5 Studies in Person Reference
This chapter sets the present work within the context of prior research on person reference. The chapter consists of three parts. In §5.1 I discuss some of the terminology that pertains to reference in general, sufficient to provide a platform for the ensuing discussions. In §5.2 I outline a seminal study from the 1930s on person reference in northern Australia, much of which deals specifically with the Murriny Patha and their neighbours. In §5.3 I present some of the major findings from the varieties of interactional research on person reference. Much of this work hails from the CA tradition, though other research is grounded in ethnography, interactional sociolinguistics or in neo-Gricean pragmatics. In this section I will work through some of the thornier issues relating to various conversational preferences and neo-Gricean maxims. These preferences were born from interactional research in languages that are typologically very different to Murriny Patha. With a degree of terminological adjustment, we will see in subsequent chapters that the preferences also operate in Murriny Patha talk-in-interaction. For similar reasons, various Gricean maxims are reworked as preferences because they also can be seen to operate in the Murriny Patha data.

5.1 Some terminology
The objective for this section of this chapter is to arrive at a useful metalanguage appropriate for describing reference. In particular I wish to define sense, reference, referent, connotation, denotatum, denotata and denotation. During this section some of these definitions (referent and denotation) will remain underdefined because the concepts will be explored in more depth in subsequent chapters. Even so, the objective here is to provide a launchpad for further analysis. For certain definitions I borrow from accounts in Allan (2001: 440) and Lyons (1977) (with modifications), each of whom has interesting and useful discussions of the above terms. The two authors diverge somewhat on the specifics of certain terms and my own usage differs from each of theirs in certain respects.

I shall define the sense of an expression in an utterance as what can be decontextually understood about a particular “something” that the utterance is talking about. It expresses the informational content of the expression, regardless of the context in which it is used. That is, it is the set of properties that make an individual
exemplar characterizable. Thus the sense of *car* is something akin to “terrestrial, typically four-wheeled, personal transportation vehicle”.

On the other hand, the *referent* of an expression in an utterance is the particular “something” that is picked out by hearers from what they understand about the expression itself, and from the context in which the expression and the utterance are embedded. *Reference* is thus the process by which a speaker goes about making that “something” identifiable. Referents stand in relationships to the sense of the expression in an utterance, to what the speaker has in mind at the time of producing the utterance, to the context in which an utterance is produced, and to the common ground shared by speakers and hearers. All of these factors have a bearing on whether the hearer can deduce the referent the speaker has in mind. If all these factors are felicitous, hearers will deduce the same referent that the speaker has in mind. However if any of these factors are not felicitous, hearers may deduce a different referent from the one the speaker has in mind.

*Connotation* and *denotation* are two words that have varied usage, both within linguistic research and within day-to-day settings. The terms are frequently used as a paired couplet, as if they deal with separate sides of the same coin. I will use *connotation* to convey the power that a contextualized expression has in extending its meaning beyond its decontextualized sense. This power comes from regular contextualized uses of the expression and the attitudes those usages convey in specific contexts. It is this power (the connotation), that speakers may draw on for pragmatic effect. For example, if a Holden driver states *Your jalopy will never catch us*, but is referring to a brand new Ford Mustang, then the denigrating power of the word *jalopy* (when used to refer to a mechanically sound vehicle) connotes “undesirability”. In this specific application of the term of *jalopy*, it is the context-specific connotation of “undesirability”, rather than the word’s sense (rattly old car of dubious mechanical status), that the Holden driver uses for pragmatic effect – to denigrate the car and its driver.

*Denotation* is another word with variable usage. It is often confused with reference. *Denotation* has a relationship with connotation though it is hardly the other side of the same coin. *Denotation* has more in common with *sense*. Whereas sense is

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57 The nature of this “something” will be examined in more detail in §10.3.
58 Allan (2001: 91) describes connotation thus: “The connotations of a word or longer expression are semantic effects that arise from the encyclopaedic knowledge about its denotation and also from experiences, beliefs and prejudices about the contexts in which the expression is typically used.”
the concept associated with an expression, or the properties that characterize an expression, the denotation is the set of all possible entities characterizable by the concept associated with that expression; or rather, the set of all possible entities exhibiting the properties associated with that expression. Thus the denotation of *car* is the set of all possible cars.

A further dissection of denotation will prove to be useful. Following Lyons (1977: 207) (with modifications) I shall use the term *full denotatum* to refer to the set of all possible entities exhibiting those properties that characterize a word or expression. Thus the full denotatum of *car* is the set of all possible cars. I shall then use the plural *denotata* to refer to sets of possible exemplars that comprise the full denotatum; that is, any set of possible exemplars exhibiting the properties associated with the sense of the particular word or expression. Thus the denotata of *car* may be Fords, Holdens, Goggomobil Darts, rusty old jalopies and supercharged, top-fuel “funny cars”. Denotata are thus subsets of the (full) denotatum. In a given context, this will be useful in narrowing the range of candidates for the referent (which is what I refer to later as *constraining the domain of reference*). Thus denotatum and denotata stand in particular relationships to referents, but they are not the same as referents. Referents are anchored with respect to the time and place of the speech event.

Understanding the sense of an expression (knowledge of the expression’s properties) and knowledge of the world allows the hearer to identify the various denotata denoted by the expression (sets of entities exhibiting those various properties). Context then allows the hearer to delimit the scope of these denotata, and pick out the referent. We will begin with the artificial example, *the car isn’t running too well*. The word *car* provides the hearer with the concept of “car” (its sense). It is an understanding of the *sense* of the expression *the car* (a specific terrestrial four wheeled personal transportation vehicle) that hearers require to pick out from amongst its denotata (Fords, Holdens, Goggomobil, jalopies, funny cars etc.), the referent the speaker has in mind. The sense of *not running too well* and the context in which the utterance was produced (e.g., whilst sitting inside a misfiring jalopy, following a prior reference, etc.) assist the hearer in picking out the referent from amongst its denotata.

I shall illustrate the relationship between the denotatum and denotata, sense and referents in a Murriny Patha example extracted from genuine conversation.
In Murriny Patha, bare nominal classifiers usually function as vague pro-forms; that is, they stand in place of a fuller nominal expression (see §6.1.2.1). The nominal classifier kura denotes water and things associated with watery liquids. The full denotatum of kura is the set of all entities associated with watery liquids and all entities exhibiting properties associated with being a watery liquid. The denotata of kura (in example 5.1) are subsets of kura’s full denotatum. Thus the denotata consist of instances of kura patha, “fresh water”, instances of kura ti, “tea”, kura petril, “petrol” and kura thurrulk, “beer” etc. From amongst the denotata of kura, hearers attempt to pick out the referent. I have deliberately removed this utterance from its surrounding talk so we may consider kura’s role within the sentence. As an isolated utterance, hearers would know the referent to be “something of the water class”. The pro-form kura is able to contribute no more specificity, per se, towards making the referent identifiable, than the scope of the full set that it denotes. However kura forms part of a proposition. The referent expressed by kura is the patient being brought this way by the two siblings.59 Thus the sense of pandjedhadharra, “the two siblings were bringing”, delimits the scope of kura’s full denotatum, eliminating excessively large, uncarryable denotata (such as creeks and billabongs) from the range of possible denotata. In this case, the word kura can be thought of as having a domain of reference somewhat smaller than its full denotatum.

Of course example 5.1 was not produced in isolation. The speaker is reporting a particular event. The speaker has in mind a particular watery “something”, not just any kura, but a specific instance of a specific sort of kura. Cultural knowledge about referring practices, knowledge of the participants involved and what siblings like to do on the weekends etc., further assist the hearer in picking out the intended referent, kura thurrulk, “beer”, from amongst kura’s denotata. The connotations associated

59 Inanimate referents are not overtly expressed as patients within the verb complex. Kura thus fulfils the requirement for an overt nominal referential expression.
with making initial reference with the vague pro-form *kura*

Because *denotatum* and *denotata* have been explained above, this liberates the word *denotation* from what I’m calling *denotatum*, making it available for the slightly different usage that I wish to apply to it. I will use *denotation* to refer to the job of denoting denotata.

The widely used term *referring expression* is problematic grammatically. In English referring expressions largely correspond to noun phrases, including pronouns, while verbs carry little information about the referents of their arguments. Murriny Patha, however, is a morphologically rich language. In Murriny Patha pronominal elements inside polysynthetic verbs are recruited for referring at least as frequently as nominal expressions. These pronominal elements may be portmanteau or even discontinuous, and so there’s no one-to-one correspondence between a grammatical element (morpheme or word or phrase) and a referent. Secondly, polysynthetic verbs are expressions that are additionally recruited for predication as well as for referring, so to call them *referring expressions* is misleading. Thirdly, *referring expressions* are usually thought of as being employed for referring to a single entity or group of entities (e.g., the subject), yet polysynthetic verbs may be recruited for referring to multiple entities, or groups of entities, at the same time (because they are syntactically complex words that express up to three arguments). Fourthly, as we will see in §6.2, speakers recruit both verbs and co-referential nominal expressions to refer to a single referent. In this way, a single argument may be jointly expressed by two or more expressions that each have a referential function.

However, the point, which will be further developed in §10.1, is that the term *referring expression* is misleading because it confuses actions of the speaker with a property of the expression. Referring is an interactional process undertaken by interlocutors. Speakers use expressions to refer to referents. It is because “referring expressions” are able to denote denotata that speakers are able to use them to refer to referents. Because the expressions themselves do not actually refer at all, the name is

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60 This is amounts to a “general-for-specific” euphemistic strategy (Allan & Burridge 1988, 1992), where distasteful or taboo topics are referred to in vague or general ways, rather than specifically. For an interactional analysis of the fragment from which this example was extracted see Fragment 80.
a misnomer. Given that these expressions do denote denotata, I will instead use the terms *denoting expression* or *referential expression*.

5.2 A seminal study of person reference in northern Australia

Our story of Murriny Patha person reference actually begins with the eminent anthropologist W.E.H. Stanner and his 1937 paper *Aboriginal Modes of Address and Reference in the North-West of the Northern Territory*. This paper was written after two months of fieldwork conducted in 1935, when Stanner accompanied Father Richard Docherty on a boat from Darwin to establish the very first mission at Werndek Nganayi. Not only does this seminal paper deserve acknowledgment for being decades ahead of its time, the situation he describes stands the test of time remarkably well, considering the immense changes that have happened in the region since 1935.

Personal names have a very special status Aboriginal society. One important point that Stanner makes is that personal names are seldom used as terms of direct address and that instead, a variety of other strategies are preferred. He notes that people generally have more than one personal name and that some names (the “big names”) are only discovered with difficulty.

The personal names by which a man is known are something more than names. Native statements suggest that names are thought to partake of the personality of which they designate. The name seems to bear much the same relation to the personality as the shadow or image does to the sentient body. To stab a man’s shadow with a spear is not a friendly action. Names are not symbols so much as verbal projections of an identity which is well known in the flesh.61 (Stanner 1937: 301)

Names are also subject to numerous taboos. Stanner mentions the restriction on using the name of a deceased person and the strong restriction on a man using the name of his mother-in-law (though he does not mention that the converse restriction also applies to women mentioning the names of their sons-in-law). He states that this latter restriction extends with somewhat less intensity to other affinal relations such as the father-in-law and brother-in-law. The other very strong restriction is on adults mentioning the names of an opposite-sex sibling. Even hearing the names of an avoided person can cause embarrassment and shame.

Once it is seen what shame and confusion it is possible to bring upon a man by

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61 That names are not to be used lightly is remarked upon elsewhere in the anthropological literature on Australian Aboriginal societies. For instance, Garde (2002: 202-203) states that Bininj Gun-wok speakers claim mentioning the name of a person not present can cause a tingling sensation in the body of the person to whom the name pertains. Particularly, it is believed to cause them to sneeze.
mentioning in his presence a name which convention prevents him to hear, one is able to understand the circumspection with which personal names are used, even though the nexus between name and its avoidance may not be well understood. (Stanner 1937: 302)

Although he wasn’t particularly speaking about the Wadeye region, another important point that Stanner makes is that European names operate on a different level to indigenous names (in fact, in 1935 it is unlikely that many Aboriginal people in the region had European names). His point however, is probably more applicable in Wadeye now than it was when he wrote it.

White names are not like black names, and it is not necessary to apply to them the normal restraints. White foods are not subject to the tapus [taboos] which make various native food-stuffs ritually dangerous to initiates, or to men and women at certain periods of their lives. White men, to an extent, are beyond the reach of black social and moral rules, and blacks do not seem to feel the evangelist’s urge to bring aliens within those rules. (Stanner 1937: 309)

My experience is that European names are actually avoided in the case of the death taboo, and also for the other strong restrictions on naming affines and opposite-sex siblings. Nonetheless, I concur with his general point, that the constraints on using personal names are applied more forcefully to names of indigenous origin than to names of European origin.

Stanner notes that kinterms are the most common “substitutes” for personal names. He notes that classificatory kinterms have nearly as much precision as personal names. The reason he suggests is that:

[i]n the small native community where even the footprints which each person leaves can be identified by everyone, the pitch and tone of each voice are equally well known. When a speaker and the person spoken to are not looking at each other, the identity of the speaker is at once known, thus limiting to a narrow range of people the kinterm to which he has employed. (Stanner 1937: 307)

Other kinds of referential expressions that Stanner mentions include nicknames which he says tend to characterize the person’s temperament or physical idiosyncracies; various social category terms such as subsection names, moiety names and clan names, and age grade terms – some of which, such as marluga, “old

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62 The observation that white people lie beyond the Aboriginal social and moral rules has a grammatical correlate in the fact that the Murriny Patha nominal classifier kardu pertains to Aboriginal humans, whereas non-Aboriginal humans ordinarily take the ku classifier pertainable to animates (see §6.1.2.1).

63 See also Nash & Simpson (1981).

64 The use of both subsection and moiety names have waned as these categories have declined in importance.
man”, are terms of respect or status. All of these are used for both reference and address. He also makes specific mention of derogatory terms such as “rubbish” and “devil-devil” for referring to an avoided sister. Interestingly, he also notes that the Murriny Patha have a number of “circumlocutory” terms that “make references to or about a [presumably avoided] person even more indirect by tracing the relationship through an earlier generation.” He gives the example yilamana, a special term for “brother” (Stanner 1937: 315). Circumlocutory ways of referring to persons will be taken up in Chapter 8.

5.3 Studies of person reference in conversation

In the 1970s conversation analysts and interactional sociolinguists began close examinations of naturally occurring talk-in-interaction. It emerged that certain conversational preferences have a bearing on how speakers construct their references to persons. “Preference organization” deals with how alternative choices of actions are differentially weighted, not by the individual but by society. Thus, certain actions prefer particular sets of responses: it is preferable to agree with an assessment, rather than to disagree; it is preferable to accept an invitation, rather than decline one (Pomeranz 1984a). Dispreferred responses typically reveal aspects of their dispreferredness in the ways that they are packaged (they tend to be delayed, mitigated, etc.) and the responses themselves are frequently accounted for (Atkinson & Heritage 1984). Although these preferences are manifested differently from culture to culture, the evidence to date suggests that certain principles underpinning many of the social practices of referring have a universal applicability. Clearly cultural practices, social structures and language-types have a bearing on how different peoples do referring, yet seemingly such variability can largely be accounted for through culture-specific prioritization of what are more or less the same referential principles, locally applied according to local constraints (Stivers et al. 2007).

In studies of person reference in interaction, three names loom large: the late Harvey Sacks, Emmanuel Schegloff and Stephen Levinson. Sacks took up person reference several times in his short but groundbreaking career. Important works include Sacks (1972a, b), Sacks & Schegloff (1979), as well as several of Sacks’ lectures on conversation (Sacks 1992). His collaborator Emmanuel Schegloff has

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65 Marluga is a common Northern Australian term. The equivalent in Murriny Patha, ngalantharr, is also a term that carries respect and authority.
frequently returned to issues taken up in these early papers, developing his and Sacks’ ideas, as well as addressing certain problems emerging from those early papers (Hacohen & Schegloff 2006; Schegloff 1979, 1996a, 2007a, b). Stephen Levinson is a scholar who is greatly influenced by CA. He initially drew on CA to support his work in pragmatics, particularly in reworking Grice’s (1975) conversational maxims (Levinson 1987, 1998, 2000). More recently, he has been using CA to analyse conversation in Yéli Dnye, the Papuan language from Rossel Island (Yela) (Levinson 2005, 2007).

5.3.1 Minimization and recognition
One of the most important early papers in CA is Sacks and Schegloff’s (1979) “Two preferences in the organization of reference to persons in conversation and their interaction”. This paper has been revisited time and again by Schegloff and his colleagues. It provides the launchpad for interactional research on person reference. Sacks and Schegloff suggest that the vast majority of references to persons concurrently satisfy two conversational preferences. The two oft-cited preferences are the preference for minimization and the preference for recipient design. Sacks and Schegloff (1979: 16) frame minimization as follows: “On occasions when reference is to be done, it should preferably be done with a single reference form”. The preference for recipient design is framed as follows:

If they are possible, prefer recognitionals. By “recognitionals” we intend, such reference forms as invite and allow a recipient to find, from some “this-referrer’s-use-of-a-reference-form” on some “this-occasion-of-use,” who, that recipient knows, is being referred to. (Sacks & Schegloff 1979: 17)

The generality in the way these preferences are worded leads to a range of interpretations. I will take up the interpretation of minimization and the question of the “single reference form” in §5.3.3. The second preference is reformulated on the following page: “If recognition is possible, try to achieve it” (Sacks & Schegloff

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66 Conversational maxims, like CA’s preferences, are organizational principles for conversation. They differ however, firstly, in how they are worded – pithily, as rules of conduct, usually framed in the imperative as injunctions for the speaker – and secondly, in how they are conceived of. Maxims are rules of behaviour for the individual, to be adhered to or flouted, as the individual sees fit. They are viewed as assumptions hearers can make about how speakers talk that will assist them to interpret a speaker’s utterance. Preferences on the other hand, are organizational principles for society at large. Talk that conforms to a conversational preference is seen as being unremarkable because it represents behaviour that is normative for the members of that society. Talk that does not conform to such a preference tends to be packaged in such a way that it stands out as being distinct from the talk that would otherwise be expected in a similar sequential environment.

67 This paper was actually written in 1973.
Although it was tagged the *preference for recipient design*, and is frequently referred to as such in some of the person-reference literature, this tag is somewhat confusing because the *principle of recipient design* has been used elsewhere in the CA literature with a broader scope than its mere application to person reference, and in particular to this restricted sense of preferring recognitionals. For example Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson (1974: 727) write:

> By ‘recipient design’ we refer to a multitude of respects in which the talk by a party in a conversation is constructed or designed in ways which display an orientation and sensitivity to the particular other(s) who are the co-participants. In our work, we have found recipient design to operate with regard to word selection, topic selection, admissibility and ordering of sequences, options and obligations for starting and terminating conversations, etc.

Sacks et al. credit the notion of recipient design to their acquaintance with Harold Garfinkel (Garfinkel 1967; Garfinkel & Sacks 1970). It is also developed in Sacks’ lectures on conversation (Sacks 1992, e.g., vol 2: 230). As a tag for a preference for using recognitionals, it is somewhat of a misnomer since, as we saw in Chapter 2, the *principle of recipient design* (as opposed to the aforementioned preference) can be seen to be motivating the casting of referential expressions as recognizable for certain targeted recipients and as unrecognizable for other unintended recipients.68 Mason (2004), in work on covertly taped telephone conversations, finds that that Colombian drug-traffickers who suspect their phones of being tapped routinely avoid personal names and instead use definite descriptions so as to conceal the identities of their associates from would-be overhearers. Effectively, these speakers “recipient-design” their references simultaneously for non-ratified recipients as non-recognitional, and for ratified recipients as recognitional. For this reason, when I take up the question of recognition in Chapter 8, I will refer to Sacks and Schegloff’s preference for using recognitionals as the *preference for targeted recipient design*.

Sacks and Schegloff (1979) view the frequent use of proper names (and particularly first names) as evidence that speakers suppose their recipients should be able to recognize who they are referring to.

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68 The name of this preference is problematic because *recipient* encompasses a number of different participant roles (Goffman 1981; Levinson 1988), and the ways in which references are designed for these different classes of recipient varies accordingly. Recall that in line 37 of Fragment 1, within the context of a story preface, Phyllis cleverly tailors a person reference to be accessible to a targeted knowing recipient, her friend Elizabeth, yet simultaneously obscures the reference from other co-present conversationalists that have yet to be told the story. According to Goffman’s (1981) decomposition of the role of the hearer, Elizabeth would be a *ratified recipient* and the others would be *non-ratified recipients* of the utterance – though they are about to become ratified recipients of the story.
The heavy use of first names evidences a preference for recognitionals. Furthermore, names are not only heavily used when known: they may be introduced for subsequent use when not already known to recipient, thereby arming him with the resources he may thereafter be supposed to have. (Sacks & Schegloff 1979: 17)

They claim that first names, for speakers of American English, are “a basic sort for recognitionals” (Sacks & Schegloff 1979: 17). Given that they are also single reference forms (and therefore minimal), their use as recognitionals simultaneously satisfies the preference for minimization as well as the preference for [targeted] recipient design.

Names are prototypical and ideal recognitionals in part because they are minimized reference forms as well; and the stock of minimized forms includes a set (of which names are only one sort) which are for use as recognitionals. (It should be noted that names do not have their uniqueness of reference serve to account for their recognitional usage – for they are, of course, not characteristically unique.) (Sacks & Schegloff 1979: 18)

Apart from the use of personal names as recognitionals, the 1979 paper is vague as to what Sacks and Schegloff really meant by recognitionals. Some insight is provided in Sacks’ fifth “fall” lecture of 1971 (Sacks 1992, vol 2: 444-452). Although he doesn’t specifically use the term recognitional, he is more explicit: “[this type of] identification is one that the speaker produces with the intention of having the recipient use it to find some person that the recipient already knows.” From the point of view of the recipient, “it’s the recipient’s business to try to find from it who, that he knows, is being referred to”. Of non-recognitional expressions, Sacks says: “[this type of] identification is one that a speaker uses to indicate to the recipient that he should not employ it to attempt to find who, that he knows, is being referred to.” And from the recipient’s point of view: “it’s his business to recognize that he’s not to try and find from it who he knows is being referred to” (Sacks 1992, vol 2: 445). Thus expressions such as “this friend of mine” and “one guy” are not recognitionals, whereas personal names typically are recognitional.

Schegloff (1996a) elaborates on the forms that recognitional and non-recognitional expressions can take. Apart from proper names, the other sort of recognitionals that Schegloff mentions are what he calls “recognitional descriptions or (descriptors) […] such as ‘the woman who sits next to you,’ or ‘the guy you brought your car from’” (1996a: 459). Schegloff says that recognitionals should be used when the following contingencies are met:

- a) If the speaker may (or ought to) suppose the recipient to know the referent; b) if the
speaker may be supposed by recipient to have so supposed; and c) if the speaker may suppose the recipient to have so supposed. All three conditions must be met; no further extensions of this hall of mirrors are necessary.

Recognitional forms may be contrasted with non-recognitionals; that is, forms that “do ‘referring-as-non-recognizable’”, such as “someone”, “this guy”, “this woman” and in particular with “non-recognitional descriptions” such as “a guy at work” (ibid). However, the question of how recipients should realize that they are obliged to recognize a person they know is not fully explained. This question will be taken up in Chapter 8.

Sacks & Schegloff (1979) find that the vast majority of initial references to persons concurrently satisfy both preferences. However on occasions where the two preferences come into conflict, minimization is incrementally relaxed until recognition is achieved. One environment where such an incompatibility emerges is when the current speaker anticipates some difficulty for his recipients in recognizing a referent. It is in “try-marked” sequences that this incompatibility is revealed. A “try-marker” is a recognitional term that is produced with an upward intonation contour, followed by a slight pause. Current speakers use these try-markers to test the knowledge state of their addressees, and on the basis of those tests, make referential adjustments.

Use of such a form is understood to be appropriate if a speaker anticipates that the recognitional form being used will on this occasion, for this recipient, possibly be inadequate for securing recognition. If recipient does recognize the referred-to, such success is to be asserted in the brief pause which the referrer will have left for such assertions. (Sacks & Schegloff 1979: 18)

Failure to assert success in achieving recognition is to be taken as confirming the speaker’s suspicion that the recipient may have difficulty in perceiving the intended referent. Schegloff (2007b: 127-128) reworks one of the try-marked sequences previously analysed in Sacks & Schegloff (1979).

Fragment 4  SBL 2/2/4 (Schegloff 2007b: 127) (itself taken from Sacks & Schegloff (1979: 19)
though re-transcribed and revised) (my emphasis)

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
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<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Ann: ...well I was the only one other than</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>→   .hhh than thee uhm (0.7) mtch! Fg:rd.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>→   Uh Mrs. Holmes Ford? (0.8) You know the-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>→   [the the cellist?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Bev:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Ann:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Bev:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Ann:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In Fragment 5, Ann tries three times to refer to a particular woman and her husband. Her first attempt displays trouble. The word *than* in line 1 projects a name as forthcoming. In line 2, the break that is filled by an in-breath, the repetition (*than thee*), the *uhm* and the 0.7 second break, all display problems with the turn’s progressivity. The name that is produced, *Fords*, is “the prototype for ‘recognitional’ reference” (ibid. 127). Schegloff states that it is common for recipients to mark the success of problematic recognitionals with a token of recognition.

When no such recognition token is forthcoming, Ann produces an upward intoned *try* at line 3, *Mrs Holmes Ford?*, followed by a pause. When no sign of recognition is produced in the space that was left for it, a second *try* is produced at line 4, *the the cellist?*. This third attempt is actually produced in overlap – the try produced in line 3 had in fact proved adequate for the recipient to recognize the referent.

Each of the recognitional expressions are “single reference forms”. In Sacks and Schegloff’s view the try-marked sequence results in a stepwise relaxation (not a suspension) of minimization that continues until recognition is achieved. Sacks and Schegloff take this stepwise relaxation to be evidence for the preference for [targeted] recipient design being stronger than the preference for minimization (Sacks & Schegloff 1979: 19-20).

Downing (1996) shows that when a current speaker believes a particular referent to be difficult for the addressee to identify, the speaker may seek clarification of the addressee’s knowledge state before proceeding. These potentially unidentifiable cases are notable for not using bare first names (as in line 1 of Fragment 5).

**Fragment 5** (Downing 1996: 100) (transcription modified)

1 C: I don't think you've met **Nelly Cartwright** upstairs
2 A: No
3 C: I won't pre- ... um ... what's the word
4 ... Pre-persuade you ... but uh... she's not the most helpful variety

Downing (1996) calls into question Sacks and Schegloff’s claim that the frequent use of first names in conversation should be taken as necessarily evidencing a preference for using recognitionals. Rather, she suggests that speakers of English may simply have a preference for using proper names to introduce referents. Downing finds that personal names (in English) have a special status as the preferred expressions for introducing new referents into conversation, whether the referent is
believed to be recognizable to the addressee or not. Downing finds that referents believed to be not known to the addressee are regularly introduced using non-recognitional descriptors consisting of a name, embedded within a noun phrase (e.g., *somebody called Susan Potter*) (Downing 1996: 101).

When the current speaker considers the addressee’s knowledge state of the referent to be doubtful, rather than use an indefinite descriptor to introduce the referent, speakers will either employ try-marked sequences, as in Fragment 4, or negotiate the identifiability of the referent, as in Fragment 5. Noting that in English bare proper names typically do act as recognitionals, she states that bare proper names are only ever used (albeit frequently) for referents that fall within both the speaker’s and recipient’s “territory of information” (Kamio 1994). That is, they are used when both speakers and recipients have some degree of access to the referent in question and this makes the use of bare proper names “co-recognitional” reference forms.

### 5.3.2 Form and position
Noting that pronouns are the most common (and therefore the unmarked) referential items for address and self-reference, Schegloff (1996a: 441-449) examines alternatives to *you* as forms of address and alternatives to *I* as self-reference forms. Schegloff finds that when a third person reference form is used for self-reference or address, invariably the chosen reference form displays the relevance of the person being referred to, to the position being adopted in the current talk; whether it be in portraying an “official” position towards the referent, or in the context of congratulations, or in the context of a disagreement (as in Fragment 6). The following fragment hails from a therapy session. Rather than refer to herself with the pronoun *I*, as part of her disagreement with her son’s assertion that she didn’t want him to pass, the mother refers to herself as *Mom*. So doing, she uses this reference form to frame her own contrary assertion, in the manner of a correction.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fragment 6</th>
<th>(Schegloff 1996a: 444, citing a prepublication version of Jones &amp; Beach 1995)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1→ Son:</td>
<td>But I didn’t flunk I didn’t flunk Mom didn’t want me to pass cause I missed too much school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>=No:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Therapist:</td>
<td>Oh she wanted you to make=</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Son:</td>
<td>=No:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Mother:</td>
<td>(. .)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Son:</td>
<td>.hh But you didn’t</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Mon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8→ Mother:</td>
<td>Mon made a trade with the school if they</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

In the same paper, Schegloff (1996a: 438-439) asks how reference to persons is accomplished in talk-in-interaction amongst speakers of English:

How do speakers do reference to persons so as to accomplish, on the one hand, that nothing but referring is being done, and/or on the other hand that something else in addition to referring is being done by the talk practice which has been employed?

Fragment 7  (Schegloff 1996a: 439-440) (transcription simplified, my emphasis)
01 Mark  No, "not et aw-" not at a:ll:. I hafta study this whole week.<every ni:ght {(hhh)/(0.8)} en then I got s'mthing planned on Sunday with Laura,
04 (0.5)
05 → Mark She- she wen- she 'n I are gonna go out 'n get drunk et four o'clock in the afternoon.
07 Sheri huh-huh .hhhIn
08 Mark ↓ It's a religious: (0.3) thing we're gonna have.
09 (0.3)
10 I d'know why:, "b't
11 (0.5)
12 Uh::m, (.) No- her ex boyfriend’s getting married
13 → en she's gonna be depressed so;

In line 3 of Fragment 7, the name Laura introduces the referent, inviting the hearer’s recognition of the person being spoken about. On the other hand, the anaphoric use of she in line 13, according to Schegloff, does “reference (or re-reference) simpliciter” because this form is being used for “referring and nothing else” (ibid. 440). There are also certain sorts of noun phrases that are used for doing more than merely referring. For example her ex boyfriend in line 12, does what other potentially alternative referential expressions (Paul, a friend of Laura’s, or her accountant) are unable to do, in providing an account for Laura’s depression.

Following Fox (1984, 1987) (see also Ford & Fox 1996), Schegloff (1996a: 450-458) distinguishes between “locally initial” and “locally subsequent” reference forms. Typically, full noun phrases and names are locally initial forms whereas pronouns are (typically) locally subsequent forms. The forms themselves need to be distinguished from the positions in which they occur, “locally initial” and “locally subsequent” positions.

The most common (and, in this respect, unmarked) instances are composed of locally initial reference forms in locally initial reference positions, and locally subsequent reference forms in locally subsequent reference positions – that is, some full noun phrase for first reference and pronouns thereafter. (Schegloff 1996a: 450)
Fox (1987) finds that full noun phrases (Schegloff’s “locally initial” reference forms) tend to mark sequence boundaries. Their occurrence (as opposed to the occurrence of a pronoun) tends to mark preceding sequences as closed, whereas pronouns indicate that a particular sequence is still open. This basic schema may be utilized for pragmatic ends, in that speakers may use referential expressions to close off sequences and re-open sequences that were previously closed. For example in Fragment 8, after enquiring as to Jessie’s whereabouts, B in line 4 initiates a closing sequence. In line 7, rather than close the conversation altogether, A seeks confirmation as to the identity of the caller. Having received this, in line 10 she reopens the sequence dealing with Jessie’s whereabouts that had been previously closed at line 3. So doing, she refers to Jessie with the pronoun *she*, a locally subsequent reference form. By choosing the pronoun rather than a locally initial form (for example, her name), B treats the previous sequence as still open, rather than opening a new sequence altogether.

Fragment 8  (Fox 1987: 39-40)

1 A. Hello
2 B. Is Jessie there?
3 A. (No) Jessie's over at 'er mother's for a couple da:ys
4 B. A'right thank you,
5 A. Yr wel:come?
6 B. Bye,
7 A. Dianne?
8 B. Yeah,
9 A. OH I THOUGHT that w'z you,
10 → A. Uh-she's over et Gramma Lizie's for a couple days.
11 B. Oh Okay,

This pattern of using locally initial forms in locally initial position and locally subsequent forms subsequently is the unmarked anaphoric pattern. This unmarked pattern represents “situation normal”. Much of the special business of referring lies in deviating from this pattern – namely, using initial forms in subsequent position and subsequent forms in initial position.

One environment where locally initial reference forms regularly surface in locally subsequent positions are in contexts of disagreement. In these cases the same locally

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70 “Locally initial” and “locally subsequent” are Schegloff’s terms, not Fox’s.
initial reference forms tend to be recycled in framing the disagreement (such as the name Alex in line 4 of Fragment 9).

Fragment 9  (Fox 1987: 62) (transcription modified)
1  R.  Those’r Alex’s tanks weren’t they?
2  V.  Pdsn’ me?
3  R.  Weren’t-didn’ they belong tuh Alex?
4  → V.  \No: Alex ha(s) no tanks Alex is tryintuh buy my tank

Schegloff (1996a: 455) finds that in the case of overlapping speech, a speaker may orient to their turn being potentially ineffectual and recast the turn using the same locally initial reference form that was previously used in initial position, though this time in a locally subsequent position (cf. lines 2 and 4 of Fragment 10). In these cases, the reference form should not be considered “a re-mention, but the initial mention ‘for another first time’”.

Fragment 10  (Schegloff 1996a: 454) (transcription modified)
1  Curt  M’Gilton still there?=
2  → Gary  =hhHawkins,
3  Curt  \Oxfrey (run-?)/(runnin-?) I heard Oxfrey gotta new ca:r.
4  → Gary  Hawkins is ruFinnin,
5  Mike  \Oxfrey’s runnin the same car ’e run last year,=

Another important deviation from the unmarked pattern is where locally subsequent forms appear in locally initial position. Schegloff (1996a: 451) remarks that using a free pronoun for a first mention presents a referent as someone the hearer should know. This pattern treats the referent as being potentially “‘on the mind’” of his interlocutors, or that the referent may thus “readily be ‘activated’” (ibid.). Schegloff exemplifies this by recalling President Kennedy’s assassination. Unacquainted people would ask each other, “‘Is he still alive?’”, without making any previous reference to just who it was that might not be alive (ibid.). In spite of this, these references were invariably understood. Using a locally subsequent reference form for initial reference is perhaps more common amongst speakers of Murriny Patha than it is in English.

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71 The name Oxfrey in lines 3 and 5 of Fragment 10 is a further example of locally initial forms being recycled in the context of framing a disagreement.

72 For discussion of this inversion of form and position in English see Kitzinger (2005a, b), Land & Kitzinger (2005) and Sacks (1992, vol 2: 762-763).
5.3.3 Problems with minimization
Minimization is a fundamentally important notion that will inform the analysis of this dissertation. Unfortunately the two dominant scholarly treatments, although similar, differ subtly in ways that have important ramifications for analysis. As they stand, neither of these treatments are entirely satisfactory for the analysis of Murriny Patha conversation that I will engage in. I will therefore endeavour to tease apart the various strands and reweave them in a way that provides useful definitions that will allow me to proceed.

The differing positions are that of Emanuel Schegloff and his colleagues on the one hand, and that of Stephen Levinson on the other. Schegloff’s position is basically that articulated in the Sacks and Schegloff article of 1979, “On occasions when reference is to be done, it should preferably be done with a single reference form” (Sacks & Schegloff 1979: 16). In that paper, Sacks and Schegloff did not explain what they meant by a “single reference form”. Further insight is provided in Hacohen & Schegloff (2006). However, before discussing this position, I will firstly outline Levinson’s findings.

In Levinson’s (1987) paper, he identifies two senses for minimization. One of these senses has an approximate correlation with the Sacks and Schegloff preference, though it differs in not using the phrase “single reference form”. This sense of minimization, Levinson’s “minimization2”, is stated as: “‘shorter’ expressions (with less units of speech production) are preferred to ‘longer’ ones” (Levinson 1987: 72). This sense of minimization has its origins in Zipf’s (1949) Principle of Least Effort. Levinson’s minimization2 is also echoed in his “I-principle” or conversational maxim of minimization: “‘Say as little as necessary’ i.e. produce the minimal linguistic clues sufficient to achieve your communicational ends…” (Levinson 1987: 68).

One of the strengths of minimization2 not necessarily adhering to “single reference forms” is that it can be seen to apply to domains other than person reference. For example, Levinson finds support for this construal of minimization in the preference for self-initiation of self-repair, where speakers encountering troubles generally repair their talk in the same turn as the trouble encountered. Schegloff, Jefferson & Sacks (1977) demonstrate this to be preferred to other-initiation of self-repair, which otherwise sees the repair sequence extended over three turns. This same-turn self-initiation of repair is more minimal because fewer units of speech production are required to deal with the problems.
Levinson also finds similar support in the truncation of sequences. For example, telephone opening sequences maximally consist of greetings plus self-identifications, as in Fragment 11. However where possible, the demonstrated preference is for greetings with “submerged self-identifications” (Levinson 1987: 89) – that is, where the recipient recognizes the caller’s voice – in the greeting-turn, as in Fragment 12.

**Fragment 11**  Greetings plus self-identifications (Levinson 1987: 89) [Schegloff 1979]

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>C: ((Rings))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>R: Hello,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>C: Hi. Susan?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>R: Yes,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>C: This's Judith (. ) Rossman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>R: Judith!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Fragment 12**  Greetings with submerged self-identifications (Levinson 1987: 89) [Schegloff 1979]

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>C: ((Rings))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>R: Hello</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>C: Hello</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>R: Hi</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

However even within the more limited domain of person reference, the conceptualization of minimization as preferring fewer units of speech production has clear advantages over the Scheglovian version. Because it is not framed in terms of reference forms, it has potential for better correlation with grammatical arguments, which, rather than reference forms, can be thought of as the true locus of reference (see §6.2). In Chapter 9, we will see that minimization also plays a role in shaping prosodic reference. This “supra-segmental” reference operates within the prosodic domain; that is, at a level of linguistic structure that is higher than that of segments, and higher than that of referential expressions.

The other sense of minimization that Levinson identifies, “minimization1”, relates to the notion of semantic informativeness: “semantically general expressions are preferred to semantically specific ones” (Levinson 1987: 72). Levinson (1987: 94) notes that usually “minimization1 and minimization2 go hand in hand”. However, there are situations where the two senses do not go hand in hand. The word minimization has here been applied to two distinct concepts. As a result, we effectively have three different conceptualizations of minimization: Sacks and Schegloff’s preferring single reference forms, Levinson’s (2) which prefers fewer linguistic units and Levinson’s (1) which prefers semantically general expressions.
Having come from a Gricean perspective rather than a CA perspective, Levinson aims for maximum generality. He recognizes that both of his senses for minimization involve “less” of something (fewer formal units of speech production and less specificity). He thus applies a label that captures this reduction. Thirty years later (Levinson 2007), he repackages his two senses of minimization as the principle of economy (see below). Because much of his 2007 chapter deals specifically with a preference for using non-specific expressions (and not for shorter linguistic forms), the opportunity to provide some clarity has been passed up. I will return to this problem in due course.

As stated earlier, Sacks and Schegloff’s minimization (1979), the preference for “single reference forms”, is problematic. In that paper, where they largely discuss the use of proper names as recognitionals, it is unclear exactly what they mean by a “single reference form”, if not a proper name. Some insight is provided in a paper by Hacohen and Schegloff (2006), where these two authors investigate the preference for minimization in Hebrew. Present and future tensed verbs in Hebrew incorporate pronominal suffixes marking person (1\textsuperscript{st}, 2\textsuperscript{nd} and 3\textsuperscript{rd}), number (singular and plural) and gender (male and female, except in the case of 1\textsuperscript{st} person references). The language also has a series of free pronouns. Because the free pronouns inflect for all the same categories as the verbal pronominal suffixes, from the perspective of their ability to specify the referent, they are referentially redundant (though not pragmatically redundant).

Hacohen and Schegloff construe verbal cross-reference as being “minimal”, and the co-occurrence of anaphoric free pronouns and cross-referring verb forms as being “more-than-minimal” (that is, something more than single reference forms).

Here, as elsewhere, observing the preference for minimization is a central feature of referring simpliciter – that is doing “just referring” and nothing else. Adding a pro-term reference when person is conveyed in the verb-form constitutes a departure from this preference, and implements and conveys the accomplishment of something else in addition to simply referring (Hacohen & Schegloff 2006: 1307).

For self-reference and address, Hacohen and Schegloff find that the combination of verbal cross-referencing with an additional free pronoun surfaces in disagreement contexts, and also when a stance is taken by a speaker that foreshadows a less than desirable outcome for the addressee. The authors note (ibid. 1311) that these findings parallel Fox’s (1987) findings for American English, whereby the use of something “more than the default form” in locally subsequent positions (that is, full noun phrases
in locally subsequent positions) forms part of the strategy for displaying disagreement (recall Fragment 9, p. 73).

Interestingly, although Hacohen and Schegloff (2006) do not mention Levinson’s dissection of minimization, the last paragraph of their paper states that:

[…] the preference for minimization is a formal preference; that is, it is a preference for the use of a single form and not necessarily for a minimization of referential information, for, in Hebrew and English data, an additional form may carry no new referential information, other than the sheer fact of its addition. (Hacohen & Schegloff 2006: 1311) (My italics.)

The statement appears to be an oblique reference to (and seemingly, a rejection of) the semantically general sense of Levinson’s minimization1. In Chapter 7 we will see that the Hebrew situation parallels that of Murriny Patha in that the addition of a free pronoun to verbal cross-reference results in forms that are more than minimal, but are as general semantically as verbal cross-reference on its own. It is precisely because of this situation that I separate minimization2 from minimization1.

On the question of the “single reference form” the authors state that:

“a single form” need not be a single word; it can be a phrase, it can be a clause, and, […] it can be less than a word – an affix. Its minimality is not defined by words; it is better understood by its packaging – sometimes a recognizably complete grammatical construction, sometimes its delivery in some recognizably complete-for-now prosodic contour – whether up or down, sometimes a gestural component such as a point, and others. (Hacohen & Schegloff 2006: 1306)

I suggest that the difficulty they have in defining the term is to be expected. The problem lies in the singularity of its construal. Minimization is indeed best understood by its packaging; but it is a packaging that is achieved by using “less material”, rather than “single forms”.

In order to adhere to this construal of minimization, Schegloff is himself forced to creatively re-interpret the “single reference form”. In his most recent paper on self-identification in telephone calls (2007b)73, he shows that in the event of an answerer not recognizing the caller, the caller may initially self-identify with a first name (lines 5 of Fragment 13 and Fragment 14), and then upgrade the self-identification by adding a surname as an increment to the first name (line 7 of Fragment 13 and line 5 of Fragment 14).

Fragment 13  (Schegloff 2007b: 143-144)
1     ((ring))
2 Lau  H’llo; ,

73 This paper is a reworking of Schegloff (1979).
In Fragment 13 the increment is added following half a second of silence where Laura displays no sign of recognizing the caller. In Fragment 14, the increment is added upon completion of the first name. In each of these cases the upgrade to a full name is achieved by incrementing the preceding turn constructional units (which were grammatically, pragmatically and prosodically complete on production of the first name) in such a fashion as to fit them grammatically so they are parasitic on the preceding TCU. According to Schegloff, by upgrading in this fashion, rather than by upgrading using an altogether separate TCU (e.g., It’s Peter. Peter Williams., or This’s Judith. Judith Rossman.), the caller can simultaneously satisfy the preferences for minimization and for [targeted] recipient design, because the upgraded item still functions as a single reference form.

[... B]y making that additional resource an increment to the preceding turn-constructional unit, the self-reference is made to conform to the preference for minimization by being constituted by a single reference form, while slipping additional information into that single reference form (Schegloff 2007b: 145).

I suggest that while this refashioning of the forms to fit the preference certainly works for these two English examples, the use of incremental TCUs is just as well explained by construing minimization as “less material”. In a language like Murriny Patha, which frequently lacks a 1-1 correspondence between grammatical elements and referents, construing minimization of “less” has the advantage that no definitional fudging of “single” is required.

The issue isn’t whether or not “single” can be refashioned to fit the forms, it is whether “single” makes for an adequately broad construal of minimization to explain the constraining of referential material that actually occurs in natural conversation. In her work on person reference in Tzeltal conversation, Brown (2007) follows Sacks &
Schegloff (1979: 16) in construing minimal expressions as “single reference forms”. More precisely, she says that the minimal forms are single noun phrases produced under a single intonation contour (Brown 2007: 186), whereas non-minimal references consist of more than one noun phrase. By this reckoning, “minimal” expressions in Tzeltal can be fairly lengthy constructs (as in example 5.2) – at least as lengthy as “non-minimal” expressions (as in example 5.3). That these “non-minimal” constructions are not uncommon in the Tzeltal data\(^74\) raises the question of whether this construal of minimization is the correct one.

5.2 a minimal expression (Brown 2007: 187)\(^75\)

\[
\text{kuxul to ni bal ya’tik te j-me’tik me’ lus kawayu-e}
\]

\[
\text{DET Cl-’madam’ DEIC first name last name-CLI}
\]

“Is that Mrs Lus Kawayu still alive?”

5.3 a non-minimal expression (Brown 2007: 194)

\[
\text{wa´yanima ik’labil bel sok a´nich’jun j-pedro k-u´un}
\]

\[
\text{2E-nephew Cl-first name 1E-REL}
\]

“So you see, he was suddenly out along with your nephew my Pedro”

If single reference forms are single noun phrases produced under single intonation contours, then should an English noun phrase with an embedded relative clause, e.g., *my uncle John who drives the bus*, be considered more minimal than a pair of appositional noun phrases produced under separate intonation contours, e.g., *my uncle John, the bus driver*? And should a pair of appositional noun phrases be considered more minimal if they are produced under a single intonation contour than if they are produced under separate intonation contours? However, the problem of the “single reference form” is not merely one of construal. A cursory examination of any English conversational corpus will reveal that for reference to persons, relative clauses embedded within noun phrases are low frequency items in natural conversation. The paucity of such person-reference items suggests that if a preference for minimization operates at all (and the evidence suggests that it does) then such a preference must also constrain against complex lengthy forms, in addition to constraining against noun phrases in apposition.

\(^74\) Brown (2007: 191) states that 10% of initial references to third persons are made with constructions of this type.

\(^75\) Abbreviations for Tzeltal glossing (after Brown 2007: 201-202):

1/2/3E = first/second/third person Ergative (marking ergative, possessor), Cl = classifier, CLI = clause final clitic, DEIC= deictic particle, DET = definite determiner, REL = relational noun.
In the first of two papers examining person reference of the Papuan language Yélî Dnye (on Rossel Island), Levinson (2005) modifies the two Sacks and Schegloff preferences. Although not named as such, minimization is expressed as, “use a single or minimal reference form if possible” (Levinson 2005: 448). This adaptation is precisely the definition that I will adopt for the present research. In his second paper Levinson (2007) takes a different tack. Here he takes the two Sacks and Schegloff preferences for minimization and [targeted] recipient design and reworks them as a pair of conversational maxims that he calls the principles of economy, “[m]inimize the expressive means” and recognition, “[a]chieve recognition in the strongest sense possible” (Levinson 2007: 30). Readers will notice that economy here corresponds to his earlier minimization2, “‘shorter’ expressions (with less units of speech production) are preferred to ‘longer’ ones” (Levinson 1987: 72). As a maxim, economy is itself framed as a minimized version of his earlier conversational maxim of minimization: “‘Say as little as necessary’ i.e. produce the minimal linguistic clues sufficient to achieve your communicational ends…” (Levinson 1987: 68). On the other hand, recognition here echoes [targeted] recipient design76, though the term “recognitionals” has here been avoided. Moreover, in each preference he avoids mentioning reference forms altogether.

Levinson then goes on to reframe the two maxims as naturally opposing principles governing referential specificity. Recognition he frames as: “[r]estrict the set of referents so as to achieve recognition” (Levinson 2007: 31) whereas its counterpart, economy, becomes “[d]on’t over-restrict the set of referents explicitly” (ibid.). Readers will notice that this reframed version of economy has a closer correlation with his minimization1: “semantically general expressions are preferred to specific ones” (Levinson 1987: 72).

What Levinson identifies is a tension between two opposing design principles. These principles state that on the one hand that reference should preferably be done with specific reference forms and on the other, that reference should be done with vaguer forms that are less specific. The specificity of the reference forms play a role in how likely recipients are to identify a referent. Binominal first-name-plus-last-name combinations are more referentially specific than first names because in any community, there will be very few people to whom the binomial may be applied. On

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76 Cf. “if recognition is possible, try and achieve it” (Sacks & Schegloff 1979: 18).
the other hand, other reference forms like him and the man have more general senses (because at any one time there may be a multitude of people who satisfy the senses of these expressions). Effectively, they have broader denotata and therefore larger sets of potential referents. The value of Levinson’s contribution is in alerting conversation analysts not to ignore referential semantics.

Levinson was right to distance the preference for “semantically general expressions” from the word minimization and its baggage (the “single reference form”). He has generalized what minimization1 and minimization2 have in common and presented this as a conversational maxim. This does not prevent minimization1 and minimization2 operating as conversational preferences. For this dissertation I will investigate the question of specificity of reference forms and the positions in which the forms are placed. If I describe a reference form as minimal, I want to be clear that the reference form is short (and quite possibly also “single”). I want it to be understood that the speaker has employed an economy of expression – fewer linguistic units. I do not want this notion confused with expressions having a more general sense and having broader denotata.

I will therefore rework each of Levinson’s (1987) senses for minimization into separate preferences, retaining the name Minimization (in capitals) for his second sense (because minimization is a well-established term), and assigning a new label, Generalization, to his minimization1.

MINIMIZATION: If possible, prefer single or minimal reference forms (fewer units of speech production) (after Sacks and Schegloff 1979, after Levinson 2005).

GENERALIZATION: If possible, prefer general reference forms and don’t be overly specific about who you are referring to (after Levinson 1987, 2007).

The counterpart to Generalization, its paired polar opposite, I will call the preference for Specification (after Levinson’s recognition (2007: 31)).

SPECIFICATION: If possible, prefer specific reference forms that maximize the potential for achieving recognition.

Although Levinson’s (2007) maxim of Recognition is presented so that it subsumes the Sacks and Schegloff preference for [Targeted] Recipient Design, I suggest that (at least for Murriny Patha conversation) we are better served by separate preferences for achieving recognition. On the one hand, we need a dedicated preference for using reference forms as recognitionals (Targeted Recipient Design). On the other hand, we need a preference for being referentially specific. Although most forms used as recognitionals are quite specific (in that they have restrictive
denotata, and hence few potential referents), in Chapter 8 we will see that under
certain circumstances, speakers recruit expressions that have a very general sense
(pronouns) for use as recognitionals. Each of these distinct preferences thus play a
role in securing the recipients’ recognition of the referent (and normally at the same
time), though they do not play the same role.

Levinson (2007: 32-33) ranks certain categories of definite reference forms in
terms of how specific or general the terms are. The categories he chooses for English
are pronouns, minimal descriptions (that man, the neighbour, the girl down the
street), kinterms and names. For English conversation he proposes the scale of
“diminishing referential competition” 77:

5.4 pronouns > minimal descriptions > kinterms > names

where pronouns have the most general sense and names have the least general sense.
“[T]here will be a much larger pool of candidates that satisfy the semantic conditions
of he than those that satisfy the condition of being called John Rickard” (ibid. 33).
Specification (Levinson’s recognition) will tend to push the scale towards the right, in
the direction of names – names being the most specific expressions. The reason for
this is that at any one instance in a conversation, there will only ever be a few
candidates who satisfy the sense of a name. Kinterms are also reasonably specific
though they are normally not as specific as names. On the other hand, Generalization
(Levinson’s economy) will tend to push the scale towards the left, in the direction of
pronouns – pronouns being the most vague expressions (because at any one time,
there are potentially numerous candidates that might satisfy the sense of such an
expression).

Generalization (not restricting the set of possible referents) helps to explain why
conversationalists generally don’t use binomials when a single name is adequate for
achieving recognition – something that minimization when construed as using “single
reference forms” cannot explain. Levinson suggests that for English conversation, the
default status of first names as recognitionals might be explained as the meeting point
where the force promoting the restriction of reference and the force opposing the
restriction of reference come to meet (see Figure 5.1).

77 Levinson’s “referential competition” might be thought of as the number of candidate persons that
satisfy the sense of a particular expression in a given contextualized instance of its usage.
5.3.4 Further preferences

In recent years the fields of conversation analysis and interactional linguistics have grown immensely. This growth has seen a flourish of interest in person reference and two major publications in 2007. The first of these is a special issue of *Discourse Studies* edited by Gene Lerner and Celia Kitzinger (2007). The second is the collection edited by Enfield & Stivers (2007): *Person Reference in Interaction: Linguistic, Cultural and Social Perspectives*. The research draws on a wide range of cultures and language types, and the different researchers have a range of disciplinary backgrounds. Emerging from the volume are further conversational preferences that influence how references to persons are cast. The first preference that we will consider is the preference for Association.

5.3.4.1 The preference for Association

The preference for Association hails from Brown’s (2007) research amongst the Tzeltal speaking Mayans from Tenejapa in the highlands of Chiapas, Mexico. She phrases the preference as follows: “associate the referent as closely as possible to the current conversation participants” (ibid: 199). In Tzeltal conversation Association is predominantly enacted via kinterms. The Tenejapans have an extensive classificatory kinship system. Because they also have a very small set of personal names to choose from, in Tzeltal conversation it is kinterms, rather than names, that form the basis for most recognitional references.

In Tzeltal, kinterms are obligatorially possessed. The propositus of the kinterm (the person through whom the kinterm is reckoned) is cross-referenced by a

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78 Brown (2007) describes two series of trinomial naming conventions that operate in the region. The indigenous one consists of a first name sourced from a very limited pool of possible first names (12 male, 12 female), a “Spanish” patrilineal clan’s surname (e.g., *Gusman*) and a sub-clan lineage name (e.g., *Ch’ijk*), also patrilineal. The “Spanish” system consists of the Spanish equivalent of the first name, the father’s surname (i.e., the referent’s patrilineal clan-name) and the mother’s surname (i.e., mother’s patrilineal clan-name) (the patrilineal clans are exogamous, so each individual necessarily has different surnames from both father and mother). Thus for example the person bearing the name *Xun Gusman Ch’ijk* under the indigenous system will be called *Juana Gusman Lopez* under the “Spanish” system.
pronominal prefix to the kinterm. This allows kinterms to be reckoned (triangulated) through the current speaker (as in example 5.5), though the addressee (as in 5.6) or through a third person (as in 5.7). For third persons, the propositus is also frequently expressed by an overt noun phrase (as is the case in example 5.7).

5.5 Brown (2007: 195)79
k-ichan
1E-mother’s brother
“my mother’s brother”

5.6 Brown (2007: 189)
in te ‘-wix-e
DEIC DET 2E-elder sister-CLI
“this elder sister of yours”

5.7 Brown (2007: 198)
x-nich’an anima j-mamal tajun
3E-son deceased CL-oldman uncle
“The son of deceased old man my uncle.”

It is the anchoring of kinterms to a propositus that enable the preference for Association to be realized. Thus in designing recognitionals, the normal practice is for speakers to choose as propositus themselves (as we saw in example 5.5), their addressees (as in 5.6), or both (as in examples 5.8 and 5.9), or another person that is connected to either themselves or their addressees (or both).

5.8 Brown (2007: 188)
j-kompare-tik alonso guzman santis-e
1E-compadre-1Plinc first name clan name mother’s clan name-CLI
“Our (incl.) godfather Alonso Guzman Santis”

5.9 (=5.3) Brown (2007: 194)
wa’yanim a-‘nich’jun j-pedro k-u’un
2E-nephew Cl-first name 1E-REL
“So you see, he was suddenly out along with your nephew my Pedro”

However, Brown (2007: 189-191) claims that if a referent may be equally associated to either the current speaker or the addressee, then it is preferable to associate the referent to the addressee (cf. Haviland 2007: 241). In example 5.10, the speaker refers to his own son by using the addressee as propositus for the kinterm ichan, classificatory “mother’s brother”.

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79 The abbreviations for the Tzeltal glosses are listed in footnote 75, on p. 79.
The preference for Association seems to be prevalent in conversation conducted in Mayan languages other than Tzeltal, such as Tzotzil (Haviland 2007) and Yucatec (Hanks 2007), as well as in the Papuan language, Yélî Dnye (Levinson 2007). Brown suggests that the preference for Association may be a consequence of having possessed kinterms as the default reference forms for recognitional reference. In Tzeltal conversation, Brown (2007: 200) claims that Association is unremarkable— even the association of the referent to both speaker and addressee (as in examples 5.8 and 5.9) is (depending on context) unremarkable, “not conveying anything special beyond person reference”. Stivers (2007) shows that in restricted contexts, the preference also surfaces in conversations conducted in English and in other European languages. However when it does, its occurrence is not at all unmarked. Association is primarily employed for affiliating with, or disaffiliating from, the referent.

Stivers (2007) takes up Schegloff’s (1996a: 438-439) question, “How do speakers do reference to persons so as to accomplish […] that something else in addition to referring is being done by the talk practice which has been employed.” Whereas Schegloff (1996a) examined locally initial forms in locally subsequent position and vice versa, Stivers examines recognitional reference forms that depart from the expected unmarked variety. In the English, Italian, Dutch, Spanish and Danish conversations that Stivers examines, she finds that personal names are the unmarked forms for siblings, extended family, friends, colleagues and partners (Stivers 2007: 76). However for reference to the parents or grandparents of either the speaker or the recipient, then kinterms are the unmarked choice. On the other hand, if a person’s name is not known, or is thought to be problematic, or when person is best known in a specific capacity, then recognitional descriptors (e.g., our dentist) are the unmarked choice for recognicionals.

Stivers is centrally concerned with the sorts of recognitionals that depart from the unmarked choice for the particular circumstance; for instance, a departure from an
expected name to a kinterm or recognitional descriptor. Stivers calls such expressions “alternative recognitionals”. For a term to be an alternative recognitional:

1. the speaker must know the unmarked form (e.g., the name).
2. the speaker must (a) assume the hearer knows the unmarked form and (b) assume that the hearer would assume the speaker knows it.
3. the form must still be recognitional for the hearer (Stivers 2007: 77).

Stivers identifies four types of alternative recognitionals: demonstrative prefaced recognitionals, “in the know” references, those references that are associated to an addressed recipient, those that are associated to the speaker. Speakers tend to fit these reference forms to the action that the speaker is engaged in (complaining, congratulating, celebrating etc.). Each of these four types are employed for either affiliating or disaffiliating with the referent in question. However, it is the last two types that concern our preference for Association.

Stivers finds that recipient-associated alternative recognitionals are most often used in the context of complaints. Such forms problematize the referent and place the referent within the domain of responsibility of the addressee, implicating the addressee in finding a solution to the problem that forms the basis of the complaint. Fragment 15 shows an addressee-associated alternative recognitional used in a complaint. When talking to her daughter, Emma refers to her husband (Bud) as ‘Yer FATHER’ (line 10). By departing from the normal way she talks to her daughter about him (as Dad or as Bud), she problematizes the husband, presenting him as the cause for complaint. By explicitly associating the referent to her addressee (her daughter), she places him within the daughter’s domain of responsibility, thus implicating her in finding a solution to her problem.81

Fragment 15  Stivers (2007: 80-81)
1  Emma  Well this is ree(.)DICulous fer a ma:n that age.=s=I’ve
2    I: sgid the=u-hga-‘oh::: come q:n nq:w: this is reedICulous;
3   ‘n=’e s’ys ‘nq:’ (.). hhhhh ‘I don’ wan’ any- (.)

81 In lines 1-6 of Fragment 15, Emma, who has marital problems, is complaining on the phone to her sister Lottie about her husband Bud. Emma and Bud had had an argument about having their children over for a Thanksgiving party and Bud ended up walking out, announcing that he would not return for the party. In lines 9-11, Emma reports her earlier phone call to her (and Bud’s) daughter Barbara, in which she announces that he had left her and that the proposed Thanksgiving party might not proceed as planned. The phone call to the daughter was also a complaint. Stivers states that in other calls to Barbara, Emma ordinarily refers to her husband as Dad (a categorial “name” by Stivers’ reckoning, see footnote 80). Rather than refer to him as Dad (or as Bud), she uses the alternative recognitional, Yer FATHER (line 10). Apparently, Barbara does in fact go on to call Bud and ultimately persuades him to attend the party.
On the other hand, alternative recognitionals associated with the speaker tend to place the referent within the domain of responsibility of the speaker; as such, they usually present the referent in a more positive light.

Fragment 16  Stivers (2007: 84)
1 Nic Sunday’s my honey’s birthday;
2 (0.8)
3 Sha Mm.
4 Nic Sunday’s my honey’s birthday.
5 (0.2)
6 Sha I know;: Whatchfu doin’
7 Nic [We wuz gon’ go t’south springs but..]

In Fragment 16, Nicole announces to her friend Shauna that Sunday is her boyfriend Rick’s birthday. Earlier in the conversation, Shauna has already previously referred to her boyfriend by name. Here though, in line 1 she uses the self-associated alternative recognitional my honey, a term of endearment – a term of endearment that Stivers argues is typically reserved for partners. In line 3 Shauna produces an open class repair initiator Mm, which Nicole treats as pertaining to a hearing problem (rather than to a problem of reference), and so repeats the previous utterance (line 4).

By associating the referent to herself, Nicole places the referent within her own domain of responsibility, highlighting the couple’s relationship. The alternative recognitional is fitted to the action that she is undertaking, namely, announcing a reason for celebration. The referent is presented as worthy of a celebration (rather than a cause for complaint, as in the previous fragment).

In Chapter 8 we will see that the preference for Association is extremely important in Murriny Patha conversation. Murriny Patha speakers draw on the affiliative and disaffiliative effects of associative references in order to make authoritative claims about prior knowledge. The preference also combines with a number of other compatible preferences. As such it plays roles in achieving recognition, and in name-avoidance – which brings us to our next preference, Circumspection.
5.3.4.2 Circumspection

The other “preference” to emerge from the Enfield and Stivers’ (2007) volume is what Stephen Levinson (2007) calls the principle of “Circumspection”. Circumspection deals with the need to observe “local restraints” on referring to persons, and to avoid what are otherwise the default reference forms. In high schools, the local constraints prohibit students from using first names to address their teachers. On Rossel Island, where Levinson conducts his research, local constraints include the practice of using christianized names in dealings with the church and with foreigners, whereas ordinarily indigenous names predominate. In the main however, for the Yélf Dnye speakers of Rossel Island, Circumspection deals with the avoidance of personal names under conditions of taboo; an avoidance that often occurs at considerable cost to the progressivity of the conversation.

For reasons I will outline shortly, Levinson’s most succinct articulation of Circumspection is challenged by contradictory evidence from Murriny Patha conversation. For this reason, I prefer to draw on his discussion and piece together a definition. Circumspection is best paraphrased as follows (after Levinson 2007: 31):

CIRCUMSPECTION: If possible, observe culturally specific and/or situationally specific constraints on reference and avoid the default reference forms.

The preference has certain parallels with Stivers’ “alternative recognitionals”, which also are used when the default reference forms are to be avoided (Stivers 2007). In Chapter 8, when we investigate this preference in Murriny Patha, we will see that a class of “avoidance recognitionals” are recruited when the task of name avoidance is performed.

I now turn to Levinson’s evidence for Circumspection. Firstly, some background. The Papuan language Yélf Dnye is spoken by all Rossel Islanders, of whom there are approximately 4000. All adults on the island know each other and as such, all person-referents are potentially recognizable. According to Levinson, Rossel Islanders generally make a point of trying to identify each person referred to.

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82 Whereas a number of papers furnished evidence for the preference for Association, the jury is out (Stivers et al. 2007: 16-17) as to whether Circumspection should be considered a universal preference. Levinson does not describe Circumspection as a preference, but as a principle (which he expresses as a maxim).

83 Levinson (2007: 31, footnote 5) argues that Circumspection differs from the situation reported by Stivers where fitting the form to the action that the speaker was engaged in was the motivation for avoiding the default reference form. For this reason, Levinson expresses Circumspection as “observe further local constraints” (Levinson 2007: 31, my italics), where further constraints might be applied once other constraints such as “recipient design” and “fitting the form to the action” have already been exhausted.
On Rossel Island there are a number of taboos on naming individuals: there are strict taboos for certain in-laws and lesser taboos on direct reference to other in-laws, as well as the avoidance of direct reference to the recently deceased. It is also preferable to refer to senior kin using kinterms. Names of co-present parties are also to be avoided. These amount to “local constraints” on person reference for which Circumspection comes into play.

Levinson groups the Yélî Dnye initial person references into four main types: names, kinterms, minimal descriptions and “zeros or inflected predicates”. Levinson uses the term “zeros” for when no denoting noun phrase is present and reference to persons is either implicit or through verbal agreement. However all of these forms are frequently accompanied by pointing, usually to the person in question’s place of residence. The person reference scale of diminishing referential competition (or, of increasing specificity) that Levinson (2007: 55) proposes for the Yélî Dnye is:

5.11 “zero” (+ point) > minimal descriptions (+ point) > kinterms (+ point) > names (+ point)

The forms to the right are the most specific. These are the form that best satisfy Levinson’s principle of Recognition (my Specification). The forms to the left are the most general. They are the forms that best favour his principle of economy (my Generalization). Levinson states that Circumspection, like economy, pushes the scale towards the left, in the direction of greater referential competition. For instance, in many cultures there is a constraint on children addressing adult members of their family by name, so that instead they use kinterms. Kinterms are generally less specific than names and fall to the left of names on such scales as the one proposed for Yélî Dnye in example 5.11, and the one proposed for English in example 5.4 (p. 82).

As foreshadowed previously, Levinson expresses Circumspection as a maxim dealing with the restriction of reference, “Show circumspection by not over-reducing the set of referents explicitly” (Levinson 2007: 31). Whilst it would appear that Circumspection necessarily pushes reference towards vaguer, more general expressions, the Murriny Patha data suggests that this is not the case. Certainly, when

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^84 Levinson’s “zero” more or less equates with the Murriny Patha category that I call “verbal cross-reference” (that is, where the speaker recruits only a polysynthetic verb, a verb or a voun for referring), a category that also includes implicit person references (see §7.1.1).
speakers show circumspection and names are avoided, the alternatives are overwhelmingly less specific than names. However in §8.2, I discuss a notable exception to this tendency. In an effort to avoid a restricted name, one speaker produced a highly complex, highly specific reference that is spread over two turns at talk. This “non-minimal” description does not fit into any of the usual referential categories. I therefore conclude that the reduced referential specificity is incidental to the fact that names (demonstrably the default reference forms for initial reference) are the most specific of the regular categories of reference forms. I find that Circumspection does not predict the forms to be used, it only predicts the forms to be avoided. The tendency towards lesser specificity is a natural outcome of the language’s own specificity hierarchy. 85

Because names are the most referentially specific forms, and they are also the forms to be avoided under Circumspection, sometimes problems emerge that require repairing. In these repairs we see reference forms upgraded in terms of referential specificity. The overall tendency is to move up the scale proposed in 5.11 (p. 89), toward more specific forms, gradually relaxing economy (Generalization and Minimization) as required, step-by-step. Circumspection has the effect of spreading reference over multiple turns, thus revealing preferences such as recognition (Specification) and economy (Minimization, Generalization) – preferences that would otherwise remain invisible because the optimal reference forms used in unproblematic reference simultaneously satisfy multiple preferences.

In particular, Levinson investigates “third position” repair sequences (Schegloff 1992) where repair is other-initiated using person specific repair initiators (the Yélî Dnye equivalents of who?, which person? or which John?) rather than open class repair initiators (Drew 1997) (e.g., huh?).

In some of these repairs, names are ultimately produced, though speakers often display serious misgivings about producing them, as in Fragment 17.

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**Fragment 17**  (Levinson 2007: 57, example 19)

1. Kawêde nga ani tóó, u pyinê d:q, ngméê, ← zero, trouble source
   I’m here today, I’m ?looking for its repaying.?
2. law nkwodo ãtê ni kmungo
   I took it up with the law. ((eye points))
3. T n:uu ye ngmepe
   Who is paying it back to you? ← person specific RI

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85 For a fuller discussion see Fragment 56, on p. 217.
In Fragment 17, K is discussing the recovering of a “bride price” that is due to him. The initial reference to his debtors (line 1) is implicit in the use of a gerund, “its repaying”. When this fails to achieve recognition, T produces a person-specific initiation of repair (“who”, line 3), which is repeated in line 5. The upgraded form consists of a minimal description built around a kinterm; effectively, “those two brothers-in-law”. At this point, the two interlocutors gaze at each other in silence for 3 seconds, during which there is no sign of T recognizing the parties referred to. In line 8, K produces a further upgrade by naming one of the two brothers-in-law. Following two further seconds of mutual gaze, T produces a further person specific repair initiator (line 10), which results in K’s producing the name of the second debtor (line 11). T’s recognition is acknowledged in line 12 with a nod. The eventual upgrades to names are seemingly produced with great reluctance.

In the case of more serious taboos, speakers will avoid producing a name at all costs and interlocutors are obliged to guess the identity of the individuals in question. In Fragment 18, not only does N avoid naming a tabooed affine, his interlocutors are forced to guess the person’s identity, also avoid producing the person’s name as they guess.

Fragment 18  (Levinson 2007: 60, example 20)

1  N  wu dmââdi a kędé Thursday ngê anê loó  ← minimal description
    That girl told me she would go across on Thursday.
2  (0.6)
3  P  n:uu ngê?  ← person specific RI
    Who did?
4  (0.8)
5  N  “(yi dmââdi)”  ← minimal description
    That.mentioned girl
6  (1.2)
7  P  Mby:aa tp:oo módó (ngê)  ← 1º guess
    The daughter of Mby:aa did?
In Fragment 18, N introduces a tabooed referent (his own daughter-in-law) with a minimal description *wu dmââdi*, “that girl” (line 1). After a brief silence, P other-initiates a repair (line 3) with a person-specific repair initiator. Following further silence (0.8 seconds, line 4), N recycles the reference form “that girl” (sotto voce), though this time using an anaphoric demonstrative, “that girl previously mentioned”. Following a notable silence (1.2 seconds, line 6), N’s interlocutors produce two guesses (lines 7 and 9), both of which are composed of kinterms. In the silences that follow these guesses, N does not produce any signs of assent. In line 11, P repeats M’s previous guess, “Kpâtuta’s wife” (in overlap with a turn that instructs a group of children to move on). In reply, N produces a slight eyebrow flash (EBF, line 13) which signals assent. This is followed by a head-point to the east, to the referent’s place of residence. The third guess, “Kpâtuta’s widow” is produced in overlap with N’s third reworking of the minimal description, “that girl” (line 15). Kpâtuta’s widow is an upgrade in specificity from the previous guess, Kpâtuta’s wife, because the number of potential Kpâtutas is reduced (the husband, N’s own son, is deceased). Assent is displayed by a stronger eyebrow flash (line 15).

Circumspection has the effect of spreading adequate reference over a series of turns. In each of these fragments, names – the default reference forms – are avoided. In Fragment 18, they are avoided completely, whereas in Fragment 17 they are eventually produced, though with considerable resistance.

The opposing pressures model nicely captures the trajectory of the repairs. In each of these fragments, the repairs are performed as step-by-step upgrades in referential specificity. In Fragment 17, the initial zero is upgraded to a kinterm, then eventually to a pair of names. In Fragment 18, the three guesses are all upgrades to kinterms (from minimal descriptions). In addition, N upgraded one of those guesses
by pointing to the direction of the referent’s place of residence. The cumulative effect of these upgrades is in reducing the pool of possible referents. The overall direction of the upgrades is toward greater specificity.

In each of these fragments, economy is incrementally relaxed in favour of recognition (alternatively, both Minimization and Generalization are incrementally relaxed in favour of Specification). The trajectory of these drawn-out repairs cannot be explained by a single relaxation of Minimization (irrespective of whether Minimization is construed as “single” forms or “minimal” forms) in favour of Targeted Recipient Design. Why for instance in Fragment 18, did N not simply produce an adequate recognitional at line 5 (e.g., “my son’s widow”)?; and why, in Fragment 17, did K not produce a pair of names at line 6? Such strategies would have amounted to single relaxations of Minimization, rather than the multiple relaxations we find in these fragments. Instead we see packets of referential information released, step-by-step. The preference for using specific reference forms (recognition/Specification) is constrained by the opposing preference for not being overly specific (economy/Generalization). The recipients’ eventual recognition is ultimately achieved once these opposing pressures come to a satisfactory compromise.

Because of the numerous naming restrictions in Wadeye, Circumspection is a very important preference in Murriny Patha conversation. In Wadeye, as on Rossel Island, the avoidance of personal names often has the effect of spreading optimal recognitional reference over several turns at talk, thus revealing other preferences (Minimization, Generalization, Specification, etc.) that are not so readily apparent when names are used for achieving recognition. In Chapter 8 we will see how all of these conversational preferences integrate in a (possibly) complete referential system.

5.4 Conclusion
In this Chapter, by detailing the important developments in the field, I have endeavoured to provide a platform for the interactional analysis of person reference in Murriny Patha. In particular, I have worked through some of the tricky terminology – minimization in particular – so as to put the remainder of the dissertation on a sound terminological footing. The various preferences discussed here will be taken up in subsequent chapters, as we turn to the Murriny Patha data. In order that there is no

86 That is, Minimization as I defined it on p. 81.
confusion in the future about whose versions of the preferences are being discussed, they are restated here with the definitions that will be adopted hereon.

MINIMIZATION: If possible, prefer single or minimal reference forms (fewer units of speech production).

TARGETED RECIPIENT DESIGN: If possible, prefer recognitionals.

GENERALIZATION: If possible, prefer general reference forms and don’t be overly specific about who you are referring to.

SPECIFICATION: If possible, prefer specific reference forms that maximize the potential for achieving recognition.

CIRCUMSPECTION: If possible, observe culturally specific and/or situationally specific constraints on reference and avoid the default reference forms.

ASSOCIATION: If possible, closely associate the referent to the current conversation’s participants.

We’ve seen that Schegloff and Levinson each make important contributions to person reference research. Although they hail from different research traditions, and have different ways of approaching their data, there are certain similarities in their findings. Schegloff stresses the importance of looking at the forms used (whether minimal or more than minimal) and the positions in which they occur (whether locally initial or locally subsequent). Levinson’s interest is in the categories of forms that are used and their referential semantics (as well as their resultant pragmatic effects). Schegloff is interested in departures from the unmarked pattern of using locally initial forms initially and locally subsequent forms subsequently. Levinson is interested in departures from the unmarked forms for initial reference (names). Each investigates departures from the unmarked way of doing things. The approaches are different but there is no reason why they cannot be combined. A consideration of Generalization and Specification will add power to an analysis of form and position. Locally initial reference forms tend to have greater referential specificity, whereas forms that are locally subsequent tend to be more general and vague. I will investigate this phenomenon in Chapter 7, where I consider the varieties of anaphoric patterning found in conversation. In particular, I find that the reference forms that are typically used for the very first reference tend to be a specific subset of those reference forms used when locally initial reference is re-established following a topical digression or juncture. I thus find that the initialization of reference can be considered from both global and local perspectives. Importantly, the tendency for initial references to be
made with forms that are more specific than the forms that follow is a tendency that is played out on both global and local scales.

The integration of conversational preferences in Murriny Patha will be taken up in Chapter 8. Particularly, I explore the workings of the two “new” preferences to emerge from the Enfield & Stivers (2007) volume, Association and Circumspection. I show how these two preferences are mutually compatible. Whilst Circumspection will not predict the reference form to be used, Association is best satisfied by using *triangular reference forms* such as kinterms. Importantly, we will see that different categories of reference forms are used to satisfy more than one preference at the same time, and that each preference may be satisfied by more than one category of reference form.

Firstly however, before considering the categories of reference forms, we need a more detailed examination of the sorts of words that are recruited for referring and how these words are used to denote sets of potential referents. We thus turn to the nuts and bolts of reference, the morphosyntax of the language – at least to that portion of the morphosyntax that is relevant to the present undertaking.