offended party is overtly mentioned, i.e., the agent who is responsible for and committed to their stance (Enfield, 2011). As a result, the moral indignation appears in a stronger form than if the subject had been omitted. In extract 9, Robbie and Leslie have been collaboratively constructing a complaint about two teachers with whom Leslie used to work who are now Robbie’s colleagues. In line 16, Leslie’s describes her affective stance in an expression of moral indignation, including the subject pronoun *I* to upgrade the seriousness of the offence on her as the offended party.

Extract 9 [Holt:May 88: Side 1: Call 5]

1 Rob: I: find her I get t'the sta:ge w'r I: I: come out'v
 2 staff room cz I feel like saying t'her .hhh (0.2) if
 3 you don' w'nna p't anything int'teaching, th'n why dn't
 4 you get out.=

5 Les: =That's ri:gh[t,
 6 Rob: [Did you f- (.) Di[d you (feel the]sam[e)
 7 Les: [Y e : s .]Yes[she's
 8 ju_st ticking o_ver i_sn't sh[e.
 9 Rob: [Oh:↓: it's ridicu[lous.
 10 Les: [Ye:s:.=
 11 Rob: =I[really feel very]()
 12 Les: [W e l l it's ni]ce to have this cha:t['n know that=
 13 Rob: [Oh!
 14 Les: =you feel the[same .hhh
 15 Rob: [↑ha: ha↑
 16 Les: → ↑I[use to come: home so: ↑↑cro:ss↓someti:me[s,
 17 Rob: [↑Mm:: [Oh I'm
 18 such a ↑so: gla:d t'have a chat with you cz I↑↑do want
 19 t'↓know'n I'm en↑jo:ying it 'n the children'r ↓love[ly.

Robbie’s complaint in lines 1-4 appears towards the end of an extended sequence regarding a narrative about Mrs. Pelch and Freddie Masters, teachers whom Robbie has described as being not “overhelpful”, and Leslie as “ru:de.” (data not included in extract). In an interrogative construction in line 6, Robbie enquires after Leslie’s affective stance towards her overall complaint about the unhelpful behaviour of these teachers. Leslie agrees in overlap, which is strongly affiliative due to its occurrence in overlap and Leslie’s re-statement of Robbie’s complaint in alternative phrasing: “she's ju_st ticking o_ver i_sn't she.” (lines 7-8). In the lines immediately subsequent to the detailing of the offence, there are several instances in which the interlocuters use the construction *I/you feel* (i.e., in lines 6, 11, 14). Clearly, an appeal to their affective stances concerning the complainable matter is regarded as warranted in this environment in order to index the seriousness of the offence and its effect on the interlocuters.

Leslie summarises that they have a mutual affective stance: “you feel the same” (line 14), and states her own emotional state regarding the complainable matter more explicitly in line 16:

“↑I use to come: home so: ↑↑cro:ss ↓someti:mes,”. Leslie’s turn in line 16 includes the self-referring pronominal subject, *I*, which arguably strengthens her agentic responsibility and commitment to her stance. In Finnish psychotherapy interactions, zero anaphora was found to occur in affective accounts, specifically in affiliating responses to complaints that “distribute... the emotive experience between the therapist and the client” (Etelämäki et al., 2021, p.10). Interestingly, in the affective account in extract 9, in which two speakers are affiliating in a complaint sequence, a zero anaphor is lacking; instead, Leslie employs a fully agented form, asserting her agency in coming home “so: ↑↑cro:ss” (line 16). In the therapist-client interaction, the therapist’s aim is to distribute and share the emotive experience of the client. However, in the extract above, Leslie is co-constructing the complaint with Robbie, and thus seeks to personalise the offence. By using the subject in reporting how the transgressive behaviour made her feel, she asserts her agency as a fellow offended party, i.e., a co-complainant with Robbie. Thus, rather than distributing the experience, Leslie portrays the offence as a personal imposition, emphasising how the transgression has been inflicted upon her as a wronged party. Indeed, it is in a more affiliative environment in which you might expect a zero anaphor to invite the co-complainant to distribute the emotional experience and stance with the teller that we instead find the fully agented form rather than a zero anaphor, which arguably expresses the moral indignation of the speaker more strongly than if a zero anaphorised version had been employed.

These extracts have shown that zero anaphora is associated with the ‘troubled’ environment of complaint sequences. In particular, it has been shown to occur in complaints about the weather and in complaints about non-present persons, including reportings of (mis)conduct, (rude) remarks attributed to non-present persons in reported speech, and in expressions of moral indignation. A range of interactional functions were identified at these various positions, including mitigation, downgrading agency, and marking maximum continuity. In many cases, it has been shown to be a combination of the action being performed and the sequential position in which the TCU occurs that seem to motivate the use of zero anaphora as an interactional resource. Thus, zero anaphora may be employed as a positionally sensitive grammatical resource selected by interlocutors to achieve interactional aims.

4.3 OIRs in Disagreements

Zero anaphora was also found to occur in OIRs in the ‘troubled’ environment of disagreement, a further instance of repair being associated with zero anaphora (as in extract 3 in section 4.2.1). It is argued that the use of a zero anaphor, where the full form could be used, contributes to the action of mild pushback.

In extract 10, Nancy informs Hyla that, according to her doctor, the cause of acne breakouts is due to internal, emotional factors, like worry, rather than external factors, such as the foods one consumes. Hyla disagrees with Nancy's endorsement of the doctor's information. She expresses her disagreement in direct and subtle ways throughout the extract, including via the use of a syntactically complete OIR (lines 7-8) and a zero anaphoric OIR (line 24) to push back against Nancy's position. It is argued that the zero anaphoric OIR does a milder form of pushback compared to the OIR that *does* include the subject.

Extract 10 [HG:II]

1 Nan: He says 't's all inside you it's 'n emotional thing'n,
 2 .hhh e[:n,
 3 Hyl: [Yeah buh whatchu ea:t if you eat greasy foo:d=
 4 Nan: =We:h he said it's no:t the fact that you've eaten the greasy
 5 food it's a' fact that you worry about it. En that makes you
 6 [break ou:t.
 7 Hyl: → [.Tch.k.h[hhhhh Y'mean I c'd sit here en eat french fries
 8 → 'n ez long'z I'm not worrying about it I [won't break ou]hhth
 9 Nan: [I g z a : :]:ctly,
 10 (.)
 11 Hyl: .hh[hh] 't'sa [buncha [h:::]:[horse:]:
 12 Nan: [I] belie[ve 'im [too he's[rilly-]
 13 (.)
 14 Nan: [e.-he's rilly a [smart,]
 15 Hyl: [(isk-skih-) f: [feather]s, .huhh [.hn
 16 Nan: [Wha:t?=
 17 Hyl: =.hh[hh]
 18 Nan: [I-] c-I rilly b'lieve im cz another doctor tol' me
 19 that too:,
 20 (0.4)
 21 Nan: A doctor et school tol' me the exac'same thing 'e said it's j's
 22 something new they're discoverin:g y'know .hhh 's like-
 23 (.)
 24 Hyl: → Mean I c'n eat all th'candy bars I want [nhhow?hh
 25 Nan: [Yeah.And, en the fact
 26 that you, you feel gui:lty about eating them tha:t's what makes
 27 you break ou:t b'cuz it's (0.4) 't's all inside you,=
 28 Hyl: =.t.hhh So people who've broken out ther just very emotional
 29 [peo(h) [ple]ha:h?]
 30 Nan: [hhhhh [hih].hhhh] En ther worried a[bout it,]
 31 Hyl: . [ih.uh.eh].eh.e:h.e[h.heh]
 32 Nan: [.hhh]

Nancy uses indirect speech to report what the doctor has said about the cause of acne breakouts (line 1). It is by invoking a third party, especially one who is an authority figure, i.e., a doctor, that Nancy is enabled to validate her claim. Hyla challenges Nancy's report with a "Yeah buh" preface (line 3) that operates as a pro-forma agreement (Schegloff, 2007, p.69-70), followed by a counterexample, i.e., "whatchu ea:t" (line 3), that disproves the general rule that it is "all inside you" (line 1). Nancy pushes back by stating that it is not the intake of food but rather the attitude towards it that causes the breakouts (lines 4-6). Hyla remains non-affiliative, employing a practice of OIR (lines 7-8) identified by Jefferson (2018, p.106): *Y'mean* followed by a candidate understanding of the prior turn. In this TCU, she includes a

contracted version of the subject *you*, the second person singular, to refer to Nancy. Her question enables her to check understanding and includes a modified repetition of Nancy's statement that "it's a fact that you worry about it. En that makes you break ou:t." (line 5-6), where she changes the second person pronouns to self-referring ones and negates the statement (line 8) in order to clarify Nancy's position. However, Hyla's turn in lines 7-8 seems to do more than seek clarification, given that she has pushed back against Nancy's position in lines 3-4. Her OIR breaks the contiguity of the sequence, indicating a forthcoming dispreferred response (Schegloff, 2007). In addition, her turn displays an affective stance of surprise with its marked prominence on the first repeated item, i.e., "worrying" (line 8) (see Selting, 1988; Selting, 1996); thus, the OIR may be used to convey "ritualized disbelief" (Heritage, 1984). As a result, the use of the OIR may act to push back against Nancy's position and express disbelief, which indicates that she may also be employing her turn as a challenge.

Nancy treats the practice as a straightforward OIR by providing a repair solution, i.e., confirming the candidate understanding (line 9) (see Kendrick, 2015, p.181-182, on the distinction between OIRs being used as vehicles for other actions and pseudo OIRs) to which Hyla expresses explicit disagreement, i.e., that the doctor's information is nonsense: ".hhhh 't'sa huncha h:.....:horse: :" (line 11) which ends with sound stretches, and a self-repair that changes the projected expletive *horseshit* to *horse feathers*, i.e., "(isk-skih-) f: feathers, .huhh .hn" (line 15). Nancy augments her position in response by stating her trust in the doctor's information based on his intelligence: "I believe 'im too he's rilly- (.) e.-he's rilly a smart," (lines 12-14), and the endorsement of his information by other medical professionals (lines 18-22). Hyla continues to push back against Nancy's endorsement of the doctor's information with another OIR. However, this time she omits the grammatical subject, merely stating: "Mean I c'n eat all th' candy bars I want nhhow?hh" (line 24). This instance of OIR is not only employed as a question used to check understanding but may also be used to challenge Nancy's position. The use of "all" (line 24) may act as an instance of *reductio ad absurdum*, stating the strongest possible case of what Nancy is suggesting to show that it is unreasonable. The OIR is a similar practice to the one employed in lines 7-8 (and identified by Jefferson, 2018, p.106), but the turn begins with the verb "Mean" (line 24), while the second person singular pronoun referring to Nancy remains phonologically unexpressed. The lack of a phonologically overt subject may act to downgrade the speaker's attribution of agentive responsibility (as in Enfield, 2011) to the recipient by omitting reference to the "wilful initiator of the action" (Biber et al., 1999, p.123), similar to the downgraded accusations found in section 4.2.2. As a result, the zero anaphor may work to mitigate the disagreement, downgrading it to more of a mild pushback. The fact that Hyla's turn trails off into laughter (line 24) supports the tentative suggestion that the OIR has been downgraded. Hyla's subsequent formulation of Nancy's position in lines 28-29: "So people who've broken out ther just very emotional peo(h)pleha:h?" after Nancy's

confirmation and further explanation (lines 25-27) is a further palpably absurd characterization of Nancy's position, and they descend into shared laughter (lines 29-32). In this way, Hyla's use of zero anaphora (line 24) may be regarded as a downgraded version of the prior OIR in the extract, acting as a mild pushback to Nancy's position in an environment of disagreement.

Extract 11 also contains an instance of OIR in a disagreement sequence, but in this case, the OIR is formatted as a partial repeat of the prior turn. In the extract, Leslie complains to her mum about an unwanted gift of T-shirts from a mutual friend. Mum produces a partial repeat of Leslie's prior turn that does not include the subject and that acts as an OIR (line 15).

Extract 11 [Holt:1:1]

1 Les: Oh: yes.=↑What is she sendin d'you know,
 2 (.)
 3 Mum: (Well yes)
 4 (0.3)
 5 Les: Oh not one a'tho:se whi:te tee shirts,=
 6 Mum: =Well I don't know what sort'v tee shirt it is b't it i:s,
 7 Les: ↓Oh:: Mu::m:::
 8 (0.4)
 9 Les: It's just a waste of money.
 10 (1.8)
 11 Les: .h ACTUALLY IF YOU ↓can drop the hint (.) tell'er not tuh
 12 send any more becuz .h (0.2) they don't wear them an'I:
 13 can't give'm awa:y.
 14 (1.6)
 15 Mum: → Can't give'm away?
 16 Les: Well no:- Yuh see: um (0.4) I can't give'm as presents to
 17 anybody:,
 18 (0.9)
 19 Les: Bec'z they've got J.P. Five Hundred written all over them.
 20 Mum: Well it's a good adver:t.
 21 (0.5)
 22 Les: Yeh but ↑nob'ddy wants fthem uh huh huh .hh

Leslie enquires what the gift from their friend will be with a *wh*-interrogative followed by a tag request for confirmation that appeals to mum's knowledge: "d'you know," (line 1). According to the principle of contiguity (Sacks, 1987), mum first answers the tag question: "(Well yes)" (line 3). However, trouble is signaled by mum's lack of uptake in addressing Leslie's first question in line 1 because mum only responds to the tag question, at which point a (0.3) second pause ensues. Leslie proposes a candidate answer of what the gift will be: "one a'tho:se whi:te tee shirts," (line 5) but states it by negating her guess with "not" (line 5). Such a negative formulation confirms that trouble is brewing, i.e., her turn design choice conveys a negative stance and suggests that she views the gift in some way as problematic. Mum confirms Leslie's candidate answer (line 6), but her use of a *well*-preface signals disaffiliation with the prior turn (Heritage, 1984; Pomerantz, 1984; Bolinger, 1989). Moreover, she claims a

lack of knowledge about the type of T-shirt while confirming that the gift is indeed T-shirts as Leslie surmised. Leslie expresses dismay through her annoyed tone and falling intonation: “↓Oh:: Mu::m::” (line 7). Mum’s lack of uptake to Leslie pronouncement that “It’s just a waste of money.” (line 9) via a (1.8) second pause (line 10) signals trouble because it disrupts the progressivity of the turn-taking system. Leslie self-selects with a request for mum to “drop the hint” (line 11), which is re-formulated more strongly after a micropause as “tell’er not tuh send any more” (lines 11-12). She then utters two reasons for the request: “they don’t wear them an’I: can’t give’m awa:y.” (lines 12-13). Subsequently, there is (1.6) second pause (line 14), a significant disruption to the turn-taking system that indicates trouble.

The preferred response to a request is a granting (Wootton, 1981), but instead, mum responds with a partial repeat of the prior turn that acts as a repair initiator: “Can’t give’m away?” (line 15). The repeat is fragmentary insofar as it lacks the subject, but otherwise, mum’s TCU is grammatically complete. The lack of a phonologically expressed subject pronoun may be employed in this position to downgrade the level of the action. Rather than uttering a more accusatory form that includes the grammatical subject and thus, an overt reference to the agent, i.e., the “wilful initiator of the action” (Biber et al., 1999, p.123) and the individual committed to and responsible for the action (Enfield, 2011), e.g., “You can’t give them away?”, mum utters a form that may act as more of a mild pushback that simply locates the trouble source in the prior turn through the repeated elements (Jefferson, 1972; Schegloff et al., 1977). While mum’s turn may be grammatically incomplete, it is produced as a pragmatically complete TCU. Her declarative syntax with rising intonation invites Leslie to confirm her knowledge, as mum has a K- epistemic status regarding Leslie’s ability to give the T-shirts away (Heritage, 2012, p.23). According to Schegloff et al. (1977, p.380) and Schegloff (2007, p.102-104), speakers can employ OIRs to signal a forthcoming dispreferred response, e.g., rejections and disagreements. Thus, by treating one of Leslie’s reasons as a trouble source, mum is pushing back against the request and signaling an incipient dispreferred action. In this case, the practice of OIR does repair on the surface, as Leslie treats the trouble as one of understanding by confirming mum’s statement: “Well no:” (line 16) and clarifying her prior turn with a re-formulated version that includes extra detail, i.e., that she cannot give the T-shirts away *as presents*. However, the overall environment is one of disagreement. The disagreement is incipient early on in the extract (lines 3 and 6), and mum does mild pushback with the OIR and a later more explicit disaffiliative pushback against Leslie’s stance: “Well it’s a good adver:t.” (line 20), in response to Leslie’s mention of what is on the T-shirts. Thus, the lack of the subject pronoun in line 15 allows mum’s turn to operate as a partial repeat of the prior turn which identifies the trouble source and may do the interactional work of downgrading the level of disagreement to more of a mild pushback.

In sum, while the examples of zero anaphora shown in these OIRs both occur during disagreement sequences, their design as either an OIR that proposes a candidate understanding, or as a partial repeat that seeks clarification are quite different. In extract 10, the OIR is a completely independent syntactic unit, while in extract 11, the linguistic design is heavily parasitic on the prior turn due to the use of repeated elements. However, both zero anaphoric TCUs are employed as OIRs which push back against the recipient's position. It is argued that the zero anaphor is employed as an interactional resource to downgrade the pushback to a milder form in these 'troubled' environments of disagreement.

5.1 Introduction

In the preceding chapter, I analysed instances of zero anaphora in ‘troubled’ environments. The zero anaphora cases in this chapter occur in the sequential environment of topic closure and topic transition. In particular, zero anaphora was found in TCUs acting as summaries, upshots, and/or ‘concluding resignations’. It is argued that zero anaphora may be employed in such concluding utterances to mark maximum continuity (much like the function identified in Oh, 2006) at the climax of sequences including informings, complaints, and a word search sequence, thereby allowing the interlocutors to orient to topic transition. Thus, it may be seen as one interactional resource among others employed in the management of closing and summarising topics in the talk.

In terms of sequential position, these zero anaphoric TCUs occur predominantly in a closing position to sequences of talk concerning a complainable matter or other trouble. The topic closure sequences pattern in a systematic way: after the zero anaphoric TCU, the recipient produces a minimal acknowledgement or agreement, and then a new topic is introduced by either interlocuter. In the first four cases, topic closure and topic transition are achieved, either immediately after the recipient’s turn in response to the zero anaphoric TCU, or with a few intervening turns, i.e., in a more incremental fashion. In the fifth case, a zero anaphoric ‘concluding resignation’ does not result in the closure of a word search sequence; rather, the statement of resignation is repeated in a linguistic design that *does* include the pronominal subject, and the interlocutors orient to pursuing the current topic. Thus, while these zero anaphoric constructions orient to closing the topic, they may not always achieve topic closure. The final case contains a summary statement that *does* include the grammatical subject. It is shown that while zero anaphora may be employed in this sequential environment, it is not required to close the topic given that it is the summaries, upshots, and/or ‘concluding resignations’ themselves that orient to topic closure and transition. Nevertheless, zero anaphora is argued to be employed as an optional turn design feature in this sequential position to mark maximum continuity by creating a sense of connectedness with the prior topic in a syntactically obvious way.

5.2 Summaries, Upshots, and ‘Concluding Resignations’

First, I present a clear instance of zero anaphora in a summary statement that concludes the topic before topic transition. In extract 12, Hyla informs Nancy that she has to return a

birthday gift. After listing the reasons for returning the gift, Hyla concludes the topic with a summary statement that does not include the subject (line 18).

Extract 12 [HG:II]

1 Hyl: =Nen I('ve) gotta go tuh Robins'n return *u-h-h* birthday
 2 gift *my* brother (.) bot me,=
 3 Nan: =Mmmi. Whud'e buy you,
 4 (.)
 5 Hyl: .tch.hhh u-him'n Nancy got me this, nightgown, li'l shorty,
 6 (.)
 7 Nan: [Uh hu:h,]
 8 Hyl: [nightgown] yihknow en this forty degree weather I nhheed a
 9 shor[ty ni'gown.]
 10 Nan: [Yeah r i :]ght,=
 11 Hyl: =Plus it's a size sma:[ll].
 12 Nan: [Oh:,
 13 (.)
 14 Hyl: En I don't think it'[ll fit] mhhhhhhhhh
 15 Nan: [No I] don't thinks hh=
 16 (H): =.k .huhhh hhh=
 17 (N): =.hehhhh=
 18 Hyl: → =hh So:, (.) ginna see wh't I c'n:: [get for it.]
 19 Nan: [°()
 20 Nan: = Mm hmm.
 21 (.)
 22 Hyl: .tch! A:u::nd, whut a:lse. .hhh D'you know w't I did t'day
 23 I wz so proud a'my[s e l]f,=
 24 Nan: [What.]

The topic is launched with Hyla informing Nancy that she must return a birthday gift (lines 1-2), which she specifies is a nightgown (line 5) in response to Nancy's enquiry (line 3). Her description of the nightgown as "li'l shorty," (line 5) contrasted with the current temperature, "this forty degree weather" (in Fahrenheit) (line 8), suggests the nightgown is an inapposite gift for the current time of year, and thus, a reason to return it. Hyla adds a further reason for the return: "=Plus it's a size sma:ll." (line 11), i.e., incorrect sizing, and the consequence of that for her: "En I don't think it'll fit" (line 14), which Nancy agrees with: "No I don't thinks hh=" (line 15). Hyla then states her hoped-for outcome of the errand in a zero anaphoric summary statement: "So:, (.) ginna see wh't I c'n:: get for it.]" (line 18). In this turn, she omits the self-referring pronoun *I* and the auxiliary verb *am* that would typically be required in this context by formal grammatical rules to accompany the verb "ginna", i.e., the structure [*be going to* + INF] is used to express the near future (Biber et al., 1999, p.456).

Hyla employs several practices at line 18 to orient to topic closure, including turn-initial *so* and zero anaphora. Firstly, Hyla prefaces her TCU with *so*, a lexical element routinely employed turn-initially in upshots of prior talk (Raymond, 2004, p.186-189). The TCU is an upshot insofar as it brings together connections made between the prior turns in the sequence, which enables the speaker to promote operations relevant to the sequence, such as sequence closure (Raymond, 2004, p.186). In line 18, Hyla draws connections between the prior turns

by stating the anticipated outcome or consequence of what will happen upon returning the gift, i.e., that she expects to receive something for it. In this way, her statement also pertains to the entirety of the topic and “detach[es]... from an item-by-item sequential development of the topic”, much like the figurative assessments that summarise topics delineated in Drew and Holt (1998, p.503). In particular, she detaches from her listing of reasons by returning to the outcome of the first mention of the topic, i.e., returning the birthday gift in lines 1-2. Thus, Hyla’s *so*-preface may be employed to mark the turn as an upshot that acts as a summary.

Secondly, Hyla’s use of zero anaphora occurs in the sequential position of topic closure and may be employed to mark maximum continuity in this position. Anaphoric expressions have been argued to contribute to discourse cohesion (Givón, 1983; Fox, 1987; Halliday and Hasan, 1976; Schegloff, 1996b; Raymond et al., 2021). In this case, the zero anaphor occurs in the climactic utterance of a topically connected spate of talk concerning the unsuitability of a birthday gift. Thus, the zero anaphor could be said to highlight the connectedness of the summary upshot to the prior turns regarding Hyla’s listing of reasons to return the gift. While the summary upshot could arguably have been employed to orient to topic closure even if Hyla *had* included the grammatical subject in this position – indeed, summaries, upshots, and/or ‘concluding resignations’ such as the examples presented in this section need not contain a zero anaphor to do closing, as illustrated by the final case in this chapter – its use does tie the summary turn more closely, syntactically, to what came before in Hyla’s preceding turns in the sequence, thereby marking maximum continuity at the climax of an informing. In any case, both interlocutors orient to such an understanding of closure in the subsequent turns: Nancy utters a token of minimal acknowledgement, “= Mm hhm.” (line 20), and Hyla introduces a new topic, “.tch! A:u::nd, whut a:lse. .hhh D’you know w’t I did t’day I wz so proud a’mys e lf,=” (lines 22-23). Thus, zero anaphora is shown to occur in a topic terminating environment and may do the interactional work of marking maximum continuity in a sequence closing position, allowing the interlocutors to orient to topic transition.

Extract 13 is another example of a zero anaphoric TCU that concludes the topic and orients to topic transition. In the extract, Leslie confirms that she stays at home during the Easter holidays while her family go skiing. She produces a summary assessment, i.e., that they “Have a great time” (line 20) that seems to orient to topic closure. Foster agrees and affiliates with this summary assessment: “Good.” (line 22), and then introduces a new topic (line 24).

Extract 13 [Holt:2:1]

1 Fos: D’you go: yourse:lf or-
 2 Les: No: I[: : c a -] [No ah- u-we’ve guh-
 3 Fos: [And you stay]’t [home.
 4 Les: you see ah- I can’t bear the idea’v putting the dogs in

5 kennels.
6 Fos: N_o:.
7 (0.3)
8 Les: So: uh,h (.) in any case I hate snow,
9 (.)
10 Fos: Yes.
11 (.)
12 Fos: k[hheh .hhh[Well you near nearlly had some he:re('v it)=
13 Les: [So uh [T h e y go with]
14 Fos: =he[h .hhhh
15 Les: [Ye:s
16 Fos: Ye(h)s.
17 Les: They go with () School.
18 Fos: °Mm:°
19 (.)
20 Les: → Have a great time
21 (.)
22 Fos: Good.
23 (0.2)
24 Fos: .t.hhh Right ho Les[lie?
25 Les: [Right- ekhh he Okay [then,
26 Fos: [Yes.
27 (.)
28 Les: [Bah bye,
29 Fos: [Bah bye

Foster employs a polar interrogative to ask Leslie whether she joins her family on their skiing holiday that terminates in a cut-off after *or* (line 1), to which Leslie responds in the negative, implying that she stays at home (line 2). She provides two reasons as to why she prefers this arrangement, i.e., because she “can’t bear the idea’v putting the dogs in kennels.” (lines 4-5), and because of her negative sentiment toward snowy weather: “I hate snow,” (line 8). Leslie then provides further information about the skiing holiday, i.e., with whom her family go: “() School.” (line 17), after a first attempt that occurs in overlap with Foster’s touched-off comment about snow (line 12). After Foster’s minimal acknowledgement (line 18), there is a micropause and Leslie self-selects to utter a summary assessment about her family’s skiing holiday that does not include the grammatical subject, i.e., that they “Have a great time” (line 20). While Leslie employs several practices to summarise and conclude the topic in line 20, her orientation to topic closure seems to be incipient in the prior talk. Her uses of *so* in lines 8 and 13 may be viewed as pre-closings given that they allow Leslie to occupy the floor and indicate that she has nothing “more or new to say” (Schegloff and Sacks, 1973, p.80). However, Leslie follows the pre-closings with “uh,h” (line 8) and “uh” (line 13) and then does produce further topically connected talk: “in any case I hate snow,” (line 8) and “T h e y go with” (line 13), an interactionally incomplete turn that is recycled in line 17. Thus, these pre-closings orient to but do not achieve topic closure, and it is only when she utters the zero anaphoric summary assessment (line 20) that topic closure is achieved, enabling the interlocuters to orient to topic transition in lines 24-25.

There are several turn design features implemented by Leslie in line 20 that orient to topic closure in this position. Firstly, her turn is designed as an assessment of her family's skiing holiday, a common format for summaries according to Jefferson (1984, p.211). In describing figurative assessments, Drew and Holt (1998, p.502) state that they "convey a certain positive or negative value to be attached to the circumstances that the speaker has been describing". In terms of Leslie's TCU, while Leslie has a negative stance towards going skiing herself, she attaches a positive value to her family's experience of skiing with the adjective "great" (line 20). Secondly, her turn is designed as an upshot of the prior talk that detaches from an empirical reporting of details (much like the figurative assessments in Drew and Holt, 1998, p.502-504) because Leslie states an assessment of her family's experience of the skiing holiday in a TCU that makes a general comment about the whole topic.

Finally, Leslie's use of zero anaphora seems to serve a similar interactional function as the zero anaphor in the previous extract, i.e., marking maximum continuity. The anaphoric reference form *they* in lines 13 and 17 can be argued to contribute to discourse cohesion (Fox, 1987; Halliday and Hasan, 1976; Schegloff, 1996b; Raymond et al., 2021) because it is parasitic on the prior talk for the referent to be identified, i.e., the fact that Foster's enquiry concerns Leslie and her family's Easter holiday (and possibly also based on shared knowledge in the interlocutors' common ground, i.e., that Leslie has a family and who her family members are). The zero anaphoric reference term (line 20) is even *more* parasitic on the prior talk given that the pronominal subject has been omitted and therefore must be inferred from the prior linguistic context. Thus, it may be employed in this position to highlight the connectedness of the summary TCU with the prior talk. Furthermore, Quirk et al. (1972, p.592) suggest that ellipsis in coordinated clauses signals "a closer connection between the content of the clauses". In a similar way, zero anaphora, a fragmentary or elliptical construction, seems to be employed in this case to tie the summary assessment more closely to the turns that came before, even though they are all uttered as syntactically separate clauses. While the zero anaphor marks the turn as connected to the prior talk, it is the summary assessment itself that orients to topic closure. Indeed, after a minimal agreement that affiliates with the positive affective stance in Leslie's assessment: "Good." (line 22), Foster initiates a farewell sequence (line 24), changing the topic and ending the interaction in the subsequent turns. Thus, zero anaphora seems to be associated with an environment of topic closure and transition, rather than directly causing it, and may be employed to mark maximum continuity in this position.

In the following extract, mum complains about the necessity of re-painting a kitchen wall. She utters a zero anaphoric upshot (line 18) that states the remedial action she took, i.e., re-painting the kitchen, in response to her general complaint about the paint. The use of zero anaphora in this sequential position is argued to mark maximum continuity in a concluding

environment of resignation regarding the complainable matter, thus allowing the interlocuters to orient to topic transition in the subsequent turns.

Extract 14 [Holt:1:1]

1 Mum: I couldn't I: couldn't abi:de what I had o:n: las'ti:[me,
2 Les: [What
3 didyuh have o:n.=
4 Mum: =Eh: we:ll:, a sort of a (1.0) a sort of a (0.6) well
5 (). (1.3) not the e↓mulsion. It wz a-:-:-
6 (.) we:ll yes a sort'v e↓mulsion.
7 (0.5)
8 Mum: B[ut u]h-
9 Les: [Oh:-]
10 (0.3)
11 Mum: A sort'v: uh:m: (0.5) vinyl emulsion.
12 (.)
13 Les: ↑Oh:.=
14 Mum: =An' on: the co:ld wall on the outside it flaked off in
15 the corner
16 Les: Oh yes.
17 (0.4)
18 Mum: → So: had t'have it done again.
19 Les: Ah:.
20 (.)
21 Les: .hh (.) Oh=
22 Mum: =(Well it needed doing [anyway]).
23 Les: [Well it'll look very nice
24 (.)
25 Mum: Yes.
26 (0.9)
27 Les: Uh didyuh get yer garlic tablets.

The zero anaphor occurs at the climax of a complaint sequence. Leslie's mum describes the former composition of the paint on her kitchen wall (lines 1-11). She states that she "couldn't abi:de" (line 1) the paint, using the negated modal *could* and the lexical verb *abide* to express an inability to tolerate it, thus characterising it as a complainable matter. She adds to the complaint by describing the paint's degradation, i.e., that "it flaked off in the corner" (lines 14-15). After Leslie's minimal acknowledgement: "Oh yes." (line 16) and a (0.4) second pause (line 17), mum utters a turn-initial "So:" (line 18) which indicates that the turn will be an upshot of the prior talk (Raymond, 2004, p.186-189). Her zero anaphoric TCU is an upshot insofar as re-painting the wall provides a solution to the problems described previously, i.e., her inability to tolerate the paint (line 1) and its degradation (lines 14-15), thereby bringing together connections made in the prior sequence. Even though the re-painting ameliorates the original source of complaint, mum also conveys the re-painting as complainable through her turn design. Firstly, the modal verb *had to* portrays the task as obligatory, and thus characterises the matter as complainable because she is compelled to get the wall re-painted. Furthermore, her use of turn-final "again." (line 18) expresses her complaint by portraying the problem as recurrent. The upshot (line 18) may also be regarded as a 'concluding

resignation' because mum is expressing reluctant acceptance of something undesirable, i.e., the modal verb *had to* indicates that the re-painting of the wall was an imposition, albeit a necessary one. In addition, the syntactic formulation of the TCU seems poised between "(I) had to have it done" and "(it) had to be done", the latter similar to mum's construction with the overt pronominal subject *it* in line 22. By employing a self-referring zero anaphor, mum portrays the necessity of having the wall re-painted as a personal imposition, further legitimising the complaint.

In this position, the zero anaphor may be employed to mark maximum continuity as in the previous extracts. The use of a zero anaphoric expression means that the turn is parasitic on the prior talk for the referent to be interpretable; thus, the zero anaphor contributes to discourse cohesion (as in Fox, 1987; Halliday and Hasan, 1976; Schegloff, 1996b; Raymond et al., 2021). Given that the TCU is an upshot of the prior turns, the zero anaphor emphasises its connectedness to the preceding complaint sequence and underscores its significance as the remedial action necessary to resolve the source of the complaint. In this way, the zero anaphoric upshot brings together connections made in the complaint sequence, allowing the interlocutors to orient to topic transition. The upshot is followed by minimal acknowledgements from Leslie (lines 19 and 21). Rather than transitioning to a new topic, mum utters a qualifying caveat: "=(Well it needed doing [anyway])." (line 22), which Leslie supports with a positive assessment: "Well it'll look very nice" (line 23) that mum agrees with: "Yes." (line 25). Thus, mum shifts from complaining towards a stoical, exculpatory explanation or caveat, with the *well*-preface possibly indexing mild disagreement with the prior talk (Pomerantz, 1984; Bolinger, 1989). However, Leslie introduces a new topic (line 27) subsequent to a (0.9) second pause (line 26) after mum's minimal agreement (line 25). Thus, zero anaphora may be used to mark maximum continuity at the climax of a complaint sequence in a TCU that acts as an upshot, or 'concluding resignation', even when topic closure and topic transition are not achieved immediately subsequent to such a concluding utterance.

In extract 15, the zero anaphoric TCU occurs at the end of a complaint sequence in which mum complains about Mrs. Field's treatment of Louisa. This extract was analysed in terms of its complaining character in section 4.2.2. The data has been re-used in this chapter because zero anaphora is argued to accomplish multiple functions in this action environment and sequential position. Given that it is a complaining environment, the zero anaphor was argued to downgrade the force of the complaint in mum's pursuit of an affiliative response, which is related to the action it is performing. In this section, I am focused on the sequential context, i.e., topic closure, and seek to describe how mum's zero anaphoric summary of her informing of the (mis)conduct of a non-present person, i.e., "Got quite a lot'v (0.4) service out'v Louisa," (line 23), is used to summarise and conclude the topic.

Extract 15 [Holt:X(Christmas)1:Side 1: Call 1]

1 Mum: ↑How dare she expect t'be there.
2 Les: I kno:w ye:s,
3 Mum: She wz so wicked to Lou:isa.
4 (0.6)
5 Les: Mm hhm hm
6 Mum: All those years ago.
7 Les: Ye:s.
8 (.)
9 Les: O[↑ka:y love]
10 Mum: [(A : : s usual.) If Louisa had (know:n) she wouldn't
11 've uh (0.5) carted Missiz Field abou:t like she did (.)
12 all the ti:me,
13 (0.2)
14 Les: No:,
15 Mum: Taking'er to to:wn an' to do ()- do 'er shopping
16 (0.3) everywhere she wanted to go Louisa use to take'er
17 in th'ca:r,
18 (0.2)
19 Les: Ye:s th't's ri:ght,
20 Mum: Yep
21 (0.2)
22 Les: °M[m°
23 Mum: → [Got quite a lot'v (0.4) service out'v Louisa,
24 Les: Ye(h)es ↓hn hn↓ .hhhh
25 (.)
26 Mum: Okay love
27 Les: ↑Bye then,
28 (.)
29 Mum: Musn't grumble, (hm-[hm)
30 Les: [No,
31 Mum: Ba[h bye ()
32 Les: [↑Bye:,
33 Mum: Bah bye love

As described in section 4.2.2, Mum formulates her complaint in lines 1 and 3 with an expression of indignation and a negative assessment respectively. With no affiliation from Leslie, mum produces an increment (line 6) to which Leslie responds with minimal agreement: “Ye:s.” (line 7). Since a TRP has been reached with no speaker selected, either speaker could self-select at this juncture, with the first speaker obtaining “rights” to the next turn (Clift, 2016, p.124). After a micro-pause, both Leslie and mum self-select, speaking in overlap. Leslie’s turn, i.e., “O↑ka:y love” (line 9), is formatted as an attempt to close the topic (see Schegloff and Sacks, 1973). However, mum utters an increment “(A : : s usual.)” (line 10) and elaborates on her complaint in lines 10-12 and lines 15-17, producing a summarising TCU: “Got quite a lot'v (0.4) service out'v Louisa,” (line 23) without the grammatical subject.

The use of zero anaphora in this summary turn may be one practice among others employed to mark maximum continuity in an utterance that occurs at the climax of a complaint sequence, allowing the participants to orient to topic transition. In this position, the zero anaphor

contributes to discourse cohesion due to its parasitic connection to the prior talk for the referent to be identified (Givón, 1983). That is, given that the subject and agent of the clause, i.e., Mrs. Field, has been omitted, and the turn-initial element is the main verb “Got”, the agent performing the verb must be inferred from the prior linguistic context. In this case, we can infer that the subject is Mrs. Field, given that the complaint is about Mrs. Field and the most proximate referent is “er” (line 16), referring to Mrs. Field. Mum’s employment of zero anaphora in the summary turn emphasises its connectedness to the prior complaint because it is parasitically connected to the prior talk for the referent to be inferred, rather than being a completely independent syntactic unit. As a generalised, figurative expression that summarises the thrust of the complaint, this further detaches it from the item-by-item listing and allows the interlocuters to orient to topic closure and topic transition. Indeed, after minimal acknowledgement from Leslie interspersed with laughter particles: “Ye(h)es ↓hn hn↓ .h h h h” (line 24) and a micropause (line 25), it is mum who initiates a closing sequence: “Okay love” (line 26), which Leslie recognises as such by responding “↑Bye then,” (line 27).

However, the topic is not closed down immediately, as mum produces further topically connected talk in line 29. She utters another figure of speech: “Musn’t grumble” (line 29), which supports Drew and Holt’s (1998) finding that figures of speech sometimes occur in flurries (initially recognised by Black, 1972)³, which they argue is associated with a speaker’s pursuit of their position in topic terminating environments. In this case, Leslie’s lack of affiliation (as discussed in section 4.2.2) makes relevant mum pursuing her position, even though Leslie still does not express affiliation with mum’s stance. The idiomatic expression “Musn’t grumble” (line 29) has no subject and could be analysed as being in the imperative. In this case, the lack of an overt pronoun would be normatively obligated by a formal grammar (e.g., as stated in Biber et al., 1999). Alternatively, the turn could be seen as an instance of zero anaphora, in which the subject is left ambiguous between various pronominal options such as *you/one, we, I*, etc., similar to the interactional function identified in Oh (2006) of avoiding a choice between alternative reference forms. Regardless of its referential status, after Leslie’s minimal confirmation “No,” (line 30), in which her stance of non-affiliation persists, mum returns to the farewell sequence (line 31) and Leslie responds with a type-conforming response: “↑Bye,” (line 32), thereby terminating the interaction. Thus, the use of zero anaphora is again shown to be associated with topic closure and topic transition sequences and may be used to mark maximum continuity at the climax of a complaint alongside the use of other closing practices.

Extract 16 illustrates a case in which the use of zero anaphora in a TCU fails to achieve topic closure. In the extract, an insert sequence arises during a discussion about a friend who has kidney stones, acting as a search sequence for the term that refers to the substance that causes

the production of kidney stones. Mum produces a zero anaphoric TCU (line 15) that acts as a ‘concluding resignation’ in her search for the term. However, after mum re-states her TCU in an expanded version which *does* include the subject (line 19), the search resumes, and topic closure is only achieved when Leslie identifies the searched-for term in line 31.

Extract 16 [Holt:1:1:8-9]

1 Les: [I've forgotten what causes them.
2 Mum: Pardon?
3 Les: .t What causes the[m].
4 Mum: [Uh:m: (.) acid. You know uh:m=
5 Les: =Oh yes.
6 (.)
7 Mum: Acid isn't right what d'they call it now? uhm (1.2) Mm:,
8 (.) what do we °call i[t.°
9 Les: [Bi:le?
10 (0.7)
11 Mum: No::. It has its own special na:me.
12 (1.3)
13 Mum: Ehm
14 (2.1)
15 Mum: → Ca:n't think'v it.
16 (0.4)
17 Les: Oh.
18 (1.8)
19 Mum: → Isn:t I can't think'v it j'st at present b't[it's a sort'v=
20 Les: [nNuh-
21 Mum: =acid.=that go- (.) (in the lung) (0.4) An'it fō:rms
22 th'sto:ne
23 Les: It['s in the kidney
24 Mum: [()
25 Les: Yes.
26 (0.3)
27 Les: Yeh.
28 (1.1)
29 Les: Oh::.
30 (0.2)
31 Les: AMINO acid.
32 (0.8)
33 Les: [Nuh?
34 Mum: [Well something li:ke tha(h)at,
35 Les: Mm::.
36 (0.7)
37 Mum: Anyway they're hoping it'll go throu:gh'n'ee had the (0.8)'ee
38 had the X-ra:y an' (0.3) and the SCAN.

Prior to extract 16, Leslie’s mum had been telling Leslie about a mutual friend who has kidney stones. Leslie states that she has “forgotten what causes them.” (line 1), which mum responds to with an ‘open’ class initiator of repair, “Pardon?” (line 2) (Drew, 1997). Leslie responds with a partial repeat of her turn that alters the syntactic formulation from a declarative with an embedded interrogative to a straight interrogative prefaced by the *wh*-word *what*: “What causes them.” (line 3). Thus, a search sequence ensues, as Leslie’s partial repeat enlists mum’s assistance through her use of an interrogative, given that a type-conforming response to her request for information would be to identify the queried referent.

Mum's first suggestion is "acid." (line 4), which she subsequently denies as being the correct term: "Acid isn't right" (line 7). Her interrogative "what d'they call it now?" (line 7) is a request for information that may act as a rhetorical device because mum is enquiring into an epistemic domain (as in Heritage, 2012) of the unspecified *they* (an anaphoric expression that has no antecedent in the prior talk) regarding the name of the substance, and thus Leslie may or may not have access to such information. Therefore, mum may be displaying 'doing thinking'. Her "uhm", a (1.2) second pause, and another "Mm;" (lines 7-8) seem to act as further displays of thinking. Interestingly, mum utters another interrogative "what do we °call it.°" (line 8) that is a modified repeat of her request for information in line 7, in which she changes the pronoun from third person plural "they" (line 7) to first person plural "we" (line 8). Through this pronominal shift, mum is able to recruit Leslie's assistance in identifying the referent. Given that the first person plural *we* can be inclusive and refer to both the speaker(s) and their recipient(s), the request for information may be regarded as being addressed to Leslie, rather than acting merely as a rhetorical device. Furthermore, Leslie orients to mum's interrogative as a recruitment of assistance in identifying the term by proffering a candidate answer in overlap with mum's question, "Bi:le?" (line 9). The final rising pitch may be employed by Leslie to construe her turn as a request for confirmation (see also Benjamin, 2013 for a discussion of final rising pitch in OIRs). However, mum denies Leslie's suggestion: "No::. It has its own special na:me." (line 11), a dispreferred response that occurs after a (0.7) second pause (line 10). Mum continues to search for the name of the substance: a (1.3) second pause (line 12), a hesitation "Ehm" (line 13), and (2.1) second pause (line 14), i.e., a significant disruption to the turn-taking system, all display to Leslie that mum is 'doing thinking'. However, mum then produces the 'concluding resignation': "Ca:n't think'v it." (line 15), omitting the self-referring subject pronoun *I*. Instead, the negated modal *can't* begins mum's TCU, followed by the attitude verb *think* which links to her current mental activity.

Mum's TCU in line 15 can be regarded as a concluding statement of resignation because she is expressing acceptance of her inability to identify the searched-for term. As a result, she may also be orienting to topic closure by stating her inability to continue the project at hand, i.e., identifying the term. The zero anaphor in this position may be employed to mark maximum continuity, as in the previous cases presented in this section. Firstly, it is an anaphoric device, which have been argued to contribute to discourse cohesion (Givón, 1983; Fox, 1987; Halliday and Hasan, 1976; Schegloff, 1996b; Raymond et al., 2021). Secondly, the content of the TCU refers back to the entire search sequence, i.e., the search for a particular referent. Thus, the zero anaphor in this position may be employed to emphasise the connectedness of this TCU to the whole topic, thereby orienting to a potential for topic closure by bringing together the prior sequence in a 'concluding resignation' that expresses mum's inability to identify the

searched-for term. Acknowledgment or agreement have been shown to occur contiguous to the summaries, upshots, and/or 'concluding resignations' prior to topic transition. In this case, Leslie produces minimal acknowledgement: "Oh." (line 17), and there is a (1.8) second pause (line 18), at which point topic transition becomes optionally relevant.

However, mum orients to topic continuation rather than topic closure by repeating the lexical phrasing of her TCU in line 15: "I can't think'v it j'st at present." (line 19). Her repeat is an expanded version of the prior 'resignation', but in the second version she includes the grammatical subject. Furthermore, she adds the temporal phrase "j'st at present." (line 19) and then utters contrastive *but* before providing further information regarding the searched-for term: "b'tit's a sort'v=acid.=that go- (.) (in the lung) (0.4) An'it fo:rms th'sto:ne" (line 19 and lines 21-22), indicating that although she cannot identify the searched-for term, she is able to provide information about the nature of the referent they are trying to pinpoint. Thus, while mum's use of zero anaphora in line 15 fails to achieve topic closure, perhaps because the searched-for term had not been identified at that point in the sequence, the re-statement of an expanded TCU that *does* include the self-referring subject (line 19) seems to orient to topic continuation. The use of a pronoun in the second TCU is in line with Fox's (1987, p.18) finding that a speaker's use of pronouns "displays an understanding that the preceding sequence has not been closed down." In the following lines, Leslie also provides further information about the term: "it's in the kidney" (line 23), and then pronounces: "AMINO acid." (line 31) with high pitch and prosodic prominence on the first lexical item in the phrase, i.e., *amino*, thus closing the word search sequence by identifying the search-for referent. Mum acknowledges Leslie's pronouncement: "well something like that" (line 34), and after a token of understanding from Leslie, i.e., "Mm:." (line 35), mum pivots back to the sequence prior to the word search sequence with a turn prefaced by the topic-shift-implicative element "Anyway" (line 37) (Ferrara 1997; Halliday and Hasan, 1976; Sacks 1992, p.561-569). In sum, the expanded repeat provides evidence for the positional sensitivity of syntactically variable anaphoric forms. While the use of zero anaphora oriented to topic closure, a pronoun in subsequent position orients to topic continuation. Thus, the use or omission of the grammatical subject appears to be employed to achieve interactional aims, such as closing or continuing the topic.

In the following extract, a summary statement that *does* include the grammatical subject is employed by Leslie to conclude the topic. While it was shown in the previous cases that zero anaphora seems to have a recurrent association with the sequential environment of concluding TCUs prior to topic transition, I show in this case that an anaphoric reference term may be employed in this same sequential environment to achieve some interactional aim, such as re-asserting the interlocuter's intentions more strongly in a second saying than if a zero

anaphor had been employed, and asserting the agency of her moral indignation. Thus, it seems that a zero anaphor is not required for the concluding utterance to orient to topic closure. In the extract, Leslie complains about doing Granny Field's shopping in light of evidence that Granny Field would have been capable of doing her own shopping. She states her intention to stop shopping for Granny Field in a summary turn that includes the self-referring pronominal subject, *I* (line 12).

Extract 17 [Holt:1:8]

1 Les: [A:nd u]m: I did Granny Field's shopping for'er at the
 2 beginning a' the wee:k,
 3 Mum: Oh yeh:,
 4 (.)
 5 Les: But (.) I-:'m not goin'tuh do it no:w she wz p- she wz up'n
 6 Les: about'n out'n the ga:rden there's nothing the matter with
 7 'er an' there wz me going an' doing a:ll'er flipping
 8 shoppin[g.
 9 Mum: [Ah ha!
 10 (.)
 11 Mum: Mm:.
 12 Les: → So:-:- (0.2) I:'m afraid that's finished no[w,
 13 Mum: [Mm: hm,
 14 (0.9)
 15 Les: Uhm:
 16 (1.9)
 17 Les: .t I d- Oh an' we went out las'night t'the Smi:th's: becuz
 18 they had uh (0.5) their French: friends uh you know there's
 19 an exchange going o[n
 20 Mum: [Ah: ↓yes.

Leslie informs mum that she did Granny Field's shopping earlier that week (lines 1-2), which mum acknowledges in line 3: "Oh yeh:". Leslie then utters *but* as a disjunctive conjunction to contrast with her prior informing. She states her intention to stop shopping for Granny Field: "I-'m not goin'tuh do it no:w" (line 5), followed by an explanation for that decision in two syntactically separate units that are connected via continuing prosody: "she wz p- she wz up'n about'n out'n the ga:rden there's nothing the matter with 'er". Her listing of prepositions, i.e., "up'n", "about'n" and "out'n" (i.e., out in), in the first explanatory clause may be employed to indicate that Granny Field has a mobility that belies her years. Added to this, Leslie states that "there's nothing the matter with 'er", with the negative word "nothing" as an extreme case formulation (Pomerantz, 1986) that presents the strongest possible case, with the implication that she is in perfect health, in order to portray Leslie's shopping for Granny Field as unnecessary and thus, complainable. In spite of these reasons, Leslie informs mum that she still went shopping for Granny Field: "an' there wz me going an' doing a:ll'er flipping shopping." (lines 7-8). While mum utters tokens of minimal acknowledgement in lines 9 and 11, she does not explicitly affiliate with Leslie's complaint.

In this environment of non-affiliation, Leslie re-states her intention to stop shopping for Granny Field in a summarising TCU that includes the grammatical subject (line 12). Leslie's *so*-preface projects that the turn will be an upshot of the prior complaint (Raymond, 2004, p.186-189). After a (0.2) second pause, she produces a re-saying of her intention to stop shopping for Granny Field: "I:'m afraid that's finished now," (line 12). This turn is similar to the other cases that have been analysed in this chapter. The *so*-preface appears as a recurrent feature, and Leslie's re-statement of her intention to stop shopping for Granny Field acts as a summary that is the upshot of the complaining. Interestingly, the self-referring pronominal subject is phonologically overt, which provides evidence to suggest that summaries, upshots, and/or 'concluding resignations' do not require a zero anaphor to achieve topic closure and topic transition. An overt pronoun in this environment not only strengthens Leslie's agency in her affective stance towards her intention to stop shopping for Granny Field (as in Enfield's, 2011, notion of agency, i.e., that an agentive term expresses responsibility and commitment to a stance or course of action), but it also creates a sense of discreteness rather than connectedness between the concluding statement and the prior complaint. The second version in line 12 is thus rendered as a syntactically independent utterance from the initial saying, i.e., "I-:'m not goin'tuh do it no:w" (line 5), and re-asserts Leslie's intentions more strongly than if a zero anaphor had been employed (see also Oh, 2005, p.292-295, for a similar analysis of the non-occurrence of zero anaphora in second sayings).

Mum utters minimal acknowledgement (line 13) of Leslie's re-stated intentions, but an affiliative response is unforthcoming. After a (0.9) second pause (line 14), Leslie utters a hesitation particle (line 15), and another pause ensues, this time (1.9) seconds (line 16), a significant disruption to the turn-taking system that signals trouble. Without achieving affiliation, Leslie introduces a new topic in line 17. Thus, Leslie's re-statement of her intention to stop shopping for Granny Field does occur in a topic terminating environment, much like the previous zero anaphora cases presented in this chapter. In this case, however, the subject is expressed overtly to achieve the interactional aim of re-asserting her intention in a syntactically independent unit, which also strengthens the agency of her second saying, in order to achieve an affiliative response, even if such a response remains unforthcoming in the subsequent turns.

In conclusion, these cases have shown that zero anaphora is associated with the sequential environment of topic closure and topic transition and seems to be employed as an interactional resource to mark maximum continuity in such concluding positions. By being employed in turns of this concluding nature, the speaker can connect their utterance back to the prior topic in a syntactically overt way that promotes discourse cohesion, but simultaneously displays an orientation to topic closure and allows the interlocuters to orient

to topic transition, given that they occur during summaries, upshots, and/or 'concluding resignations'. Importantly, the occurrence of zero anaphora in this sequential environment is not required to achieve topic closure, but rather, may be employed in such concluding positions to mark maximum continuity and allow the interlocuters to orient to the possibility of topic closure and topic transition, even if the topic is not closed due to the influence of other interactional contingencies.

6.1 Summary of the Chapters

The aim of this dissertation has been to situate a description of English zero anaphora in an understanding of grammatical practices as interactional resources. This investigation provides insight into the positional sensitivity and interactional appositeness of zero anaphora as a syntactically ‘incomplete’ construction employed systematically to accomplish social actions in ordinary conversation. I now turn to a summary of the previous 5 chapters to show how I have reached my conclusions.

The study of grammar *in interaction* was argued to be a worthwhile avenue of study in chapter 1 because studying grammar in its natural habitat of ordinary conversation shows how syntactically ‘incomplete’ constructions, according to a formal grammar, can be employed in particular sequential positions to achieve interactional aims. Chapter 2 detailed the CA methodology used to conduct this study. I also stated the corpora from which the data were extracted, the transcription method used to transcribe the data, and how the data collection was compiled. In chapter 3, I reviewed key literature concerning the main points addressed in the dissertation: fragments in interaction, English anaphora, and (English) zero anaphora, as well as research complaints, agency, and repair, and topic closure and topic transition sequences (environments in which zero anaphora was found to occur in the present study). These chapters formed the basis for the following analyses of conversational data.

In chapters 4 and 5, I presented data extracts that illustrate the grammatical phenomenon under investigation, i.e., zero anaphoric TCUs, in two main environments in order to answer the following research questions:

- (1) What recurrent instances of zero anaphora can be identified and where do these occur sequentially?
- (2) What interactional functions are accomplished using zero anaphora in these positions?

Regarding question (1), zero anaphora was found to occur recurrently in ‘troubled’ environments, including complaints and OIRs in disagreement sequences, and in TCUs that act as summaries, upshots, and/or ‘concluding resignations’ in the sequential environment of topic closures and topic transitions. There was found to be a consistent association of zero anaphora with these sequential positions and action environments. Even though other (non)-

anaphoric forms may also occur in these positions, the zero anaphoric forms seem to be selected by interlocuters as marked forms, in some instances, to do interactional work.

As for question (2), I found that zero anaphora accomplished a range of interactional functions at these positions. Such functions appeared to be related to the actions performed by the TCUs, as well as the sequential positions in which they occurred. For complaints about the weather, as well as the complaint about the (mis)conduct of a non-present person, zero anaphora was suggested to do mitigating and downgrading. For complaints about accusatory remarks attributed to non-present persons, zero anaphora was suggested to downgrade agentive responsibility and commitment (as defined by Enfield, 2011), thereby characterising the turn as insulting via understatement. Zero anaphora was also argued to downgrade agentive responsibility in an expression of moral indignation. In OIRs in disagreement sequences, zero anaphor was argued to do mild pushback. Whether or not these tentative suggestions hold true upon consideration of further data, zero anaphora has been shown to be consistently associated with 'troubled' environments and seems to appear as a marked form in certain sequential positions to do interactional work. This finding supports Oh's (2005) finding regarding the association of zero anaphora with the presence of negativity in the talk. As for the interactional function of zero anaphora in summaries, upshots, and/or 'concluding resignations', it seems to be employed to mark maximum continuity at the climax of informings, complaints, and a word search sequence, allowing the interlocuters to orient to topic transition. Thus, I have shown that zero anaphora may be employed systematically as an interactional resource in ordinary conversation.

6.2 Discussion

The description of two generalised environments in which zero anaphoric TCUs were shown to occur by no means provides a complete account of the uses of zero anaphora in interaction. Rather, my aim has been to identify instances of its recurrent distribution in sequences of talk, to show how it is associated systematically with certain sequential environments and may be employed as an interactional resource at these positions, rather than being merely an instance of something 'ungrammatical' that is seen as a random or a mistake. The findings detailed above contribute to the literature on zero anaphora, and in particular, add further functions to those identified in Oh (2005) and Oh (2006) by describing additional environments in which English zero anaphora has been found to occur.

In terms of 'troubled' environments, the functions suggested build on previous findings in the literature on agency. For the instances of zero anaphora occurring in complaints about the weather, zero anaphora was argued to do mitigating and downgrading. As for zero anaphora

in complaints about non-present persons, specifically its uses in accusatory remarks, punch lines in reported speech, and expressions of moral indignation, the tentative suggestion regarding its use as an agentively downgraded form extends the sense of 'downgrade' used in relation to assessments in Heritage and Raymond (2005), which is further expounded in Enfield (2011). Enfield (2011, p.304) proposed an idea of 'agency' that refers to a speaker's commitment to and responsibility for a certain course of action. While Thompson et al. (2015) relate Enfield's (2011) idea of 'agency' to responses to requests, the current study suggests a further association of 'agency' with complaints about the (mis)conduct of non-present persons, reported accusatory remarks in conversation, and expressions of moral indignation. I argue that the omission of grammatical subjects that occur as agents, a linguistic unit that carries an inherent association with the agent's responsibility and commitment to an action or stance, may appear as a downgraded form that either adds to an interactional import of insult via understatement or downgrades the strength of the accusation. As for OIRs, a similar argument has been made regarding a downgrade of resistance, i.e., pushback, to an interlocuter's stance from explicit disagreement to more of a mild pushback via the omission of the grammatical subject. Thus, rather than being solely related to the epistemic rights of the interlocuters, the use of downgraded anaphoric forms seems to also be motivated by social concerns, i.e., the degree of commitment or responsibility indicated by the use or omission of certain reference terms.

The second finding of zero anaphora occurring in the sequential environment of topic closure and topic transition provides a further sequential environment in which zero anaphora may be used to mark maximum continuity. Building on findings in other languages, including Chinese, Japanese, and Korean (e.g., as identified in Givón, 1983), Oh (2006) found that zero anaphora may be used for marking maximum continuity in English, and also contributes to discourse cohesion in a spate of talk that is topically connected. I found that a specific sequential position, i.e., summaries, upshots, and/or 'concluding resignations' occurring at the climax of certain sequences including informings, complaints, and a word search sequence, was consistently associated with the use of zero anaphora. Interestingly, these sequences were not instances of storytelling, given that Oh (2006) argues that zero anaphora may be employed to link sequentially related beats in a telling, particularly at the climax of such sequences. Rather, the same principle of linking topically related talk at the climax of a sequence seems to apply to the summaries, upshots, and/or 'concluding resignations' identified in the current study. In the instances presented in chapter 5, the use of zero anaphora seems to be employed not to do sequential linking of beats in a telling, but rather, allows the summarising/concluding TCU to be scoped back over the topic as a whole, with the zero anaphor marking a closer connection to the prior turns in a more syntactically obvious way than if an overt anaphoric form had been used. Furthermore, the close link back to the prior

topic is also argued to display an orientation to sequence closure, allowing the interlocuters to orient to topic transition. Thus, the current study supports the use of zero anaphora for discourse cohesion in line with previous research (e.g., Givón, 1983; Fox, 1987; Halliday and Hasan, 1976; Schegloff, 1996b; Raymond et al., 2021), but expands on previous findings by showing a further sequential position in which it is used to achieve this interactional aim. In sum, these discussions delineate how the current findings regarding the distribution and interactional functions of zero anaphora contribute to the literature on anaphoric reference forms in English.

6.3 Conclusion and Future Directions

While this dissertation has sought to delineate the distribution and interactional functions of zero anaphora in ordinary conversation, there is still much more to be understood about the practices identified. In addition, there were many cases excluded from the present study that illustrated further interactional functions of English zero anaphora, such as its use in responses to Telling and Specifying Questions (Thompson et al., 2015, p.20). Thus, further research is certainly warranted. Furthermore, there is much more to be understood about zero anaphora, not only in English, but also in languages that are typologically different to English, and a comparative study might reveal many more intriguing findings about this grammatical phenomenon.

In conclusion, the association of zero anaphora with ‘troubled’ environments and topic closures and topic transitions supports Schegloff’s (1996a) notion of grammatical resources as being part of a *positionally sensitive grammar*. Specifically, we have seen how a particular syntactically ‘incomplete’ construction, namely zero anaphora, may be employed as an interactional resource to manage interactional contingencies at specific interactional moments in conversation. This key finding contrasts with past linguistic investigations into English zero anaphora which had explained its usage either in terms of situational ellipsis (Quirk et al., 1985; Biber et al., 1999) or phonological reduction (Biber et al., 1999), or which had casually dismissed it as a product of fluent but disorderly speech. However, this dissertation once again asserts that English zero anaphora may be employed and oriented to as a valid referential option that is part of a positionally sensitive grammar. Zero anaphora is thus shown to be an interactional resource that interlocuters can mobilise to achieve interactional aims in ordinary conversation.

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Footnotes

¹ I refer to excerpts of Selting (1997) from the German to English translations found in Thompson et al. (2015).

² A clear example of an expression of moral indignation that *does* include the grammatical subject (which can also be found in Drew, 1998, p.306, referred to on p.310) is shown below:

```
[Holt: 1988 Undated: Side I: Call 4]
1  Dan: →  [And I was so a[ngrɪ]
2  Gor:      [kuhhhh .hh-[h
3  Dan:      [a:n' (0.3) (
4  ( [      ) an' oh::: Ghhhod. [C' z-
5  Gor:      [.hhhhhhhhhh [But was: was the ↓film
6  good.↓
```

In the extract, Dana states “And I was so angry” (line 1) in a TCU that includes the self-referring pronominal subject *I*, an overt mention of the offended party in the complaint sequence, which adds to the strength of her moral indignation.

³ While Drew and Holt (1998) consider the use of multiple figurative idioms to be associated with a speaker’s pursuit of their position, Black (1972) originally viewed such flurries of figurative expressions as having a ‘contaminating’ effect on the talk.

Appendix: Glossary of Transcription Conventions

The following glossary of transcription conventions is a shortened version of the full list of conventions found in Jefferson (2004):

Co:/Pt:	Speaker labels (PA: = Personal Advisor; Cus = customer)
=	Links talk produced in very closely together (latched talk), but not quite overlapping
° °	Encloses talk which is produced quietly
<u>underline</u>	Underlining used to mark words or syllables which are given special emphasis (intonationally stressed)
CAPS	Words or parts of words spoken loudly marked in capital letters
s::	Sustained or stretched sound; the more colons, the longer the sound
.hhh	Inbreath; the length of the inbreath is indicated by the number of hs
[]	Encloses talk produced in overlap i.e. when more than one speaker is speaking simultaneously
(word)	Parentheses around word, phrases etc. indicate transcriber's uncertainty
()	Parentheses with no words etc. indicate transcriber hears something being said, but cannot make out what is being said
(this/that)	Alternative hearings
((description))	Description of what can be heard, rather than transcription, e.g. ((shuffling papers, baby crying, mobile phone etc. ringing))
cu-	Cut-off word or sound
(0.6)	Silence in seconds

- (.) Silence of less than two tenths of a second
- ^ Marks high pitch (sometimes shown as arrows)
- > < Marks speeding up delivery (in talk between the facing arrows)
- (h) Indicates laughter while speaking (aspiration)
- {24:55} Time through interview (or excerpt) in minutes and seconds