



# Talk in Interaction

*Comparative Dimensions*

Edited by

Markku Haakana, Minna Laakso and Jan Lindström

Studia Fennica  
Linguistica

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# Foreword

This volume is a collection of conversation analytical studies of interactional practices and structures. The authors investigate, for instance, how American journalists interview presidents, how interactants correct errors in other speakers' talk, how children negotiate in play interaction, and how disappointment is displayed in interaction. The volume is also methodological in nature: the theme of the book is comparative analysis within conversation analysis (CA). The chapters explore and discuss several kinds of comparative approaches to talk in interaction. The authors analyze, for instance, how the practices of interviewing presidents have changed over time, and how the negotiation practices of girls and boys differ from each other.

Conversation analysis is applied as a method in several disciplines; the authors of this volume have their background in sociology, linguistics and logopedics. We hope that the book is of interest to all those scholars who share an interest in the research of naturally occurring interaction. Because of its methodological nature, we hope that the collection can also be utilized in teaching and in learning the discovery procedures typical of CA. Some of the chapters have a more pedagogical dimension than the others. Especially the introduction and the chapter by Ilkka Arminen present and discuss the forms and possibilities of comparative analysis in a more general fashion.

The volume is published by Finnish Literature Society in the series *Studia Fennica*, in its sub-series *Linguistica*. The aim of the series is to promote research made in Finland (on Finnish culture/-s) internationally. Thus, most of the contributors in the volume are Finnish and study interactions that are conducted in languages spoken in Finland (here, Finnish and Swedish). However, as the list of the authors shows, the collection has an international dimension as well. The book has its roots in the International Conference on Conversation Analysis held in Helsinki in May 2006 (ICCA-06). The theme of the conference was comparative analysis, and this collection follows up that theme and includes chapters by the plenary speakers of the conference: Steven Clayman (here with John Heritage), Elizabeth Couper-Kuhlen, Paul Drew and Auli Hakulinen & Marja-Leena Sorjonen. Some chapters of the book are based on work presented in the ICCA-conference, but not all of them.

The authors present analyses of interactions that are conducted in English, Finnish, German and Swedish. When the data are in a language other than English,

the transcribed extracts are presented with translations into English and provided with a gloss of the lexical and grammatical features of the utterances. The transcription and glossing symbols are presented in the beginning of the volume.

We would like to thank Finnish Literature Society for publishing this volume, and the two anonymous reviewers for their helpful comments on the manuscript. We are also grateful to the Helsinki Collegium for Advanced Study for financial support and Svetlana Kirichenko in particular for valuable help in the editing of the book. Finally, we would like to thank all the authors of the volume for their contributions and for their patience.

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# Transcription and glossing symbols

Transcribed data extracts from languages other than English represent the talk of each person in three lines to be read as follows: the first line is the speech in the original language (e.g., Finnish), the second is the English word-by-word gloss, and the third is the free translation into English. If glossing is not necessary for the understanding of the utterance only two lines are used, that is, the gloss line can be omitted. In the following, a list of transcription symbols and a list of abbreviations used in the grammatical glossing are provided.

## Transcription symbols

The notation used is basically the same as the one used in conversation analytic literature (see, e.g., Atkinson & Heritage, 1984: ix-xvi)<sup>1</sup>.

### *Overlap and pauses*

|       |   |
|-------|---|
| (0.5) | A pause and its duration in tenths of a second  |
| (.)   | A micropause (less than 0.2 seconds)  |
| =     | Latching, i.e., no interval between the end of a prior and the start of following piece of talk |
| [     | Beginning of overlap  |
| ]     | End of overlap  |

### *Intonation contour*

|   |                               |
|---|-------------------------------|
| . | Falling intonation            |
| ; | Slightly falling intonation   |
| , | Continuing (level) intonation |
| ? | Rising intonation             |
| ∩ | Slightly rising intonation    |

<sup>1</sup> *Structures of social action: studies in conversation analysis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press). – If the authors use symbols other than these, the transcription conventions are explained in the chapters.

### *Prosodic shifts, emphasis and pace of speech*

|           |   |
|-----------|---|
| <u>no</u> | The underlined word or syllable is uttered with emphatic stress                                 |
| ↑         | The word following the arrow is uttered with a higher pitch than the surrounding talk           |
| ↓         | The word following the arrow is uttered with a lower pitch than the surrounding talk            |
| °no°      | Silently pronounced word or utterance   |
| NO        | A word or utterance pronounced louder than the surrounding talk                                 |
| >no<      | Talk inside arrow heads is said at a pace faster than the surrounding talk                      |
| <no>      | Talk inside arrow heads is said at a pace slower than the surrounding talk                      |
| no<       | A word ends abruptly  |
| No        | A capital in the beginning of a word indicates the beginning of an intonation unit <sup>2</sup> |

### *Duration*

|      |  |
|------|--|
| wha- | A cut-off word (a hyphen indicates self-interruption of the word)                                  |
| no:  | A stretch (a colon indicates lengthening of a sound)   |
| ja:a | Legato pronunciation (a colon between identical sounds indicates a binding of the sounds together) |

### *Other*

|         |  |
|---------|--|
| @ei@    | Altered voice quality (e.g., animated voice)   |
| £eif    | Smiling voice  |
| #ei#    | Creaky voice   |
| .joo    | A word pronounced with inbreath  |
| .hh     | Inbreath (each h indicating one tenth of a second)   |
| hh      | Outbreath  |
| (koira) | Single parentheses indicate transcriber's doubt  |
| (-)     | An unclearly heard word or utterance   |
| (...)   | Omitted stretch of talk  |
| →       | An arrow in the left margin of a transcript signifies that the focus of interest is in the current line of the extract |

### *Gestures and other non-verbal actions*

|             |  |
|-------------|--|
| ((subdued)) | Transcriber's comments are represented within double parentheses.  |
| *DRAWS*     | Non-verbal actions can be described in small capital letters on a separate line below the utterance they co-occur with, or on a line of their own if there is no simultaneous talk. An asterisk can be used to mark the beginning (and the end) of a co-occurring gesture. |

2 This transcription practice is not shared by all CA scholars. In this volume, some authors use it and some do not.

### Abbreviations used in glossing (Modified from Sorjonen 2001)<sup>3</sup>.

The following are treated as unmarked forms, not indicated in the glossing: (i) nominative case, (ii) singular, (iii) 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular, (iv) active voice, and (v) present tense.

Case endings are referred to by the following abbreviations:

| <i>Abbreviation</i> | <i>Case</i> | <i>Approximate meaning</i>    |
|---------------------|-------------|-------------------------------|
| ABL                 | Ablative    | 'from'                        |
| ACC                 | Accusative  | object                        |
| ADE                 | Adessive    | 'at, on' (owner of something) |
| ALL                 | Allative    | 'to'                          |
| COM                 | Comitative  | 'with'                        |
| ELA                 | Elicative   | 'out of'                      |
| ESS                 | Essive      | 'as'                          |
| GEN                 | Genitive    | possession                    |
| ILL                 | Illative    | 'into'                        |
| INE                 | Inessive    | 'in'                          |
| INS                 | Instructive | (various)                     |
| NOM                 | Nominative  | subject                       |
| PAR                 | Partitive   | partitiveness                 |
| TRA                 | Translative | 'to', 'becoming' 'into'       |

Other grammatical abbreviations:

|      |                        |
|------|------------------------|
| CLI  | clitic                 |
| CNJ  | conjunction            |
| COMP | comparative            |
| CON  | conditional            |
| DEF  | definite (article)     |
| FRE  | frequentative          |
| IMP  | imperative             |
| INF  | infinitive             |
| NEG  | negation               |
| PAS  | passive                |
| PC   | participle             |
| PL   | plural                 |
| POS  | possessive suffix      |
| PPC  | past participle        |
| PRON | pronoun                |
| PRT  | particle               |
| PST  | past tense             |
| Q    | interrogative (clitic) |
| RFL  | reflexive (pronoun)    |

3 *Responding in conversation. A study of response particles in Finnish* (Amsterdam: Benjamins).

|        |                        |
|--------|------------------------|
| SG     | singular               |
| SUBJ   | subjunctive            |
| 0      | zero subject or object |
| 1      | 1st person             |
| 2      | 2nd person             |
| 3      | 3 <sup>rd</sup> person |
| 4      | passive person ending  |
| lnameF | 1st name, female       |
| lnameM | 1st name, male         |

## Introduction: Comparative dimensions of talk in interaction

Conversation analysis (CA) emerged as a method in the sociology lectures given by Harvey Sacks between 1964 and 1972 (published as Sacks 1992a,b), and some of the fundamental findings were published in ground-breaking papers by Sacks and his colleagues in the mid-seventies (e.g., on turn-taking, Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson (SSJ) 1974; on the organization of repair, Schegloff, Jefferson & Sacks (SJS) 1977). In the beginning CA was a radically empirical enterprise, launched as an alternative to experimentally driven social psychology or deductive social theorizing. Since those early days, CA has developed into a distinctive method for analyzing conversation or talk-in-interaction, as the object of the study has come to be known (see e.g., Schegloff 2007: xiii). This method is currently utilized with several disciplines sharing an interest in social interaction (anthropology, linguistics, social psychology, sociology, etc.) and has been applied to a great variety of languages and types of interaction, ranging from ordinary conversations at home to various institutional interactions, as well as to the interactions between native and non-native speakers, speakers with aphasia and other speech and communication disorders, and so on. The principles of the method are presented in several textbooks (see e.g., Schegloff 2007; ten Have 1999; Hutchby & Wooffitt 1998; Tainio 1997), its “classics” are available in edited volumes (e.g., Drew & Heritage 2006; Lerner 2004), and conferences are regularly organized around CA work. These are all signs of an established discipline. Indeed, the current abundance of CA studies from different languages and cultures on the one hand, and from a wide range of interactions on the other, make it possible and relevant to engage in comparative analysis of talk-in-interaction. This is the theme of the present volume, which serves as a showcase collection of novel conversation analytically grounded studies employing and exploring various kinds of comparative approaches to talk-in-interaction.<sup>1</sup>

Conversation analysis can be characterized as an essentially comparative method. The analysis typically begins with the analyst identifying a phenomenon of interest

1 The theme of comparative analysis has certainly been in the air within the field of CA. In 2006 it was the theme of the international conference on conversation analysis (ICCA-06) held in Helsinki. This volume continues that theme and earlier versions of some of the chapters in the present volume were first presented at that conference. Simultaneously another collection on comparative CA is published (Sidnell 2009), concentrating on cross-linguistic analysis of interaction.

in the data: a certain type of sequence, a certain action or an interactional (verbal or non-verbal) device. The identification of a potential phenomenon subsequently leads to gathering a collection of relevant instances, and the analytical work consists of a careful analysis of each case as well as the comparison of these cases. This comparative work enables the analyst to identify the recurrent patterns of interaction and to make generalizations about the phenomenon analyzed.

The essentially comparative nature of this analytic practice can already be seen in the very first lecture of Sacks (1992a: 3–11), entitled *Rules of conversational sequence*. As that title indicates, the aim is to find a rule behind specific instances of interaction. Sacks starts by presenting extracts of the beginnings of phone calls to a suicide prevention clinic. Two of those instances are presented here:

(1)

A: This is Mr Smith may I help you

B: Yes, this is Mr Brown

(2)

A: This is Mr Smith may I help you

B: I can't hear you

A: This is Mr Smith

B: Smith

Sacks shows that in the beginning of the phone call, the representative of the clinic first presents himself, and typically the caller then presents her/himself (extract 1). However, there were occasions when something else happens: the caller would initiate repair (in extract 2, *I can't hear you*, as a sign of a hearing problem) in the slot where self-presentation would ordinarily occur. From this observation Sacks moves on to think about the possibility that the callers sometimes specifically use repair initiation as a way of *not* giving their name when it would be interactionally relevant. Thus, Sacks presents cases that are typical (reciprocal presentations) and cases that depart from the basic pattern. It is important to note that the deviant cases then seem not to be random, but orderly: repair initiation can be a method of not giving one's name.

The comparative nature of CA is clearly present in the seminal articles on turn-taking (SSJ 1974) and repair (SJS 1977). The generalizations about the turn-taking practices and the practices of repair and the preference organization present in them are arrived at through a careful examination of a considerable number of cases in which speaker transition occurs (or does not occur) and in which speakers deal with a problem of speaking, hearing and understanding. The analysis of singular instances groups some cases together and separates some: one finds different variations of the same phenomenon (e.g., different ways of allocating a turn-at-talk or initiating repair on the other speaker's turn), and on the other hand, differing but related phenomena (e.g., various forms of self- and other-initiated repair).

Conversation analysis is, thus, a comparative approach at heart. Nonetheless, there are several possible levels of comparison that the analyst can engage in. For instance, in reading the classic papers on turn-taking and repair, one might start to wonder whether turn-taking organization works in the same way in different interactions (see e.g., Drew & Heritage 1992a on turn-taking in institutional talk) or how turn-taking practices may or may not differ in different cultures and in

relation to the grammatical resources of the different languages (see e.g., Tanaka 1999 on turn-taking in Japanese). The practices of repair raise many comparative questions: for instance, are the practices of other-correction the same in all cultures (see Haakana & Kurhila in this volume), or do the repair practices of interactions with non-native speakers differ from those of conversation between native speakers (see e.g., Kurhila 2006)? In fact, SSJ (1974) and SJS (1977) already direct attention to some such comparative directions: the authors suggest that other-correction might be more general in certain types of action sequence (story-telling) and in interactions between certain kinds of participant (child–adult) (see SJS 1977: 380–381). Furthermore, the turn-taking practices are discussed, for instance, in terms of the number of the participants (dyadic vs. multiparty interaction; SSJ 1974: 712–724) and the different types of interaction (SSJ 1974: 729–730).

In the following we will explore some of these dimensions in more detail and discuss some types of comparative analysis in conversation analytic work. There is, of course, a wide range of comparative perspectives that could be applied in the analysis of interaction, and any presentation of the topic is necessarily selective. Our discussion concentrates on three major themes. We will first discuss comparisons across different types of interaction (for instance, institutional versus ordinary talk), then move on to discuss the participants' different identities and competencies (e.g., gender, native versus non-native speakers) and finally arrive at discussing interaction from a cross-linguistic and cross-cultural perspective. These dimensions of comparison are often intertwined in the analysis, as we shall show and as the chapters in this volume will testify.

### *Comparison across types of interaction*

Perhaps most typically, a CA study investigates a feature of interaction in one type of interaction. The study can analyze the feature, for example, in a set of “ordinary” everyday telephone conversations between friends or in a type of institutional interaction (e.g., a meeting, a doctor’s consultation). This is often at least the starting point of the analysis and, for instance, conversation analytical dissertations often employ this “within (interaction) type” (cf. ten Have 1999: 131) approach<sup>2</sup>. Analysis within one type of interaction aims to discover the recurrent features and variations of the phenomenon being studied. For instance, the study can analyze the variation of the onset of overlap (see e.g., Drew in this volume) or of the different formats for correcting the other speaker (see Haakana & Kurhila in this volume) and aim to determine the factors that differentiate the use of these

2 In Finland, for example, conversation analytical dissertations have concentrated on specific features of certain types of institutional interactions: primary care health interactions (e.g., on patients’ candidate diagnoses, Raevaara 2000; on giving the reason for the visit, Ruusuvoori 2000; doctors’ questions, Lindholm 2003, Korpela 2007), different types of therapeutic interactions (see e.g. Arminen 1999 on the interaction in AA meetings, Halonen 2002 on addiction treatment group therapy, Sellman 2008 on voice therapy interactions) – just to name a few examples. On the other hand, some PhD studies focus on an interactional or a linguistic feature of a certain type of everyday conversation: Routarinne (2003) analyzes parentheses and rising intonation in interactions between young girls and Seppänen (1998) the use of the Finnish demonstrative and third person pronouns as devices for referring to a co-participant in multi-party conversations.

variations. One way of expanding this kind of work with a comparative perspective is to analyze the same phenomenon in different types of interactions. The aim of the analysis would then be to detect similarities and differences in the topic of the study across interaction types: if the phenomenon occurs in all kinds of interaction, or if it is more typical of certain types of interactions; if the phenomenon takes different, context-specific forms, etc. In the following pages, we will raise some issues concerning such comparative analysis across different interactions (cf. ten Have 1999: 131).

What do we mean when we talk about ‘types of interaction’ (or conversation)? Interactions can, of course, be classified in several ways. We could describe one conversation in various ways: in respect to its medium or channel (e.g., a telephone call), to its institutional or non-institutional character (e.g., an everyday telephone call), to its participants’ age, gender, etc. (e.g., female–female interaction) and to the participants’ roles and competencies (e.g., mother–daughter, native–non-native interaction), etc. As Hakulinen (1999: 1) points out, “no one-dimensional typology of conversations will correctly capture the variety and richness of conversational activity.” From a CA perspective, it is important to consider the factors that are observably relevant, and relevant for the speakers themselves; to determine the “type of interaction” from the participants’ perspective. Hakulinen (1999) mentions three elementary distinctions that can, and have been claimed and shown to, have an impact on the type of conversation<sup>3</sup>: the channel (e.g., telephone versus face-to-face), number of participants (dyad versus multi-party) and the institutional versus non-institutional nature of the interaction. Here, we discuss some issues that these three distinctions make relevant; this discussion is by no means meant to be an exhaustive review of these distinctions.<sup>4</sup>

### **Channel: telephone vs. face-to-face**

In comparing telephone and face-to-face interactions, the issue of channel comes down to the following question: on the telephone, the interactants can only use the vocal channel, whereas in face-to-face interaction, the visual channel is also available – in what ways does this affect interaction<sup>5</sup>? CA work on interaction started on telephone conversations (and partly on face-to-face interactions which were not videotaped). This was due to several reasons, one being that concentration on telephone calls enabled interaction to be studied legitimately without its complex non-verbal side: while talking on the phone, speakers cannot rely on such interactional resources as facial expression, gaze, and gesture since they are unavailable to the recipient (see e.g., Schegloff 1979: 23–25; Heritage 1989: 31–

3 Here we use, following Hakulinen (1999), the term ‘type of interaction’. These distinctions could be at least partly discussed with other terminology as well; for instance, Levinson (1992) talks about different kinds of ‘activity types’ and Raevaara and Sorjonen (2006) discuss the different kinds of interactions through the concept of ‘genre’.

4 For instance, when we discuss ‘channel’, we only take up the difference between the interactions on the telephone and face-to-face. Other issues that could be discussed are, for instance, the use of sign language, and interaction through writing, for instance, in the Internet chat rooms, by email, etc.

5 This is the major question that is often asked. However, there might also be other kinds of differences between telephone and face-to-face interactions: for example, there could be actions that speakers prefer to do face-to-face rather than on the phone.

33; Hutchby 2001: 80–81). Thus, many of the basic CA findings on interaction are based on telephone and non-videotaped interactions. With the advent of videotaped materials, the comparative question arose: does the interaction on the phone differ in fundamental ways from the interactions in which the participants have visual access to each other? The question has been answered in different ways, but perhaps surprisingly, many have concluded that such interactions are quite similar. For instance, Schegloff (1979: 25) writes:

“.. Indeed, the gross similarity of telephone and other talk has contributed to our confidence that a great deal can be found out about the organization of conversational interaction without necessarily examining video materials (however important and interesting it is to do so in any case). The talk people do on the phone is not fundamentally different from the other talk they do.”

At least, what seem to a large extent to be similar in both types of interaction are the basic structures of turn-taking, sequence organization and repair organization (see also Schegloff 1993; Hopper 1992; cf. Hutchby 2001: 85–89). Some differences have been pointed out, however: for instance, Schegloff (1979) discusses the beginnings of phone calls from the perspective of identifying/recognizing the participants which seems to be an issue especially relevant on the phone.

The non-verbal features of interaction have been studied in CA to some extent already quite early on (see e.g., Goodwin 1981), and in recent years there has been a growing interest in the multimodality of interaction (see e.g. Mondada 2006, 2007; papers in Schmitt 2007)<sup>6</sup>. However, as for instance Schegloff (2006: 10–11) points out, there is still a considerable amount of work to be done in this area. It is quite apparent that the non-verbal devices that are available in face-to-face situations can shape the actions and sequences in a distinctive manner, as some studies have already shown. For instance, smiling can be an important part of laughing sequences (see e.g., Glenn 2003; Haakana 1999, 2002, forthcoming), different facial expressions can be used in distinct ways in (e.g.) assessment sequences (Ruusuvoori & Peräkylä 2006, forthcoming) and there are specific devices for seeking the recipient’s gaze and thereby his or her attention (see e.g., Goodwin 1981; Heath 1986). The reciprocity of talk-in-progress can be shown in different ways in telephone and face-to-face interactions, and there is some evidence that the interactants design their actions differently in these situations. For example, Egbert (1996) shows how interactants choose a different form of other-initiation of repair in those interactions where visual contact is established and in those where it is not or cannot be established (e.g., on the phone); the German repair initiator *bitte* is used much more in phone calls than in face-to-face situations, and in the latter, it is used in situations when the speakers do not have eye contact.

In comparing telephone and face-to-face interactions, it is important to remember, however, that there is considerable variation in both. Not all phone call types are similar; for instance, institutional phone calls have a different shape than phone calls between friends (on some problems in identifying the type of call, see Drew 2002). Everyday calls between friends and family members can take

6 Multimodal interaction is the theme of the next international conference on CA (2010, Mannheim).

various forms: some calls have a clear reason for the call, whereas some are “just to keep in touch” (on this difference and its interactional manifestations, see Drew & Chilton 2000). Furthermore, the type of telephone can also shape the structures of the interaction: Arminen & Leinonen (2006; see also Arminen in this volume) show how call openings differ in Finnish landline and mobile phone calls. Mobile phones make it possible to recognize the caller before answering and to tailor the answer accordingly. (On a more general level, see Hutchby 2001 on the impact of technology for interactional structures.) Similarly, face-to-face interactions can vary in several ways; one relevant issue in these is the number of the participants.

### **Number of the participants: dyadic vs. multi-person interactions**

Comparison between phone calls and face-to-face interactions implies another possible difference: whereas phone calls are most often two-party interactions, face-to-face interactions can be either dyadic or have more participants. The number of participants has been shown to affect the interaction in several ways. Evidently, it can shape the practices of turn-taking and participation (framework) (on the differences see e.g., SSJ 1974; Schegloff 1995, 1996; Seppänen 1998; Hakulinen 1999). When an interaction has more than two participants, certain phenomena that could not take place in a dyad become possible. Some interactional phenomena also depend on the number of participants more precisely: certain things can take place in four-party interactions that could not occur in three-party interaction. Schisming is a case in point: when there are four or more participants, the conversation can transform from a single conversation to multiple conversations (on schisming, see Egbert 1997a).

The number of participants can also affect both the production of actions and the responses to them. For instance, Sacks discussed the interactive impact of compliments in multi-party interaction, and talked about “safe” and “unsafe” compliments (Sacks 1992a: 597–600): a compliment to one person (for instance ‘you look pretty’) can be heard as a criticism of the other participants. In fact, compliments are often mentioned as a prime example of an action that has different dynamics in dyadic and multi-person interactions (see e.g., Schegloff 1996; Golato 2005), but other actions can also vary in this respect. Egbert (1997b) analyzes the specifics of other-initiated repair in a German multiperson conversation, and discusses several phenomena that are distinctive to such interactions: for example, usually the speaker of the trouble-source turn responds to the repair initiation, but in multi-person interaction, a person other than the trouble-source turn speaker can respond before the trouble-source turn speaker’s attempt to repair. Furthermore, Glenn (1989, 2003) compares the practices of laugh initiation in two-party and multi-party interactions and reports a striking trend: most of the time, when two people were talking, the current speaker (i.e. the producer of the “laughable”) would laugh first, whereas when three or more people were talking, someone other than the current speaker (i.e. the producer of the laughable) would laugh first (see e.g., 2003: 88). Glenn discusses this difference in relation to the participation framework: in multi-person interaction, there is a possibility of an audience, and the interactants can align themselves as the speaker (“the entertainer”, for example) and the audience.

### **“Ordinary” vs. institutional interaction**

Institutional interaction in CA refers to the interactions in which at least one participant is a representative of such official social institutions as law, medicine, and education for instance, and in which the participants orient to an institutional task (on institutional interaction in general, see e.g., Drew & Heritage 1992a; Drew & Sorjonen 1997; Raevaara et al. 2001; Arminen 2005). The features of institutional interaction are seen in comparison with what is referred to as the ordinary, everyday conversation between peers. Such an ordinary conversation is seen as the primordial form of interaction. The primacy of ordinary talk is seen to arise from several factors: it is the most frequent type of interaction, it is the type of interaction that children are first socialized into, and in ordinary talk, the variation of practices is the largest. The interactants can engage in a wide variety of social actions and practices without restrictions that would arise from their participant roles (see e.g., Heritage 1984: 238–240; Drew & Heritage 1992: 19). On a general level, the participants in both ordinary and institutional interactions do similar things: they orient to turn-taking rules, they ask questions and answer them, talk about troubles and respond to such talk, etc. However, the ways of performing these actions can vary across the types of interaction; the resources of ordinary talk are modified for institutional purposes. As Drew & Heritage (1992a: 19) put it:

“The basic forms of mundane talk constitute a kind of benchmark against which other more formal or “institutional” types of interaction are recognized and experienced. Explicit with this perspective is the view that other “institutional” forms of interaction will show systematic variations and restrictions on activities and their design relative to ordinary conversation.”

The study of institutional interaction is thus seen as being comparative: the practices of institutional talk are compared with similar practices of ordinary talk. Yet the level of explicitness in this comparison varies a great deal (see e.g., Drew & Heritage 1992; Arminen in this volume).

Drew & Heritage (1992a: 22) mention three general features that characterize institutional interaction: (i) Institutional interaction involves an orientation by at least one of the participants to some core goal, task, or identity (or set of them) conventionally associated with the institution in question; ii) Institutional interaction may often involve special and particular constraints on what one of both of the participants will treat as allowable contributions to the business at hand; iii) Institutional talk may be associated with inference frameworks and procedures that are particular to specific institutional contexts. These three features characterize institutional interactions on a very general level and also distinguish them from ordinary conversation. For example, an ordinary conversation may very well be a task-oriented one, but need not be; task-orientation is not a fixed feature of such interactions. Talk in a medical encounter is oriented to the institutional task at hand, which is diagnosing and treating the patient’s problem, and this orientation is typically sustained by both the doctor and patient (more or less) through the encounter.

Not all talk within a medical encounter (for example) is necessarily institutional in nature, however. A single interaction can include episodes of clearly institutional and non-institutional talk (see e.g., Drew & Heritage 1992, Drew & Sorjonen 1997). Conversation analytic work has heavily emphasized the local nature of

institutionality: the participants construct the institutional nature of the interaction by choosing ways of acting that activate the institutionality. This means that the institutional (or the “ordinary”) character of interaction is produced on a turn-by-turn basis.

The differences between ordinary talk and institutional talk can be detected in many aspects of interaction: for instance, in the practices of turn-taking, in the structure of specific action sequences and in the overall organization of the interaction. Some types of institutional interaction have a specific, formal turn-taking system: for instance, courtroom interaction (Atkinson & Drew 1979), AA meetings (Arminen 1999), and classroom interactions (at least some of them, see e.g., McHoul 1978; Tainio 2007) have a characteristic turn-taking system that serves, or is seen to serve, the specifics of the institution in question. Question-answer sequences can be found in various interactions, but their functions and shapes can be specific to the institutional context (see e.g., the articles in Drew & Heritage 1992b). For instance, the analysis of third-position turns after an answer can reveal institution-specific practices (see Schegloff 2007: chapter 12): Heritage (1985) discusses the absence of *oh* responses as a typical feature of news interviews, and classroom interaction is often characterized by the teacher’s third position turns that evaluate the answer (see e.g., Routarinne in this volume). Furthermore, institutional interactions can have a typical overall organization with certain sequences of action that follow each other in a specific order: such organizations have been discussed, for instance, in medical encounters (see e.g., Heritage & Maynard 2006: 13–15; Peräkylä et. al. 2001: 12–13) and in different types of service encounters (Raevaara & Sorjonen 2006).

The comparison of everyday and institutional interaction can also produce findings about how specific actions are designed and responded to: for instance, how sequences of troubles-telling are shaped in the different types of interaction (see Jefferson & Lee 1992; Ruusuvuori 2005; Ruusuvuori & Voutilainen this volume). This comparison can also reveal that some actions seem to be more typical of institutional interaction than of everyday talk (see Drew 2003 on formulations) and that certain linguistic designs of actions seem to be more frequent in institutional talk (cf. Drew & Sorjonen 1997: 101). Lindström and Lindholm demonstrate in their chapter in this volume that question frames (of the type *I would like to ask* or *can I ask...*) seem to be characteristic of different types of institutional talk. This does not mean that these frames do not occur in everyday interactions, and the same holds for formulations (Drew 2003). However, there is something about these practices that makes them more useful for occasions of institutional talk.

Even if institutional interactions share some common features, such as task-orientation, they can also differ from each other to a great extent: an encounter between a doctor and a patient is very different from an interaction between a teacher and students in a classroom. Thus, a comparison between the different institutional interactions can also be a relevant research task, especially within those institutional interactions that share similar features but differ in certain ways. For instance, Ruusuvuori and Voutilainen (this volume) compare the responses to troubles-telling in different interactions: everyday conversation, general practice medical encounters, homeopathic medical encounters and cognitive psychotherapy. Similarly, Vehviläinen (2001) has compared a way of giving advice (a stepwise transition to advice) in different interactions. Furthermore, Drew (2003) compares the linguistic construction of formulations in psychotherapy, radio call-in programs,

news interviews, and industrial negotiations, and shows how the same action is shaped into institution-specific forms.

In this section we have outlined some ways that the comparative analysis of talk-in-interaction could take, and some of the strengths of such an approach. This comparison shows the specific features of a certain type of interaction; only through explicit comparison can we see whether the potential features of a conversation type really are features specific to that type of interaction. Comparative work also leads us to see what features are typical in interaction in general. In the end, interaction *per se* can be seen as the key topic of CA studies (cf. Schegloff 1999). Comparison across types of interaction is a challenging enterprise, however, and as Drew (2002: 478) observes:

“We do not yet have any explicitly comparative framework for grounding findings about what may seem to be distinctive or characteristic properties of talk in a given setting. But implicitly at least, we work with a comparative perspective, arising from the manifest differences between, for instance, talk in medical consultation and talk in other settings, such as telephone conversation between friends. The hope is that research will yield up the particular linguistic and interactional features which lie behind one’s sense of those differences, and of what seems to be distinctive about the talk-in-interaction in one setting as compared with that in another.”

As the above quotation implies, explicit comparative work across different interactions has been infrequent in CA studies: for example, even the differences between telephone and face-to-face interaction have not been analyzed in explicit terms to a great extent. Undoubtedly, more comparative work in this area is needed. The challenging nature of this work lies partly in the realization that we started from in this section: as Hakulinen (1999) pointed out, the “typology of conversations” is by no means simple. Interactions can be classified in several ways, and the challenge is to ascertain what categorizations are relevant in each case. For instance, what are the relevant categories in an interaction between a doctor and child patient, or in a social insurance office interaction in which the client is a non-native speaker? How do such speaker identities as ‘child’, ‘adult’, and ‘parent’, or such attributes as ‘non-native speaker’ or ‘a speaker with aphasia’ figure in interaction? Moreover, are descriptions such as ‘native–non-native interaction’ classifications of the type of interaction? Such questions are the topic of the next section.

### *Comparison across participants with different competencies and identities*

Conversations differ with respect to their participants. Already Sacks discussed participant categories that the members of a particular culture or community use as inference-rich tools in their conversations (Sacks 1992a: 40–48). However, CA studies do not a priori impose participant categories such as age, gender, ethnicity, social class, language proficiency, etc. on the analysis of the data, but instead focus upon the identities that the participants themselves orient to during their interactions. In conversation, participant categories thus emerge as something one

does, not something one has as a fixed trait or as property residing in oneself (Stokoe & Smithson 2001). CA studies do not take for granted that an identity of a participant who has, for example, aphasia, is relevant for the interaction. Having aphasia may become relevant at some point in the conversation, for instance, if the participants orient to resolving aphasic word-finding difficulties, but on other occasions, it may well be irrelevant. In particular, participant identities are not seen to have direct causative effects on interactive phenomena: the mere possession of an identity does not warrant the relevance of that identity in accounting for some conduct. As Weatherall (2002: 116–117) states:

“The important point is that just because someone **is** a woman, a New Zealander, middle-class, or whatever, doesn’t justify invoking those categories as a way of explaining how that person talks and interacts.”

Thus, within CA, identities are seen as dynamic, socially situated phenomena. By orienting to their different identities, the participants make the identities situationally relevant in a particular interaction. Through the analysis of situated relevancies, recent CA studies have been able to shed critical light on many categorical stereotypes of participant identities. Several researchers have analyzed such issues as gender identity and different competencies, and more and more research findings have emerged in the field. In the following, we will first look at the comparative studies on gendered identities and then move on to the studies of talk-in-interaction involving participants with different competencies.

### **Gendered identities: women’s versus men’s style of interaction**

Very early on, some CA researchers compared the interactional styles of men and women. The early comparative work on gender focused on male dominance in cross-sex interaction, showing that men interrupt women more often than women interrupt men (Fishman 1978; Zimmerman & West 1975). This early analysis of male-female interaction was criticized for not taking into account all the interactive detail that, besides gender, may account for the observed asymmetries (Schegloff 1987; on interruptions and overlapping talk, see also Drew in this volume). As gender differences were hard to define in empirical detail, many CA researchers have since been cautious in topicalizing gender issues in the analysis of talk. However, in recent years the observable displays of gendered identities have been found to be a relevant feature of interaction and worth studying within CA (e.g., Kitzinger 2000; Stokoe & Smithson 2001; Tainio 2001; McIlvenny 2002; Speer 2005).

The later analysis of West and Zimmerman (1987) on ‘doing gender’ was concerned with how gender is accomplished through conversational activity. This approach is prominent in the current CA (and also other) research on gender displays in interaction (see the discussions on CA and gender categories in e.g., Stokoe & Smithson 2001; McIlvenny 2002). According to this view, one sees “gender identity not as something that is biologically given, a natural category, but rather as something that participants actively construct, a cultural artifact” (Harness Goodwin 2006: 15) or, as Jefferson (2004: 118) put it: “I tend to think of them (‘male’ and ‘female’) as something like careers rather than conditions, i.e., as constructed rather than biologically intrinsic.” Thus, the displays of gendered

identities, not necessarily tied to the participants' biological sexes, are considered to be the relevant object of study. Even more radically, some CA researchers consider gender as an omnipresent feature of all interactions: the identification of a person as belonging to one of two gender groups is fundamental to how they are perceived and how their behavior is interpreted and responded to (Weatherall 2002: 120). In sum, comparative studies of the gendered practices of interaction thus focus on how participants in interaction categorize each others and constantly negotiate the norms and behaviors that define masculinity and femininity so as to produce them as gendered subjects (Cameron 1995, Stokoe 2006).

A comparative study of situated identities has revealed the fluidity of gender identities in spoken interaction. For example, although children are socialized to feminine and masculine gender displays, they context-sensitively vary the speech styles associated with men and women in their same-sex and cross-sex peer groups (Kyratzis 2001). Moreover, it seems evident that boys and girls construct overlapping identities in interaction. Instead of looking at general differences in female and male speech and interaction styles, CA research has focused on single activities in which children display gendered practices to accomplish an activity, such as gossip telling (Evaldsson 2004). This research has shown that there are similarities in the form and function of gossip, but the substance of gossip can be radically gendered (on male gossip, see also Cameron 1997: 62). Furthermore, the research on disputes (e.g., Goodwin & Goodwin 1987) has shown that girls are not necessarily more collaborative and boys more argumentative as has been previously claimed. Nonetheless, girls and boys may have a tendency to construct their conversational activities (such as proposing some course of action) using different, gendered practices (see Laakso & Tykkyläinen in this volume). Thus, although the practices differ, the activities (disputing, proposing) themselves do not.

To a great extent, recent CA studies of gender displays are in line with Judith Butler's (1990) idea of performative gender, that one becomes gendered by doing and talking gender. Furthermore, CA is currently considered to be one of the qualitative methods that can contribute to our understanding of gender and sexuality and its manifestations in interaction (McIlvenny 2002). As an illustration, one great advantage of the CA method is that it avoids the tendency of many other research approaches to polarize and stereotype differences between men and women.

### **Comparing participants with different competencies**

As with gender, the CA studies of competence explore the ways in which competence is constructed in particular circumstances by the participants involved, i.e. competence is not viewed as something one either has or does not have (Richards 2005). Within the last two decades, a growing number of CA studies have focused on conversations where one or several participants have some limitation to their linguistic competence (e.g., due to aphasia, age, or being a non-native speaker). Currently there are several monographs and edited volumes that deal with interactions of children (e.g., Wootton 1997; Harness Goodwin 2006; Gardner & Forrester, 2010), second-language learners (e.g., Gardner & Wagner 2004, Kurhila 2006), and people with communication disorders (e.g., Goodwin 2003; Richards & Seedhouse 2005).

A common denominator of many of the studies on conversations between competent and less competent speakers is that although they analyze in detail the type of interaction in their data, the findings are often at least implicitly compared to the existing knowledge of the ordinary, 'normal' conversation between equal peers. Comparisons to everyday conversational practices, thus, form the basis of the analysis of showing how the basic conversational practices differ (or do not differ) in the interactions of less competent speakers. This is in line with the CA notion of ordinary conversation as the primary form of interaction against which other types of interaction are recognized and experienced (see e.g., Drew & Heritage 1992: 19). In practice, such comparison is problematic since ordinary conversation is to some extent an idealized concept based on the study of competent adult members of monolingual (mostly English-speaking) Western societies (with equal status and a similar cultural background). For example, family conversations involving linguistically less competent children are among the most common everyday interactions and thus quite ordinary.

Perhaps the most studied linguistically asymmetric conversations are those of people with aphasia (or other neurological impairment, such as dementia). Some of the first studies in this field focused on the speech therapy interactions of aphasic speakers (e.g., Milroy & Perkins 1992; Wilkinson 1995; Klippi 1996; Laakso 1997). Later on, there have been CA studies of speech therapy interactions of children with specific language impairment (Gardner 2005; Tykkyläinen 2005), conversations of people with dementia (e.g., Perkins, Whitworth & Lesser 1998; Lindholm 2007) and with dysarthria (Bloch 2005), as well as of home interactions of aphasic speakers (Heeschen & Schegloff 1999; Helasvuo, Laakso & Sorjonen 2004). Investigators of aphasic conversation have found some adaptations to, but not radical departures from, the fundamental principles of conversation such as turn-taking, repair, and sequential organizations. The basic conversational organizations thus also exist in conversations where the participants differ with respect to their linguistic competencies. Even the elderly with dementia are found to use interactional resources such as laughter in the same way as normal and aphasic speakers (Lindholm 2007).

Based on the existing research, one could propose that there seem to be at least three characteristic features of linguistically asymmetric interactions that emerge in comparison to the conversations between equal peers. First, the former interactions rely more heavily on contextual knowledge and multimodal resources of communication. Second, the co-construction by the more competent participants plays a bigger role, which makes these interactions even more collaborative than those between equally competent speakers. Third, typical of these interactions are long and sometimes complex repair sequences, as linguistic incompetence threatens the inter-subjective understanding between the interlocutors. We will now turn to the topic of asymmetry and the three aspects mentioned above in more detail to compare the existing studies on children, non-native speakers, and people with communication disorders such as aphasia.

Conversations that involve children, non-native speakers, and people with communication disorders are generally considered to be asymmetric because

the participants do not have equal linguistic competencies<sup>7</sup>. CA studies have nevertheless shown that these interactions are not necessarily asymmetric as such because the linguistically less competent participants may use other resources, such as gesture, for communication<sup>8</sup>. For example, preverbal children actively initiate the interaction sequences with their parents by merely pointing at things (Wootton 1994). Similarly, a person with aphasia can initiate and manage interactions with very few words using bodily expression, and pointing in particular, as a resource (Goodwin 1995; see also Klippi 1996 on the use of gesture, drawing, and writing as resources in aphasia group therapy discussions). Consider, for example, the following data extract from a conversation between a person with aphasia (A) and her close friend (B) about a recent incident that had happened to a local shopkeeper (Heeschen & Schegloff 1999:391)<sup>9</sup>:

(3) Heeschen & Schegloff 1999

01 A: .hhh Ach, .hhh Herr Ahlert? (1.0) ((pointing to the outside)) ä:h,  
.hhh ach, .hhh Mr. Ahlert? (1.0)

02 siebentausend Mark (1.2) n:, na:, .hhh drei - /perso:l/ ähm, nein=  
seven thousand marks (1.2) n:, na:, .hhh three - /perso:l/ ähm no=

03 B: =Geklaut.  
=stolen.

04 A: Ja.  
Yes.

05 B: Der wurde beklaut?  
He-DEM was robbed?

06 A: Ja. .hhh ä:h, äh, .hhh äh:, /mest/, nee, äh, (Bru-), nee tch!  
Yes. .hhh ä:h, äh, .hhh äh:, /mest/, no, äh, (brea-), no tch!

07 hmna= ((A vividly pointing to her breast during lines 6–7))

08 B: =Pis[tole.  
=gun.

7 These interactions differ with respect to the limitations to linguistic and cultural competence. Children and second-language learners are not-yet competent speakers of a language, whereas people who have acquired aphasia are not competent any more. Non-native speakers may have very different levels of competency in the language they are learning. Due to their young age, children also learn the interactive competence of their culture, whereas people with aphasia still have the cultural knowledge of their own speech community and foreign language learners have the linguistic and cultural competence of their own language environment.

8 Unlike the study of ordinary conversations between equals in which CA research has largely focused on telephone conversations, the studies focusing on children and people with communication disorders have from the very beginning mainly used videotaped face-to-face interactions as their main data source (see e.g., Wootton 1997; Klippi 1996). Videotaped data has shown convincingly how non-verbal displays (e.g. gaze, gestures and facial expressions) are used as a resource in interaction. For example, during word searching, aphasic speakers use gaze direction and changes in their body posture to manage the collaborative responses of their interlocutors (Laakso 1997: 160–185).

9 We have not added glossing symbols to those extracts which are borrowed from published work.

- 09 A: [Pistole: auf die Brust, und Hände /nachunten/ ((A puts hands to back))  
 [gun to the breast and hands /downwards/

Here speaker A has difficulties in finding the words to construct her story. However, even in a telegraphic manner and pausing frequently to find more words she is able to produce some key elements: the name of the shop keeper, a nonverbal point towards the outside surroundings where the shop is, and a sum of money (lines 1 and 2). As a consequence, B is able to complete her utterance (line 3) and the conversation moves on. Similarly, in line 8, B interprets A's hand gesture as a pistol point and it is clearly observable how the conversation is co-constructed by the non-aphasic interlocutor. So, as we can see here, there can be a linguistic asymmetry in persons' abilities to speak in a conversation, but this does not necessarily mean that there is also an asymmetry in participation, or that less competent interlocutors are passive participants in interaction. However, interaction relies on gestural and contextual resources and on the collaborative responses of the more competent participants more heavily than if the competencies were equal. If the linguistic competencies of the participants are not that far apart from each other, as can be the case in interactions between native and non-native speakers, no linguistic asymmetry may be manifested despite the fact that one of the participants is a non-native speaker.

Besides linguistic competence, interactions can be asymmetric in other terms as well: children interacting with their parents have asymmetric roles of a child and a parent, as well as aphasic patients interacting with their speech and language therapists may have institutionally asymmetric roles in a therapy session. In line with this, some systematic aspects of interaction that have been associated with linguistic competence have in fact been shown to be connected to other participant identities, such as being a client and a therapist (Laakso 2003) or a client and a service provider (Kurhila 2005).<sup>10</sup>

As compared to ordinary conversation, the studies of aphasic conversation have pointed out the frequency and length of repair sequences, as well as the collaborative participation of the more competent interlocutors in repairing actions (e.g., Milroy & Perkins 1992; Goodwin 1995; Klippi 1996; Laakso & Klippi 1999; Perkins 2003). Based on these studies, it seems that the preference for self-repair can be lapsed, or that the preference is organized differently than in ordinary conversation. Milroy and Perkins (1992) suggested that other-repair by the non-aphasic speaker is common and even a preferred practice in aphasic conversation. In addition, interesting differences in other-correction have been observed between the therapy and home interactions of aphasic speakers depending on the co-participant. For example, in British family conversations, the spouses engaged in other-correction, whereas in speech and language therapy, the therapists avoided the direct correction of the aphasic errors in conversation (Lindsay & Wilkinson 1999). Similarly, Gardner (2005) found that a mother engaged in lengthier rounds than the speech and language therapist in trying to correct her child's pronunciation (also in a British context). This may, however, relate to the fact that in more intimate relationships, other-correction tends to occur

<sup>10</sup> For example, Laakso (2003) shows that the long and complex speaking turns of fluent aphasic speakers can result from the fact that the therapist did not take a speaking turn in transition space.

without hesitation (see Haakana & Kurhila in this volume). For children, and their parents, other-correction may not appear as a dispreferred activity in conversation (McTear 1985: 180–187). On the other hand, in native–non-native conversations between adult participants of more equal status, native speakers do not correct grammatical errors if the errors do not obstruct communication (Kurhila 2005). So, there seems to be variation in the extent that different co-participants orient to the preference of self-repair or make ‘exposed’ corrections (Jefferson 1987) when interacting with less competent speakers.

A new line of comparative work in the study of interactions of less competent participants is to look at longitudinal change and to compare temporally distinct interactions. In particular, children’s interactions have been compared longitudinally to determine emerging interactive practices and skills, and simultaneously, comparisons to adult practices have been made (e.g., Corrin, Tarplee & Wells 2001; Laakso 2010). For example, Vierijärvi (1999) followed a mother and baby interacting with each other and observed how the mother’s co-constructive responses to the child’s early vocalizations resulted in the emergence of more systematic turn-taking practices. In the same manner, Wootton (1997) observed the development of a child’s requesting initiatives in the child’s interaction with the parents from early gesture-sound combinations to spoken requests including the word *please* (see also Wootton 2007). These studies show convincingly how social conversational practices emerge and develop within recurrent interactions with others.

Recently, longitudinal comparisons have also been made in connection with aphasia to find out how conversational practices adapt to aphasia in the long run (Klippel 2007; Wilkinson, Gower & Beeke 2007). Furthermore, a growing body of CA research has addressed learning in terms of comparing changes in interaction at different points of time (e.g., Brouwer & Wagner 2004; Martin 2004; Melander & Sahlström 2009; Sellman 2008). In temporal comparisons, quantification has been used much more extensively than is usual in traditional CA studies. In connection to measuring the outcome of speech and language therapy, quantitative measures are considered to be especially relevant, but certain cautiousness with calculating and applying CA remains, as Gardner (2005: 72) notes: “Quantification can certainly help in making outcomes of therapy more transparent and measurable but must be used alongside a level of sequential analysis and clinical judgment”.

To summarize, comparative focus has proved to be essential in the study of conversations with participants having differing competencies and identities. In almost all studies, comparisons are made to the existing knowledge of the practices of ordinary conversation. Furthermore, recently the comparison between interactions is even more directly addressed by comparing cross-sectionally the same participant in interactions with different interlocutors, or longitudinally at different points of time. This has led to many practical applications of CA in terms of planning intervention to improve or change interactions (e.g., Booth & Perkins 1999; Wilkinson et al 1998). Applying CA, especially combined with quantification, has also raised some concern in the research community (ten Have 2007; Richards 2005). In particular, cautiousness has been suggested in moving from a close, turn-by-turn sequential analysis into the new, explicitly comparative quantitative study of conversational phenomena (Schegloff, Koshik, Jacoby & Olsher 2002).

## *Comparison across languages and cultures*

Every study of linguistic and interactional practices in one language has the potential to broaden the sphere of observations by identifying and comparing nearly corresponding practices with those observed in other languages and cultures. In fact, there are several sub-disciplines in linguistics and social sciences in which the comparative perspective constitutes one of their cornerstones, such as anthropology, cross-linguistic pragmatics, historical linguistics, interactional sociolinguistics, and linguistic typology. As conversation analysis operates in the intersection of language and culture, it is reasonable to expect that it can provide a powerful methodology for detecting variation in the organization of language and social interaction when applied to different languages and cultures.

Classical work within CA did not bring cross-cultural questions to the forefront. One reason for this is that CA was conceived of more as an analytic method, an approach to language and interaction, rather than as a theory of how language and interaction were supposed to be in, say, cultural, societal or gendered perspectives. Nevertheless, the method includes some tacit assumptions, for example, about turn-taking in conversation, with possibly universal implications. Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson (1974: 700) interestingly address the question of cross-cultural validity of the systematics for the turn-taking they are proposing. The authors point out that such a question is empirical, and is in need of testing, but they also note the existence of evidence from other (anthropological) investigations which supports their basic claim: turn-taking is at least a potential universal trait of human social conduct. The specific structural means for sustaining the systematics of turn-taking may vary in different cultures though, but an investigation of such variation was beyond the scope of the paper by Sacks et al.

Since the 1970s, CA has been applied as a research method to very many languages in different countries and societies, providing cumulative evidence for the universality of certain basic practices, such as the turn-taking and repair for maintaining intersubjectivity. But the opportunity to compare with prior studies has also enabled researchers to discover language and culture dependent variation regarding the social organization of interaction. Indeed, while the bulk of the seminal CA work has been based on and developed for (American) English conversations, these studies cannot be taken as a measure of normality when conversations in other languages and cultures are studied. Instead, previous methodologically groundbreaking studies may offer the researcher some preliminary guidance in the quest for social and linguistic practices that are indigenous to a specific language and culture – practices which may or may not coincide with the practices in, for example, American English conversation (see Lindström 1999: 32). Crucially, what is similar or different may become recognizable only against an existing pattern that has been detected in one language and cultural setting, and which thereby established a starting point for further comparison.

Interactional linguistics, which methodologically relies on the investigation techniques of conversation analysis, puts a programmatic value on cross-linguistic comparisons. The goal is to achieve “a better understanding of how languages are shaped by interaction and how interactional practices are moulded through specific languages” (Couper-Kuhlen & Selting 2001: 3). This thesis relates to a discourse functional approach that assumes that culturally specific ways of conducting

discourse leave a mark on linguistic practices, and vice versa, the structural resources of a specific language construct the social order that is expressed through the language (cf. Gumperz 1982). A cross-language comparison can inform us about the form-function correlations in interactional and linguistic practices: what is possibly more universal about them and what is the scope of language specific variation? This then is one way to address the question of language or culture specific ‘structures’ which maintain social interaction and which Sacks et al. (1974) left open for future research (see above). What is important to note is that universals and particularities tend to become best visible in the encounters between different languages and communities, either in practice or in the comparative work of a researcher.

In an attempt to bring some order to the complexity of possible comparative perspectives, we offer here a general outline for studies of a ‘syntax-for-conversation’, which can be understood as one of the central topics in interactional cross-linguistic explorations (cf. Schegloff 1979). Hence, it could be practical to identify structural regularities that reflect the turn-sequential organization of talk on the one hand, and the turn-internal organization of talk on the other (cf. also Linell 2009). Turn-sequential organization of talk departs from the local factors in a conversational sequence that are decisive for the choice of a certain linguistic form and an interactional practice in a given dialogical slot. In a certain contrast, turn-internal organization of talk might be more adjacent to the traditional conceptions of phrasal and clausal syntax, albeit with the acknowledgment of a dynamic, progressive and incremental on-line perspective, where, for example, the internal structure of the verbalized turn is described both from the perspective of grammar and interaction (cf. Schegloff 1996; Steensig 2001; Lindström 2006). Of course, both aspects of such a ‘syntax-for-conversation’ are interrelated and interdependent in different ways. There is no need to keep them strictly separate in the analysis of data, but the concepts may be helpful when ordering the results that are obtained in analyses. Certainly, in some cases, we have to deal with phenomena that are inherently in the very intersection of what might be understood as turn-sequential and turn-internal organizing principles.

### **Turn-sequential organization of talk**

Studies within or in a close relation to the CA vein are particularly concerned with aspects of sequence organization. For example, the opening sequences of (landline) telephone conversations have been examined in a number of cross-language studies where findings concerning the American English practices have been contrasted with the practices in another language and culture. Lindström (1994) has compared Swedish openings with both American English and Dutch and has found differences between these. Speakers of American English seem to prefer other-recognition in the opening sequence, whereas the Dutch favor the caller’s self-identification; the preferences among the Swedes seem to be somewhere in between these extremes (for American English, see Schegloff 1979; for Dutch, Houtkoop-Steenstra 1991; further, see Schegloff 2007: 88–90). These preferences and practices may, however, be different in mobile telephone communication, which shows that changes in the communication technological environment also change patterns of communication; differences in the Finnish landline and mobile

telephone openings have been discussed by Arminen & Leinonen 2006, also by Arminen in this volume.

Studies of response tokens and ‘continuers’ relate to the turn-sequential organization of conversational language and reveal cross-linguistic differences. One case in point is the sensitivity to negative polarity in the choice of acknowledgement tokens. In many languages, a negating token is used when the utterance being reacted upon is framed negatively, that is, contains a word with a negating meaning like ‘no’, ‘never’, ‘barely’ (see Heinemann 2005; Müller 1996). This is also the case in the following Swedish extract (4) in which the sales of a newspaper is discussed:

(4) Green-Vänttinen 2001: 123.

01 A: (...) alltså vår lösnummerförsäljning e int (.) alls vikti.  
           so our single.copy.sales are not at all important  
           so our single-copy sales are not at all important

02 de:e ju [liksom vi anstränger oss int ens för att sälja den=  
       it is PRT like we strain us not even for to sell it  
       it’s like we don’t even try to sell it so hard

03 B:           [ne  
                   no

04 A: för att [de:e så marginellt  
       because it is so marginal

05 B:           [°.ne°  
                   no

06 B: °ne°  
       no

07 A: men när du nu pratar om löpsedlar (...)  
       but when you now talk about flyers

The negating expression *int alls* ‘not at all’ occurs in line 1 and is subsequently oriented to in the negating acknowledgement token by B in line 3; A’s turn in line 2 contains another negation (*int ens* ‘not even’) which similarly receives a polarity sensitive orientation in lines 5 and 6. In these uses, the negating particle *ne* is not then a token of disagreement but merely a way of showing active listenership and understanding, functionally corresponding to continuers like *yes*, *mm*, *uh huh*. A study by Jefferson (2002) suggests that the speakers of English may possibly, depending on the dialect or setting, also show sensitivity to sequential polarity but the systematics of this may be more complex to pin down than, for instance, in Scandinavian languages.

A related language-specific feature is the use of a special *jo*-form of the positive response token, which is normally *ja* in Scandinavian languages. The affirmative *jo*-form, instead of *ja*, is used in sequences where the foregoing move has been framed negatively, for example, in a response to a question such as *Har du ikk prøvet den? – Jo vi prøvet den I går aftes*, ‘Haven’t you tried it? – Yes we tried it yesterday evening’. It seems that the *jo/ja*-variation can partly be accounted for

by dispreferred positive responses, but in Danish, the use of the negative polarity form *jo* is even more conventionalized than so, that is, practically constrained by a grammatical rule (see Heinemann 2005). Another type of language-specific intricate pattern of variation is analyzed in Sorjonen 2001 that addresses the Finnish response token system. The system contains the two tokens, *joo* and *niiin*, which both (in many contexts) correspond to the English *yes*, but with an interactionally relevant division of labor. A further elaboration of the typology of the Finnish response tokens is put forward by Hakulinen and Sorjonen in this volume.

These examples of turn-sequential organizing practices manifest cross-language (or cross-dialect) differences in the fundamental structural resources with which interaction is maintained and thus provide an intriguing object of comparative studies.

### In the intersection of turn and sequence

Some phenomena are observable in the intersection of the turn-sequential and turn-internal organizing sphere, most notably the repair practices which can occur turn-internally, in turn transition space and in the next turns of a sequence. Indeed, languages may differ in the deployment of these practices depending on the grammatical structure of a given language. Egbert (1996) reports certain structural differences between repairs in German and English that result from the richer morpho-syntactic coding in the former (see also Uhmman 2001). For example, in German, the target of same turn repair may be the definite article that projects a noun phrase head of a certain gender:

(5) Egbert 1996: 592.

M: im büro steht **das**- (0.5) steht **der** kuchen stefan.  
 in the office is the- is the cake stefan.

Such sensitivity to grammatical gender will not be manifested in English and cannot thus be the target of the repair.

More recently, morpho-syntactic repair practices have been studied in a fairly comprehensive cross-linguistic project involving Apache, Bikol, Sochiapam Chinantec, English, Farsi, Finnish, German, Hebrew, Indonesian, Japanese, Korean, and Mandarin (Fox et al. 2008). Although this quantitative survey of repair cannot follow the methodological practices of CA, it is, nevertheless, informed by it and contributes to our knowledge of cross-linguistic variation regarding one of the fundamental matters of interest within CA. For example, the survey shows that languages vary in how much simple lexical recycling speakers do in repair (with Japanese as an extreme case) compared to the clausal, more “syntactic” recycling (with English as an extreme case). Such differences seem to depend on the morpho-syntactic characteristics of a language, not least on syntactic projectability, which determine the structural resources the participants have at their disposal for repair and turn-taking practices (see also Fox, Hayashi & Jasperson 1996).

Another phenomenon at the very intersection of turn and sequence is the practice of producing increments to turns. The term ‘increment’ refers to a grammatically and functionally dependent unit that, *post* possible turn completion, is added on to the preceding turn-unit (TCU). Through this practice, the turn and the current

constitutive TCU are extended (see Schegloff 1996). The local reasons for producing increments may vary; they are often produced in order to repair the just completed action or to extend the turn in case of no (relevant) up-take by the other. By comparing incrementing in English, German, and Japanese conversations, Couper-Kuhlen and Ono (2007) observe the substantial differences in the structural adaptation of increments; this appears to depend on the grammatical typologies of the languages. The authors demonstrate that syntactically concordant, ‘glued-on’ increments are typical of the extensions of English clausal TCU:s (6):

(6) Couper-Kuhlen & Ono 2007: 522.

G: hUh:m (0.2) .p.hhhh hu- You going to- (0.3) the music- (0.3) work ↓shop.

K: Yes[: I am].

G: [ .hhhhhh .g **this** ↓**morning**.

u- What time are you going,

In contrast, syntactically non-concordant, ‘inserted’ increments occur more often in German and predominantly in Japanese. In the following German example (7) the symbol @ shows the grammatically conventional position for the incremented unit (*kurz nach dem Zusammenbruch*) which, when looked at in a post-hoc perspective, the unit seems to be delayed from:

(7) Couper-Kuhlen & Ono 2007: 532.

A: meine Mutter ist @ ganz furchtbar schwer an (.) eh Krebs gestorben.

my mother has very terribly bad of cancer died.

My mother died a very terrible death of cancer.

ehm **kurz nach dem Zusammenbruch**.

ehm shortly after the collapse.

Couper-Kuhlen & Ono argue that ‘insertable’ increments are so frequent in German and Japanese because these languages are characterized by a right-headed syntax, which places constituents before the head rather than after it. This makes the closing boundary of a clause a very strong one, not allowing for smooth, syntactically fitted post-unit continuations. English on the contrary is a left-headed language, which permits a step-by-step prolongation of the clausal structure by optional constituents, such as the adverbial expression *this morning* in (6). These observations then indicate how language-specific structures at a turn-internal organizing level are at play in the deployment of the interactionally and sequentially rooted practice of producing increments.

### Turn-internal organization of talk

Languages may differ to the extent that they project the course of the clausal syntactic structure and in that sense, the internal syntactic course of a (clausal) TCU. Germanic languages, such as English, German, and Swedish, provide a fairly good projection of what is needed for the completion of a clause because the word order patterns are fairly fixed and thus predictable from the very beginning of the clausal construction. This is an asset when the projectability of turn closure and

speaker change are negotiated. Explicit orientations to such projectability are seen in the case of the early turn starts where the next speaker initiates the turn slightly overlapping with the last projected element(s) of the prior turn (see Drew in this volume). An example from Swedish is provided in (8): B's turn entry overlaps the projected object to the verb (*ha*) *haft* '(have) had', which then is a potential closing constituent of A's clausal TCU.

(8) Lindström 2006: 101.

A: .h var i kroppen ha du haft [**värken**  
 .h where in the body have you had [the pain

B: [**hördu** ja kan nästan säj de:e hela kroppen  
 [listen I can almost say it's the whole body

In languages with other word-order characteristics, such as Japanese, corresponding negotiations call for a sensitivity to other types of cues than the mere syntactic arrangement of the complements following the finite predicate verb (see Fox et al. 1996; Tanaka 1999; Couper-Kuhlen & Selting 2001). Vagueness in syntactic projection can indeed explain the deployment of linguistically and culturally special recipient practices, like *aizuchi* in Japanese. These interjections signal a recipient understanding during utterance production at a more local on-line level than 'continuers' in English which often orient to more comprehensive, possible completion points in utterance construction (Sidnell 2007: 236). Hence, structural linguistic features seem to determine the kinds of signals that are relevant and also developed for the orchestration of turn-taking.

The syntax of clausal beginnings may in some languages be indicative of specific interactional, pragmatically salient values. For example, German and Swedish employ a syntactically 'loose' clausal pre-front field that is a locus for 'non-constituents'; these include sequentially positioning TCU initial elements, such as response tokens, discourse markers, and dislocated referents (Auer 1996; Lindström 2006). This syntactic extra position can also be used to disambiguate the pragmatic function of the potential 'constituents', such as sentence adverbs and subordinate clauses. Hence, syntactic variation in the management of the turn beginning correlates with its functional variation; generally, this variation concerns a referential or a pragmatic sense of the beginning element. An example is given in extract (9) in which the German sentence adverb *natürlich* 'obviously' occurs in the pre-front field, disintegrated from the subsequent inner clausal frame (an integrated version would put the finite in the position directly following *natürlich*):

(9) Auer 1996: 298.

U: ja;=aber dann immer die 'h die wahl auch; zwischen jemandem und zwischen essn.  
 yeah but then always the 'h choice too; between somebody and between eating.

T: ja?  
 yeah

U: also 'h [aber **natürlich** ganz allein denk=ich sch]afft mers nich,  
 you know 'h but obviously just on your own I think you can't make it

T: [jedenfalls der griff wa:r ]  
 at any rate you grasped

U: [aso irgnd=ne hilfe braucht mer.=nur halt andre vleicht,=wie s essn; ne  
 I mean some kind of help you need

T: [ja:  
 yes

The use of the sentence adverb *natürlich* in a syntactic locus typical of the TCU initial markers upgrades its potential function as a connective, interaction regulating element between two utterances. Like other TCU initial discourse markers, the pre-fronted sentence adverb is more preoccupied with making a comment on the subsequent dialogical action (it is 'natural' to say x) rather than with modifying the proposition that is constitutive of the action (something is 'natural'). As shown in Lindström and Lindholm's contribution in this volume, small introductory clausal question framing units, such as *jag undrar* 'I wonder' and *får jag fråga* 'may I ask', can also be constructed as syntactically loose pre-fronted elements in Swedish. This syntactic treatment upgrades their function as pragmatic markers of the speaker's stance rather than as fully referential matrix clauses that would project a complement clause as the object.

In a comparison, an interactionally salient trade-off between grammatically integrated and non-integrated beginnings is a practice, which is less prominently available in English. This is because English systematically treats most elements, especially adverbial disjuncts (i.e. stance adverbs), as syntactically non-integrated elements if they occur before the first clause constituent, the subject. In other words, there is no pragmatically conditioned scope for word-order variation like in the German case in (9); cf. *Natürlich, ganz allein schafft man es nicht* / *Natürlich schafft man es nicht ganz allein*, which in plain syntactic terms would both be 'Obviously, you can't make it just on your own' in English.

### Structural contrasts and interactional import

The above examples have served to show that a conversation analytic method in combination with an interactional linguistic, structurally informed orientation to language, is a powerful tool for examining cross-language variation in spoken, dialogically rooted language. The grammar of a language provides the structural contrasts necessary for carrying out interactionally salient tasks, such as response giving, repair, projection of turn closure, incrementing, and speaker positioning. In this sense, a comparative interactional cross-linguistic analysis offers intriguing prospects for cross-language studies, which traditionally have been made in the realm of typology and contrastive linguistics. Indeed, what pragmatic content is coded in a language may be specific for a culture to such a degree that it is impossible to render it in a simple manner in another language that reflects another culture. Or, to put it differently, the saliency of certain interactive practices may be different in different cultures; thus, their explicit coding may also have different saliency in languages.

By examining spoken, interactional language, we meet a further important comparative aspect, that of contrasting the spoken and written modes of a given language. It may be that the spoken mode is in many respects essentially different from the written norm which has been ‘canonized’ by generations of grammarians, scribes and professional writers. In such comparisons it is important to be able to investigate the spoken representation of a language in its own right, as a normal form in its own environment, and not as a (deficient) deviation from what is tacitly supposed to be normal language use in writing.

### *Comparative dimensions: the chapters*

The previous sections have outlined some forms of comparative conversation analysis. The dimensions discussed do not exhaust the comparative possibilities, as the chapters in this volume will show. Furthermore, a single study can simultaneously apply several kinds of comparative analysis, as again the chapters show.

Most of the chapters in this volume present a study of a specific interactional phenomenon (responding to assessments, displaying disappointment, other-correction, question frames, responses to troubles-telling etc.) and apply comparative approaches in the analysis. Simultaneously, the authors discuss the advantages and challenges of the comparative enterprise. The first chapter by Ilkka Arminen, however, is methodological in nature and thus continues to explore some of the themes presented in the introduction. Arminen discusses the various analytical techniques used in CA from the comparative perspective. The author starts with the role of a single case analysis and demonstrates that even this type of analysis can be, at least implicitly, comparative. This chapter then discusses the comparison between the cases in a corpus, the role of deviant cases, and the role of quantitative analysis in CA studies. Throughout the discussion, Arminen illustrates the methodological points by providing examples from his own previous work, for instance, on telephone conversation openings (landline vs. mobile phone calls) and on interaction in Alcoholics Anonymous meetings.

The next chapter by Paul Drew revisits overlap, a central turn-taking phenomenon. The author builds on Gail Jefferson’s work on overlap and presents a comparative classification of the types of overlap. This study concentrates on overlap onset, the precise moment when overlapping begins, and analyzes the interactional differences of overlap in different onset positions (e.g., transition space onset and last item onset). Furthermore, this chapter discusses the terminological and interactional differences between ‘overlap’ and ‘interruption’. The author argues that most cases of overlap cannot be described as ‘interruptions’. Overlapping talk is overwhelmingly fine-tuned and not disruptive or disaffiliative in nature; quite the contrary, talking in overlap is frequently associated with affiliative actions.

Elizabeth Couper-Kuhlen analyzes affect, displays of disappointment more precisely, in interaction. As the author states, CA and affect have often been seen as “uneasy bedfellows”. The analysis presented in this chapter shows, however, that affect can be studied as a sequential phenomenon, and CA offers a solid methodology for its analysis. This study approaches disappointment from a specific sequential position and from specific turn types (rejection finalizers in rejection sequences) and analyzes the prosodic features of the turns in this position. After detecting the prosody of disappointment in British phone calls, the author compares

the practices with similar sequences in German phone calls. Couper-Kuhlen opens a cross-cultural discussion on the construction of affect in interaction and suggests that languages can rely on different kinds of resources in affect displays: the same affect can be displayed by prosody in one language, whereas another language may rely more on lexical resources, e.g. particles.

The next chapter, by Auli Hakulinen and Marja-Leena Sorjonen, also concentrates on an affective interactional sequence, namely responses to assessments. The authors focus on a set of response types that are typical of Finnish conversation: responses that consist of, or include, the repetition of the verb of the first assessment. In Finnish, there are many such responses: the agreement can be done, for instance, using verb repeat only, with a double verb construction, or with the combination of a verb repeat and a response token. By comparing the use of the different types, the authors show that they carry distinctive interactional and sequential implications: for example, the combination of verb repeat and response token *joo* 'yes' not only expresses agreement, but also implies a closure of the topic. Hakulinen and Sorjonen also discuss the construction of agreeing responses from a cross-linguistic and typological perspective.

The next chapter approaches other-correction from several comparative perspectives. Markku Haakana and Salla Kurhila analyze the different constructions that speakers use to correct an error in another speaker's turn in Finnish conversation. This study shows the variations of correcting: some of the corrections include elements of negation, some do not; some are simple phrases, some clausal structures; some are constructed with markers of uncertainty, but most are not. The authors present an analysis of these formats and show that several kinds of issues can affect the construction of the correction: for instance, the correctable issue, the timing of the correction, and the kind of knowledge that is dealt with in the correction sequence. Haakana and Kurhila compare their findings with the analysis of other-correction presented in previous CA studies concerning conversations conducted in English (most notably in SJS 1977) and observe striking differences: other-correction is not always treated as a dispreferred action that needs to be "modulated" in various ways. Thus, this chapter shows other-correction as a complex phenomenon that can adjust to different types of interactions, to different kinds of relationships between the participants and to different kinds of "errors".

Jan Lindström and Camilla Lindholm investigate one interactional linguistic practice, question frames, in a variety of institutional interactions conducted in Swedish. By question frames, the authors refer to self-referencing turn beginnings such as *jag undrar* 'I wonder' and *får jag fråga* 'may I ask' that project a question to follow. This chapter analyzes the different linguistic forms these frames take and discusses their grammatical status in the turns. Furthermore, the authors discuss the functions of the frames and compare their distributions in different institutional interactions (e.g., medical consultations and calls to a poison control centre). Through multi-layered comparative analysis, the authors show that different kinds of frames are favored in different contexts, both in terms of topic/sequence and in terms of type of interaction. The frames used also vary according to the participant identity (e.g., patient versus doctor), and in different contexts, the frames have different import. The authors point out that although question frames are also used in everyday conversations, they are much more frequent in institutional encounters and thus they bear a distinct role in institutional communication.

The following chapters continue the analytical line adopted in the previous one by analyzing an interactional phenomenon that occurs in different types of interaction. Johanna Ruusuvuori and Liisa Voutilainen analyze troubles-telling sequences in several types of interaction and concentrate on the role of empathy in responding to troubles-talk. The authors start with the troubles-telling practices and responses in everyday conversation between friends and then move on to analyze three types of health-care consultations: general practice, homeopathy, and cognitive psychotherapy. The chapter focuses on how the professionals receive the patient's expressions of problematic experiences. The results show that generally, the professional party may show affiliation with the patient's affective stance, although affiliative responses are rarer than in everyday conversations. The comparative analysis reveals several interesting issues: for instance, the comparison between general practice and homeopathy shows that homeopaths affiliate with patients to a considerably higher degree than physicians.

The chapter by Helena Kangasharju continues the comparison between different types of interaction and also the analysis of affect in interaction. The author focuses on an emotionally heightened interactional activity, a dispute. She compares three disputes that occur in different settings: within ordinary conversation at home, in a television reality show (*Big Brother*), and in one type of institutional interaction, a meeting. Kangasharju investigates the verbal and non-verbal devices of disputing, such as challenging questions, swearing, raised volume, and animated voice. In addition, this chapter analyzes the reconciliation sequences of the disputes. In spite of the setting, the three disputes exhibit, to a large extent, similar features. However, some differences emerge: certain devices, such as swearing, are only used in non-institutional settings, and in reconciliation, the resources and motivations of the interactants can differ according to the setting. Furthermore, this chapter shows that the devices used in Finnish disputes appear similar to other languages and cultures.

Sara Routarinne compares two different educational situations: "ordinary" classroom interactions and computer-human interactions in which teaching and learning happens by playing an educational game. In both of these settings, the interaction is structured as three-part I-R-E sequences of i) the Initiative question/task by the teacher/game, ii) the Response from the student(s), and iii) the Evaluation by the teacher/game. Although the interactions appear similarly structured sequentially, the detailed comparative analysis reveals remarkable differences in them. By examining the fourth position, the student's uptake after the evaluation, Routarinne demonstrates that uptake only occurs in computer game interactions and (almost) never in plenary teaching. This phenomenon reveals the difference between these two settings as learning environments. As the traditional plenary teaching treats students as isolated islands, the computer game supports interactive learning and makes problem solving a collaborative effort between the students playing the game together. Through the analysis of the multi-modal features of the game setting, the author shows how collaborative playing is an instantiation of distributed cognition in action.

Another type of comparison is presented in the chapter by Minna Laakso and Tuula Tykkyläinen, who examine gender-related differences in interaction. The authors compare four- to five-year-old Finnish-speaking girls and boys in their same-sex interactions. This analysis focuses on the interactive sequences in which the children formulate proposals about the future course of the play and the

subsequent responses to the proposals. This study shows clear differences across genders in the negotiation practices and the linguistic expressions of them. The girls tend to use appealing proposal formats (e.g., the particle *jooko* ‘yes-Q’) and also engage in lengthy explicit negotiation sequences where conflict is not avoided. In contrast, boys make their proposals with attention-getters and by making use of the visually present play situation. Furthermore, boys do not negotiate verbally about the play design once the proposal has been made. The girls thus appear to solve the interactional tasks at hand verbally and explicitly, while the boys rely more on the non-verbal dimension and handle the negotiation more implicitly.

The last chapter of the volume presents yet another comparative perspective on interactional practices. Steven Clayman and John Heritage synthesize their previous work on questions presented in the U.S. presidential news conferences. Their analysis is in many ways extraordinary in the field of CA: the authors approach the questioning of the presidents from a historical point of view, looking for possible changes in the practices over time (1953–2000), and apply a complex statistical approach. This chapter shows convincingly that with conversation analysis, or applied conversation analysis, it is also possible to analyze interactional practices from a historical point of view, and how the practices of some action (e.g., questioning) can change over time. The authors are interested in whether the journalists’ questioning style has become more aggressive over the years. ‘Aggressiveness’ is analyzed through several features of question design (e.g., directness), which are based on a conversation analytical case-by-case analysis. The statistical analysis shows a clear trend: the questioning styles in general have become more aggressive. However, the styles of questioning have varied in different periods of time, and the authors discuss, again through statistical analysis, how the different social issues (e.g., the duration of the presidential term, unemployment rate) may or may not affect the questioning style of the journalists.

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## On comparative methodology in studies of social interaction

This chapter discusses the role of comparative methods for studies of social interaction beyond the narrow traditional view of comparative studies. Traditionally some forms of research have been called comparative, such as comparative linguistics (originally comparative philology, Anttila 1989), or comparative sociology (Alapuro et al. 1985), but it can be argued that most scientific research is comparative. For instance, Emile Durkheim stated in *The Rules of Sociological Method* (1895) that all sociological research is comparative since social phenomena are considered to be typical, representative or unique, all of which judgements are based on comparisons. Studies of individual cases are also often comparative, as counter-intuitive as this may sound. Max Weber's well-known study of the birth of capitalism (*The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, 1905) that concerns the relationship between the protestant aspirations and the genesis of the capitalist mode of production may seem an explication of a unique history, but it was a reconstruction created by contrasting, comparing and highlighting the uniqueness of the case (Arminen & Alapuro 2004).

Conversation analysis, in particular, relies on comparisons of individual instances and sequences to each other to note their similarities and differences so as to explicate their sense. In fact, comparative operations already play a role in the identification of a phenomenon, a sequentially organized action with a social meaning. The phenomenon is identified by focusing on the particularity of the instance of action, at least in an imaginary contrast to other kinds of action. Further, comparative operations are in fact doubly constitutive of the sense of action. In the first place, the participants that rely on their stocks of comparative knowledge display their understanding and interpretation of the ongoing interaction that can only be scrutinized subsequently by analysts through their sets of knowledge (cf. Schegloff & Sacks 1973).

Stocks of comparative knowledge form the taken-for-granted basis of social life. Consequently, single cases are not void of comparative reasoning, and although we do not normally think single case studies as being comparative, they are loaded with this comparative reasoning and involve comparative operations. Single case studies focus, highlight and graphically represent individual aspects of the case, thereby making them comparable implicitly or explicitly (Goodwin 1994, 2007; Arminen 2005a).

Systematic comparisons start after a set of cases has been assembled. Study of a collection of cases, a corpus, proceeds essentially through comparing similarities

and differences between cases (Mill 1843–1883; Arminen 2005b, chapter 3). Comparisons concerning instances of a corpus can be called internal comparative analysis, i.e., the study concerns one set of data and does not involve comparisons between different sets (collected from different settings or at different times). The most systematic internal comparisons can be achieved via analytic induction, which aims at a comprehensive treatment of data. It surveys all instances of a phenomenon within the data set to find and characterize regularly occurring features of that phenomenon. Deviations from the regularities originally found are pointed out, and the reasons for their existence articulated. In this way, the ultimate aim is to formulate regularities that are binding throughout the data, and account for exceptions.

Ethnomethodologically inspired studies of social interaction are qualitative at the outset. They try to discover and explicate the participants' methods and means of achieving the action in question. The data consists of a small number of instances, and reliability is gained mainly through the depth of the analysis. Comparisons with data from different settings are often used for revealing the characteristics of the action. Studies of institutional interaction are typically based on comparisons between ordinary conversation and institutional settings to observe the specificity of these interactions. In most cases, comparisons are qualitative, based on a few comparable cases, and their reliability is not statistical.

Quantified forms of data analysis have also become increasingly common in studies of social interaction. The validity of the analysis is then not based simply on individual instances but also on the distributions of interactional practices. For instance, we may compare how the different responses of doctors to complaints by patients figure in interaction, or compare the ways in which people answer calls with different kinds of telephones. Quantifications make visible and sharpen the contrasts. They also enable statistical, causal analysis if a sufficient amount of data is available. As a whole, the discussion on the role of comparative procedures can enhance our understanding of the various methodological solutions of the different types of studies of social interaction and their potential applications.

This chapter proceeds from the consideration of single cases to quantitative comparisons through “internal” comparisons using analytic induction and qualitative comparisons. The applicability and benefits of different strategies are discussed at the end.

### *Implicit comparisons: single case analysis*

In the beginning there was talk and action in interaction. To make this field a domain of scientific activity, it has to be organized into analysable objects. Scientific activity is then a matter of defining and describing the relevant objects of knowledge. Various discursive practices are necessary to distil the objects of knowledge from the domain of scrutiny (Quine 1960). To make it simple, to start an analysis you have to be able to identify a phenomenon that you may then treat as your object of knowledge. The identification of an object is not itself a scientific activity, rather a precursor or a threshold to begin the analysis proper (Garfinkel et al. 1981). In studies of social interaction, you tend to just notice a particular kind of sequential trajectory, or perhaps you get the feeling that something you have

come across has appeared somewhere earlier and the reappearance gives you the idea that there seems to be or may be something that has a particular organization. Sometimes this apparently/possibly “recurring” object is an action that is socially consequential for the parties in interaction. The recognition of a phenomenon is a precondition for any study; the subsequent analysis can be developed in several directions. The research can also focus on an individual instance of data. A single case analysis, if developed into a mature study, includes comparative detailing that spells out the analytic characteristics of the instance as a specimen of a particular phenomenon in an implicit contrast to other kinds of actions and sequential patterns.

Let me give you an example. When I was involved with a research project studying interactions in 12-step addiction treatment<sup>1</sup>, I was struck by what was going on in some interactions that we had videotaped. The following extract comes from a peer group interaction (i.e., a group of seven patients having a session together without the therapist). They had been asked to think about what their lives would be like six months after the treatment period. The extract starts with an answer that Tiina, one of the patients, gives.

(1) (VR 2 20:3-10; Arminen 2005b)

1 T:  $\text{fMää vastaan et emmä tie}^{\circ}\text{d(h)ä}^{\circ}$ , hhhe hy hy (.) .vhhh  
 I answer-1 that NEG-1.I know  
 $\text{fI'll answer that I don't kno}^{\circ}\text{(h)w}^{\circ}$ , hhhe he he (.) .vhhh

2 (0.4)

3 T: → Ehkä raittiina?, (0.6) Ehkä en  $\text{e}^{\circ}\text{lossakaa}^{\circ}$ . hh  
 Perhaps sober-ESS Maybe NEG-1 alive-INE-CLI  
 Perhaps sober?, (0.6) Maybe not even a°live°. hh

4 (0.6)

5 N1: [(-)]

6 M2:→[(Paanks mä et)  $\uparrow\text{TOIvottavas [ti}^{\circ}\text{raittiina}^{\circ}$ ,  
 Put-1-Q-CLI I that hopefully sober-ESS  
 [(Shall I put that)  $\uparrow\text{HOpefull [y}^{\circ}\text{sober}^{\circ}$ ,

7 T: [N:: en tiedä?,  
 NEG-1 know  
 [e:: I don't know?,

8 Toi [vottavasti raittiina vois< (.) sanoo?, h  
 Hopefully sober-ESS can-CON say-INF  
 Hop [efully sober I guess (.) one c'd say?, h

9 P: [YHH

10 (0.5)

<sup>1</sup> The data comes from group therapy sessions in a Finnish addiction treatment inpatient clinic that uses the so-called Minnesota model, based on the program of Alcoholics Anonymous, in their treatment.

There is a striking discrepancy between Tiina's answer (lines 1–3) and what the senior member volunteers to write down (line 6). This discrepancy highlights a contrast between the individual viewpoint and a reportable answer that is meant to be read by the therapist. Tiina's answer reveals her understanding of her situation that as a middle aged addict, the odds are turning against her: it is not easy to quit a habit since that is pretty much all she has left. The senior member (M2), by contrast, orients to his role as a secretary of the group to write down what he seems to think the therapist would want them to report to her. There is a gap between the officially prescribed/desired state of affairs by the treatment clinic and the patients' individual views. This was a kind of initial observation. It is not yet the identification of a phenomenon, but a possible starting point. To analyse addiction therapy, you may want to pay attention to the gap between patients' individual views and the official goals. But to move toward a sequential analysis of interaction you have to narrow down your interest, and articulate distinct aspects of this more general structural feature. To proceed further, a more detailed representation of sequential trajectory has to be drawn. A starting point for the sequential analysis can be presented as a chart (below).

Chart 1 (T=therapist; P=patient; GS=Patient who acts as a group senior and secretary)

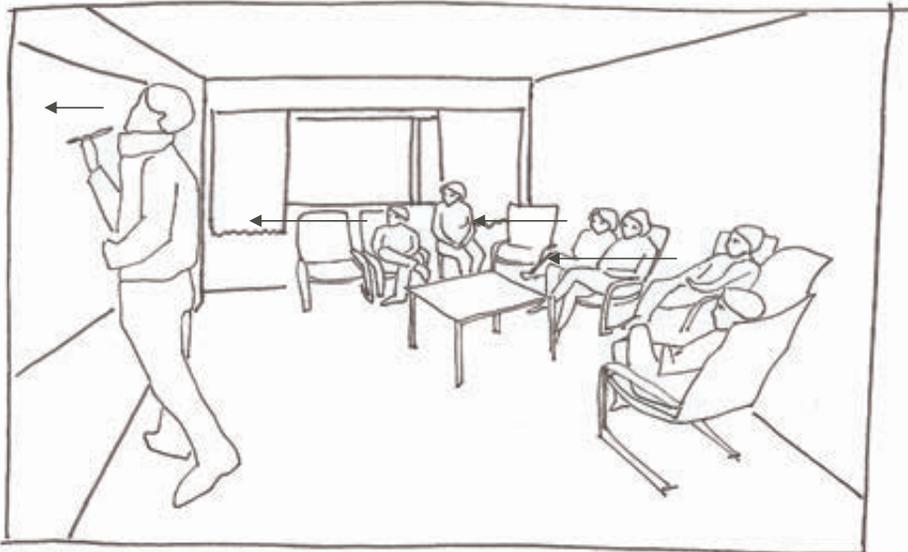
- T: Q (Question deriving from an institutional agenda)
- P: A (Patient's Answer deriving from a personal agenda)
- GS: A (GS corrects<sup>2</sup> P by formulating an answer reflecting institutional agenda)
- P: A (Patient acknowledges GS's correction)

This detailing of the sequential trajectory would allow us to focus on individual components of the sequential pattern and the relationships between components. The analytic procedure is to first identify a generic structural feature, and then break it down into a set of observable and identifiable elements consisting of enumerable interactional features. Among other things, we could point out that the patients' answer (lines 1–3) is produced in a particular way, consisting of several turn construction units that allow other participants to come in. Subsequently, we will comment on the other participants' absent actions through the exposition of the participation framework of the event. As a whole, the explication of the sequential pattern facilitates at least two lines of analytical development. First,

2 Alternatively, the correction could be heard as a candidate understanding, and not as a correction. This hearing would be possible if the parties were not orienting to the 12-step treatment. The group senior makes the correction as if it were a candidate understanding. The correction displays an orientation to the ideology of the clinic, the cornerstone of which is an exhibited willingness to stay sober (which the patient initially challenged). The broader issue is the relevance of contextual knowledge for the analyst. The analyst has to invoke a contextual understanding of the activities to make sense of the participants' actions and inferences. To make a competent analysis of the 12-step therapy, the analyst has to be able to follow the 12-step ideology in action (see Arminen 2000, 2005b).

we may use the chart of the sequential pattern to seek instances in the rest of the data that are recognizably ‘similar’ to form a corpus of cases for further analysis. In the course of the addiction therapy research project, we did indeed collect a number of corpora that concerned different types of sequences formed along the gap between ‘personal’ and ‘official’ views of the clinic. We investigated the professionals’ ways of confronting patients who expressed views unacceptable from the 12-step therapy point of view (Arminen & Leppo 2001; Arminen & Halonen 2007), the ways the institutional view surpassed the patients’ own views in the multi-professional meetings (Arminen & Perälä 2002), and the ways the patients formulated the group therapy rules in the peer group (Arminen 2004).

Second, the analysis can progress as a single-case analysis that explicates the pattern found through the scrutiny of the ways in which the orientation of parties is established in situated achievement of the action. This construes the uniqueness of the case and explicates participants’ methods of making the situation what it becomes. A possible way to develop the single-case analysis is also to take into account the visual aspects of interaction that reveal the participation framework of action. Through the chosen participation framework, talk and bodies relate to physical resources in a manner that embodies the participants’ ways of seeing and organizing structures relevant to the focus of their action (Goodwin 2007). The peer group in 12-step addiction treatment appears to be organized around a very particular participation framework that displays an orientation to an external authority. Although the therapist of the clinic is not present at the peer group, the tasks she has given and participants’ reportability to her frame the situation. At the beginning of the sequence 1 discussed above, the group senior wrote down the question “what would their lives be like six months after the treatment?” The other peer group members are organized facing the group senior acting as a secretary for



*Figure 1: Orientation to the absent authority in the participation framework of the 12-step peer group.*

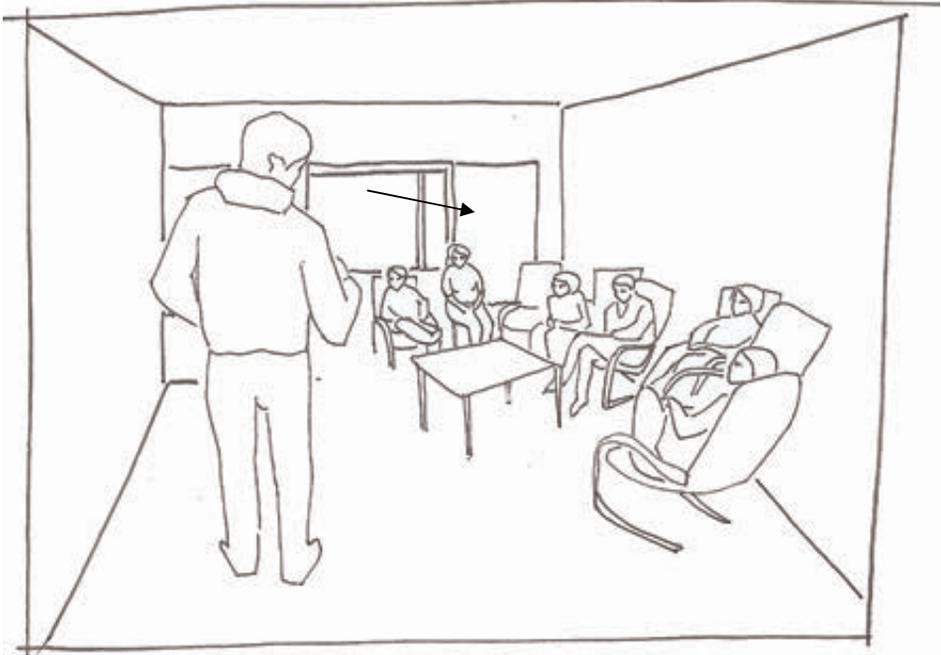


Figure 2: Group senior orients to the patient to restate her answer reportable.

the group (i.e., a transmitter of the views to and from the therapist). In this way, the embodied organization of interaction is oriented toward the therapist as an absent authority (see Figure 1).

Writing down the therapist's questions and the patient's answers not only structures the organization of the topic of conversation but also becomes embodied as a sequential frame. The group senior's work as a secretary creates a rhythm for the sequential orchestration of the question–answer pairs. As the group senior has the task of writing down “glosses” of the answers, the answer is only completed in this participation framework until its gloss has been written down. Further, as “writing” is slower than “speaking”, the group senior tends to lag, and breaking may occur between the group senior and the rest of the peer group, which has got ahead. When the patient starts to answer in extract 1, the group senior is still writing down the previous answer. The asynchrony between activities opens an “empty” space that allows development of the answer. Other peer group members conspicuously respect the individual patient's right to deliver an answer, and do not participate in answering. After line 3, the group senior finishes his writing, and turns toward the patient to suggest a *reportable* answer (Figure 2). As soon as the patient – after some hesitation – accepts the reformulated answer, the group senior turns back toward the flip-board, and starts writing down the reportable answer (Figure 2).

The participation framework of the peer group in 12-step treatment embodies an orientation to the external authority. This configuration of participation, roles and entitlements becomes directly consequential for the organization of language use in the group. The other-correction in this instance makes the arrangements

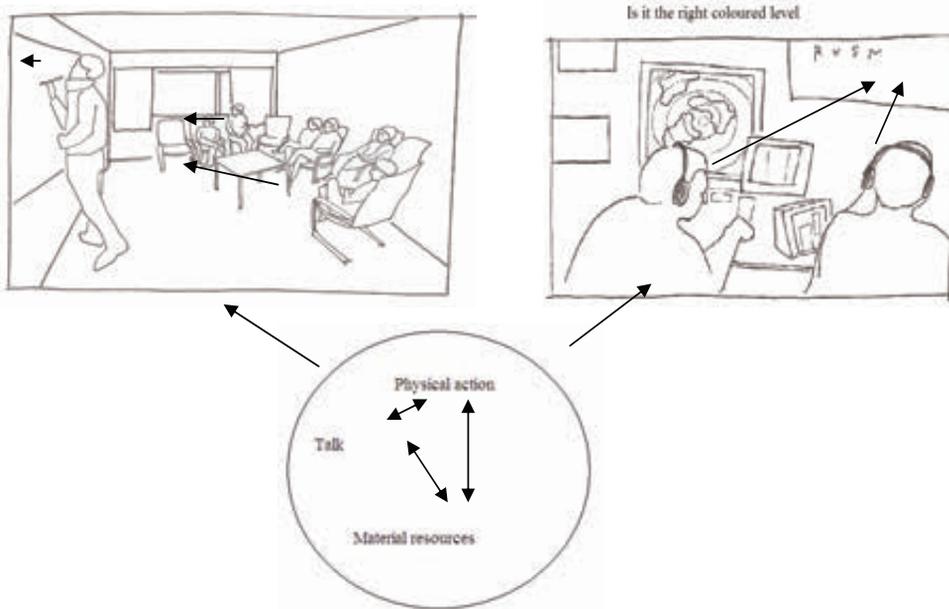


Figure 3: Comparison of homologies in the structures of the organization of action (Cf. Goodwin 2007: 60).

concerning participation statuses public. The group senior animates and embodies the absent authority which is the source of the corrections over-riding the peer group members' authorship.

The participation framework orienting toward the external authority is not unique to this event or type of interaction. We can find similar outwardly directed participation configurations in other settings, such as air traffic control (Arminen et al. 2010; see figure 3). The similarities in participation frameworks come out in similar interactional trajectories, such as other-initiated other repairs orienting to the external authority. In both contexts, parties relay views of external authorities through other-initiated other repairs that correct views incompatible with the views of the absent authority, thereby animating views of absent principals (cf. Levinson 1988). In both settings an external authority becomes procedurally relevant for the interaction; among others, participants end up making specific kinds of repairs that modify the claims originally made. Single case studies can point out structural features of action that are comparable even beyond differences on the surface of interaction. We may pay attention to the structural homologies in the organization of embodied interaction, or sequential patterns. This orientation of structural homologies is characteristic of much of the work by Charles Goodwin (1994; 2007), who investigates the constellation of language, environment, body and action, paying attention to the differences and similarities in their configurations in different settings.

*Internal comparisons:  
systematic descriptive analysis and deviant cases*

Tracing of generalizable invariances can start when an analyst has collected a corpus of instances of an identifiable phenomenon. The search for invariances can apply the principles of analytic induction (Llobera 1998; Lindesmith 1947). A characteristic feature of analytic induction is a comprehensive data treatment in which all cases are carefully scrutinized (Lindesmith 1947; Becker 1998). In the comprehensive data analysis resemblances and differences in the cases sharing similar elementary features are compared. If modifications of the basic pattern are found, the formulations concerning hypothesized underlying patterns are revised accordingly. Cases that depart from the rule formulated are called deviant cases (Schegloff 1968; Clayman & Maynard 1995). The three ways to handle deviant cases are fundamental for analytic induction.

The analyst can first check whether the parties themselves orient toward the deviance. Orientations to deviant behaviour demonstrate the relevance of the underlying normative framework, and thus reveal the underlying salience of the basic pattern. Secondly, the analyst may reformulate and generalize the basic pattern so that the putatively “deviant case” eventually falls under the reformulated rule. This strategy is actually common, since most analyses start from a provisional understanding that is eventually elaborated through the evidence gathered case by case. However, only rarely is this procedure acknowledged explicitly. Schegloff’s (1968) analysis of landline telephone call openings is one of the best-known examples of this strategy. In all but one of 500 telephone call openings, the answerer spoke first. By considering the deviant case, Schegloff came to reformulate and develop his regularity from “the answerer speaks first” to a “summons–answer sequence”. That is, the answerer does not speak first, but answers a summons. In a deviant case, after the answerer had failed to take the floor, the caller repeated the summons by soliciting an answer by saying *Hello*. The originally formulated regularity was rephrased in a stronger form, including an account of the deviant case. Finally, genuinely deviant cases in which there is no display of deviance and which cannot be undone by a reformulation of the regularity need separate analysis that explains them. The analyst has to find local contingencies to account for the departure from the pattern, so s/he can show that those factors have caused the deviance. For example, in the meetings of Alcoholics Anonymous, speakers systematically referred to earlier speakers to display their solidarity (Arminen 1998). Speakers could, however, refrain from referring to prior speakers without overtly orienting to that being deviant. A contingent fact was a quarrel between AA members. Speakers occasionally refrain from referring to prior speakers because of their quarrel, thereby actually orienting toward maintaining solidarity by avoiding open conflict.

To discuss the analytic induction and the role of deviant cases, I return to the study of the group therapy rules in the addiction therapy. Initially I noticed that the existing set of ten rules of group therapy for the clinic were explained to every new incoming patient in the peer group, and that there seemed to be something systematic in the way these rules were discussed. This systematic practice consisted of 1) a reference to a rule clause, 2) a reformulation of the rule clause, i.e., its interpretation. In the peer group, the group senior was the master of this

ceremony. In extract 2, he refers to the rule concerning turn-taking, according to which parties talk one at a time in the sharing round (line 5). Subsequently, he gives a commonsense explication of the rule “Only one person can talk at a time” (lines 9–16).

(2) (VR3,32,15-4; S = senior member, T = new comer, E = other group member; Arminen 2004)

- 1 S: Seh'n nyt on kai: melkein sel#vää#°ki  
That-CLI now be probably almost clear-CLI  
that's y'know is somewhat clear though
- 2 e[t°,  
that  
°t[hat°,
- 3 T: [Totta kai juu,=  
of course PRT  
[Of course yeah,=
- 4 \*((T TURNS TOWARD THE TABLE OF RULES))
- 5 S: =.hhhhh Sjt (0.3) puhuttaa yks kerralla,h  
Then talk-PAS one.at.a.time  
=.hhhhh Erm (0.3) we'll talk one at a time,h
- 6 (0.5) ((T turns towards S))
- 7 S: totta kai °ja,° hhh  
of course and  
of course °and,° hhh
- 8 (0.7) ((T nods))
- 9 → S: ↓Ei tääl o kai kukaan  
NEG here be perhaps anyone  
↓No one I guess has
- 10 → suuttunu jos joku on #kommentoinu asioita.=  
get angry-PPC if someone be comment-PPC thing-PL-PAR  
gone mad here if someone has commented on things.=
- 11 E: [°#Nii#hh°  
[°#yea#hh°
- 12 → S:=[mut siis sillee että:#,=  
but PRT like that  
=[but it's that way that:#,=
- 13 T: =hmy
- 14 → S: Ei nyt vältt- että [°minä ja toi ja:@, (.) sinä ja  
NEG now necess- that I and that and you and  
Not necess- that [°I and that one and@, (.) you and



(3) (VR3,35,5-6; S = senior member, T = newcomer; Arminen 2004)

- 1 S: Sit voidaan ottaa tähä vihot seuraaval tunnil ja  
then can-PAS take here notebook-PL next-ALL hour-ALL and  
Then in the next hour we can take notebooks here and
- 2 kirjottaa.  
write  
write.
- 3 (0.5)
- 4 T: [Mm:
- 5 → S: [.hhh (.) Kunnioita toisten ↑mielipiteitä ja toisia  
respect other-GEN-PL view-PL-PAR and other-PL-PAR  
[.hhh (.) Respect other people and their
- 6 → ihmisiä, hh  
people-PL-PAR  
views, hh
- 7 (1.0)
- 8 ja (0.3) .hhh Tunteita saa ilmaista vapaasti, hhh eli?,  
and emotion-PL-PAR may express freely PRT  
and (0.3) .hhh emotions may be expressed freely, hhh that's?,

In lines 5–6, the group senior reads the rule plainly (“respect other people and their views”) and then after a pause, just moves to the next rule (line 8). By reading the rule without explanation, he displays his understanding that the rule itself is ready to be used and applied. The same rule is also read plainly elsewhere in our data, like another rule (“violence and threats of violence are forbidden”). In fact, these two rules are read plainly in all their appearances in our data just like a third rule (“listen to others without prejudice”) – except once, a deviance from deviant cases, which I cannot discuss here (see Arminen 2004).

It appears that the three plainly read rules are general ethical guidelines which also apply outside the clinic. They may not always be followed, but recognition of them constitutes part of tacit cultural competence through which any social conduct is assessed and appreciated. The analysis of deviant cases thus strengthens the conclusions. The analysis revealed a distinction that informs social actors in their moral assessments and exposes the ways in which rule use is embedded in the social actors’ mundane interpretative frame. Parties orient to the rules by holding them accountable in an everyday interpretative frame. All extensions, specifications or applications of mundane tacit rules for the social organization of interaction are held accountable. In this way, therapeutic interaction floats on the accountability built into the social actors’ cultural competence, which for its part is observable in the details of interaction.

Participants also prioritize everyday expectations in group interaction at the addiction clinic, forming the bedrock of the institutional arrangements, which are then clarified through recourse to commonsense explications (cf. Sacks 1992b:

533; Arminen 1998: 185–186). The existence of two sub-sets of rules may be vulnerable to problems of integration. In fact, this tension becomes observable in extract 2 above.

The group senior's presentation of a blatant violation of the rule also invites some laughter (lines 11–16). He was not only showing his ability to imagine an occasion when the rule would be broken, but he also caricatures some orderliness in which that might happen. The punchline ('I and that (one), and you and that (one)'), invites laughter, and it is designed with some rhythm and order, invoking an alternative description of the situation. Instead of the turn-taking of a sharing, in which one party talks at a time, the current speaker might select the next one, or the speakers might self-select so that the scene breaks into separate dialogues (cf. Sacks et al. 1974). The punch line gives an account of the violation of the institutional turn-taking rule with the help of another kind of order involving another rule. That is, everyday cultural competence is used to invoke another order to juxtapose the institutionally set order (Sacks 1992b: 489–493). E, a group member who seems to have committed this kind of rule violation, greets the tension with laughter (for laughter at the crossroads of the life-world and the medical realm, see Haakana 1999: 178–190).

To conclude, CA aims to treat data comprehensively and extend the analysis to all cases. Consequently, the findings should apply to all cases in the corpus including deviant cases, which are accounted for as shown above. The generalities found through CA analysis are thus rigorous, so that they apply to the whole corpus. The analysis of all the variation in data, particularly of deviant cases, is important in that it sharpens the understanding of the nature of action. It may also revive interest in the "standard patterns", of which new features may be observed after "deviant cases" have been scrutinized.

### *Qualitative comparative analysis of different data sets*

Qualitative comparisons are very typical in studies on social interaction. A typical analysis can illuminate institutional practices by comparing them with some instances of parallel practices in everyday talk (e.g., Maynard 2003). In these studies, the individual instances of interaction are taken to embody constitutive or primordial aspects of the action analysed in contrast to the ways in which things are done "normally" or "preferably" outside of the context in question. Comparisons between different types of institutional interaction can allow us to see the particularities of institutional practices. For instance, Vehviläinen (1999; 2001) has analysed the stepwise entry to giving advice in counselling, contrasting counselling within labour-market training with counselling in health care and therapy settings. In the latter, a stepwise entry to advice contributes fitting advice with the clients' perspective, creating an alignment between them, and minimizing resistance. In labour-market training, it was used for evaluating a student's plans, enabling the counsellor to gain an argumentatively advantageous position for giving advice. In this context, alignment and agreement with the client were not oriented to as much as in health care and therapy. The comparative analysis between different types of institutional interaction can illuminate the characteristic nature of a work practice.

Next I will discuss qualitative comparisons with the help of data excerpts from AA and 12-step treatment, which have many similarities, as the 12-step treatment is based on the set of beliefs of AA. However, it appears that in these settings, the central goal of both – the problem drinker’s aim to sober up – is characterized in more or less opposed ways. I will focus on self-repairs<sup>4</sup> that take place when a speaker characterizes a third party’s attempt to stay sober. Extract 4 is from an Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) meeting; the speaker (Marja) talks about the phase of her life when she was living with a partner who had had alcohol problems but who did not drink at the time. The analysis concerns the self-repair at line 3.

(4) (IA94Marja; Arminen 1996; 2000; 2005b)

- 1 M: Ja mä sitte siinä niinku sivussa olin (.) olin sitte kans (0.4)  
and I then there PRT aside-ADE be-PST-1 be-PST-1 then also  
And then on the side I was like (.) I was also (0.4)
- 2 kans selvin päin,=tavallaan tää i:hminen piti mua raittiina  
also sober in.a.way this person keep-PST me sober-ESS  
also abstaining, =in a way this pe:rson kept me sober
- 3 → koska se ei niinku voinu- (1.0) halunnu itse juoda,  
because he NEG PRT can-PPC want-PPC self drink  
cause he couldn’t- (1.0) didn’t want to drink himself,
- 4 eikä myöskään hyväksyny sitä että minä juon. (.)  
NEG-CLI also-NEG-CLI approve-PPC it that I drink-1  
and didn’t either approve of me drinkin. (.)
- 5 Ja mä sitte, mä olin hir- hirvittävän riippuvainen siitä  
and I then I be-PST-1 horrible-GEN dependent.on he-ELA  
And I myself, I was so hor- horribly dependent on him,
- 6 mä pidin sitä jonain isähahmona oja° .hhh  
I take-PST-1 he-PAR some father figure-ESS and  
I considered him as some sort of father figure °and° .hhh

In line 3, Marja makes a self-repair (‘he just couldn’t- (1.0) didn’t want to drink himself’), marked by a cut-off and a pause after the repairable that is then replaced. The repair draws a distinction between the *inability* to drink, and *unwillingness* to drink that characterize different reasons for abstaining. “Unwillingness” stands for a deliberate decision, whereas “inability” points toward actions that a person is not able to take, irrespective of volition. The repair replaces necessity with optionality, displaying the abstention as deliberate. This repair makes relevant a distinction between exterior compulsion and voluntary choice with strong moral and ethical implications. The repair portrays the action in moral terms that include the option of personal choice. A moral stance has been constituted in talk.

In extract 5, the activity context is different from that of the AA meeting. Here, the addiction therapist talks about a patient’s relationship to AA and to

4 Self-repairs are not the only context in which the orientation to the set of beliefs becomes apparent, but they display the participants’ demonstrated orientation.

sobriety in a multiprofessional team meeting, in which the aim is to discuss and develop treatment recommendations for the patient. The addiction therapist's characterization of the patient is actually embedded in the activity context for making treatment recommendations. The therapist establishes a view on what the successful 12-step treatment would require of the patient. We can again focus on the self-repair (lines 16 and 19).

(5) (MT 3, 17, 21-(18)10; T = female therapist; Arminen & Perälä 2002, Arminen 2005b)

- 1 T: Mä sit kysyin et ois:ko se kauheen niiku hävettävää  
I then ask-PST-1 that be-CON-Q it horrible-GEN PRT shameful-PAR  
I then asked if it would be so terribly shameful to
- 2 mennä AA:han ?, (0.8) (nii että) kau#heen niinku jotenki?, #  
go AA -ILL PRT terrible-GEN PRT somehow  
go to AA?, (0.8) (like) terr#ibly somehow?, #
- 3 (0.3) vaikeesti (0.3) melkein teki mieli sanoo että (.) (tiesithän sä)  
difficult-AVD almost feel-PST like say that know-PST-2 you  
(0.3) difficult (0.3) almost felt like saying that (.) (you knew)
- 4 tai eiku mä sanoinki sille että? (0.5)  
or NEG+PRT I say-PST-CLI she-ALL that  
or I did say to her that (0.5)
- 5 ku ei täs hoidos niinku sillä taval mitää tapahdu et se,  
as NEG here treatment-INE PRT in.that.way anything happen that it  
in this treatment nothing happens like that,
- 6 (0.5) suurin ihme mikä voi tapahtuu on se että, (0.6)  
greatest miracle what can happen be it that  
(0.5) the greatest miracle that can happen is that, (0.6)
- 7 et sä alat sitoutuu niiku ittes hoitamises  
that you start-2 commit PRT yourself-POS treat-ILL  
you become, like, committed to your own treatment
- 8 (0.8)
- 9 T: nii se oli jotenki vähä yllättyny?, (0.6) >että< se on kuitenkin  
PRT she was somehow a.bit. surprised that she be after all  
and she was somehow a bit surprised?, (0.6) >that< she has after all
- 10 käyny tän kaheksankyt viis että:, (2.4) #et jännä (.)  
go-PPC this 85 that that funny  
gone through this in eighty five that:, (2.4) #it's funny (.)
- 11 emmä tiä mitä noi potilaat oikee  
NEG-1.I know what those patient-PL really  
I don't know what the patients

- 12 odottaa että,# (0,6) nt kaikille ei#i#?, (0,4) tai siis suurimmalle  
 expect that all-ALL NEG or PRT most-ALL  
 expect that,# (0,6) no#ne of them#?, (0,4) or most
- 13 osalle ei viisiin sit niinku kuitenkaa perille se että idea  
 part-ALL NEG apparently then PRT anyway destination-ALL that that idea  
 of them do not seem to understand that the idea
- 14 ois siinä että?,# (0.7) tajuis et täs pitää  
 be-CON there that realize-CON that here must  
 is that?,# (0.7) they should realize that they should
- 15 itteää hoitaa (.) mut RAITTIINAHAN TÄÄ  
 oneself-PAR take.care but sober-ESS-CLI this  
 care for themselves (.) but SOBER SHE
- 16 → [TAHTOO? (0.6 )  
 want  
 [ WANTS TO? (0.6)]
- 17 [((speaking in background)) ]
- 18 (0.7)
- 19 → T: haluu ollah?, (0,3) sen on pakko ollah?, (1,3) ei siin o muit  
 want be she-GEN be must be NEG there be other-PL  
 wishes to be?, (0,3) she's got to be?, (1,3) it's not like she has any other
- 20 vaihtoehtoi sillä kyllä?,  
 choice-PL she-ADE PRT  
 choice, is it?,

The therapist addresses the key elements required of patients in 12-step treatment: going to AA, commitment to one's own treatment, and sobriety. When we take up the self-repair, we note that here willingness and desire are replaced with obligation and lack of choice (lines 16, 19). In extract 5, the self-repair is a part the professional treatment practitioner's attempt to confront the client to accept his disease. It portrays the client as a victim of his disease who "must" give up drinking.

In this fashion, the qualitative comparative analysis can reveal the differences between social practices and realities. Here we can see that while AA and 12-step therapy share the same ideology, they are in fact realized as critically different institutional orders, in which the same set of beliefs gives cunningly the contrary meaning to abstinence/sobriety as a compulsion or as a voluntary choice. The qualitative comparative analysis, however, depends on the analyst's ability to recognize the constitutive, primary components of the practices analysed. Practices may also involve variation that would require analysis of the distribution. The systematic analysis of distribution calls for quantified analysis.

*Quantitative comparative analysis of data*

Saturation is a general methodological rule for the amount of data (Alasuutari 1996). That is, after a certain point new data no longer provides a challenge to what is already known. However, it is a theoretical notion. Schegloff (1993) has repeated that one is a number, i.e., one case may be enough to show and explicate the nature of social action, a social fact. The distribution of a pattern is a different matter: when, where and how often we can expect to find the observed pattern. Studies on social interaction are generally strong in detailing phenomena, but considerably weaker in a variationist analysis that elaborates the distribution of patterns. A limited number of cases may be enough for recognizing and detailing systematic patterns, but a comparative analysis that elaborates differences between selected groups of cases, or studies the distribution of patterns in target groups, requires larger data sets. Ultimately, the amount of data needed depends upon the research questions posed. As far historical and cultural comparisons are concerned, larger quantifiable data sets are preferable. Quantified comparisons can shed light on the distribution of activity patterns across cultures and times more rigorously than qualitative comparisons (cf., Clayman & Heritage in this volume).

To discuss quantitative comparative analysis, I take up the study on mobile communication. In order to specify the emerging properties of mobile talk, Arminen and Leinonen (2006) compared a set of mobile calls to a set of landline calls. Our initial understanding was that mobile talk openings differ critically from landline telephone talk openings, suggesting that the opening sequence has undergone a number of substantial changes. For instance, (mobile) telephone service may involve the possibility of displaying the caller's name, if the incoming call comes from a person whose number is listed on the phone. Consequently, the mobile answerer can be superconfident of who is calling if the call comes from the known number, and design the answer correspondingly. A greeting answer to a call from a known caller establishes a common ground between the speakers known to each other (extract 6).

(6) (2002-06-21\_10-44-47; A= answerer, C= caller; Arminen & Leinonen 2006)

- 1 A: no moi,  
PRT PRT  
[]<sup>5</sup> hello,
- 2 (0.3)
- 3 C: no mo:i,  
PRT PRT  
[] hello:.
- 4 (.)
- 5 C: ooks sää lähössä,  
be-Q you((informal)) about-to-go ((idiom))  
are you leavin,

5 Utterance particle *no* can not be translated, as there is no comparable item in English (for a more detailed discussion, see Arminen & Leinonen 2006).

- 6     (.)
- 7     A: e,  
       no,
- 8     (0.3)

For the caller, the greeting is not only an answer to summons and a voice sample, but it makes a return of the greeting relevant (lines 1–3). The anchor position for the reason for a call is established (line 5) after the exchange of greetings. Consequently, the opening sequence is systematically reduced from earlier analogue landline openings. After the reciprocal greetings, the speakers have shown their availability for interaction, displayed recognition of knowing with whom they are speaking and have greeted each other. Consequently, the participants are ready for the reason for the call after only two turns.

In contrast, the canonical Finnish landline call openings include an exchange of self-identifications and an exchange of greetings, followed by a topic initiation, an apology or “*mitä kuuluu?*” (‘how-are-you’) question (extract 7).

(7) (SG098A\_03; A = answerer; C = caller; Arminen & Leinonen 2006)

- 1     A: (0.5) Mäki:>sellä<  
          surname-ADE  
       (0.5) at Mäkinens
- 2     C: n:o: M:irja tässä hei. .hh[hh .hh  
       PRT 1nameF here PRT  
       [ ] M:irja here hi:. .hh[hh .hh
- 3     A:                                     [no fhe:ih£=  
   [[ ] fhi::h£=
- 4     C: =#e#   no   ku- #ö#   kuule   tuota: mmh ö m- meinasin  
          PRT           PRT   well           mean-PST-1  
       =#e#   [ ] li- #uh# listen   e:rm mmh uh m- I meant
- 5     kyssyy paria   asiaa   ku taas >neuvoa   tartte:  
       ask   few-PAR thing-PAR when again   advice-PAR need  
       to ask couple of things   as   again >I nee:d advice

Self-identification openings were predominant in the Finnish landline calls, as in Dutch or Swedish calls (Houtkoop-Steenstra 1991; Lindström 1994). The form of self-identification varied from the whole name to the first or family name only, as above. In our data set, only 3 out of 107 calls were opened with an item other than self-identification, and these cases were accountable for by local circumstances (*haloo* ‘hello’ said due to technical problems (in two calls), or *niin* as an opening of a call-back call showing an orientation to return immediately to business). Self-identification was also predominant in the second turn. As in line 2 above, the conventionalised format of the second turn in the Finnish landline calls includes the utterance particle *no* + self-identification + greeting (Hakulinen 1993). This format or its slight variant was used in 70 calls out of 107 in our data set. After the

return of the greeting (line 3), a topic initiation (as above) follows unless a pre-topic apology or “how are you” question is pursued.

The findings briefly discussed above are incipiently statistical, that is, the cases are enumerable and quantifiable. The quantification then makes comparison of distributions of practices possible. I will now present a simple summary of the findings (Table 1; for more elaborate comparisons, see Arminen & Leinonen 2006).

Table 1. Types of answers to summonses (first turns) in Finnish call openings

| Type                | Landline calls (N=107) | %   | Mobile calls (N=63) | %   |
|---------------------|------------------------|-----|---------------------|-----|
| Self-presentations  | 104                    | 97  | 24                  | 38  |
| Greetings           | 0                      | 0   | 28                  | 44  |
| Channel openers     | 1                      | 1   | 5                   | 8   |
| Try-marked openings | 2                      | 2   | 6                   | 10  |
|                     |                        | 100 |                     | 100 |

We can conclude that mobile and landline call openings are systematically different. There is a radical shift in the opening pattern. Furthermore, the openings have become more heterogeneous. The landline call openings were very homogenous. The variety has to be elaborated to provide a sufficient account for the findings. In this fashion, the quantification also provides a challenge for the analysis that might have been missed if a qualitative comparison only was pursued.

We concluded that a new type of a summons-answer sequence has emerged. The answerer orients to a personalized summons that conveys information about who is calling. In fact, this also provides an account of the heterogeneity of mobile openings; that is, the answers have diversified, as they are no longer responses to a neutral summons. Summonses have also become variable, as calls from unknown callers or from silent numbers do not reveal the identity of the caller, merely informing the answerer about the unknown or silent number. The answers to the summonses have become tailored through recipient-design, unlike the analogue telephone system, on which summonses were uniform. In mobile calls, the recipient-designed shaping of a call can start immediately from the answer to the summons. Mobile calls are heterogeneous from the very opening of a call in that different types of summons occasion different responses, but there is a systematic difference between these and analogue landline calls. The new heterogeneity of practices thus had a systematic basis that formed the difference from the earlier historical period.

Quantification, if done carefully, can amount to sensitive analysis of the sequential patterns of interaction. At its best, quantitative comparative analysis of interaction can be both sensitive to local details and extensive enough to address wider changes in social practices. However, the amount of data often sets limits to the analysis. For instance, it is evident in the study above that the numbers are not big enough for a representative analysis of populations. The analysis may be able to show a possible change, but it cannot really address the question of how this change progresses at the population level beyond a small token of people included in the data. A systematic, representative analysis of historical processes at the population level would demand larger sets of data.

*Combinatory statistical analysis of data*

In so far as studies concern enumerable objects that are incipiently statistical (Heritage 1999) we can count the incidences of distinct patterns, and link the observed cases to other factors. In addition to mainstream CA, which is not statistical, there have been some attempts to do statistical analyses of the interactional patterns of everyday language use (e.g., Ford & Thompson 1996). Studies on institutional interaction offer a distinct platform for statistical work. Institutional practices amount to measurable outcomes: products sold, problems solved, deals achieved, cures prescribed, etc. Defined outcomes dominate institutional practices, in contrast to the contingent outcomes of everyday life. Institutional practices are accountable in terms of their outcome, which permits reverse-engineering of the patterns of action that may have a bearing on the outcome. The analyst's task is first to identify the strategic moments that may have an impact on the outcome. Secondly, the range of activities in these strategic moments has to be detailed. Thirdly, the rate of incidence of each type of action has to be counted. Fourth, findings are represented in a frequency table. Finally, the findings can be correlated with various types of outcome measurement (the success rate, client satisfaction, etc.).

Some examples of quantified CA in outcome measurements include an analysis of the impact of communication styles on the financing of medical treatment (Boyd 1998; Heritage 1999), and an analysis of doctors' ways of managing parental pressure to prescribe antibiotics (Heritage & Stivers 1999; Stivers 2007). Boyd's (1998) study on peer reviews of the proposed treatment shows that a "collegial communication style" increased the likelihood of approval of the proposed procedure. Significantly, she also discussed alternative interpretations of this correlation (i.e., intervening factors). Stivers has studied doctors' ways of dealing with parental pressure to prescribe antibiotics. Preliminary results suggest that "online commentaries" – the physician's descriptions of what she or he sees, feels or hears during physical examination – may counter demand for antibiotic medication.

Finally, quantified studies of social interaction allow historical or cultural comparisons of institutional practices. Clayman and Heritage (2002; in this volume), for example, compared journalistic adversarialness in the press conferences of Eisenhower and Reagan, showing that journalists had become increasingly aggressive. There were substantial historical differences in the journalists' initiative, directness, assertiveness and hostility. The study raises a number of questions about the evolving relationship between journalism and government. More generally, historical comparisons are a valuable asset in that they link the development of interactional practices to the evolution of institutions.

However, some words of caution are necessary. Quantification requires a careful analysis of the sequential patterns. Premature coding may obscure phenomena if the strategic sequential environments and patterns have not been adequately identified. Furthermore, the research procedure is laborious, as the amount of data must meet statistical criteria. There is also a problem of dual competence, since the research team must possess adequate skill, both in qualitative and quantitative data analysis. Finally, the supposed causal relations are always open to reinterpretations that may modify and even reverse the original assumptions (Boyd 1998).

## Conclusion

Studies on social interaction are inherently comparative, involving several layers and types of comparison (Drew 2003). At an elementary level, instances of sequential patterns are compared to observe similarities and invariances. Of course, this characterizes all genuinely empirical scientific endeavors (see also Ragin 1987; 1994). Characteristically, studies on institutional interaction include comparisons between “ordinary conversation” and “institutional practices”. They can help us to find practices that are constitutive or characteristic to the institution in question. Some institutional interactions, however, are not formally distinct from mundane interaction, but based on generic mundane patterns of interaction that anyhow play a distinct role in them. To characterize distinct usages of mundane interactional patterns comparisons are invaluable. As a whole, comparisons between ordinary talk and different types of institutional interaction pave the way towards understanding the nature of social practices.

In the selection of a research strategy, virtue may be made out of necessity. Single case studies that illuminate the particularity of the case are invaluable if the practice in question is highly complex or socially significant (cf. Goodwin 1994).<sup>6</sup> Single case studies can point out features that are comparable with other practices but cannot address variation or change. If you have only a limited number of cases to study, do in-depth qualitative analysis including qualitative comparisons that reveal the characteristics of the practice. Always use analytic induction when you can to strengthen the reliability of your analysis. Use quantitative comparisons if you want to compare a distribution of a pattern between different populations/areas/periods. Causal, statistical analysis becomes possible only with the help of an extensive amount of data providing powerful arguments that may participate in the debates on governance of social matters. Be concise when selecting your research strategy, as it not only improves the quality of the study but may also open your eyes to unforeseen phenomena.

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6 A point however might be made that all social practices are highly complex and significant if you look at them closely enough.

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# “Quit talking while I’m interrupting”: A comparison between positions of overlap onset in conversation

## *Prologue*

My title is slightly misleading, for reasons that will become apparent. In part it is designed to capture your attention. But it also has a history. Several years ago (actually over a quarter of a century ago) some conversation analytic research purported to show that men interrupted women more frequently than women interrupted men – and that this interactional asymmetry reflected some power relations between the sexes (e.g., Zimmerman and West 1975). This research, now largely discredited, offered the prospect of demonstrating the interactional production – the ‘talking into being’ – of inequalities and power relations. At any rate, this was a period when Gail Jefferson had an honorary visiting position at the University of York. She had researched overlap/’interruption’ quite extensively (indeed, as Lerner recounts, it was on the basis of that work that she had an input into the famous paper by Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson on turn-taking; Lerner 2004, Introduction). Moreover, this was something in which she and I were interested, not so much professionally or analytically, but as something that was part of our social lives, which we joked about – for reasons that need not concern us here. With this in mind, she returned from one of her visits home to see her folks in Los Angeles with a sticker for me (the kind people stick in the rear windows or on the fenders of their cars). It read *Quit talking while I’m interrupting* – an injunction to which thereafter we frequently resorted.

This paper relies to a considerable extent on Jefferson’s work on overlap/simultaneous talk; indeed my objective in this paper is only to explicate her findings about the orderliness of overlap onset (especially Jefferson 1973, 1983, 1986 & 2004). She would not have approved of anyone writing in her honour; therefore I’ll say only that this paper is in her memory.

## *Introduction*

It is very common, in the research literature, in papers submitted for publication to the journals, in students’ work and elsewhere, that authors describe what happens when one speaker starts speaking, whilst another is (already/still) doing so, as an interruption. All it takes is for there to be some simultaneous talk, some occurrence

of two or more participants in a conversation talking together, and analysts will observe that one speaker has ‘interrupted’ the other. Almost invariably, the one who starts to talk ‘second’ – whilst the one who was talking ‘first’ is still speaking – is regarded as having ‘interrupted’ the other (‘first’) speaker. Furthermore, the occurrence of such an ‘interruption’ is treated as being an interactional transgression of some kind, a failure to adhere to the rules of conversation.

This is no place to review the account that Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson gave of the organisation of turn-taking in conversation (Sacks et al. 1974; see also Sacks 2004). But the salient points for our purposes here are as follows. Among the readily apparent features of conversation that they noted in that programmatic account, are that one speaker speaks at a time; that periods during which both speakers are speaking are common but brief; that speakership changes; and that transitions from one speaker to a next are managed with no, or minimum, gap or overlap (see Sacks et al. 1974: especially 696–706). Out of these and other features, Sacks et al. proposed a rule that, put simply, one speaker should speak at a time. They were concerned in that paper largely with matters of how turns are allocated to a ‘next’ speaker, how transitions and orderly transfer from one speaker to a next are managed. I won’t say more about turn allocation/transition here, except to note that Sacks et al. show that (next) turn allocation is managed on a local, turn-by-turn basis, providing a kind of motivation for listening to what is being said, for monitoring when it might be one’s turn next, and what it might be relevant to do or say.

My focus here is the observation by Sacks et al. that transitions from one speaker to a next are ‘fine tuned’ (the ‘minimum gap or overlap’ feature) – and more particularly the objection that might be raised that speaker transitions are not fine tuned. When we listen to conversations and look at transcriptions of recorded interactions, we find that instead of one speaker only beginning to speak when, and immediately after, another speaker has finished – that is, without any overlap or much gap – in fact overlapping talk occurs with very great frequency, all over the place. Moments when both participants are speaking together are, if generally brief, very common.

The evident frequency with which speakers speak at the same time might suggest either that there is no such ‘one at a time’ rule, as Sacks et al. proposed; or that participants flout the rule with such frequency that it might as well not exist. Whichever is the case, it might appear from the frequency of overlapping talk that participants’ conduct is not rule governed, that they do not orient to any such rule. It might seem that far from being fine tuned, systematic and orderly, transitions from one speaker to a next are disorganised. Indeed it might seem that moments when two or more speakers are talking together, overlapping with one another, are moments of chaos – breakdowns in the smooth operation of any turn-taking system, perhaps arising from incoming (‘next’) speakers breaking conversational rules.

These apparent moments of chaos, of breakdown in the orderliness of conversational turn-taking, are generally attributed to two kinds of failure on the part of the ‘incoming’ speaker. ‘Next’ speakers are behaving either ‘without due care and attention’ (the driving metaphor will be elaborated shortly), or in a fashion which is ill-mannered. The first (failure to listen/attend carefully) is a kind of technical dereliction, the second (failure to observe the rules of good behaviour) a kind

of moral or normative dereliction. Accounting for such inadvertent or deliberate transgressions generally takes one of these forms:

- The incoming speaker is being clumsy – they are interactionally gauche, inept or incompetent.
- The incoming speaker is inattentive, not listening carefully to what the other was saying and hence not realising that the other had not finished speaking.
- The incoming speaker is attempting to cut the other speaker off; realising the other had not finished, the ‘next’ speaker is nevertheless trying to close the other down.
- The incoming speaker is being rude.

In any of these accounts, the incoming ‘next’ speaker is taken to have *interrupted* the ‘first’; because it might appear that the ‘first’ speaker had not finished, the ‘next’ speaker is taken to be the transgressor.

This way of accounting for overlapping talk as the result of a failure by ‘next’/‘second’ speakers, who thereby interrupt the other, amounts to a ‘shunt’ theory of conversational transgression. In British motoring law (and I think in the US, and probably elsewhere), if a motorist collides with the car in front, that is drives into the rear of the car in front, it is always the ‘second’ motorist, the one driving behind, who is legally at fault. Claims that the driver in front braked suddenly, for no apparent reason, that the road was icy, that one’s attention was diverted by wondering whether a pedestrian was going to step out into the road – none of these has the least chance of success as a defence in law. Always, you should leave sufficient distance between you and the car in front to be able to stop, if necessary. So if you shunt the car in front, you’re convicted!

The same is not the case, however, for conversation; the ‘shunt’ theory is not an adequate explanation for conversational collisions.

The readiness in the research literature to treat overlapping talk as interruption, and the inadequacy and inappropriateness of doing so, has already been extensively and cogently discussed (see especially Drummond 1989 and Schegloff 2000). My purpose here is twofold. First, to put another nail in the coffin of the term ‘interruption’ – to convince you that overlapping talk is not *per se* interruption. ‘Interruption’ is a moral category, connoting principally that an ‘interruption’ is someone’s (‘next’ or second speaker’s) fault; and that it is an aggressive or hostile act. (The many studies in which putative ‘interruptions’ are taken as indicators of power, or the means through which power is exercised, displayed or managed, whether in cross-gender interactions, medical interactions or other kinds of professional/client interactions, rely on just those connotations of ‘interruption’.) We shall see that overlapping talk is frequently (I might say overwhelmingly, but I haven’t done the statistics) co-operative, affiliative, supportive.

My other purpose – and this is my main aim here – is to pull together from previous research, notably by Jefferson, that overlapping talk is not evidence for any interactional breakdown, chaos or disorder – but rather is generated systematically by participants’ very close attention to what another is saying, and their attempts to fine tune transitions from one speaker to a next. When someone speaks and happens to overlap with another, that ‘next’ speaker is not being inattentive or sloppy. Rather, they are monitoring closely the progress and trajectory of a turn, and aiming for the smooth transfer (without gap or overlap) from one speaker to the next. So that overlapping talk is generated systematically by the same systems

and practices for orderly turn transfer as account for ‘one at a time’ (i.e. turn transfers which do not involve overlap). All of which requires us to look carefully at precisely where in a ‘current’ speaker’s talk a ‘next’ speaker begins to speak – that is, the precise point of overlap onset.

Before we move to consider, in close detail, precisely where in a ‘current’ speaker’s turn a ‘next’ speaker may begin speaking, a remark about comparative analysis is in order. There are, in CA as in most other perspectives, a variety of forms of, or approaches to, comparative analysis. One such approach, represented in a book edited by Sidnell (2009) is cross-linguistic comparisons of some particular phenomenon or interactional practice. Thus the contributors to Sidnell’s volume each focus on some conversational practice (e.g., repair, assessment, gaze as a means to display reciprocity, and many others), which are susceptible to cross-linguistic comparisons to show whether they are (likely to be) universal practices, or language- or culture-specific. Cross-national, cross-cultural and cross-linguistic comparisons are perhaps what we generally consider to be ‘comparative’ analysis.

In a quite profound way, however, all conversation analytic studies are comparative, insofar as one of our most general methodological approaches is to compare the different turn designs that might be used in implementing or ‘constructing’ some action. For this reason, self-repair in conversation provides a particular insight into what goes into constructing a turn at talk. In comparing the different lexico-syntactic forms in which offers may be done, for instance, and showing that speakers orient to which form is appropriate in given sequential environments, it is significant that a speaker may change from one form to another, as she does here:

We:ll do you wanna me tuh|be tih js pick you|Can u you|(.  
 get induh Robins’n? so you c’buy a li’l pair a’slippers?h(.  
 I mean er|can I getchu somethin:g? er: sump’m:? er sum’m:?)

The speaker begins with a *do you want..* form, and finally through a series of self-repairs (highlighted in the extract) arrives at *can I get you something*. Such a self-repair as this not only enables us to make a comparison between forms in which offers are done (Curl 2006), but demonstrates that such ‘comparisons’ are salient to participants. So also we can compare the different forms in which requests are done, particularly modal forms like *Could I..* and more ‘conditional’ forms such as *I wonder if I could..*, and investigate the different interactional circumstances in which each of these forms is used (e.g. comparing informal social interactions with institutional interactions; see Drew & Curl 2008). In general, any investigation into turn design, and how a turn is designed to implement an action, is comparative.

So too is this study; not because it focuses on turn design, as such, but because it examines the different positions in a turn’s progression/construction in which a ‘next’ speaker may start speaking. These different positions are to be found through comparing instances of overlapping talk; from which we can show that there are different types of overlap – at least with respect to their placement in a current turn.

Again, this comparative enterprise requires us to look carefully at precisely where in a ‘current’ speaker’s talk a ‘next’ speaker begins to speak – that is, the precise point of overlap onset. But first, we need to be clear that when speakers find themselves speaking together, they frequently display that they are nevertheless orienting to the ‘one at a time’ rule.

*Overlap resolution: participants' orientation to the rule 'one at a time'*

It is well known, in sociology as well as jurisprudence, that following a rule may not result in conduct which conforms to the rule: rule-following, as Garfinkel, Hart, Goffman and others demonstrated, may be consistent with and found amidst conduct which seems to transgress the rule. So it is with the rule that speakers should speak – take turns – one at a time. Listening to two (or more) people talk, whether face-to-face or over the telephone, reveals very many instances where they are talking at the same time. If you have any experience of transcribing recorded naturally occurring talk, you'll know that some of the trickiest moments to transcribe are those where two (or more) speakers are talking simultaneously. At such moments, participants might be considered to be 'breaking the rule', and even perhaps 'ignoring' the rule.

Whilst they may indeed find themselves for a moment, for an instant, to be behaving in a way that transgresses the 'one at a time' rule, participants nevertheless display through their conduct their orientation and their commitment to the rule – that their transgression was in some sense inadvertent. They do so particularly through one or other of them withdrawing from the collision of talking together. The following example is a case in point (the relevant overlap is highlighted by boldface: the focal overlap, position of overlap onset or other phenomena will, wherever possible, be similarly highlighted in all subsequent examples).

(1) [NB:II:2:1]

- |   |      |   |
|---|------|---|
| 1 | Emm: | B <u>ud</u> js lef't'play go:lf he's gotta go tuh R <u>iv</u> erside=     |
| 2 | Nan: | =[O <u>h</u> : . ]  |
| 3 | Emm: | =['nna <u>comp</u> 'n]y dea:l so, .t.h[hhhhh                              |
| 4 | Nan: | [Oh:z?  |
| 5 | Emm: | ↑G <u>OD</u> [it's <b>bih-</b>  |
| 6 | Nan: | [Tuh Riverside tihda:y?   |
| 7 | Emm: | .hhh Y <u>eah</u> they: theh gun'tee off et twelve it's a <u>comp</u> 'ny |

Finding herself talking in overlap with her friend Nancy (see lines 5 and 6; I'll say more about their overlapping talk in lines 2–3 later), Emma drops out, as is shown by her cutting off what was probably going to be *been* (as in *God it's been...*). She doesn't simply carry on talking, asserting (perhaps) some entitlement to do so because she started speaking first. Her withdrawal from this moment of overlapping talk is precisely an orientation to the one-at-a-time rule; she minimises the transgression, and the period of talking together, by dropping out in favour of the other – recalling SS&J's point that periods of speaking together are common but brief. Here we see how participants manage to keep overlaps brief: one drops out, the other continues.

Dropping out of the talk in the other's favour, thereby minimising overlapping talk, does not mean that that speaker (i.e. the one who dropped out) 'loses' what they were in the course of saying. Only a few seconds later Emma re-introduced what she abandoned in line 5 (*God it's been* was to have been a prefatory remark introducing the matter of Robert Kennedy's assassination, and from there to a story; see Heritage 1990). That excerpt is a little too long to be shown here; but other examples illustrate how, when a speaker abandons their turn when they

found themselves speaking simultaneously with the other, he/she may drop out, temporarily abandon their turn, resuming it when they are in the clear – generally by repeating what might have been ‘lost’ in the overlap.

(2) [Frankel]

- 1 Rich: I think **if** [you-  
 2 Car: [Am I right?  
 3 (.)  
 4 Rich: **If you** bring it intuh them.

(3) [NB:II:2:19]

- 1 Nan: En it wz inexcusable thet he couldn’of made some (0.2)  
 2 kin’ of cont\*act yihkn\*ow w\*ith \*iz f\*am’ly \*er me en  
 3 .hhhhh I guess she rilly js (.) told im o:[ff’n **meh-’n** ]  
 4 Emm: [W’l goo:]d ]  
 5 (.)  
 6 Nan: **made** him angry en he: °hung up.°

(4) [Goldberg]

- 1 Fran: He’s not gunnuh li:sten [tuh tha:t,  
 2 Jim: [**I’m not say in- I’m not**  
 3 **saying that...**

In each of these examples, finding him/herself speaking simultaneously with the other, the speaker stops what he/she is saying, cuts off and resumes when they are in the clear – by partially repeating their abandoned turn, and continuing.

Perhaps it will be sufficient to look at only one of these examples in detail. Example (3) occurs a little later in the same conversation between Emma and Nancy from which the first example was taken. Nancy is describing how her ex-husband’s mother told him off for not contacting either her, or Nancy, on Mother’s Day. It is evident that Nancy was in the course of saying (line 3) that she *really just told him off and made him angry* (“meh-“ being the beginning of *made*), abandons that when she finds herself in overlap with Emma’s approving interjection in line 4, then resumes by partially repeating what was lost in overlap (the first sounds in *made*) and completes her turn (all in line 6).

It will be possible, given space restrictions, to show only a very few instances of each of the phenomena reviewed in this chapter. So these four examples will have to suffice to illustrate that by not continuing to talk together in overlap, but instead one or other of the participants stopping, cutting off and temporarily abandoning their turn – and resuming when they are in the clear – participants in conversation orient to the one-at-a-time rule. Though finding themselves contravening the rule, they display that nevertheless they are adhering to it. So the frequency of overlapping talk is not evidence that no such rule exists; rather, participants’ conduct in minimising the consequences of their talking together (a kind of ‘damage limitation’, if you like) is evidence that they are indeed ‘following the rule’ (Hart’s 1960 discussion of rule formalism and rule scepticism captures this precisely, in matters of legal rules – laws – not determining action).

*Overlap onset: the three ‘positions’ at which overlapping talk begins*

In the previous section we saw something of how overlapping talk may be resolved. That is, we saw that when two speakers find themselves talking together, simultaneously (these examples will have to stand proxy for more complex but nonetheless orderly instances where more than two speakers are talking simultaneously), the overlap is resolved by one or other (temporarily) dropping out. That is all I’ll have to say about how the occurrence of overlapping talk – the collision involved when two or more speakers speak at the same time – is resolved. From here on, I’ll be considering only the points at which a speaker may begin speaking, only to find that the other is also speaking, so that they end up speaking together/simultaneously. That is, I am considering the points where overlaps begin – the moments of overlap onset. The purpose of examining (comparing) the points of overlap onset is to show how it is that speakers, whilst following the one-at-a-time rule, can come to find themselves talking together. How does that come to happen, that a participant can begin speaking, only to find him/herself speaking at the same time as the other?

Research into overlap (and particularly Jefferson’s research into overlap) shows that there are some fundamental and orderly positions of overlap onset – that is, places in the other’s talk, the ‘current’ speaker’s talk, where a speaker may start to talk, as it happens in overlap with ‘current’ speaker. There are three such positions of overlap onset. To understand how it is that a ‘next speaker’ can start speaking, whilst as it turns out the other is ‘still’ speaking, it is necessary to appreciate that a speaker’s turn is built out of turn construction units. There is already an extensive literature on turn construction units (referred to from here on as TCUs), so it is unnecessary to say more about them other than to remind you that a TCU may be a sound (*Aw:::*), a word, a phrase or clause, or a sentence.

These (syntactic units) are the building blocks of turns in conversation; and although a turn can consist of a single TCU (e.g. just a single word or phrase), commonly turns are built out of multiple TCUs (Ford et al. 1996). For instance, Sheila’s opening turn in line 1 and her enquiry in line 6 in example 5 consist of only one TCU, *Hello:?* And *Zis Harriet?* However, her turn in lines 8 is built out of two TCUs, namely a greeting *H<sub>i</sub> Harriet.*, to which she adds an answer to Harriet’s enquiry about when Lila will be home, i.e. *about fi:ve.* We won’t consider more carefully here whether her turn in line 3 consists of two or three TCUs; that is, whether or no her turn initial *nNo* and then subsequently *she’s no:t* are stand-alone units, or whether *nNo she’s no:t* was designed and delivered to be a single unit (on the phonetics and other linguistic properties of TCU production, see Ford et al. 1996a,b; Selting 2000).

(5) [MDE:60:1:6:1] (Harriet is a friend of Sheila’s school-age daughter, Lila)

- |   |          |  |
|---|----------|--|
| 1 | Sheila:  | Hello:?  |
| 2 | Harriet: | Hello is Lila home?                              |
| 3 | Sheila:  | nNo she’s <u>no</u> :t. She:’s et school.        |
| 4 | Harriet: | Yeh d’you know what time she’d be back in t’day? |
| 5 |          | (0.2)  |
| 6 | Sheila:  | Zis H <sub>a</sub> rriet?                        |
| 7 | Harriet: | Yeah.  |
| 8 | Sheila:  | H <sub>i</sub> Harriet. <u>U</u> h about fi:ve.  |

Turns constructed out of multiple turn units, that is two or more TCU, are the key to the occurrence of overlapping talk – and to the position of overlap onset. Very schematically at this stage, the principal positions in which a next speaker begins talking, only to find him/herself in overlap, are:

- Transition space onset: in the ‘space’ between one TCU and the next, that is in the transition space.
- Last item onset: that is, overlapping with the last (projected) item – usually word or syllable – of a TCU (immediately before the transition space).
- Post transition onsets: that is, immediately after a transition space, when the ‘current’ speaker has begun a next TCU.

In short, the three positions in which overlapping talk generally and principally occurs (remember, *begins* or onsets) all focus on the transition space between one construction unit and the next. They occur either right in that space, or just before, or just after. We’ll see that there is real precision to the occurrence of overlaps in these positions, to how it comes about that ‘next’ speakers begin speaking when they do. This precision arises from an orderliness to overlap onset, that is from the systematic basis a ‘next’ speaker has for starting to speak next.

In the remainder of this chapter I will outline and illustrate each of these positions; and then show a fourth category or type of overlap onset, in which speakers start up some way from a transition space (i.e. between transition spaces). Whilst these ‘interjacent’ overlaps do not share the precision and orderliness of the three main kinds, nevertheless they have a precision and orderliness of their own. But they are most like what is commonly regarded as ‘interruption’ in conversation.

This outline of the three principal positions in which overlap onsets occur, as well as the fourth type of interjacent onsets, derive from Jefferson’s work, and particularly the key papers Jefferson 1973, 1983, 1986 and 2004. All that I am doing here is to pull together her findings across these papers, and slightly reassemble and re-order her typologies. Generally I am using different data examples than hers, just as an update using data with which scholars currently working in conversation analysis will be familiar – the corpora from which my examples are taken are the British and US English telephone and face-to-face conversations that are in wide circulation among conversation analysts. Otherwise, I am not adding anything to Jefferson’s analysis, or reporting anything new; I am only explicating her account of the position of overlap onsets. It would be tedious and repetitive to cite the original version(s) of each point and analytic observation below in her publications; so I hope this disclaimer is sufficient to indicate that all of what follows can be found and has its origin in those four papers by Jefferson. What follows should, if possible, be read in conjunction with those papers.

### *Transition space onset*

We saw that Sheila’s turn in line 8 of (5) was constructed out of two TCUs, a greeting and an answer to Harriet’s enquiry about when her friend would be home.

In that excerpt I didn't show that just as Sheila completed the first TCU, and just as she begins the next/second TCU, Harriet begins speaking. That precise point of overlap onset is marked by the left square brackets, indicating that Harriet simultaneously begins saying *Hi:*. – and thereby in overlap – with Sheila's answer *Uh about fi:ve.*. Here's the excerpt in full.

(6) [MDE:60:1:6:1] (Harriet is a friend of Sheila's school-age daughter, Lila)

- |   |          |  |
|---|----------|--|
| 1 | Sheila:  | Hello:?  |
| 2 | Harriet: | Hello is Lila home?                              |
| 3 | Sheila:  | nNo she's <u>no</u> t. She:'s et school.         |
| 4 | Harriet: | Yeh d'you know what time she'd be back in t'day? |
| 5 |          | (0.2)  |
| 6 | Sheila:  | Zis Harriet?                                     |
| 7 | Harriet: | Yeah.  |
| 8 | Sheila:  | Hi Harriet. [ <b>Uh</b> about fi:ve.             |
| 9 | Harriet: | [ <b>Hi:</b> .                                   |

Having now recognised the caller as her daughter's friend Harriet (line 6) (Sheila's try-marked recognition is confirmed by Harriet in line 7), Sheila does a recognitional greeting *Hi Harriet.* (line 8) (for an account of recognitional greetings in opening sequences, see Schegloff 1986; on their interactional trickiness, see Drew 2002). Precisely at the point at which Sheila completes her recognitional greeting, Harriet responds by reciprocating, also with a recognitional greeting *Hi:*. (line 9). As it happens, just as Harriet begins her reciprocal greeting, Sheila continues with her turn in line 8 with a new, next action, an answer to Harriet's enquiry (line 4) about when Lila will be home, *Uh about fi:ve.*

Notice that each is well within her rights to speak when she does, in overlap in lines 8–9. Sheila has greeted her, so Harriet is entitled (indeed given the constraints of adjacency pairs, required) to greet her in return. Sheila, on the other hand, is entitled – again, since she's been asked a question, 'required' – to answer Harriet's enquiry. In this respect, the recognitional greetings sequences in lines 6–8 is inserted between Harriet's question in line 4 and Sheila's answer in line 8 (on insertion sequences, see Jefferson 1972; Schegloff 2007). It would not be possible to say that one interrupts the other; each has an entitlement to speak when she does (Harriet is entitled to respond to Sheila's greeting; and Sheila is entitled to continue, to answer Harriet's enquiry). They happen to collide, the collision arising from the intersection between two action sequences.

The overlap between Sheila and Harriet in this example can be summarised thus: the 'next' speaker (Harriet) begins speaking at a transition point, when as it happens the 'current' speaker (Sheila) continues.

Precisely this collision between a next speaker beginning to speak at a transition point, whilst the current speaker continues by adding a next unit to their turn, is further illustrated in the following examples.

(7) [Her:OII:2:7:5]

- |   |         |   |
|---|---------|---|
| 1 | Doreen: | Yes well pop in on th'way back'n pick it up         |
| 2 | Katie:  | Thank you ve'y much eh ha-how are you all.          |
| 3 |         | [Yer a little t̥:red] nah                           |
| 4 | Doreen: | [Oh we're all fi:ne] Yes I'm jus: sorta clearing up |

(8) [NB:II:2:23]

1 Emm: Y’got any(b) frie:nd boyfrie:nds? er any<sup>o</sup>thing  
 2 [goin:g [steady’r:°]  
 3 Nan: [Oh::: [° h\*ell n]\*o.°

(9) [NB:II:25]

1 Emm: I do t:oo I shoulda hād’m drop me off but I didn’know  
 2 whether you w’r hō:me er no:t. [An:d] u h ]  
 3 Nan [Oh: : ] Em: ]ma e-Why’nche  
 4 CA:::LL.

(10) [Rah:C:1:16:3-4]

1 Jen: ‘n did you want anything in Middlesbruh  
 2 Ida [or are you jis going [f’r the ri’.]  
 3 Ida: [I : : : doh [I d o h n ‘]t eeveh- ah h- ah have no  
 4 money Jenny

Space does not allow us to consider each of these examples in detail. But notice that at precisely the points at which the ‘next’ speaker begins speaking (Doreen in line 4 of (7); Nancy in line 3 of (8); Nancy in line 3 of (9); and Ida in line 3 of (10)), the ‘current’ speaker has completed a unit. For instance, in (7), knowing that Doreen has had visitors staying, Katie has asked *how are you all.:* and in (10), *a propos* a trip she and Ida are going to make into a local city, Jenny asks *did you want anything in Middlesbruh Ida*. As it happens, in each case the current speaker adds something to her turn, either by adding a new unit (e.g. the solicitous *Yer a little ti:red* in (7) line 3), or by continuing. Their continuations may be explicit, as in the conjunctive markers *and* and *or* in (9) line 2 and in (10) line 2; or incremental, as in (8) line 2.

In these examples speakers end up speaking in overlap when the recipient/‘next’ speaker begins to respond to a completed question or enquiry ((7), (8) and (10)), or does a fitted response to the action in the current speaker’s turn (Nancy’s regretful response in (9)). In doing so, each did not anticipate that the current speaker would continue by adding something to a potentially completed unit, or by adding a new unit to their turn. Hence the ‘next’ speaker begins in a possible transition space – a point at which ‘current’ speaker may have completed their turn, though as it happens, they – quite legitimately – add something to the ‘completed’ unit/turn.

It might seem at first sight that the following case (11) is quite different from the transition space onsets considered so far. Bearing in mind the precision with which ‘next’ speakers begin in the transition space in (6)–(10), it might appear that in (11) Nancy begins just too soon, just before the transition space – so is this imprecision, or sloppiness on her part?

(11) [NB:II:2:2]

1 Nan: Well I’m glad ih didn’ha:ppen while you were tryin tuh get o:ff,  
 2 Emm: hOh: my Go:[:d hh  
 3 Nan: [God that w’d’v been a mess you’d a’never  
 4 got’n tuh Hawāii,

When in line 3 Nancy begins to say *God*, she overlaps with the last sound of Emma's exclamatory *Go::d* in line 2; so Nancy doesn't begin precisely on completion of *hOh: my Go::d hh*, but seemingly a little early. Indeed this might seem to be a case of the second category listed above, of last item onset.

But notice that Emma has extended the vowel in *Go::d* in line 2 (the *hh* after this indicates only some audible aspiration). Had she not done so, Nancy would have been starting to speak (in line 3) precisely on completion of Emma's *God*, right at the transition point, and in the clear. This case illustrates how a 'next' speaker may aim for the transition space, anticipating the completion of the word and hence of the TCU: however, she does not anticipate that the current speaker would extend or lengthen the sound of the last word in the TCU – and thereby ends up colliding with the end of that last sound in the TCU. Still, the 'next' speaker was aiming to begin precisely at the end of the TCU, in the transition space.

Here are just three further examples, to highlight how speakers can find themselves speaking (momentarily, usually) in overlap, even though the 'next' speaker is aiming to begin in the clear.

## (12) [Trip to Syracuse]

- |   |      |  |
|---|------|--|
| 1 | Ile: | Hullo:,  |
| 2 |      | (0.3)  |
| 3 | Cha: | hHello is eh::m:: (0.2) .hh-.hh Ilene there?       |
| 4 | Ile: | Ya::h, this is Ile: [ne,                           |
| 5 | Cha: | [.hh Oh hi this's <u>Charlie</u> about th'trip teh |
| 6 |      | Syracuse?  |

## (13) [Holt:2:12]

- |   |      |   |
|---|------|---|
| 1 | Les: | W'l <u>Gordon</u> 's got quite a deep voice now,<br>(3 lines omitted) |
| 5 | Joy: | I meant to've said t'you this afternoo:n. .hh                         |
| 6 |      | Yih don't realize how they're all growing <u>u:</u> [p,               |
| 7 | Les: | [No:.   |

## (14) [Holt:1:1:6]

- |   |      |   |
|---|------|---|
| 1 | Mum: | <u>She</u> 's got a ba:d meh- uh long mem'ry abou:t (0.2) that          |
| 2 |      | sort'v thing now <u>what</u> do you think the people <u>here</u> 'v got |
| 3 |      | long mem'ries abou:[t.  |
| 4 | Les: | [Ye:s that's ri:ght.  |

It should be clear enough, without further explanation, that the 'next' speaker just catches the tail of the final word in the 'current' speaker's TCU, when the 'current' speaker happens to lengthen the sound on that last word. Because the 'next' speaker was aiming for the transition space, these can be considered to be transition space onsets, along with cases such as (6)–(10). These contrast with the next type, of last item onsets, in which it appears that 'next' speakers are not aiming for the transition space, only to be confounded by the lengthening of that last word/item.

*Last item onset*

The next of the principal positions of overlap onset, the next category of what can generate overlapping talk, is last item onsets; that is, when a ‘next’ speaker begins talking in overlap with the last item – usually the last word, but in some cases a last unit (such as a *year* in [19]) – of the ‘current’ speaker’s turn.

(15) [NB:II:2]

- 1 Emm: u.-theh I c’d see the bui:lding en then the Wɔ:rd  
 2 Airways wz uh: .hhh on the side there whur it comes  
 3 in en that’s ↑js where ↑we took o:ff  
 4 Nan: W’l ah’ll be da[rned]  
 5 Emm: [Yɛ::] jah,

(16) [Her:01:2:2]

- 1 Jean: So well they won’t be here Boxing [**Day?**  
 2 Doreen: [**Oh** well that doesn’t  
 3 matter...

(17) [Holt:X(C):2:1:2:6:3]

- 1 Les: eeYɛ:- uh-we:ll u-hu- ↑Well thank you very much f’m  
 2 Christmas [**present,**  
 3 Joa: [**Oh::** pleasure,

(18) [SCC:DCD:23]

- 1 Sokol: Ah’ll tell you ‘ow she does i:t? .hhh That’s all sewn  
 2 together by [**ha:nd**  
 3 Bryant: [**I thought** this w’z a very expensive (business)

(19) [NB:II:2:1]

- 1 Emm: Y’\*oughta go sh\*o:pping,  
 2 Nan: .hhhh Well I should but (.) yihknow et eight dollars a  
 3 mo: [ n : th : ]  
 4 Emm: [hm hm] [h hm-m-hm. ]  
 5 Nan: [anything I’ d ] buy’d (.) be using up my raise fer  
 6 ‘alf [**a ↑YEA:R:**] ((smile voice))  
 7 Emm: [**Y e : a : h.**]

In each case, the recipient’s response overlaps just with the last word or ‘item’ in the first speaker’s turn. So in (15) Emma’s response to Nancy’s exclamation (an acknowledgement confirming that Nancy has correctly seen the significance of the coincidence she’s reported; see lines 4 and 5) overlaps with the last word of that exclamation, *darned*. Then in (16) Doreen begins her response to Jean’s news that *they won’t be here Boxing Day?* in overlap with the last word of that news. The overlaps in (17) and (18) are positioned in exactly the same way. And in (19) the overlap between lines 6–7 occurs when the recipient (Emma) responds whilst the first speaker (Nancy) is ‘completing’ her unit/turn (...*half a year*).

Evidently, the recipients/‘next’ speakers in these examples were not aiming to

begin at a transition space, precisely at the end of the prior speaker's TCU/turn. They are coming in a little early. There are three points worth noticing about these examples.

First, though beginning to speak a 'little early', there is a certain precision to how early. 'Next' speaker is beginning in overlap with the start of, on during, the last item of the first speaker's turn.

Second, in each case, there is a specific basis on which the recipient may be able to anticipate that that will be the last item. They can anticipate either precisely the word which will complete current speaker's TCU, or the kind of word it will be – sufficiently, at any rate, to be able to project where/when the current speaker will have completed their turn. Notice that in each case, the last word is from a standard, formulaic or routinised phrase, *I'll be darned*, *Boxing Day*, *sown together by hand* and *half a year*. Thus it very commonly happens that recipients are beginning to speak in overlap with the end of a current speaker's turn, at just the point where they can anticipate what the current speaker is in the course of saying – and that that will complete their turn.

Third, these overlapping responses are broadly affirming, or affiliative; in each case the recipient is agreeing or aligning with the other in some way. These are not oppositional, hostile or disaffiliative responses. We know from previous research on preferred (affiliative, cohesive) responsive actions that they are done promptly, even a little early, in overlap; whilst dispreferred (disaffiliative) responses tend to be delayed (Pomerantz 1984; Heritage 1984: 265–280; Schegloff 1988).

Taken together, these observations underline how far the generation of overlapping talk in these cases, onsetting with the last item in a current speaker's talk, are from what is generally regarded as competitive 'interruptions'. Recipients are not attempting to close the current speaker's turn down; they can see (anticipate) that the speaker is about to complete their turn. They can do so on the basis of the relatively 'fixed' character of the phrase with which current speaker is completing her turn. The onsets are precisely timed/placed, in overlap with only the last item, so recipients are not being sloppy or inattentive. And the recipient is responding affirmatively, and not in any disaffiliative, hostile way; affirmative or affiliative (preferred) responses tend not to be delayed but instead are done early, just before the completion of the turn with which recipient is agreeing or aligning.

The same observations apply to cases in which the overlapping talk is somewhat more extensive than in (15)–(19). For instance in (20) the overlap between Jenny's incoming response and Vera's initial turn might seem to involve more than just the last item in Vera's turn.

(20) Rah:B:2:14:5]

|   |      |  |
|---|------|--|
| 1 | Ver: | They <u>m</u> ucked intuh <u>b</u> iscuits.=They had (.) quite a |
| 2 |      | lotta biscuit[s'n <b>chee:::se</b> , ]                           |
| 3 | Jen: | [ <b>Oh</b> : well that's it th]en                               |

Jenny's response overlaps not just *chee:::se*, and more even than *n'chee:::se*; Jenny begins in the last sibilant of *biscuits* (all line 2). This may seem to be unduly picky, to be quibbling about a tiny detail. But the detail here involves just how precisely Jenny begins her response. If *chee:::se* is the last item in Vera's turn, as it might appear to be, then her response onsets just a little before a last item; and that's not so precise.

However, it seems that Jenny is anticipating that Vera’s turn will end with *biscuits* in line 2, on the basis that Vera is bringing her turn (and her account of the food her grandchildren ate on their last day staying with her) to completion by repeating *biscuits*, i.e. *They mucked intuh biscuits.=They had (.) quite a lotta biscuits*. Repetition is a commonly-used practice for bringing a turn or story or topic to a close. So anticipating, when she hears Vera repeat *biscuits*, that she is completing her turn, and indeed that *biscuits* will be the last item in Vera’s turn, Jenny begins her (affiliative) response. In doing so, she has not anticipated that Vera would continue, incrementally, to add *n’chee:::se.*. Had Vera not added that, the extent of the resulting overlap would have been minimal.

One further case will have to suffice to illustrate the overlaps which can occur when a recipient anticipates that a turn is approaching completion, begins speaking in what they treat as the last item in that turn, but as it happens the current speaker continues – which had *not* been anticipated by the recipient.

(21)

- |   |       |   |
|---|-------|---|
| 1 | Alan: | W’l b- bring a change a’clothes yih c’n use |
| 2 |       | the ba:th[r’ <b>m d’change</b>              |
| 3 | Mary: | [Okhhay ghhood,                             |

Again, the current speaker’s (Alan’s) turn was projectibly complete after *ba:thr’m* (i.e. bathroom); that could reasonably be the end of that TCU and hence of Alan’s turn. Instead Alan adds the increment *d’change* (i.e. *to change*) after that possible completion, thereby extending his turn, and extending also the overlap between his talk and Mary’s. Once again, one couldn’t say that either or them is ‘interrupting’ the other. The recipient has legitimate grounds for anticipating that a word will bring about the completion of current speaker’s turn – will be the last item in that turn; whilst the current speaker is quite entitled to add a word or phrase to complete what has been produced thus far.

The two ‘sets’ we’ve been considering of overlaps onsetting with the last item in a current speaker’s turn arise when a recipient has a good basis to anticipate that the turn is about to come to completion – that this word will be the last in the turn. There is a final set termed ‘recognitional’ onsets; in these, recipients begin responding early, on a last ‘item’ (which can include a single word, or a formulaic or standard phrase/expression), at a point where they recognise where the current speaker is heading – and recognise also that what current speaker is saying in some way does not apply or is not apt. In (22) for example, focusing on the overlap between lines 4 and 5 (the other overlap in lines 2–3 is an instance of the first type, a transition space onset, reviewed earlier) Doreen is asking Helen (who has recently moved house) for her new telephone number. Recognising that this is where Doreen’s turn is heading, Helen begins in the last item (in the standard phrase *telephone number*)

(22) [Heritage:1:6:9]

- |   |         |  |
|---|---------|--|
| 1 | Doreen: | If by any chance, (0.8) theh isn’t anybody heuh I’ve got                 |
| 2 |         | tih go out jus’ fer aw <sup>h</sup> i:le, [.hh <u>What</u> is your- new- |
| 3 | Helen:  | [Ye:s  |

- 4 Doreen: What is your telee [phone numbuh?  
 5 Helen: [Well we're not on the phone yet

Helen's overlapping response in line 5 indicates that Doreen's question is inapt, since they don't have a telephone.

Similarly, in (23) Geri can anticipate that Shirley will give two times, *between eleven and (a time, like 'eleven thirty')*. So midway through *eleven* she can anticipate what remains to complete Shirley's turn. Even though Geri cannot anticipate precisely how long Shirley was trying their number, she can tell already that Shirley's question (about who she was talking to earlier) is inapposite, since irrespective of how long it was, their line was not engaged. She wasn't talking to anybody (which is what Shirley asks about in line 1); her phone was simply 'left off the hook' and therefore her number was unobtainable.

(23) [Fr:TC:1:1:2]

- 1 Shi: .hhh Uh:m, .tch.hhhh Who w'yih ↑ta:lkɪŋ to:  
 2 (0.6)  
 3 Ger: Jis no:w?  
 4 Shi: .hhhh No I called be- like between ele[ven en  
 5 Ger: [I: wasn'talkeen tuh  
 6 a:nybuddy. (b) Bo-oth Marla'n I slept 'ntil about noo:n,  
 ((continues with account of waking up, picking up the phone,  
 thinking it was out of order – when it was just that *Marla left  
 the phone off the hook*))

These cases have in common that a recipient recognises that what the other is saying or asking is in some respect inapposite, or does not apply. They are not waiting until the enquiry is fully formed and complete; the display of its being inapposite is managed, in part, through the recipient starting early – starting before the current speaker's turn is complete, indicating that in a sense no answer is possible. Nevertheless, the recipient's turn onsets only on a 'last item' in the current speaker's turn; not, perhaps, on the last word (as in the previous set), but a last phrase or unit.

### *Post-transition onsets*

In previous sections we have considered overlapping talk that onset right *in* the transition space at the end of a 'current' speaker's TCU, and before a next TCU begins (so that a 'current' speaker begins his/her next TCU simultaneously with the next speaker's incoming); and next speaker's talk that begins (onsets) just before the transition point, i.e. on the last item of the 'current' speaker's TCU, usually the projectable last word in that turn. The third principal position of overlap onset is immediately after the transition point, just as the 'current' speaker continues with a next TCU. These are, therefore, post transition onsets.

In (24) Emma is explaining to her sister Lottie a difficulty that has arisen concerning family arrangements for getting together at Thanksgiving; for reasons that need not concern us here, her husband will no longer be able to take their daughter (Barbara) to the bus depot at the end of the weekend. She reports this

as a problem (*I don’t know what to do about Barbara....she was depending on him...*) (lines 1–3). Parsing the construction of Emma’s turn, it is evident that it is potentially complete after *Sundee* (i.e. Sunday), at the end of line 3. That is the end of the TCU, and therefore a transition point.

(24) [NB:IV:4:4]

- |   |      |  |
|---|------|--|
| 1 | Emm: | W’l <u>any</u> way tha:t’s a’ <u>dea</u> :l so I don’t know wʉt tih do about |
| 2 |      | Ba:rbrə .hhhhh (0.2) c’z you see <u>she</u> w’z: depending on:               |
| 3 |      | hɪm <u>takin</u> ’er in tuh the L.A. <u>dē</u> ple s:- depot Sundee          |
| 4 |      | <b>So</b> [’e siz ]  |
| 5 | Lot: | [ <b>Ah</b> :’ll] <u>take</u> ’er in: Sundee,                                |

Emma and Lottie end up speaking in overlap in lines 4–5, when Lottie makes an offer which would resolve Emma’s problem (to take Barbara to the bus depot), but does so just after Emma had begun to continue her turn, *So ‘e siz* (i.e. so he says) (line 4). Note that the beginning of this next TCU by Emma is constructed precisely as a continuation, with the conjunctive *So*. Lottie’s ‘spontaneous’ offer of assistance is delivered at just the point at which she is able to see that Emma is going to continue, i.e. immediately after *So*. By continuing, the ‘current’ speaker (Emma) might take the talk in a direction away from the immediate problem, in which case the opportunity to offer assistance ‘spontaneously’ might be lost. Therefore Lottie is coming in to make her offer at a point when she can see that Emma might take the conversation away from this immediate opportunity to offer to help (such offers properly being done now, not later: for more on the interactional management and format of offers, see Curl 2006).

The overlapping talk begins, therefore, just post the transition point, when the ‘current’ speaker has resumed her turn and continued her talk – with the potential of moving away from an opportunity for the recipient (Lottie) to respond appropriately to the turn-so-far (i.e. with an offer of assistance, in response to Emma’s report of a problem she has).

These same features, or properties, of post-transition onsets are evident in further examples, shown below. Although the specific action sequence involved differs in each, they all involve a recipient seeing that ‘current’ speaker is going to continue; and that therefore an opportunity might be missed to respond in some appropriate way to whatever has (just) been completed in the current speaker’s turn-thus-far.

(25) [NB:II:2:13]

- |   |      |  |
|---|------|--|
| 1 | Emm: | u- <u>Oh</u> :: I’ve go:t s’ <u>m</u> Christmas <u>stu</u> :ff en I:’ve got (.)          |
| 2 |      | <u>Oh</u> : .hh- .hh-.hhh s’ <u>m</u> <u>d</u> ishes my <u>s</u> ister’n law gay me fer: |
| 3 |      | SHRIMP STUFF en I <u>don</u> ’wah I jɪs doh wan’take it <u>out</u> ta                    |
| 4 |      | the <u>draw</u> ::ers <b>I</b> jɪ’s  |
| 5 | Nan: | <b>[I</b> : <b>wouldn’t</b> ? Why dihyuh <u>haf</u> to.                                  |
| 6 |      | (0.2)  |
| 7 | Emm: | En I’m gunnuh <u>lea</u> :ve I: <u>th</u> ink ah’ll <u>ev</u> ’n <u>lea</u> ve some      |
| 8 |      | a’t <del>h</del> ese <u>BLA</u> :nkets.  |

## (26) [SBL:3:1:3]

- 1 Cla: W'l you ca:n't e: enchiladas 'n all thetu stuff  
 2 Marylou:ʔ requires a lo:tta spa:ce:.  
 3 Ah me[a:n i h hhh  
 4 Mar: [**Specially** if yer gonna have it open fuh the public,

## (27) [NB:II:2:]

- 1 Emm: Bud js lef't'play go:lf he's gotta go tuh Riverside=  
 2 Nan: =[O h : . ]  
 3 Emm: =[ 'nna comp'n]y dea:l so, .t.h [hhhhh  
 4 Nan: [Oh:ʔ?  
 5 Emm: ↑**GOD** [i t' s b i h-]  
 6 Nan: [**Tuh River**]side tihda:y?  
 7 Emm: .hhh Yeah they: theh gun'tee off et twelve...

(In (27) I have highlighted the overlap that is the focus here, involving a post-transition onset, to distinguish it from two other overlaps, in lines 2–3 and 3–4. These others are both cases of the first type reviewed in the section on transition space onsets; though the explanation of that for Nancy's second overlap, her *Oh:ʔ?* in line 4, is not in point here.)

In each case, the recipient starts to speak only just after the 'current' speaker has resumed or continued with a next TCU, i.e. *Ij* in (25), *Ah me* in (26) and *GOD* in (27). Pretty much as soon as it becomes evident that the current speaker is going to continue, the recipient pulls back, as it were, to respond to the prior, completed unit in the 'current' speaker's turn.

Echoing points made earlier about the affiliative character of recipients' responses when overlapping with the last item of a current speaker's TCU, notice that in each case of these post-transition onsets recipients are responding in supportive, affiliative, affirmative ways (fragment (27) might be rather more 'neutral' in this respect, since Nancy is only displaying her surprise that Emma's husband would be playing golf today; though in doing so, Nancy is perhaps displaying also a solicitous knowledge about when Bud generally plays golf). In each of (24)–(26) recipients' responses are actually rather strongly supportive of the other, either in offering assistance, as we have seen, or affiliating with the other's suggestion or position. It is worth highlighting how commonly affiliation is involved in overlapping talk, in view of the widespread association there seems to be in the research literature between 'interruption' and hostility.

### *Post-transition onsets that aren't! 'Latency' in overlap onset*

In the post-transition onsets reviewed so far, the recipient/'next speaker' has begun speaking, in overlap, with a turn that takes the opportunity to respond to a 'current' speaker's completed turn and action. In responding to that action, the recipient takes a full turn, with a complete TCU (as in *Ah: 'll take'er in: Sundee* in (24)). Jefferson identified cases in which, curiously, recipients seem to begin to speak, apparently post-transition and in overlap, but then immediately drop out: so having started, they do not complete their turn (Jefferson 1986; as far as I know, no-one else has ever researched or written about this). Jefferson expressed it thus: "The

question was, what on earth is this? They start up after it is obvious that someone is continuing, and then do this ‘oops sorry’ and drop out” (Jefferson 1986: 161). Here’s one of the cases she showed.

(28) [Fr:US:43:2]

- 1 Mike: Least’e c’d’v done w’z c’m down::n en letchu know w’t  
 2 happ’n **Hey** [look yih gl:ss broke,  
 3 James: [**Tha:t-**

The first completion point in Mike’s turn occurs after *happ’n* (beginning of line 2), *Least he could have done was come down and let you know what happened* being a complete unit (TCU). When Mike continues with *Hey* in line 2, he starts a new TCU. James begins in precisely the same post-transition position illustrated in previous cases, after just a word (*Hey*), from which James can tell that Mike is continuing. But by contrast with previous cases in which the next speaker has taken the opportunity to respond to the prior completed unit/action, here – finding himself speaking in overlap with Mike – James drops out (notice the cut-off on *Tha:t-* in line 3).

Here are three further examples.

(29) [GTS:1:1:50:1-2]

- 1 Dan: It is part a’the function a’th’group to begin d’share  
 2 in some a’tthese things **so**[: the others c’n understand  
 3 Roger: [**W’I**

(30) [Her:III:1:4:2]

- 1 Desk: Just one moment I’ll uh he’s in uh-actually in surgery  
 2 et the moment **I’ll** [see’f I c’n get hold of him,  
 3 Heath: [**ee-**

(31) [SCC:DCD:9]

- 1 Phipps: Didju hev it ma:de (0.3) ju- soon ahtih you bought th’  
 2 m’terial? Or or lay::tuh. **Was** i[t in ]Febru’ry:  
 3 Sokol: [**W’I**]

It is unnecessary to explicate each example in detail; but just to take one, to consolidate our understanding of where these brief overlaps are located. In (30) Heath overlaps with Desk (see lines 2 and 3), with -*ee-*, the beginning of something that is discontinued. Desk has completed a unit, an explanation (*he’s in uh-actually in surgery et the moment*). She then continues her turn by repeating what she began but then suspended for that explanation, *I’ll* (see the self-repair in line 1 and the resumption or retrieval in line 2). So when having completed the inserted unit, the explanation, Desk repeats *I’ll* in line 2, she is starting a next unit. Heath begins to speak immediately after Desk’s *I’ll*, but having uttered only a sound of what he was about to say, drops out.

In these examples, ‘next’ speakers begin to say something just after a transition point, but they drop out when they find themselves starting up in overlap with a current speaker who is continuing. In such cases, it appears that a ‘next speaker’

is beginning to speak post the transition point, so that these would seem to be post-transition onsets. However, Jefferson's argument (Jefferson 1986) is that in fact they are transition space onsets. Her explanation is that in the normal course of speaker transfer in the speech exchange system Sacks et al. (1974) described, transitions from one speaker to a next occur with minimum gap and overlap. Such 'smooth' transfers between speakers are achieved by the next speaker aiming to leave a brief space between the completion of the current/previous speaker's turn, and the one that the next speaker is about to take. Jefferson describes a 'brief space' as a beat. During that brief intra-turn silence lasting a beat, the one who is about to speak changes from being a recipient of talk, to becoming a producer of talk – a speaker. During the changeover that occurs in this beat of time, that recipient-and-now-to-be-speaker is in what Jefferson depicts as a blind spot; "He is no longer in recipient orientation, but in a state of speakership, although he is not yet producing sounds" (1986:164). So the 'next' speaker is gearing up to speak, leaving a beat of time to elapse after the completion of the prior speaker's turn – a systematic 'latency' in the 'next' speaker's talk which happens to generate overlapping talk. That beat of time, and its associated blind spot, is the 'space' after which the 'next' speaker begins to speak; but having done so, they find that the prior/current speaker is continuing, and hence they ('next' speakers) drop out.

In other words, the 'next' speaker is aiming to begin speaking just after – a beat after – the current speaker has finished speaking. However, in what would otherwise have been a brief intra-turn silence, the current speaker continues. There is therefore a very brief delay before the 'next' speaker begins to speak, by which time current speaker has continued, the 'next' speaker finds she/he was mistaken and so drops out. The 'next' speaker is, therefore, aiming to begin in the transition space. These are not therefore being produced post-transition, as they might appear to be, but are being produced to occur in 'unmarked next position', happening "to collide with a current speaker's producing further talk" (Jefferson 1986: 164). So although I have discussed the 'latency' Jefferson identified, in cases which seem related somehow to post-transition onsets – because that's what they look like – you should haul these back in your mind to the earlier section on transition-space onsets. And I've given only a very simplified account of Jefferson's exploration of this latency; with this background, you'd be well advised to read her article (which can be downloaded from her website, <http://www.liso.ucsb.edu/Jefferson/>) (see also <http://www.gail-jefferson.com/>).

### *'Interjacent' overlap*

So far I have described what are broadly speaking three main positions or locations where overlapping talk begins, or onsets; in the transition space, just before the transition space (last-item onset), and just after the transition space (post-transition). Instead of chaos, we find that overlapping talk is systematically associated with participants' close, fine-grained orientation to one another's talk, and particularly to when and how another's turn at talk might be complete. The orderliness of overlap onset is the product of, and generated through, participants' analysis of the points at which another's talk may be complete, and hence at which they might begin speaking. Overlapping talk begins, to a very considerable extent, in close proximity to turn transition points.

But not all overlapping talk does so. It does happen that speakers begin speaking whilst another is speaking, at points where the ‘current’ speaker cannot be close to completing their turn (i.e. at a point which is distant, in some fashion, from a completion or transition point). Here is an example.

(32) MDE:60:1:3:1]

- |   |         |   |
|---|---------|---|
| 1 | Sheila: | What time did’e get on the pla:ne.                      |
| 2 | Tom:    | Uh:: (0.2) I: don’t know exactly I think ih w’z arou:nd |
| 3 |         | three uh’clock er somethin a’tat sort.                  |
| 4 |         | (0.2)   |
| 5 | Sheila: | Oh: maybe he g[ot s’m                                   |
| 6 | Tom:    | [He took it et fou:r. Gerda says.                       |

When Tom begins speaking in line 6, Sheila has plainly not completed a TCU, nor is she close to completing a unit/her turn. She has just begun some kind of surmise about the arrival of the person she has asked about (their son), and why he might be late (e.g. *maybe he got caught in the traffic on the freeway back from the airport...*). Tom cuts in well after Sheila has begun *Oh maybe he g...*, plainly not close to the completion of what she is saying, and too far into her ‘surmising’ (if that is what it was going to be).

Tom begins speaking, therefore, during the course of the production of a TCU, ‘between’ transition points, not close to or next to – not adjacent to – a possible completion and transition point. He begins speaking ‘interruptively’ in Sheila’s turn. But Jefferson coined the term ‘interjacent’ overlap onsets to describe a case such as this (and others; again for the fuller picture see Jefferson 1986), a term designed to replace the morally loaded ‘interruption’ with one which more technically described their placement or position in the turn. So instead of describing these as ‘interruptions’, which conveys almost a motive for interjecting and beginning to speak whilst another is speaking, Jefferson recommended a term that described simply, and technically, where in a current speaker’s turn another begins and interjects.

To appreciate the importance of describing, and accounting for, overlap in as morally neutral and thereby technical way as can be found, we should consider Tom’s interjection – and its placement or position in Sheila’s turn. Sheila and Tom are no longer married; they now live in cities some distance apart, and having evidently been visiting Tom, their son has flown back home to Sheila earlier that afternoon. In response to Sheila having asked when their son ‘got on the plane’ (line 1), Tom is uncertain (line 2), but estimates that the flight left around 3 o’clock (line 3). Now, with that information, Sheila evidently begins trying to figure out why he might be delayed getting home (as I said earlier, surmising perhaps about getting caught up with something on the way back from the airport). Whilst Sheila is underway surmising what might have happened to cause the delay, Tom finds that the estimate he gave, about when their son’s flight left, is wrong. His partner (Gerda), who apparently is co-present with him and must have heard him tell Sheila that it was 3 o’clock, has told Tom that it was 4 o’clock (line 6). That hour makes a difference; it may be that if his flight left at 3pm, it is taking him longer than would be expected to arrive home; if, however, he left at 4pm, then he is probably on his way. Given that Sheila is evidently searching for an explanation for their son being delayed, as soon as he learns (from Gerda) the correct departure

time, he cuts in to correct what he said previously to Sheila. In doing so, he saves Sheila the trouble of continuing to figure out why their son is delayed – the point being that he’s not.

Tom’s action here, intercepting Sheila’s search for a reason for their son’s delay, is co-operative. Were he to have let Sheila continue with what he now knows would be a fruitless search (for a reason for a non-existent circumstance), he’d be misleading her. (There is a range of idioms for this situation, such as ‘hanging her out to dry’, ‘leading her up the garden path’, ‘stringing her along’; they all capture something nasty – knowingly allowing someone to proceed on the basis of some erroneous belief.) So not to have intercepted when he did would have been mistaken, ‘hostile’ in some fashion; by correcting himself when he did, speaking ‘interjacently’ when Sheila was speaking, he is being co-operative in saving her the trouble of explaining something that doesn’t need explaining.

Here are some further examples of overlapping talk beginning interjacently during another’s turn.

(33) [NB:II:4:8] (Nancy met a man yesterday evening)

- 1 Nan: He’s jst a ri:l sweet GU\*:y..h.t [.hhhhh  
 2 Emm: [↑WONderf\*:ul.  
 3 Nan: ↑So: we w’r [s\*itting in]  
 4 Emm: [YER LIFE]is CHANG[ing  
 5 Nan: [↑↑EEYE::A:H

(34) [Holt:SO88(II):1:3:]

- 1 Les: ...it’s just c’z these Italian: fellow’s come  
 2 over .hh [h an’  
 3 Hal: [Oh ee have the:y.=  
 4 Les: =iYe[:s.  
 5 Hal [Yeh  
 6 Les: .hhh And so that’s why we’re [a bit-  
 7 Hal: [(But-)  
 8 (0.3)  
 9 Les: -hh  
 10 Hal: Ah- (0.2) Oh interruptin’ you I w’z g’nna say you could  
 leave it...

(35) [From Hutchby 1996:80] (A particularly combative radio call-in show, London)

- 1 Caller: I: Well if- well I suppo:se so yes but I mean if  
 2 it go:es to charity but we’re not told that  
 3 (.) But I mean I [don’t know (the-)  
 4 Host: [Well what d’you think it’s going to.  
 5 Caller: I’ve no- ‘aven’t a clu::e,  
 6 (.)  
 7 Host: E:r, well if you haven’t a clu::e, you m[ight  
 8 Caller: [Ye:h well I mean  
 9 whe:re d’you [think it’s [going to.  
 10 Host: [you- you [might’ve I think it’s going to charity.  
 11 Caller: Yeh but you don’t know do you.

In (33) Nancy is telling Emma about a man she met the day before (line 1), and is evidently going to tell something further about the circumstances in which he asked her for a date (*So we were sitting in...*, line 3). Intersecting early in Nancy’s narrative Emma expands her previous exclamation (*Wonderful*, line 2), adding that *your life is changing* (line 4) – overlapping at a point where Nancy has plainly not completed a TCU or her turn.

Similarly, Lesley is beginning an explanation in (34), *so that’s why we’re a bit*, when Hal interjects with his suggestion (lines 6 and 7) at a point in Lesley’s turn where it is plainly incomplete. This example is shown as a reminder that ‘interrupting’ is a lay description of an action (see Schegloff 1996 on lay and analytic descriptions of actions), as when a participant describes an action as having been an interruption. Here Hal attributes that to his own action, *Oh interrupting you* (line 10).

Finally the multiple interjacent overlaps in (35) between the host of a radio phone-in programme and a caller – they are arguing about whether the money raised during ‘telethons’ really goes to the charities for which it is ostensibly being raised – illustrate the kind of competitive, hostile, perhaps argumentative overlapping talk that is regarded as ‘interrupting’ another speaker (for more on which, see Schegloff 2000). Each of the overlaps when the host interjects in lines 4 and 10, and when the caller does so in line 8, onsets far from any possible transition place. Sometimes there is quasi-syntactic evidence for the incompleteness of the current speaker’s turn, as when in line 7 the host constructs his turn as a conditional sentence. After the conditional clause *well if you haven’t a clue*, it is evident that the main clause is yet to come (and has only been begun with *you might*). Hence the caller begins his turn at a point where there is plainly more to come (i.e. the rest of the main clause) (on the importance that the syntax of turns in progress can have for interaction, see e.g., Lerner 1991).

The kind of overlaps illustrated in this section, which result when a ‘next’ speaker begins speaking ‘in the middle of’ another’s turn – that is, not in or close (adjacent) to a transition point, and therefore ‘interjacent’ – are perhaps closest to what might be regarded as ‘interruptive’. For instance that might seem to be the basis on which Hal can attribute *interrupting* to his incoming in line 7 of (34). But some caution is necessary, since ‘interruption’ – together with the hostile, argumentative, disputatious character often attributed to interrupting – is a quality or function not only of the incoming (i.e. the point of overlap onset), but also of whether speakers continue to speak simultaneously, and thereby compete for the turn. These issues concerning what happens after the overlap onset, and the competitions that can ensue between speakers for the floor, are discussed elsewhere (see especially Schegloff 2000). Here I have focused only on where/when precisely overlapping talk begins.

### *Conclusion*

I have aimed to show two things here. First, I have tried to show why it is inappropriate to describe all and any instances of simultaneous speech – when two (or more) speakers are speaking at the same time, in overlap with one another – as ‘interruption’. As a moral vernacular account, rather than a technical, analytic term, it attributes a certain character to (verbal) conduct. It conveys something of

the illegitimacy of a turn incursion, of a transgression in beginning to speak before another had finished. Thus although ‘interruption’ might seem to capture some of the properties of ‘interjacent’ onsets, illustrated in the previous section, it might really be more fruitful to consider how participants themselves use the term, in describing their own conduct, as in example (34), or in describing the conduct of others (as in complaining about their conduct, *Don’t interrupt me*, or *You’re always interrupting me*). That is not the direction I have pursued here; but I hope to have added to what has already been said against ‘interruption’ (again, see e.g., Drummond 1989; Jefferson 1986; Schegloff 2000), sufficiently to outlaw the term as a technical category in analyzing interaction. In any case, part of the moral baggage which the term ‘interruption’ carries is the assumption that it is always the ‘next’ incoming speaker’s fault, and that it is somehow an aggressive or hostile action. I hope it is now clear that neither of these is the case; there is no fault to be assigned in these overlap onset positions, and the majority of examples we have reviewed involve co-operative, supportive conduct.

My second and principal aim has been to show – through a comparative analysis of precisely where in a ‘current’ speaker’s turn at talk a ‘next’ speaker begins speaking – that overlapping talk is not at all the result of some failure by participants in conversation. These (usually brief) moments of speaking together are not the results of failures to listen to one another carefully; failures to adhere to the rules of conversation, and especially the ‘one at a time’ rule; or failures to take account of the rights a current speaker might have. Moments of overlapping talk result not from the chaos which is often attributed to them, to some breakdown in conversational practices and rules; rather the reverse. When we examine closely precisely where a next speaker begins to speak, in relation to the construction of the (ongoing) turn into which they seem to interject, we find a considerable orderliness. Overlapping talk onsets – begins – primarily at one of three positions; in a transition space, and just before and just after a transition space – where ‘just’ indicates one word or short phrase. Overlap onsets are therefore orderly insofar as they are generated systematically from the same procedures for managing smooth (no/minimal gap, no/minimal overlap) turn transition from one speaker to a next. Overlaps arise not from sloppiness, but from ‘next’ speakers’ exquisitely close attention to what the other is saying. Overlaps do not represent breakdowns in conversational orderliness and organisation; instead they embody and are generated by precisely the procedures that make orderliness possible – at least at the level of turn-taking.

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## A sequential approach to affect: The case of ‘disappoint’\*

### *Introduction*

Conversation Analysis (CA) and affect are uneasy bedfellows: classical CA, with only a few exceptions, has shied away from tackling affect and emotion in interaction directly. Aside from the recent study by Wilkinson & Kitzinger (2006) on ‘surprise’, there have been virtually no CA studies dealing with specific affects in interaction.<sup>1</sup> In fact, CA practitioners tend to avoid the terms *affect* and *emotion* altogether.<sup>2</sup> When absolutely necessary to refer to something akin to a feeling state, they prefer less psychologically tainted terms like *affiliation* or *stance* instead. As Sandlund (2004) has pointed out, CA takes a “quotation mark approach” to affect, putting scare quotes around terms like ‘fear’ (Beach et al 2005) or ‘hysteria’ (Whalen & Zimmerman 1998). In doing so, it appears to be acknowledging just how scary it finds the whole enterprise.

### **Studying affect in interaction**

Why should the study of affect and emotion be so perilous? Actually there are grounds for any discipline to shy away from it. Even practitioners of ‘emotion psychology’ (or ‘emotionology’, Stearns & Stearns 1988) – that branch of psychology dedicated to studying the way people identify, classify and recognize

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1 The work by Jefferson (1979, 1984, 1985), Jefferson, Sacks & Schegloff (1987), Glenn (2003) and Haakana (2001, 2002) on laughter as well as that by Hepburn on crying (2004) lay important groundwork, however.

2 In the present paper, *affect* will be used as a general label for all kinds of displayed heightened involvement in conversation, whereas *emotion* will be reserved specifically for that kind related interpretably to feelings (as opposed to moods or attitudes).

emotions – will admit that their enterprise is fraught with problems. For one, it is extremely difficult to establish a reliable taxonomy of affect and emotion. How many discrete feeling states are there? How are they to be distinguished one from another? Within the field of psychology there are both cognitively oriented approaches<sup>3</sup> (Roseman & Smith 2001) and socially oriented ones (TenHouten 2007) which attempt to answer these questions, but as yet no real consensus has emerged among them.

Linguists for their part will point out that labels for affects have notoriously fuzzy boundaries. Is there a difference, for instance, between being 'distressed' and being 'upset'? Discrete categories of affect, moreover, do not always have different names. For instance, there appear to be two types of 'fear' – one with a concrete object of reference and one without, but both are referred to in colloquial German with the word *Angst* (Egbert & Bergman 2004; Gülich & Couper-Kuhlen 2007). Even the universality of the so-called 'basic emotions',<sup>4</sup> about which one might expect there to be agreement (Ekman 1994; Ekman & Davidson 1994), has been called into question by Wierzbicka (1992), who claims that they are merely cultural artefacts of English.

The study of affect is plagued not only by conceptual and terminological problems, but also by methodological ones. How can inner states be reliably investigated? Many psychologists, in an attempt to control variables, have opted for questionnaires and laboratory experiments, often making use of actors to enact or re-enact the emotions being investigated. But as Fiehler (1990, 2002) and others have pointed out, this is a very poor, if not wholly inadequate substitute for the actual display and interpretation of affect as it occurs naturally in talk-in-interaction.

Recently, more discursively oriented psychologists have begun to investigate what they refer to as 'emotion discourse': how people talk about emotions, their own and those they ascribe to others (Edwards 1997, 1999). Yet although this kind of approach does permit a ready examination of the situated use of emotion words in the conversational record, it does not allow a study of the actual display of affect in talk-in-interaction, in particular its non-verbal aspects, both vocal and visual.

But there are more specific reasons for CA to be wary. The CA enterprise centers on the ways in which members of society accomplish social actions in and through talk. But is affect an action? A verbal action? Actually it is more usual to consider affect an accompaniment, or overlay of verbal action,<sup>5</sup> but on this understanding it need not necessarily 'surface' in the interactional record. And if there is no structural reflex of affect, then methodologically it would appear to be something about which CA has little to say, no matter how much it might want to.

There have been isolated attempts by CA scholars to bring affect and emotion into the realm of the sequentially describable. Quite early on Goffman, for instance,

3 "Appraisal theory", for instance, argues that the events and situations encountered in real life are evaluated differently with respect to factors like agency, valence, etc. and that these differing cognitive evaluations elicit distinct emotions (Scherer 2001).

4 These are generally thought to be in one way or another biologically or physiologically primitive. Most scholars would include anger, fear, disgust, sadness, enjoyment and surprise in the category.

5 This is because even actions like compliments or complaints, which lend themselves to heightened involvement, can also be carried out without any hearable or visible display of affectivity.

argued that expressions of affect and emotion are not simple flooding-outs but are managed as interactional resources (Goffman 1956; 1961, as cited in Jefferson 1985). Some of Heath's early work, especially on embarrassment (1988), suggests that affect-related resources are deployed in sequentially organized ways. And more recently, Goodwin & Goodwin (2000) make the argument quite pointedly that "emotion (involves) situated practices lodged within specific sequential positions in interaction" and consequently that "the relevant unit for the analysis of emotion is ... the sequential organization of action" (2000: 239).

Along with Goodwin & Goodwin I wish to propose that CA *can* make a specific contribution to the study of affect and emotion if we adopt the following as axiomatic:

- Affect and emotion are performed as *displays*<sup>6</sup> in interaction.
- These displays are realized as *embodied practices*.
- The practices are *situated* at specific sequential positions within interaction.
- The practices are interpreted in a *context-sensitive* fashion.

Some of the early groundwork for treating affect this way was done by Selting (1994, 1996). In her study of 'astonished' repair initiation, for instance, she showed that the presence of prosodic marking on a variety of other-repair initiation devices in German cues the repair initiation as involving a problem of expectation. Recipients, she argued, interpret this as 'astonishment' and *orient* to the display in next turn by either agreeing, i.e. aligning with the 'astonishment', or by accounting for why they are not 'astonished'.

More recently, Sandlund (2004) has looked at displays of affect – specifically at enjoyment, frustration and embarrassment – in American academic talk-in-interaction and found that they occur in identifiable sequential slots. Displays of embarrassment, for instance, are found not just anywhere but specifically in other-repair sequences, between the self-initiation of repair and other-repair (p. 205). Sandlund observes that when embarrassment is "brought into the interactional weave" of talk, it has consequences for the trajectory of the activities underway by changing the local context and requiring participants to re-orient "according to other orderly principles" (p. 226).

Thus, the upshot of CA work on affect so far has been to stress that some affect displays are not only situated sequentially but are also consequential for the ongoing interaction because they influence what happens next.

## Organization and procedure

In this chapter I wish to show that the same goes for another – and quite distinct – kind of affect, namely 'disappointment'.<sup>7</sup> The data base for my study is telephone conversation and the focus is on turns with minimal lexical content. Therefore,

6 The term *display* is not being used here in the sense of 'reveal', i.e. it is not intended to imply that some inner state is brought to outward expression (cf. Darwin 1915). Rather it is being used in the sense of 'make publicly available' (a phrase borrowed from Charles Goodwin, p.c.). In this usage the term skirts the issue of whether there is any corresponding state 'inside' (cf. also Potter 2006).

7 Scare quotes will be retained to remind the reader that what is meant is the behavioral display (in the sense of 'make publicly available') of something which in context becomes interpretable as disappointment.

much of my argument will hinge on vocal features, or 'tone of voice'. This is not to say that affect displays are done solely by phonetic or prosodic means, but only that the nature of the data and the focus chosen preclude taking gesture, facial expression or body position in consideration.

The first part of my paper is based on a generous collection of conversational fragments where 'disappointment' might be said to be in play. They have been culled from a large set of British telephone calls known as the "Holt" corpus. I will describe displays of 'disappointment' and their contexts of occurrence in these English materials and then compare a much smaller set of similar contexts taken from a collection of German telephone conversations. By way of conclusion I will address some of the more general issues which emerge when taking a cross-linguistic perspective on 'doing disappointment'. Can we identify similarities and differences in the display of affectivity across languages and cultures by holding sequential context constant? Do different languages provide different sorts of resources for the display of affect? What do we stand to gain from a comparative perspective on affect?

### *A case of 'disappointment' in English interaction*

Let us begin by examining a fragment from the Holt materials which demonstrates how 'disappointment' can enter the warp and weft of everyday conversation:<sup>8</sup>

(1) Other chap (Holt Sept-Oct 1988 II)

Leslie's husband Skip is planning a business trip to Oxford.

- |    |        |   |
|----|--------|---|
| 1  | Les:   | where are you going to STAY:.                               |
| 2  | Ski:   | (0.7) well i don't know whether we're going to stAy         |
| 3  |        | or come BACK yet.   |
| 4  |        | uh i- it can be DIFFicult;                                  |
| 5  |        | i expect to get a HOtel in oxford;                          |
| 6  |        | at THIS short nOtice,                                       |
| 7  | Les:   | well I was going to SAY:                                    |
| 8  |        | if I came WITH you;   |
| 9  |        | perhaps we could stay in Ox-                                |
| 10 |        | in HUDnam for the nIght. (( <i>animated</i> )) <sup>9</sup> |
| 11 |        | .hh   |
| 12 | Ski:   | (1.4)   |
| 13 |        | well I shall be with this OTHER chap;                       |
| 14 |        | HE won't want to do THAT.                                   |
| 15 | → Les: | OH:.  |
| 16 | →      | (0.5) oh i SEE.   |
| 17 | →      | (0.6) oh not to WORry then. (( <i>subdued</i> ))            |
| 18 | →      | .h (1.7)  |

8 These materials were originally transcribed by Gail Jefferson; her transcripts have been modified here in order to capture the prosodic details of talk more systematically. See the GAT conventions listed in the appendix (Selting et al 1998).

9 In order to give the reader an idea of the way the turns in question are delivered, I (=C-K) will give a rough gloss of their prosody (= tone of voice) in double parentheses at the end of the last line.

This sequence begins with Leslie launching a preliminary inquiry, or ‘pre-’ (Schegloff 1980), into where her husband intends to spend the night on his upcoming business trip (line 1). Such an inquiry projects that, if encouraged, Leslie will have something further to say (or propose) concerning that night. When Skip hedges, however, by responding that he doesn’t yet know whether he will spend the night in Oxford at all (lines 2–6), Leslie’s ‘project’ is in danger of being thwarted. Rather than abandoning it altogether, she now opts for pursuing it as something which she “was going to say”.<sup>10</sup> The ‘project’ turns out to be a suggestion that she could join him for an overnight stay in Hudnam, a village near Oxford (lines 8–10)<sup>11</sup>. The strong animation in Leslie’s voice here suggests that she has a vested interest in this proposal and indeed has attached hopes to its working out. But Skip, with noticeable delay, now invokes a contingency about which Leslie apparently did not know, namely that he will be travelling with a business associate and his travelling companion will not want to spend the night outside of Oxford (lines 13–14). This reporting is tantamount to a rejection of Leslie’s proposal (cf. Drew 1984).

Although the delay and *well*-prefacing of Skip’s turn mark it as dispreferred, the action it implements is rather unequivocal. Skip’s veto is not qualified or mitigated in any way. Moreover, his turn lays a strong claim to epistemic certainty about what his travelling companion will and will not want to do. No attempt is made to assuage or appease Leslie, e.g. by offering an alternative or a substitute plan which might reconcile her wish with his conflicting business commitments. Leslie’s response to this unequivocal rejection (lines 15–17) mobilizes a series of objects which Davidson has called *rejection finalizers* (1984, 1990). Expressions such as *oh, oh I see* and others like them (*okay* or *alright*), when they are produced subsequent to a rejection, display that the rejection is going to be accepted and that the proposer is not going to insist further, for instance by suggesting a modification which might make the proposal more acceptable. In this sense these objects ‘finalize’ the outcome of the prior sequence as rejection and in doing so move towards sequence closure.<sup>12</sup> Schematically then, we might represent the sequential structure of (1) as follows:

*Proposal sequence involving rejection*

- A: Pre-proposal
- B: Hedged response
- A: Proposal nonetheless
- B: Rejection of proposal
- A: Acceptance of rejection (REJECTION FINALIZER)

Yet the rejection finalizer not only signals ‘no contest’; in addition, the details of its vocal delivery are hearable as a display of the *affective stance* which the proposer is taking towards the rejection. In (1), for instance, the objects *oh, oh I see, oh not to worry* are produced with softer volume than normal; with breathy

10 As Schegloff notes, in the case of a blocking or hedging response to a ‘pre-’, the projected actions may be produced “nonetheless” (2007: 33).

11 As it later emerges, Leslie and Skip have friends in Hudnam.

12 At least for the time being. Just as speakers can move out of closings to re-embark on topical matter, so speakers who have initially signalled that they are accepting a rejection can subsequently reinvoke their proposal and in doing so, re-open the sequence (Davidson 1984).

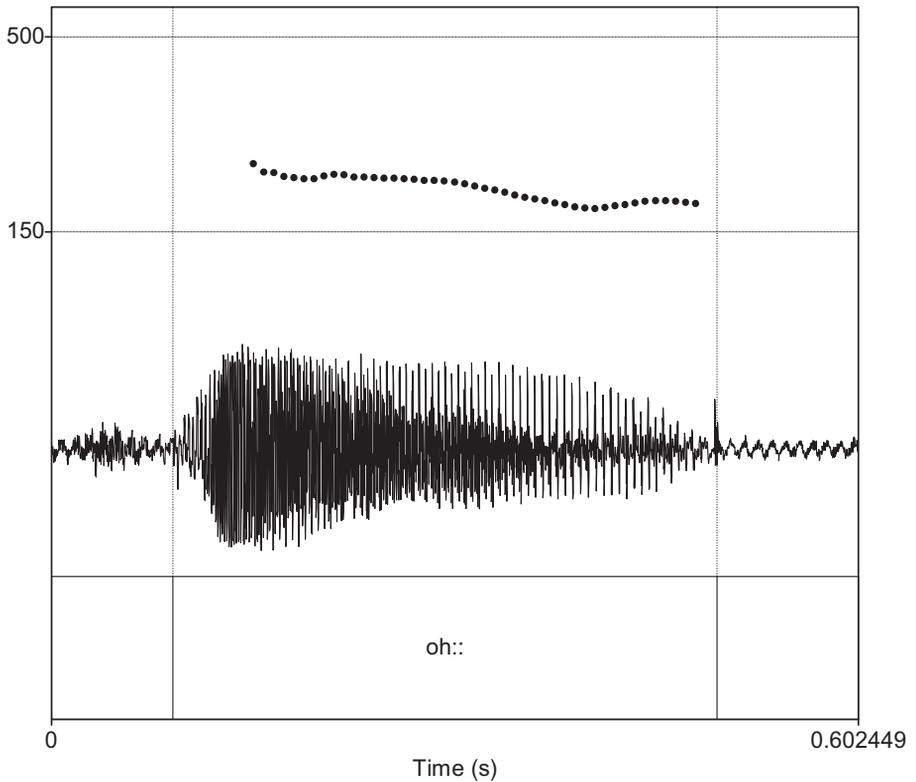


Figure 1. Waveform and pitch trace of Leslie’s *oh* in line 15 of (1).

phonation and weaker articulatory force than usual; and with low, narrow and slightly falling pitch. The *oh* token undergoes some stretching and ends in a trail-off (Local & Kelly 1986).<sup>13</sup> Figure 1 shows a Praat picture of the waveform and pitch trace of Leslie’s *oh* in (1).<sup>14</sup>

Overall, this combination of pitch, loudness, phonatory setting and timing<sup>15</sup> creates a tone of voice which seems akin to a turning inward. It is this tone of voice which will be referred to here, for short, as ‘subdued prosody’.<sup>16</sup>

Not only is Leslie’s tone of voice in lines 15–17 hearably subdued; the way the talk develops subsequently suggests that this turn is designed to ‘do disappointment’:

13 See also Local 1996, who identifies this as a characteristic feature of freestanding *oh*’s produced as news receipts.

14 The dotted lines at 500 Hz and 150 Hz mark the upper and lower limits of Leslie’s normal pitch range. All figures were made with the speech analysis program *Praat: Doing phonetics by computer* ([www.praat.org](http://www.praat.org)).

15 In terms of timing, Leslie’s turn sets in neither early nor late with respect to the pacing of prior talk.

16 Interestingly, it is similar prosodic features (“decreases in mean  $f_0$ ,  $f_0$  floor,  $f_0$  range and intensity, downward directed  $f_0$  contours, the rate of articulation decreases”) which Johnstone & Scherer identify as the “acoustic correlates of sadness” (2000: 227).

## (2) “Other chap”, continued from (1)

- 19 Les: RIGHT. hhh  
 20 Ski: uh: -  
 21 Les: .hhh (0.7)  
 22 Les: thAt means tAking the dOgs TOO of [course. ((*subdued*))  
 23 Ski: [YES.  
 24 YES.  
 25 Les: but if it was just YOU;  
 26 we could DO that;  
 27 Ski: YE [AH=  
 28 Les: [↑COULDn't we.  
 29 Ski: =if it was just YOU-  
 30 if it was just ME;  
 31 i mean i'd be HAPpy to.  
 32 but what [i-

Still using a subdued tone of voice, Leslie goes on to reflect that were she to come with Skip on his business trip, the dogs would have to come along too (line 22). This observation comes off as resignatory: Leslie appears to be reasoning aloud that her proposal is perhaps not such a good idea after all, an evaluation with which Skip concurs in next turn. But she next remarks that if things were as she had originally thought, it would be possible (lines 25–26). Signs like these of resignation and regret suggest that Leslie is viewing the situation as one which dashes the hopes she had originally entertained and nixes her carefully laid plans. These signs confirm and reinforce the interpretation that her subdued prosody on the earlier rejection finalizers was designed to ‘do disappointment’.

Skip orients to Leslie’s affect display by rushing in to assure her that, were the circumstances different, he would welcome her proposal (lines 29–31). The fact that he demonstrates more than pro-forma concern to reassure her that her proposal was not unreasonable, suggests that not only has she done a display of ‘disappointment’, but that he has in fact also registered this display as one of ‘disappointment’.

When speakers whose proposals are rebuffed produce expressions of sadness and/or regret that things are not the way it was hoped they would be and proffer signs of resignation and/or profess not to care, they are engaging in behavior which is customarily described as ‘disappointment’. If an implicated co-participant follows up with actions which can be heard to console or conciliate the party whose proposal has been rejected and to make amends for the rejection, this suggests that a display of ‘disappointment’ has been registered as such.

Summarizing the discussion so far: Following the unequivocal rejection of a proposal, the use of a markedly subdued tone of voice on a rejection finalizer (or similar expression proposing acceptance of the rejection) is interpretable as a display of ‘disappointment’. Participant orientation to such a display is reflected in what happens next. Possible trajectories include: wishful formulations of how things could/would/might have been otherwise, had the proposal been acceptable; ‘stoic’ claims not to mind or care (suggesting troubles resistance by the proposer whose hopes have been shattered; Jefferson 1988); attempts by the rejector to emphasize how under other circumstances things would be different; apologies and other attempts to redress the balance, e.g. by suggesting alternative plans of action.

*Affect displays in rejection contexts*

Displays of ‘disappointment’ like that observed in (1) will also be found in request and invitation sequences following an open refusal of the request or an unambiguous declination of the invitation. For example:

(3) “Not in at the moment” (Holt 1:4)

Keith is a friend of Leslie’s daughter Katherine.

- 1 ((opening unrecorded))  
 2 Kei: (hell-)o missiz FIE:LD;  
 3 Les: YE:S –  
 4 Kei: this is KEITH.  
 5 can i speak to KATHERine plea[se.  
 6 Les: [oh KEITH;  
 7 she’s not IN at the moment,  
 8→ Kei: **AH.** ((*subdued*))  
 9 (0.9)  
 10 Kei: what-  
 11 (.)  
 12 Kei: [do you know what ti-  
 13 Les: [do you want to give me a MESSAGE;

Here Keith the caller, on finding that the phone has been answered by Leslie (lines 2–3), asks to speak to her daughter Katherine (line 5). When he now learns that his request cannot be met (lines 6–7), he produces *ah*, another rejection finalizer, accompanied by subdued prosody. Leslie next offers to take a message (line 13), indicating through this attempt to conciliate that she has perceived his prior turn not only as acknowledging a change-of-state (Heritage 1984) but also as displaying ‘disappointment’ about it.

Following is another request whose rebuffing engenders a display of ‘disappointment’:

(4) Granny coming (Holt X Christmas 2:1:4)

Leslie’s daughter Katherine, who is at college in the north, is making plans to return home for a Christmas visit.

- 1 Les: ↑↑ anyway=  
 2 ↑=whEn do you think you’d like to come HOME love.  
 3 (.)  
 4 Kat: uh:m – (.)  
 5 we:ll brAd’s going down on MONday.  
 6 (0.7)  
 7 Les: MONday.  
 8 WE:LL ah:-hh .hh w:  
 9 ↑mOnday WE can’t mAnage,  
 10 becuz (.) ↑GRANny’s coming mOnday.  
 11 (0.4)  
 12 → Kat: **OH:.** ((*subdued*))  
 13 (0.5)  
 (. . .)  
 36 Les: .hhh but uh:m (0.6)

37 .t.hhhh i'm SORry;=  
 38 =but (.) wE- we can have brAd for an ek- an extra TI:ME over hE:re.  
 39 to make UP.

In response to Leslie's inquiry as to when she would like to come home for the Christmas holidays (line 2), Katherine proposes that she could come down on Monday with her friend Brad (line 5). Because Katherine's coming home involves someone picking her up at the station, this proposal contains an implicit request. Leslie rejects the request, however, on the grounds that Granny is arriving (lines 9–10). In next turn Katherine now responds with a subdued *oh*, acknowledging the information she has just received and at the same time displaying 'disappointment' over it (line 12).<sup>17</sup> Leslie shows that she has taken Katherine's reaction as 'doing disappointment' when she later apologizes and offers to 'make up' by inviting Brad over on another occasion (lines 38–39).

In sum, the contexts being referred to here as rejection contexts – ones where displays of 'disappointment' can be found post rejection – include proposal, request and invitation sequences as well as the corresponding preliminaries thereto (pre-proposals, pre-requests, pre-invitations).<sup>18</sup> The rejection finalizers documented so far include: *ah, alright, oh, oh dear, oh I see, oh not to worry, oh right, oh well, oh well never mind, okay, okay never mind, okay then*. As this list makes clear, the particle *oh* figures prominently among the devices for finalizing a rejection.<sup>19</sup>

However, it is NOT the case that any *oh*, or any rejection finalizer, produced in a rejection context will be interpretable as 'doing disappointment'. In fact, displays of 'surprise' will also be found at these sequential junctures, as the following fragment demonstrates.

(5) The Duvals (Holt:July 1986:1:4)

Leslie is calling an acquaintance of hers to inquire about a French family whom they both know through the son Jean-Claude, a former exchange student.

1 Les: ehm – (.) .t (0.7)  
 2 wuh- ↑↑whAt's this about- (0.5) u-the DUvals.  
 3 (0.6)  
 4 Gwe: i ↑dOn't KNOW.=  
 5 =i haven't hEArD anything at ↑A:LL.  
 6 (1.1)  
 7 → Les: **OH:** ((dynamic))  
 8 (0.2)  
 9 Les: WE:LL.  
 10 ↑we gOt a ↑LETter todAy,  
 11 and i- (.) it was VERY: jean CLAU:DE..  
 12 yOU know hOw he GOE:S,  
 (...)

17 The fact that this response is noticeably delayed may display an element of 'surprise' as well (Wilkinson & Kitzinger 2006).

18 It is an open question at this point whether 'disappointment' is a relevant display in other activities and sequential contexts.

19 Under these circumstances, as Manny Schegloff has pointed out (p.c.), it will have falling intonation.

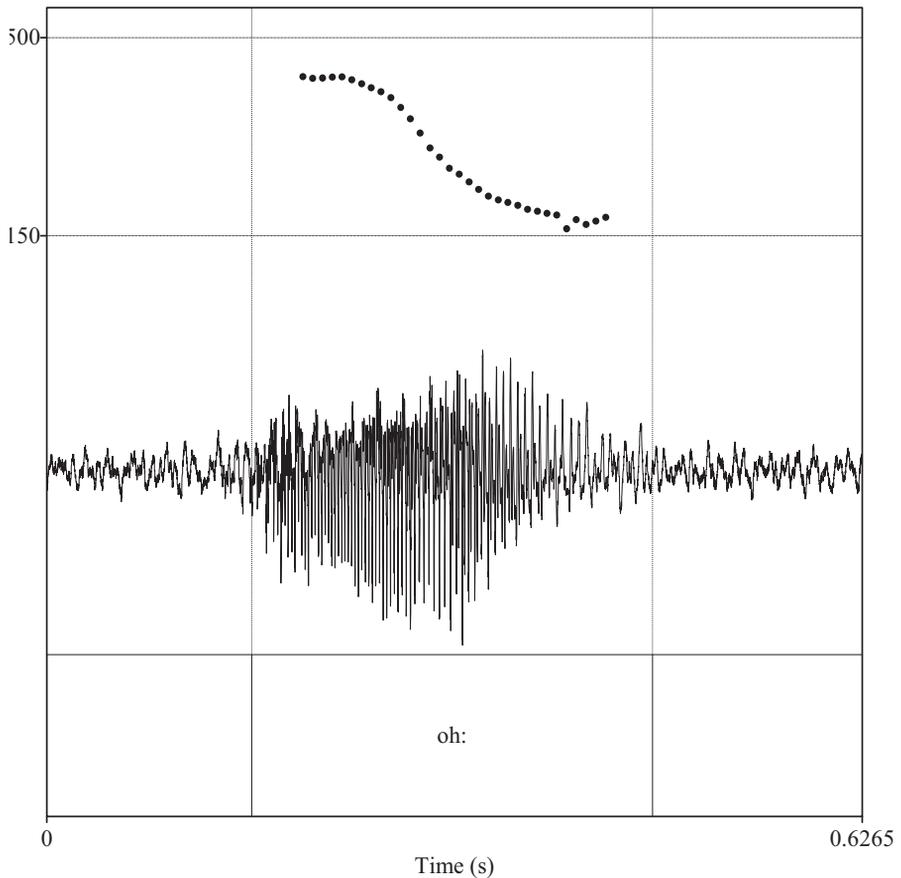


Figure 2. Waveform and pitch trace of Leslie's *oh* in line 7 of (5).

78 Les: =well i ↑thOUght you might kn:ow more than I did;  
 79 becuz you ↑knOw jean CLAU:DE;  
 80 e-he e-he ↑dOEs (0.3) roMA:NCE;=

In line 7 Leslie produces an *oh* following Gwen's rejection of her (implicit) request that she tell her something about the Duvals. Yet this *oh* sounds distinctly different from the *ohs* produced with subdued prosody in (1)–(4). In (5) the *oh* is shorter and stronger in articulatory force. It has an upstepped pitch peak moving into a wide fall and ends in glottal closure (cf. also Local 1996). Figure 2 shows a Praat picture of the waveform and pitch trace of Leslie's *oh* in (5).

The vocal characteristics of this kind of *oh* might be described as dynamic rather than subdued. In a context where there is evidence that the *oh*-producer was under a different impression or was misinformed, this kind of vocal delivery on *oh* is interpretable as a display of 'surprise' (cf. also Local 1996; Wilkinson & Kitzinger 2006).<sup>20</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Wilkinson & Kitzinger (2006) speak of "punched up" prosody with respect to 'doing surprise'.

In comparison to displays of ‘disappointment’, displays of ‘surprise’ following rejections are oriented to differently in subsequent talk. Rather than the requester dwelling wishfully on the request and/or claiming not to care and the rejector producing accounts and trying to make conciliatory offers, subsequent to a display of ‘surprise’ the requester will often proceed to account for why the request was made in the first place. For example, in (5) Leslie later explains to Gwen that she thought her friend would know more and, as an account for why she asked, alludes to Jean-Claude’s tendency to embellish the truth (lines 78–80). Gwen the rejector offers no further explanation for why she can not provide Leslie with the information requested.<sup>21</sup> There are no subsequent apologies, no attempts to console or conciliate her co-participant, no alternative proposals or compensations offered.

Following is another case where a rejection finalizer is produced in a way which suggests ‘surprise’ rather than ‘disappointment’:

(6) Photograph (Holt:May 88:1:5)

Leslie is explaining to her friend and co-teacher Robin why she has called (she has made some photographs and offered to share them with Robin’s pupils).

- 1 Les: eh: ↑WE:LL ;  
 2 ↑whAt i rang `UP about was=ehm,  
 3 di-↑dId you hAve anybody want a PHOtoGrA:ph?  
 4 (0.5)  
 5 Rob: i`ll be HONest with yOU?  
 6 Les: NO.=  
 7 Rob: = (i) haven` t A:SKED them.  
 8 → Les: **OH::**=  
 9 → =thAt`s alRIGH[T,= ((*dynamic*))  
 10 Rob: [( )  
 11 Les: =<<h> hhah hah hah hah> [.ah  
 12 Rob: [↑can I leave it another `WEE:K,  
 13 Les: .hhh wEll YES;=  
 14 = if you don` t think it`s too `LATE nO:w,  
 15 Rob: oh: NO: [no.  
 16 Les: [NO:;  
 17 O-KAY then.

On Leslie’s inquiry as to whether Robin’s pupils would like copies of her photographs,<sup>22</sup> Robin produces a hedged response: she hasn’t asked them yet. Like other hedges in second position, this may be a sign that the upcoming response will be a dispreferred one. In light of this, and because Leslie’s inquiry is implemented in a way which implies that she hopes the pupils will want some of her pictures, a rejection context is created. However, Leslie’s prosody on the finalizer *oh:; that’s alright* is sharp and dynamic rather than subdued. As in (5) this tone of voice is hearable as doing a vocal display of ‘surprise’ rather than ‘disappointment’.

21 Her profession of lack of knowledge in line 4 implements the rejection itself.

22 Although superficially a request for information, Leslie’s inquiry is at the same time a renewal of her offer to share her photographs with Robin’s pupils. Offers belong in the same category as proposals, requests and invitations, in that when they are turned down a rejection context ensues.

Examples such as (5) and (6) demonstrate that the rejection of a request, proposal or invitation is not a context where a display of 'disappointment' is obligatory, but rather one where such a display is possible. In CA terminology, we might say that a rejection context makes different types of affect display possible or relevant. Figuring prominently among the relevant displays in rejection contexts are, as we have seen, 'disappointment' and 'surprise'. Whether one of these alternative affects can be thought of as more preferred than another in the conversation analytic sense, and if so, which one, is an empirical question meriting further study.<sup>23</sup>

It is also an empirically open question at the moment what other affect displays might be relevant in rejection contexts. There is some indication that displays of 'irritation/annoyance' or 'anger' are also encountered subsequent to rejections of requests, particularly if the rejection is perceivable as unjustified or as resulting from an abuse of power. This is not uncommon in adult-child interaction (Wootton 1981, 1997) but may also occur in service encounters (Vinkhuyzen & Szymanski 2005). And it is of course also possible for there to be *no* display of affect at all on a rejection finalizer. Under appropriate circumstances lack of any marked affect display may be interpretable as an indifferent or 'stoic' response.

To summarize the discussion so far: There is a specific sequential location for displays of 'disappointment', namely after the outright rejection of a proposal, request or invitation in a turn which finalizes that rejection. Vocal displays of 'disappointment' are cued by a specific cluster of phonetic and prosodic characteristics, referred to here as 'subdued' prosody, which accompany the rejection finalizer. However, these phonetic and prosodic features need not be used on a rejection finalizer. The latter can just as well be delivered with a distinctly different set of (marked) phonetic and prosodic features which in the appropriate context may be interpretable as 'surprise' or, under other circumstances, as 'annoyance'. The rejection finalizer can also be delivered with no marked prosody at all, in which case it may be interpretable as a display of 'stoicism' or in contemporary parlance, 'coolness'.

Two important caveats to the above generalizations must be registered. The first of these is that following unequivocal rejections of requests, proposals and invitations, "post-rejection silences" and/or "weak agreement tokens" such as *yes* or *mhm* may also be encountered rather than rejection finalizers. Instead of signalling acceptance of the rejection, silences or weak agreement tokens suggest that the response so far is incomplete or insufficient in some way. In contrast to rejection finalizers, these devices leave room for negotiating the proposal or request and the terms of its acceptance. For instance, the rejector may proceed to qualify the rejection or offer an alternative. Or the requester may go on to revise the request in order to facilitate its granting. This is what happens in the following conversation:

23 Couper-Kuhlen (forthcoming) addresses the issue of preference with respect to affect displays in rejection contexts.

(7) Barclay's (Holt S-O1988:2:1)

Leslie has called the local branch of Barclay's bank to inquire whether they will cash a Midland check for her son.

- 1 ((ring ring))  
 2 ((ring ring))  
 3 Des: good afterNOON;  
 4 barclay's castle CARY;  
 5 (0.3)  
 6 Les: oh heLLO.  
 7 uhm .tch .hhh i'm ↑not very SU:RE;  
 8 of (0.4) what i DO;  
 9 eh- if ↑i: give my s-  
 10 i deal with uh MIDlan:d,  
 11 [hh .hh [h.hhhh  
 12 Des: [ (0.7) [YE:S,  
 13 Les: but if my SON comes DOW:N;  
 14 with a CHECK. h  
 15 a MIDland CHE:CK; .hhh  
 16 u-aa for thirty five POUNDS;=  
 17 =will you CASH that FO:R him,  
 18 at BARclays?  
 19 (0.3)  
 20 Des: not NORmally,  
 21 is your son a customer HE:RE,  
 22 Les: .hhhh i-NO::;  
 23 my MOther in law is. hh  
 24 missiz FIELD.  
 25 Des: NO;=  
 26 =there's- there's NOTHING –  
 27 w-WE can do.  
 28 we could only cash YOUR check for YOU;,  
 29 (0.3)  
 30 Les: .h YES.  
 31 (.)  
 32 Des: with a ↑CHECK card.  
 33→ (1.0)  
 34 Les: what do you MEAN;=  
 35 =if i send my CHECK card along.  
 36 Des: NO,  
 37 it would need YOU to do it yourSE:LF,  
 38 (.)  
 39 Des: i can't- (.)  
 40 i can't cash a MIDland check HE:RE,  
 41 Les: NO.  
 42 Des: ANybody other than the drawer of the uh CHECK.  
 43→ (1.7)  
 44 Les: oh I see:.  
 45 so(.i) [f:-  
 46 Des: [then there's a poun:d FEE.  
 47 OBviously;  
 48→ Les: oh: RIGHT.  
 49→ Okay.  
 50→ NEVer mind then, ((*subdued*))

51           THANK you very much.  
 52 Des:     al↑↑RIGHT?  
 53 Les:     .h YEAH,  
 54 Des:     TH[ANK you.  
 55 Les:         [not REALly,  
 56           bye BYE.=  
 57 Des:     =(you're we:l-)  
 58           bye BYE.

When Leslie inquires, with some hesitation, if Barclay's will cash a Midland check for her son (lines 13–17), the clerk first ascertains whether the son is a customer with the bank (line 21). On learning that he is not, the clerk then announces that there is no way Leslie's request can be granted (lines 26–27). Yet he appends a counter-offer: his bank would be prepared to cash a check of Leslie's for her (line 28), provided she has a check card (line 32). Following this rejection+counter-offer, Leslie withholds a response and a one-second silence ensues.

Next, Leslie proposes a candidate understanding of the clerk's offer, signalling a willingness to revise her original request: she could send her check card along with her son's check (line 35). But the clerk immediately rejects this (lines 36–42), whereupon Leslie allows an even longer gap to ensue. After 1.7 seconds, she then launches what promises to be another candidate understanding-cum-modified request (line 45). But now the bank clerk abruptly intervenes with the announcement that there will be a one-pound fee and she quickly relinquishes the contest. In doing so, she produces three subdued rejection finalizers (lines 48–50) and then moves to end the call.

Thus, as example (7) shows, recipients of rejections are not obliged to accept the rejection without contest. In fact, rejection sequences may contain a considerable amount of back and forth between reprises of the request and reformulations of the rejection before finalization ensues.

The second caveat requiring mention is that *ohs* with subdued prosody are not invariably interpretable as 'doing disappointment'. For instance, in tellings and informings when the news is bad for the deliverer, the recipient may respond with an *oh* (or *ah*) which sounds surprisingly similar to the subdued *oh* produced in rejection contexts.<sup>24</sup> However, because this kind of news delivery context is not one which would make 'disappointment' a relevant affect to display, these *ohs* are not interpretable as 'doing disappointment' but rather as 'doing sympathy' (Couper-Kuhlen 2005b).<sup>25</sup> Stated more generally, *ohs* with subdued prosody produced in contexts where 'disappointment' is not a relevant affect to display will not be interpretable as 'doing disappointment'. It follows that affect displays are not always distinguishable out of context, but instead receive specific in-situ interpretations within their context of occurrence.

24 See Maynard 1997 and Freese & Maynard 1998 for more on (bad) news deliveries.

25 There is, however, a sense in which 'sympathy' can be thought of as an expression of sadness-for-you and 'disappointment' as an expression of sadness-for-me (Gene Lerner, p.c.).

### *Comparative aspects of a sequential approach to affect*

The approach to affect outlined above and demonstrated with the case of ‘disappointment’ involves localizing and specifying affect displays sequentially in conversational exchanges. This approach presents a number of advantages for cross-linguistic and cross-cultural comparison:

1. If it can be reasonably assumed that requests, proposals and invitations are actions that occur universally, then it is equally as reasonable to assume that such actions will engender sequences in which unequivocal rejection is a possible outcome. In other words, rejections happen everywhere (arguably).
2. Likewise, it is reasonable to assume that requesters everywhere register rejections and finalize them in one way or another.
3. Therefore, it should be possible – and in fact, relatively easy – to search the conversational records in any language or culture for such sequence types and catalogue the way or ways in which recipients respond to rejections when they occur.
4. Assuming that, say, disappointment, surprise and irritation/anger are universal human responses to having one’s expectations or hopes dashed, then it might be possible to say that vocally subdued finalizers of rejection display ‘disappointment’, whereas vocally sharp and dynamic ones display, e.g., ‘surprise’ or, under the proper circumstances, ‘annoyance’. Presumably this categorization could be made independently of whether there is a word or other lexical expression in the language which adequately translates the English terms ‘disappointment’, ‘surprise’ or ‘annoyance’.

But can these assumptions be made unproblematically? I think not. In fact, there is good reason to be wary of each one:

*Ad 1.* A great deal of research has been done on speech acts, including those of requesting and inviting, within the framework of cross-cultural pragmatics. Without wishing to propose that this body of research be accepted without qualification,<sup>26</sup> we should nevertheless be cautioned against assuming that verbal actions are executed with the same degree of directness in all languages and cultures. Specifically, as concerns rejection contexts and ‘disappointment’, it may be hard to find unequivocal rejections in a given culture if that culture frowns upon direct forms for carrying out such an action. Yet an unequivocal rejection – at least based on the analysis developed here – is a crucial component of sequences in which displays of ‘disappointment’ become relevant next.

*Ad 2.* Likewise, it need not be the case that straightforward rejections, should they occur, are necessarily accepted without contest in all cultures. There may be linguistic communities and cultural groups where rejections are expected to be resisted, where requesters insist rather than resign themselves to the inevitable. This too would seem to preclude a display of ‘disappointment’ as encountered in the English materials.

*Ad 3 and 4.* Even on the assumption that requests or proposals and rejections do occur in a given language community or culture, we may not be able to take it

26 Much of it has been accomplished through informant interviews and questionnaires and is not based on the micro-analysis of spontaneous everyday talk.

for granted that there are different ways of responding vocally, including subdued and sharp, dynamic tones of voice. In fact, in the field of emotion studies it is well known that there are culturally variable “display rules” which regulate whether and to what extent it is considered acceptable to show a particular emotion or affect in a given situation. Specifically, with respect to ‘disappointment’, it may not be considered socially acceptable in a given community or society to display ‘disappointment’ even if one is ‘sad’ that one’s hopes have not been or cannot be fulfilled.

The anthropological literature on emotion, in particular ‘sadness’, gives further ground for doubt (Lutz 1987, 1988; Abu-Lughod 1986; Heelas 1986; Barr-Zisowitz 2000). It indicates that ‘sadness’ is not necessarily experienced everywhere as a negative emotion. Some cultures will report feeling ‘anger’ as a common response if no one can be held responsible for a problem, whereas they report ‘sadness’ when another person is responsible. This means that in these cultures ‘disappointment’ – if it exists – would be more like ‘anger’ than ‘sadness’. Cognition about agency is then not cross-culturally constant in determining “feeling rules”, or what emotions are ‘felt’ in what situations (cf. also Hochschild 1979, 1983).

So only if there are grounds for assuming that the feeling rules of another community permit ‘sadness’ and kindred affects, and more specifically permit them as demonstrations in response to categorical rejections of requests, proposals and invitations (on the assumption that the latter occur), only on these grounds is it meaningful to examine in a comparative perspective if and how exactly such displays are done. But then it *does* make sense to ask cross-linguistically: Are the ‘display rules’ in rejection contexts comparable in different cultures? What verbal and non-verbal resources are used to ‘do disappointment’ in different languages and cultures?

### *A cross-linguistic comparison of affect display subsequent to rejection*

In the following, questions such as the above will be explored in a preliminary examination of rejection contexts in a cultural context closely related to English, namely in German talk-in-interaction.<sup>27</sup>

#### **A rejection context in German interaction**

Let us consider a rejection context in German roughly comparable to the English one shown in (7) above:<sup>28</sup>

27 The discussion should be regarded as exploratory only. A full-fledged investigation remains to be done.

28 My thanks to Margret Selting for providing me with access to this conversation. The transcription and glossing are my own.

(8) Stabi (Tel 7-2)

Gabi is a college student who needs to write a term paper over the week-end. She has called up the library on a Friday to find out if they can get a book from Building One (where the stacks are) to Building Two (where the reading room is) on that same day if she orders it by email.

- 5 Gabi: SAGen sie;  
say you  
say
- 6 wenn ich hEUte noch –  
if I today still  
if I
- 7 uhm .hhh
- 8 n bUch ausm haus EINS bestelle;  
a book from house one order  
*order a book from Building One today*
- 9 per Email;  
*by email;*
- 10 kOmmt das heute noch: im hAU's zwei AN?  
comes that today still in house two  
*will it get to Building Two today?*
- 11 Lib: (1.2) dAs: ist nicht unbedingt SICHerstellt.  
that is not necessarily certain  
*(1.2) that is not for sure.*
- 12 → (1.2)
- 13 Lib: aso: (.) es kAnn schon SEIN,  
so it can already be  
*uh (.) it could,*
- 14 MUSS aber nicht.  
must however not  
*but it might not.*
- 15 aso es kOmmt auf den FAHRer an.  
so it depends on the driver  
*it depends on the (male) driver.*
- 16 oder auf die FAHRerin=ne?  
or on the driver+FEM doesn't it  
*or on the female driver you know?*
- 17 → Gabi: uh HNH.
- 18 → (0.7)

In the given context Gabi's initial inquiry (lines 6–10) harbors a request: she hopes to obtain the book she needs that same day. But the librarian's response to this inquiry/request is delayed and hedged (line 11). Notice that Gabi now remains silent, displaying that the librarian's answer is incomplete or insufficient (line 12), whereupon the librarian proceeds to elaborate on her answer, explaining that the book might get there or not depending on the driver. Gabi provides only a weak acknowledgement of this information, again conveying that the matter is not yet settled to her satisfaction (line 17). This is what happens next:

(9) Stabi2, continued from (8)

- 19 Gabi: aso es wär für den LESesaal.  
so it would be for the reading room  
*it would be for the reading room.*
- 20 ds-  
*it's-*
- 21 Lib: ja JA.  
*yeah yeah.*
- 22 DENnoch.  
*still.*
- 23 aso es mUss ja nun aber m-mit dem (.)kuRIERdienst;  
so it must indeed now but with the courier+service  
*it has to go by (.) courier;*
- 24 uhm hierHER gefahren werden,  
to here driven be  
*uhm to get here,*
- 25 .hh und uh::  
*.hh and uh*
- 26 im prinzip JA.  
*theoretically yes.*
- 27 aber uhm: ich würds ihnen nIch r- eh garanTIERen.  
but I would+it you not guarantee  
*but uhm: I wouldn't want to uh guarantee it.*
- 28 → Gabi: mhn;  
*mhn;*
- 29 → (0.7)
- 30 → Gabi: .hhh ↑GUT – ((stylized))  
*.hhh okay*
- 31 na ja ich verSUCHS mal.  
oh well I try+it once  
*oh well I'll try it.*

- 32            alles [KLAR.  
                  *fi[ne.*
- 33    Lib:            [O-KAY;  
                  *[okay;*
- 34    Gabi:        VIElen dank.  
                  *thank you.*
- 35            WIEderhören;  
                  *good bye;*

Gabi next volunteers information which will conceivably reduce the imposition entailed by her request: she only needs the book for the reading room, not to check out (line 19). But the librarian insists that there is still no way to be sure whether it will get there in time or not, formulating the gist of her talk in a way which is tantamount to rejection (lines 26–27). At first Gabi again merely acknowledges this rejection (line 28), but then – after a longish pause, during which she may be monitoring for some reversal on the part of the librarian – finally appears to give up the contest. In line 30 she produces the German rejection finalizer *gut* (‘okay’), adding with resignation that she will try anyway (line 31), and moves into closings (line 32).

Here then is a German rejection context, one where, based on the English materials, ‘disappointment’ would be a relevant affect to display: compare Leslie’s subdued tone of voice in lines 48–50 of (7) above. Yet Gabi’s prosody on the finalizer *gut* in (9) is not of the subdued type, nor is it heard as doing ‘disappointment’. Instead it has stylized prosody, with the syllable stretched and the pitch and volume held constant at a relatively high level.<sup>29</sup> Together with her next precipitous and quasi unilateral moves to end the conversation (lines 32, 34–35), Gabi’s *gut* is retrospectively heard as signalling something akin to ‘annoyance’ or ‘frustration’.

Intriguingly, the librarian orients to this display by now unexpectedly re-opening topical talk and offering some practical advice to help Gabi resolve her problem:

(10) Stabi3 , continued from (9)

- 36    Lib:        passen sie AUF;  
                  watch you out  
                  *hey listen*
- 37            rufen sie doch hier in der buchausgabe AN;  
                  call you still here at the book+loan up  
                  *just call up the lending desk*
- 38            obs aso am nachmittag ANjekommen ist.  
                  if+it so in+the afternoon arrived has  
                  *(to see)if it has got here this afternoon*

<sup>29</sup> See Ogden et al 2004 and Couper-Kuhlen 2005a for more on the use of prosodic stylization in Finnish and English conversation, respectively.

- 39            .hh dass sie aso um uh FÜNF (.) hier mal ANrufen?  
               that you so at     five     here once call+up  
               .hh just give a call here at five p.m.?
- 40    Gabi:    mhm?  
               mhm?
- 41    Lib:     ich sag ihnen mal die DURCHwahl für die BUCHausgabe?  
               I say you once the extension     for the book+loan  
               I'll give you the extension number for the lending desk?
- 42    Gabi:    ja?  
               yeah?
- 43    Lib:     zwei sechs SECHS?  
               two six six?
- 44    Gabi:    ja,  
               yeah,
- 45    Lib:     ACHTundzwanzig FÜNFundzwanzig.  
               eight+and+twenty     five+and+twenty  
               twenty-eight twenty-five.
- 46    Gabi:    [ACHTundzwanzig fünfundzwanzig.  
               eight+and+twenty     five+and+twenty  
               [twenty-eight twenty-five.
- 47    Lib:     [ge-  
               [ex-
- 48            und GEBen sies gleich     WEG.  
               And give you+it immediately in  
               and get your order in right away.
- 49            (1.0)
- 50    Gabi:    uh huh.  
               uh huh.
- 51    Lib:     aufn WEG. ja?  
               on+the way yeah  
               (get it)on its way. okay?
- 52    Gabi:    mhm.  
               mhm.
- 53    Lib:     und RUFen sie aber v- bevor sie KOMmen noch mal AN,  
               and call you however before you come     once again up  
               and call up however bef- before you come,
- 54            (0.8)

- 55           und seien sie nicht entTÄUSCHT wenn es erst denn  
and be you not disappointed if it first then  
*and don't be disappointed if it ends up*
- 56           MONtag soll.  
Monday must (be)  
*having to be Monday.*
- 57   Gabi:    h he HEH [.h he:],
- 58   Lib:           [JA?  
                      [*all right?*
- 59   Gabi:    GUT=  
                  *okay=*

The librarian recommends that Gabi call up the lending desk late that afternoon to see whether the book has arrived (lines 37–39) and offers to give her the telephone number to call (lines 41–47). She then rounds off her advice by reminding Gabi to turn in her order immediately (lines 48, 51) and admonishing her not to be *disappointed* if things do not work out (lines 55–56).

From this behavior on the part of the librarian, it is clear that Gabi's earlier response to the rejection was registered as affect-laden. Had Gabi produced a non-affect-laden rejection finalizer, there would have been no need for the librarian to make any effort at conciliation. Furthermore, the librarian's admonition not to be disappointed serves as confirmation that 'disappointment' is also a relevant affect in the German cultural context following rejection.<sup>30</sup>

The librarian's conciliatory move now motivates Gabi to make another stab at getting the book before Monday. She reopens the request sequence by inquiring whether she could perhaps get the book by Saturday, if not Friday.

(11) Stabi4, continued from (10)

- 60   Gabi:    =Also dann hab ich sOnnabend auch keine CHANCE=  
                  so then have I Saturday also no chance  
                  = *so there's no chance I could get it Saturday*
- oder wie.  
                  or what  
                  *I suppose.*
- 61   Lib:    (0.2) nein NEIN:.  
                  (0.2) *no no.*
- 62           SONnabend FÄHRT der wagen nicht.  
                  Saturdays drives the car not  
                  *Saturdays the driver doesn't work.*

30 The fact that the librarian alludes to Gabi's display as one of 'disappointment' rather than 'annoyance' or 'frustration' may be a reflection of the fact that this type of display is preferred, in the sense of being socially more acceptable, in the given circumstances.

- 63 → Gabi: OH:: ((*subdued*))  
oh::.
- 64 MM?  
mm?
- 65 alles KLAR.  
all clear  
okay.
- 66 Lib: JA?  
okay?
- 67 Gabi: ↑gut vielen DANK.  
↑*fine thank you.*
- 68 Lib: BIT-te –  
*you're welcome -*
- 69 Gabi: [WIEderhören.  
[*bye.*
- 70 Lib: [WIEderhören.  
[*bye.*

Gabi re-opens the request sequence by proffering a candidate understanding, couched as a negative inference (line 60). With this move she reveals that her hope that the book will be available sooner than Monday is still very much alive. Yet the librarian immediately and unequivocally rejects the possibility of Saturday (line 61–62). It is at this point (line 63) that Gabi responds with the German particle *oh* (which translates as *oh* in English) delivered in a prosodically subdued tone of voice (see Figure 3 next page).

Gabi's *oh* accomplishes two things: for one, it registers receipt of the information that the drivers don't work on Saturdays. It thus marks a change of state in Gabi's knowledge. At the same time, however, its vocal formatting, specifically the low, slightly falling, soft, weak prosody, contributes to a display of 'disappointment'. Although this display is fleeting, it registers in the conversational record in two ways: it motivates the subsequent display of troubles resistance (*mm?*), and it accounts for the 'stiff-upper-lip' manner in which the sequence-closing object (*alles klar*) is delivered.

### Dimensions of cross-linguistic variation in the display of affect

What do we learn from a comparison of rejection contexts in English and German? Although all due caution is needed given the small amount of data available, a number of provisional observations can be made concerning cross-cultural and cross-linguistic variation in the display of affect:

- (1) *Ways of responding to rejection.* If we compare fragments (7) and (8) – both of which are organized around requests made by individuals to representatives of institutions with which they (or members of their family)

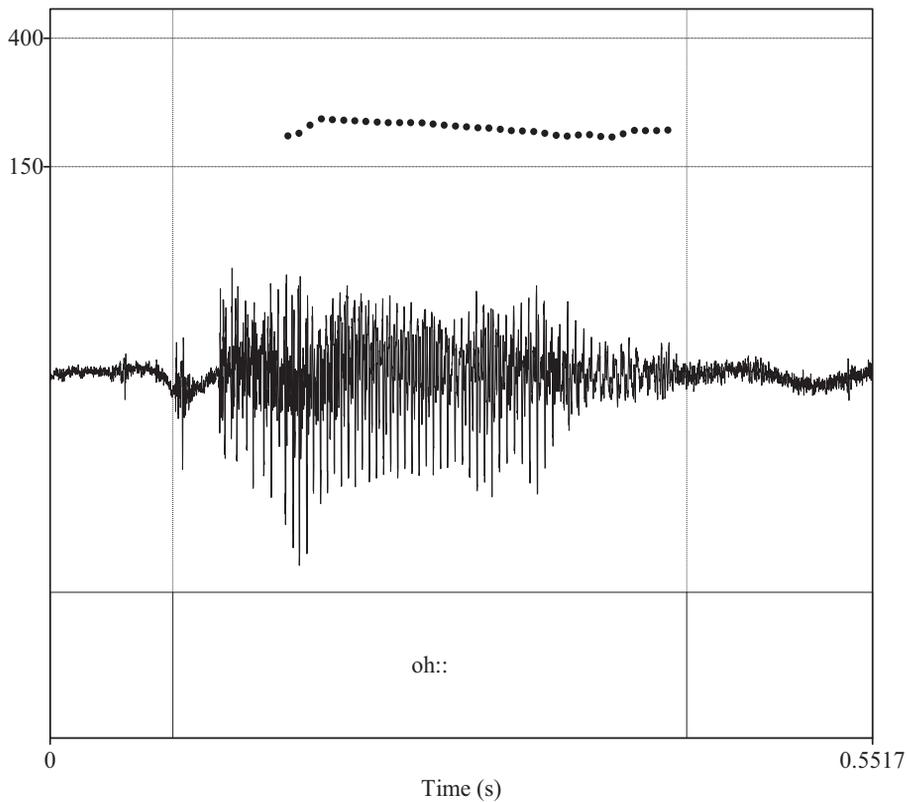


Figure 3. Waveform and pitch trace of Gabi's *oh* in line 63 of (11).

are in a client relationship – we find that the activity of requesting a service has similar possibilities for sequential development.<sup>31</sup> Unambiguous rejections occur in both speech communities. We also find similar procedures being deployed following rejection: silences, weak agreement tokens and/or rejection finalizers. And we find similar types of affect being displayed in conjunction with the finalization of rejection. The German example confirms that both displays of disappointment and displays of irritation or frustration are relevant affect-laden ways of responding to rejections of requests. What we do not know at this point is whether the “display rules” in the two speech communities vary in terms of which, if any, of these affects is considered socially more acceptable: is annoyance or frustration more likely to be displayed in the German context than disappointment?<sup>32</sup>

31 For the moment I am making the assumption that displays of ‘disappointment’ are similarly organized in everyday and institutional contexts, i.e. that they are relevant in the same sequential contexts. However, it is clearly an empirical question whether the preference for one affect display over another is the same in both contexts – and one which is still open at this time.

32 Recall that in (7) it is ‘disappointment’ which is displayed first, i.e. on the rejection finalizer, and that ‘frustration’ surfaces only later and in a more inconspicuous fashion, whereas in (11) the party rejected displays first ‘frustration’ and only later, on renewed rejection following conciliatory moves by the rejector, ‘disappointment’.

Leslie in (7) is clearly also annoyed that the bank will not cash her son’s check (see her belated ‘cheeky’ reply in line 55 to the clerk’s solicitous inquiry in line 52) but she does not display this vocally in finalizing the rejection (lines 48–50).

- (2) *Lexical resources.* Whereas in English one of the most common particles for finalizing rejection appears to be the change-of-state token *oh* (either on its own or together with objects like *I see* or *right*), the German example shows two rejection finalizers in use (*gut, oh*), neither one of which is the standard change-of-state particle. The standard expression to mark a change of state in German is *ach* or *ach so* (Golato & Betz 2008). It is an open empirical question at this point whether *ach* or *ach so* can also serve as a rejection finalizer and have a vocal display of disappointment associated with it. However, what we can say, based on the German data considered here, is that there are more than two change-of-state tokens: *oh, ach* and *ach so*, and that one of these (at least) can be used to ‘do disappointment’. We do not know at this point what lexical resources are available in German for other displays of affect such as, e.g., sympathy. Whereas English *oh* can be used to do sympathy as well, can the German *ach so* be used the same way? Introspection suggests that it cannot. This raises the question of whether German, as a well-known ‘particle language’, might rely more heavily on particles for the display of different affects, whereas English as a ‘non-particle language’ might rely more heavily on phonetic and prosodic variation of one and the same lexical item, *oh*.<sup>33</sup>
- (3) *Prosodic resources.* The prosodic features which are used to ‘do disappointment’ in the two languages appear to be similar. Although the quality of the vowel /o/ in the *oh* tokens of (7) and (11) differs, in both cases the volume is softer than normal, the pitch range is narrow and relatively low in the speaker’s range, the pitch movement is slightly falling and the articulatory force is weaker than usual. Thus, the prosody for signalling ‘disappointment’ in the two languages appears to be roughly the same.<sup>34</sup> However, in English the related affect ‘sympathy’ can also be done using *oh* with vocal features very similar to those of disappointment (Couper-Kuhlen 2005b). Is the same the case in German?

In sum, what needs exploring in a cross-cultural and cross-linguistic comparison of ‘disappointment’ in rejection contexts in English and German conversation is (a) whether the “display rules” and preference relationships holding among affect displays are comparable in the two communities, and (b) what the division of labor is between lexis and prosody as resources for the display of ‘disappointment’ and its cousin ‘sympathy’.

33 Schubiger 1965 & 1980 makes a similar argument with respect to German particles such as *doch* and *denn*.

34 We need not expect this to be the case, however, in languages with typologically different prosodic systems, e.g. in tone languages.

### *Some conclusions*

It is to be expected that not only disappointment but also many other, hitherto uninvestigated affects will repay sequentially grounded investigation. When affect is treated as displayed by a set of practices embedded in sequences of action in talk-in-interaction, it becomes a type of behavior amenable to CA methodology. The research question can then be operationalized as: What resources are deployed, and when, to carry out a particular affect display? The linguistic resources for affect display hold the potential for a division of labor between lexis and prosody. Yet how this division is made may differ from language to language.

Conceptualizing affect as a context-dependent interpretation based on lexical and prosodic cues in specifiable sequential locations means ridding ourselves of the notion that there are distinct ‘tones of voice’ for distinct affects independent of context, or that it is possible or even meaningful to look for ‘acoustic cues’ corresponding to particular affects in a context-free fashion.<sup>35</sup> Instead it appears to be the case that in given sequential locations actual displays are judged with respect to a restricted set of affects which are considered to be relevant for that location. Within a given relevance set, we can expect that the affect displays in question will be distinguishable from one another on either lexical or prosodic grounds, or both.<sup>36</sup> The prosodic parameters distinguishing affect displays in a given relevance set may be of a very general nature, such as ‘subdued’ vs. ‘dynamic’.

Affects displayed in situ, as we have shown for the case of ‘disappointment’, can be expected to affect the trajectory of interaction. And different affect displays in the same relevance set can affect the trajectory of interaction in distinct ways, as we have seen is the case for ‘disappointment’ as opposed to ‘surprise’. For this reason, the moral of the story is that if we as conversation analysts ignore affect (displays), it is at our own risk and peril.

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35 Out of context, a display of disappointment sounds surprisingly similar to a display of sympathy (Couper-Kuhlen 2005b).

36 On the other hand, affects which are not in the same relevance set with one another need not be expected to be signalled distinctively.

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### *GAT<sup>37</sup> Transcription: Basic Conventions*

#### *Sequential structure*

|     |  |
|-----|--|
| [ ] | overlapping speech                             |
| [ ] |  |
| =   | latching of turns or turn constructional units |

#### *Pauses*

|                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| (.)              | micro-pause                                   |
| (-), (--), (---) | short, medium or long pause of up to 1 second |
| (2.0)            | estimated pause of more than 1 second         |
| (2.85)           | measured pause                                |

#### *Other segmental conventions*

|                  |                                   |
|------------------|-----------------------------------|
| and=uh           | close juncture                    |
| ;, ::, :::       | stretching, according to duration |
| so-              | abrupt cut-off or glottal stop    |
| uh, hm, er, etc. | non-lexical ‘fillers’             |

#### *Laughter*

|               |   |
|---------------|---|
| so(h)o        | laughter particles superimposed on speech |
| heh, hah, hnh | syllabic laughter particles               |
| ((laughing))  | description of laughter                   |

37 Adapted from Selting et al 1998.

*Intonation phrase*

Line of transcript intonation contour

*Position of accented syllable*

|          |                                 |
|----------|---------------------------------|
| ACcent   | primary or main accent          |
| !AC!cent | extra strong accent             |
| Accent   | secondary or subordinate accent |

*Final pitch movement*

|   |   |
|---|---|
| ? | rise to high point in speaker's voice range |
| , | rise to mid point in speaker's voice range  |
| – | pitch remains level                         |
| ; | fall to mid point in speaker's voice range  |
| . | fall to low point in speaker's voice range  |

*Pitch accent type*

|     |  |
|-----|--|
| `SO | fall beginning on accented syllable      |
| ˘SO | rise beginning on accented syllable      |
| ^SO | rise-fall beginning on accented syllable |
| ˘SO | fall-rise beginning on accented syllable |
| –SO | level beginning on accented syllable     |

*Pitch step-ups and step-downs*

|   |                                      |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| ↑ | pitch step up to accented syllable   |
| ↓ | pitch step down to accented syllable |

*Pitch range*

|            |   |
|------------|---|
| <<narrow>> | use of small segment of speaker's voice range |
| <<wide>>   | use of large segment of speaker's voice range |

*Pitch register*

|       |   |
|-------|---|
| <<l>> | intonation contour placed low in speaker's voice range  |
| <<h>> | intonation contour placed high in speaker's voice range |

*Volume*

|           |                             |
|-----------|-----------------------------|
| <<f>>     | forte, loud                 |
| <<ff>>    | fortissimo, very loud       |
| <<p>>     | piano, soft                 |
| <<pp>>    | pianissimo, very soft       |
| <<cresc>> | crescendo, becoming louder  |
| <<dim>>   | diminuendo, becoming softer |

*Speech rate/tempo*

|          |                              |
|----------|------------------------------|
| <<all>>  | allegro, fast                |
| <<len>>  | lento, slow                  |
| <<acc>>  | accelerando, becoming faster |
| <<rall>> | rallentando, becoming slower |

*Rhythm*

|   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| / | / | prosodic foot (accented syllable + any following unaccented syllables) |
| [ | / | regular timing of successive feet                                      |
|   | / |  |

*Breathing*

|               |                                   |
|---------------|-----------------------------------|
| .h, .hh, .hhh | in-breath, according to duration  |
| h, hh, hhh    | out-breath, according to duration |

*Other*

|              |  |
|--------------|--|
| ( )          | unintelligible passage   |
| (such)       | presumed wording   |
| (such/which) | possible alternatives  |
| →            | specific line in the transcript which is referred to in the text |

## Designing utterances for action: Verb repeat responses to assessments<sup>1</sup>

### *Introduction*

Assessments are actions that make agreement or disagreement by the recipient conditionally relevant. The recipient may minimally just claim agreement, for example, using a response token such as *yes* in English, or *niin* in Finnish (see Sorjonen 2001: 167–208). Often, however, s/he is doing something more than that when giving an agreeing response. A repetition of the prior assessment or some of its key elements has turned out to be a practice used in a variety of languages for giving an agreeing response. Depending on the typological characteristics of the language, this repetition can be constructed in different ways.

In this chapter we will take up part of the paradigm of utterance types that provide an agreement to an assessment in Finnish. We will focus on the types that express agreement by presenting the ‘same evaluation’ as the one in the prior assessment (cf. Pomerantz 1984: 66–68). A shared feature of the responses we will discuss is the presence of the finite verb. The following two examples by Pomerantz (1984: 67) show same evaluations in English. In them, the recipient repeats the subject and the finite verb of the co-participant’s assessment.

(1) [GTS:4: 6]

R: Ohh man, that was bitchin.

J: → **That was.**

(2) [GTS:4:15]

K: He’s terrific!

J: → **He is.**

Swedish, another Germanic language, also requires a subject constituent in addition to the finite verb when repeating as in the following example.<sup>2</sup> However, the word

1 An earlier version of this study was presented at ICCA-06 in Helsinki. We are grateful for the comments we received from the audience. We would also like to thank two anonymous referees and the editors of the volume for useful comments and criticism that helped us to develop our thinking and clarify the arguments.

2 Jan Lindström kindly provided us with this example, originating from a corpus of spoken language at the University of Gothenburg, Sweden.

order of the response is here different from the English examples. As Swedish is a verb-second language, the finite verb precedes the subject when the predicate nominal is in initial position.

(3)

A: Första texten e cool tycker jag  
 first text-DEF is cool think I  
 The first text is cool I think.

B: → **Ja de e den**  
 PRT it is it  
 Yeah so it is

Compared with the two Germanic languages above, English and Swedish, Finnish allows more variants in constructing a response with a repetition: the response does not need to have a subject at all, nor is it necessary for the subject to precede the finite verb.<sup>3</sup> What we want to show in this chapter is that within a paradigm of minimal and next-to-minimal response types, a speaker of Finnish can convey a number of interactionally relevant implications which in typologically different languages presumably require the use of other kinds of elements and constructions.

The following schema presents the range of variants used when an agreement is given by repeating the finite verb of the participant's prior utterance. The ones that will be in the focus of this chapter are bolded.

Schema 1. Positive responses to assessments with a verb repeat.

S = subject, V = verb, X = complement, ADV = adverb, PRT = particle.

|             |                       |              |           |             |               |
|-------------|-----------------------|--------------|-----------|-------------|---------------|
|             | S                     | V            | X         |             |               |
| Assessment: | tulo                  | on           | hieno     |             |               |
|             | ‘the result is great’ |              |           |             |               |
| Response:   | ADV + V               | V + S (+X)   | V (+ V)   | S + V (+ X) | V + PRT       |
|             | niin on               |              | <b>on</b> |             | <b>on joo</b> |
|             |                       | <b>on se</b> |           | se on       |               |
|             |                       | on se hieno  |           | se on hieno |               |

For illustrative purposes, we have used a predicate nominal clause (‘NP is AP’) in the schema as the first position assessment, the one which initiates an assessment sequence (cf. e.g. Goodwin & Goodwin 1987, 1992; see Heritage & Raymond 2005: 16 on “first position assessments”). As the schema shows, an agreeing response can be formed with a repetition of the copula verb only (*on*, or as reduplicated *on on*). When the response contains the subject, it can occur after the verb (*on se*). The response may also have an anaphoric adverb before the repeated finite verb (*niin on*), or a response particle after the finite verb (*on joo*).

This range of options is provided by the typological character of Finnish: the possibility of forming a clause without a subject, and the flexibility of the word

3 In yet another Indo-European language, Russian, what seems to be repeated is the assessment term (e.g. the adjective), instead of the subject or the finite verb (Pirkko Paukkeri, p.c.).

order. More specifically, there are different ways of forming a clause without a subject: through replacing the subject constituent with a so called anaphoric zero (the response types *on*, *on on*, *on joo* and *niin on*). With respect to its word order, Finnish is considered as an SVO language, the basic word order being Subject – Verb – Object (Heinämäki 1976; Vilkuna 1989; Helasvuo 2001). Word order is not primarily used for grammatical purposes, such as keeping subject and object apart, as in, for example, Germanic languages (e.g. English and Swedish). Subject and object are mainly kept apart by morpho-syntactic means like case endings and Subject-Verb agreement. Only if that fails, the Subject-Verb word order will tell us which one of the nominal constituents is the subject.

Accordingly, word order can be used for a variety of other purposes. Besides imperatives and yes-no interrogatives, which are verb initial in many European languages (see König and Siemund 2007; Haspelmath et al. 2005: 470–473), in Finnish also statement-formatted utterances may start with the finite verb. This is the case, for example, in affective first assessments (*On-pa täällä kuuma!* is-CLI here hot 'It is certainly hot here'). In addition, verb initial word order typically indexes that the utterance is responsive: an answer to a question, an assent or a second assessment. In the agreeing responses to assessments that will be analyzed in this chapter, the only obligatory element is the finite verb, typically the copula verb *on* 'is'. Verbs other than the copula can occur as well, but much more rarely: among our 52 examples there were only two instances of those.

The response types presented in the schema are not all equally frequent. Notably, the SV format (*se on*) occurs very rarely, whereas *niin on* appears to be highly frequent (see Sorjonen and Hakulinen 2009 on the use of these response formats). Thus the schema only presents the alternatives in crude structural outline. The structure of the first assessment can vary as well.

In the research on responses to assessments in English, one of the main dimensions has been the strength of agreement a given response type indexes. Thus Pomerantz (1984: 68) states for instance that same evaluations can be seen as weak agreements: some of them tend to occur as prefaces to disagreements. The more recent work by Heritage (2002) and Heritage and Raymond (2005) takes up ways in which first position assessments and especially their responses express the epistemic positioning of the speaker: her rights and responsibilities to make the assessment (see also Goodwin & Goodwin 1987, 1992). The indexing of epistemic position through a repetition of the co-participant's prior turn is discussed by Stivers (2005). She shows how partial repetition of the prior assertion (among them also assessments) with a stress on the copula (or the auxiliary) asserts its speaker's rights to make the statement and works to undermine the prior speaker's rights to the claim.

With our schema we illustrate the fact that for Finnish speakers, there are several response types in which the core element is a repetition of the finite verb in the prior speaker's assessment. On the surface, they all express a same evaluation. One may ask for what purpose a language would have so many alternative ways of constructing agreement through a same evaluation.<sup>4</sup> We will argue that while

4 The response types in our schema were earlier analyzed by Tainio (1996). Her data were relatively scant and consequently the findings tentative. She did take up the degree to which the different response types displayed its speaker's alignment with the co-participant's prior turn, a theme that will come up in our discussion as well.

the choice of a specific variant may index the speaker's epistemic position, there are a number of other parameters that influence the design of the response. We will take up the design of the first assessment, the nature of the knowledge the participants have, and the larger activity context in which the assessment and its response occur.

Our database consists of 33 interactions, most of them telephone calls (N = 27). The majority of the data come from conversations among friends and family members, but we have also used three videotaped institutional interactions, from a social insurance office and from hair salons. This database contained 52 responses of the types that are discussed in this chapter. They were evenly distributed between the different response types: there were twelve instances of each type (*on*; *on on*; *on se*), except the [V + PRT] type (*on joo*) of which we have sixteen examples.

### *Asserting agreement with a verb repeat only*

A mere repetition of the copula verb of the prior assessment represents the most minimal of the responses; we will call this response type a verb repeat. Through ellipsis the speaker leaves both the subject and the assessment term of the prior turn intact. For that reason the response type is maximally built as a second action and thereby indexes alignment with the prior assessment.<sup>5</sup> That makes it usable for a variety of purposes, and we do find it in different kinds of sequential contexts. Its more specific function as well as its sufficiency as a response will become manifest in the sequential contexts of its use.

A single verb can form a turn of its own as a response. This is the case even in instances where the prior turn is formed with an assessment term only, as in the following extract. The speaker Ville responds with this format (line 12) to an assessment with which the co-participant responded to his answer. By responding with the verb only, he merely asserts agreement and makes relevant a continuation of talk by the co-participant. A relevant continuation in this sequential context is an expression of the relevance of the question (line 6) and the assessment of the answer (line 11).<sup>6</sup>

#### (4) [SKK/Sg 094-7 3b8]

01 Simo: No: onhan se kato ku se on vanhi veljeksistä ja,  
PRT IS-CLI it look as he is eldest brothers-ELA and  
Well it is y'know see as he's the eldest of the brothers and,

02 (1.4)

03 Simo: ainut ku on, (1.0) t̄ai ei oo ainut ku on naimisissa vaan tota  
only as is OR NEG be only as is married PRT PRT  
the only one who is, (1.0) or he isn't the only one who's married but

<sup>5</sup> By alignment we mean that the recipient goes along with the activity in progress. A related term is affiliation with which we mean that the recipient displays that she shares the perspective of the co-participant. On the distinction between alignment and affiliation, see Stivers 2008.

<sup>6</sup> We do not give free translations for the responses with a verb repeat. As there is no comparable research on the English responses, we would at this stage have to guess what the equivalents might be.

- 04           nii, ainut kel       on niinku pieni lapsii ja   muuta nii,  
PRT only who-ADE is like small kids and else so  
 er, the only one who has like small kids and all that so,
- 05           (0.5)
- 06 Ville:     Montas niit       on kaiken kaikkiaa, hh  
many-Q they-PAR is all.in.all  
 How many are there of them altogether, hh
- 07 Simo:     Poikii,=  
 Sons,=
- 08 Ville:     =Sisaruksia,  
 =Siblings,
- 09           (5.7)
- 10 Simo:     Viis,  
 Five,
- 11 Ville: → **M-hm, aikamoine (.) lauma.**  
Mh-hm, quite (.) a herd.
- 12 Simo: → **O:n.**  
**is**
- 13           (0.3)
- 14 Ville:     Onks ne kaikki mukana siinä,  
is-Q they all with it-ESS  
 Are they all involved in the,
- 15           (0.3)
- 16 Ville:     fi[rmassa,  
firm-INE  
 in[ the firm,
- 17 Simo:     [Yks ainut ei oo ja ainut mikä on opiskellu  
[one single NEG be and only which is studied  
 [A single one is not and the only one who's been studying
- 18           se on ihan .hhhhhh (.) se on tämmöne ingenjööri, hhhh  
s/he is quite s/he is this.kind engineer  
 s/he is just .hhhhhh (.) s/he is a kind of engineer, hhhh

Simo and Ville are in the midst of Ville's telling about Christmas at his sister's house where also his brother-in-law's family were gathered (he gives the reason for the family gathering at his brother-in-law's in line 1). With his response in line 12, Simo asserts agreement in the same terms with the assessment with which Ville received his answer to a question. By not continuing his turn after that, he leaves the next action to his co-participant. In this way he orients to the question

in line 6 as one that was possibly done in service of some other action. And in his subsequent turn (lines 14 and 16), Ville explicates the relevance of his question by asking about the involvement of the siblings in the family business.

The verb repeat may be followed by further talk by its speaker in the same turn. The continuation shows affiliation with the prior speaker's perspective. In the next example the utterance following the verb repeat in line 9 is marked as a continuation (with the clitic particle *-kä* 'and'). It takes up an aspect of the referent which the speakers are evaluating, a new brand of cigarettes, with an assessment term that fits the valence of the prior assessment.

(5) [Turku spoken language archives 1977:5, C 151]

- 01 Miia: Eihän tää o yhtän hassumpaa tai sem[motto,  
NEG-CLI this is at.all funnier or such  
This isn't actually bad at all or kind of,
- 02 Satu: [Ei:  
[No:
- 03 tää hassumpaa.=hintans väärtti. mum miälest  
this funnier price-POS worth. my mind-ELA  
this isn't bad.=worth the price. in my mind
- 04 tää o iha::, maistuu hyvält mut, mä en kyl  
this is quite tastes good but I NEG-SG1 PRT  
this is qui::te, tastes good but, I simply don't
- 05 maista nii sillai mittää,=  
taste PRT like.that anything  
taste like anything,=
- 06 Miia: =Joo.=  
=Yeah.=
- 07 Satu: =.nfff=
- 08 Miia: → =>Tää o iha< hintans väärtti.=  
this is PRT price-POS worth  
=>This is well< worth the price.=
- 09 Satu: → =O::n:. eikä tää o nii väkevääkää. mä luuli  
is NEG-CLI this is so strong-CLI I thought  
=O::n:. and it isn't so strong either. I thought
- 10 et se vois olis voinu olla väkevää.  
that it could be-SUBJ can-PPC be strong  
that it could have perhaps been strong.
- 11 (0.4)
- 12 Miia: Mä olisi luullu et tää maistuu iha °venäläiselt  
I be-SUBJ think that this tastes just Russian  
I would have thought that this tastes just like °Russian

- 13            tupakalt°.=mut ei tää mittää. .hh Mikä tän nimi o.  
 tobacco but not this anything what this-GEN name is  
 tobacco°.=but it doesn't. .hh What's this called.

The verb repeat in line 9 constructs the response as maximally responsive and as aligning with the co-participant's assessment: the ellipsis leaves both the subject *tää* and the assessment terms intact. The utterance is pronounced with a lengthening of its initial sound (marked with colons) and a pitch curve up during it (marked with an underlining). Our intuition is that these prosodic features make the agreement more independent from the co-participant's prior assessment than what the verbal construction, the verb repeat, suggests<sup>7</sup>. This implication, conveyed by the prosody, is here associated with the fact that the assessment presented by Miia in line 8 is a recycling of what the speaker of the verb repeat herself, Satu, had said in line 3 (*hintans väärtti* 'worth the price'). After the agreement Satu provides another assessment, marked as an addition (*ei-kä*, 'and not', literally 'not-and'), which continues the line of positively assessing the cigarettes. This continuation thus sustains the force of the prior agreement.

The following example from a hair salon is a more complex case. In lines 8–9 the hairdresser evaluates the benefits of being tidy from the point of view of a customer service professional. This assessment gets a verb repeat as its response by the client in line 10.

(6) [SKK/SG 108 A: 28–30]

- 01 H:            .hh Kyllä (.) minum mielestä että< sinäkit teet  
                   PRT     my     mind     that you-CLI do-SG2  
                   .hh Really (.) in my mind so< you as well do
- 02            niim pitkää tota m työpäivää. nii,  
                   SO long-PAR PRT work.day-PAR SO  
                   such a long er m working day so,
- 03 Cli:            krhh [krhm     ]
- 04 H:            [Täytyy sitä] jotain iloja itselle olla että=  
                   [must PRT] some joys- PAR oneself-ALL be PRT  
                   [There must be some joys to oneself so=
- 05 Cli:            =Ky:llä,  
                   =Su:re
- 06 H:            .hh Et laittaa edes itsensä sitte ja;  
                   PRT makes at.least oneself then and  
                   .hh So that one at least grooms oneself and;
- 07            (.)
- 08 H: →        .hh On se m- ↑mukavampi ottaa asiakkaita  
                   is it pleasant-COMP take clients- PAR  
                   .hh It is m- more ↑pleasant to receive clients

7 As there is, unfortunately, no research as yet on the interactional relevance of phoneme lengthening in Finnish, we offer our interpretation as a hypothesis to be tested by later work.

- 09 → **vastaan että tietää ett\_on siis [ti. ]**  
 on PRT knows that is ti[dy ]  
 when one knows one is ti:dy. ]
- 10 Cli: → [O::n,] ky:llä m<sub>um</sub> mielestä  
 [is ] PRT my mind-ELA  
 [O::n,] in my opinion
- 11 pitäs kaikkien tommoset jotk\_on .hh asiakaspalvelus  
 should all-GEN those who is customer.service-INE  
 all those who work.hh in customer service should
- 12 niin täytys tosiaa vähä .hh vähä niinku katsoo että,  
 so should indeed a.little a.little like watch that  
 they should indeed a little .hh a little bit sort of see
- 13 minkä näköne sitä on.  
 what look.like PRT is  
 to the way they look like.
- 14 H: .mthh M<sub>inum</sub> mielestä että m:, jos laittaa vaikka kuinka  
 my mind-ELA so if puts however  
 .mthh In my opinion m:, if one uses however
- 15 kauniin meikin? .hh hh et se voi olla todella  
 beautiful- ACC makeup- ACC so it can be really  
 beautiful makeup? .hh hh so that it can be really
- 16 kaunis mutta (.) hiukset likasena roikkuu  
 beautiful but hair-PL dirty-ESS hangs  
 beautiful but (.) the hair is hanging dirty
- 17 [ku (.) tuotam] (.) kasvojen (.) .hhhh kasvoja  
 [like PRT ] face-PL-GEN face-PL-PAR  
 [like (.) well ] (.) face (.) .hhh against
- 18 Cli: [Nii-i, ]
- 19 H: vasten ni ↑ejj\_oo kyllä siistin °näkö [ne°. ]  
 against so NEG is PRT tidy looking ]  
 the face so one simply ↑doesn't °look tidy°.]
- 20 Cli: [ Ei: ]:j\_oo  
 [ NEG is  
 [No:: one doesn't.
- 21 [(ei) kyllä ne hiukset] merkkää [pal]jo.  
 [NEG PRT the hair-PL ] matters [much  
 [ but the hair really] does matter [a lot.
- 22 H: [>Että .hh< ] [e  
 [>So .hh< ] [er

- 23 H: Mut h<sub>i</sub>ukset jos on s<sub>i</sub>jistit ni .hh e voi olla vaikka ilmam  
 but hair-PL if is tidy PRT can be even without  
 But if the hair is tidy then .hh e one can even be without
- 24 mitääm meikkiä sitten °että°,  
 any make-up then °so°,

The assessment in lines 8–9 is part of a longer segment of talk in which the hairdresser has praised the client as an ideal one because she visits the salon once a week. They have then disapprovingly discussed women who have their hair done only twice a year (data not shown). Before the segment above, the client advocated regular visits, using herself as an example and portraying herself in the role of a customer service professional (she is a kiosk keeper). From talking about the client, the hairdresser subsequently takes the talk to a more general level (cf. the generically formed statements in lines 4 and 6)<sup>8</sup>. The assessment stays on a general level, thereby possibly suggesting a closure of the topic (cf. e.g. Goodwin & Goodwin 1992; on assessments as closing implicative, see also Jefferson 1993).

By responding with a verb repeat (line 10), the client asserts that she shares the stance expressed in the assessment. However, unlike in the previous example, a continuation by the speaker here implies at first sight a competition over rights to assess the matter at hand (cf. Heritage 2002). Most clearly this is due to the epistemic phrase *mum mielestä* ‘in my mind’ (line 10) which invokes the existence of other opinions (cf. Rauniomaa 2007), and the adverb *tosiaan* ‘indeed’ (line 12), which implies that the speaker is restating her prior stance. Furthermore, while the hairdresser took the perspective of the feelings of a customer servant herself, the client views tidy looks as a general requirement for any customer servant (cf. the verbs *pitäs* and *täytyy* ‘should’, lines 11 and 12). Thus, while she provided unconditional agreement with the verb repeat, with the elaboration she presents herself as the participant who has the primary rights to assess the issue at hand.

The elements that seemingly invoke contrast and competition get, however, their specific meaning from the larger activity. They continue to reinforce the participants’ joint disagreement with and disapproval of women who visit the hair salon too infrequently. With her response, the client, a customer service professional herself, teams up with the hairdresser against those women. She affiliates with the hair dresser who needs regular customers to make her living. In her response starting in line 14 the hairdresser continues the argument against the imaginary non-ideal customers, getting agreeing responses from the client (lines 18 and 20).

Across contexts, then, the single verb implies unproblematic and unconditional agreement with the prior assessment. It may be offered as a turn and action of its own, for example when orienting to a larger, still incomplete activity. When the single verb speaker proceeds into further talk in the same turn, the continuation expresses alignment with the prior turn even when this might not be the case on the face of it. The prosodic details of the response act as further contextualization cues.

8 A noteworthy feature of this segment (lines 14–24) is that, apart from the expression *minun mielestä* ‘in my opinion’, the speakers stay on the generic level through the use of the generic zero person (Laitinen 2006). With this device, a speaker may be interpreted as either speaking about and for herself or as referring to some category – in this case, to women – in general.

Our observations suggest that the lengthening of the initial sound of the response may be used to allude that the prior assessment was already stated (example 5) or assumed (example 6) in the preceding talk.

### *Double verb repeat as a response*

Recipients have the choice of not only repeating the verb once but doing it twice. We will call this response type a double verb construction as the repetition is done in one prosodic unit. Reduplicating a word has been interpreted as having a ‘diagrammatically’ iconic relation to the intensity of the expression (cf. English *far far* away, see Quirk et al. 1985: 970; also Lindström 1999: 45–47).<sup>9</sup> Does this interpretation hold for the Finnish double verb construction, as well, we may ask.

One sequential context where the double verb construction tends to occur is where the prior assessment is formulated as self-evident, presented as holding true without doubt. The double verb construction picks up this intensity of the prior assessment and agrees with it. In the following extract, the recipient responds (line 8) with a double verb construction to an utterance that is constructed as a proverbial formula. Two colleagues are talking about an unfavourable newspaper review on a musical performance organized by Anu’s office. Eva has just seen the review and mentioned it to Anu, who has not yet seen it.

(7) [SKK/Sg 212 A08]

- 01 Eva: Ni tota: (.) et nyt (.) et tota\_noi täähän nyt ei  
 PRT PRT SO NOW SO PRT\_PRT this-CLI NOW NEG  
 So uh: (.) so now (.) so um well this y’know doesn’t
- 02 oikee täs niinku (.) o- näytäkää hyvältä.=Et mitäs täs  
 quite here like seem-CLI good so what-CLI here  
 look sort of (.) a- good actually.=So what
- 03 nyt oikee oisi (---)  
 now in.fact be-SUBJ  
 could this in fact be (---)
- 04 ((disturbance in the tape))
- 05 Anu: No <@MIKä:s nirppanokka siellä ny sitten on.@>  
 PRT what-CLI nitpicking.nose there PRT then is  
 Well <@What kind of a nit-picker is that one over there now@.
- 06 Eva: thehh
- 07 Anu: → **No: tietys↑ti makuja on mon[ja mut et]**  
 PRT of.course taste-PL-PAR is many- PL-PAR but so]  
**Well of course each to his taste but ]**

9 A straightforwardly iconic relationship prevails between a word repetition and the quantity of a referent, while diagrammatic iconicity holds in cases where there is a less direct relationship between the phenomenon described and the repeated element.

- 08 Eva: → [O::n on. ]  
[is is ]
- 09 Anu: .hh mutta tuota (.) kyllähän se nyt (2.0) kaikki ei oo  
but PRT PRT-CLI it now all NEG is  
.hh but uh (.) surely it (2.0) not everyone is necessarily
- 10 välttämättä aina tulkinnoist samaa mieltä.=  
necessarily always interpretations-ELA same-PAR mind-PAR  
always of the same opinion about the interpretations.=
- 11 =[Mut ei si- (.) ] voi niinku ihan vaisuks sanoo suorastaa  
[but NEG it can like quite dull-TRA say simply  
=[But you simply cannot call it quite dull
- 12 Eva: =[Nj:, näin o. ]  
=[Yeah, so it is. ]

The assessment to which the double verb responds is a highly conventionalized, proverbial type of utterance which implies that the tone of a review is a result of matters of taste (line 7). On one level the utterance acknowledges the possibility of different kinds of review and in this way legitimates the review in question. On the other hand, the adverb *tietysti* ‘of course’ corroborates the self-evidentiality of the proposition and in so doing treats the review as not to be taken too seriously – it devaluates its import. The self-evidentiality is reinforced through the stylized prosodic ‘no news’ contour with which the utterance is said (Ogden, Hakulinen and Tainio 2005).

Slightly after the first syllable of the word *monia* ‘many’ (line 7) that forms a possible completion of the assessment, the recipient responds with the double verb construction. Through this response type, she matches her response to the intensity of the prior assessment. We would like to claim that the prosody of the response – the accentuation of the second verb in particular – works towards the same effect. The double verb construction picks up the taken-for-granted character of the preceding assessment and in that way expresses a strong display of agreement. In so doing the recipient shows that she is on the side of her colleague who has just received bad news. In overlap with her response, the co-participant proceeds to continue her turn in the same vein.

Incontestable assessments, such as those which take the form of a proverbial formula, are one type of turn that gets the double verb construction as the agreeing response. Assessments may also contain other elements that invite a strong display of agreement. In the following extract from a phone call between two sisters, the double verb construction is given as a response to an assessment with which the co-participant explicates the complaint she has previously hinted at (lines 3–4). In addition to the choice of the assessment term (*tymppeetä* ‘disgusting’), the utterance contains other elements that appeal to strong agreement (the zero person, the clitic particle *-hän*, which implies shared knowledge, and the understatement *vähän* ‘a little’).

## (8) [SKK/SG 074: 14–15]

- 01 Jaana: Voi:: hyvä ihme.  
Oh my god,
- 02 (.)
- 03 Mervi: Muuten myö tässä just suunniteltti että .hhh että  
by.the.way we here just planned that that  
By the way we were just plotting here that .hhh
- 04 mitenkähä tuossa kävis jos jättäs vaa (.)  
how-CLI-CLI there go-SUBJ if leave-SUBJ just  
what would happen if one left (.)
- 05 nui:npaha maksamatta sen asuntolainan  
so-CLI-CLI paying.without the-ACC housing.loan-ACC  
the housing loan unpaid just like that
- 06 se o .hh kato siihen a:suntoo sidoksissa se laena .hh  
it is see it-ILL flat-ILL tied the loan  
it is .hh you see tied to the fla:t the loan. .hh
- 07 Että mäniskö se asunto voan sii:nä °että.° käviskö  
PRT go-SUBJ-Q the flat just there PRT go-SUBJ-Q  
So would the flat just be lost in that way °so°. could
- 08 siinä sen hassum(h)mi .hhh he [h .hhh  
there that.GEN funnily.COMP [h .hhh  
things go any m(h)ore wrong .hhh he[h .hhh
- 09 Jaana: [hhh
- 10 Mervi: S(h)e meijjän puolesta sais kyllä sen  
it our side-ELA could sure it-ACC  
A(h)s far as we are concerned it
- 11 Mervi: [(laettoa siitä lopulta) sen asunnon,]  
[put there.ELA finally that-ACC flat-ACC ]  
[could be put for sale in the end the flat, ]
- 12 Jaana: [hy hy hy hy hy hy hy ]
- 13 Jaana: .hhh °hi hih° .hhh Hm::.. °.mt°=
- 14 Mervi: → =**Ku vähähä tuo on tymppeetä kyllä makssoo hn .hh**  
as little-CLI that is disgusting sure pay  
=As it is a bit sickening indeed to be paying hgh .hh
- 15 (0.2)
- 16 Jaana: → **No o::n on °äh°**  
PRT is is

- 17 (2.3)
- 18 Jaana: Hmh
- 19 Mervi: Pittää melekkeen käövä jossai #y# (1.1)  
must almost visit somewhere  
Must almost pay a visit to somewhere #er# (1.1)
- 20 tuolla< (0.3) kunna<# (.) asuntoneuvoja  
there community-GEN housing.adviser-GEN  
there< (0.3) to the community housing adviser's and
- 21 j- juttu<sup>o</sup>silla ja kysyä [(siltä kaikkee)  
talking and ask [her-ABL all-PRT  
ask her about everything
- 22 Jaana: [Nii: muute kannattas.  
[PRT by.the.way is.worth-SUBJ  
[Yeah it would be worth it
- 23 Mervi?: .hh[hh
- 24 Jaana?: [.hhh
- 25 (.)
- 26 Jaana: Mm:: Mut toisaalta ni .hhh kaheksa vuotta o  
PRT but on.the.other.hand PRT eight years is  
Mm:: But on the other hand .hh eight years is
- 27 loppujel lopuks aika lyhyt aika ihmiselämässä että mhh  
after.all rather short time human.being.life PRT  
after all a rather short time in life so mhh

The double verb construction in line 16 receives the prior turn as one that made a strong display of agreement relevant. It treats the assessment and the complaint expressed through it as self-evident and legitimate, affiliating with the co-participant. The turn is prefaced with the particle *no* which is, we suggest, at this place hearable as corroborating the ‘of courseness’ of the matter at hand.

The double verb response is followed by a long silence (line 17). By remaining silent the assessment speaker may treat the double verb construction as an insufficient response. The response speaker, on the other hand, may imply the relevance of further talk by her co-participant. In the ensuing talk, the assessment speaker first treats her earlier thought as non-serious by presenting other plans for solving her problem (lines 19–21). To that she gets an agreement from the recipient (line 22). A little later the recipient expresses an alternative view showing thereby her disagreeing stance towards the plan of stopping the payment (lines 26–27).

The intensity indexed by the double verb construction may also be deployed in contexts where there is clear disagreement going on between the participants. In those cases it can treat the prior turn as self-evident in the sense that the prior turn does not count as an argument in the controversy. This is what happens in the following extract. Reijo and his family are moving to the countryside and he

has just described the emptying of the old house as exhausting. As a response to Reijo's idiom-like statement (lines 1–2), the co-participant Aune, a colleague, first offers a change-of-state token (line 3) and then presents an assessment (line 6) which is constructed as a generic, incontestable statement. Both of these responses imply her disagreement with Reijo.

(9) [SKK/SG 098 B]

01 Reijo: .hhh ↓Kyl sen<sub>n</sub>in on et ei täs elämäs mittään  
 .hhh PRT it so is that not 0 this-INE life-INE anything  
 .hhh ↓It is definitely so that you get nothing in life

02 saa jos nyt yhteen tont<sub>t</sub>tiin juuttuu. .hh[h<  
 gets if PRT one-ILL lot-ILL 0 gets.stuck  
 if you stick on to a piece of land. .hh[h<

03 Aune: [Ai jaha,  
 [Oh I see

04 Reijo: Nii:  
 PRT

05 (.)

06 Aune: → **Juu mutta uskollisuus on myöskin yks eöo arvo,**  
 PRT but loyalty is also one value  
**Yes but loyalty is also a er value,**

07 Reijo: → **#No o::n o:n [mut**  
 PRT is is [but

08 Aune: [Se oli niin kauheen kiva se teiän  
 [it was so awfully nice the your  
 [It was so awfully nice your

09 (.) tai se missä te vieläkin nyt (oote)  
 or the where you still now (are)  
 (.) or the one where you are still today.

By using the double verb construction, the speaker agrees with his co-participant to the extent that he picks up the general truth aspect of the utterance. He responds to and agrees with its 'of-courseness'. The double verb implies that what the co-participant said in her turn is so self-evident that it does not count in this dispute.

The double verb construction is followed, within the same prosodic unit, by the conjunction *mut* 'but', which projects disagreement to come. In overlap with the conjunction, however, the co-participant begins her turn which sequentially deletes the implications of the double verb. It ties back to its speaker's own prior turn, giving a reason for the loyalty in this particular case. In subsequent talk, the participants slowly move towards accepting each other's stance.

Compared to the single verb response, the double verb construction has a narrower range of possible sequential contexts of use. It is especially the design of



- 06 Anna: Joo:=  
Yeah:.=
- 07 Leila: Juu se kuulosti niin ihanalta että ihmiset .hhh  
PRT it sounded so lovely that people  
Yes it sounded so lovely that people .hhh
- 08 → se on kyllä kiva mahdollisuu:s.  
it is PRT nice opportunity  
It is a very nice opportunity:.
- 09 Anna: → On se.= Vaikka kamalasti se siellä itki ku  
is it although terribly she there cried when  
On se.=Although she did cry a lot there when
- 10 pari ensimmäistä kertaa soitin.h  
a.couple first-PAR time-PAR called-SG1  
I called her the first couple of times.h
- 11 Leila: °Ai jaa:°  
°Oh I see°
- 12 Anna: #Tietysti.h on se i[so muutos#] °(ja)°.  
of.course is it big change and  
#Of course.h it is a [big change# °(and)°
- 13 Leila: [Nji:: ]  
[ PRT ]
- 14 Leila: .hh No nji:n se on nyt tiet'sti ku on  
PRT PRT it is now of.course as is  
.hh Well so it is 'f course being
- 15 kaukana #pois koto-o ni#,  
far away home-PAR PRT  
far #away from home so#,
- 16 Anna: Joo:.  
PRT
- 17 Leila: Joo eihän sille mitään keljua  
PRT NEG-CLI she-ALL any nasty-PAR  
Yeah nothing nasty
- 18 #ollu sattunu#.  
was-PPC happen-PPC  
had happened to her I guess.

The assessment in line 8 is offered in the midst of going through arrangements for a birthday party of a mutual friend. It is produced at a point where a segment of talk involving Anna's daughter's return home after a school visit in Spain has come to a possible completion. The recipient first begins a positive generalized assessment on the daughter's trip (line 7), marking her secondary access to the

topic with the verb *kuulosti* ‘sounded’, but the utterance is left unfinished. She then produces another generalizing assessment in line 8.

The VS response (line 9) asserts agreement with the prior assessment, that is, it agrees with the stance that going abroad during the school term is a nice opportunity. From the agreement Anna moves on to qualify her agreement with a concessive clause (cf. *vaikka* ‘although’). She reports her daughter’s unhappiness in the beginning of the visit, opening up a possible place for troubles talk. In so doing, she displays that she has more immediate access to the subject matter than what is reflected in the generic assessment by her co-participant. In this case, by using the VS response, the better informed participant implicates the possibility of further talk while asserting agreement on a generic level.

When the object of evaluation is equally accessible to both participants, the use of a VS response may seem to run against the implication of a difference in the perspectives. In the following example the VS response occurs as part of discussing the weather.

## (11) [SKK/Sg01 B03, 8–9]

- 01 Leila: Minkälainen sää teillä nyt on.=  
 what.kind weather YOU.PL-ADE now is  
 What kind of weather do you have now.=
- 02 Anna: =.hh Tänään on kaunista. ihan kirkas taivas  
 today is beautiful just bright sky  
 =.hh Today it is beautiful. there is quite
- 03 näkyy olevan tuol[la.hh  
 seems be there  
 a clear sky over th[ere .hh
- 04 Leila: [Niin e niin täälläki ja  
 [so here-CLI and  
 [So er so it is here as well
- 05 niin komee ruska että .hh[h  
 so handsome autumn.colouring that  
 and such a fine autumn colouring that .hh[h
- 06 Anna: [JOO:.hh
- 07 (.)
- 08 Leila: että nyt:hän siellä  
 that now-CLI there  
 that now: it (would)
- 09 [(-)(-)(-), ]
- 10 Anna: [Nyt kelpais olla]k[i. Mut kyllä sie]l on  
 [now be.worth-SUBJ be-CLI but PRT there is  
 [Now it would be worth while. But it is really

- 11 Leila: [Ai(-) ]  
[Oh (-) ]
- 12 Anna: ihanaa heti kun ei sada.  
lovely as.soon.as NEG rain  
lovely there as soon as it's not raining
- 13 Leila: ↑Nii, [Joo,  
Right. [Yeah.
- 14 Anna: → [.**hh** **Kyl se on: syksy on niin**  
[ PRT it is autumn is so  
[.**hh** It really is: the autumn is so
- 15 **mahdottoman kaunis. [h**  
impossibly beautiful  
extremely beautiful. [h
- 16 Leila: → [**On se.=**  
[is it
- 17 Anna: = .Jo[o  
= .Ye[ah.
- 18 Leila: [>Kyllä mä vi- ei viikonloppuna menen< .hhh  
PRT I NEG week.end go-SG1  
[>I'm certainly wee- at the weekend I'm going< .hhh
- 19 mä meen kans t- kääntää ↑maat ja .hh laittamaan  
I go-SG1 also turn soil-PL and put  
I'm also going to dig the land over and .hh put
- 20 kuntoon varmuuden vuoks kaikki jos (.) jos  
order-ILL safety-GEN for.sake all if if  
everything in shape to be on the safe side if (.) if
- 21 sitte ei tuu enää <sup>o</sup>mennyks<sup>o</sup>.  
then NEG come more GO-PPC-TRA  
one doesn't then happen to go there anymore.

The segment was preceded by talk about Leila's summer cottage which Anna had checked out while visiting hers during the weekend. Lines 8–12 refer to the circumstances at the cottage. The assessment in lines 14–15 moves the talk into autumn weather in general. This generalization can be heard as closing implicative (cf. Goodwin & Goodwin 1992: 162). Nonetheless, it receives a VS response which foreshadows further talk by suggesting that the participants have different perspectives on the topic being discussed.

The ensuing talk explicates the difference in the perspectives. In overlap with a further closing-implicative turn by Anna (an inhaled response token *.joo*, cf. Hakulinen 1993) in line 18, Leila moves back to the topic of her summer cottage: she takes up her plan to visit her cottage the following weekend. This talk subsequently leads into troubles-telling; it turns out that Leila has considered

selling her cottage. The implication conveyed by the VS formatted response was thus deployed by the recipient as a way of constructing a bridge from the joint talk about the weather to her own but related talk about giving up her summer place.

In some cases, the difference in the perspectives implied by the VS response does not get explicated in subsequent talk. In the following extract from a social insurance office, the difference is associated with the institutional roles and tasks of the participants, the official and the client. In the segment the official responds with a VS formatted turn (line 10) to an assessment by a client who has come to ask whether he should pay back some of his study grant. He has earned too much in his part-time work to be eligible for the whole amount of grant that he received.

(12) [Kotus, T1000:2-3, social insurance office, Helsinki]

- 01 Off : Paljokos sulla on ollu niitä tuloja.  
 how-Q-CLI YOU-ADE is be-PPC those income-PL-PAR  
 How much income have you had.
- 02 Cli: No mull on olluk kahheksantoistuhatta et  
 PRT I-ADE is been eighteen-thousand PRT  
 Well I have had eighteen thousand so
- 03 seittämäntoistuhatta seittämäsataa.  
seventeen thousand seven hundred.
- 04 (.)
- 05 Off : Joo katotaa (hetki).  
 PRT look-PAS moment  
 Yeah let's have a look (a moment).
- 06 (2.0) OFFICIAL TAKES A PRINTOUT FROM THE PRINTER
- 07 Off : Mä otan tom päätöksen tosta samalla mä  
 I take-SG1 the decision-ACC that-ELA same-ADE I  
 I'll take the decision from there while I'm
- 08 TAKES A PAPER FROM THE PRINTER  
 [haen sen. ]  
 [fetch-SG1 it-ACC ]  
 [fetching it ]
- 09 Cli: → [ **Se ov vä]hä hankala arvioida etukätee.**  
 [ it is a.little difficult estimate 0 beforehand  
 [ **It is a bi]t difficult to estimate them beforehand.**
- 10 Off: → **Q:n ne. joo; se o ihan totta.**  
 is they PRT it is quite true  
**Q:n ne. ye:s, it's quite true.**
- 11Cli: → Tuntilaisena teen.  
 hour.worker-ESS do-SG1  
 I do ((the work)) as an hourly worker.

- 12 Off: ((clears throat:)) krhrr
- 13 (2.0) OFFICIAL READS THE TEXT ON THE COMPUTER SCREEN
- 14 Cli : °Joo°  
°Yeah°
- 15 (0.2) OFFICIAL READS THE TEXT ON THE COMPUTER SCREEN
- 16 Off : .mt Eli kakstuhatta↑kaks: on tulluv valvonta,  
PRT two-thousand-two is come-PPC control  
.tch So two thousand and ↑two: there's been a control,

The primary function of the assessing utterance in line 9 is an account: the client provides his reason for the need to pay back some of the allowance. The utterance does not contain any explicit person reference forms referring to the client himself, but is formed with a zero person format (Hakulinen 1987; Laitinen 2006). Through it, the account is constructed as generic. This invites the official to display affiliation with the client and in this way show her acceptance of the account (cf. Sorjonen 2001: 131–140). By responding with a repeat of the copula verb *o:n*, followed by the subject pronoun *ne* ‘they’ (line 10),<sup>11</sup> the official treats the turn as one that sought agreement.

This response type used by the official implies that their perspectives on the issue are different. While the client presented his evaluation as someone who is expected to have correctly estimated his income, the official’s choice of response is understood to be based on the experience she has gained in her job, dealing with other clients in a similar position. This difference in experience is treated as a matter of course – it is not explicated by the official. Instead, after her assertion of agreement, the official proceeds to corroborate the truthfulness of the client’s statement (*se o ihan totta* ‘it’s quite true’, line 10). With her turn, the official legitimates her client’s account and as if absolves him from his sins, thereby also orienting to the primary function of the client’s turn as an account. The prosody of the repeated verb – it is accented and lengthened –, we suggest, contributes to the assuring function of the response.

What we have seen is that the VS response, while asserting agreement, conveys an implication of a difference in the speakers’ perspectives to the assessable. It may be due to the difference in the degree of the participants’ knowledge about the issue, the difference in their epistemic position (mother of a child vs. acquaintance). In institutional encounters the participants are differently positioned in terms of their experience of the tasks at hand, and a difference of this kind can be treated as a matter of course. Alternatively, the difference may arise from the type of current relevance the topic may have to them (e.g. the plan of selling one’s summer cottage being activated by the talk about autumn weather).

11 The antecedent to the plural pronoun *ne* is found in line 1, *niitä tuloja* ‘the income’, which is plural in Finnish. In line 9, the reference to the income is achieved with a zero anaphora object, marked with a 0-sign in the English gloss.

*Response with verb and response particle*

The responses discussed so far have either consisted of a repetition of the finite verb only or contained a repetition of the finite verb followed by the subject. Yet another response type is one in which a repetition of the finite verb is followed by the response particle *joo* in the same prosodic unit. In its usages *joo* resembles, for example, the Swedish or German *ja* and the English *yeah*. To the agreement, the particle brings along an implication of the closing relevance of the topic. The preceding assessment itself may have been closing implicative, in which case the recipient aligns with the assessment. The response may also treat the assessment as an action that, in one way or another, has departed from the main line of talk. In that case it displays reluctance to proceed in the new line of talk.

In the next example, [V + *joo*] (line 18) is offered as a response to an assessment that occurs as the final TCU of a re-topicalising turn by the co-participant. Pekka is telling Antti about a trip to Lapland with his friends where they had stayed overnight in cold winter conditions. Earlier in the conversation he mentioned that they were given a chance to stay at a hut which was heated with an oil stove. The kind of heating was treated by Antti as newsworthy and special. In line 16 he re-topicalises the heating system and evaluates it (lines 16–17). In so doing he displays his continued interest in the matter and offers Pekka an opportunity to elaborate on it.

(13) [SKK/SG 094 B2: 7–8]

01 Antti: Olik<sup>s</sup> se< sitte pitkällä siitä Rastekaisest se hytti.  
be-Q-CLI it then far it.from name.of.hill-ELA the hut  
Was it< then far from Rastekaise (=mountain) the cabin.

02 (1.0)

03 Pekka: .mt Se on joku semmonen ne:ljä kilsaa eteenpäin.=  
it is some such four kilometres forward  
.tch It is some roughly four kilometers further.=

04 =Se on niinku länteenpäin<sup>o</sup> siitä.  
it is like westward it.from  
=It is like to the west<sup>o</sup> of it.

05 Antti: <Aj: jaha [joo: ]  
<Oh I see yeah: ]

06 Pekka: [E:ka iso jä]rvi mikä on e sil:lä puolel  
[first big lake that is the-ADE side-ADE  
[The first big lake on e that side which uh empties

07 mikä uh laskee sinne suoraan Jää:mereen ettei  
which empties there.to straight ice.sea-ILL not-that  
straight into the Arctic ocean so it doesn't

08 tuu Tenon kautta.=  
come river.name-GEN via  
run via the Teno.

- 09 Antti: =Niin nii joo. ʔoo:;=
- PRT PRT PRT PRT
- 10 Pekka: =(Et) se menee se kynnys just siinä sen .hhh
- PRT it goes the sill just there the-GEN
- =(So) it goes the sill just there between .hhh
- 11 niitten kahen (.) Keinokaisan ja
- those-GEN two-GEN name.of.mountain-GEN and
- those two (.) Keinokaisa and
- 12 Rastikaisan välissä,h
- name.of.mountain-GEN between
- Rastikaisa.
- 13 (0.5)
- 14 Antti: Yy:,
- PRT
- 15 (.)
- 16 Antti: .nhh ʔoo:, .mth (.) ↑Ai siel ol' oikeen löpökamina.
- PRT PRT there was true oil.stove
- .nhh ʔoo:, .mth (.) ↑So there was a real oil stove.
- 17 → **Sehän oli hieno homma.=**
- that-CLI was fine business
- Now that was something.=**
- 18 Pekka: → =mt **Oli joo.**
- was yes
- 19 (0.6)
- 20 Antti: Ne oli iha ö ((ähkäisten:)) s:opusia veikkoja nää,
- they was quite agreeable-PAR fellows-PAR these
- They were quite er ((groaning:)) agree:able fellows these (ones)
- 21 Pekka: **nO:li oli** Me ku (.) käyttii jossa' ku (.)
- was was we when went somewhere when
- nO:li oli** When we (.) went somewhere when (.)
- 22 päästiin sinne k- ensi sillä kelkalla oli se .hhh ukko
- got there first the-ADE sleigh- ADE was the old.man
- we got there at first with the sleigh the old man was
- 23 jo tarjoom's meille viskipaukkuja jahh k(h)uuma
- already offer we-ALL whisky.shots and hot
- already offering us whisky shots andhh ho(h)t
- 23 ʔvettä ku tultiin perille heh heh heh
- water when arrived.there
- water when we arrived there heh heh heh

The assessment gets a [V+*joo*] response from Pekka (line 18). With this response he, while asserting agreement with the assessment, implies that there is nothing to add to what he had said earlier. The response may orient to the lateness of the assessment within the conversation, treating it as a misplaced action. The prosodic composition stands in an iconic relation to the implication of the verbal design of the turn. The prosody is flat, which adds a nonchalant flavour to the response.

While the [V + *joo*] response implies a closure of the topic, Pekka does not take the initiative to move on to a new topic nor to the closure of the call. In this way he transfers the turn and the responsibility for the continuation of the talk to Antti. After a silence (line 19), Antti asks a question about a different aspect of the trip, thereby displaying an orientation to the closing implicative character of Pekka's response.

In the next extract the speaker responds with the [V + *joo*] utterance (line 20) to her recipient's assessment which is hearable as closing implicative. Arja has been telling the latest news about a mutual friend who had bad luck with people to whom she sublet her rental apartment (line 9). The new tenants who have just moved in have complained about the uncleanliness of the apartment and the lack of extra keys.

## (14) [SKK/SG S08A01]

- 01 Arja: Ja Soili pelkää että (.) et se (.) tulee loppujel lopuks  
and Iname<sub>F</sub> is.afraid that that it comes ends-GEN end-TRA  
And Soili is afraid that (.) that it (.) will in the end come to her
- 02 hänelle kuitenkin se v- se ↑availlaskuki ja .hh sill\_ ov viissataa  
she-ALL after.all the the key.bil-CLI and she-ADE is five.hundred  
after all the r- ↑the bill for the key and .hh she has five hundred
- 03 markkaa sisällä sitäp (0.3) panttia siel[lä (avaimmatil)la]  
marks inside the.PAR deposit-PAR there key.man-ADE  
marks as a (0.3) deposit the[re at (the key man ) ]
- 04 Jaana: [Joo joo. ]
- 05 että hän ei saa sitä ulos.=  
PRT she NEG get it out  
and she won't get it out.=
- 06 Jaana: =Joo,
- 07 Arja: .hhh h (0.2) lik lak hhhh
- 08 Jaana: Hm.
- 09 Arja: Tyhmät a(h)livuo(h)kra(h)laiset.  
Stupid t(h)en(h)ants.
- 10 Jaana: No o:li °kyl°.  
Well they were °indeed°.

- 11 Arja: Ja inhottavat noi .hh ettei ne nyt sitte< .hh (0.3)  
and disgusting like that-NEG they now then  
And disgusting .hh in that they then< .hh hadn't at all tried to
- 12 ollu yhtää viittiny ottaa selville mikä juttu se on  
were at.all bother-PPC take clear what business it is  
find out what the thing was
- 13 että minkä [takii, ]  
PRT what for  
or what [ for ]
- 14 Jaana: [Mm:, ]
- 15 Arja: missä se toinen avain on, ja että olisko sinne,  
where the other key is and PRT be-SUBJ-Q there.to  
where the other key is, and if there
- 16 joku tulossa siivoamaan ja .hh ja muuta.hh  
somebody coming cleaning-ILL and and other  
was someone coming to clean up and .hh and all that.hh.
- 17 Jaana: Joo. Hm.  
Yeah. Hm.
- 18 (1.1)
- 19 Jaana: → **On siinki jotai oikei mänttipäitä.**  
is there-CLI some real jerk-PL-PAR  
What real jerks those guys are.
- 20 Arja: → **On joo.**  
is yes
- 21 (0.8)
- 22 Arja: lik lak, .hhh Mut Soili om päättäny vaa että hän ei  
but InameF is decided only that she NEG  
lik lak, .hhh But Soili has simply decided that she is not
- 23 mitä laskua maksa m- eikä ja< se poika lähetti  
any-PAR bill-PAR pay not-and and the boy sent  
going to pay any bill b- and not and< you see the boy
- 24 taas n'm'ttäin ...  
again namely  
again sent ...

The placement and the design of the assessment (line 19) that gets the [V + joo] response imply a closure of the topic. The recipient of the telling produces this assessment at a place where the teller has pursued an affiliating response by detailing the actions by the new tenants. Having only received a minimal, non-affiliative response (line 17), she remains silent (line 18). Thus the assessment

has a delayed character. It is verb-initial, and it takes the form of a conventional utterance for doing a generalized assessment. Through the pro-form *siinki* ‘there too’ the speaker distances herself from the object of evaluation. By designing her assessment in this way, the recipient of the telling also implies a closure of the topic.

With the *on joo* response, the teller both asserts agreement with the assessment and aligns with its implication of closing down the topic (line 20). However, by not continuing she leaves the responsibility of the continuation to her co-participant. As the recipient does not take up the talk, another lengthy silence follows (line 21). It gets broken by the main speaker who moves on to a new subtopic (prefaced by *mut* ‘but’), the mutual friend’s reaction to the demands of the new tenants (lines 22–24).

Among the alternative response types we have discussed, the [V + *joo*] format has a task of its own. While a verb repeat simply asserts agreement with the prior turn and the VS response implies a difference in the speakers’ perspectives to the assessable, the import of the turn-final particle *joo* to the agreement is topic closing, regardless of the sequential placement of the prior assessment.

### Conclusion

In this chapter we have discussed four response types in Finnish that all express agreement by repeating the finite verb of the co-participant’s prior assessment. In terms of their structure, they all agree by presenting a ‘same evaluation’. That is, through ellipsis, the response leaves the evaluative terms used by the co-participant intact. By virtue of their more detailed structure and their sequential placement, each of these four responses contextualises the ‘same evaluation’ differently, however.

The plain verb repeat (*on*) is an all-purpose response which merely asserts agreement, and there are no further implications encoded in it. In that sense its interpretation is most context-dependent: its interactional import, its role in the development of talk and its sufficiency as an agreement are specified in the particularities of the sequential context of its occurrence. When the verb is repeated twice (*on on*), the agreement is presented as strong: the reduplication brings intensity to the response. Often this expression of intensity is called for by something incontrovertible, highly emotional or beyond doubt expressed in the preceding assessment.

In the case of the VS response (*on se*), the verb is followed by an explicit subject pronoun. In a language like Finnish, where the subject is not an obligatory element in a clause, choosing a subject at a place where it could also be left out will no doubt carry special meaning. As an agreeing response to assessments, this fuller type of response conveys an implication of a difference in perspective or experience between the participants. What exactly this perspective is in any given instance, as well as whether it is spelled out or to be inferred, depends on the sequential context as well as on the specifics of the given participation framework.

The meaning of the Finnish VS response resembles in some respect what John Heritage has suggested regarding the *oh*-prefaced agreements to assessments in English. According to him, *oh*-prefacing is “a method persons use to index the

independence of their access and/or judgment in relation to the state of affairs under evaluation” (2002: 204). This function of *oh* rests on its more general ‘change of state’ semantics. Even though the issue of epistemic access and rights can be associated with the VS response, that is not the key issue with it – the difference in perspective can be specified in the ensuing talk in different ways. There is another response type in Finnish that more explicitly addresses the issue of epistemic independence than the VS response, one with the same elements but in the reverse order (*se on*). In a recent work we found (Sorjonen & Hakulinen 2009) that this utterance type may perform a double task: while claiming agreement with the prior speaker it also functions as a confirmation of the validity of the co-participant’s assessment by way of conveying the priority of access to the matter at hand.

Finally, the repetition of the finite verb can also form a construction with the response token *joo* (*on joo*). Here we have a format part of which (*joo*) is not repeated from the prior assessment. In several other activity contexts, the response particle *joo* has been found to be closure relevant (cf. Sorjonen 2001; Kangasharju 1998: 152–164; Routarinne 2003: 251–260). In combination with the verb repeat, it also implies a closure of the topic – in a way, it sets a full stop after the agreement expressed by the verb repeat.

Two typological features of Finnish turn out to be relevant in the formulation of utterance formats as means of agreement to assessments. First, Finnish is a language that has, from a grammatical point of view, ‘free word order’ (cf. Vilkuna 1989). This means that for example verb initiality can be deployed for a number of discourse purposes, one of them being the responding to questions, assessments and negative assertions. Secondly, in Finnish, a fully grammatical clause can be formed without an overt subject: with an anaphoric zero, a response is tied to the utterance of the prior speaker.

In previous work on English, the parameters shown to have relevance to the different response formats were the strength of the agreement (Pomerantz 1984) and the respective primacy of the access to the knowledge at hand (Heritage 2002; Heritage & Raymond 2005; Stivers 2005). The parameters we found to be relevant in the description of the agreeing responses in Finnish were the unconditionality of the agreement, the difference in the speakers’ perspectives, the self-evidential nature of the prior assessment, and the closing implicativeness of the response. Our work raises questions about languages which lack the grammatical resources made use of in Finnish: by what means do they convey similar or related implications? Furthermore, although there is no thoroughgoing work on similar phenomena in Estonian, a language closely related to Finnish, what we know at this stage is that while in Estonian responses to assessments may also be verb initial, the formats V, VS and SV are not deployed for this end.<sup>12</sup>

What we have found about responses to assessments can be set in a more general context of responsive utterances. In particular, there are parallels between responses to assessments and answers to polar questions. In the paradigm of positive answers to interrogatives, the verb repeat is a key response type (see

12 The main types consist of the verb plus one or more particles (e.g. *on jah* is PRT ‘yes it is’ ~ *on küll jah* is PRT PRT ‘it surely is yes’). We are grateful for Renate Pajusalu and Tiit Hennoste for discussing this matter with us, and for Tiit Hennoste for providing us Estonian data. The translations are, at this stage, approximate.

Sorjonen 2001a, b: 37–44). Furthermore, the reduplication of the finite verb seems to treat the question as irrelevant – as an action that makes the answer self-evident, or as something that has already been dealt with. Finally, the answer type [finite verb + *joo*] bears a similarity to its use in assessment contexts in that it is closing-implicative (Hakulinen 2001: 6–7). It remains to be shown whether the VS response, when used as a positive answer, is also related to the issue of primary epistemic authority.

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## Other-correction in everyday interaction: Some comparative aspects

### *Introduction*

In conversation analysis, repair organisation is seen as one of the central organisations of talk-in-interaction. The organisation of repair covers a wide variety of phenomena: self-initiated self-repair in different positions (see e.g., Schegloff 1979, 1997a; Fox, Hayashi & Jasperson 1996), word searches (e.g., Goodwin & Goodwin 1986; Kurhila 2003, 2006a), different forms of other-initiation of repair (e.g., Drew 1997; Egbert 1996, 2002; Schegloff 1997b, 2000; Selting 1996) and other-correction. The common denominator behind these forms of repair is that they are used to resolve interactional problems in speaking, hearing and understanding (Schegloff, Jefferson & Sacks 1977). Whereas the term ‘repair’ covers this large domain, ‘correction’ refers to a more specific action: dealing with an error during interaction (see e.g., SJS 1977: 362–363).

This chapter focuses on the analysis of other-corrections in Finnish everyday conversations, i.e. those occasions when a speaker corrects a factual error in another speaker’s talk. Extract (1) provides an illustration of this phenomenon. In line 1, Lotta speaks about video tapes she has just been looking at and claims that the duration of these tapes is thirty minutes. In her next turn (line 2) Milla corrects Lotta: she rejects Lotta’s description of the length (*ei oo* ‘no they aren’t’) and states then what she feels to be the correct length of the tape.

(1) [Girl scouts/face to face]

01 Lotta: *noi o kolmekymmene minuuti kasettei.*  
 those be thirty-GEN minute-GEN cassette-PL-PAR  
 those are thirty-minute tapes.

02 Milla: ***ei ook ku nää o neljäkymmene viie.***  
 NEG be PRT these be forty-GEN five-GEN  
 no they aren’t they are forty-five (minutes).

In her turn Milla simultaneously points out and corrects an error in Lotta’s talk. For the analyst, this error in Lotta’s talk is only available through Milla’s subsequent correction. This is typical of our data: the corrections are about factual information that the participants know about in their specific contexts. Consequently, we

approach error as an interactant's own categorisation: as something that the speakers themselves treat as an error by correcting them. In this article we focus on the linguistic construction of correction turns: we explore the ways corrections are constructed, describe what kind of variation the different constructions exhibit and analyse the kinds of factors that explain that variation. Thus, our analysis compares the different designs of other-correction. Other-correction in Finnish everyday conversations has not been studied before<sup>1</sup>.

Another comparative aspect in our study is cross-linguistic and -cultural. We will compare our findings with those presented in the studies on other-correction in conversations conducted in English. The basics of repair organisation were presented in the classic paper by Schegloff, Jefferson and Sacks (SJS 1977). The authors argued that there is a preference organisation in the repair system, the basic finding being that there is a preference for self-repair (and correction) over other-correction. That is, if a problem arises in a speaker's turn (e.g. an "error") it is preferred that the speaker herself corrects that problem. SJS provide several types of evidence for this preference. For instance, self-repair/correction is by far more common than other-correction. Furthermore, if there is a problem in a speaker's turn, the recipient typically produces a repair-initiator that leaves the actual repair/correction to the speaker of the trouble source turn (even if a correction could be produced). The following extract from SJS provides an illustration of this point. In line 2, Al repeats a part of Ken's previous turn: this repeat functions as a repair-initiator that points out a problematic item in the previous turn, and the stress on the gender-specific part pinpoints the problem more specifically.

(2) [SJS 1977: 377, extract 62]

- 01 Ken: 'E likes that waider over there,  
 02 Al: **Wait-er?**  
 03 Ken: Waitress, sorry,  
 04 Al: 'At's bedder,

The repair initiator makes relevant repair/correction by the person who first produced the trouble source, and this is exactly what happens: Ken corrects in line 3 and provides an apology for his mistake. Thus, producing a repair initiator is one way of dealing with an error in the previous talk, and SJS interpret this as

1 There are several studies on the different types of repair phenomena in Finnish interactions. Sorjonen (1997) presents an overview of repair organisation by providing examples from everyday interactions. Sorjonen & Laakso (2005) analyse the ways of initiating self-repair in different types of conversation (see also Kärkkäinen et al. 2007). Kurhila (e.g., 2001, 2003, 2006a, b) and Lilja (forthcoming) study repair and correction in native–non-native -interactions. Several studies have detailed repair phenomena in the talk of speakers with aphasia and other speech disorders (Klippi 1996; Laakso 1997; Laakso & Klippi 2001; Helasvuo, Laakso & Sorjonen 2004; Tykkyläinen 2007). Laakso (2006) studies repair in child–parent interaction and Sellman (2008) in voice therapy sessions. However, there are obvious gaps in the repair-related research on Finnish: the practices of other-initiated repair and other-correction have not been analysed in so-called ordinary, everyday conversation (see e.g., Heritage 1984: 238–240) between adult native speakers with (more or less) similar linguistic and cultural competencies. The present study offers a partial remedy for one of those gaps.

a preferred option to straightforward other-correction<sup>2</sup>. Additional evidence for the preference for self-correction was found in the correction turns themselves: SJS (1977: 378) claim that on those rare occasions when other-corrections are performed, they are usually produced in a modulated form, which means offering the correction as being uncertain rather than being a fact. Extract 3 provides a case in point:

(3) [SJS 1977: 378]

- 01 Lori: But y'know single beds'r awfully thin tuh sleep on.  
 02 Sam: What?  
 03 Lori: Single beds.//They're-  
 04 **Ellen: Y'mean narrow?**  
 05 Lori: They're awfully narrow //yeah.

In line 4, Ellen produces a turn that can be seen as a correction of Lori's talk: it replaces the adjective *thin* (in line 1) with *narrow*. This correction is produced in a questioning format (*y'mean*, with rising intonation) which marks the turn as tentative and leaves Lori the possibility to confirm the description (which she does in line 5).

To summarize, SJS (1977) consider other-correction to be problematic activity which has preferred options. According to them, the producers of other-corrections display their understanding of the dispreferred nature of the action at hand by uncertainty-marking, modulation. The observations of the SJS article have been cited in several other studies and CA text books. For instance, Hutchby and Wooffitt (1998) talk about the preference for self-repair and state that explicit other-correction can be a sensitive issue. They formulate the problem in the following way (1998: 68):

“To correct another person is to draw attention to and topicalize an error or ‘lapse in performance’ on their part. This could be interpreted as a slight, a ‘put-down’ or might even be cited as evidence of deliberate rudeness, which in turn may undermine the harmony or accord of the exchange. Other-correction, then, has potential implications for the coordination of the interpersonal relations of the parties.”

After the SJS article, the ways of dealing with errors have been studied especially by Gail Jefferson. Jefferson (1987) analyses corrections which are embedded in other actions and Jefferson (1988) observes that there are occasions when errors are perhaps detected but not corrected. In a more recent paper, Jefferson (2006) discusses abdicated other-correction, a recipient practice that minimizes the import of an error by the other speaker. Other-corrections in interaction have also been studied by Norrick (1991), and Drew (1981) who analyses adults' corrections of children's mistakes, as well as M.H. Goodwin (1983) who studies aggravated correction in children's conversations. Other-correction in a specific institutional

2 In this article we analyse cases of other-correction (as in extract 1) and do not analyse those cases in which errors are dealt with by producing a repair initiator. But it should be pointed out that we have found many more cases of other-correction than cases like extract 2. This finding is not in line with the results by SJS (1977).

environment, classroom, has been analysed in McHoul (1991) and Macbeth (2004).

We have, however, encountered some difficulties in comparing our findings with those studies on speakers of English. The studies do not seem to form one unified, comprehensive view of other-correction, and some statements are even quite contradictory. For instance, in SJS (1977: 378) cases of outright other-correction are said to be very rare in conversation. In contrast, Jefferson (1988: 1) says that she has found hundreds of cases of one speaker correcting another. Furthermore, in SJS (1977), the authors claim that when other-corrections are performed, they are typically produced in a modulated fashion, as in extract (3) above. When one looks at cases of other-correction in Jefferson (1987) for instance, they turn out to be different. Extracts (4) and (5) provide two examples; the correction turns are in boldface. These are very straightforward, produced without any modulating elements:

(4) [Jefferson 1987: 87.]

Larry: They're going to drive ba:ck Wednesday.  
 Norm: **Tomorrow**.  
 Larry: Tomorrow. Righ[t].  
 Norm: [M-hm.  
 Larry: They're working half day.

(5) [Jefferson 1987:87.]

Milly: ...and then they said something about Krushchev has leukemia so  
 I thought oh it's all a big put on.  
 Jean: **Breshnev**.  
 Milly: Breshnev has leukemia. So I didn't know what to think.

The differences pointed out above are not discussed in the studies themselves. There can be several reasons for these discrepancies (for instance, the phenomenon of other-correction is perhaps seen differently in different studies), but at least they reflect the fact that no comprehensive study of other-correction in interactions has been conducted in English – nor to our knowledge in other languages.

This study analyses other-correction in ordinary, everyday conversations. The speakers in the data are adults, friends and family members, who have – more or less – equal access to linguistic and cultural resources. In other words, this analysis does not include interactions between adults and (small) children, between children, between native and non-native speakers, nor the interactions in different kinds of institutional settings. While other-corrections occur perhaps more frequently in some of these types of interactions (e.g., in adult-child-interactions, SJS 1977: 381; classroom talk, Macbeth 2004), we wanted to start with the practices in conversations where the participants' resources are quite symmetrical. This study is based on approximately 20 hours of everyday Finnish conversations, both telephone conversations (11 hours) and face-to-face situations (9 hours). In these data, 50 sequences of other-correction were found. These corrections do not occur evenly in the data, however: they are much more common in the multiparty conversations than in the two-party conversations, as the following table shows:

**Table 1.** Data.

| Data type    | Duration | Other-corrections (N) |
|--------------|----------|-----------------------|
| Telephone    | 11 hours | 15                    |
| Face-to-face |          |                       |
| two-party    | 2 hours  | 2                     |
| multiparty   | 7 hours  | 33                    |
|              | 20 hours | 50                    |

Furthermore, the corrections tend to cluster in certain conversations: in one hour of a certain interaction, eight examples of other-correction were found, and on the other hand, hours and hours of other data do not yield a single instance. We will return to these issues in the concluding discussion.

### *Other-correction: variations in design*

In the following, we focus on the linguistic construction of the correction turns, and will explore three aspects: 1) initial negation in the turn, 2) clausal vs. phrasal construction of the turn, and 3) modulation of the correction. As mentioned, the term ‘modulation’ refers to corrections that are “downgraded on a confidence/uncertainty scale” (SJS 1977: 378). The analysis of these three aspects reveals some variation in the construction of other-correction turns in Finnish. Most of these corrections include elements of negation (e.g., the particle *eiku*), but not all of them. Some of the corrections are performed by using a phrase, whereas some employ a clausal format. Most of our cases are not framed as uncertain; however, some modulated instances can be found. The main objective here is to determine recurrent features in these variations.

### **Negation – doing correcting**

One typical feature of other-corrections in Finnish is that the correction turns often begin with a negation word. Indeed, over half of the cases in our data are negation-initial. In this section, we will explore the relation between corrections and the (possible) initial negation element in the turns. In particular, we will focus on a specific format of negation that can be found in other-correction turns, the combination of the negative word *ei* with the conjunction/particle *ku[n]*. To provide a point of comparison, we will investigate corrections that occur without initial negations.

In other-correction turns, the initial negation element can be the plain negator *ei*<sup>3</sup> (*Ei nyt tällasii pestä* ‘not does one wash these things’), or it can be the negative word together with the particle *ku(n)* (*Eiku Hiekkiksessä*, see example 7 below).

3 The Finnish negation consists of a verb that has a partial inflectional paradigm (see e.g., ISK: 135–136, 1540). Sometimes, however, the speakers use the third-person form of the paradigm (*ei*) more generally, for example when referring to themselves. In these cases, the negation element can be categorised as a particle. (See e.g., ISK: 1541; Airikka 2006.)

The plain negation is used particularly in counter-arguments where the target of the correction is the polarity of a proposition. Such cases come close to disagreements because the speakers have differing views on a yes/no-matter (for instance, ‘does one wash certain type of clothes or not’). In these corrections, the speaker can produce merely a negation of a grammatically positive utterance.<sup>4</sup>

The other option, *ei + ku(n)*, is used in corrections that do not just negate what the prior speaker has said but also provide the new (correct) version. Even though *eiku* actually consists of two elements, it is often produced as one prosodic unit in corrective contexts and can be treated as a particle of its own (ISK: 1542; Sorjonen & Laakso 2005: 251)<sup>5</sup>. In previous research, *eiku* has been analysed in self-corrections. Sorjonen and Laakso (2005) observed that *eiku* is typical of the self-corrections used for substitutions – to replace a unit in the prior talk with another. The following example, from doctor-patient interaction, illustrates a typical example of self-correction:

(6) [Sorjonen and Laakso 2005: 252]

01 P: >Mä etä aatteli vaa että **kahreksankymmentä**: (0.2) **eiku seit(tek)**< (.)  
 I PRT think-PST just PRT eighty NEG+PRT seventy  
 >I just thought that a eighty (0.2) *eiku* seven(ty)< (.) nine year old

02 **yhreksävuotiaan** ihmisen ei tartte (0.4) s(h)a(h)ada enää ho(h)itoo.  
 nine-year-GEN person-GEN NEG need get anymore treatment-PAR  
 person doesn't (0.4) need any t(h)reat(h)ment any(h)more.

The speaker replaces a certain age (80) by another (79). The correct number (79) is preceded by the particle *eiku*. In a similar way, *eiku* can be used to frame corrections that are performed by the other speaker. If the second speaker observes something that needs to be changed in the previous speaker's turn and decides to correct it, she can indicate that a correction will follow by beginning her turn with the particle *eiku*. It thus seems that *eiku* functions as a kind of general correction marker in Finnish (see also Sorjonen and Laakso 2005: 255; Laakso and Tykkyläinen in this volume)<sup>6</sup>. The next excerpt illustrates an *eiku*-initial correction in our data: the speaker replaces one place name (*Håkansböle*) with another (*Hiekkis*).

(7) [Hiekkis / face to face]

01 Tero: Kati halus et puol neljä maissa oltas siellä,  
 name want-PST PRT half four around be-PAS-CON there  
 Kati wanted to be at around half past three there

4 If the trouble turn is negatively formulated, then the correction does not usually begin with a negation. Instead, these corrections begin with the discourse particle *kyl(lä)* ‘surely, indeed’ (on the particle *kyllä*, see Hakulinen 2001).

5 We will not translate the particle *eiku* in the examples. In the glossing line, *eiku* is marked as NEG+PRT, but we will explain the construction and the function of the particle in this section. We hope that these explanations give the reader a better picture of the particle than a (necessarily inadequate) translation.

6 However, no studies specifically focusing on the particle *eiku* exist to the date.

- 02 Rea: .nss .n [ss
- 03 Kati: [Joo:  
[Yes::
- 04 Tero: Håkans[bölessä.  
(place name in Swedish)-INE  
in Håk[ansböle.
- 05 Kati: [mut ei se nyt,  
but NEG it now  
[but it isn't like,
- 06 Rea: **Ei[ku Hiekkiksessä.**  
NEG+PRT (another place name in Finnish)-INE  
*Ei[ku* in Hiekkis.
- 07 Kati: [Ei,  
[No,
- 08 Tero *Eiku* Hiekkiksessä.  
*Eiku* in Hiekkis.
- 09 Kati: Sand↑kulla↑  
(Swedish name of Hiekkis)-NOM  
Sand↑kulla↑
- 10 Rea: Sandgullassa.  
(Swedish name of Hiekkis)-INE  
In Sandgulla.

Tero mentions the place and the time of the planned future action (lines 1 and 4). He chooses to use the Swedish name of the place<sup>7</sup>, but the place reference is not correct: the right place is Hiekkis (Sandkulla in Swedish), not Hakunila (Håkansböle in Swedish). Rea performs a correction through her *eiku*-initial turn (line 6). This correction turn is rather simple: it consists of the corrective particle *eiku* and the correct place name. That particle sets a frame for the turn; it is evident that what follows will replace some part of the prior talk. The part that is replaced becomes clear through the syntax and semantics of the corrective utterance: the place name is inflected in the inessive case, as is the element to be corrected in the trouble turn, and this element represents the same category, place names. Thus, the turn-initial *eiku* first indicates that a correction will follow, and then the syntactic and semantic features of the correction show more specifically what it is in the trouble turn that is being substituted.

It is a characteristic feature of the particle *eiku* that it is followed by the correct item or a clause providing the correction<sup>8</sup>. This is why *eiku* cannot be used, for

7 Both Finnish and Swedish are official languages in Finland, and in bilingual areas the towns, streets, buildings, etc. have both Finnish and Swedish names. The place name Hiekkis (actually Hiekkaharju) is Sandkulla in Swedish, and Håkansböle is Hakunila in Finnish.

8 The corrections that are discussed in this section occur in single phrases. Corrections that occur in clauses are analysed in the next section.

example, when a speaker is making more substantial other-corrections – those that not only provide the correct item, but also negate the deficient item. These substantial corrections are found both in English and in Finnish conversations. An example from Jefferson (1987) illustrates how correction can be performed using this format, by both negating the old (*motor*) and providing the new (*engine*):

(8) [Jefferson 1987: 87]

01 Ken: And they told me how I could stick a th- uh:: Thunderbird motor?  
 02 (0.5) in my Jeep? And I bought a fifty five [Thunderbird motor.  
 03 Roger: [Not motor, **engine**.

Such substantial other-corrections are also possible in Finnish (see examples 1 and 11). These cases, however, do not begin with the particle *eiku*; instead, the initial element is the plain negation word:

From (1): **ei ook ku nää o neljäkymmene viie**.  
 NEG be PRT these be forty-GEN five-GEN  
 no they aren't they are forty-five (minutes).

From (11): **ei myö oltu kymmene. myö oltii kakstoista tai jotai**  
 NEG we be-PPPC ten we be-PAS-PST twelve or something  
 we weren't ten. we were twelve or something .

Example 1 is worth mentioning since it is a kind of intermediate version between an *eiku*-correction and a fully articulated substantial correction. The speaker uses a clausal construction (*ei oo* 'no ((they)) aren't'), but she does not complete the sentence with the correctable (*ei oo* [kolmenkymmene] 'no they aren't [thirty]'). This type of correction is thus a condensed version of the substantial correction, but it is not as condensed as a plain *eiku*-correction would be. It would be perfectly plausible to produce the correction simply in an *eiku*-format (*eiku nää o neljäkymmene viie* 'eiku these are forty-five minutes').<sup>9</sup>

Actually, it is possible to consider *eiku*-corrections as including both elements: the negation of the prior and the new version. The first part of the particle (*ei*) indicates that something is negated, though it is not articulated (*ei* [Häkansbölessä] *ku Hiekkiksessä*). The latter part, the *ku(n)* projects an account or an explanation which provides an alternative to the negated element. The conjunction *kun* shows a relation between two situations, and it has causal, temporal and contrastive functions (Herlin 1998). In spoken interaction, *ku(n)* is often involved in giving reasons for something (ibid. 169, 173). Within the particle *eiku*, *ku(n)* may no longer have a transparent relation to the causal or other functions of the conjunction *ku(n)* (cf. Sorjonen and Laakso 2005: 251), but it shapes the function of the corrective particle so that an alternative to some prior segment of talk is to be expected. By beginning her correction with *eiku*, the speaker therefore indicates something like "what you just said is not right; here comes what it should be".

9 The reason this correction does not occur in the plain *eiku*-format may have to do with the fact that the girls have been talking about the tapes before, and apparently (not audible in the tape) the duration has already been mentioned. Through her more substantial correction, Milla can be seen insisting that her previous statement is correct.

Even though *eiku* is a rather formulaic marker of correction, some variations of it can be found in the data. The next example illustrates one variation, with the clitic particle *-kä*. Here the girl scouts are talking about tasks (way of making fire) at a scout camp, and Oona has mentioned a “steel wool system” which is not familiar to Lotta. Milla’s correction (line 4) targets a detail of this steel wool system, the number of the batteries.

(9) [Girl scouts / face to face]

01 Lotta: mitä siin sit pitää (tehä).  
 what-PAR it-INE then must do  
 what do you have to do then.

02 Oona: ↑ei siinä mitää muuta ku ottaa kaks patterii  
 NEG it-INE anything else PRT take two battery-PAR  
 ↑there’s nothing else you just take two batteries

03 ja laittaa teräsvillaa näij ja,=  
 and put steel wool-PAR so and  
 and put steel wool like this and,=

**04 Milla:** =>↑**eikä ku yks**,<  
 NEG-CLI PRT one  
 =>↑*eikä ku* one:,<

05 (1.7) ((Oona and Milla gazing at each other intensively))

06 Oona: kahella patterillaha se oli.  
 two-ADE battery-ADE-CLI it be-PST  
 with two batteries it was.

07 Milla: yhellä?  
 with one?

08 Oona: kahella.  
 with two.

09 Milla: yhellä?  
 with one?

10 Oona: #no:# okei,=no kokeillaa .hh °(voi ju-) nyt mie  
 #well# okay,=we’ll try .hh (oh dear) now I

11 piirsi- (.) housuihi.° .mth=  
 coloured (.) on my trousers. .mth=

12 Lotta: =>nää o hyviä,<  
 =>these are good,< ((eating waffles))

In this excerpt (as in example 7), the correction turn consists simply of the negative element and the correct item. Nevertheless, the negation is more than a combination of the negative word and *ku*, as it also contains the clitic *-kä*, which is an additive clitic particle attached to the negative verb (ISK: 785). This clitic

seems to emphasize the contrastive dimension of the negation. This interpretation is also supported by Milla's non-verbal behaviour. When uttering the correction, she stops glancing at the book she has been reading and abruptly turns her head toward Oona. She then continues gazing at her without moving. This intensive gaze, the fact that Milla stops all her other activities, as well as the prosody in her turn (high pitch, level intonation), give the impression that Milla is challenging Oona to a debate. And a debate is indeed what follows in lines 6–9.

Despite the slightly more challenging nature of this example, the correction turn is as simple as in (7): it consists of the initial negation (*eikä ku*) and the substitution (*yks*). This straightforward design is typical of the corrections in our data that begin with the particle *eiku*.

However, not all linguistically simple corrections begin with *eiku*. Some corrections do not begin with a negation and these will be discussed now. Even though *eiku*-corrections are typically straightforward, it is possible to correct the other speaker in an even more reduced way – simply by producing the alternative version. In these cases, the correctable is often a wrong item in a specific category, and both the speaker and the recipient have the relevant knowledge of this correctable. The following excerpt is a case in point; two boys are talking about the school projects they have done together.

(10) [Boys/face to face]

01 Sami: heheh s(h)e vid(h)eo oli ihan kau:heen hyvä. .h  
           the video was PRT terrible-GEN good  
           heheh t(h)he vid(h)eo was just so: good. .h

02 Pasi: he

03 Sami: he he .h (mä ainakin) nauroin. .hhh  
           he he .h (at least I) laughed. .hhh

04 (0.5)

05 Sami: #@mja:[:: ]@# ((matkii videon kuuluttajaa))  
           #@and:[:: ]@# ((imitates the voice in the video))

06 Pasi: [se ] Jesaja vasta mum mielest kauhee oliki.  
           the nameM PRT I-GEN mind-ELA awful-PAR was-CLI  
           [the] Isaiah thing was really awful I think.

**07 Sami: e: Aamos.**  
           eh Amos.

08 Pasi: [ai nii Aamos. ]  
           PRT PRT nameM  
           [Oh yeah Amos. ]

09 Sami: [tässä on ] <tässä on öljyä.> @mitä ihmettä  
           here is here is oil-PAR what-PAR wonder-PAR  
           [there's ] <there's some oil here.> @what on earth is

10        se öljy oikein on.@ ha ha ha  
           that oil really is  
           that oil actually.@ ha ha ha

In line 7, Sami replaces a proper name by another. The boys have undertaken a project on a prophet in their religion class, and Pasi identifies the prophet as Isaiah. Sami then performs a correction simply by providing the new name (after a brief hesitation sound). This correctable belongs to a specific category (the prophets in the Bible), and both speakers have equal access to the relevant information. The fact that Pasi refers to a wrong prophet can thus be interpreted as a slip of the tongue or a memory failure. Sami corrects the wrong name, but the correction is as minimal as possible: he only states the correct name.

Our database contains few other instances of minimal corrections (consisting only of a noun phrase). This type of correction can be characterised by the accidental nature of the trouble-to-be-corrected as well as by both participants' access to the relevant knowledge of the correctable. These correctables could be classified as slips of the tongue, since the speakers have access to the right information but for some reason happen to produce a wrong lexical item. For example, a pronunciation error (*tupista* → *typistä*) and a wrong language reference (*ranskaa* → *saksaa* 'French → German') are likewise corrected through this minimal format.

It thus seems that a relationship may exist between the type of the trouble source and the form taken by the corrections addressed to them. If the trouble is accidental so that the recipient has grounds to assume that the prior speaker has the relevant knowledge about the issue, then the speaker's correction is accomplished as minimally as possible. This relationship seems almost iconic: small slips need only small interventions. Major negotiations or disruptions in the progress of conversation are not needed, since what is correct should be clear for the participants despite the temporary failure.

Even though the character of the trouble source has a link to the form of the correction, this does not explain everything. In the previous excerpts (7) and (9), for example, the correctable could be thought of as being an accidental slip. In (7), Tero has heard the name of the place before, since he merely seeks to confirm that the time-table is suitable. Furthermore, in (9), both Oona and Milla have been present when the steel wool system has been demonstrated. However, in both excerpts, the correction begins with the negative marker and is thus not as minimal as the one found in (10). The question here is why the speakers in (7) and (9) choose the *eiku*-variant whereas the speaker in (10) selects the more minimal variant?

The answer can be found in the sequential environment of the trouble source turn and the correction, i.e. the activities that the speakers are involved in. In (10), the speakers pursue different lines in their conversation: Sami is involved in talking about their biology project (on oil) and the video the boys shot for the project (lines 1, 3, 5). Pasi, however, interrupts Sami's turn and moves forward in the conversation by naming another school project (line 6). At this point, Sami is not yet ready to move on; the funny quotation he initiated in line 5 is yet to come. Sami's behaviour clearly shows that he plans to retain his position as a speaker or a storyteller: he does not wait for a response from the recipient. Instead, he continues with the disrupted activity – his reported speech – immediately following the correction, in overlap with Pasi's response. Thus, Sami does not

perform the correction in order to negotiate the right prophets; he merely slips in his correction as a piece of information that needs no further attention. This correction is managed so as to minimize intrusion into the talk in progress, and therefore could be classified as an *en passant* -correction (Kurhila 2006: 36, 41).

In (7) and (9), the corrections are not similarly *en passant* in nature. The speaker who corrects the trouble is not trying to pursue another activity. Furthermore, the error is consequential for the participants' conversation-external actions – whether Tero drives to Hiekkis or Håkansböle is crucial for the successful completion of that action. In (9), the speaker who produces the correction (Milla) is definitely not trying to minimize the intrusion caused by her correction. The combination of her non-verbal behaviour, her intensive gaze, the prosody of her turn and the contrastive clitic *-kä*, all add up to a correction that challenges the other speaker to a debate rather than aiming to close the repair sequence.

Thus, it seems that the speaker uses a turn-initial negative marker (*eiku*) when she focuses on the correction and attempts to clarify what the correct reference is. By beginning the correction turn with *eiku*, the speaker makes the error interactionally more salient and projects a response from the recipient. Despite the projecting nature of *eiku*-corrections, the correction turns can be linguistically minimal (e.g. *eiku* + single phrase). However, *eiku*-turns clearly perform a correction: they (implicitly) negate some prior version and replace it by a new, more correct version.

Corrections that are even more reduced – one word substitutions without initial negations – also replace some prior version by a new. These corrections have, however, different sequential projections: they do not focus on the error; instead, they try to manage the correction as minimally as possible. Hence, in these cases, the correction does not usually become the interactional business of the activity as much as in those cases that begin with *eiku*.

### Phrase or clause?

Next we will turn to another type of comparison: the size of the correction turns. Examples 7, 9 and 10 are cases in which a phrase is used to perform a correction (*eiku* + phrase, or a phrase without *eiku*). However, most of the corrections in the present database are performed with a clause<sup>10</sup>. We can now address some issues that motivate the choice between a phrase and a clause in performing a correction.

In the previous examples, the correction was directed at a specific element of the previous turn, a place name (Håkansböle vs. Hiekkis), the number of batteries (two vs. one) or the name of a prophet (Isaiah vs. Amos). A phrase is enough to perform the correction when the correction only deals with a specific element of a previous turn and leaves the rest of that turn intact. For instance, in example (7), the problem in Tero's turn is the place name, not the overall plan he is presenting (see line 1 in example 7). Similarly in (9), Oona's presentation of the steel wool system is otherwise left intact (i.e. one makes a fire by rubbing together steel wool and a X number of batteries).

<sup>10</sup> According to our observations we suspect, however, that the corrections using phrases are more common than the present database leads us to understand.

A further condition for the use of a phrase is the timing of the correction: if the correction targets a specific item in the previous talk and is produced immediately after that talk, a phrase will do the correcting easily. But on those occasions when the correction is for some reason delayed, it is produced with a more elaborate syntactic structure, even though it could have been performed with a phrase in the first instance. We have found a few examples of delayed other-corrections, and extract (11) represents one of them. This extract is taken from the same conversation as extract (9): here the girl scouts are thinking back at the good old days when they were first participating in the scout championships. In lines 1–2, Milla states that they were ten years old at that time. She constructs this as being somewhat noteworthy with the imperative form *aatelkaa* ('think'). Oona confirms by agreeing (lines 3 and 5). Next, Milla contrasts the girls' actions with what could be expected of the present-day young girl scouts (the omitted lines). The third participant, Lotta, does not participate at this point. In line 21, she corrects the age Milla has mentioned:

## (11) [Girl scouts / face to face]

01 Milla: just mieti, (.) aatelkaa myö oltii,  
just think-PST-1 think-IMP-PL2 we be-PAS-PST  
I just thought, (.) just think we were,

02 kymmenvuotiaina ensimmäisis äsämeissä.  
ten-year-old-PL-ESS first-PL-INE Finnish championships-INE  
at age ten in the first Finnish championships.

03 Oona: ni?  
yea?

04 (.)

05 Oona: n(h)i o(h)ltii.  
PRT be-PAS-PST  
ye(h)s we we(h)re.

[lines 6–14 omitted]

15 Milla: eh mie, £ei meil ikinä ees tullu mielee et  
I NEG we-ADE never even come-PPC mind-ILL PRT  
eh I, £it never even occurred to us that we could

16 myö oltas voitu niinku pahemmin eksyy [tai mitää  
we be-PAS-CON can-PPC PRT worse get.lost or anything  
have y'know lost our way [or anything

17 Oona: [mm-m?

18 Milla: tapahtuis tai (- [-)  
would happen or [

19 Oona: [mm:,

- 20 (0.4)
- 21 Lotta: **ei myö oltu kymmene. myö oltii kakstoista tai jotai .**  
 NEG we be-PPPC ten we were twelve or something  
 we weren't ten. we were twelve or something .
- 22 (0.5)
- 23 Milla: ei, ol[tu;  
 NEG be-PPC  
 no, we[ weren't;
- 24 Oona: [yheskyt yks myö oltii ensimmäisis äsämeissä.  
 ninety one we were first-PL-INE championships-INE  
 [in ninety one we were in the first Finnish championships.
- 25 Milla: mie oo ollu kymmenevuotias;  
 I be-1 be-PPC ten-year-old  
 I was ten years old.

Lotta produces the correction considerably late in relation to the turn where the correctable item occurs. In her turn (line 21), she uses the substantial correction format. She first negates the age mentioned in Milla's turn (*ten*) and then presents – in her mind – the correct age (*twelve or something*). Had she produced the correction right after Milla's turn, she could have constructed it with just a phrase (e.g. *eiku kakstoista tai jotain* 'eiku twelve or something'). However, the distance between the trouble source and the correction makes it impossible – or at least very unlikely – to use a phrase. Thus, the correction turn first makes explicit what Milla had said and then provides the correction.

As the previous example illustrated, the timing of the correction can motivate the syntactic structure of the correction turn; a phrasal construction relies more heavily on the construction of the previous turn. Nevertheless, on most occasions the use of a clause is motivated by issues other than the timing of the correction. In these cases, the correction simply needs a more complex syntactic structure – the correction is not directed at a specific element (e.g. a referent) of the previous turn but the overall description of the state of the affairs. In these cases, the correcting party needs to change the whole verbal presentation of the proposition. The following case from a story-telling sequence illustrates this. In extract (12), Jaana tells a story about the division of inheritance. One of the siblings, Veikko, has turned out to be greedy and wanted to take everything. This story is about a trick Jaana's husband, Jaska, played on Veikko. Jaska pretended that a cheap glass plate was in fact a piece of valuable design (see lines 2–8 and Mirja's display of understanding at lines 9 and 11). Jaska himself enters the story-telling at the point of its climax (line 14).

(12) [division of inheritance/face-to-face]

- 01 Jaana: .hh nii Veikko sit t- ka >taikka  
 PRT nameM then in-other-words  
 .hh so Veikko then t- lo >or looked

- 02 katteli< onkos tää minkää arvone, >näytäs< määki  
 look-PST is-Q-CLI this any worth show-IMP-CLI I-CLI  
 at ((it))< is this worth anything, >let me see< I'll
- 03 katto sano Jaska ja mä aatteli että @voi ei, @ .hhh  
 look-1 say-PST nameM and I think-PST-1 PRT PRT NEG  
 have a look too said Jaska and I thought that @oh no, @ .hhh
- 04 mää näin sen naamasta jo et jotai  
 I see-PST-1 he-GEN face-ELA already PRT something  
 I saw already from his face that something is now again going
- 05 täs nyt taas o, >.hh< @tää on kuule varmaa, @ kenen tekemiä,  
 here now again is this be PRT surely who-GEN made-PL-PAR  
 on, >.hh< @listen this is probably@ made by whom,
- 06 @näitä muatteja tehtii, @ hän on nähny ku näitä  
 these model-PL-PAR make-PAS-PST he be see-PPC when these  
 @these models were made, @ he has seen when these
- 07 muatteja tehtii @tää o sej j a sen tekemä, @  
 model-PL-PRT make-PAS-PST this be it-GEN and it-GEN make-PC  
 models were made, @this is made by that and that, @
- 08 [mitä kaikkee tieksää mitä-,  
 what all-PAR know+you what  
 [whatever you know what-,
- 09 Mirja: [nii juu, väittäis että se oj jotai  
 PRT PRT claim-CON that it be something  
 [yeah right, one would claim that it's something
- 10 Jaska: [eh heh heh he,
- 11 Mirja: oikei ar:vokasta [taidelasia,  
 really valuable-PAR art-glass-PAR  
 really valuable [design glass
- 12 Jaana: [pois vaan kuule  
 [away PRT PRT  
 [away just like that y'know
- 13 ja se kiskasi [sej Jaska,  
 and he grab-PST it-ACC nameM  
 and he grabbed [it from Jaska's,
- 14 Jaska: [mää pis- pistin se tohon, [tolle pualelle,  
 I put-PST-1 it-ACC there [that-ALL side-ALL  
 [I pu- put it there, [on that side,
- 15 Jaana: [eiku se oli sun  
 [PRT it was your  
 [eiku it was in

- 16                    **käsis[äs,**  
hand-PL-INE  
your hand[s,
- 17 Jaska:            [**>eiku,< mää pisti se >tos< sivulle @nii se**  
[PRT I put-PST it that-ILL side-ALL PRT he  
[>eiku,< I put it there on the side @so he
- 18                    **tuli@ ja (--), [heh heh he,**  
came@ and (--),[heh heh he,
- 19 Mirja:            [a-haa, [no nii juu,  
[I see, [well okay yes

In lines 12–13 Jaana is arriving at the climax of the story: Veikko takes the plate. Jaana’s utterance in line 13 is left unfinished because Jaska, the other main character in the story, comes in to present his version of the events. Jaana’s utterance *se kiskasi sen Jaskan*<sup>11</sup> (‘he grabbed it from Jaska’s’) implies that the plate was in Jaska’s possession when Veikko took it. Jaska’s version, nonetheless, is that he had put the plate on his side (line 14). Jaana corrects this in her turn in line 15. The turn starts with the correction particle *eiku* and the following utterance *se oli sun käsissä* (‘it was in your hands’) paints a different picture of the events than indicated in Jaska’s previous turn. Jaska had used the verb *pistää* (‘put’) and expressed the location of the plate (‘there’, ‘on that side’) whereas Jaana’s version has the plate being (*oli* ‘was’) in Jaska’s hand. In order to perform this correction, Jaana needs a full clause. The correction is followed by a counter-correction: Jaska starts his following turn with the particle *eiku* and repeats his previous version of the event (*mää pisti se tos sivulle* ‘I put it there on the side’). As an active agent in the narrated events, Jaska has primary access to the details of the event and he gets the final word.

Sometimes the speaker can perform the correction with a phrase, but sometimes a more elaborate verbal construction is needed. Extract (13) is from the same conversation as the previous one and shows both possibilities. Here Jaana has just started telling about the division of the inheritance. She has told that one of the brothers, Pena, was paid off (i.e. got his share as money) before the actual division of the property had started. In lines 1–4, Jaana talks about Pena and what he has paid. In line 5, Mikko constructs a candidate understanding of Jaana’s talk: *elikkä* ‘in other words’ at the beginning of this turn indicates that he is now formulating his understanding and offers it to Jaana to be confirmed or corrected (cf. ISK: 778). However, Mikko’s wife, Mirja, comes in to correct Mikko’s understanding (line 8)<sup>12</sup>.

11 If the reader follows the gloss line, the glossing of the Finnish item *se* may seem confusing. *Se* is used as a demonstrative pronoun (‘it’), but in colloquial Finnish it is regularly used in 3<sup>rd</sup> person reference (‘s/he’). Furthermore, especially in spoken Finnish it is used as a kind of definitive article (approximately ‘the’). We have decided to gloss the occurrences of *se* according to its function and meaning in the utterance; thus, it is sometimes glossed as ‘it’, sometimes ‘s/he’, sometimes ‘the’ etc.

12 Corrections that occur after a candidate understanding are not the focus of the present study. Candidate understanding is a repair initiator that formulates a speaker’s understanding of the previous turn or its part. As such, it makes relevant either confirmation or correction by the producer of the previous turn. (See e.g. Kurhila 2006 (chapter 5); Sorjonen 2001 (section 4.3)). Thus, correction

(13) [division of inheritance/face-to-face]

- 01 Jaana: sitte tota, suastu maksamaa sitte kuluista,  
 then PRT agree-PST pay-INF-ILL then cost-PL-ELA  
 then uhm, [he] agreed to pay then of the costs,
- 02 sen kahdeksasosansa?  
 the-ACC eight-part-POS  
 his eighth?
- 03 (0.7)
- 04 Jaana: ja myöskin siittä asianajopalkkiosta sen kahdeksasosansa,  
 and also-CLI the-ELA lawyer-fee-ELA the-ACC eight-part-POS  
 and also of the lawyer's fee one eighth,
- 05 Mikko: elikkä ens otettii <kulut pois> ja sitte s-  
 in other words first take-PAS-PST cost-PL away and then  
 in other words first they took <the costs away> and then t-
- 06 sit [sej jälkee,  
 then it-GEN after  
 then [after that,
- 07 Jaana: **[eiku [se,**  
 PRT it/he?  
 [eiku [it
- 08 Mirja: **[eiku oma häne ossansa o:sansa vaa kuluista,**  
 PRT own his part-POS part-POS only cost-PL-ELA  
 [eiku his own his share of the costs only,
- 09 Mikko: ↑niin niin, juu juu [juu, aivan,  
 ↑yes yes, yes I see [right
- 10 Mirja: [mm,
- 11 Jaana: **eiku hän maksaa ne sit ku ne laskut tulee,**  
 PRT he pay they then when the bill-PL come  
 eiku he pays them then when the bills come,
- 12 (.)

after a candidate understanding is one possible response type that can be expected; Sacks (e.g. 1992a: 21–25) even refers to it as “a correction-invitation device”. Consequently, corrections after candidate understandings are different from our cases in which the producer of the error in no way invites a correction from the recipient(s). SJS (1977) state that other-corrections often occur after candidate understandings and that in this interactional slot, they are not presented as modulated.

We analyse extract 13, however, because Jaana’s subsequent correction at line 10 can be seen to correct also Mirja’s turn at line 8. Note that it is Mirja who first reacts (line 13) after Jaana’s correction. In addition, we have observed that the other-corrections that we focus on and the corrections after a candidate understanding are constructed in a similar fashion.

13 Mirja: >nii nii nii,< joo, ai[van,  
>yes yes yes< I see [right

14 Mikko: [aha, joo:?  
[I see, okay?

Mikko's candidate understanding is directed at Jaana's previous turn and Jaana is anticipated as the next speaker. She starts a turn in line 7: the turn-initial *eiku* shows that a correction is on its way. However, Mirja gets to make a correction first: her turn at line 8 also starts with *eiku* and what follows is a phrase *oma hänen ossansa osansa vaa kuluista* (roughly 'his own his share of the costs only'). Mirja thereby corrects a part of Jaska's turn: the NP *kulut* 'costs' is replaced with a complex NP which narrows the costs to only Pena's share of the costs. This correction comes immediately after the candidate understanding and deals with a specific part of it. After Mikko has displayed understanding (line 9), Jaana provides a correction: her *eiku*-initial turn in line 11 can be heard to be both an answer to Mikko's candidate understanding and a correction of Mirja's previous turn. Jaana's turn consists of a clause: she needs a clause to perform the correction since the correctable is not about the NP *kulut* 'costs' but about the temporal order of the events. Mikko's candidate understanding has the temporal order of the costs being paid first and then something else happening. In line 11, Jaana corrects this when she says that the costs will only be paid later, when the bills arrive. The first correction (by Mirja) can be made using a phrase, whereas the latter one (by Jaana) cannot.

### Modulation: defining the speaker's epistemic status

The previous section showed that different factors may affect the size of the correction turn. Yet one possible factor that may have such an effect is modulation (SJS 1977: 378). Since one means to modulate a correction is to produce it with some uncertainty markers, then a need to modulate corrections may provide the correction utterances with more verbal elements.

The issue of modulation, however, is far from being clear-cut, and it has not been explored extensively. Even though modulation is mentioned as a typical feature of other-corrections by SJS, later papers on correction phenomena do not discuss this issue. And, as was shown in examples 4 and 5, traces of modulation (i.e. downgrading the correction on a confidence/uncertainty scale) cannot be found in many of the English examples of other-correction. For these reasons, there seem to be open questions regarding the issue of modulation; sometimes the speakers portray themselves as less confident in relation to the correction, sometimes they display themselves as more confident. In our data, correction turns are typically not downgraded on a confidence scale. Let us now look at the corrective utterances extracted from the examples discussed thus far:

1. **ei ook ku nää o neljäkymmene viie.**  
no they aren't they are forty-five (minutes).

7. **eiku Hiekkiksessä.**  
*eiku* in Hiekkis.

9. **eikä ku yks:,<**  
*eikä ku one:,<*
10. **e: Aamos.**  
*eh Amos.*
11. **ei myö oltu kymmene. myö oltii kakstoista tai jotai.**  
*we weren't ten. we were twelve or something.*
12. **eiku se oli sun käsisäs,**  
*eiku it was in your hands,*
13. **eiku hän maksaa ne sit ku ne laskut tulee,**  
*eiku he pays them then when the bills come,*

All the turns provide the correction in a straightforward manner. The only instance where the speaker can be seen to downgrade her level of confidence about the correction is found in example 11. Having negated the prior version and replaced it by a new, the speaker nevertheless loosens the correction ('twelve') by ending the turn in an expression of approximation (*tai jotai*). In all the other instances, the correction turns are not framed as uncertain – the speaker simply produces the correct version. The only additional element in the turns is the negative particle at the beginning of the utterance (or the brief vocalization in example 10).<sup>13</sup>

It therefore seems safe to conclude that other-corrections are not self-evidently modulated, nor are they typically modulated. Modulation is, however, one option, and it accomplishes a specific function in the correction turn. Since correction is one means for the speakers to negotiate their epistemic authority (cf. Heritage and Raymond 2005), the degree of modulation can be seen to reflect how strongly the speaker portrays herself as the knowledgeable participant. In example 1, the one who corrects has primary knowledge about the correctable: it is her father who has, on her request, bought the tapes that are being discussed. In (7), the performer of the correction (Rea) is the one who has made the arrangements. And the same is true in examples 8, 10, 12 and 13: the one who produces the correction has been present at the situation that is being referred to and thereby has first-hand knowledge about the relevant information. This means that all the speakers who perform an unmodulated correction have first-hand access to the information about the correctable, and they display their status as the knowledgeable participant through their choice of the correction format.<sup>14</sup>

13 SJS define a specific location for unmodulated corrections: "of the unmodulated other-corrections which *do* occur, a very large proportion occur in the turn after an understanding check or a modulated other-correction" (1977: 379). This sequential explanation is taken to be further evidence of the dispreferred status of other-correction, given that instances of other-correction are either specially marked or specially positioned. Recall, however, that we have excluded corrections that are preceded by candidate understandings from our present data set (notwithstanding ex. 13). That is, the unmodulated form of the corrections in our data cannot be explained by their sequential position.

14 In (11), Lotta has also been present in the event they are talking about and she therefore has access to the relevant knowledge. The fact that she displays some uncertainty with respect to her correction (*tai jotai* 'or something') may reflect the dispreferred status of the activity, but it may also result from Lotta's genuine uncertainty about the matter. The year of the championships has

Even though many corrections are performed in a straightforward manner, other-correction is a potentially problematic activity. By correcting something in the other speaker's turn, the first speaker displays her knowledge as being more accurate than that of the conversation partner's. Thus, correction is an activity through which conversational asymmetry and hierarchical relations can be established. This might not be a problem, as can be seen in the examples above, but clearly sometimes speakers orient to portraying their positions as being not too knowledgeable. The following example illustrates one of the cases in our data where the speakers heavily downgrade their certainty about their corrections. This excerpt comes from the same conversation as in example 10. Here the boys are talking about a person from their school. They are surprised because this person (whom the boys do not appreciate much) "has made some archaeological findings". The correction concerns the boys' ideas of what that finding was.

## (14) [Boys/face to face]

- 01 Sami: >mä luulin et se on paska [mut sehä oli< ]  
 I think-PST-1 PRT she is shit but she-CLI was  
 >I thought she is shit [but actually she was< ]
- 02 Pasi: [>mä aatlinet< se ] jotenki  
 I thought-1+PRT she somehow  
 [>I thought< she ] somehow
- 03 kusetti [senkin homman.]  
 bullshit-PST that-CLI thing-GEN  
 bullshited [that thing too. ]
- 04 Sami: [nii mäki. ] mut siis e:i [e:] ei se voinu koska se  
 PRT I-CLI but PRT NEG NEG she could because she  
 [so did I ] but like no [no] she couldn't because she
- 05 Pasi: [ei ]  
 [no]
- 06 Sami: löys jonku ihmeen (.) [eri ni:]  
 find-PST some-GEN strange-GEN different PRT  
 she found some strange (.) [different ]
- 07 Pasi: [ruukun ] jonkun ihmeell[isen ruukun.  
 pot-ACC some-ACC strange-ACC pot-ACC  
 [pot ] some strange [pot.
- 08 Sami: [↑ei: eiku  
 NEG NEG+PRT  
 [↑no eiku it

not been mentioned, and Lotta is quiet for a long time while the other two are talking (lines 3–20). She may be counting back the years, and when she has come to a result, she produces the (very delayed) correction. Furthermore, it turns out (after the excerpt) that since Lotta was born earlier in the year than were Oona and Milja, she was 11 during the championships (in the summer), while the two other girls were 10 (turning 11 in the autumn).



negation. The negative particle (*ei*) is followed by *eiku* which is followed by a predicate nominal clause (*se oli* ‘it was’) introducing the correction. At the same time when Pasi says something (line 10), Sami modifies his turn into a question format (‘wasn’t it’) before he produces the correction *esine* ‘item’, which is broad in its reference. Pasi does not react to the correction (line 11), and Sami specifies it (line 12) but approximates the new lexical item by the pronoun *joku* ‘some’. After this, both participants give support to their own ideas, but their turns are constructed so as not to display authoritative knowledge about the issue in question. Pasi’s turn (line 13) is heavily modulated (*mum\_mielest*, ‘I think’, *joku ruukun kaltainen* ‘something like a pot’), and he ends his turn by explicitly doubting his epistemic authority (*emmä tiedä* ‘I don’t know’). Likewise, Sami ends his utterance (line 14) in a modulation (*mä luulin* ‘I thought’).

Why is this correction more modulated than the others? Why does Sami reformulate his correction turn (lines 8–9) from more to less confident; why is he not satisfied with the format he begins with, the simple ‘*eiku* (*se oli*) + correction’ that the speakers in the previous examples have used? The reason cannot be found in the speakers themselves, i.e. in their age, sex, speaking style, etc., since the same speakers in the same conversation also perform corrections in a more confident manner (example 10). Rather, the explanation can be found in the speakers’ relation to the issues that are being corrected.

In both examples from this conversation (10 and 14), the speakers talk about an issue of which they both have some previous knowledge. However, in (10) (when talking about the prophets), the boys were talking about the school projects they had personally been involved in. In contrast, both speakers in (14) have only second-hand access to the relevant information: they have heard about the archaeological find but they have not been present at the actual event. This indirect access to the relevant knowledge may be reflected in the modulations in the correction turns: while replacing an element by another, the speaker simultaneously displays uncertainty, thus indicating that he is (aware that he is) not in a dominant position. Moreover, neither of the speakers has special knowledge in archaeology. By framing their corrections as somewhat uncertain, they can display their layman status in this domain of knowledge. Another relevant point is that since the boys talk about a person who is not highly appreciated by them, it would perhaps be problematic for them to display too much knowledge about her activities. The boys may have a reason to frame themselves as not-too-knowledgeable, and hence not too intimate with this person and her activities. As a result, the modulations in this excerpt make possible for the speakers to orient to their lack of relevant expertise and to take some distance toward the correction.

It seems then that modulation is one resource that the speakers use when they construct and negotiate their epistemic authority. Since other-correction is an activity through which speakers can establish and negotiate their position of knowledge, modulations can be found in relation to this activity. This relationship is not straightforward, however. In contrast to what SJS reported, we did not find that “most of the other-correction which does occur is either specially marked or specially positioned” (SJS 1977: 379). Of the 50 cases in our data, only 8 were downgraded on a confidence scale (two of them presented in this paper; examples 11 and 14). This means that in our data, it is thus more usual that the speaker who performs an other-correction portrays herself as being the knowledgeable person.

Sometimes this knowledgeable position is accepted by the recipient (ex. 7, 10, 13), sometimes it is not (ex. 8 and 11), but speakers find no difficulty in claiming epistemic authority.

In sum, by using modulation in their correction turns, speakers have a resource to help them define their epistemic status in relation to the issue that is being corrected. By modulating or not modulating their corrections, the speakers can portray themselves as more or less confident about the correctable issue, and by so doing indicate what kind of access they have to the information or knowledge that is relevant for their corrections.

### *Concluding discussion*

Schegloff, Jefferson and Sacks (1977) present other-correction as a problematic activity<sup>15</sup>: it is seen as the dispreferred option in the practices of repair. This is evidenced, for instance, with the following issues: i) other-correction is a rare phenomenon (compared to other-initiation of repair and to self-correction), and ii) when other-corrections occur, they are modulated. Our data, however, suggest that the producers of other-corrections do not find them to be a problem in the sense suggested by SJS. First, it is difficult to say whether other-corrections are rare in the Finnish interactions: we have found 50 cases in approximately 20 hours of interactions. But, of course, other-corrections do not occur randomly: they (potentially) occur when an error has been made and detected. Cases of other-correction are rare if we compare them to self-repairs/corrections and to other-initiated repair in general, but these repair types do not often involve an error that the recipient could correct. Second, the other-corrections in our data are not typically produced in a manner that would display orientation to the problematic nature of the action at hand: the correction turns are – for the most part – not modulated in the sense put forth by SJS (1977). This suggests that in the present data, in interactions between friends and family members, other-correction is not perceived as being a problematic action that needs to be handled in a delicate manner.

As we stated earlier, the corrections in our data tend to cluster in certain conversations, and especially within multi-party interactions. Thus, we could say that in at least some interactions, other-corrections are produced quite regularly and in a non-modulated fashion. Other-correction could therefore be one of the devices that is easily available or even typical of intimate interactions between participants who know each other well. These participants can be couples, as in extract 7, where Rea corrects her partner, and in extract 12, where Jaana corrects her husband and he then counter-corrects her. Indeed, couples-talk has been said to have some special interactional features (e.g., activities) that are also devices of displaying a specific relationship between the participants (see e.g., Sacks 1992b:

15 The problematic nature of correcting another speaker is also mentioned in other sources, for instance in etiquette books. A Finnish etiquette book (Lassila 1991) offers the reader some instructions for behaviour in social gatherings. One piece of advice is “Do not correct the other”. The author states that correcting the mistakes of other speakers is likely to embarrass the other person in front of other people. The most stylish solution is to ignore the errors.

437–443; Tainio 2000), the use of other-corrections being one of them (Tainio 2000: 24). However, this need not be limited to couples: the same interactional phenomena might also be displays of “being friends”. We have found that other-corrections are especially common in conversations where also other signs of intimate talk can be found, for instance teasing. Drew (1987) has shown that teasing is a conversational activity that suggests a certain level of intimacy between the participants: it is a way of playfully criticising the actions of friends and family members. Perhaps it is not a coincidence that teasings and other-corrections are found in the same conversations, and indeed sometimes together: some corrections are done teasingly.

Why then do other-corrections seem to be more frequent in multiparty conversations? One reason for that might well be that the corrections are not produced only for the one who made the error, but also for an ‘audience’. This might be relevant in several ways. For example, other-correction can be a way of manifesting a special relationship between the corrected and correcting party, e.g. construct the participants as spouses, or at least demonstrate their shared experiences. Furthermore, a correction can be provided for the unknowing audience: for instance, in extract (9) Milla produces a correction on an issue that one of the participants knows nothing about (how to make a fire with steel wool). Here, Milla and Oona are the knowing participants and the explication of the fire system is done for Lotta. Similarly, in extract (12), Jaana and Jaska are telling a story that the two other participants do not know. In multiparty interactions, then, other-corrections are made not only to correct the producer of the error, but also for the benefit of the audience, for them to get it right.

Some of our cases exhibit signs of what could be seen as ‘modulation’. However, these cases form a minority in the present database. Why are corrections sometimes marked as uncertain, even though they are not on most occasions? Again, several issues can be at stake here. For instance, sometimes the markers of uncertainty can indeed be signs the speaker’s genuine uncertainty: she may have a sense that an error occurred in the previous talk but may not be able to produce the correct information exactly. In extract 11, we had a case in which Lotta corrected the other speaker by negating the age she had mentioned and then produced an approximate correction (‘we were twelve or something’). Furthermore, the construction of the correction turn displays the speaker’s epistemic stance: how the speaker positions herself towards the knowledge presented in the turn and the sequence. In most of our cases, the speakers offer their correction as being certain, and the knowledge at stake can be such that both (or all) participants share or should share it or the correcting party can have primary access to that. However, other occasions arise in which the speakers either do not have direct access to the knowledge, or do not want to portray themselves as fully knowledgeable of the issue at hand. Extract (14), for instance, has both the participants downplaying their certainty of the correctable issue. In this example, too much knowledge about the issue could imply something that the participants do not want to imply: that they are quite knowledgeable of a person whom they have just portrayed in less than flattering terms. Thus, the construction of the corrections also displays how the speakers position themselves in relation to the knowledge that is relevant in that correction.

This study has presented a first step of analysing other-correction in Finnish interactions. Nevertheless, further layers of analysis are needed to obtain a broader

picture of the dynamics of error-correction. Future issues to be resolved include the following:

(i) Whereas the focus of this article has been on the turn that provides the correction, other aspects of the correction sequences also deserve closer attention. For instance, the responses to correction range from a straightforward acceptance of the correction (e.g., in extract 7 Tero accepts the correction by repeating it) to counter-corrections (e.g., in extracts 9 and 12). It turns out that corrections are quite often counter-corrected. In the correction sequences, even though the correction itself is not marked as a problematic activity, it is evident that it can certainly lead to interactional problems. The correction in extract (9), for example, sets off a dispute between the participants and the correction sequence interrupts the activity at hand: Oona's explication of the steel wool system is left unfinished (line 3) and never resumed – at the end of the dispute, the topic changes. Furthermore, in some correction sequences, the one who performs the correction can afterwards produce talk that seems to be oriented to downplaying the import of the correction, e.g. humorous talk on the same issue.

(ii) The present analysis is based on 50 sequences. More data of everyday interactions is needed to validate and modify the present findings. Even in the 50 cases we have collected, some cases are more clearly corrections than others. In some cases, the corrections are done in a teasing and/or humorous fashion (cf. SJS 1977: 378; Jefferson 1987), and it is difficult to say whether the turns are more like corrections or teases. Moreover, the line between actions such as disagreement and correction is not always clear. These observations suggest that 'correction' can be present in interaction in several ways: it can be an action of its own, but 'correctiveness' can also be a feature of several different types of actions (e.g., teases, answers to questions, directives). This study has focused on what we have seen as being the clearest cases of correction.

(iii) The practices of other-correction presented here should be analysed by comparing them to other ways of dealing with errors in interaction. To detect anything like a preference in these practices, we need to conduct a thorough analysis of error-treatment and comparisons between the practices. For instance, the following types of phenomena could be analysed: speakers self-correcting their errors, embedded corrections of errors (cf. Jefferson 1987), non-correction of observable errors (cf. Jefferson 1988), locating errors with repair initiators – if they come up in the data. For instance, we have found very few cases of repair initiators as correction-initiators (see footnote 2). But up to this point, we have been concentrating on outright other-corrections and have not collected other types of cases as systematically.

(iv) It would certainly be of interest to analyse the practices of other-correction in different kinds of interactions. On a more general level, it would be interesting to see whether the correction practices differ between people who know each other and people who do not know each other (so well). Furthermore, previous studies have suggested that some types of interactions might be more likely to have other-corrections (e.g., child–adult and especially child–parent, SJS 1977: 380; interactions between native and non-native speakers, Norrick 1991; interactions in classroom, McHoul 1991, Macbeth 2004, Tainio 2007). By analysing different types of interactions, one could see whether the asymmetrical nature of interactions affects the practices of correction: for instance, whether the linguistic asymmetry

in native–non-native interaction leads to more corrections (see e.g., Kurhila 2001, 2003, 2006).

In this chapter, we have presented some observations on the linguistic construction of correction-turns: we observed some variations in the turn-formats and explored factors that explain these variations. On the other hand, we wanted to compare our findings with English data. However, as we pointed out in the beginning, this cross-linguistic comparison is difficult for several reasons. In the end, can we now say that other-corrections are performed differently in British/American interactions (typically modulated) and in Finnish interactions (typically not modulated)? Obviously not. As noted earlier, the examples of other-correction in English-speaking interactions also seem to have the same kind of variations: some are modulated, some or not (see e.g., cases in Jefferson 1987; and cases in Hutchby & Wooffitt 1998: 63, 67–69). Before we can understand the dynamics of other-correction in depth, further comparative work is needed, both within specific languages and interaction types, between languages and cultures, and across different types of interactions.

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## ‘May I ask’ Question frames in institutional interaction

### *Introduction*

In conversation analytic research, a distinction is usually made between everyday conversation and institutional interaction. These two types of interaction differ in many ways, one of which is the task orientation of institutional interaction. When people meet in an institutional context, there is typically a pre-specified agenda and a measurable goal that has to be met – a diagnosis to be delivered, a decision to be made, a deal to be achieved – before it is possible to close the conversation. The participants need to gather a certain amount of information in order to achieve the institutional goal, and questions are an important vehicle for gathering this information (for the characteristics of institutional conversation, see, for example, Drew & Heritage 1992; Hakulinen 2009: 58–60; cf. also Arminen in this volume).

Although questions form part of the foundation of many institutional encounters, we have noticed that they are not always introduced by simple interrogative sentences. Indeed, we have observed that it is one of the characteristics of interaction between professionals and lay people that, in some well-defined cases, interrogative turns are prefaced with conventionalized markers that just project the upcoming interrogative action rather than standing for that action. Such action-projecting preliminary turn-parts are here called *question frames*. The following extracts illustrate the fact that a frame may precede a question posed by the lay-party; in (1), this is a customer in a commercial exchange.

(1) UMOL 2:A:18 Call to a kennel, C=customer, E=kennel owner.

→ C: >Ja undrar< finns de plats på pensionat:et;  
I wonder exist it place on kennel-DEF  
>I wonder< do you have room in the kennel;

02 E: Dē gör de nu hör rö:;  
It does it now PRT  
Yes, we do have room indeed.

Framing also occurs in questions posed by professionals, as in (2), where it is used by a doctor during a medical consultation.

(2) INK 6:16 Doctor-patient conversation; D=doctor, P=patient.

→ D2: .hh **får ja fråga** v- v- (0,5) vem ställde den här  
 may I ask w- w- who set-PST this here  
 .hh **may I ask** w- w- (0.5) who made this

02 diagnosen då på sista dan ( )  
 diagnosis-DEF then on last day-DEF  
 diagnosis then on the last day

In both examples, the initial framing of questions occurs in a context where the questioners’ institutional right to ask questions should be unchallenged.

Examples (1) and (2) show that the question frame can have the syntactic form of a declarative (*ja undrar* ‘I wonder’) or an interrogative (*får ja fråga* ‘may I ask’). It is noteworthy that the frames are constructed as grammatically parenthetical units, i.e. “I wonder + question”, rather than “I wonder if + embedded question”. Such syntactic coding deviates from what is normal in the written standard, and means that question frames are interesting grammatically as well as in terms of interaction (we return to these formal properties later). Of course, the more “canonical” ‘I wonder if’ type of introduction for questions also occurs in spoken language. However, this type of biclausal construction is not regarded to involve a question *frame* in the distinct syntactic and pragmatic sense that is discussed in this study.

Our study of question frames is intended to be not only a contribution to the research on questioning in institutional interactions (e.g., Boyd & Heritage 2006; Clayman & Heritage 2002; Heritage 2002; Heritage & Roth 1995; Linell et al. 2003), but also an investigation of grammatical patterns in spoken Swedish with possible implications for cross-linguistic research on the syntax of spoken language. Our decision to study both interaction and grammar is inspired in general terms by research in the field of interactional linguistics, which derives its empirical methods of investigation from conversation analysis (see, for example, Hakulinen & Selting 2005; Lindström 2006a; Selting & Couper Kuhlen 2001). The existence of question-projecting devices has been noted in a few prior studies of conversational Swedish (see Hofvendahl 2000: 66; Lindholm 2003: 70–73; Melander Marttala 1995: 80–81; Lindström 1999: 155), but these are not focused accounts of the phenomenon which is at issue here. However, the topic is raised in Haakana (2002), a study of Finnish which introduced the term *question frame*. Some studies of English have also discussed somewhat parallel devices, i.e. constructions of the types *I wonder if...*, *May I ask you a question?* (especially Schegloff 1980; cf. also Clayman & Heritage 2002 and in this volume; Drew 2006) and the evolution of units of clausal origin into formulas or discourse markers (Hopper and Thompson 2008; Kärkkäinen 2004).

The following aspects of question frames will be investigated in the present comparative study using the research perspective of interactional linguistics:

1. *Grammatical*. What are the typical syntactic features of question frames and how are they placed within the design of a turn and a TCU?
2. *Interactional*. What kinds of interactional functions are realized by question frames and do the frames have different interactional profiles depending on their grammatical form?

3. *Distributional*. How frequent are question frames in different conversational genres, institutional activity types, conversation phases and participant roles? From the point of grammar, the linguistic practice of question framing is contrasted with clausal embedding in the syntax of written language; from the point of interaction, we investigate the functional division of labour between different types of questions frames. By studying the distribution of the usage of question frames, this study compares activity types in an analysis of the kind outlined by Drew (1998), also comparing the usage among different participants in the activities.

### *Data*

The data excerpts are drawn from institutional interactions conducted in Swedish. Data from three main types of institutional activity were used: medical consultations recorded in Finland (INK, video), calls to the Poison Control Centre recorded in Sweden (GIC, audio), and calls to a ticket booking agency recorded in Finland (“Luckan”, audio). We also examined one police interrogation and one courtroom interview (Tema K, audio recordings in Sweden). In addition, we scanned a number of casual group and telephone conversations and found that question frames rarely if at all occurred in these types of data. The most important material of casual type came from the corpora compiled in the project *Grammar in conversation: A study of Swedish* (GRIS), i.e. 20 conversations (the institutional ones excluded) with the total length of ca 10 hours. The appendix provides a more detailed account of the data.

The database of institutional conversations included 57 conversations, of a length varying from 30 seconds to 52 minutes, the total extent of this database being ca 16 hours of recordings. Within this database, we located a total of 35 structures that fit the definition of *question frame* as given in the next section. Question frames are thus not extremely frequent, but constitute a recurring pattern in spoken interaction. We could say that a question frame occurs in approximately every other conversation. Although we mostly found examples of question frames in institutional talk, it is not possible to conclude that they have no place in everyday conversation. For example, we must take note of the data presented in Ottesjö (2006), which presents family dinner conversations and in which a few instances of question frames occur. Nevertheless, it seems fair to say that question frames constitute a pattern of interaction which plays a distinct role in institutional communication (cf. Arminen in this volume).

This study begins by recognizing the different formal varieties of question frame and by analyzing aspects of turn design and syntactic organization. The second part of the chapter deals with the interactional functions of question frames, comparing different types of frame and their functional profiles in the data. Finally, we report on the distribution of question frames with regard to institutional activity types, conversational phases and participant roles.

### *On frame and turn design*

In formal and semantic terms, question frames fall in a few sub-categories, as outlined in the following:

- (3) a. reference to cognitive activity (‘wonderings’)  
*jag undrar* ‘I wonder’  
*jag funderar* ‘I ponder’
- b. reference to the act of asking a question (‘appeals’ and ‘aims’)  
*får jag fråga* ‘may I ask’  
*jag tänkte fråga* ‘I was going to ask’  
*jag tänkte höra* ‘I was going to hear [i.e. learn about]’  
*en fråga (bara)* ‘one question (only)’
- c. generic pre-question (‘how abouts’)  
*hur är det (med den där)* ‘how is it (with that [thing])’

Categories (3a) and (3b) both involve a modal dimension by hedging the interrogative act with a wondering, permissive or an intentional formulation (the cognitive verb *tänka* ‘think’ is lexicalized as a futural marker in the uses of type 3b). The frames in the category (3c), like *hur är det* ‘how about it’, express only a very generic interrogative act, so generic that it is not considered an answerable question in the sequential environment: *Hur är det, har du värk i kroppen?* ‘How about (x), do you have pain in the body?’ Hence, all these variations of question frames have one characteristic in common: they all represent the projection of an interrogative action.

The common syntactic characteristic of all the question-frame types is that they are grammatically incomplete structures from a sentential point of view. The wonderings of type (3a) look like matrix clauses (i.e. superordinate clauses) that could take a subsequent embedded clause as the object (cf. Auer 1996); such an object clause would be introduced with the subordinator *om* ‘if’ (4a). Instead, however, the potential matrix clause (e.g., *jag undrar*) is left without an overt object, and is followed by a syntactically independent interrogative main clause, evident in the verb-first word order typical of direct polar questions (4b). Hence, the ‘wondering’ merely projects the action proper rather than constituting it.

- (4) a. *Jag undrar om det finns plats på hotellet.*  
 I wonder if it exist place on hotel-DEF  
 ‘I wonder if there is any room at the hotel.’
- b. *Jag undrar, finns det plats på hotellet?*  
 I wonder exist it place on hotel-DEF  
 ‘I wonder, is there any room at the hotel?’

The same applies to the question projections of type (3b). In canonical terms, the matrix clause (*får jag fråga*) should be completed with an embedded interrogative clause (5a), here marked as syntactically dependent by the subject place-holder *som* (the subject should always precede the finite verb in an embedded content question). As a question frame, however, the preliminary clause (and its verb of

asking) is left without an overt object, and is instead followed by an interrogative clause with no marking of syntactic dependency (5b):

- (5) a. *Får jag fråga vem som ställde den här diagnosen?*  
 May I ask who PRT set-PST this here diagnosis-DEF  
 ‘May I ask who it was that made this diagnosis?’  
 b. *Får jag fråga, vem ställde den här diagnosen?*  
 May I ask who set-PST this here diagnosis- DEF  
 ‘May I ask: who made this diagnosis?’

The format of generic, preliminary questions of type 3c has some features in common with that of ‘how about’ questions, where the subject matter is specified in a prepositional phrase using *med* ‘with’: *Hur är det med maten?* ‘How about the food?’. However, question frames of type 3c may leave out the specification totally (*hur är det* ‘how is it, how about’), or be completed with a prepositional phrase which has the character of a pronominal “dummy” (*hur är det med den där* ‘how is it with that, how about that’). This pronominal component is non-referential, leaving the status of the initial interrogative unit generic, unspecified, and thus unanswerable. Instead of being a question with semantic content in its own right, the unit functions as a preliminary question that merely indicates that a question of some kind is on its way: *hur är det, finns det möjlighet att beställa biljetter?* ‘How about, is it possible to book some tickets?’

We should also note that a question frame may have a phrasal construction, as in the variant *en fråga bara* ‘only one question’, exemplified in (6):

(6) GIC:19242 Call to the Poison Control Centre, P=pharmacist, C=caller.

01 P: (...) så e de väl ändaå (.) förmodligen en ganska liten mängd,=  
 so is it PRT still (.) probably a rather small amount  
 (...) so I guess it’s (.) probably a rather small amount

02 C: =mm,=

→ P: =.hh **en fråga bara**, var i landet ringer du ifrån förresten?=  
 one question only where in country-DEF ring you from by the way  
 .hh **only one question**, where in the country are you calling from by the way

04 C: =ifrån Borås.  
 from Borås

The noun phrase *en fråga bara* stands in initial position, outside the inner clausal frame of the subsequent, syntactically independent interrogative clause.

From the perspective of clausal syntax, then, all the various types of question frame are parenthetical elements. They do not have nor are constituents in the clause that they are appended to. Most often, the frame functions as a preface to and projection of the question proper, but it is also possible for a frame to occur finally, postmodifying the interrogative action as in extract (7).

(7) INK 14:3 Doctor-patient interaction, D=doctor.

D2: när va de här **får ja fråga**  
 when was it here may I ask  
 when was this, **may I ask**

Syntactically parenthetic coding is typical of pragmatic markers, such as discourse markers (e.g., conjunctions as one type of them) and pragmatic particles (e.g., expressions like *you know*). A corresponding syntactic conduct is displayed by question frames, which is probably indicative of their pragmatic functional prominence and reduced semantic significance. In addition, the grammatically incomplete, minimal clausal shape of typical question frames has a formal affinity with lexicalized pragmatic markers with a historical clausal source, like *jag menar* ‘I mean’. These syntactic characteristics could be interpreted as a grammatical indication of the auxiliary role of question frames in the formation of an action, i.e. the fact that they do not represent the action proper, but rather project and possibly modify its formulation (Lindström 2006b). For these reasons, we do not regard question frames as TCUs in their own right (see below).

The Swedish question frames have many features in common with English pre-questions (such as *Can I ask you a question?*) and other related action projections (*Let me ask you this question*), which have been investigated by Schegloff (1980), one of them exemplified in (8):

(8) Schegloff 1980:122, part of extract (11).

→ V: **Lemme ask you dis question.**  
 02 J: Yeh.  
 03 V: Are you getting toothaches?  
 04 (0.8)  
 05 J: No!

Question frames are thus one subcategory of action-projecting devices. They are related to pre-invites (*Do you have plans for Saturday night?*), pre-requests (*Do you mind doing me a favour?*) and pre-narratives (*I have to tell you something*) (see Levinson 1983: 345–364; see also Eriksson 1997: 72–83 and Lindström 1999: 36–39 for Swedish data). Action projections announce turns (actions) of a certain kind (a question, a request, a telling). The projected action does not occur in the same unit as the projection, but is represented by a verb or a noun that foreshadows the projected action. There is only a general representation of the real subject of the enquiry; for example, a type of “favour” may be left unspecified, or the projected object of a question may be represented by a pronoun such as *something* (see Schegloff 1980: 107; cf. also Hopper & Thompson 2008 on projectability and clause combining). This also happens in some question frames: *Hur är det med en sån sak...* ‘How about such a thing ...’

Action-projecting units and acknowledging responses often form a pre-sequence (as in 8), or may be incorporated in the same turn as the projected continuation. The second alternative is favoured in the case of Swedish question frames. It seems that pre-sequences are more likely to arise when the projection has a more elaborated or even syntactically (and pragmatically) complete form. One such example is shown in (9), where a pre-question, functioning as a turn of its own

with a topic specifying PP (*om körkort* ‘about the driver’s license’), is followed by the acknowledgment token *mm* (lines 1–2).

(9) Tema K P5 Police interrogation, P=policeman, S=suspect.

→ S: men **ja vill bara fråga en- en grej om körkort?**  
 but I want just ask one one thing about drive.card-DEF  
 but **I just want to ask something about the driver’s license?**

→ P: mm:ç

03 S: om man får >sån här<. (0.2) heter nåt ei- (.)  
 if one get such here call something ei-  
 if you get a thing like this (0.2) it’s something ei-

04 e e en er a en, (0.8) va innebär de?  
 e e en er a en what mean it  
 e e en er a en, (0.8) what does that mean

05 (1.1)

06 S: er in rån står de (nog).  
 reminder stand it PRT  
 reminder it says

Hence, we categorise sections of talk like the one at line 1 in (9) as pre-question *turns* rather than as question frames (which are non-turns).

In our database, question frames may introduce turns of various degrees of internal complexity. The frame may be directly followed by a simple question or an elaborate series of questions. More significantly, the interrogative turn may be structurally complicated by the addition of other contextualizing elements, such as references to times, places, or the speaker’s motivation for asking a certain question or making a certain request. One example is given in (10), where a customer calling a kennel is asking whether there is any room for her dog. In line 1, the customer projects a “wondering” (*ja undrar*), after which she inserts some background information about where and when she will be away (alluding to the time when she needs a place for her dog); this contextualizing parenthesis is marked with italics in the transcription, whereas the question frames surrounding the parenthesis are bolded.

(10) UMOL 2:A:18 Call to a kennel, C=customer, E=kennel owner.

→ C: A va bra:ç pt .h Du **ja undrar** eh v- vi ska åka till  
 yes what good pt .h you I wonder eh w-we shall go to  
 Yeah that’s good pt .h Well **I wonder** eh we’re going to

02 *Fin:la:nd i hel:gen*  
 Finland in weekend-DEF  
*Finland at the weekend*

03 (.)

- 04 E:    [[Ja:ç  
          yes  
          [[Yes  
→ C:    [[>Ja undrar< finns de plats på pensionat:et:ç  
          I wonder   exist it place on kennel-DEF  
          [[>I wonder< do you have room in the kennel

After a slight pause, and overlapping with a continuation from the kennel owner, *ja* in line 4, the customer then returns to the interrogative project by recycling the question frame *ja undrar*, which is eventually followed by the projected action.

With regard to turn design, we can observe that question frames and contextualizing additions are placed in certain characteristic positions around the projected interrogative action. The simplest case is one where a frame directly precedes or, occasionally, follows the question. Contextualizing segments may be placed in various locations relative to the frame and the question. They may precede both the frame and the question, be inserted between these, or follow the framed question. Table 1 summarizes these structural variations with the help of some slightly simplified examples taken from our data.

Table 1. Variations in turn design involving the components question frame + contextualization + question

| Interrogative turn                                   |  |  |   |   |   |
|--|--|--|---|---|---|
| Frame  | Context  | Frame  | Question  | Context   | Frame                                   |
|  |  | <i>får ja fråga</i><br>may I ask                           | <i>vem va de som<br/>diagnosticera de här</i><br>who diagnosed this   |   |   |
|  |  |  | <i>när va de här</i><br>when was this   |   | <i>får ja<br/>fråga</i><br>may I<br>ask |
|  | <i>ja blev stucken<br/>av en geting</i><br>I was stung by<br>a wasp                            | <i>då undrar ja</i><br>I wonder then                       | <i>behöver man göra<br/>nåt speciellt</i><br>do I need to do<br>something special   |   |   |
|  |  | <i>då kan vi<br/>bara fråga</i><br>then we can<br>only ask | <i>begär du nån<br/>ersättning</i><br>are you demanding<br>any compensation   | <i>du kommer<br/>från Karlstad</i><br>you come<br>from Karlstad |   |
| <i>ja bara<br/>funderar</i><br>I'm just<br>wondering | <i>inte efterlyser<br/>ja mediciner</i><br>I'm not asking<br>for medication                    |  | <i>men finns de inget<br/>som sätter fart på<br/>blodcirkulationen</i><br>but isn't there<br>anything that would<br>activate the blood<br>circulation |   |   |
| <i>ja undrar</i><br>I wonder                         | <i>vi ska åka<br/>till Finland i<br/>helgen</i><br>we're going to<br>Finland at the<br>weekend | <i>ja undrar</i><br>I wonder                               | <i>finns de plats på<br/>pensionatet</i><br>is there any room in<br>the kennel  |   |   |

It seems that the simple turn format question frame + question is typical of questions posed by doctors. In contrast, the question turns by patients tend to

contain contextualizing elements. The same pattern also occurs in the calls to the Poison Control Centre and in the customers' calls to the ticket-booking agency: questions asked by the lay-party seem to need more contextualizing work. We will return to these differences in our interactional analysis in the next section, and again in our summarizing discussion at the end of the chapter.

At this point, we can conclude that an additional contextualizing segment is generally introduced if the person who poses the question needs to provide a motivation for it in order to enhance its chances of appropriate reception. The frame and the contextualization work together to adjust the interrogative action to the local interactional contingencies.

### *Interactional uses of question frames*

The brief inventory at the beginning of the previous section provided an illustration of the structurally most frequent and stable types of question frame in our data. We will now proceed to comparing the interactional uses of these frames, starting with the “wondering” type.

#### ***The type ‘I was wondering’ (jag undrar, jag funderar)***

The verbs in the frames that refer to cognitive activity typically express a ‘wondering’ (*undrar*) or a ‘pondering’ (*funderar*). The following extract illustrates how a caller might use a question frame in a telephone conversation. The turns in lines 1 and 2, and the customer’s (C) turn-initial acknowledgement token *a va bra* ‘good’ in line 3, belong to the initial identification phase in this telephone call. The conversation moves on when the caller initiates a question in line 3.

(11) UMOL 2:A:18 Call to a kennel, C=customer, E=kennel owner.

- 01 C: Då vet du vem ja e v[a<sub>ç</sub>  
then know you who I am what  
Then you know who I am, don't you
- 02 E: [Jajamensa:n<sub>ç</sub>  
Yes.indeed  
[Yeah I certainly do
- C: A va bra:ç pt .h Du **ja undrar** eh v- vi ska åka till  
yes what good pt .h you I wonder eh w-we shall go to  
Yeah that's good pt .h Well **I wonder** eh we're going to
- 04 *F̄in:la:nd i hel:gen*  
Finland in weekend-DEF  
*Finland at the weekend*
- 05 (.)
- 06 E: [Ja:ç  
yes  
[Yes

→ C:     [>**Ja undrar**< finns de plats på pensionat:et;  
           I wonder exist it place on kennel-DEF  
           [>**I wonder**< do you have room in the kennel

08 E:     De gör de nu hörö:ç  
           It does it now PRT  
           Yes we do have room now indeed

Before stating the question, the caller first produces the attention-getter *du* (‘you’) and the question frame *ja undrar* (‘I wonder’). These are structuring markers with the function of signalling the transition from the initial exchange of greetings to the next phase, the reason for the call. The turn continues with a contextualizing segment, *vi ska åka till Finland i helgen* ‘we’re going to Finland at the weekend’. As discussed with reference to Table 1, a contextualizing segment can be defined as an account of circumstances that facilitates the adequate comprehension of the projected action. In line 7, when the contextualizing work is done, the caller repeats the question frame. Only after repeating this frame does she introduce the reason for the call by asking if there is room (for her dog) at the kennels. This is a preliminary action, in which the caller does not explicitly express any demands, as she would if she were to say, for example, *I would like to make a reservation*. Instead, she poses a question about circumstances that would make a demand relevant. As the conversation goes on, the caller reveals that there are some complicating matters related to her inquiry (her dog, a bitch, is in heat). This may account for the cautious design of the turn in lines 3–7, which includes a projecting frame, a contextualizing segment and a preliminary action. The repetition of the question frame (lines 3 and 7) serves the function of marking a return from the parenthetical contextualizing segment to the already projected key action, making a reservation.

Extract (12) is another example of a “wondering”, this time in a telephone conversation to a Poison Control Centre. The caller’s first turn consists of an introduction *ja hejsan* ‘yes hello’, the question frame *ja undrar* ‘I wonder’, and two declarative turn segments that initiate the description of a problem.

(12) GIC:19541 Call to the Poison Control Centre, P=pharmacist, C=caller.

01 P:     <giftinformation>, jourhavande apotekarie?  
           poison.information on.duty     pharmacist  
           poison information, pharmacist on duty

→ C:     ja:a hejsan. **ja undrar**ç (.) *ja har en dotter som e*  
           yes hello I wonder I have a daughter who is  
           yes hello. **I wonder** (.) *I have a daughter who is*

→         två (.) år,  
           two year  
           two (.) years old,

04 P:     mmç

→ C:     å hon har drucki lite AD- (0.4) dro:pparç  
           and she has drunk a little AD- drops  
           and she has drunk some AD- (0.4) drops

- 06 P: AD-droppar [ja:  
AD-drops yes  
AD-drops, yes
- 07 C: [ja:  
[yes

The pharmacist responds to the question framing unit *ja undrar* and the first contextualizing segment of the turn *ja har en dotter som e två år* ‘I have a daughter who is two years old’ with the neutral acknowledgement token *mm* in line 4. The elements in lines 2–4 thus constitute a kind of a pre-sequence that is followed by a prosodically and pragmatically projected continuation which pins down the problem: *å hon ha drucki lite AD-droppar* (‘and she has drunk a little AD-drops’). Note that the caller does not formulate a proper question after this utterance. Instead, as soon as the caller says the name of the potentially poisonous liquid, the information provider starts asking questions about it. Hence, the pharmacist (P) starts dealing with the problem (line 6) immediately after the initial contextualizing work is done, treating this introduction as an independent communicative action, not as a mere pre-practice (see Schegloff 1980: 116).

The conversational genre probably explains why the pharmacist treats the contextualizing segment as an information-seeking act. Telephone calls to the Poison Control Centre are focused on problems, and after the initial exchange of greetings the caller is expected to describe a potential problem and ask the pharmacist for advice (Landqvist 2001: 214). It is therefore possible for the pharmacist to start asking detailed questions as soon as the central referents (the poison and the person who potentially has been exposed to the poison) have been identified. Furthermore, the question frame signals the fact that the caller is “wondering” about something; thus, she has an adequate reason for calling the Poison Control Centre – indeed, she “has a question”, as the frame would suggest.

Extract (13) demonstrates how a patient might frame a question as a “pondering”. In addition, in this extract, the frame and the question are separated by a contextualizing segment (*int efterlyser ja mediciner ...* ‘I’m not asking for any medicine ...’). The contextualizing segment appears to be designed to ward off a (possibly negative) reaction from the conversational partner until the speaker has produced the action that is projected by the frame *ja bara funderar* ‘I’m just pondering’.

(13) INK 2:25 Doctor-patient interaction, D=doctor, P=patient.

- P2: **ja >bara funderar .h alltså<** finns de int (.)  
I just ponder so exist it not  
**I’m just pondering .h see,** is there no (.)
- *int int efterlyser >ja mediciner för int e ju de man e*  
not not call.for I medicine-PL because not is PRT it one is  
*I’m not asking for any medicine ’cause it’s not what one is*
- *ute [efter me]n< .h (.) men finns de ingenting som*  
out after but .h but exist it nothing that  
*looking for but .h (.) but isn’t there anything that*

04 D1: [nä ]  
no

05 P2: sätter fart. (.) sprätt på b- blodcir°kulation° ((snuffles))  
puts speed rip on b- blood.circulation  
would speed up. (.) activate the blood circulation

The question frame is a comment on the projected action: the patient categorizes the activity as a “pondering” over something, i.e. as a potentially worried reflection. Moreover, the adverbial *bara* ‘just, only’ emphasizes the pondering as the key activity, downplaying any implication that what is projected might be a proposal or indeed a challenge. In the following contextualizing segment, the patient then “defines” her move as something other than a request for medicine. She uses this to represent herself as “a good patient” and her question as merely seeking information. However, the sequence results in the doctor promising to prescribe her a new medicine (not included in the extract).

The use of the verb *fundera* ‘ponder’ instead of the more generally available *undra* ‘wonder’ is characteristic of question frames produced by patients. It typically occurs when patients introduce candidate diagnoses and make suggestions regarding medical treatment (Lindholm 1999; see also Raevaara 2000 for a corresponding use in Finnish). This is related to the patient’s urge to position herself as a lay party rather than an expert. There is generally some sensitivity in introducing a topic which is not on the doctor’s agenda or a move which can be understood as the patient’s subjective assessment of a subject within the doctor’s area of expertise. Indeed, it has been demonstrated by Drew (2006) that patients’ diagnostic hypotheses can cause misalignment between doctors and callers in telephone medicine.

Patients, then, seem to need more contextual support for their questions than doctors (see Sandén et al. 2001; Linell et al. 2003). Doctors can base their questions on their medical agenda, but patients have to contextualize their questions locally, for example by pre-announcing their actions as more or less spontaneous wonderings or ponderings. The patient’s question in lines 1–5 indirectly expresses her diagnostic hypothesis; she thinks that her muscular stiffness is caused by blood circulation problems, and therefore some “circulation medicine” would improve her symptoms. Her question about medicine in lines 3 and 5 is thus potentially delicate in the medical context, and this delicacy is probably the motivation for both the question frame and the contextualizing practice before the question proper.

Interestingly, the verb *fundera* occurs in question frames in set of material consisting of family dinner conversations (Ottesjö 2006), although question frames are generally rare in casual conversations. An example is given in (14), where *ja fundera* is found in line 6.

(14) Dinner1: Family dinner, U=mother, S=daughter, V=son.

01 U: jo jo: men dom här hade han ju till uthyrning också  
yes yes but these here had he PRT to rent also  
right, but he did rent these ones as well

02 fö han sålde rom ju sen vet↑du.  
because he sold them PRT then PRT  
'cause he sold them then you know.

- 03 (0.7)
- 04 S: Jo >(i)allafa:=mamma.< =  
yes anyway mum  
Well anyway, mum.
- 05 U: =ja↑  
yes
- 06 S: **Ja fundera.** *dom i Göteborg, dom ha ju °inte: samtidigt*  
I ponder they in Gothenburg they have PRT not same.timed  
**I ponder.** *them in Gothenburg, they don't have at the same time*
- 07 *som oss va.°*  
as us what  
*as we do, do they*
- 07 U: >Näj näj nä.< du ka- du kan ring[a till e Frida ] å=  
no no no you ca- you can ring to e Frida and  
no no no, you can call Frida and
- 08 V: [Harald å rom ha]  
Harald and they have  
Harald and the others have
- 09 U: =Harald å höra om nån av dom ha en bräda å låna ut.  
Harald and hear if some of them have a board to lend out  
Harald and ask if any of them has a board to lend to you.

The issue here is how the daughter in the family (S) can get hold of snowboarding equipment for the school's winter holiday. The conversation is lively, with many family members involved and competing for turn space. The mother (U) concludes a piece of information about a person from whom the equipment could be hired (lines 1–2). However, the daughter has already discussed her own project, trying to introduce the idea of using the equipment of some friends in Gothenburg. In line 4, she returns to her project by producing the resumption marker *jo iallafall* addressed to *mamma* 'mum', who acknowledges the initiative with *ja* 'yes', which then form a pre-sequence for the resumed project. Then, in line 6, the daughter presents her idea as a "pondering", cautiously referring to "them in Gothenburg" and that "they" do not have "at the same time as us", i.e. suggesting that Gothenburg schools do not have the winter holiday during the same week as S has, and thus the snowboard might be available. In fact, no proper question about the equipment is formulated; rather, S has provided a background for how her idea about borrowing the equipment might work out. The other parties, the son (V) and the mother, see the implications of this background and offer a solution along the suggested lines: S can call the friends and ask if they have a board to lend her (see Ottesjö 2006 for a more detailed analysis).

The use of a modest, "patient-type" question frame like *ja fundera(r)* is motivated by the daughter's uncertainty about whether her suggestion is appropriate. She presents her idea with markers of indirectness and reciprocity: the frame *ja fundera* communicates the fact that she has been thinking of a possibility but



- 06 P5: [Rönnerberg
- 07 [Erik Rönnerberg ]
- 08 D2: [Rönnerberg just så å] han e ju en (0.4)  
Rönnerberg just so and he is PRT a  
Rönnerberg right, and he is a (0.4)
- 09 mycky skickli reumatolog  
much skilful rheumatologist  
very skilled rheumatologist

The doctor in (15) is diagnosing the patient for the first time. In line 5, he asks for more information about the person whom the patient has referred to as “the one who made this diagnosis of fibromyalgia”. The doctor’s question forms an attempt to obtain more information about the circumstances described in the patient’s previous turn, treating the contextual information provided by the patient as insufficient.

The patient has been telling the doctor about her medical history, describing a variety of symptoms and diagnoses. In lines 1–3, she describes how certain drugs failed to affect the medical symptoms caused by her diaphragm hernia. She refers to her primary medical diagnosis, fibromyalgia, but these references are embedded in her ongoing reasoning about the hernia. When the doctor enters the conversation in line 5, he targets a minor aspect of the patient’s previous turn as the focus for his question by asking for the identity of the previously mentioned physician; for a parallel case, see extract (2) above.

The doctor’s question frame functions to mark the topic of the following question, a certain physician’s identity, as both unsupported by the local context and potentially delicate. The potential delicacy is connected to issues of disagreement among medical professionals concerning the fibromyalgia syndrome and the diagnostic evaluation of this syndrome. Note that the doctor responds by giving a positive evaluation of the other rheumatologist when his identity is disclosed (lines 8–9).

In frames referring to an intention to ask a question, the finite verb appears in the past tense (*tänkte*), as in the expression *ja tänkte höra* ‘I thought I’d find out’ in extract (16), line 4.<sup>2</sup>

(16) GIC:16485 Call to the Poison Control Centre, P=pharmacist, C=caller.

- 01 P: <giftinformation>, jourhavande apotekare;  
poison.information on.duty pharmacist  
poison information, pharmacist on duty
- 02 C: hej. .hh  
hello

2 The present tense, for instance *jag tänker fråga* ‘I’m going to ask’, would place the activity somewhere in the future, in a context other than the present speech situation. The past tense form *jag tänkte fråga* thus places the speaker’s intention in a moment that, reasonably enough, is prior to the projected act of asking the question.

- 03 P: h[e:j̥  
hello
- 04 C: [eh ja heter Mattias, å **ja tänkte höra** (0.5) hh ehm (0.6)  
I name.is Mattias and I thought hear  
My name’s Mattias and **I thought I’d find out** (0.5) hh ehm (0.6)
- 05 *de e så här att de stog ett glas, <me en> (.) Treo.tablett*  
it is like this that it stood a glass with a Treo.tablet  
*it’s like this, I had a glass with a liquefied Treo tablet*
- 06 *upplöst på mitt nattygsbo:rd här på morronen,*  
liquefied on my bedside.table here on morning-DEF  
*on my bedside table here in the morning*
- 07 P: mm̥
- 08 C: *och nu:, >precis nyss< då så e:h hh (0.3) <kom sonen> fjorton*  
and now right just.now then so came SON-DEF fourteen  
*and now a moment ago my son fourteen months*
- 09 *månader gående me den där, (.) .hh å då va de ungefär halva*  
months walking with this there and then was it about half  
*came walking with it and he had drunk barely about half of*
- 10 *glaset urdrucket knappt, hh å sen så va, större*  
glass-DEF out.drunk barely and then so was bigger  
*the glass, hh and then the main*
- 11 *delen av de han hade försökt få i sej hade*  
part-DEF of it he had tried get in him-RFL had  
*part of what he tried to drink*
- 12 *hamnat på tröjan, för den va plaskblöt, (.)*  
ended.up on shirt-DEF because it was soaking.wet  
*ended up on his shirt ’cause it was soaking wet,*
- 13 hh men hur farlit e de?  
hh but how dangerous is it

The frame is produced at the beginning of a call to the Poison Control Centre, during a transition from the identification of the caller to the presentation of the reason for the call. The projected question does not follow immediately after the frame; instead, a lengthy contextualizing segment, describing all relevant circumstances, is produced. The projected question (*how dangerous is it?*) is posed only at the end of the caller’s turn in line 13, prefaced by the adversative conjunction *men*, which marks the shift from the contextualization to another action.

An intentional frame like *ja tänkte höra* is not a typical “patient’s frame”, rather, the caller positions himself as a customer who has an obvious right to seek information. We find similar kinds of frame in the calls to a ticket booking agency. Providing information and keeping a low threshold for a citizen’s questions is, of course, the objective of the Poison Control Centre. This orientation towards public

service probably contributes to the fact that these interactions between pharmacists and callers constitute an interesting mixed genre, which exhibits some features of ordinary medical interaction and some features of communication between customers and sales clerks.

Finally, we will consider a variant that has a phrasal construction, the expression *en fråga bara* ‘just a (one) question’ (17). As with the intentional and permissive formulations of the frame, an explicit reference is made to “questioning”.

(17) GIC:19242 Call to the Poison Control Centre, P=pharmacist, C=caller.

01 P: (...) så e de väl ända (.) förmodligen en ganska liten mängd,=  
so is it PRT still probably a rather small amount  
(...) so I guess it's (.) probably a rather small amount

02 C: =mm,=

→ P: =hh **en fråga bara**, var i landet ringer du ifrån förresten?=  
a question only where in country-DEF ring you from by the way  
.hh only one question, where in the country are you calling from, by the way

04 C: =ifrån Borås.  
from Borås

In line 1, the pharmacist summarizes the conversation, confirming that there is probably no acute risk of poisoning in the case described by the caller. Generally, there is no need for further discussion once the pharmacist has provided the concluding piece of advice and the caller has acknowledged it, since the Poison Control Centre calls are very focused on giving and receiving advice (Landqvist 2001: 215). However, in line 3, the pharmacist initiates one more question, checking the caller's home town in order to emphasize an earlier recommendation to go to the hospital and check that the caller can follow the recommendation. The use of a phrasal question frame, which contains the mitigating adverb *bara* ‘just, only’, is probably an attempt on the part of the pharmacist to orient the speakers to this somewhat unexpected return to asking questions, an issue which is further signalled by the turn-final misplacement marker *förresten* ‘by the way’ (Schegloff & Sacks 1973: 319–320). The mitigation signals that the question is of less importance, and that there will probably not be any more questions, thus foreshadowing the closing of the conversation.

### Generic pre-questions (*hur e de*)

We will now move on to dealing with a special subcategory of question frames, those comprising a generic pre-question such as *hur e de* ‘how is it, how about (x)’. Due to their non-referential form, these pre-questions do not form a pragmatically well-formed question in their contexts of occurrence; instead, they project an act of questioning. In extract (18), the doctor produces a multi-unit question turn which is framed with this kind of a generic, preliminary interrogative:

(18) INK 13:17 Doctor-patient interaction, D=doctor, P=patient.

- 01 D3:    jå så du [(klarar) att att låta [(v-) låta vara  
           yes so you manage to to let           let be  
           yes, so you manage to leave it
- 02 P13:                   [ja                   [ja  
                               yes                   yes
- 03 P13:    jå  
               yeah
- 04 D3:    °jå°  
               yeah
- D3:    .h **hur e de** e de e: e de nån av dina vän**innor**  
             how is it is it is is it some of your female.friends  
             .h **how is it**, are there, are there any of your friends
- 06           eller tidigare   arbetskamrater som fick samma  
               or   previous colleagues   who got same  
               or previous colleagues who got the same
- 07           problem som du: eller .h va   du ensam me de här  
               problem as you or   was you alone with this here  
               problem as you or .h were you alone having this
- 08           då de börja, eller ha   ha du kunna   identifiera dej  
               when it started or   have have you can-PTC identify you-RFL  
               when it started, or have you been able to identify yourself

The previous topic comes to an end with the doctor’s formulation in line 1 and the finalizing acknowledgement tokens in lines 2–4. At this point, the doctor poses a topic-initiating question turn. The generic frame *hur e de* orients to the transition, and is probably also indicative of the apparent subsequent problems the doctor has with bringing in the focus of the projected question, problems which then lead to the multi-unit design of the turn. However, *hur e de* is used as a formula, viz. a framing unit, and not as an abandoned initial attempt to give the question a linguistic form.

In the next case, (19), a customer calling a ticket booking agency uses the question fragment *hur e de* to frame a structurally non-complex turn which introduces the reason for the call (line 4).

(19) Luckan:23 Call to a ticket booking, C=customer, E=clerk.

- 01 C:    .h jo de e Elisabet Nordberg godda  
           yes it is Elisabet Nordberg good.day  
           .h yes this is Elisabet Nordberg, how do you do
- 02 E:    godda  
           good.day  
           how do you do

- 03 (0.4)
- C: ä: **h:ur e de:** finns de möjlighet att beställa biljetter  
 how is it exist it possibility to order tickets  
 e: **how is it,** is it possible to order tickets
- 05 till dedär (.) Christer Sjögrens konsert<sub>ç</sub>  
 to PRT Christer Sjögren-GEN concert  
 to erm (.) Christer Sjögren's concert
- 06 E: de finns de  
 yes exist it  
 yes it is
- 07 (0.5)
- 08 C: å: på onsdagen den sjätte april [( )  
 and on Wednesday-DEF the sixth April  
 and on Wednesday, the sixth of April
- 09 E: [jå hu många?  
 yes how many
- 10 C: två stycke<sub>ç</sub>  
 two piece  
 two tickets

At first sight, the framing seems to be rather unmotivated in this case: the customer's question is supported by the agenda, and the question is not supplemented with a contextualizing account that would make the design of the turn more complex. It nonetheless appears that the framing works as a marker of complication: the question posed by the customer is not a direct, demanding one, which it could be in this context. She does not make an order immediately, but asks the clerk whether it is possible to order tickets to a certain concert. Only after the clerk has confirmed this possibility does the customer proceed to move towards making an order, making a more exact reference to the preferred date (line 7).

Indeed, the question in lines 3–4 could be interpreted as a preliminary action that carries a function comparable to that of a contextualizing segment (see Schegloff 1980: 110, 113). The projected action is marked as somewhat “displaced” – because a proper order of tickets could be in place here – by the generally seeking frame *how is it*. The question's pre-requesting nature (Levinson 1983: 356–364) allows the caller to avoid formulating a direct request and potentially receiving a negative response to such a request (if it turned out to be impossible to order the tickets). By using this strategy, the caller can make the clerk offer her tickets, as in line 8, which seems to be preferable in the social interplay displayed here.

In interactional terms, the question-frame variant used to project a question is significant. Extract (20), from medical interaction, illustrates this: here we have a case where a patient switches from a generic pre-question to a “pondering” frame (lines 6–7).

(20) INK 6:32 Doctor-patient interaction, D=doctor, P=patient.

- 01 D2: ni känner till hur ni hur ni ska behandla den, ja tycker  
you know to how you how you shall treat it I think  
you know how you should treat it, I think you should
- 02 att följ med på samma sätt, ja har int nånting  
that follow-IMP with on same manner I have not something  
keep an eye on it in the same way, I don't have like anything
- 03 så där nu att säja säja egentligen att gör si eller så  
like this now to say say actually that do-IMP this or that  
to say now actually, like do this or that
- 04 annat än di här allmänna .h allmänna de här tankarna  
other than these here general-PL general-PL these here thoughts  
except for these general .h general these thoughts
- 05 ja- ja tycker att att [att (-)  
I- I think that that that  
I- I think that, that, that
- P6: [↑**hur e de me hh en sån sak, ja bö-**  
how is it with a such thing I  
**how about such a thing hh I be-**
- **fundera här n- nu nu e man ju så där när man e ensam å**  
ponder here n- now now is one PRT like that when one is alone and  
**ponder, it's like this when you're alone and**
- *int lagar mat, bara åt de här barnbarne liksom: (.)*  
not cook food only to this here grand-child-DEF like  
*don't cook, only for this grand-child you know*
- *lördagana när hon e [i skolan #å så här# hh eh*  
Saturdays-DEF when she is in school-DEF and so here  
*on Saturdays when she's at school and like this*
- 10 D2: [mm
- P6: ett? vitamintillägg eller nånting sån dänt,  
a vitamin.addition or something such there  
a vitamin supplement or something like that,
- 12 SKU DE VARA nånting.  
would it be something  
would that be worth trying.

In lines 1–5 we can see the doctor coming to a conclusion, i.e. giving the patient medical advice based on the information he has gathered in the conversation so far. The patient enters the conversation by initiating a question in overlap with the doctor's ongoing turn. This move is not produced at a TRP, but at a point

where stuttering and repetitions (line 5) reveal problems in the progression of the doctor's turn. The patient's question is first framed with a generic pre-question (line 6), which is reminiscent of frames that are often used by doctors, as in (18). This pre-question is, however, followed by a question frame of the "pondering" kind, which seems to downplay the speaker's epistemic claims. The double framing work and the subsequent contextualization (in italics) thus make the patient's turn quite complex, and the projected question, or rather suggestion, is eventually produced in lines 11–12. The complex syntax is related to the patient's need to create a context for a question that is not supported by the agenda. This is both a potentially sensitive action and an action that "breaks off" the topic and therefore needs additional work in order to be justified in the local conversational context. Furthermore, the patient suggests a specific kind of medical treatment, thus engaging herself in a potentially delicate activity as regards the participant roles.

To conclude this section, we wish to draw attention to some differences between the question formats discussed in the previous sub-sections. All three sub-categories of question frame can be used to mark the introduction of locally new topics or topical aspects. However, the sub-categories also differ with regard to the global topic structure of the conversation. The permissive type 'may I ask' is mostly used to re-introduce and focus a previously mentioned element; these frames, then, connect to something which has already been discussed or at least actualized in the conversation. The type 'I was wondering' and the generic pre-questions usually frame topics that are being introduced for the first time in the conversation. The "wonderings" have a special profile in the calls to the Poison Control Centre and the ticket booking agency: in these interactions, they serve as the initial transition to the discussion of the reason for the call.

### *Participant roles, activity types and conversational phases*

As we have seen, there are certain patterns in the distribution of the various types of question frame in the data. We find that the distribution can be related to participant roles, conversational phases and the general type of activity within which the interaction is taking place.

The different rights and obligations associated with asymmetric participant roles, such as those between a lay-party and a professional, are generally reflected in the deployment of interrogative actions. Typically, one of the parties asks questions, while the other provides the answers. However, the activity type also determines the right to and relevance of questions: in medical consultations it may be the doctor, i.e. the professional, who seeks information for a diagnosis, but in commercial exchanges it may be the customer, i.e. the lay-party, who seeks information about, say, specific aspects of a product in order to decide whether or not to buy it. In our data, we have found some discrepancies of this kind when comparing medical interaction and customer calls to a ticket booking agency. Evidently, the differing participant roles and activity types have an effect not only on who is asking the questions but also on the design of the questions as regards the framing practices. Moreover, framed questions tend to occur during certain phases in the conversation, which suggests that the extra framing work correlates

to contextual contingencies that need to be taken care of in order to secure a smooth interactional flow.

The frames used by doctors do not occur at the very beginning of the conversation, but mostly during the taking of medical histories. In this phase, the doctor may enter into potentially sensitive topical fields dealing with former treatments or diagnoses that have been made by another doctor. The desire to orient to the delicacy of the subject matter, then, would explain the prevalent permissive nature of many of the question frames used by doctors, which are frequently of the type ‘may I ask’. Nevertheless, even when using a permissive frame the doctor is orienting to his or her basic right to ask questions, and the act of asking is generally carried out in a direct manner after the use of an initial framing practice. Thus, it is not so much the act of questioning as the content of the question that is marked as problematic.

Patients do not use permissive question frames, which can be understood to indicate that they do not consider themselves as experts who may follow a professionally motivated agenda which would support also delicate questions. Instead, patients use frames to mark some kind of uncertainty connected to the act of questioning, its relevance and possible outcome. Patients’ questions are not then supported by the agenda; they typically deal with hypothetical diagnoses and proposals of medical prescriptions, thus entering a field of expertise that in fact belongs to the doctor. Because of the non-supported and hypothetical status of these questions, it is profitable to frame them as “wonderings” or “ponderings” – that is, as results of some cognitive activity that are marked to indicate that the questioner does not really have access to definitive authority on the subject. Another striking feature of the patients’ framed question turns is their indirect quality which is due to the expression of contextualizing parenthetical segments typically following the frame and preceding the question. Such segments give further motivations for the act of questioning and can be seen to indicate that the patients really feel that they have less support for asking questions in the current situation.

The patients seem to place their questions at certain terminative boundaries during the consultation, i.e. when a sequence is being concluded or closed in some way, notably when the doctor is about to move on to giving a diagnosis and medical advice or to bring the conversation to an end (cf. Drew 2006: 439). Another conversational phase which provides room for patients’ initiatives is the physical examination (see extract 13), at which time the doctor is not pursuing an agenda. The physical context may work to neutralize the patient’s initiative, since the doctor’s attention is focused on something other than the verbal seeking of information.

We noted some differences between the customer calls to a ticket booking agency and the medical interaction. In the former, framed questions mostly occur at the beginning of the conversation, during the transition from the initial greeting phase to the reason-for-the-call phase. No permissive frames are used, for the quite natural reason that the customers are fully entitled to ask for the services provided by the agency. Instead, the customers present their questions either as “wonderings” or as intentions (‘I was going to ask’); alternatively, their questions may be framed by generic pre-questions. These “wonderings” mark the outcome of the projected question as somewhat unsure – it is the clerk who has the authority with regard to the availability of tickets and schedules. This orientation is reminiscent of that of the patients, but the sequential placement is different. Frames referring to a future

intention are more straightforward, forming a means of entering into discussion of a subject matter that the caller already has some plans about.

Interestingly, the callers to the Poison Control Centre have the same profile with regard to question frames as the booking-agency customers. On the one hand, they seem to orient to the call service as customers, having certain “customer rights”; on the other hand, the practices used by the caller may be indicative of more general patterns in institutional telephone communication and ways of introducing reasons for calls.

Another interesting finding is that generic pre-questions of the type ‘how about’ are used by doctors and ticket customers, but not by patients or callers to the Poison Control Centre. Generic pre-questions are used for transitional work when doctors are entering a new topic, but also when ticket customers introduce the next step in their booking project, for instance, from initial greetings to the negotiation about the availability of tickets and further to the show times etc. The frames, then, present an inquiry about the possibility of launching a projected interrogative action successfully. A generic pre-question is not typically followed by the sequentially most relevant question, but rather by a contextualizing segment that gives motivations for the question, or by a preliminary question (e.g., “Is it possible to order tickets?”) that checks the availability of a favourable answer which in turn would enable the real question (e.g., “I would like to order some tickets”). It seems that generic pre-questions are used by the party who in one way or another “owns the agenda” and the responsibility for its development. This may be the reason why these question frames are not used by patients or callers to the Poison Control Centre who are inclined to leave the agenda to the consulted pharmacist.

Finally, it should be noted that the ticket seller naturally asks quite a few questions during the commercial encounter; these concern the name of the caller, the date of the show, the row of seats etc. Such questions are completely routinized and sequentially predictable in the activity type. Consequently, no framing, which would mark deviations from routines, occurs in the ticket seller’s questions.

In sum, our comparative data shows that the use of question frames in general and the design of individual frames are related in a complex manner to interactional contingencies, of which some have to do with the local sequence (e.g., topic transitions) and some with more global contextual issues such as participant roles (orientation to professional authority) and activity types (orientation to the tasks and phases). The use of a specific question projection could be indicative of other things, too, such as the projection of a problematic and thus a complex multi-unit turn. Such a projection would be a secondary implication of a question frame, while the frames primarily signal an orientation to delicacy or a transition from what could be sequentially expected.

## *Conclusion*

We may summarize the findings of our study of Swedish question frames with reference to the three areas of interest that were put forward in the introductory part of this chapter.

1. *Grammar.* Question frames form a distinct grammatical practice, with a syntax typical of spoken language. They constitute a limited paradigm of expressions that are arranged as syntactically parenthetical elements preceding, or occasionally following, a clausal unit. In this respect, question frames are like pragmatic markers, and we can state that the syntactic arrangement of question frames mirrors their pragmatic role. They have sometimes prosodic qualities that also point in this direction, like subdued or speedy vocal production.

2. *Interaction.* Question frames are an interactionally distinct category of action, in this case question-projecting devices: they foreshadow an action rather than constitute one. The speakers do not treat question frames as TCUs; for example, no response to the frame itself is produced in our data. Question frames are deployed to position the interrogative action within the local topical sequence, the general conversational agenda, and the expectations related to participant roles and activity type. The framing work typically occurs during a transition, such as when arriving at the reason for a call, the initiation of a new topic, or an interpersonally complex question.

3. *Distribution.* Question frames are a characteristic of institutional communication, fine-tuning the often asymmetric participant roles in institutional activities. Frames may be used by lay-parties as well as experts; however, subtypes of question frame have an uneven distribution as regards conversation type and participant roles. In institutional telephone calls, frames expressing “wonderings” and intentions are used as a way of entering into discussion of the reason for the call. They are also used by patients when they formulate questions addressed to doctors. Doctors, however, do not position their questions within wonderings, but may use permissive questions frames. This is indicative of the fact that doctors do not doubt the relevance of their questions, but may show sensitivity to delicate content-related aspects of certain questions by framing them permissively.

Generally, question frames constitute a particular type of pragmatic contextualization cue. The frames quite often occur in turns where the speaker is creating additional background for a question in an explicit and elaborate manner; this might include a statement of the motives for the act. The provision of such a background context may be treated by the other party as sufficient for the production of a response, even though the question projected by the frame is never explicitly stated.

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## Appendix: data

- GIC = Telephone conversations to the Poison Control Centre in Sweden (*Giftinformationscentrum*). Department of Scandinavian Languages, FUMS, Uppsala University. Transcription by Ulrika Sjöberg and Håkan Landqvist, revised transcription by Karin Ridell. See Landqvist 2001 for a more detailed description of the data. Data included in the kernel corpus of the project *Grammar in Conversation: a Study of Swedish*.
- GRIS = Kernel corpus compiled in the project *Grammar in Conversation: a Study of Swedish*. Ordinary and institutional Swedish conversations provided by the universities in Gothenburg, Helsinki, Linköping and Uppsala.<sup>3</sup>
- INK = Interaction in an institutional context. Approximately 13 hours of videotaped (Swedish) conversations between doctors and patients, recorded in southern Finland and Ostrobothnia. Department of Scandinavian Languages and Scandinavian Literature, University of Helsinki. Transcription by Camilla Lindholm. See Lindholm 2003 for a detailed description of the data.
- Luckan = Telephone conversations to a Swedish ticket booking agency in Finland, data included in a larger corpus of service encounters recorded in Sweden and Finland. Department of Scandinavian Languages and Scandinavian Literature, University of Helsinki. Transcription by Charlotta af Hällström-Reijonen, the transcription of the quoted extracts was revised by Jan Lindström.
- Tema K = Audio recorded conversations from one courtroom interview (A51) and one police interrogation (P5). Tema Kommunikation, Linköping University. Transcription by Niklas Norén. Data included in the kernel corpus of the project *Grammar in Conversation: a Study of Swedish*.
- UMOL = A telephone conversation between a dog owner and a kennel owner (“Hundpensionat”); included in a collection of private telephone conversations belonging to Anna Lindström. Department of Scandinavian Languages, FUMS, Uppsala University. Transcription by Kristina Musslinger. See Lindström 1999 for a detailed description of the data. Data included in the kernel corpus of the project *Grammar in Conversation: a Study of Swedish*.
- Dinner1 = A videotaped dinner conversation, recorded and transcribed by Cajsa Ottesjö. For a more detailed description of the data, see Ottesjö 2006.

3 A description of the project and the kernel corpus is found in the project web site <http://www.liu.se/isk/research/gris/>.

## Comparing affiliating responses to troubles-tellings in different types of health care encounters

Comparison is a central method of research in any scientific inquiry, not least in conversation analysis (CA), which studies the actions and practices of talk-in-interaction. The backbone of the CA approach is formed by empirical analyses of data from everyday conversation between friends and acquaintances: different ways of performing and receiving a specific action, such as a request (Walker et al. forthcoming) or a compliment (Etelämäki et al. forthcoming), are compared, and the specific contexts of each variation of a practice recorded. In research on institutional interaction, comparison with everyday conversation helps to observe differences in the ways of conducting a particular practice and, further, to consider what these differences reveal about the institutional features of the environment in question. These comparisons are anchored in the idea that everyday conversation forms a 'baseline' of social interaction in relation to which activities in various institutional encounters can be analysed (Drew & Heritage 1992; Drew 2003).

The key activities in many institutional encounters tend to be realized as larger packages of sequences. For instance, service encounters, such as medical consultations and social insurance office encounters (Sorjonen & Raevaara 2006) are structured on the basis of one key pair of activities that is extended in between the first and the second pair part: the client's request for service and the professional's granting of that service. Often the request by the client takes the form of disclosing a problematic experience or 'a troubles-telling' as Jefferson (1984, 1988) has called it. A troubles-telling by the client at the beginning of the encounter forms the basis of the whole course of interaction in the encounter, as the rest of it mainly consists of the professional's investigation of the reported problem and a possible solution to it.

In this chapter we investigate sequences of troubles-telling in three types of health care consultation: general practice, homeopathy, and cognitive psychotherapy. Through the analysis of one particular activity in three different contexts we draw attention to contributions that a comparative approach may bring to the analysis of interaction. In the aforementioned encounters, troubles-tellings by the patients may occur both in the context of the initial disclosure of the reason for the visit and later in the consultation as parts of other larger activities. They may occur in accounting for resistance towards the professional's treatment suggestions, for example, or in discussing life-world issues that are considered relevant to the visit, such as financial problems.

Troubles-telling sequences capture an important dilemma in health care interaction: in responding to troubles-tellings, professionals have to find a balance between professional neutrality and showing understanding to their patients' distress. In practice, the latter would entail affiliating with the negative affective stance displayed by the patient (Ruusuvuori 2005a, 2007; Voutilainen et al. forthcoming a, b). These displays of understanding by the professional come close to a phenomenon often referred to as 'empathy' in literature on medical interaction and on psychotherapy (Barrett-Lennard 1981; Frankel 1995; Ruusuvuori 2005a). We examine the extent to, and the ways in which, professionals affiliate with patients' troubles-tellings in different types of health care encounters. We suggest that these affiliating responses offer a 'gestalt' of what the theoretical idea on empathy might look like in actual interaction (see Ruusuvuori 2005a).

We start by offering an example of a troubles-telling sequence in everyday conversation between friends. We then focus on comparing the ways in which troubles-tellings are received; first, in everyday conversation as against institutional (health care) encounters, second, in homeopathy as against general practice consultations and, finally, in homeopathy and general practice as against psychotherapy. The analyses of general practice and homeopathic consultations are based on Ruusuvuori's earlier research (2005a & b, 2007), while the section on psychotherapy draws upon our ongoing study (Voutilainen et al. forthcoming a, b). Throughout the analyses we draw attention to the similarities and dissimilarities between the three types of consultation and what they reveal about the particularities of the institution in question. We also discuss benefits that comparative analysis of a particular practice brings to the investigation of institutional encounters.

### *The troubles-telling sequence in everyday conversation*

The troubles-telling sequence was made famous by Gail Jefferson (1988) as 'a sequence that was not there'. She traced regularities in how problematic experiences are delivered and received in ordinary conversation, detecting a trajectory that contains several alternative ways in which the sequence may evolve. The contingencies that she describes arise from the basic tension between 'attending to talk about trouble' as compared to 'attending to business as usual'. The loose trajectory presented by Jefferson consists of six recurrent elements: approach, arrival, delivery, work-up, close implicature and exit. The adjacency pair of information delivery and reception lies at the core of the trajectory. Drawing upon work by Jefferson (ibid.) and Sacks (1992), Maynard (2003: 95) has extracted a news delivery sequence that consists of announcement, announcement response, elaboration and assessment. We find that both Jefferson's and Maynard's trajectories shed light on the way in which sequences of troubles-telling evolve in the Finnish data.

The following extract exemplifies a troubles-telling in Finnish everyday conversation. Lines 1–3 contain the announcement of the trouble and announcement response (a go-ahead in this case). The announcement is followed by elaboration of the trouble (lines 5–6) and an affiliating response *jä:rkyttävää* 'how shocking' (line 8). The work-up of the problem ensues (lines 8–10, 15), after which the troubles-teller transits from the trouble-telling to the further topic of how news should be written in her opinion, that is, she exits from troubles-telling.

(1) Lunch conversation

(17.0)

01 B: H<sub>enni</sub> kans on r<sub>asittava</sub> teh<sub>ä</sub> uutisia.  
InameF-GEN with is tiresome do-INF news-PAR  
it is t<sub>iresome</sub> to write news with H<sub>enni</sub>.

02 (0.3)

03 A: ni m<sub>itä</sub> se h<sub>aukku</sub> niist<sub>ä</sub> te<sub>jän</sub> uutisista.  
PRT what she yap-PST those-ELA you(PL)-GEN news-ELA  
so h<sub>ow</sub> was she cr<sub>iticizing</sub> your news-strips.

04 (0.5)

05 B: @niissä on p<sub>itkiä</sub> l<sub>auseita</sub>. O<sub>litkos</sub>  
those-INE are long-PL-PAR sentence-PL-PAR be-PST-2-Q-CLI  
@there are l<sub>ong</sub> s<sub>entences</sub>. W<sub>ere</sub> you there

06 sinä siinä h<sub>arjoituksissa</sub> o<sub>llenkaan</sub>.@ hh he hhh  
you there.in practice-PL-INE at.all  
at the p<sub>ractice</sub> course at a<sub>ll</sub>.@ hh he hhh

07 (.)

08→A: jä:rkyttävää o<sub>liks</sub> se sit [oikeesti vihanen (0.3) vai  
shocking-PAR be-PST-Q she PRT really angry or  
how sho:cking was she then [angry for real (0.3) or

09 B: [.hhhh

10→A: o<sub>lettiks</sub> se [e- et te o<sub>saatte</sub> heti.  
assume-PST-Q she that you(PL) can-PL2 right.away  
did she assume [th- that you can write them right away.

11 B: [£#n:o joo (ehkä)# vähän (se oli)  
PRT PRT maybe little she be-PST  
[£#w:ell yeah (maybe)# a little (she was)

12 k(h)yrs(h)iintyneen n[äk(h)önenh£, he  
annoyed-GEN looking  
looking a[n(h)n(h)oyed

13 A: [.hff

14 (.)

15→A: miten se voi ku[vitell-a et te o<sub>saat</sub>te heti ne.  
how she can imagine-INF PRT you(PL) can-PL-2 right.away those  
how can she imagine that you can write them right away.

- |    |  |                             |   |
|----|--|-----------------------------|---|
| 16 | B:   | [.hhhhhhh<br>[<br>[.hhhhhhh | [.mhhhh .mts no kyl munki<br>[ PRT PRT I-GEN-CLI<br>[.mhhhh .tch well in fact I |
| 17 | mielest ne oli h <sub>u</sub> onot ne # <u>u</u> tiset#. (0.5) mut ku H <sub>e</sub> nni<br>mind-ELA they be-PST bad-PL those news but since InameF<br>also thought those news were not that good. (0.5) but as H <sub>e</sub> nni |                             |   |
| 18 | halus tehdä sillee suoraa muokata niinku <u>S</u> TT:-n jutuist<br>want-PST do-INF such.way straight edit-INF PRT name-GEN news-ELA<br>wanted to edit it like directly drawing upon like <u>S</u> TT news reports                  |                             |   |

This extract shows how troubles-tellings typically embody a double action: as (self-) disclosures they entail an information delivery that changes the epistemic balance of the recipient (Maynard 2003), while as talk about trouble they incorporate a negative stance towards one's own situation. Consequently, troubles-tellings make relevant both an information receipt and an affiliating comment (that recognizes the speaker's troublesome experience and shares a similar stance to it) or at least some sort of assessment by the recipient. Thus, the participants display both an 'epistemic stance' and an 'affective stance' in troubles-telling sequences. In extract 1, in her initial announcement of trouble, speaker A says: *Hennin kans on rasittava tehdä uutisia* 'it is tiresome to write news with Henni' (lines 1–2). Her utterance both conveys information about her feelings towards writing news with Henni and assesses the nature of the cooperation as 'tiresome'. B receives A's announcement with a go-ahead that asks for more information and thus displays her epistemic stance as lacking the upcoming information: *ni mitä se haukku niist teijän uutisista* 'so how was she criticizing your news-strips.' However, B also takes notice of A's negative evaluation by using the word 'criticize' in referring to the upcoming report (line 3), thus recognizing the evaluative element (or the affective stance) present in A's announcement. In her subsequent utterance, A elaborates her troubles disclosure by answering B's question (lines 5–6). Her use of animated talk (Günthner 1997; Holt 2000; Haakana 2007) and extreme case formulations (Pomerantz 1987) emphasize her negative, complaining stance towards working with Henni. In her following response, B strongly affiliates with this, both in her choice of the word *järkyttävää* 'how shocking' as well as in her emphasis and lengthening of the first syllable of the word *jä:rkyttävää* (line 8).

Jefferson (1988) and Jefferson and Lee (1992) have suggested that in ordinary conversation, in addition to acknowledgement of information, affiliation (recognizing the speaker's negative stance and taking a similar stance) is the relevant response to a disclosure of a problematic experience by one participant. The pattern is complicated in health care encounters, as troubles-tellings also form a major starting-point for the whole institutional activity. The initial troubles-tellings set the agenda for the ensuing expert work of the service provider. Presumably, this state of affairs also guides the way in which troubles-tellings are received in these contexts. In accordance with these ideas, Jefferson and Lee (*ibid.*) proposed that in service encounters the relevant response to troubles-tellings by the patient is giving advice. While their suggestion seems intuitively sensible, some further reconsideration might be necessary. Although giving advice certainly constitutes an institutionally relevant response to patient's initial troubles-telling, it may involve the risk that the informative aspects of the problematic self-disclosure

are emphasized at the expense of the affective aspects involved. In more general (health sociological) terms this could result in ‘losing the empathetic opportunities in the situation’ (see Frankel 1995; Suchman et al. 1997). In the following, we will shed light on these questions by analyzing responses to troubles-tellings in two contexts of health care: general practice and homeopathy as against the findings from everyday conversation.

*Talk about trouble vs. business as usual in general practice and homeopathic consultations*

According to Ruusuvuori (2005a, 2007) the participants of general practice and homeopathic consultations orient to the Jeffersonian dilemma of maintaining a balance between talk about trouble vs. business as usual. Ruusuvuori’s analyses are based on 225 troubles-telling sequences drawn from 20 general practice and 20 homeopathic consultations selected randomly. In these contexts the dilemma becomes apparent mainly in the ways in which the patients’ talk about trouble is formulated and received. Patients tend to articulate their disclosures in ways which make it possible for the professional to ignore the affective and ‘troublesome’ line of the patient’s talk and only orient to the business of problem-solving. In the data, 83% of the doctors’ and 63% of the homeopaths’ responses to the patients’ troubles-tellings were non-affiliating, receiving them merely as information and disregarding the embedded affective stance of the patient. On the other hand, both patients and professionals oriented to the *possible relevance* of affiliation following the patients’ troubles-tellings.

**Patients’ orientation to possible relevance of affiliation**

There were cases in the data in which the patients did not seem to be satisfied with the professionals’ non-affiliating responses. In extract 2, the doctor has referred the patient to a hospital for further examination. The patient has asked about the length of the hospital stay and the doctor has responded that it will probably be short. The patient acknowledges this and says:

(2) General practice

01 P: >mutta mua ihan< #h̄irvittää# >minä en< m̄illään menis  
but I-PAR PRT terrify I NEG-1 no.way go-CON  
>but I’m just< #terrified# >I’d< never want to go

02 sairaa#laan.#  
hospital-ILL  
to hospital.

03 (0.7)

04 → D: >mutta ei ne siellä ↑teitä< #ö:::# kauempaa  
but NEG they there-ADE you-PAR long-COMP-PAR  
>but they won’t keep you there< any longer

- 05 → pidä kun: [mitä  
keep-INF than what  
than [what
- 06 P: [hhh
- 07 → D: [on välttämätöntä että saa selville mikä tää ]  
be necessary-PAR PRT find out what this ]  
[is necessary to find out what this ]
- 08 P: [ei:: var- ei varmas>tikkaa< ei ]  
NEG surely NEG surely-CLI-NEG NEG ]  
[no:: I sup- no I suppose not ]
- 09 (.) >mutta kun on<  
but since is  
(.) >but as I have<
- 10 semmonen että ei (.) ei ei  
such that NEG NEG NEG  
such that no (.) no not
- 11 [mihinkään nii että .hhh >on niinko  
nowhere-ILL PRT PRT is PRT  
[anywhere so that .hhh >I have like
- 12 D: [(°m:°)
- 13 P: semmonen< pelon tunne.  
such fear-GEN feeling  
such a< feeling of fear.
- 14 (0.5)
- 15 P: h[hh
- 16 → D: [nii,<sup>1</sup>  
PRT  
[I see,

In lines 1–2, the patient talks about her fear of going to hospital. The lexical choice *ihan hirvittää* ‘just terrified’ and the extreme case formulation *en koskaan* ‘never’ (see Pomerantz 1987) clearly bring out the patient’s anxiety as she conveys a negative emotional experience. Instead of recognizing the patient’s trouble and empathizing with it, the doctor responds to the patient’s troubles-telling with a ‘no problem’ type of utterance (lines 4–5, 7). Her response resembles what Maynard (2003: 179–182) has called ‘a bright-side telling’, an exit device from sequences of bad news. The patient displays her worry about having to go to hospital to

1 The meaning of the Finnish response particle *nii* is dependent on the immediately preceding context. When relevant, the meaning of each *nii*-particle will be explained in the analysis of the transcripts.

get her intestines examined, as a response to which the doctor convinces her that she does not have to stay there for very long. Thus the doctor gives information about the common procedures of a hospital. This way, as in advice-giving, she treats the patient's utterance as a problem to be solved rather than expression of stance that calls for affiliation. The patient, however, is not satisfied with this. She acknowledges the doctor's claim and agrees with it (line 8) but goes on upgrading her negative state of mind and explaining that she has a feeling of fear (lines 9–11, 13). This time the doctor responds with *nii*, which is a minimal way of the doctors (and the most common) to indicate that they feel compassion with the patient<sup>2</sup>. Even after this minimal affiliation the patient goes on with her troubles-telling:

(3) General practice continued

- 17 P: mutta >se että ku mulla on ny noita< oopamax  
but it PRT since I-ADE have PRT those-PAR name  
but >the thing is that now I have those< opamax
- 18 taplettia,  
tablet-PL-PAR  
tablets,
- 19 (0.6)
- 20 D: m:m?,  
PRT
- 21 (.)
- 22 P: hhh (--)>ku mulle tulee se semmonen niinkun<  
since I-ALL come it such PRT  
hhh (--)>as I get that a kind of like< claustrophobia
- 23 ahtaan paikan kammo >taikka semmonen< (.) >semmonen m-< (.)  
claustrophobia or such such  
>or a kind of< (.) >kind of m-< (.)
- 24 [.hhhh
- 25 → D: [>↑nii semmonen<  
PRT such  
[>↑yes a kind of<
- 26 P: ahdistus nii,  
anxiety PRT  
anxiety yes,
- 27 → D: ahdistuksen olo, (.) joo,=  
anxiety-GEN feeling PRT  
feeling of anxiety, (.) yes,=

2 In the context of assessing a common target, the Finnish particle *nii* is used to claim affiliation, to indicate that the recipient shares the same stance as the speaker of the first assessment (Sorjonen 2001: 133).

- 28 P: =mutta kum mää otan sitä sitte voinko mää  
 but since I take-1 that-PAR PRT can-1-Q I  
 =but as I take that then can I then take them
- 29 siel sairaalassa sitten ottaa vaikka >enhän  
 there-ADE hospital-INE PRT take-INF even.though NEG-1-CLI  
 there in the hospital although >I don't take
- 30 mää niitä ota [muuta ku neljänneksen.<=  
 I those-PAR take else than quarter-GEN  
 [any more than a quarter.<=
- 32 D: [m:,  
 [PRT
- 33 → D: =.mth #ä# ↑sanokaa siellä niille hoitajille >ni ne<  
 say-IMP-PL there-ADE those-ALL nurse-PL-ALL so they  
 =.mth #eh# ↑tell that to the nurses there >so the< nurses
- 34 → hoitajat tuo >teille niitä< sairaalan tabletteja  
 nurse-PL bring you-ALL those-PAR hospital-GEN tablet-PL-PAR  
 will bring >you the< hospital tablets >they must have
- 35 → >sitä on varmaan sitä< oxe- (.) oxe [pan tai opamox nimellä  
 It-PAR is surely it-PAR name name or name name-ADE  
 that under the name oxe- (.) oxe [ pan or opamox .hh also
- 36 P: [o-
- 37 → D: .hh siellä  
 there-ADE  
 .hh there in
- 38 → D: sairaalas [sakin niin >älkää niitä< omia  
 hospital-INE-CLI PRT NEG-IMP-PL those-PAR own-PAR  
 the hos[pital so >do not take your< own
- 39 P: [juu  
 PRT
- 40 → lääkkeitä siellä ottako vaan pyytäkää sitte hoita[jilta  
 medicine-PL-PAR there take but ask-IMP-2 PRT nurse-PL-ABL  
 medication there but then ask the nurs[es for
- 41 P: [joo >jo.<  
 [yeh >yeh.<
- 42 P: juu.  
 yes.
- 43 → D: >sanokaa et< (.)ku meette >sinne sairaalaan  
 say-IMP-PL that when go-PL-2 there-ILL hospital-ILL  
 >say that< (.) when you go >to the hospital

- 44 → D: et teil on tämmönen< lääkitys .hhh >mä laitan  
 that you-PL-ADE be this kind of medication I put-1  
 that you have this kind of< medication .hhh >I'll write
- 45 → sen [tänne< lähetteeseenkin,  
 it-GEN here-ILL referral-ILL-CLI  
 it even [here< in the referral,
- 46 P: [>mutta kum mää niin< harvon o- harvon otan.  
 but since I PRT rarely rarely take-1  
 [>but as I so< rarely ta- rarely take it.
- 47 (0.3)

The patient continues to talk about her problem indicating that she should be able to take pills for claustrophobia in the hospital as well. While the doctor shortly recognizes the patient's trouble with her ailment (lines 25 and 27) at a point where the patient's turn is not yet complete in terms of intonation, her response in lines 38–45 treats the patient's turn as asking for advice. It is noteworthy that following the doctor's advice the patient still continues her troubles-telling (line 46). Thus, it is possible that the patient's problem is not so much about the pills and how to take them as it is about her fear of hospitals as she indicated in her first utterance of the sequence (see extract 1, lines 1–3). Drawing upon the observation that the patient treats the doctor's informative responses as inadequate, we can suggest that the patient is pursuing affiliation with her affective stance from the doctor instead of information and advice. (On the consequentiality of affective displays to interaction, see Couper-Kuhlen, Kangasharju, this volume).

### Professionals' orientation to possible relevance of affiliation

The potential relevance of affiliating with the patient's affective stance was also observable in the professional responses (homeopaths and general practitioners) to patients' troubles-tellings: they were affiliating in 25% of the cases and non-affiliating in 75% of the cases. Advice-giving was only one possible non-affiliating response, and not even a very frequent one. The non-affiliating responses ranged from neutral acknowledgements such as “mm” or “right” to more extended neutral answers along the lines of possible answers to news delivery, such as bright-side tellings or normalizations (see extract 2; cf. Maynard 2003).

The affiliating responses on the other hand ranged from minimal *nii*-affiliations to extended affiliating responses. The following extract 4 is an example of an extended affiliating response in homeopathy. Similar practices were also located in general practice consultations, although to a lesser extent.

#### (4) Homeopathy

- 01 H: hhh (0.2) (o)kei, (.) oisko jotain m<sub>u</sub>uta sellasta  
 PRT be-CON-Q something else such-PAR  
 hhh (0.2) (o)kay, (.) would there be anything else that's sort



- 76 P: selvästi tekee semmosen .hhhhh  
clearly make such-GEN  
clearly makes the sort of .hhhhh
- 77 (0.3)
- 78 → H: onhan se rasite sillai ku[n ] (.) sitä 0<sup>3</sup> joutuu aina  
be-CLI it burden such.way since it-PAR have to always  
it is a burden so th[at ] (.) you frequently have to
- 79 (.)
- 80 P: [o:. ]  
is  
[it is.]
- 81 → H: (.) välillä miettimään k[un 0 muisetaa sen paljoko.hhhh  
sometimes think-INF-ILL when remember it-GEN much-Q  
(.) think about it a[s you remember how much .hhhh
- 82 P: [mm:].
- 83 → H: 0 on velkaa minneki päin ettei 0 oo sellasta  
be debt-PAR where-CLI direction CONJ-NEG have such-PAR  
you owe to who that you don't have the kind of
- 84 → vapautta. (0.2).mthhh °välttämättä s:itte°.  
freedom-PAR necessarily PRT  
freedom. (0.2).mthhh °necessarily then°.
- 85 (0.5) ((H looks down at her notes))
- 86 H: .mthhh (.) joo.=hh onks sulla tällä hetkellä  
PRT have-Q you-ADE this-ADE moment-ADE  
.mthhh (.) right.=hh have you got
- 87 mitään muuta lääkitystä käytössä kun ne hormoonit  
any other medication-PAR use-INE than those hormone-PL  
any other medication than those hormones at the moment.

We can see how the homeopath first claims to recognize the patient's trouble as valid by her assessment *onhan se rasite* 'it is a burden' (line 78), after which she goes on to describe the possible consequences of a situation of financial difficulty. Her description is explicitly marked as an explanation with *kun* 'as' (line 81). By detailing the possible consequences of the patient's trouble, the homeopath indicates that she has knowledge of and thus access to a similar type of experience (see Ruusuvaori 2005a). She uses the so-called zero-person construction, where the verb is in the third person singular but the subject is missing (see lines 78, 81,

3 The zero-mark in the transcript refers to a zero-person-construction used by the speaker, where the actual person reference is missing but the verb is in third person singular.

83). In Finnish, this is a way to invite the recipient to supply the person reference, to propose that the experience that is talked about is shareable or potentially common with the participants (see Laitinen 1995). It implies that the speaker commits to or affiliates with the perspective of the other participant (Hakulinen & Laitinen 2008)<sup>4</sup>. These sort of extended affiliations by professionals encode that they understand the patient's perspective and see it as valid, that is, they might be seen to display empathy with the patient (Ruusuvuori 2005a).

The patient confirms the homeopath's proposals while the turn is ongoing (lines 80 and 82), thus accepting her proposal of affiliation. The homeopath treats the patient's confirmations as adequate: in closing her turn she turns her gaze from the patient to her notes (line 85) and returns to the task-driven agenda with a sequence-closing third turn *joo* 'right'<sup>5</sup> and a question on a new topic (lines 86–87).

The previous extract 3 showed how patients may treat non-affiliating responses to troubles-tellings as inadequate and pursue for another kind of response. Extract 4, on the other hand, shows how professionals may give affiliating responses and how they can be treated as adequate by the patient. (A further example of the latter type in general practice can be found in extract 5 below.) Drawing upon these preliminary observations, we suggest that affiliation as a response to a troubles-telling remains a relevant option not only in everyday conversation but also in health care encounters.

The comparison between everyday conversation and institutional interaction nicely brings out the potential of comparative CA analysis. The ground-breaking findings by Jefferson on troubles-telling in ordinary conversation and by Maynard on news delivery sequences can considerably support and illuminate the analyses of institutional encounters. The comparison with everyday interaction helps to locate aspects of communication, such as possible relevance of affiliation, that are not explicit in institutional data. In the following we will turn to comparison of the ways in which displays of empathy differ in homeopathy and general practice.

### *Comparing affiliating responses in homeopathy and general practice*

Empathy and patient encouragement have been shown to have a strong positive influence on patient satisfaction, adherence to treatment plan and reduction of concerns (Frankel 1995; Wasserman et al. 1984). Yet physicians often fail to recognize emotional distress among patients with somatic concerns (Roter et al. 1997). One possible explanation of this is the exclusive biomedical focus of physicians (see *ibid.*). Homeopaths, on the other hand, should ideally focus on the whole organism of the patient, taking into account not only somatic but also

4 The Finnish, zero-person leaves open a slot for a person reference, which anybody can take if she so wishes. Once you identify yourself with the generic kind of person talked about, and take that place, you define yourself as the person within that utterance. Thus, for example by switching from the use of a first person reference (I) to the zero-person format, the speaker works to render her own experience available for the recipient to comment upon and to affiliate with. The speaker makes a move from 'owning the experience' towards the possibility of sharing the experience. (Laitinen 1995; Hakulinen & Laitinen 2008.)

5 The first turn of the sequence is the homeopath's question in lines 1–2, the second turn is the patient's extended response starting at line 35 and continuing until line 76.

psychological and social aspects of his or her wellbeing (Vithoulkas 1991 [1980]: 39). Thus, homeopaths are also probably more prone to use the opportunities to affiliate with the patients than the physicians. As the key task of both types of consultation is similar (attending to patients’ health-related problems), but their theories of illness and healing are different, the two consultation types create an interesting pair for comparison, both in terms of the extent to which patients are affiliated with and in terms of how affiliating comments are made.

The following table indicates the number of affiliating responses to troubles-tellings in homeopathy and in general practice.

Table 1: Affiliating vs. non-affiliating responses to troubles-tellings in homeopathy and general practice

| <b>Responses to troubles-tellings</b>     | <b>Homeopathy</b> | <b>General Practice</b> |
|---|-------------------|-------------------------|
| Extended affiliating                      | 27                | 13                      |
| Minimal affiliating                       | 7                 | 10                      |
| <b>Affiliating responses in total</b>     | <b>(37%) 34</b>   | <b>(17%) 23</b>         |
| Extended non-affiliating                  | 21                | 36                      |
| Minimal non-affiliating                   | 57                | 75                      |
| <b>Non-affiliating responses in total</b> | <b>(63%) 57</b>   | <b>(83%) 111</b>        |
| TT sequences in total                     | 91                | 134                     |

The table indicates that while the homeopaths affiliated with the patient in 37% of the cases, the general practitioners affiliated only in 17% of the cases. One explanation of the small affiliation rate by the GPs is the shortage of time. Lack of time may lead to poor interviewing skills (Fletcher 1980) and put physicians in a less advantageous position in terms of developing rapport with their patients in comparison to homeopaths (see Clarke 2005). However, a comparative analysis of troubles-telling sequences in these two types of consultation indicates that keeping to problem-solving and refraining from affiliating with the patient may not be the best way to save time. Quite the contrary, we saw how in extract 4, the professional’s extended affiliation efficiently worked to close the sequence of troubles-telling. Following the professional’s proposal of affiliation, the patient immediately accepted it (see extract 4, lines 80 and 82), after which the professional was able to close the sequence and return to problem-solving (line 86). This quick closing off of the troubles-telling sequence following the professional’s extended affiliation was a rule without exceptions in the data (see Ruusuvaori 2007 for a more extended analysis). On the other hand, we also saw in extracts 2 and 3 how the doctors’ non-affiliating responses, although oriented to problem-solving, led to an extended sequence where the patient continued her or his troubles-telling to get a sufficient response. Thus, affiliating with the patient may actually help to close the sequence efficiently and return to the task of problem-solving more quickly than refraining from affiliation and strictly keeping to problem-solving would do.

The relatively rapid closure of troubles-telling sequences after the professionals’ extended affiliation was also observable in general practice, although there it was mainly the patients and not the professionals who closed the sequence. Let us look at extract 5 from a general practice consultation. The patient has been complaining about tiredness, implying at various times during the consultation that she would

benefit from physiotherapy in a health spa. The patient complains about her difficult economic situation and the doctor affiliates with her at line 20.

(5) General practice

- 03 D: ↑mä kirjotan teille lähetteen siihen että °jos°,  
I write-1 you-ALL referral-GEN it-ILL PRT if  
↑I will write you a referral for that so °if°,
- 04 P: nji.  
PRT
- 05 D: °menisitte sitte,°  
you-CON-PL-2 PRT  
°you'd go then,°
- 06 (.)
- 07 P: joo.  
yeah.
- 08 D: .nfhh
- 09 P: semmonen mistä 0 edes vähä sais  
such what-ELA even little get-CON  
the kind where you'd get at least a little ((refund))
- 10 [ku mul on pieni eläke,  
since I-ADE have small pension  
[as I have a small pension,
- 11 D: [mm.  
PRT
- 12 P: kyllä mää tuun sillä ft(h)oimee m(h)ut ei sillä voisi paljo  
PRT I come-1 it-ADE along but NEG it-ADE can-CON much  
I do get £al(h)ong with it b(h)ut it's impossible to ((do)) very
- 13 ku£ .hh siis,  
since PRT  
much as£ .hh like,
- 14 → D: n(h)ii (.) £ylimäärästä£ s-  
PRT extra-PAR  
ri(g)ht (.) £extra£ w-
- 15 P: niinku< 0 aattelee että kolmellatuhannella 0 on pärjättävä.  
PRT think PRT three.thousand-ADE be manage-PC  
yes like< thinking that three thousand is what you have to manage with.
- 16 (0.8)

- 17 P: pikkusen yli kolme tuhatta saan käteeni.  
 little-GEN over three thousand get-1 hand-ILL-POSS-1  
 a little bit over three thousand is what I get.
- 18 D: ni, (.) joo.  
 PRT PRT  
 yes, (.) right.
- 19 P: nii:  
 PRT  
 indeed.
- 20 → D: tarkkaan on 0 lasketta[va mihin,  
 carefully be count-PC what-ILL  
 you have to count very carefully on what kind of,
- 21 P: [.hhh
- 22 P: ka:ikki on 0 laskettava eikä saa elää mitään  
 all be count-PC NEG-CLI can-0 live any  
 you have to count just everything: and you can't live any kind of,
- 23 semmosta, (0.8) nii: (0.6) kyllä. (.) >mutta< pärjään.  
 kind.of-PAR PRT PRT but manage-1  
 (0.8) so it is. (0.6) right. (.) >but< I get along.
- 24 (1.5) ((D is writing))
- 25 P: ja meen viel kylpyläänki.  
 and go-1 PRT (health)spa-ILL-CLI  
 and I'll even go to the spa.
- 26 (1.0)
- 27 P: mutta oon mä aina menny mä oon töissäki vaikka mä  
 but have-1 I always go-PPC I have-1 work-INE-CLI even.though I  
 but I have always gone even when I was working even when I've got
- 28 oon saanu °ihan vähän ni mä oon siltiki menny vie aina  
 have-1 get-PPC PRT little PRT I have-1 anyway-CLI go-PPC still PRT  
 °really little so I've still gone every now
- 29 joskus.°  
 sometimes  
 and then.°
- 30 (4.8)
- 31 P: ja eikä näissä mitään ny ollu näissä, =entäs se  
 and and-NEG these-INE nothing PRT be-PPC these-INE and-Q-CLI it  
 and there wasn't anything now in these,=what about the

32           ↑kolestrooli.  
                  cholesterol  
                  ↑cholesterol.

The doctor suggests at line 14 that she may have an understanding of the patient's difficult situation by completing the patient's preceding utterance. By the response particle *nii*, which in this context can be heard to claim affiliation with the patient's affective stance (see Sorjonen 2001: 133–135; Ruusuvuori 2005a) and by continuing the patient's utterance with *ylimäärästä* 'extra', the doctor claims to grasp what the patient is talking about. The patient confirms the doctor's completion and continues her troubles-telling. In her utterance (line 15) she leaves the person reference out of the utterance, inviting the recipient to count herself as one of those who think the way the speaker does, to affiliate with her (see Laitinen 1995; Hakulinen & Laitinen 2008). As the doctor does not take the turn but remains silent (line 16), the patient reformulates her utterance and specifies what she means with *pikkusen yli kolme tuhatta saan käteeni* 'a little bit over three thousand is what I get' (line 17). The doctor receives this utterance neutrally (line 18). At line 19 the patient redoes her turn of talk by stating *nii*, which translates here as 'indeed' or 'that's the way it is', making a new response by the doctor relevant. Now the doctor affiliates, and says *tarkkaan on laskettava mihin* 'you have to count very carefully on what kind of'. A word-by-word translation of the utterance in Finnish would be "carefully has [zero-person] to count". Thus, like the homeopath in extract 4, the doctor also leaves out the person reference, offering the slot for the patient to fill in (line 20). The doctor's utterance provides a more detailed description of the situation referred to by the patient, it formulates the possible consequences of such a situation. Thus, the physician stresses that she has access to a similar situation and understands what it may mean to the patient, showing (extended) affiliation with the patient's affective stance in a rather similar way to the homeopath in extract 4. (See Ruusuvuori 2005a.)

The patient accepts the proposal in line 22 by repeating elements of the doctor's preceding utterance: *kaikki on laskettava* 'you have to count just everything' (again using the zero-person construction in the Finnish original), after which the patient gradually shifts the topic from talk about trouble to talk about more positive aspects of her life. Shortly after this she herself returns to the agenda by asking about her cholesterol (line 33).

This extract was one of the 13 troubles-telling sequences in the general practice data in which the practice of showing affiliation is explicit. In the cases in which the doctors displayed more than minimal affiliation (such as a minimal *nii*-response) with the patient's troubles-telling, the troubles-telling sequences were usually closed by the patient by starting to talk about ancillary matters. It was only found through the analysis of the homeopathic consultations that the professionals could also use their affiliating responses to close the sequence of troubles-telling. In extract 4 we saw how the homeopath effectively closed the sequence and shifted back to problem-solving agenda (line 86), having first got the patient's acceptance (lines 80, 82) to her affiliating remarks (lines 78, 81, 83–84).

We come to recognize the parallels between such sequences in general practice consultations and homeopathy through comparative analysis. Further, we can suggest that since such extended affiliating responses are found in both types of consultation, they are *possible* in both contexts (see Peräkylä 2004). Thus,

comparative analysis may also contribute to the development of the quality of interaction between professionals and patients, since the previous analysis allows us to propose that it would be possible for medical doctors to use extended affiliations as well (as some of them already do) to a greater extent without disregarding their institutional duties (Peräkylä & Vehviläinen 2003; Peräkylä et al. 2005).

### *Comparing affiliating responses in homeopathy, general practice and psychotherapy*

Adding psychotherapy, a slightly different environment, to this comparison produces new and interesting observations. While in ordinary conversation as well as health-related service encounters such as general practice and homeopathy, affiliating responses may be one relevant way to treat patient's disclosures in order to return to 'business as usual' (Ruusuvaori 2007), the issue is vastly more complicated in psychotherapy. A basic institutional task of psychotherapy is to transform the patient's ways of relating to others and their own experience, and the means of achieving this objective is talk (see Peräkylä & al. 2008:16). Unlike homeopathy and general practice, where talk about troublesome experiences and emotions evoked by them may be treated as a side-issue, the patients' experiences and emotions are the primary material to work with in therapy. The following extracts 6 and 7 from psychotherapeutic consultations are drawn from our ongoing research on the ways in which a client's disclosures of problematic experience are received by a therapist in cognitive psychotherapy (see Voutilainen et al. forthcoming a).

In general practice and homeopathy, we saw how professionals' affiliating responses to troubles-tellings resulted in quick closure of the sequence of troubles-telling and returning to the main activity. In extract 4, from homeopathy, the professional closed the sequence rapidly following the patient's agreement to her proposal of affiliation and returned to the agenda (lines 86–88). Following an extended affiliation by the professional, the patient in extract 5, from general practice, entered into the closing of the sequence by starting to talk about ancillary matters (lines 25–28), thus indicating that she was no longer talking about trouble but was ready to change the topic and return to business as usual. In both types of consultation the professionals used zero person construction in their affiliating responses to the patient's troubles-telling.

The specific characteristics of psychotherapy are apparent particularly 1) in the way in which the sequences continue after the professional's affiliating utterance, and 2) in the choice of person-reference in the responses. The following extracts show two cases in which the therapist in a specific way affiliates with the patient's troubles-telling. The patient has been talking about her difficult relationship with her mother. She has told the therapist how she heard from a third party that her mother had talked positively about her and in the extract she is complaining that her mother never praises her face-to-face. The therapist's response is found in line 6.

## (6) Psychotherapy

- 01 P: ja mm- must se oli (.) se on (0.3) toisaalta  
and I-ELA it be-PST it is on.the.other.hand  
and um- I thought it was (.) it is (0.3) on the other hand
- 02 harmitti että miksi ei se ↓voi tulla  
annoyed-PST PRT why NEG she can come-INF  
I was annoyed about why ↓can't she come
- 03 mu:↓lle sitä sanomaan että [#että,  
I-ALL it-PAR say-INF PRT PRT  
and say it to me:↓: I mean [#that,
- 04 T: [mm:.  
PRT
- 05 P: [se olis niin ihana kuulla,  
it be-CON PRT lovely hear-INF  
[it would be so lovely to hear,
- 06 → T: [↓sä tarttisit sen [nii: paljo.  
you need-CON-2 it-GEN PRT much  
[↓you'd need it [so: much.
- 07 P: [nii.  
PRT  
[yeah.
- 08 P: mut et kyllä toiki oli nyt tollai välikäden  
but PRT PRT that-CLI be-PST PRT that.way second.hand-GEN  
but I mean even that was also like hearing it as
- 09 ka(h)utta ku(h)ultuna niinku tuntu ihan älyttömän  
through hear-PC-ESS PRT feel-PST PRT immense-GEN  
second hand(h) knowled(h)ge like felt just immensely
- 10 hyvältä. .hhh ja ku sit sen voi uskoo et se on totta  
good-ABL and since PRT it-GEN can believe-INF PRT it be true  
good. .hhh and as then you can believe it that it's true
- 11 ku miksi Marja nyt semmosta että  
since why InameF PRT such-PAR PRT  
as why would Marja (make up) something like
- 12 [@↑nii joo@ että niitten äiti puhu että =et(h) se on  
PRT PRT PRT they-GEN mother speak-PST PRT PRT it is  
[@↑yeah right@ their mother said that =so that(h) it has
- 13 T: [°mm,  
PRT

The therapist responds to the patient's troubles-telling in line 6 by saying *sä tarttisit sen nii: paljo* 'you'd need it so much', referring to the patient's need to receive her mother's acceptance and praise directly. Instead of assessing the mother's activities, however, the therapist focuses on the patient and her craving for praise from her mother. This is evident in her use of the person reference *sä* 'you' referring directly to the patient and thus to her needs and feelings, and also in her upgrade *nii: paljo* 'so much' concerning the intensity of the patient's proposed need. This way the therapist seems to direct the patient to talk more about her own (inner) negative emotion and need for her mother's acceptance; shift the focus away from the mother towards the patient herself. The patient agrees with the therapist's proposal of affiliation with her *nii*-response at line 7 (see Ruusuvuori 2005), and goes on to talk about her positive feelings about having got second hand information about her mother having praised her, at least in that particular situation. Thus, following the therapist's recognition of her emotional experience, the patient first agrees with the therapist's affiliating response and then continues talking about the topic, although she does not exactly follow the direction the therapist has suggested. As opposed to extracts 4 and 5, where the professional's affiliation led to closing the sequence of troubles-telling, in extract 6 the patient continues to develop the topic further.

In Extract 7 the therapist's extended affiliation is followed by a self-reflection by the patient. The patient's utterance in lines 1–3 is a summary of preceding talk in which she has mentioned her difficult relationship with her mother. She implies that her mother has not acted in the way she herself would if she were a mother.

(7) Psychotherapy

- 01 P: jo:tenki et tiedän #nn# ainaki (.) tiedostan että  
 somehow PRT know-1 at.least be.aware.of-1 PRT  
 so:mehow that I know #nn# at least (.) I am aware of
- 02 mitä en (.) halua tehdä ja (.) mitä  
 what NEG-1 want do-INF and what  
 what I (.) don't want and (.) what I
- 03 [haluan tehdä.  
 want-1 do-INF  
 [do want to do.
- 04 → T: [sä haluisit jotenkin .hhh olla se hyvä ä:iti  
 you want-CON-2 somehow be-INF it good mother  
 [you would somehow want to .hhh be that goo:d mo:ther
- 05 mitä [sul # ei# kosk°aan ollu°.  
 what you-ADE NEG never have-PPC  
 that [you #never# °had°.
- 06 P: [khm ((swallows))
- 07 (0.4)

- 08 P: nii.i.  
PRT  
yea:ah.
- 09 (.)
- 10 P: nii. .hh (.) #mm n#ii.  
PRT PRT  
yeah. .hh (.)#mm y#eah.
- 11 (1.2)
- 12 P: ja ny(h) hy h >£nyt tulee semmone m:ielikuva et  
and PRT PRT come-3 such image PRT  
and now(h) hnow h >£now we get the p:icture that
- 13 et mä haluun jotenki elää sit niinku sitä< .hh  
PRT I want-1 somehow live PRT PRT it-PAR  
that I somehow kind of want to live that then< .hh
- 14 (.) #o u u # sen kau- sillei lapsen kautta tai  
it-GEN through such.way child-GEN through or  
(.)#o u u # with (through)- like have that life with (through)
- 15 jotenki, #mm# ↑emmätiä  
somehow PRT  
the child somehow, #mm# ↑I don't know
- 16 voihan >se ↑osittain ehkä olla niinki mutta  
can-CLI it partly maybe be-INF such.way-CLI but  
>it may ↑partly be that too but
- 17 että< .hhh (0.5) °#mm#° (0.5) nii.=ja ky:llä  
PRT PRT and PRT  
I mean< .hhh (0.5) °#mm#° (0.5) yeah.=and ye:s
- 18 haluan olla hyvä äiti m:itä  
want-1 be-INF good mother what  
I want to be the good mother tha:t
- 19 ei [(0.3) <ei itellä.>  
NEG NEG self-ADE  
I did not [(0.3) <have myself.>
- 20 T: [°mm.°
- 21 (1.8)
- 22 P: >se on va-< PAha sanoo >em mä voi vieläkään  
it is PRT bad say-INF NEG-1 I can yet-CLI-NEG  
>it is jus-< HARrd to say >I can't even now

- 23            oikeestaan sanoo että< #£äiti ei ollu hyvä äiti£#.  
 actually say-INF PRT mother NEG be-PPC good mother  
 actually say that my< #£mother was not a good mother£#.

In lines 4–5, the therapist responds to the patient’s troubles-telling, saying *sä haluisit jotenkin olla se hyvä äiti mitä sul ei koskaan ollu* ‘you would somehow want to be that good mother that you never had’. There are elements in this utterance that recognize the affective stance the patient has taken in her preceding turn of talk. As in the displays of affiliation that were found in homeopathy and to a lesser extent in general practice, the therapist shows that she has access to the experience that the patient has been describing by drawing the conclusion of the patient’s narrative, thus also implying that she is able to understand it. Further, there is an affective tone in the therapist’s utterance: she uses an extreme case formulation *koskaan* ‘never’ in the context of the patient ‘never having had a good mother’, which can be heard as conveying compassion for the patient’s situation. Simultaneously with the affiliation, the therapist suggests a connection between the patient’s current wishes and her childhood experiences, and thus guides the patient to self-reflection. In her response from line 6, the patient starts to reflect upon her own wants and needs with regard to mothering and connects these with her own relationship with her mother; in other words, she starts to work with her emotions and reflect upon them, which can be seen as the fundamental objective of a therapeutic encounter (see Voutilainen et al. forthcoming a).

In both extracts 6 and 7, the patient continues her self-reflection following the therapist’s affiliating response. Although the self-reflection by the patient may not always pursue the direction that the therapist has offered, it is obvious that these sequences of patient’s troubles-talk and therapist’s affiliating responses seem to *make up* the main agenda of the encounter in that talk about emotion and affiliating with the patient’s affective stance are treated as ‘business as usual’ rather than as side-issues to be closed in order to return to the main agenda. Talk about troublesome experiences and the reactions that they evoke in patients is a central part of the institutional task in hand.

A further difference between professionals’ affiliations with patients’ troubles-tellings in these environments is found in the choice of person reference. While in homeopathy and general practice the professionals’ affiliating responses were designed by using the so-called zero-person reference, the responses in psychotherapy were made with the reference in the second person singular, with ‘you’, the owner of the experience, as the referent. This is interesting in terms of epistemic rights to experience. Heritage and Raymond (2005) have suggested that epistemic positions are constantly present in talk because people tend to pay close attention to each other’s epistemic rights with regard the topic of their talk, doing this through tiny details of conversation, such as choices of person references or response particles (see also Sorjonen 2001; Heritage 1984). In health care consultations, when patients talk about their troubles, the focus is on the patients’ owned experience – they have primary rights to knowledge concerning it (Sacks 1992; Vol. 2: 242–248; Peräkylä & Silverman 1991). In general practice and homeopathic consultations, the professionals attend to these rights by choosing a zero-person construction in responding to the patient’s disclosure. Patients have also often used this zero-person construction as one element of their troubles-telling (see extract 4, line 70, and extract 5, lines 9, 12, 15) to invite the co-participant to share

the experience. Thus, the participants make way for the possibility to talk about the other participant's owned experience as generally shareable, the troubles recipient being granted a moment when she or he has access to the patient's experience and can affiliate with the troubles-telling. In therapeutic consultations, on the other hand, it seems that the professionals do not need manoeuvres such as the zero-person construction to gain access to their patients' experience, acting as though they have a right to make suggestions concerning how the patient feels in her- or himself (see also Vehviläinen 2003). This is understandable, since the patient in psychotherapy has provided such access through her or his self-disclosures during previous therapy sessions. Drawing upon our data, it seems that patients accept this "intrusion" as relevant, not treating it as a transgression.

This difference between the ways in which patient's problematic self-disclosures or troubles-tellings are received seems to crystallize one essential distinction between psychotherapy and more somatically focused health care consultations: the institutional task in psychotherapy is to work with the patients' troublesome experiences and emotions, to help them to reflect upon them and to transform their ways of relating to them. One device that helps to fulfil this institutional task is deviating from the rule of the ownership of experience. This device is more explicitly observable in relation to other types of health care encounters where it is not in use than it would be by simply investigating the environment of psychotherapy.

### *Conclusion*

As we have seen, comparison of different types of institutional encounters opens up new ways to analysing institutional practices. Focusing on one larger sequential activity, troubles-tellings and their reception, has allowed us to explore three types of comparative operation. The comparison between existing literature on troubles-tellings in ordinary conversation and the analyses of sequences of troubles-telling in health care consultation directed our attention to tension between orientation to talk about trouble and to business as usual, and how this tension appears in institutional encounters. This provided a starting-point for considerations on the relevance of affiliating with the patient's affective stance in institutional encounters.

The comparison of differences between two types of health care consultation with a similar institutional task, general practice and homeopathy, helped to further analyse the ways in which patients' troubles-talk is managed in encounters where the main task has to do with attending to patients' health-related problems. The comparison suggested that contrary to what has been suggested before, affiliating responses by the professionals provide a quick way to return to the medical business as usual, while keeping to the problem-solving agenda may lead to patients extending their disclosures of problematic experiences and treating professionals' neutral responses as inadequate. Further, the comparison helped to outline more practices that are available for professionals in affiliating with the patient's affective stance than an analysis of just one consultation type would have done. These practices of displaying affiliation can be suggested to illustrate what 'empathy' could look like in health care interaction. The analysis has also mapped down some interactional consequences of neutral versus affiliating responses to

patients' troubles-tellings. Such results are potentially applicable in the training of both homeopaths and general practitioners on patient-centered styles of consultation.

Finally, the comparison of homeopathy and general practice with psychotherapy facilitated the analysis and description of a specific device (deviating from the rule of the ownership of experience) that was used in performing a key task of therapeutic work: generating self-reflection. This way the analysis helped to locate and describe a practice that is descriptive of the institution of psychotherapy. Throughout the analyses, the point was made that without comparison much of the findings could have remained hidden.

So far we have paid attention only to possible gains that a comparative approach brings with it, but there are of course problems as well. One important question is whether and on what terms we can assume that sequences of troubles-telling in different types of encounter constitute a comparable activity. As was mentioned in the introduction, troubles-tellings are found in various different locations and can carry various different functions even within one type of institutional encounter. This critical point will have to be taken into consideration in reflecting upon the possible worth of comparative analysis.

Drawing upon the analyses above, we can still suggest that comparison makes it possible to make observations on various interactional phenomena that would be difficult to capture by analysing a single interactional environment. Comparative conversation analysis allowed us to locate and analyse one such phenomenon, the management of patients' displayed affective stance, and to observe how it was treated as relevant even in environments that are usually thought of as restricted to problem-solving.

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## Preference for disagreement? A comparison of three disputes

### *Introduction*

A dispute is a highly interesting phenomenon in terms of both analysis of social interaction and study of emotion. Disputes reveal features of human conduct that are not necessarily observable elsewhere. For example, in aggravated disputes, the general interactional principle, which is called the preference for agreement by Sacks (1987), tends to be challenged and even turned into a preference for disagreement (see, e.g., Kotthoff 1993). Aggravated disputes also make relevant the study of emotion (see, e.g., Couper-Kuhlen 1999; Goodwin & Goodwin 2000). While, despite of differences in opinion, people usually try to avoid overt confrontation, in aggravated disputes this endeavor can fail, and the failure often becomes visible in the form of more or less uncontrolled emotional behavior. As a consequence, aggravated disputes easily become objects of social condemnation, and quarreling, particularly in public, tends to be avoided.

In spite of the attractiveness of the topic, there are still rather few micro-level studies of authentic disputes (see, however, e.g. Dersley 1998; Dersley & Wootton 2000; Goodwin, M. H. 1990; Goodwin & Goodwin 2000; Kotthoff 1993; Selting 1994; Vuchinich 1990). One challenge in the study of disputes is the difficulty of gaining access to authentic recorded data for research purposes. Disputes often arise spontaneously and unexpectedly, and the possibilities of having them recorded for analysis are poor from the outset. Neither is it certain that the recorded disputes can be used for research purposes because people, due to the social and moral concerns attached to quarreling, are often unwilling to let outsiders study their disputes. In general, the scarcity of research concerns particularly studies focusing on argumentation between adults in mundane interactional contexts. It has proved to be easier to gain access to children's arguments and several of the studies dealing with disputes use data recorded in conjunction with children's play (see, e.g., Goodwin, M. H. 1990; Goodwin & Goodwin 1987, 2000; Maynard 1985).

This study compares interactional practices used in conjunction with three serious two-person disputes. The disputes occur in quite different settings: at home between a young couple, in an institutional meeting between two middle-aged women, and in a reality television show between two young women. The focus of the analysis is on the practices employed by the participants when constructing

their turns at talk in the course of the dispute, including the display of emotional stance. In the analysis of emotion, the article draws on the view presented by, for instance, Couper-Kuhlen (1999, this volume) and Goodwin & Goodwin (2000), according to which emotion can best be studied as a social phenomenon. From this it follows that the relevant unit for the analysis of emotion is the sequential organization of action, i.e. how emotional reciprocity is built up turn by turn and how the turns of the parties are related to each other.

The idea of comparing three disputes stems from the availability of the recordings of three aggravated disputes, which, on the basis of a preliminary study (Kangasharju 2006), also showed remarkable similarities. Two of the disputes were videotaped and one was audio-recorded. This difference partly limits the comparison, because the non-vocal features such as bodily orientation, gestures and gaze have to be left out. Still, the verbal and vocal practices used by the parties involved form a rich object of analysis.

### *Dispute as an interactional phenomenon*

What is a dispute? What makes it different from an ordinary disagreement? The answer is not simple because confrontations that are called arguments or disputes in ordinary language may appear in multiple forms (see, e.g., Dersley 1998; Goodwin & Goodwin 2000; Kotthoff 1993; Vuchinich 1990). In general, disputes can perhaps best be seen as a continuum, extending from more or less harmless arguments to aggravated conflicts.

A common feature of the disputes analyzed in the present study is that they ‘flare up’ in the context of ongoing interaction that is non-disputatious. When assessing the degree of aggravation of such disputes, at least three types of criteria can be used. In the first place, the dispute becomes visible in interaction – typically very clearly and comprehensively – in “sudden shifts from an unmarked normal style to a marked emphatic style” (Selting 1994: 404; see also Goodwin & Goodwin 2000). These shifts can be observed in the behavior of the participants on many different levels: in bodily orientation, movements, gestures, facial expressions, gaze patterns, laughter, voice quality, speech rhythm, pauses, and verbal expressions. Secondly, in multiparty settings a rather clear marker of a serious dispute is the withdrawal of the other participants from the discussion. This is largely a consequence of the fact that the reciprocal intensity of the turns addressed by the disputing parties to each other prevents outsiders from taking part (Kangasharju 2001).

Thirdly, a useful notion in the study of disputes can be the preference for agreement (Sacks 1987), according to which interactions usually show an orientation to agreement rather than to disagreement. The concept of preference was developed to characterize the implementation of choices in situations where alternative, but nonequivalent, courses of action are available to the participants. Sacks expressly emphasized the formal and structural nature of the concept, which, in principle, means that the choices between nonequivalent actions also reflect an institutional ranking between the alternatives (see also Atkinson & Heritage 1984). According to Sacks, the preference for agreement is displayed especially in the second turns of adjacency pairs through phenomena such as the frequency of *yes*-answers as compared to *no*'s and the tendency to push disagreements back

in a turn by prefacing them with reluctance markers such as *well, yes -- but, I don't know*, or pauses and explanations. Agreement, on the contrary, is expressed rapidly and unmarkedly. According to Pomerantz (1984), preference organization makes visible the structural basis of solidarity in interaction by systematically distinguishing the unproblematic acts from those that are problematic in terms of solidarity.

Several later studies have emphasized the relevance of the context and the expectations certain speech situations create for preferred actions. Pomerantz (1984) noted that disagreement may sometimes be preferred, even if the first turn is designed to invite agreement. This happens, for example, after self-deprecating assessments. Pomerantz does not, however, discuss the preference for disagreement in disputes, which has later on received quite a lot of attention (see, e.g., Antaki 1994; Atkinson & Drew 1979: 60; Berg 2003; Dersley 1998; Garcia 1991; Kotthoff 1993; Vuchinich 1990). A conclusion drawn by most of these writers is that certain first position actions (e.g., accusations, blamings, complaints) make agreement a dispreferred action, because the recipients are expected to defend their positions. The defence, as such, does not mean an outbreak of a serious dispute or lead to a normative preference for disagreement. On the contrary, Dersley (1998: 237; see also Dersley & Wootton 2000) found in his study of complaint sequences that only 5 per cent of complainers' second position actions were overt denials or contradictions, whereas in the majority of cases (around 85 per cent), complainers, more or less implicitly, acknowledged the complaint but also defended themselves by treating the behavior complained of as justified or unproblematic.

Still, Dersley (1998: 240) also found that when complaints were responded with overt denials, this tended to result in a polarization of the argumentative positions and confirm the view that "oppositional turns simply engender further oppositional turns". Such a phenomenon has also been described as a preference for disagreement in the literature (see, e.g., Atkinson & Drew 1979; Garcia 1991; Kotthoff 1993), although Dersley himself does not use this concept (for more details, see Dersley 1998: 251–265). Kotthoff (1993), for her part, speaks about a preference for disagreement after showing how disagreement gradually develops into what she calls a dispute genre, in which, for example, the agreement-oriented reluctance markers practically disappear and aggravated dissent is signaled through topical, lexical and prosodic devices. In the data discussed in the present chapter, accusations and responses to them also occasionally generate turns and even sequences where similar phenomena can be observed.

### *Description of the disputes*

All three disputes analyzed in this article deal with a two-person confrontation between parties who know each other quite well and who are rather equal as to their power relations. In all cases, there is a moral aspect of justice involved in the sense that, according to one party, the triggering event is something "wrong" done by the other party or taking of the "wrong" side in a matter. Thus, rather clear roles of an accuser and an accused appear in the interaction, even if the roles are sometimes reversed. A common feature of the disputes is also that they end in reconciliation of a kind during the same recording, the longest of them lasting about half an hour

in the intensive dispute mode. In all cases, it is the person put in the role of the accused who is the most active party in the pursuit of reconciliation. Occasionally, there are “smoother” phases in all three disputes, during which at least one party – usually the accused – orients to agreement rather than to disagreement. Such phases offer potential exits out of the dispute and, in fact, the disputes eventually end in phases of this kind.

The first dispute [Big Brother] takes place in the reality television show Big Brother (henceforward also BB) which was recorded and broadcast on the Finnish SubTV channel in autumn 2005. The dispute arises between two female participants, Kaisa and Saara<sup>1</sup>, who know each other rather well because the contestants have lived together for about 6 weeks in the BB house. The intensive dispute lasts about 30 minutes, but a full recovery from it takes much longer, even if the recording of the program does not cover the whole recovery phase.

The dispute deals mainly with justice and application of the rules of the group. It is also worth pointing out that the dispute is spontaneous and not pre-planned by the manuscript writers of the program. The disagreement starts developing one sunny morning when the participants notice that the BB organizers have spread out autumn leaves in the garden of the BB house during the night, and hidden apples and mushrooms that are to be picked up by the contestants among them. The girls inside the house get very enthusiastic and want to go out at once, but since two participants are obliged to prepare breakfast, this is not so simple. Consequently, a joint decision is made to go out together when everybody is able to do so. Two girls, Kaisa and Anni, do not, however, hear or understand this decision and go out. This annoys those staying inside. The most frustrated person is Saara, who remained inside, out of fairness to the rest of the group. A fierce argument arises between Kaisa and Saara, who primarily assumes an accusing role in the dispute. Saara repeatedly criticizes Kaisa for going out, and Kaisa defends herself by criticizing Saara for not telling her about the joint decision. Later on, the dispute escalates into matters such as the personal characteristics and habits of the parties. After the aggravation of the dispute, the other participants mainly assume the role of bystanders.

The second dispute [Meeting] resembles the BB case in that it also starts quite suddenly and unexpectedly between two persons in a multiparty setting. In this case, too, the other participants withdraw from the discussion. The argument arises between two middle-aged women, Eeva and Leena, in a meeting of a municipal working group<sup>2</sup> attended by four people. Eeva and Leena know each other quite well from their working community, and the group has also had regular meetings over the course of the past year. Most of the meetings were videotaped, and there are no arguments of this kind in the earlier meetings.

The cause of the dispute is, at least on the surface level, institutional. The topic under discussion is the financing of rehabilitation services in the municipality, and Eeva represents these services, whereas Leena has participated in the work of another group that has been planning the outsourcing of the municipal services. Eeva strongly disagrees with Leena on the outsourcing plan, and an aggravated dispute arises, dramatically changing the ordinarily matter-of-fact atmosphere

1 The names used in the data are pseudonyms.

2 For more details of the data, see Kangasharju 1998.

of the meeting. The dispute is, however, brought to termination in about 15 minutes, although, in this case, too, the full recovery of the participants and the return to normal interaction takes some time.<sup>3</sup> To a large extent, termination is an achievement of Leena, the accused party, who pursues it actively. Even if this dispute is not public in the way that the BB dispute is, it is worth noting that there is both a two-person audience and a recording video camera in the meeting room.

The third case [Home] occurs without an audience and even the recording is made by accident: the quarreling parties have forgotten to stop the tape recorder after another recording. It is clear from the tape that the parties eventually notice that the recorder has been on, but at that stage the dispute is over. The dispute occurs between a young couple, and the triggering event is a phone-call by the mother-in-law in which the wife promises to let her little sister visit the couple and stay overnight next Saturday. The husband does not like this idea and his indignation is increased by the fact that his wife talks at length with her mother and in the meantime he has to take care of the baby. After the call, the husband clearly expresses his indignation and also strongly disagrees on the planned overnight stay of the little sister. The parties start an intensive dispute that lasts about 10 minutes and then gradually ends in reconciliation. As in the other two disputes, it is the accused party, i.e. the wife, who actively pursues reconciliation.

### *Comparison of the interactional practices in the disputes*

The practices analyzed in this article can roughly be divided into three categories on the basis of what kind of activities they accomplish or are part of in the course of the disputes. First, there are practices that are mainly related to the topic treatment. Topically, the disputes tend to get stuck between two alternative standpoints which, according to the quarreling parties, represent the “right” and the “wrong” point of view. This antagonism is emphasized by the recycling of the same topics and largely the same arguments over and over again. The treatment of topics is also affected by the dispute mode: for example, the topics initiated by one party can be interrupted or ignored by the other (see also Kotthoff 1993).

Secondly, there are practices that mainly relate to the local positioning of the parties in the dispute. The strongly oppositional positions of the interactants in aggravated phases of a dispute become visible, for instance, through accusations, mutually contradictory utterances and pejorative assessments of the other party. Thirdly, it is possible to regard as a separate category the practices that are used to display the emotional stance of the parties. At the same time, it must be emphasized that strong opposition and high emotional involvement are such inherent features of overtly disputatious talk that all three categories very often appear intertwined in the disputes and it is not possible to separate them, which is also demonstrated by the analysis of the examples to follow.

The analysis starts with a look at the sequential display of emotionality in the disputes. Next, the use of the practices of the three categories described above is

3 The difficulties in resuming normal interactional style become visible, for example, in the gaze patterns of the parties: even if they talk to each other, they do not look at each other until the very end of the two-hour meeting.

analyzed and summarized. The last part of the article discusses some practices used by the disputing parties when seeking reconciliation.

### **Emotional and non-emotional actions in a dispute**

When display of emotion is examined as an interactional phenomenon at micro level, the focus of the analysis is on the sequential display of emotion. A basic example of sequential organization in conversation is the adjacency pair in which different actions occur in first and second positions. Typically, the first position actions initiate something new or, at least, create some relevances for the second position actions, which are reactions to the first position actions. It has been noted (see, e.g., Couper-Kuhlen, this volume; Peräkylä 2004) that a typical location for the emergence of emotion is the second position: emotions are typically reactions to something. The data discussed here also confirm this observation: a serious dispute usually becomes visible through an emotional second position action, i.e. as a reaction to some preceding action. In the midst of a dispute, however, any turns may contain emotional elements, independent of their position.

At a very general level, the emotionality of the first and second position actions in a dispute can be classified according to the following scheme:

| FIRST POSITION ACTION |   | SECOND POSITION ACTION |
|-----------------------|---|------------------------|
| 1. Non-emotional      | → | Non-emotional          |
| 2. Non-emotional      | → | Emotional              |
| 3. Emotional          | → | Emotional              |
| 4. Emotional          | → | Non-emotional          |

The terms *emotional* and *non-emotional* must be taken here as general labels that are illustrated in the detailed analysis of the examples. Again, at a very general level, a *non-emotional action* in an aggravated dispute means that the party performing such action refuses to continue the typical preference for the disagreement mode. The order in which the above adjacency pairs are presented can be seen as linear in such a way that the first alternative often implies that the interaction is proceeding without any serious disagreement. The second pair is typical in the initial phases of a dispute when an action which is, at least seemingly, non-emotional is responded to in an emotional manner. The third adjacency pair is typical in situations where the dispute continues and the parties produce emotional responses to each other's actions. The non-emotional response of the fourth type can initiate the termination phase of a dispute or, at least, offer a location for an exit.

As the focus of the analysis in this article is on the practices constructing the dispute in the intensive quarreling phases, the initiation of the dispute is not demonstrated in the examples. A common feature of all three disputes is, however, that they flare up quite suddenly and unexpectedly within a context that is non-disputatious and quickly obtain their aggravated mode.

### Violating the epistemic authority of the other party

Participants in non-conflictual interaction usually display sensitivity to what the others have rights to know and, relatedly, to describe or evaluate (Raymond & Heritage 2006; Sacks 1984). When discussing these rights, Raymond and Heritage use the term epistemic authority. Labov and Fanshel (1977) describe a similar phenomenon by talking about A-events, to which only the speaker has primary access, and B-events, to which only the interlocutor has primary access. In ordinary interaction, the personal territory of the other party is usually respected in such a way that one does not take a stand on matters about which only the other party can be aware of. For example, matters belonging to the area of a person's mental processing can be included in such topics. In aggravated disputes, however, the principle of displaying sensitivity to the epistemic authority of the other party may be violated. Extract (1) (lines 1–8) shows that Saara is expressly talking about B-events, i.e. matters belonging to the area of Kaisa's epistemic authority<sup>4</sup>.

(1) [Big Brother]

- |           |   |   |
|-----------|---|---|
| 01 Saara: | se on vaan <b>aina</b> niinku siis<br>it is just always PRT PRT<br>it just <b>always</b> sort of happens I mean                               | EXTREME CASE<br>FORMULATION <sup>5</sup>      |
| 02        | nää keskustelut <b>aina</b> lähtee siihen<br>these discussion-PL always go it-ILL<br>these discussions <b>always</b> result in                | EMPHATIC<br>STRESS                            |
| 03 Kaisa: | nii<br>yes  |   |
| 04 Saara: | et <b>sum</b> <b>mielestä</b> <b>mikään</b><br>PRT you-GEN mind-ELA anything<br>that <b>in your opinion not any</b>                           | SPEAKING FOR<br>THE OTHER PARTY               |
| 05        | <b>ei</b> <b>oo</b> <b>↑rakentavaa</b> <b>keskustelua</b> =<br>NEG is constructive-PAR discussion-PAR<br><b>discussion is ↑constructive</b> = | EXTREME CASE<br>FORMULATION<br><br>ACCUSATION |
| 06 Kaisa: | =nii=<br>=yes=  |   |
| 07 Saara: | =koska se ei mee siihen (.)<br>because it NEG go it-ILL<br>=because it is not (.) kind of   |   |
| 08        | niinku tahtiin <b>ku sää</b> <b>haluaisit</b> .<br>PRT pace-ILL PRT you want-CON-2<br>going in the way <b>you'd like it to go</b> .           | SPEAKING FOR THE<br>OTHER PARTY               |

4 This activity is described here with the expression *speaking for the other party*.

5 The capitalized utterances describing the practices are used throughout the examples in order to demonstrate the similarity of practices in different disputes (see also Table 1 in the final part of the article). The descriptions refer to the bolded utterances in the examples. To avoid repetition, each practice is not always mentioned in the analysis of the individual examples.

- 09 (0.5)
- 10 Kaisa: mää luulen et siin me tullaan vastaan  
 I think-1 PRT there we come-PAS towards  
 I think we are quite similar
- 11 toisia[mme aika vah]vasti.  
 each.other-PAR-POS quite strongly  
 in that respect.
- 12 Saara: [niin tullaan.  
 [PRT come-PAS  
 [yes we are.

Extract (1) shows the local positioning of the parties into the roles of accuser (Saara) and an accused (Kaisa). In her accusing turns (lines 1–8), Saara uses the utterances *sum mielestä* ‘in your opinion’ (line 4) and *ku sää haluaisit* ‘in the way you’d like it to go’ (line 8), which make Kaisa’s epistemic authority, i.e., her thoughts, opinions and intentions questionable. Furthermore, by using the extreme case formulations (Pomerantz 1986) *aina* ‘always’ (lines 1 and 2) and *mikään* ‘not any’ (line 4) Kaisa extends the scope of her criticism: the description is no longer restricted to the case in hand but extended to Kaisa’s behavior in other situations as well. This phenomenon is consistent with the general black-and-white antagonism which is often a permeable feature of interaction that is overtly disputatious.

Kaisa first receives Saara’s criticism with the particle *nii* ‘yes’ (lines 3 and 6), which carries a level terminal contour and conveys the meaning that the recipient treats the speaker’s prior talk as incomplete (Sorjonen 2001: 233–238). At the end of her turn (lines 10–11) she produces an assessment that can be heard as self-defending (cf. Dersley and Wootton 2000) but not as clearly disagreement-oriented: there is, for example, the epistemic marker *mää luulen* ‘I think’ (for more details on ‘I think’, see Kärkkäinen 2003), which softens the claim and makes it only Kaisa’s opinion. The prosodic features of Kaisa’s turn also lack the emotionality of Saara’s previous utterances. The assessment, which describes the parties as having similar traits, is received with agreement by Saara. This short agreement-oriented exchange does not terminate the dispute, but it shows that even in the midst of a serious dispute an action that can, mainly on the basis of the prosodic features, be interpreted as emotional, may be responded to by a non-emotional action and this, in turn, be responded to with a further non-emotional action.

Extract (2) comes from the dispute occurring at home and contains elements similar to extract (1). In the first place, both extracts are initiated with an accusation, and secondly, the accusations concern matters belonging to the personal territory of a participant. Before the extract, the husband (Timo) has criticized his wife Anna for talking too long on the phone with her mother. Anna defends herself with a counter accusation (lines 1–3), and Timo continues his criticism in lines 4 and 5:

(2) [Home]

- 01 Anna: @**kulta**:@ (1.0) ei oo (.) siis **ei oo** ANIMATED VOICE <sup>6</sup>  
honey NEG is PRT NEG is  
@**honey**:@ (1.0) it is not (.) I mean **it is not** ACCUSATION
- 02 **yks eikä kaks kertaa ku sä joriset** PEJORATIVE  
one NEG-CLI two time-PL CNJ you jabber-2 LEXICAL CHOICE  
**once or twice you jabber**
- 03 **puhelimes ja mä hoidan kaikki.** EXTREME CASE  
phone-INE and I take.care-1 all FORMULATION  
**on the phone and I take care of everything.**
- 04 Timo: joo mut **tommone (.) <mamman kaa>** PEJORATIVE  
PRT but that.kind.of mother-GEN with LEXICAL CHOICE  
yes but **such (.) babbling (.) <with the mom>**
- 05 **(.) höpötys se on ihan turhaa.** PEJORATIVE  
babbling it is fully unnecessary ASSESSMENT OF  
**it is fully unnecessary.** THE OTHER  
PARTY
- 06 Anna: ai jaa.  
aha.

In his criticizing turn (lines 4–5), Timo describes the telephone call Anna has just had with her mother as *mamman kaa höpötys* ‘babbling with the mom’ (line 4), condemning such behavior as “unnecessary” (line 5). The descriptions question Anna’s right to talk on the phone with her mother and her ability to judge the content of the calls, which can be regarded as a violation of her epistemic authority. The pejorative assessment of the phone call as *höpötys* ‘babbling’ (line 4) can be heard as a reciprocation of the utterance *sä joriset puhelimes* ‘you jabber on the phone’ used by Anna at line 2. Thus, the social and sequential dimensions of the dispute are made visible by the fact that the pejorative utterances are used reciprocally in subsequent turns by each party.

The emotional character of the dispute in extract (2) becomes also apparent through the prosodic features of the address term *kulta* ‘honey’ (line 1). When uttering this term, Anna modifies her voice in a way which is conspicuous: the voice quality can perhaps best be described as sarcastic<sup>7</sup>. The lengthening of the final vowel still emphasizes the emotional stance.

6 For the sake of brevity, the expression *animated voice* is used for all modifications of voice quality, even if the modification is not in all cases making the talk more “lively”.

7 The difficulty in describing modifications of voice quality is discussed, for example, by Haakana and Visapää (2005).

**Strong opposition and pejorative assessment of the other party**

Extracts (3), (4) and (5) below have several features in common. They all contain instances of strong opposition and pejorative assessments of the other party or his or her talk through expressions that can be heard as scornful or ironic. Extract (3) is a direct continuation of extract (2) and contains several instances of strong display of opposition (cf. Goodwin & Goodwin 2000), which can also be described as overt polarization (Dersley 1998: 240–241). Strong opposition is displayed, above all, through outright denials (lines 6–7, 9–10, 12, 20 and 22):

(3) [Home]

- 01 Timo: **mitä askaa silläkin ((anoppi)) nyt oli.** SCORNFUL  
 what matter-PAR it/she-ADE-CLI now be-PST QUESTION  
**what did she ((mother-in-law)) sort of have to say.**
- 02 (.)
- 03 **@Paula yöksi [ui@.** ANIMATED  
 InameF night-TRA swim VOICE  
**@Paula is going to stay overnight@.**
- 04 Anna: [nii et voiks Paula tulla tänne  
 PRT PRT can-Q-CLI InameF come-INF here  
 [yes if Paula could come here
- 05 lauantain ja sunnuntain väli[seks yöks.  
 Saturday-GEN and Sunday-GEN between-TRA night-TRA  
 and stay over the night between Saturday and Sunday.
- 06 Timo: [no ei nyt ihan tasan  
 [PRT NEG now quite even  
 [well she just simply
- 07 **tu sillon.** OUTRIGHT  
 come then DENIAL  
**won't come then.**
- 08 Anna: **no miksei [tuu** CRITICIZING  
 PRT why-NEG come WHY-QUESTION  
**well why not**
- 09 Timo: [ei (.) lau- (.) OUTRIGHT  
 [NEG Sat- DENIAL  
 [no (.) Sat- (.)
- 10 viikonloppuyöks ei [meil tuu **vitsi.**  
 weekend night-TRA NEG us-ALL come joke  
 a weekend night she won't come to us **damn.** SWEARING
- 11 Anna: [no soita ettei tuu.  
 [PRT phone-IMP PRT-NEG come-3  
 [well give them a call that she doesn't.

|    |  |                       |
|----|--|-----------------------|
| 12 | Timo: <b>ei tu.</b><br>NEG come<br><b>she won't come.</b>  | OUTRIGHT<br>DENIAL    |
|    | ((...A few lines omitted...))  |                       |
| 18 | (3.0)  |                       |
| 19 | Timo: <i>tuu pilaa ainoot lauvantai-iltaa.</i><br>come spoil-INF only-PAR Saturday night-PAR<br><i>she won't come and spoil the only Saturday night.</i> |                       |
| 20 | Anna: <i>no se ei millään tavalla sitä pilaa.</i><br>PRT she NEG any-ADE way-ADE it-PAR spoil-3<br><i>well she doesn't spoil it in any way.</i>          | DENIAL                |
| 21 | Timo: <b>kyllä pilaa.</b><br>yes spoil-3<br><b>yes she does.</b>   | OVERT<br>POLARIZATION |
| 22 | Anna: <b>eikä pilaa.</b><br>NEG-CLI spoil-3<br><i>no she doesn't.</i>  | DENIAL                |
| 23 | (1.0)  |                       |

Strong opposition in the form of overt polarization becomes most clearly apparent in lines 19–22 where Timo and Anna discuss the overnight stay of Anna's sister proposed by her mother. In his previous turns (lines 6–7, 9 and 12), Timo has already repeatedly opposed the proposal through outright denials, and in line 19 he justifies his denials by stating that Anna's sister's visit would spoil their Saturday night. The subsequent turns (lines 20–22) consist of mutual contradictions.

Pejorative assessment of the other party becomes visible through a scornful criticizing question (line 1) and the candidate response to it (line 3). The scornfulness of the question in line 1 results from a complex combination of the lexis and the grammar: for example, the slang form *askaa* for the word *asia* 'matter' and the clitic focus particle *-kin* attached to the pronoun *se* ('it'/'she') referring to the mother-in-law create a belittling tone in the utterance. The tonal particle *nyt* ('now'; for more details, see ISK: 791–795 and Hakulinen and Saari 1995) adds to the scornfulness of the utterance, which can be heard as unmistakably disdainful.

The pejorative content of the question in line 1 is continued in the candidate response (line 3) which is literally translated as 'Paula swims (here) for the night' and uttered in a mocking voice. Modification of voice quality is used in all three disputes in many different forms and functions (see also extract (2), line 1, and extract (4), lines 1–2, 6 and 12–14). The use of this practice in confrontational contexts would need a detailed study of its own<sup>8</sup>, but one form used in the present data is the mocking imitation of other person's talk, either real or fictitious. In

<sup>8</sup> For studies on modification of voice quality, see, e.g., Couper-Kuhlen 1999; Günthner 1999; Haakana & Visapää 2005; Routarinne 2003.

extract (3), the husband Timo modifies his voice in a mocking way when producing an utterance (line 3) that can be heard as a form of reported speech of the mother-in-law. In this context, the turn functions in a rather similar way as the pejorative assessment of the other party: it is a disagreement-preferring action and is used to diminish the value of what the other party is or what belongs to her, including the persons who are close to her.

Extract (3) also contains a mild swearing (*vitsi* ‘damn’, line 10) emphasizing the bluntness of the denial, and a *why*-question (line 8), which can be heard as conveying criticism (see also ex. (7), line 1, and ex. (8), line 4). The critical tone of *why*-questions originates from the implications the questions asking for reason create: by uttering such a question the speaker indicates that the prevailing state of affairs is in some way questionable (ISK: 1597; Lehtovaara 2002).

Even if both parties in extract (3) use turns that can be heard as disagreement-oriented, the turns of the accused party (Anna) once again (cf. extract (1)) contain less emotionality than those of the accusing party (see also Dersley 1998: 240–247). In particular, Anna’s second position action (lines 4–5), which is a response to Timo’s scornful first position action, is produced in a non-emotional way. Anna’s turn is, however, responded to by Timo with an outright denial (lines 6–7), which restores the dispute mode.

Extract (4) is from the meeting context. It also contains elements of strong opposition (lines 5 and 8–9) and pejorative assessment of the other party (lines 9–10 and 12–13). Strong opposition emerges after the first turn (lines 1–4) in which Leena gives an account of the activity of a group that is planning the outsourcing of services in the municipality. She is a member of the group and her account is a response to Eeva’s earlier turns in which she questioned the outsourcing plan. When it becomes obvious that Eeva’s area, i.e. the rehabilitation services, are included in the outsourcing plan (lines 2–4), Eeva interrupts Leena and uses two consecutive turns (lines 6–7 and 8–13) in which she clearly opposes the outsourcing of rehabilitation services:

## (4) [Meeting]

- 01 Leena: @no mut se mitä mä halusin sanoo ni oli se  
PRT but it what I want-PST-1 say-INF PRT be-PST it  
@well but what I wanted to say was that such ANIMATED  
VOICE
- 02 että kuitenkin tälläset ((kuntoutuspalvelut)) voidaan@  
that still this.kind.of-PL can-PAS-4  
((rehabilitation)) services can still more@
- 03 (0.6) helpommin nähdä sitten > mahdollisina tuottaa  
easily-COM see-INF then possible-PL-ESS produce-INF  
(0.6) easily be then regarded as >possible to be produced as
- 04 ostopalveluina<. sellaset jotka vaatii=  
purchase.service-PL-ESS such-PL that-PL demand-PL-3  
purchased services<. the services demanding=

|           |  |  |
|-----------|--|--|
| 05 Eeva:  | <b>=JOO.</b> [TOI ON (.) toi on semmonen kans ]<br>PRT that is that is such also ]<br><b>=YES.</b> [THAT IS (.) that's also kind of ]        | INTERRRUPTION +<br>RAISED VOLUME               |
| 06 Leena: | [@erityistä ammatillista koulutus]ta@<br>[ special-PAR professional-PAR education-PAR<br>@special professional educat]ion@                   | ANIMATED<br>VOICE                              |
| 07        | tai [miten sen nyt ottaa ]<br>or how it-ACC now take-3 ]<br>or [how should it be said ]  |  |
| 08 Eeva:  | [TOI ON (.) mä sanon] sen verran<br>[that is I say-1 it-ACC much-ACC<br>[THAT IS (.) I say that much that                                    | INTERRUPTION +<br>RAISED VOLUME                |
| 09        | <b>et must toi on niinkun halpamaista</b><br>that I-ELA that is PRT mean-PAR<br><b>I think that is kind of mean intimidation</b>             | PEJORATIVE<br>ASSESSMENT OF<br>THE OTHER PARTY |
| 10        | <b>kuntoutusihmisten pelottelua (.)</b><br>rehabilitation.people-GEN intimidation-PAR<br><b>of the rehabilitation people (.)</b>             |  |
| 11        | koska e- (.) jos hankitaan ostopalvelua<br>because if acquire-PAS purchased.service-PAR<br>because er- (.) if they are going to buy services |  |
| 12        | niin @kai voidaan pyytää tarjous<br>PRT maybe can-PAS ask-INF offer-ACC<br>so @I suppose they can also ask                                   | ANIMATED VOICE<br>+ SCORNFUL<br>STATEMENT      |
| 13        | <b>myös kaupungin omalta [yksiköl]tä.@</b><br>also town-GEN own-ABL unit-ABL<br><b>for an offer from the own unit of the town.@</b>          |  |
| 14 Leena: | [@kyllä] varmasti.@<br>[@yes ] certainly.@   | ANIMATED<br>VOICE                              |

Strong opposition is expressed both through a raised volume (lines 5 and 8) and through two pejorative assessments of the outsourcing plan: first, the plan is described as “mean intimidation of the rehabilitation people” (lines 9–10) and second, it is questioned through a scornful statement (lines 12–13). The scornful tone of the statement results from the use of the modal adverb *kai* ‘surely’ (line 12) and the modification of the voice quality. *Kai* marks a statement where it occurs as a subjective assumption of the speaker, which is often heard as a question with negative connotations (ISK: 1521). Eeva’s scornful tone of voice, which resembles the tone of voice used by Timo in extract (3) (line 3), for its part strengthens the negative connotations. On the whole, the statement can be heard as ironic, ridiculing the other party’s talk, because the idea of implementing the outsourcing with the help of the outsourced is absurd.

The heightened emotional involvement of the parties is also displayed through voice modification in Leena's turns, which is, however, very different from that produced by Eeva. Leena's modified tone of voice (lines 1–2, 6 and 14) can perhaps best be described as stiff and a bit offended, whereas Eeva's tone of voice (lines 12–13) can be described as scornful. At least in part, the differences between Leena and Eeva can be explained both by their local positions in the dispute and their occupational status. Locally, Eeva clearly takes the role of accuser and Leena is more or less unexpectedly compelled to take the position of defender. Leena is the chair of the group and her occupational position in the municipality is also higher than Eeva's. One consequence of this could be that emotional control in the situation is a more important issue to Leena than to Eeva.

Extract (4) also, once again, clearly shows how the display of the emotional stance of the parties is demonstrably dependent on the preceding talk and the actions of the other party. Consequently, this further emphasizes the relevance of the sequential organization of action as the central unit of analysis of emotion (Couper-Kuhlen 1999, this volume; Goodwin & Goodwin 2000).

In extract (5) from *Big Brother*, Kaisa, for a change, takes the role of accuser and criticizes Saara for going out in the midst of their discussion on the conflict (lines 2–8 and 11). Kaisa's turn is a counter accusation and can be heard as a strong opposition of Saara's preceding accusation that it is typical of Kaisa ("your style", line 1) not to be a co-operative member of the BB group (transcript of the accusation not given here; see also extract 1).

## (5) [Big Brother]

|           |  |  |
|-----------|--|--|
| 01 Saara: | =nii mut se on [sun (-----) tyylis<br>PRT PRT it is you-GEN style-POS<br>=yes but that is your (-----) style ]   | ] INTERRUPTION;                                |
| 02 Kaisa: | <b>[MUTTA NYT AINAKI (.) mut]</b><br>[PRT now at.least PRT<br><b>[BUT NOW AT LEAST (.) but ]</b>   | OVERLAPPING<br>TALK +<br>RAISED VOLUME         |
| 03        | <b>nyt</b> ainaki mum mielest (( <b>laughs shortly</b> ))<br>now at.least I-GEN mind-ELA<br><b>now</b> at least I think (( <b>laughs shortly</b> ))                | SHORT<br>LAUGHTER                              |
| 04        | tää keskustelu loppu siihen<br>this discussion end-PST it-ILL<br>this discussion ended up with you   |  |
| 05        | et <b>sä sanoit</b> että tässä keskustelussa <b>ei ole</b><br>that you say-PST that this-INE discussion-INE NEG is<br>saying that <b>there is NO sense in this</b> | ACCUSATION                                     |
| 06        | <b>MITÄÄN järkeä tää ei auta ketään</b><br>any-PAR sense-PAR this NEG help anyone-PAR<br><b>discussion this does not help anyone</b>                               | RAISED VOLUME<br>+ EXTREME CASE<br>FORMULATION |
| 07        | (( <b>pointing her finger at Saara</b> ))  | ACCUSATION<br>BY GESTURE                       |

|           |   |  |  |
|-----------|---|--|--|
| 08        | (.) <b>ja lähit</b><br>and go-PST-2<br>(.) <b>and you went</b>            | [ <b>pihalle</b> (.) <b>joka on</b> ]<br>yard-ALL which is<br>[ <b>out</b> (.) <b>which is</b> ]   |  |
| 09 Saara: |   | [ <b>nii lähinki koska</b> ]<br>[PRT go-PST-1-CLI because<br>[ <b>yes I did because</b> ]          | INTERRUPTION +<br>OVERLAPPING<br>TALK          |
| 10        | koska mua<br>because I-PAR<br>because I was                               | [ <b>EI</b> niiku kiinn]ostanu<br>NEG PRT+PRT interest-PST-3<br>[ <b>NOT</b> sort of interested in | RAISED VOLUME                                  |
| 11 Kaisa: |   | [ <b>raivostuttavaa.</b> ]<br>[infuriating-PAR ]<br>[ <b>infuriating.</b> ]                        | PEJORATIVE<br>ASSESSMENT OF THE<br>OTHER PARTY |
| 12 Saara: | tämmönen asia koska (...)<br>this kind of matter because (...)((goes on)) |  |  |

The strong opposition becomes apparent through raised volume (lines 2, 5 and 6), interruptions and occurrences of overlapping talk (lines 2, 9 and 11). Interruptions and overlapping talk are also frequent in the other two disputes (see extract (3), lines 4–6 and extract (4), lines 5–8). One reason for their frequency is the fact that the speakers pursue topics of their own to the degree that they fail to respond to the turns of the other party, who may also be actively prevented from talking to the point (see also Vuchinich 1990 and Kotthoff 1993). Extract (5) also contains a pejorative assessment of Saara's conduct (lines 8 and 11). Furthermore, the extract shows that accusations can also be expressed or, as in this case, reinforced non-vocally: while uttering the verbal accusation (lines 2–8 and 11) Kaisa also points her finger at Saara in an accusing way (line 7). This is, however, the only occurrence of finger pointing in the present data. Saara receives the accusations with a self-defencing turn (lines 9–10), which interrupts Kaisa's previous turn but is, in turn, interrupted by Kaisa.

### Summary of the analysis and comparison of disputatious practices

Table 1 summarizes the analysis and comparison of practices and characteristics of the three disputes discussed in this article. The practices are roughly classified on the basis of their production format or interactional function.

Table 1. Interactional practices used in the three disputes.

| Practices / characteristics          | Big Brother | Meeting | Home <sup>9</sup> |
|--------------------------------------|-------------|---------|-------------------|
| <b>Prosody and speech production</b> |             |         |                   |
| Accelerated speech tempo             | yes         | yes     | yes               |
| Raised volume                        | yes         | yes     | yes               |
| Animated voice                       | yes         | yes     | yes               |
| <b>Topic treatment</b>               |             |         |                   |
| Recycling of the same topic          | yes         | yes     | no                |
| Overlapping talk                     | yes         | yes     | yes               |
| Interruption of the other            | yes         | yes     | yes               |
| Ignoring the turn of the other       | yes         | yes     | yes               |
| <b>Strong formulations</b>           |             |         |                   |
| Extreme case formulation             | yes         | yes     | yes               |
| Outright denial                      | yes         | yes     | yes               |
| Pejorative lexical element           | yes         | yes     | yes               |
| Scornful statement or question       | yes         | yes     | yes               |
| Swearing                             | yes         | no      | (mild)            |
| <b>Positioning of the parties</b>    |             |         |                   |
| Accusing statement                   | yes         | yes     | yes               |
| Accusing question (esp. <i>Why</i> ) | yes         | yes     | yes               |
| Pejorative assessment of the other   | yes         | yes     | yes               |
| Speaking for the other party         | yes         | no      | yes               |
| Strong display of opposition         | yes         | yes     | yes               |
| <b>Other practices</b>               |             |         |                   |
| Short, scornful laughter             | yes         | yes     | no                |
| Changes in gaze patterns             | yes         | yes     | –                 |

The most important finding in the present study is that in spite of the different settings, the participants in the disputes use similar practices. In part, this finding can be explained by the similar character of the disputes: they are all initiated with accusations and the roles of accuser and an accused generate turn types such as accusations and accusing questions in the interaction. On the other hand, even if the practices are to a great extent similar, there are quite big differences in their frequency. In the first place, there are features and practices that are common in all disputes, regardless of the differences in the length of the disputes. Such features include raised volume, accelerated speech tempo, interruptions, overlapping talk and ignoring the turns of the other party. Practices such as swearing, extreme case formulations and speaking for the other party, on the other hand, are frequent in the disputes occurring at home and in the television show, but non-existent or rarely used in the meeting context. So far, there are no studies dealing with this issue in detail, but it seems likely that an institutional environment sets limits to the use of practices such as swearing, for example.

<sup>9</sup> A hyphen indicates that the practice in question is not possible to take into consideration in audio-recorded data.

Many of the practices discussed here have been observed in earlier studies (see, e.g., Dersley 1998; Garcia 1991; Kotthoff 1993; Vuchinich 1990), even if different labels are used. Kotthoff (1993), for example, found similar prosodic features, accusations, interruptions, ironic laughter particles, topic ignoring and dissent signaling lexical choices in her study. The present study partly summarizes these practices and partly presents some practices not previously noted (e.g., the use of animated voice and changes in gaze patterns) as well as shows, as mentioned above, that similar practices are used in quite different settings.

### *Seeking for reconciliation*

A detailed sequential analysis of argumentative talk makes it possible to monitor the changes in the orientation and emotional stance of the parties turn by turn. As noted above, a common feature of all three disputes is the role differentiation: one of the parties mainly assumes the role of accuser, whereas the turns of the party put in the role of the accused can often be regarded as agreement-oriented and reconciliation-seeking. The latter pursuit also gradually leads to the termination of the highly emotional dispute. The extracts 6–8 illustrate some practices used in the reconciliation-seeking phases of the disputes.

Extract (6) demonstrates a clear change in the orientation of the young couple as compared with examples (2) and (3) above. The first turn of Timo (line 6), who from the beginning of the dispute assumed the role of the main accuser, is still confrontation-oriented but at least from line 8 onwards Anna orients to reconciliation. Instead of returning to the conflictual issue, she orients to the physical environment and matters outside the dispute (lines 2, 4, 8, and 10; cf. also extract (7) below). According to Dersley (1998: 235), a speaker may implicitly propose dispute termination by initiating a shift of topic away from the subject of argument. Another reconciliation-oriented practice used by Anna is the formulation of her directive utterances (lines 8 and 10): she uses the passive verb form that in colloquial Finnish corresponds to the 1<sup>st</sup> person plural (*keitetäänkö* ‘shall we make’, line 8). This formulation constructs the proposed course of action as joint activity, as opposed to the imperative forms used at lines 2 and 4.

(6) [Home]

01 (6.0)

02 Anna: avaa sieltä keittiöstäki ikkuna.  
open-IMP there.ABL kitchen-ELA-CLI window-ACC  
open the window there in the kitchen too.

03 (12.0)

04 Anna: tuo se Miia essu tänne.  
bring-IMP that 1nameF-GEN apron-ACC here.ALL  
bring that Miia's ((the baby)) apron here.

05 (2.5)

- 06 Timo: <**e:n tuo.**> OUTRIGHT DENIAL  
 NEG-1 bring  
 <**no: I won't.**>
- 07 (14.0)
- 08 Anna: keitetäänkö teetä  
 cook-PAS-Q tea-PAR  
 shall we make tea
- 09 Timo: mm.
- 10 Anna: käyää pesulla ja keitetää teetä  
 go-PAS wash-ADE and cook-PAS tea-PAR  
 let's have a wash and make tea
- 11 (0.5)
- 12 Anna: jooko?  
 yeah-QCLI  
 is that okay?
- 13 Timo: mm.

Anna receives the first expressions of alignment in the dispute, i.e. the particles *mm*, from Timo (lines 9 and 13). The particle *mm* can in this context be heard as displaying affiliation (Kangasharju 1998: 165ff.), and there are no disagreement-oriented turns in the conversation after this sequence. Still, the recovery from the dispute takes some time. This is displayed, for example, by the length of the pauses and by the brevity of the turns even after the sequence above.

Extract (7) from the meeting talk is similar to extract (6) in two respects. Firstly, the accusing party (Eeva) continues the disagreement-preferring mode and, secondly, the accused party is already orienting to the termination of the conflict. Extract (7) starts with a criticising *why*-question by Eeva, but in her response Leena, instead of answering the question, appeals to the external circumstances restraining a further treatment of the issue at hand (lines 16–17).

## (7) [Meeting]

- 01 Eeva: **miks hankittais** ACCUSING WHY-  
 why purchase-CON-PAS QUESTION  
**why should we purchase**
- 02 **pie[nempiä palveluja]**  
 small-COM-PL-PAR service-PL-PAR  
**mi[nor services ]**
- 03 Leena: [mut ei me voida ]  
 but NEG we can-PAS  
 [but we can not ]

- 04 siihen nyt mennä sen pidemmälle= Minä: (0.8) kannatan  
it-ILL now go-INF it-GEN long-COM-ALL I support-1  
go further into it now=I: (0.8) am in favor of
- 05 kaikki (.) palvelut toi- (.) toteutettavana (1.3)  
all service-PL realize-PAS-PC-ESS  
all (.) services to b- (.) be carried (1.3)
- 06 toteutettavaks kunnallisina  
realize-PAS-PC-TRA municipal-PL-ESS  
to be carried out as municipal
- 07 palvelui[na. ]  
service-PL-ESS  
services.
- 08 Eeva [joo] ja mä kannatan edullisina.  
[yes and I support-1 profitable-PL-ESS  
[yes] and I am in favor of profitable ((services)).

In extract (7), Leena also, for the first time in the course of the conflict, expresses her personal opinion on the conflictual issue (lines 4–5). In fact, this statement refutes Eeva’s accusations, because there now seems to be no real controversy between the personal opinions of Eeva and Leena. Consequently, Eeva’s turn (line 8) is initiated with the particle *joo* ‘yes’ which, in this context, conveys a meaning of understanding (Sorjonen 2001), and only a few turns after this exchange, the dispute is over. Again, the full recovery from the dispute takes some time. For example, it is only at the very end of the meeting when Eeva and Leena look at each other in the normal way (Kangasharju forthcoming) when addressing turns to each other.

The Big Brother dispute, which is the longest and lasted about half an hour, also contains a lot of turns that can be heard both as non-emotional and as reconciliation-seeking. Such turns are used more by Kaisa, who is the principal accused party, than by Saara. Extract 8 illustrates one such turn containing, contrary to the fierce argument sequences, an appreciative assessment of the other party (lines 8–10), which shows orientation to normal, agreement-preferring interaction rather than to a dispute. Even Kaisa’s first turn (line 1) can be heard as an apology, which is a response to Saara’s accusations before the extract, and it is also responded to by Saara (line 2) with a turn initiated with *joo mut* (‘yes but’), which, according to Sacks (1987), displays preference for agreement. Still, Saara continues with another disagreement oriented turn that ends in an accusing *why*-question (lines 2 and 5–6).

(8) [Big Brother]

- 01 Kaisa: tarkoitus ei ollu siis  
purpose NEG be-PPC PRT  
the purpose was not I mean
- 02 Saara: joo mut ku mä en edelleenkaan ymmärrä  
yes but PRT I NEG-1 still-CLI understand  
yes but still I don’t understand



that a topic shift away from the subject of argument easily invites non-disputatious responses from the other party. The smooth conversational mode also continues in the BB dispute some turns after extract (8), but then the parties again return to the disagreement-oriented mode. Nevertheless, the BB dispute finally ends in an exchange resembling that of extract (8).

It is consistent with the other two disputes that Kaisa as the accused party uses agreement-oriented turns more than Saara. On the other hand, the BB context also offers an alternative explanation of Kaisa's behavior. Because the BB show is a contest, a conclusion could be drawn that Kaisa recognizes this fact better than Saara and wants to present herself as a 'good' quarreler who is able to control the display of emotional stances better than Saara. There is no doubt that both parties are emotionally involved in the dispute; this is indicated, for example, by the fact that, contrary to the other two disputes, the BB dispute lasts very long. The termination phase of the young couple's dispute (see extract (6)) also demonstrates that it is difficult to quarrel alone.

### *Concluding remarks*

The idea of the present study stemmed from the access to three rather unique recordings of aggravated disputes which seemed at first sight to contain several similar features. The main focus in the study is on interaction that is overtly disputatious and on the practices the parties use when constructing their turns in the dispute. A further object of interest has been analyzing the display of the emotional stances of the interactants as sequential practices, i.e. as reactions to the preceding talk (Goodwin & Goodwin 2000).

The comparison of the three disputes shows that the initial observations of the similarities of the practices were justified. In all three disputes, there are phases in which the parties either unilaterally or reciprocally use oppositional turns that can be described as disagreement-oriented or disagreement-preferring if compared to normal non-conflictual interaction where a preference for agreement is a predominant feature. On the other hand, the reciprocal disagreement-oriented phases in the present data tend to be rather short and alternate with smoother exchanges. Therefore, a preference for disagreement is not in this study regarded as a normative principle that is a permeable feature in aggravated disputes. Rather, as the examples analyzed demonstrate, the participants in disputes are considered to alternatively observe and not observe a preference for disagreement.

On the whole, the focus in the comparison of the disputes has been on the similarities, whereas the differences have received less attention. It is obvious that the different settings offer different opportunities and constraints to the parties involved. For example, in the termination phase of the disputes the settings seemed to be of importance: the dispute at home could be brought to termination by shifting the topic away from the subject of argument to ordinary domestic routines, whereas in the meeting context a similar outcome was achieved by appealing to the external circumstances that restrain the treatment of the issues on the agenda. A general conclusion could be drawn, however, that in the pursuit of terminating a dispute, a topic shift to matters outside the subject of argument seems to be a useful practice.

In conclusion, it must also be noted that this study covers only a small part of the practices through which the parties build the dispute and display both opposition and emotional stances. For example, whole area of practices related to the use of bodily orientation, movements, gestures, gazes and other physical activities has been left out, because no comparison could be made on the basis that one of the disputes was only audio-recorded. Another interesting area for future research consists of the practices used when the parties in a dispute start seeking reconciliation.

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## Uptake makes a difference Comparing evaluation uptake in two learning environments

### *Introduction*

For most of us, the classroom is one of the first settings where we encounter institutional interaction order early on and are socialized into it; learning situations are organized in ways that can be described as structural prototypes. One such prototype is attested to be a three-turn sequence consisting of the adjacent activities of a teacher Initiation, a student Response and a teacher Evaluation/Feedback, an IRE/IRF (Bellack, Kiebart, Hyman & Smith 1966: 46–48; Mehan 1979: 26; Nassaji & Wells 2000). In this chapter, I will explore IRE sequences in two learning settings: in a classroom and with an educational game. Although both settings lodge an IRE sequence, a comparison between the two picks out differences in the ways in which students take up instructors' evaluation. These differences are contingent on the very details of social organization and material affordances in the two environments. Moreover, I will argue that the differences in the students' conduct have a bearing on conceptions of learning implicit in the interactions.

In literature, IRE sequences are reported in detail covering a variety of settings (Hellerman 2003, 2005; Lemke 1985; McHoul 1978; Mehan 1979; Nikula 2007; Sinclair & Coulthard 1975; for an overview, see Tainio 2007). In a number of studies, analytical emphasis has been laid on what transpires at the feedback (Hall 1998; Lee 2007; Nassaji & Wells 2000). For example, the evaluative/feedback turns may host activities varying from evaluation to affirmation or parsing (Lee 2007; Nassaji & Wells 2000; Seedhouse 2004; Waring 2008). Not surprisingly, these interpretations have often looked backward to the preceding context for evidence, less to the prospective learner activities. The instructor evaluation carries a case-closed quality and is treated likewise by the learners (Waring 2008); a sequence closing third evaluation/feedback turn does not project any further talk on the topic (Schegloff 2007: 221). As a consequence, it has remained fairly unexplored what pupils make of an instructor's evaluation/feedback. Intuitively, the reason for providing evaluation is its effect on learning (cf. Lee 2007). Yet, it has not been studied thoroughly whether or how students take up evaluation. Waring (2008) for example supposes possible losses of learning opportunities caused by the lack of post-evaluation learner participation. This study contributes to the discussion. In line with Waring (2008), I assume that student participation in response to a teacher's positive evaluation is neither interactionally inhibited, nor

sequentially projected (cf. Waring 2008: 579; Schegloff 2007: 118). Proceeding from the fundamental pedagogic IRE sequence, I will trace footprints of how students themselves make sense of evaluation. In particular, I will report some of the ways in which students take up instructors' evaluation.

In this study, I will use the term *uptake* in reference to a learner activity that takes place immediately after an instructor evaluation. In contrast to sequentially relevant second pair parts, such as an acceptance, answer, greeting or denial (Schegloff 2007: 13), uptake will here be understood as a more open category of immediate responses to a preceding, in this case evaluative, instructor turn. In literature, uptake refers to responsive turns or opportunities for turns in sequentially next positions. In the first case, the word is used as a synonym for a response (Cekaite & Aronsson 2004: 384; Margutti 2006; Stokoe & Edwards 2007). In the latter case, the word seems to collocate with negation: some researchers use it at points of interaction with no uptake, problem of uptake or failure of uptake (Egbert & Vöge 2008; Fox 2007; Schegloff 2005). Where there is no uptake, a more precise categorization is not warranted.

For the purposes of this chapter, I will adopt a sequentially determined understanding of the term. By uptake I refer to a learner's subsequent activity to an IRE sequence, i.e. the three-part instructional sequence that consists of the adjacent activities of Initiation, Response and Evaluation (or feedback) assigned to the Teacher and the Students respectively. In many contexts the triadic sequence structure appears justified. The teacher's initiation is followed by a student's response, which is followed by the teacher's evaluation. At this point, a new three-part sequence may be initiated by the teacher. Yet the question remains of what students do with respect to teacher evaluation.

This investigation adopts one of the basic methodological principles guiding research within conversation analysis. Namely, at each point in interaction, the participants display their understanding of the previous turn in their next actions. Thus, any subsequent next action (or non-action as a version of a next action) can be analyzed with reference to the prior as a display of an interpretation of the previous turn. Drawing on this methodological perspective known as the next-turn-proof-procedure (Hutchby & Wooffit 1998: 15; Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson 1974: 729; Seedhouse 2004: 21), I will analyze how students interpret an instructor's evaluation as displayed in their next actions. After all, the learners are the recipients to whom teachers address their evaluations. In line with Drew (2005), I assume that evaluation uptakes are cognitive moments. Cognitive moments are points generated in interaction in which a participant makes a move that in turn makes a state of mind observably relevant even if the participants do not explicitly address it.

In the following, I will first describe the two learning settings. Secondly, I will present a set of cases where I will locate the instructor's evaluation and analyze its uptake as it is documentally available in these sets of data. Finally, I will conclude with a discussion on these findings.

*Data: situated organizations for attention*

In line with the theme of this volume, this chapter makes a comparison between the details of interaction drawn from two distinct learning settings. The first is an ordinary classroom setting in which learning is led by a teacher. These data represent plenary teaching. The other is a setting in which students work on a task by playing an interactive game on the Internet. These data construct a setting for collaborative learning. In both settings, the instructor – be it a person or a computer game – assigns tasks to learners. These initiations lead in both settings to an IRE sequence. In both sets of data the learners are 5<sup>th</sup> graders, approximately eleven-year-old children.

The classroom materials come from two different lessons in mathematics with two different teachers. The one teacher is male, the other is female; both are experienced in their profession. The school is located in the Helsinki area, and it provides basic education (grades 1–9). Both lessons are organized around going through homework. The spatial organization in these classrooms is ordinary: the pupils sit in rows one by one behind their desks, the teacher's desk is in front, and a blackboard hangs on the wall behind the teacher. Only traditional teaching aids, such as exercise books, pencils, rulers, the blackboard and a pointer, are in use. The spatial organization of the classroom allows it to be recognized as a classroom even without pupils' and teachers' enactment. Moreover, the ordinariness of the setting is consequential to the instruction conducted in that space. The lessons were video recorded from three camera angles by the Centre for Educational Assessment<sup>1</sup> as part of a more extensive evaluation project.

Goodwin (forthcoming) analyzes settings as storehouses of resources. Drawing on Goodwin's analyses, a classroom is a storehouse of resources in its selection and organization of artifacts. The abstract dimensions of a table are used in a classroom to do the schoolwork. Pens, pencils, workbooks and readers rest on a desk within reach of a pupil's hand and vision. Organizing desks one by one proposes individual work as opposed to collaborative work. Putting desks in rows and placing each chair behind each desk, the students are invited to sit down and face toward the blackboard. As a result some students must turn their backs to some fellow students, an additional element of discouraging collaboration between students.

The frontal positioning of the teacher may be criticized for teacher-centeredness, although most studies acknowledge it as a central organizational resource for managing the speaking floor (for a discussion on this, see Lemke 1990: 10–11; Nassaji & Wells 2000; Tainio 2007). For example, Macbeth (2000) discusses classrooms as a powerful way to organize attention. He considers classrooms as social technologies for education and analyzes them as places where knowledge and competence are brought about. In the terms of Gibson's (1979) formulation of "affordance" he explores the ways in which classrooms afford the things that are learned there. The spatial design of an ordinary classroom provides a frame

1 This is a research centre of the Faculty of Behavioural Sciences at the University of Helsinki in Finland. The Centre carries out assessment of education, particularly of "learning-to-learn", which means the general preparedness to learn that develops together with the knowledge of different subjects.

for arranging participants' bodies in a way that allows for anchoring attention to the teachers and the media they choose. It allows producing a referential triangle enabling joint attention (Tomasello 1999: 62) where newcomers and an expert attend together to a conceptual/physical object (Goodwin 2007). A teacher's close proximity to the blackboard is often deployed in the creation of joint attention by the teacher's pointing to objects on the blackboard whether written there by the teacher or students (Osala 2008). Following these lines of thought, this study adopts a social-interactional approach to learning where learning happens through and in situated, embodied, social interaction (Goodwin 2007; Mondada & Pekarek 2004; Piirainen-Marsh & Tainio 2009).

The next step is to compare this classroom setting to an educational game setting. In this particular research project these materials were collected for the purposes of understanding the domestication of technologies.<sup>2</sup> The materials consist of video recordings of two girls doing their homework. These native Finnish speakers Paula and Sanna study French vocabulary at [www.bonjourdefrance.com](http://www.bonjourdefrance.com). The task is given by their schoolteacher. She was not informed that the children would be subjects of research. However, it was organized for the research setting that the girls would do their homework together. The videos were recorded with three digital cameras: one focusing on the computer screen, one on the children's faces, and one with an overall side view to the setting.

The game setting also makes use of a table: the computer sits on it, one of the children places a glass of water on it, and the children have their schoolbooks available on the table, or on their lap. Otherwise, the setting provides a somewhat different frame from the aforementioned classroom. Firstly, the girls sit in close proximity to each other side by side. On the one hand this allows them to attend to the computer screen from the same, almost equal perspective. It is the medium of providing knowledge objects to which to be attended. On the other hand the computer and the game also restrain their action. They have only one mouse to communicate with the game, and the game has only one player position in contrast to games that allow multiple player positions (cf. Piirainen-Marsh & Tainio 2009). Sitting side-by-side, and not for example in a 30 to 180 degree angle vis-à-vis each other, makes eye contact between them an effort. In order to achieve a mutual gaze they need to turn their heads in an orchestrated manner. (For a discussion of the organization of bodies and achievement of mutual gaze, see Goodwin 1987, 2006.) In the game setting, the players are cast in the pupil position whereas the "Teacher" or Game instructor T/G is a non-human participant, an educational game accessed through the Internet.

Although the classroom and game materials represent different subjects and settings they lend themselves to comparison. In both, the pupils' tasks consist of step-by-step subtasks. The tasks at hand are based on test questions for which there are correct answers as opposed to philosophical and cognitively more demanding problem solving, a critical issue that falls beyond the scope of this article. The

2 The data were collected within the project "Industrial design and domestication of technology". This project seeks to understand the processes and roles of appropriating and embedding different technologies in the conduct of everyday lives and activities. Within this project, one of the goals is to explore how information and communication technologies are used in order to complete school assignments at home.



Figure 1. Graphic design of game interface. On the left, a 'pendu-tree'; the task is initiated as a word definition under the grey box in a white box. Above the definition box there is a letter grid to match the word wanted. On top of the grid there is the alphabet on which a player can click to choose letters.<sup>3</sup>

math lessons consist of checking homework. As language learning tasks, the game tasks fall into the category of form and accuracy – a typical context for the three-part pedagogic sequence to occur even within the present-day variability of social arrangements in classrooms (Seedhouse 2004: 102–110).

### *Analysis: ways for students to take up instructors' evaluation*

The math lesson represents a business-as-usual type of educational interaction whereas the game setting provides for a variation where post-evaluation uptake is at stake. Extract (1) illustrates a case in point. The instructor's evaluation is followed by the students' uptake. The human participants Paula and Sanna play the game together in the student role. The subject is the French language: more precisely, domestic vocabulary. Figure 1 illustrates the essential fields in the graphic design of the game interface.

In the following data extracts, each line is numbered in the left margin and consists of three tracks: the Finnish transcript, its lexico-morphological gloss and a literal translation in English. The curly braces indicate information on the computer screen. Words in French are in italics and translated into English.

3 In this paper I will not go into the details of reading and making sense of the visual interface. Making sense of visual information is an intriguing interactional issue that deserves a study of its own.

(1) [Pendu]

01 I T/G: {Pour changer les chaînes de la télévision}  
 'To change the TV channels'

02 Paula: tää on tota tele[visiossa? ]  
 this is PRT TV-[INE  
 this is part of [the TV set?]

03 Sanna: [nii< (. ) ] <siis: [se o varmaa  
 [PRT PRT it is probably  
 [yes (. ) ] I mean [it most probably is

04 Paula: [tää on joku  
 [this is something  
 [this is like

((... 19 lines omitted; the students negotiate what the response would be ...))

24 Sanna: [sen on vähän pakko olla  
 [it-GEN is little must be-INF  
 [it must be (it)

25 Paula: [((clicks on the screen:)) {E} (0.4) {N}]

26 Paula: niimpäh?  
 PRT-CLI  
 right?

27 Paula: ((clicks on the screen:)) {U}

28 R Paula: ((clicks letters on the screen:))  
 {T} {L} {C} {M} {O} {A} {D}

29 R =[{une télécommande}]  
 ['a remote control']

30 → Paula: =[#n[oin.# ((eyes open, gaze directed straight at screen))  
 [ PRT  
 [ th[at's it.

31 E T/G: [{Excellent!}] ((or a similar evaluation term))  
 ['Excellent!']

33 → Sanna: #jee:.# ((Paula closes her eyes when Sanna says this.))  
 PRT  
 #yay:.#

34 → Paula: ootas< (. ) [meiän pisteet, ] ((Paula leans slightly towards Sanna,  
 wait-IMP-CLI [WE-GEN score-PL redirects her gaze toward the screen))  
 wait< (. ) [our scores, ]  
 [ ]



Figure 2. Lines 30–35 in Extract 1. From left to right: Paula attends to the screen with eyes open (line 30 in ex. 1). She then closes her eyes for a suspension of action (l. 33) – at the same time Sanna celebrates their success verbally (l. 33). Next Paula redirects her gaze to the screen, leans forward and aligns with Sanna to check their scores (l. 34). The rightmost image illustrates how the girls are positioned side-by-side.

35 → Sanna:                                   [nolla virhettä, ]  
   [zero mistake-PAR  
   [zero mistakes,]

As the first step in the sequence, the game interface initiates an educational task. It provides a word definition in French (line 1 in extract 1, see Fig. 1). In addition to the definition the game provides a letter grid with which to match the correct word, another hint for the students of what to do. In this case the task is to provide the word for the appliance used to change TV channels.

The girls orient themselves to the task. Although they do not provide an answer as the next action, what they start to do is responsive to the prompt. This is done with what Schegloff (2007: 106) calls a pre-second insert expansion: a type-specific expansion that is designed to enable the answer, i.e. the second pair part due. This type of interaction between students is in line with research findings: the majority of talk between students in the classroom is related to the official agenda (Sahlström 1999: 133–140; Tainio 2007: 37). Sanna makes a proposal, and Paula agrees that what they are looking for is in the domain of a television set (lines 2–3). This is accomplished by making reference to the task (*tää* ‘this’) and tying the French word *la télévision* to the Finnish equivalent *televisio* in inessive case *-ssa*. This case indicates inclusion: ‘in’ or ‘in immediate contact with’ (ISK: 1190). A sequence follows where they negotiate their beliefs and also consult available links in a word search (lines 4–23 mostly omitted here). After the conclusion of their decision by Sanna (line 24), Paula executes their joint response letter by letter (lines 25–28). This input results in the correct word in the letter grid: *une télécommande* ‘a remote control’ (line 29).

The game plays the subsequent instructor role: a communication box pops up on the screen and evaluates the response as the correct one (line 31). The three-part pedagogic sequence has come to its conclusion, but the playing students continue to what I will call an evaluation uptake. In this case it consists of four different stances taken by the participants.

Firstly, as soon as Paula has finished clicking the correct letters for the French remote control, the word *une télécommande* appears in the letter grid. At this

point she produces a sequence closing token *noin* ‘that’s it’ (line 30). The players’ responding position is thereby recognized as closed. Yet, the IRE sequence is not over: the players’ eyes are open and directed at the screen (Paula in the leftmost image in Fig. 2). The players are in the state of monitoring the game.

Secondly, in classroom interaction explicit positive evaluation is frequently a sequence closing third not projecting continuation (Waring 2008; Schegloff 2007: 115–116). This position is played by a dialogue box popping up. The game interface/instructor evaluates the answer positively (line 31). However, within the studied educational game interaction, positive evaluation leads to an uptake sequence during which the learners negotiate their understanding of their success. Sanna assesses their success with a response cry (line 33) (Goffman 1978; Goodwin & Goodwin 2000). This response cry contributes further to the understanding of the evaluation: *jee* ‘yay’ is a ritual cheer that takes a stance on the game success. The game progression is suspended. This is also visible in Paula’s non-speech behavior. When Sanna produces a response cry (line 33) Paula has withdrawn her gaze from the screen (second illustration from left in Fig. 2).

Thirdly, marking her next action as a suspension (*ootas* ‘wait a minute’ line 34) Paula goes on to check their game statistics to further celebrate their success (third image in Figure 2). At this point, Paula leans her body closer to Sanna’s, a sign of embodied alignment.

Fourthly, Sanna leans forward towards the computer to articulate the evidence of success (line 35). The latter turn is a sequence completion musing that does not project more to come but reflects on what preceded it (cf. Schegloff 2007: 124).

With cases similar to and different from the one in extract (1), this chapter explores how students take up teachers’ evaluation in two distinct learning settings. The two data sets allow for an intriguing comparison because they lead to differences in what follows after the instructor’s evaluation. In the one setting an evaluation uptake occurs; in the other it does not. Warranted in a detailed analysis of naturally occurring interaction, I will show that these differences can be attributed to differences in the participation framework. In an educational setting, uptake makes a difference that may be relevant to learning.

### *Classical IRE*

‘Teacher’ and ‘pupil’ are not self-evident roles in the discourse provided by the context of an educational setting. Instead, they are discourse roles accomplished in collaboration. Institutions (e.g., schools) emerge in and from talk-in-interaction if “participants’ institutional or professional identities are somehow made relevant to the work activities in which they are engaged” (Drew & Heritage 1992: 3–4; see also Arminen 2005: 32–36). It takes both teachers doing a teacher and students doing students to accomplish school (Hall 1998). These accomplishments then meet the cultural business-as-usual expectations (Arminen 2005: 123; Sacks 1984, 1995: 10–13).

Extract (2) from the mathematics classroom serves as an example. The teacher initiates the task by asking a question (line 1). The student cohort starts to indicate readiness to respond to the task by putting up their hands. The teacher allocates a turn to a boy, Juuso, (line 3) who responds (line 4). She gives feedback with a

terminal contour: *hyvä* ‘good’ (line 6). She then immediately continues with a new turn-constructive-unit to initiate a new question to Juuso (lines 6–7) who responds (line 8), and the teacher evaluates (line 9).

(2) [5<sup>th</sup> grade math]<sup>4</sup>

- 01 T:           mitä muuta on mitattu     ku aikaa?  
 what else-PAR is   measure-PPC than time-PAR  
 what else is measured than time?
- 02               (1.0) ((hands raise; the cohort is activating))
- 03 T:           Juuso  
 InameM
- 04 Juuso:       painoo  
 weight-PAR  
 weight
- 05               (0.8)
- 06→ T:        hyvä. sano o-     mikä se olis sen painon     virallinen  
 good say-IMP (i-) what it be-CON it-GEN weight-GEN official  
 good. tell us i- what would be the official
- 07               yksikkö mitä mitataan     kun< (.) Juuso.  
 unit     what measure-PAS when     InameM  
 measure that is measured then< (.) Juuso.
- 08 Juuso:       (massaa)  
 mass-PAR  
 (mass)
- 09→ T:        hyvä. massaa.  
 good mass-PAR  
 good. mass.
- 10               ((teacher writes on the blackboard: massaa))
- 11→T:         massaa on mitattu.     krhm mitä muuta?  
 mass-PAR is   measure-PAS-PPC   what else-PAR  
 mass is measured. krhm. what else?

A foundation of a discursive perspective to learning lies in the observation that “[l]anguage is the main instrument of communication in teaching.” This argument motivated Arno Bellack’s and his colleagues’ (1966: 46) research project into classroom interaction in the 1960’s. This classroom game is played in complementary moves: the teacher’s role is to solicit and react; the student

4 These data are not presented visually here. However, when I transcribed the materials I did look closely into the details of posture and gesture. At this point I only dare to say that class behavior was “normal”. The students sat towards the teacher and the blackboard and did not display that they would be attending to other things than the pedagogic agenda.

plays the responses (Bellack et al. 1966: 45–48, 55; Sinclair & Coulthard 1975: 21). Mehan (1979: 26) who made one of the early endeavors to study classroom interaction named the pedagogic three-part sequence the IRE sequence, the Initiation-Response-Evaluation consecution. In contrast to previous discourse approaches, according to Mehan the issue is not the characterization of the moves the teacher and the students make. Instead, Mehan focuses on the interactional mechanisms that enable participants to achieve an organized, recurrent interaction pattern. In sum, an IRE sequence is a social technology through which knowledge is installed and made available for students to work out the sense of their lessons, the adequacy of their answers and the meaning of objects organized on the blackboard (Macbeth 2000: 42).

To explicate the pattern as an accomplishment Mehan (1979) evokes the notion of conditional relevance and the normative character of sequentiality (Heritage 1984: 248; Schegloff 1972: 363–364). Teachers do not only ask questions and give orders but they also rely on the conditional relevance of these activities. The notion of conditional relevance is tied to sequentiality. Sequentially initial actions, i.e. questions and orders, have the normative capacity of restricting and projecting the next actions, i.e. answers and compliance that become relevant by the first action. Teachers continue to repeat and elaborate their initiations until a suitable reply is given, and a balance between initiation and response is established; students, on their part, comply with the conditional relevance through responses (Mehan 1979: 62–63; likewise Kleemola 2007 and Ruuskanen 2007). These actions can be seen as evidence of an entitlement attached to sequentially initial actions. Extract (2), moreover, is not only a strip of talk that falls into the IRE pattern but evidence that teachers and students collaborate in their respective roles to achieve an instructional sequence.

In extract (2), two cycles of an instructional sequence are conducted. Even if true for many incidents of classroom interaction, the template lends itself to other institutional settings as well. Therefore, it has been criticized for overgeneralization: it does not tell how the sequence affords the specific activity of instruction (Drew & Heritage 1992: 15). Within the enterprise of conversation analysis, the goal therefore is not to abstract a structure but to understand what it affords and how it lends itself to conducting a particular type of action, be it learning or something other.

Since the 1960's and 1970's both school and school practices have changed. Educational ideologies informed by constructionist concepts of distributed cognition, collaboration, learning by doing and problem- or project-based learning have had an impact on the organization of learning settings (for a discussion see Lave & Wenger 1991; Sahlström 1999; Seedhouse 2004; Säljö 2000; Hakkarainen, Lonka, Lipponen 2004). Still, much classroom interaction falls into the IRE pattern (Arminen 2005: 114–129; Hellerman 2003; 2005a; Macbeth 2003, 2004; Nikula 2007; Sahlström 1999: 63–76, 2005b; Tainio 2007, 35).

Both extracts (1) and (2) conform to the IRE pattern reported in research literature. This is also widely acknowledged in research into interaction in Finnish comprehensive and secondary education and Finnish as a second language education (Kleemola 2007; Nikula 2007; Ruuskanen 2007; Tainio 2007). As seen in extract (2), the sequence is completed with the teacher's evaluation, which is seen to work backward in the discourse. In the following, I will take a closer look at teachers' evaluations and their subsequent treatment in the unfolding of activities.

*Opportunities for evaluation uptake in the classroom*

Teacher evaluation does not simply give feedback on whether the preceding answer was correct or incorrect, but it further serves as a resource to come to terms with the local and immediate contingencies of the situation (Lee 2007: 181; also Nikula 2007). In his critique directed at mechanical categorizations of classroom interaction, Lee (2007) points out that recognizing a teacher's turn as an evaluation is not sufficient to understand the local and evolving exigencies of educational encounters (see also Nassaji & Wells 2000: 379). For one, despite any sophistication of functional schemes, preset categories presuppose a mutually exclusive coding of one function per turn whereas in fact, the teachers' actual evaluations can be designed to work in a wide variety of functions in an open, not predetermined, category. The third turns provide teachers with a locus to comment upon how relevant, adequate, accurate, convincing or elaborate a student response is, to name a few types of actions in an open, context-sensitive category.

For example, in extract (2), the teacher accepts Juuso's answer *painoo* 'weight'. The assessment term *hyvä* 'good' communicates the adequacy of the answer. Without leaving room for uptake, she nevertheless continues to elicit a more accurate or 'official' term. Juuso produces one. For the convenience of the reader I will reproduce this part of the extract here:

(2) [5<sup>th</sup> grade math]

08 Juuso: (massaa)  
mass-PAR  
(mass)

9→ T: hyvä. massaa.  
good mass-PAR  
good. mass.

10 ((teacher writes on the blackboard: *massa*))

11→T: massaa on mitattu. krhm mitä muuta?  
mass-PAR is measure-PAS-PPC what else-PAR  
mass is measured. ((clears throat)). what else?

This accurate answer *massaa* 'mass' (line 8) receives special treatment. First, the teacher evaluates it with the assessment term *hyvä* 'good', and she then repeats the accurate term, writes it on the blackboard and embeds the term in a clause (lines 9–11). All these activities turn Juuso's answer to a valuable knowledge object (cf. Hall 1998: 299). Clearly the teacher designs the most accurate answer as one to be noticed by the pupils. The pupils do not produce uptake; the teacher does not try to prompt it but continues to her next question. There is no reason to believe that uptake is missing in the sense that it would be recognizable that it is not there (see Heritage 1984: 247–249; Schegloff 2007: 20).

Likewise, a prototypical IRE sequence occurs in extract (3) from the mathematics class. The teacher initiates a sequence with a question (lines 1–4) that requires a due answer. It will be given by Laura, and it begins at line 7. In this case, the teacher evaluations are geared around the delivery and finally, correctness.

## (3) [5th grade Math]

- 01 T: paljonko te olette saaneet kun te jaatte  
how.much-Q you-PL have-PL-2 get-PPC when you-PL divide-PL-2  
how much have you got when you divide
- 02 kaksykymmentä viisi pilkku kuusi kymmeneen osaan  
twenty five point six ten-ILL part-ILL  
twenty-five point six into ten parts
- 03 eli kymmenesosa tästä luvusta.  
PRT one-tenth this-ELA figure-ELA  
or one-tenth of this figure.
- 04 → T: nyt hyvä viittaatte reippaasti  
now good put.up.one's.hand-PL-2 quickly  
now good you put up your hands quickly
- 05 (.)
- 06 T: Laura  
InameF
- 07 Laura: kaks pilkku  
two point  
two point
- 08 → T vähäkuuluvammin  
little loud-COM  
a little louder
- 09 Laura: kaks pilkku viisikymmentä kuusi  
two point fifty-six  
two point fifty-six
- 10 → T (.) ((teacher writes the answer on the blackboard)) hyvä.  
good  
(.) ((teacher writes the answer on the blackboard)) good.
- 11 T ja sitte:n (.) pee kohta on vähän erilainen  
and then B point/exercise is little different  
and the:n (.) point be: is a bit different

In extract (3), both the teacher and the pupils show an orientation to what the initial question makes conditionally relevant in their next actions. The pupils are expected to be responsive as an embodied cohort, raising their hands to signal willingness to answer. To achieve this kind of commitment requires time. The teacher's turn design serves to achieve this outcome. Her turn consists of three parts: 1) an interrogative (lines 1–2); 2) an expansion that paraphrases the task and during which the cohort embodies due responsiveness (line 3); and 3) an evaluation of that responsive non-speech activity (line 4). A rephrase is a device teachers commonly use to prompt responses (Kleemola 2007: 68–69). A paraphrase gives

time for the students to indicate their responsiveness by raising their hands (see also Sahlström 1999), an activity that the teacher evaluates as the relevant subsequent conduct (line 4). What we see here is a contingent adaptation of a teacher initiation that expands the single act to what is a relevant activity for the accomplishment of the sequence underway in that situation. There is no uptake of the evaluation nor is the absence treated as noticeable.

To move on from the initiation of the sequence to the response, the teacher selects Laura to give an answer. When Laura starts to deliver her answer, the teacher interrupts to tell her to speak up (line 8): the teacher's turn is a directive but also an evaluation of Laura's way of delivering the answer. This sort of evaluation is taken up in the replay of the answer (line 9). After Laura delivered the answer accurately, it is treated as a valuable knowledge object and made accessible to all pupils. It is written on the blackboard and evaluated as good (line 10). The teacher then moves on to lead in the next task (line 11). Similar to extract (2), or the evaluation of raised hands, no student uptake occurs at the completion of the teacher's evaluation. None of the parties do anything that would treat the non-occurrence of an uptake noticeable.

To seal the deal, extract (4) will once more show no vocal uptake by the pupils. The extract is an immediate continuation of extract (2).

(4) [5<sup>th</sup> grade math]

- 11 T: massaa on mitattu. krhm mitä muuta?  
 mass-par is measure-PAS-PPC ((clears throat)) what else-PAR  
 mass is measured. krhm what else?
- 12 ? : ( - - )
- 13 T: Laura  
 lname<sub>F</sub>
- 14 Laura: ö: pituutta  
 length-PAR  
 uh length
- 15 T: hyvä.  
 good  
 good.
- 16 → ((teacher writes on the blackboard))
- 17 T: oho! pituus ((teacher corrects a spelling/grammatical error))  
 PRT length  
 oops! length
- 18 → (.)
- 19 T: mitä muuta.  
 what else-PAR  
 what else.

In extract (4), one more IRE sequence is visible. The teacher evaluates Laura's response as *hyvä* 'good' (line 15). Next to the evaluation and prior to the subsequent next question (line 19), there is plenty of time that is filled with what appear as pauses in talk-in-interaction. The teacher writes the correct answer on the blackboard (line 16). It can be said that since the teacher is not attending to the pupils but turned away to writing, she is not available to allocate a turn to anyone. Nevertheless, hypothetically there could be room for the pupils' uptake after evaluation. Extract (5) instantiates a gesture in that direction.

Starting from the teacher initiation in extract (5), the IRE differs from those seen in extracts (2)–(4). Firstly, the turn design is different. The teacher prefaces the question with a note on dissimilarity (line 1). Typically prefaces are used in non-routine interactional environments, where delicate issues are at stake. The teacher reads the equation aloud and suggests walking through it completely. Instead of asking for the result, she inquires about the pupils' ways of reasoning. A nominated pupil, Jani, then recounts his line of thinking. Walking through the task consists of subtasks. The teacher marks Jani's delivery of the first of them with an explicit positive evaluation *hyvä* 'good' (line 8). The student treats the evaluation as a point for continuation (line 9) whereas the teacher overlaps to tell him to hold on and suspend the continuation at the good first answer (line 10).

(5) [5<sup>th</sup> grade math]

- 01 T: pee kohta on vähän erilainen otetaan sekin nyt kokonaan (.)  
Bee point is little different take-PAS it-CLI now completely  
point B is a bit different let's walk through it completely (.)
- 02 neljätoista kokonaista jaettuna kahdella ei kymmenellä huom  
fourteen whole-PAR divide-PPC-ESS two-ADE NEG ten-ADE note  
fourteen divided into two not into ten note
- 03 miten te rupeette tätä päässä laskua tutkimaan eli miten sen saa  
how you start-2-PL this-PAR mental.arithmetic study PRT how it-GEN get  
how do you start thinking about this mental arithmetic like how do you get it
- 04 (.)
- 05 T: Jani  
InameM
- 06 Jani: mä aattelin ku tos ykköses kakkoseen oota ykkösen voi jakaa kahdelle  
I think-PST-1 PRT there.INE one-INE two-ILL wait one-GEN can divide two-ALL  
I thought like in one to two wait- one can be divided into two
- 07 niin sitte< neljätoist on pakko jakaa kahdelle ni siit tulee seitsemä ja sillee  
so then fourteen is must divide-INF two-ALL so it-PAR come seven and so  
so then< fourteen must be divided to two then it makes seven and like  
(1st image from left in Figure 3))
- 08 T: hyvä ((2nd image in Fig. 3))  
good

- 09 Jani: ja sitte [kaks jaettuna kahella  
and then two divide-PPC-ESS two-ADE  
and then [ two divided into two  
[
- 10 T: [älä mee niin pitkälle, se oli hyvä elikkä koska kakkonen ei  
[NEG-IMP go so far it be-PST good PRT because two NEG  
[don't go so far, it was good like because two is not
- 11 sisäl- niin sä sanoit  
incl- that you say-PST-2  
incl- that's what you said ((3rd image in Fig. 3))
- 12 T: ykköstä ei voi jakaa [kahdella, (.) joten  
one-PAR NEG can divide [two-ADE, (.) therefore  
one can not be divided [by two, (.) therefore  
[
- 13→Jani: [((waves hands above his head; 4th image in Fig. 3))
- 14 T: neljätoista. mon [taks kertaa se meni neljäntoista Jani.  
fourteen many [-PAR-QCLI time-PAR it go-PST fourteen-ILL InameM  
fourteen. how [many times did it go to fourteen Jani.  
[  
[((a student sitting in the back raises his hand))(1.2)
- 15 Jani: se menee kak- seittemän kertaa siihen  
it go tw- seven time-PAR it-ILL  
it goes tw- seven times into it.

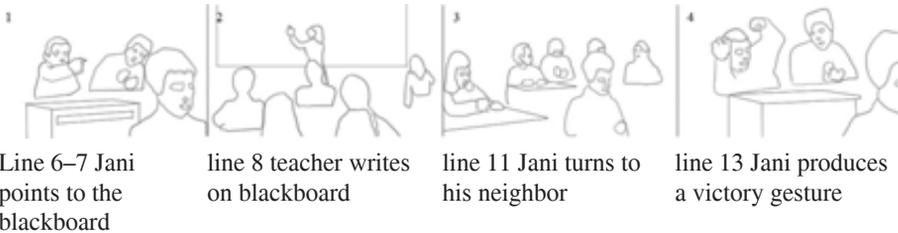


Figure 3. Learner uptake through gesture.

What is exceptional in this excerpt is Jani's embodied engagement. In many ways, Jani uses his body as a semiotic resource (cf. Goodwin 2000). When he starts to respond (lines 6–7) he does not only produce turns at talk. He also points to the blackboard (image 1 in Figure 3). The equation to be solved is written there. The teacher evaluates the response in speaking and writing: she says *hyvä* 'good' and writes the answer on the blackboard (image 2 in fig. 3). At this point, Jani also self-selects to continue. In other words, without teacher allocation he treats his response incomplete. However, the teacher rejects this continuation and repeats her evaluation in the past tense, leaving it behind: *se oli hyvä* 'it was good'. At this point Jani turns to a classmate sitting next to him (image 3 in fig. 3), reorients to the blackboard and delivers a victory gesture: he raises his both hands and waves

them in the air in a back and forth gesture (image 4 in fig. 3). Gesturing allows him to display his uptake without entering the speaking floor held by the teacher.

Jani's embodied engagement in the classroom interaction is exceptional. Other pupils rely on their voice when they respond to the teacher. Sequentially and interactionally his victory gesture somewhat resembles the use of the *jee* 'yay' token that was seen in extract (1).

Extracts (2)–(4) show firstly that teachers accomplish a variety of actions in their evaluative turns; they do not only address the correctness of the response. Secondly, these actions are intimately tied to the contingencies of unfolding interaction. Thirdly, their character as evaluations of responses is context bound. That is, they are recognizable as certain types of evaluations by virtue of their sequential placement, not by their grammatical form. In other words, an assessment term like *hyvä* 'good' does not alone convey what is regarded to be good. Some of the evaluations are assertions; some of them are sentence fragments or free standing NPs or APs; while all of them reflect the previous conduct and can only be properly understood against that context.

Yet, in extracts (2)–(4), it remains unnoticed what students make of the evaluations, as they remain silent. Only in (5) do the student's gestures offer a hint of his engagement. For the sake of comparison, structurally and hypothetically, an evaluation uptake would be due after the teacher's evaluation if the interaction were to follow a similar pattern as shown in extract (1). Frequently, it does not, and typically the teacher initiates a subsequent next sequence, either one derived from the previous response (in ex. (2) line 6) or drawn from the teacher's pedagogic agenda (ex. (2) line 11). Based on these examples and a collection of similar ones in the classroom data, the conclusion must be that typically, the participants do not treat the teacher's evaluation as a locus for displaying what they make of it. As Waring (2008) notes, opportunities for learning may therefore be lost. If one of the pupils has been able to produce the expected answer, there may be others who would benefit from a discourse that would explicate the line of thinking that was required in order to launch into the preferred, correct answer. Interestingly extract (5) shows that a task set for recounting a mental process also resulted in a comprehensive engagement. Yet, this may be true for the engaging participant but it remains questionable whether the rest of the group was activated. I will now move on to analyze IRE's in the other setting with the educational game.

### *Evaluation uptake in game interaction*

Strikingly different from a typical IRE sequence in a classroom setting, the game interaction proposes an expansion to the pattern where uptake occurs. This warrants an exploration into the details of these uptakes, and in the following I will therefore concentrate on them. By calling the post-evaluation turn an uptake I assume that it is responsive to what precedes it. Within this study, the term will be used in reference to an uptake of an instructor's evaluation.

As was shown in extract (1), despite the overall IRE pattern interaction, the *Pendu* educational game features some major differences in the conduct of interaction. Firstly, what differs from the classroom setting is that an evaluation given by the instructor, i.e. the game interface, can always be categorized as either

positive or negative: the game interface either accepts or rejects players' moves. They are either right or wrong. No matter what the response, the instructor's evaluations fall into a bipolar set of alternatives as opposed to the ones occasioned by any human teacher (as seen in extracts (2)–(4)). The computer game lacks the ability to make sense of the answers and is therefore not able to deliver any modifications regarding a response's relevance, adequacy, style, being on the right track or something else. The computer acts not on the basis of local contingencies but on the cause and effect that are programmed into it. Yet, the players who take up these evaluations are not restricted by the cause and effect in their next action.

In extract (6), braces in the transcript represent what takes place on the computer screen. Words in double parentheses explain activities. As in extract (1), in (6) the game provides an empty grid to be filled with letters that form the prompted word in French. The correct word is prompted by providing a definition (line 1). The players execute their response by choosing letters by mouse clicks (line 23). Therefore clicking a letter is always an execution of a subtask. If the players fail by choosing a wrong letter, a funny monkey will be hung in a gallows part by part. If they succeed, the correct letter appears in the grid.

In extract (6), I have omitted a similar insert expansion as in extract (1) during which the girls work out what their answer will be. The clicks (line 23) form the word *une machine à laver* on the screen (line 27). The correct answer becomes visible to the learners, not on a blackboard, as would be the case in a classroom, but on the screen. The analysis will focus on the subsequent evaluation (line 28) and its uptake (lines 29–30).

(6) [Pendu Une machine à laver]

01 T/G: {Definition: pour laver les vêtements}  
'Definition: for washing clothes'

02 Paula: tää tota: (uus)  
this PRT new  
this like (new)

((... 20 lines omitted ...))

23 Paula: [((clicks the mouse:)) {U} (.) {N} (.) {E} (.) {M} (.) {A} (.) {C} (.) {H} (.)  
[

24 Sanna: [(°une mashi:n a lave:°) ((word formation is readable on the lips of both girls;  
Sanna leads and Paula follows in the projection of the outcome.))

25 ((P continues mouseclicks:)) {I}-{L} [{R} -{V}=  
[

26 Paula: ((lip formations:)) [(°lave:r) °=  
[

27 =((word appears in the grid:)) { Une machine à laver }  
'Washing machine'

28 T/G: ((dialogue box appears:)) { *O faute ! Bravo !* }  
'O mistakes! Bravo!'

29→Paula: *jes*    *nolla virhettä*  
                   PRT    zero mistake-PAR  
                   yes zero mistakes

30→Sanna: *jep*  
                   PRT  
                   yup

The game delivers evaluation in parts: firstly, the correct letters appear in the grid letter by letter as a consequence of Paula's mouse clicks (line 23). This is a local contingency that the players are able to monitor simultaneously with their conduct. Secondly, as soon as the task is finished with the final letter, a dialogue box appears on the screen and states that the result was arrived at without a single error (lines 27–28). In addition, an evaluative term *bravo* is given in the dialogue box. What happens next is an uptake provided by both players. Paula acknowledges the evaluation (line 29) with a turn that is constructed of two types of items: a *jes* token ('yes') and a phrase that translates the evidential statement of 'zero mistakes' into Finnish. Sanna responds with a single *jep* 'yup' (line 30).

The response tokens *jes* and *jep* are both English loan words frequent in adolescent speech. Although there is no systematic study on the interactional organization of these two within the inventory of Finnish response tokens, clearly they do work in a way that differs them from the regular ones *joo* and *nii* (on these, see Sorjonen 2001). In colloquial Finnish *jes* is a response cry connected to ritual expressions of victory: for example, it is used as a response cry when a sport team scores a goal. *Jep* can be heard to confirm in this speech variety what is already evident and available for the participants in the context. The regular variant *joo* also has this function (Sorjonen 2001) but in contrast, *jep* is more marked, even affective. These particles reveal an understanding that an answer was correct.

The second part of Paula's turn ties back to the turn design in the preceding evaluation. As opposed to a literal repeat, the translated repeat displays the way in which Paula understands both the turn and the situation. She displays an understanding of French through the vehicle of Finnish.

In extract (7), Paula clicks letters with the mouse causing the word *un rideau* 'curtain' to appear in the letter grid and be evaluated on the screen. As in extract (6), both players participate in the uptake. Here too, the uptake utilizes Finnish in displaying understanding of French. What differs is that Sanna is the one who initiates the uptake even though Paula is the one who executes the responses by clicking the mouse. In other words Sanna displays herself as equally involved in monitoring the game's succession and responding to it.

(7) [Pendu Rideau]

((Screenview in the beginning of extract 7: A monkey leg is hung in the gallows. Letters and slots in the letter grid appear as {UN RI\_ \_ \_U}))

01            ((mouse clicks:)) {E}{D}{A}

02            ((word appears in the grid:)) {un rideau}  
                   'a curtain'

03 T/G:      ((a dialogue box appears:)) {Bravissimo}

04 Sanna: on se se. verhot=  
 is it it curtain-PL  
 it is it. curtains=

05 Paula: =meil oli yks virhe  
 we-ADE be-PST one mistake  
 =we had one mistake

In (7), the first part of Sanna's uptake (*on se se* 'it is it', line 4) is designed similarly to a second assessment that displays a different perspective from that of the first assessment producer (Hakulinen & Sorjonen, this volume), i.e. game vis-à-vis players. According to Hakulinen (2001) adjacent to yes-no questions, the *on se* 'it is' answer template is deployed in contexts where the speaker confirms something that is already available. Such a question has been part of the work through which the girls negotiate and search for a joint answer. The end of the turn translates the correct answer *rideau* to the Finnish equivalent *verhot* 'curtains'. Paula concludes the sequence with a reflection on the low number of mistakes during solving the task.

Extracts (2)–(4) were presented to show the normal progression of a pedagogic sequence where the teacher evaluation does not make a subsequent student act relevant. Were it a classroom situation, we could anticipate a next task initiation by the instructor would be due. However, as shown in extracts (1), (6) and (7) the pedagogic sequence with the educational game is regularly expanded with post-evaluation uptakes. These utterances are produced in speech. Because they are vocal, they take the human co-player as a recipient. The computer is not equipped with speech recognition, for example. Therefore the uptake does not interfere with the designed IRE sequence of the game. An uptake is also typical in game activity. In Hellerman's (2005a) study of ways in which teachers deliver their third turns during a quiz game activity in the classroom, several of his examples show that pupils produce uptakes after the teacher's evaluations. From these examples a reader can infer (although Hellerman does not deal with it) that the pupils orient to the game as a joint activity where members of a team are held responsible for the team failure and where affective stances are taken towards teacher evaluation. Additionally the details of uptake display an orientation to a Finnish-speaking listener who has some knowledge of French vocabulary. The players also reciprocate in producing the uptakes. These observations nonetheless leave open a fundamental issue of what they are used to accomplish: Why are they produced at that point? What if they were not produced? What is the difference they make? Minimally, the precision timing of the uptakes shows that the players have actively attended to the game, and they have a similar understanding of how to receive the evaluations. Secondly, the uptakes make observable how the players deal with the evaluations. They construct the activity of playing jointly. All in all, the uptakes make observable how the players reflect upon the evaluations, and these interactions bring learning to the social arena of talk-in-interaction.

## *Conclusion*

A pedagogic sequence can afford pupils different outcomes. The IRE sequences are basically similar in construction both in the classroom and in the game as was illustrated in the examples above. Nevertheless, they do not receive similar treatment in the stream of activities: an uptake emerges in the game context whereas it does not in the classroom context.

What differs from the outset is the participation framework (for a thorough discussion of this notion, see Goodwin 2006). In the classroom materials, the pupils construct what Sahlström (1999) has called a collective student. The classroom interaction is organized as a dialogue (and not a polylogue) between two participants: the Pupil and the Teacher. When the teacher chooses, one pupil at a time is allowed to animate the Pupil role. Pupils play their collective role as individuals, and the majority of them do not collaborate in other ways than monitoring the teacher's plenary talk: they sit still at their desks, their gaze directed at the teacher and the blackboard. This collective pupil consists of a collection of individuals that attend to the instruction as individuals. Even if the rows of desks are organized in pairs, interaction in pairs is not encouraged when this mode of interaction is conducted. Within this collective, each individual is an island, who is not supposed to collaborate with others. The classroom interaction displays a prototypical setting in plenary instruction. It reflects a metaphor of learning as a container: learning is a mental process addressed to an isolated individual mind to be filled with knowledge. This knowledge is served by the teacher.

Although the classroom data studied here consists of only two lessons in mathematics, the organization of interaction is very familiar. Similar sequences are reproduced in classrooms on a daily basis, as we likely know from our own experiences in educational settings. The triadic pedagogic interaction is also confirmed in the body of research literature on that organizational prototype (part of which has been referred to in this chapter). It is justified to assume that the triadic IRE model without a following student uptake is the general model of plenary interaction in classrooms.

What the story does not yet tell is whether the teacher evaluation has effect on the students' knowledge management (e.g., learning) even though it is the very assumption that seems to underlie in the descriptions of IRE sequences (Arminen 2005: 121; Lee 2007). In addition, Hellerman (2005b) has shown that the students treat the teacher's evaluation conditionally relevant: they prompt for a feedback if the teacher does not deliver it. The evaluation uptake has not figured as an issue in previous research literature. The uptake is not looked for in the immediate instructional context but tested in exams that follow instruction. Yet, it may well be that student uptakes other than talk follow systematically teacher evaluations: the students may take notes and correct their answers in their notebooks. These possibilities open up angles for future studies.

In the studied game material, the two girls are sitting side by side in front of a computer. Analogous to the classroom interaction, they gaze at the screen like the pupils gaze at the teacher and the blackboard. They attend to a shared referential focus. However, they do not simply orient to the screen as individuals but also to each other as members of a pair. They have and deploy the opportunity to talk to each other. It is through talk-in-interaction that playing together comes into being.

Throughout the game they collaborate: this collaboration makes observable what they make of the materials that they have been provided, how they link the given tasks to their pre-existing beliefs, and how they use various resources to solve a task. In this setting, the process of reasoning does not take place within the black box of a mind. Instead, as the participants act socially accountable to each other in their joint enterprise, they also take responsibility for each other's conceptions as long as they are displayed in interaction. It is possible to see the collaborative playing as an instantiation of distributed cognition in action.

Options made available by the game design set a structure for the interaction (Piirainen-Marsh & Tainio 2009) that results in the reproduction of IRE sequences. The game structures a process of learning vocabulary. However, playing a computer game differs essentially from a classroom setting. It affords at least two participation frameworks to be simultaneously in action: the one between the game and the player(s); the other between the co-players (Goodwin 2006; Piirainen-Marsh & Tainio 2009). Human-computer and human-human interactions are intertwined, and the two participation frameworks enable both the pedagogic interaction between the instructor (game) and the children and a collaborative problem-solving between them. The uptakes show both emotional and epistemic investment in the play and therefore in learning. The pleasures of playing immerse children in active and reflective learnership (cf. Gee 2003). In a classroom, similar uptakes might result in competition for the floor and difficulties in class management (see however Hellerman 2005a).

The configuration of semiotic fields relied upon differ in the two learning settings. Goodwin (2000) invokes the notion of semiotic fields in order to analytically approach the ways in which the social, linguistic, sequential and material details of an action figure into its organization. Semiotic fields consist of "different kinds of sign phenomena instantiated in diverse media" (Goodwin 2000: 1490); in general, participants not only orient to each other's verbal outputs but also to an array of other semiotic resources made relevant as an action evolves. In real life classroom interaction for example, the teacher's semiotic body brings about voice, gesture, posture, movements in space, the possibility to lay a finger on something or somebody, or to interfere with artifacts. The embodied resources combine in a recognizable way with such artifacts as a blackboard, schoolbooks, pens, pencils, desks, overhead projectors etc. In extracts (2)–(4), the teachers exploit the semiotic field provided by voice but also those provided by chalk and blackboard when they evaluate the pupil's correct response. The correct response is made to a static knowledge object in visual form. The teacher is in charge of the progression and decides when to move on. Extract (5) showed that semiotic fields other than talk-in-interaction might be a resource for learners, the use of which could be encouraged to create engagement. Moreover, teachers would benefit from learners' displays of uptake – be it a victory gesture or more importantly, a hint from those who have difficulties in following the instruction.

In contrast, the educational game as an instructor does not have a body to move around; in this case, it does not even have a voice. It is dependent on the learners' bodies in many aspects, and its semantic fields are visual. The learners use their bodies to interfere with the game via mouse movements and clicks. Yet, even if not embodied, the game is interactional and "smart": it reacts upon players' actions. Correct answers appear written on the screen and assessment terms are provided

in written dialogue boxes. The progression depends both on the players and the game. The game provides immediate feedback when letters are clicked during a task. However, the game does not continue to the next task before the players push a button for one. The players are more responsible for their conduct. These issues make room for the uptakes to occur.

The educational game interface cannot judge whether the players' move is on the right track even if not exactly correct. This is a limitation in its instructor's capabilities vis-à-vis a human teacher who can reflect upon the learner's response. As argued by Lee (2007), a human teacher can and does use a gradient scale in evaluation of students' responses. These become visible in the details of third turn designs that display from the teacher's point of view what a response implicates, how it is relevant to the task at hand and within the sequence. In human-to-human pedagogic interaction it would contradict the occasioned contingencies of a third position turn to force it into a monofunctional category. The game does not "hear" what the players say to each other. Nevertheless this also pushes the children to perform some of the evaluative sense-making themselves.

In line with the game's "deafness" another difference between the game and the class context is to be found in the details of social construction in these settings. When the players vocalize their uptake they also display that they have been monitoring the game, that they have in a relevant way made sense of the visual content on the screen. In this process timing is also an important issue. The uptake actions studied show that the girls monitor the game succession: they understand that their answer was correct, and they also reflect upon their overall achievements. These activities display how they deal with the evaluation. By doing so they constitute a joint attention and active playership. None of the uptake actions project more to come, but they take different stances to what is available in the multimodal interactional context. Through uptake the players show that they were not merely taking chances but actively constructing their conduct. In these activities the players make displays of their epistemic state of mind (cf. Drew 2005).

Research into learning settings within conversation analysis provides a situated way to understand learning. This line of research has demonstrated (e.g., Goodwin 2007) many ways in which learning happens, is articulated and becomes observable in social and material circumstances. In contrast, it would not happen in isolation, without the mediation of the circumstances. In other words, learning is occasioned within social settings where other social actors as well as material tools and conceptual objects mediate in the learning process and in the communication of its outcomes.

In this chapter, I have explored pedagogic sequences in two different learning settings: in a classroom and with an educational game. An IRE sequence dominated the two lessons in mathematics, but it was also detected in the interactions with the educational game. In both settings the focus was on routine processes rather than demanding cognitive skills. I wish to emphasize that I do not intend to recommend an IRE sequence as an efficient learning tool in either of the contexts. Rather, I wish to discuss how different contextual configurations enable and facilitate different types of interactions. On the one hand, if we wish to reinforce that learning is an individual cognitive task we may want to reproduce dialogic encounters between a Teacher and a Pupil in which each learner performs on her own behalf. Traditional

plenary instruction is likely to facilitate this conduct. On the other hand, if we wish to make learners take joint responsibility and learn from and with each other, we might want to think of ways in which we can support collaboration. A collaborative view of learning puts emphasis on the outcome, not on the individual who provided it. One of the benefits brought about by a game is that it makes the team members accountable for the success of the team.

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## Gendered practices of negotiation? Comparing girls and boys' practices of making proposals in same-sex peer play

### *Introduction*

In this study, we compare the practices of negotiation by Finnish-speaking boys and girls in their same-sex peer interactions.<sup>1</sup> The children participating in the study were four to five year old and were videotaped playing in same-sex dyads. Although the children shared a common interest, that of playing together, they also had their own interests concerning the play. The separate interests were often negotiated to maintain a shared play frame. We focus our analysis on the negotiation sequences in which one party formulates a proposal concerning the design of the play and the other party either aligns or disaligns with it. We compare the linguistic practices of the girls and boys in formulating the proposals and also explore the kinds of negotiation sequences that emerge in their interactions.

Children acquire language and co-construct their social and cultural worlds through participation in meaningful interactions with adults and other children (Schieffelin & Ochs 1986; Wootton 1997; Kyratzis 2004). Pretend play between peers is a central context where children practice and develop their social, cognitive and language skills (see, e.g., Garvey 1979; Cook 2000). Peer play has been studied in various public everyday settings such as preschools and elementary schools (Maynard 1985; Strandell 1993; Corsaro 1997; Goodwin 1995; Hamo, Blum-Kulka & Hachohen 2004), playgrounds and urban streets (Goodwin 1980, 1990; Evaldsson 2004; Butler & Weatherall 2006). However, peer play in the homes of children has received less attention (see, however, McTear 1985). In Finland, children's peer interactions have been previously studied by Karjalainen (1996) and Korpela (2002) in a day care setting and by Kauppinen (1998) and Korhonen (2001) in a home setting. Interactions of Finnish-speaking children are presently under investigation in the research project 'Child's Developing Language and Interaction' in which this study also was conducted (see e.g. Salonen & Laakso 2009; Laakso 2010).

Negotiations in children's play have previously been discussed by referring to concepts of 'meta-communication' (Bateson 1976; Giffin 1984) and

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'frame' (Goffman 1974). Meta-communication means 'communication about communication', which in play often means talk about play objects and the action plan of the play. In play, children can be seen moving in and out between the play frame and the frame of reality in which they plan the play activities (Bretherton 1986). Negotiations in children's peer play are usually events arising out of the ongoing play activity, and a large proportion of the interaction is devoted to creating, clarifying, maintaining and negotiating the pretend experience (Tykkyläinen & Laakso 2006). Children's negotiations usually get started from action requests with which children try to get another party to do something (Garvey 1975). Three- and four-year-old Finnish speaking children are already able to make several kinds of action request such as commands and proposals (Karjalainen 1996: 52–54). Although children of this age often use demands such as *mä haluan leikkii sillä* 'I want to play with it', they can also use indirect and persuasive forms when formulating their requests (Karjalainen 1996: 56–57; Korhonen 2001: 94–97). Thus, in the face of conflict of interests children learn early on to formulate their requests in a persuasive way and to negotiate with each other (Clark 2003: 347).

During childhood children also learn the gender-appropriate cultural behaviour that has roots in the everyday social practices of local communities. In Western culture, gender differences are reinforced by separation: boys play more often with boys and girls with girls (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet 2003). Because of the separation, it is claimed that boys and girls develop different verbal subcultures (the so-called 'two cultures' hypothesis, Maltz & Borker 1982) and consequently, even have difficulty understanding the talk of the opposite sex (Tannen 1990). In their interaction patterns, boys have been characterised as competition-oriented and girls as collaboration-oriented (Maltz & Borker 1982). However, the two cultures hypothesis has been criticised for overdichotomising and universalising gender differences (e.g., Cameron 1996) and for not taking into consideration contextual variation and other potential explanations behind the use of linguistic forms that have been characterised as gender-linked (Kyratzis 2001). The 'communities of practice' approach (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet 1992) emphasises that gendered linguistic displays are learned practices varying across different local groups. They also point out that gender cannot be isolated from other aspects of social identity and relations. For example, in the Samoan context, social rank interacts with gender in complex ways affecting language variation (Ochs 1987). Accordingly, children learn to display gender and status in their language use. Furthermore, children also playfully test and reconstruct these cultural categories in their pretend play between peers (Kyratzis 2004).

Several empirical studies have reported differences between boys and girls in their interactive linguistic practices (see, e.g., Coates 1993; Sheldon 1992, 1993). The most commonly mentioned differences in language use are, at least in certain specific contexts such as peer play, that girls use more modal expressions and indirect linguistic forms, whereas boys have more direct forms such as imperatives in their talk (Goodwin 1980; Coates 1993). Accordingly, gender differences have been found in conflict negotiations in play: Girls handle conflicts verbally (see, e.g., Sheldon 1992, 1993; Coates 1993; Goodwin, Goodwin & Yaeger-Dror 2002), whereas boys do not jointly negotiate a resolution to the conflict (Sheldon 1992). Girls have been found to have long and linguistically complex negotiations on disagreement (Goodwin & Goodwin 1987) where they use persuasive

justifications for their actions in the play (Kyratzis 1992). Boys, on the other hand, are claimed to pursue their own self-interest in conflicts using direct, unmitigated and confrontational speech acts without orienting to the perspective of the partner (Sheldon 1992).

In sum, many studies suggest that peer play is one of the central environments where children use (and learn to use) gendered language and interaction practices. Our observation is that same-sex peer play is particularly revealing from this point of view. In the following, we study the practices of negotiating and making proposals in same-sex peer play using conversation analysis as the method. CA has only recently been applied to the study of gender (e.g., Kitzinger 2000; Tainio 2001, Stokoe & Weatherall 2002; Speer 2005). Some CA researchers have been rather critical towards this enterprise and have emphasised that gender is not an omni-relevant category that organizes interaction in the same way as turn-taking, for example (Schegloff 1999). However, CA has already proved to be potentially able to demonstrate how gender is reflected in the practices of interaction (see, e.g., Stokoe & Smithson 2001; McIlvenny 2002; Speer 2005).

### *Data*

Our data come from the Helsinki Child Language Cross-sectional Corpus that has been collected in the project ‘Child’s Developing Language and Interaction’ during 2002–2007.<sup>2</sup> The whole data comprises of about 300 hours of videotaped interactions in Finnish-speaking families. Families took part in the research project voluntarily and written consent of participation was obtained. We present here excerpts from two same-sex peer play occasions, one between two girls and the other between two boys. The two girls studied here are Hilma (4;10) and Alli (5;0) who were good friends: They were in the same day care group and played together almost every day. The boys studied are Matti (4;0) and Ilkka (5;6) who also were in the same day care group with each other and enjoyed playing together. Both interactions were videotaped at the home of one of the players; girls’ play at Hilma’s home, and boys’ play at Matti’s home.

The children were videotaped using a digital Panasonic video-camera with a wide angle lens and an external microphone. The researcher brought a set of toys: a doll house, a doll family and some furniture, a traffic carpet with cars, and some plastic toys including a policeman with a motorbike and fish market with food items. The toys brought by the researcher were available but the children could also choose to play with their own toys (which they also did). The play interactions of both pairs lasted about an hour and were transcribed in their entirety using conversation analytic notation (Atkinson & Heritage 1984: ix-xvi). Besides talk, some features of gesture use and handling of toys were described in the transcript in small capital letters.

2 The responsible leader of the project is Minna Laakso and the responsible researchers and main data collectors were Tuula Savinainen-Makkonen and Tuula Tykkyläinen. Data collection was funded by the Emil Aaltonen Foundation and the Academy of Finland. The main aim of the project is to provide knowledge about the development of language and interactional practices by 0–5 - year-old children.

Sequences of play negotiation were collected for the analysis. Negotiation was defined as an interactive sequence where one party makes a proposal concerning the future course of the play and the other party either aligns or disaligns with it (on negotiation, see Arminen 2005: 168; Kangasharju 1998; Maynard 1984). In adult conversations, proposals often result in disagreement as a proposal as such presents only one potential alternative for future actions and the other participants may have other alternatives in mind (Kangasharju 1998). In our data, the children also had opposing interests on the details of the play concerning such aspects as what to play, with which toys, and who played with what toy, as well as concerning the thematic structure of the play. These opposing interests had to be negotiated to maintain mutual play.

### *Girls making proposals*

The first thing that caught our interest in the play data of the two girls was that they made many proposals beginning with the Finnish word *jooko*<sup>3</sup>. The word *jooko* is a combination of the response particle *joo* which means appr. ‘yeah’ and the clitic *-kO* that turns this particle into a question (ISK: 777). In adult Finnish *jooko* is used in turn-final position<sup>4</sup>.

In Extract 1, Hilma and Alli play with dolls, small chickens and a loading shovel that the girls have used as a taxi. The extract starts where the play has paused and the girls are just deciding what to do next. At the beginning of the extract, Alli puts her doll in the taxi (the loading shovel) and is about to leave the present play scene. Hilma’s doll stays to take care of the small chicken in the previous play surroundings by the doll house. The dolls say loud goodbyes to each other (lines 3–5). Hilma hums and plays with the small chickens as Alli drives the taxi (loading shovel) to a new play environment, Hilma’s lego house, and takes her doll out of the taxi. In line 13, Alli makes a proposal beginning with *jooko*. In the transcript, the proposal is marked with a double arrow ( $\Rightarrow$ ) and the response with a simple arrow ( $\rightarrow$ ) (lines 13 and 15). Note that square brackets indicate the beginning and the end of overlapping speech or nonverbal actions of different participants, whereas an asterisk marks the beginning and end of co-occurring nonverbal actions by one participant.

#### (1) Hilma and Alli, recording C

1 Alli: [ALLI PLAYS WITH A TOY LOADING SHOVEL, PRETENDING IT TO BE ‘A TAXI’

2 Hilma: [Tää<sup>5</sup> huolehtii pik[kutipuista, ]  
 this take.care-3 little.chick-PL-ELA  
 [This (doll) takes care of [small chicks, ]

3 *Jooko* does not have an equivalent in English and thus we have not translated it in our data extracts.

4 Tag questions such as *Yes?* and *Right?* bear some resemblance to the turn-final usage of *jooko* (yeah+question clitic) although Finnish uses a clitic and English uses rising intonation to form the question.

5 In spoken Finnish, *tää* ‘this’ and *se* ‘it’ are commonly used in reference to referents conceived as humans (as dolls here). For this reason we use the terms ‘this’ and ‘it’ in our translations into English, although these terms are not used in this way in English.

- 3 Alli: [↑He:i: ] ↓hei:,,  
[↑By:e: ] ↓bye:,,
- 4 Hilma: [↑He:i: ↓hei:,, ]  
[↑By:e: ↓bye:,, ]
- 5 Alli: [↑He:i: ↓hei:,, ]  
[↑By:e: ↓bye:,, ]
- 6 (0.7)
- 7 Alli: \*Ja (.) (kaivuli) se meni kiinni ja tämä\* (.) nousi ylös  
and loading.shovel it go-PST closed and this raise-PST up  
\*And (.) (the loading shovel) it closed and this \* (.) raised up  
\*ALLI RAISES THE SHOVEL OF THE LOADING SHOVEL \*
- 8 (.) \*eiku- \* (.) meni alas, (.) ja sitte (.) se lähti.  
PRT go-PST down and then it leave-PST  
(.) \*{NO I MEAN} \* (.) WENT DOWN, (.) AND THEN (.) IT WENT OFF.  
\* LOWERS \*  
\* SHOVEL \*
- 9 Alli: [ALLI CLOSES A DOOR AT THE BACK OF THE TOY SHOVEL AND]  
[CRAWLS AND MOVES THE TAXI/SHOVEL ACROSS THE FLOOR ]
- 10 Hilma: [HILMA SITS ON THE FLOOR, PLAYS WITH CHICKENS, HUMMING]
- 11 Hilma: [HUMS ]
- 12 Alli: [Tää hyppäs ] ((Alli is out of camera view))  
[This jumped ]
- 13 Alli:=> **Jooko et mä leikkisin tällä,**  
Yeah-q-cli that I play-con-1 this-ade  
Jooko that I would play with this, ((the lego house))
- 14 (0.5) ((HILMA RAISES HER HEAD AND LOOKS AT ALLI))
- 15 Hilma: → Joo,  
Yeah,
- 16 Alli: \*Tää avas (.) portin. \*  
this open-pst gate-acc  
\*This opened (.) the gate. \*  
\*ALLI OPENS THE GATE OF THE  
LEGOHOUSE USING A PLAY FIGURE \*
- 17 Hilma: (1.4) HILMA STANDS UP AND WALKS TO ALLI AND THE LEGO HOUSE
- 18 Hilma: Tää tulee avaamaan sille ovensa ja sil ei o (.) omia avaimia.  
this comes open-inf it-all door-pos and it-ade neg be own key-pl-par  
This comes to open the door to it and it hasn't (.) own keys.

With her turn in line 13, Alli proposes that she could play with Hilma's lego house. During the pause of 0.5 seconds Hilma looks up from her play (line 14) and then aligns with the responding particle *joo* 'yeah' (line 15). In the next turn after alignment (line 16), Alli moves on by verbalising the on-going next action in the play world: the doll figure is opening a gate to the lego house. Opening the gate to the lego house is the next move, activity for which the proposal was 'opening the floor'. After Alli's turn, Hilma stands up, walks across to the lego house and joins in the play that was initiated by Alli's proposal (lines 17–18).

The negotiation here has a two-part sequential structure: first, the proposal turn (1) and second, the aligning turn (2). The third turn already displays a new action to the direction suggested by the proposal (3). The sequential structure of the negotiation and the corresponding extract of the girls' play are presented below:

- 1 proposal =>      Alli: **Jooko et** mä leikkisin tällä,  
                               yeah-Q-CLI that I play-CON-1 this-ADE  
                               Jooko that I would play with this,
- 2 alignment →     Hilma: Joo,  
                               Yeah,
- 3 next action      Alli: \*Tää avas (.) portin. \*  
                               this open-PST gate-ACC  
                               \*This opened (.) the gate. \*  
                               \*ALLI OPENS THE GATE OF THE  
                               LEGO HOUSE USING A PLAY FIGURE\*

We see here that the girls exit from the pretend play to explicitly negotiate about a future action. In their negotiation they use the construction *jooko et* V-conditional ('*jooko* that X would do Y'). As the word *joo* means approximately *yeah* or *yes* (which the clitic then turns into a question), the particle combination *jooko* projects an aligning answer to the question it asks, and thus it works against a disaligning response<sup>6</sup>. Girls frequently use *jooko* in the turn-initial position, which is a crucial place for orienting the recipient to the action the speaker is about to do with the emerging turn (Schegloff 1996; ISK: 978–987). Similarly, previous studies have shown that children use the turn-initial position for orienting the recipient to upcoming disagreement in disputes (Goodwin 1983, 1998, 2006: 42–44). However, the turn-initial usage of *jooko* appears to be a feature of Finnish child language: adult speakers use it only in turn-final position.

Besides *jooko* this construction includes the conditional form of the main verb indicated by the suffix *-isi* that is added to the main verb. Finnish children tend to use the conditional verb form in pretence play in planning the play: the conditional creates the imaginary situation into which the children are going to move (Kauppinen 1996, 1998; ISK: 1512). In questions the conditional verb form is said to give the question a tone of politeness; it displays the request to something conditional and distances the speaker from the present situation (Kauppinen 1998:

6 The use of the form *jooko* ('yeah'+Q-CLI) thus displays the speaker's wish to agree (with the other as it projects *joo* ('yeah')) as a preferred answer to it.

218–223). This finding is in accordance with previous observations on English-speaking girls who tend to format their attempts to direct the future course of actions as suggestions and use modal verbs *can* or *could* in their suggestions (Goodwin 1980; Wootton 2005).

By using the specific linguistic construction the girls make the transition to a level of planning and negotiating very explicit. The girls' negotiation can thus be seen as a form of 'meta-communication', where the roles, the play objects and the action plan of the play are settled together. After studying the sequential structure of the girls' negotiations it is clear that their proposals look forward and 'open the floor' to the proposed next action in the play. In making verbal proposals, the girls show their preference for explicit verbal negotiation and mutual agreement on play activities. This preference is in accordance with the previous studies on English-speaking girls who also tend to use forms such as *let's*, which emphasise joint action, in their proposals concerning play (Goodwin 1980, 1990).

### *Girls negotiating disalignment*

In Extract 2, Alli's proposal using the construction *joo-ko +et+V-isi* ('*jooko* that X would do Y') is followed by Hilma's disaligning actions. The disagreement starts a long and complex negotiation sequence. In the beginning of the extract, Alli and Hilma are playing with the doll family by the doll house; the current play frame is preparing food. In line 12, Alli makes a new proposal that would change the play frame: she suggests that the dolls would celebrate a birthday party. In contrast with Extract 1, here Hilma does not immediately align with Alli's proposal: there is a delay in answering (the 0.9 seconds pause in line 13) after which Hilma starts her turn (line 14) with the utterance particle *no* (approximately 'well' in English). Both the particle and the delay in answering project a dispreferred response from Hilma (cf. Pomerantz 1984). As Alli does not get an aligning response immediately, she reformulates and specifies her proposal: the maid doll Alli is playing with would celebrate her birthday (line 15). In line 16, Hilma then disagrees with *eikä* (appr. 'no no' in English) which she says in a soft voice. The lowered voice also reflects the dispreferred nature of Hilma's disaligning response to Alli's proposal to take birthday party as the new theme of the play. The proposals and responses are marked with arrows.

(2) Hilma and Alli, recording C

- 1 Hilma: @I::sä:::@  
@Fa::the:r@
- 2 Alli: @Mi::tä=@  
@Wha::t=@
- 3 Hilma: @=Milloin äiti ja piika tule:e@ (0.5) nää voi kerätä  
When mother and maid come-3 these can pick-INF  
@=When will mother and maid co:me@ (0.5) these can pick

- 4 m:annaa (1.1) tää [munakokkeli on jo pöyrässä =mar:joja°  
 manna-par this scrambled.eggs is already table-ine berries-par  
 manna (1.1) these [scrambled eggs are already on table=ber:ries
- 5 Alli: [Arvaa mitä  
 [Guess what
- 6 (0.9)
- 7 Hilma: [@Missä munakokkeli [ on@  
 [ where scrambled.eggs is  
 [@Where are the scrambled eggs@
- 8 Alli: [\*Äiti ja- [äiti ja piika tuli nyt  
 [mother and [mother and maid come-PST now  
 [\*Mother and- [mother and maid came now  
 [\*ALLI COMES TO THE DOLLHOUSE
- 9 (0.4)
- 10 Hilma: @Äiti missä munakokkeli kulhoineen on.@  
 mother where scrambled.eggs bowl-PL-COM-POS is  
 @Mother where are the scrambled eggs and the bowl.@
- 11 Alli: @M:unakokke\*liko (0.3) siellä.@ nurkassa. Nurkassa.  
 scrambled.eggs-Q-CLI there corner-INE corner-INE  
 @S:crambled\* eggs (0.3) there.@ in the corner. In the corner.  
 \*ALLI MOVES TO THE OTHER SIDE OF THE DOLLHOUSE
- 12 Alli: => **Jooko et** (.) näil olis synttärivieraita  
 Yeah-Q-CLI that they-ADE be-CON birthday.guest-PL-PAR  
 Jooko that (.) these would have birthday guests
- 13 (0.9)
- 14 Hilma: → [No,  
 [PRT  
 [Well,
- 15 Alli: => [**Jooko et** (0.7) tällä piialla olis synttärät.  
 [Yeah-Q-CLI that this-ADE maid-ADE be-CON birthday  
 [Jooko that (0.7) this maid would have birthday.
- 16 Hilma: → °Eikä° (0.9) **eiku** joo (0.3)\*@ai täyttääks tää nel:jä@\*  
 NEG-CLI NEG-PRT yeah PRT fill-Q-CLI this four  
 °No no° (0.9) no I mean yes (0.3)\*@ oh can this become fo:ur@\*  
 \*HILMA SHOWS DOLL TO ALLI\*
- 17 (0.5)

The construction of Hilma's response to Alli's proposal is complex (line 16). First Hilma expresses disalignment to Alli's proposal with the particle combination *eikä* in which the first part is the negation word *ei* ('no') and the latter part conjunction

clitic *-ka* that intensifies the negation. It is of interest that although Hilma first rejects Alli's proposal, she immediately mitigates her disalignment by self-initiating repair with *eiku* (appr. 'no I mean') which in Finnish typically starts a self-repair that changes the utterance and the action made by the utterance to another, often to an opposite one (Sorjonen & Laakso 2005). In the self-repair, Hilma replaces her disaligning answer with the preferred alternative *joo* ('yeah'). However, after this Hilma changes her stance again and challenges the content of Alli's proposal: she asks whether the maid doll character actually can become four years old (which is the number of candles on a plastic birthday cake) (line 16). She asks the question in a loud voice and also takes the maid doll in her hand and shows it to Alli. The disagreement is thus intensified towards the end of her turn and the contradictory stance is made obvious also by prosodic and nonverbal means.

Extract 3 shows how the interaction continues as the girls go on negotiating their disagreement about starting playing a birthday party: their speaking turns grow in length and also the negotiation sequence is lengthened as they counter-argue and also make new proposals displaying their differing interests. Both girls now begin their turns with turn-initial particle *eiku* (appr. 'no I mean') thus immediately countering the previous turn of the other. Alli's response to Hilma's challenge extends to lines 18–20 and Hilma's response to it is in lines 21–23.

(3) Hilma and Alli, recording C

- 16 Hilma: °Eikä° (0.9) **eiku** joo (0.3)\*@AI TÄYTTÄÄKS TÄÄ nel:jä@\*  
 NEG-CLI NEG-PRT yeah PRT fill-Q-CLI this four  
 °No no°(0.9) no I mean yeah (0.3)\*@OH CAN THIS BECOME fo:ur@\*  
 \*HILMA SHOWS THE MAID DOLL TO ALLI\*
- 17 (0.5)
- 18 Alli: => **Eiku** (0.3) se **jooko** leikisti täyttäis kahek-  
 NEG-PRT it yeah-Q-CLI PRT become-3-CON eight  
 No I mean 0.3) jooko let's pretend it would become eigh-
- 19 (0.2) kaheksantoistaviis vuotta = mutta (0.3) siinä  
 eighteen.five year-PAR but there  
 (0.2) eighteenfive years =but (0.3) let's pretend
- 20 leikisti olis °kaheksantoistaviis kynttilää°  
 PRT be-3-CON eighteen.five candle-PAR  
 there would be °eighteenfive candles°
- 21 Hilma: → **Eiku** ei e- riittäny nii siis et se täytti vaan  
 NEG-PRT NEG suffice-PPC SO PRT that it become-PST only  
 No I mean it was not n- enough so I mean that it became only
- 22 nel:jä vee se täytti e- (.) oikeesti niin paljon mut  
 four year it fill-PST PRT so much but  
 fo:ur years it became e-(.) in reality that much but
- 23 => lö- ö- e- se =**jooko** **et** \*toi (0.2) ei tykkäis munakokkelista?  
 it yeah-Q-CLI that that.one NEG like-3-CON scrambled.eggs-ELA  
 lö- ö- e- it. =jooko that \*that one (0.2) does not like scrambled eggs?  
 \*HILMA POINTS TO A DOLL

- 24 Alli: →=> Joo mut (0.4) tä- **jooko** et tää ois sittenki sokeria  
 Yes but this yeah-Q-CLI that this be-3-CON PRT sugar-PAR  
 Yeah but (0.4) th- jooko that this would be sugar after all
- 25 (0.5)
- 26 Hilma: → Ei:: (.) se on kananmunaa.  
 NEG it is egg-PAR  
 No:: (.) it is egg.
- 27 (0.6)
- 28 Alli: No (.) \*se on sit täällä.  
 PRT it is then here  
 Well (.) \*it is here then.  
 \*ALLI PUTS EGG INTO THE HOUSE

Girls' long turns are argumentative in their nature. Alli answers Hilma's challenge by starting with the turn initial particle combination *eiku* (appr. 'no, I mean') which stops the on-going activity (line 18). *Eiku* also projects change or an alternative course of action: consistently, Alli makes a new proposal in *jooko* format and uses the particle *leikisti* (appr. 'as in play') suggesting they could pretend that the maid becomes eighteen five years old in the pretend world (lines 18–19). Alli in this way resists the challenge made by Hilma and tries to overcome the age issue: Alli argues that in the pretend world the doll can become "eighteen five" years old. She also tries to back up her argument by suggesting (here also with the particle *leikisti*) that they could also pretend that on the little plastic cake there would be eighteen five candles in the pretend world (lines 19–20). However, in line 21, Hilma makes a long counterargument and equally starts her turn with the particle combination *eiku* which displays that she does not again agree with Alli's proposal. Her turn is discontinuous as she frequently cuts off to self-repair and to reformulate her argument. Finally, in line 23, she completely drops the on-going negotiation and makes a new proposal with *jooko* which changes the topic back to the previous play sequence: *jooko that that one does not like scrambled eggs*. By doing this, she re-introduces the elements of the play that was going on before Alli's proposal of changing the play frame to a birthday party. Alli starts to counter but then cuts off her utterance (*yeah but thi-*) and self-repairs her turn into a new proposal dealing with the food items of the previous play.

As we have seen in Extracts 2 and 3, the negotiation becomes more complicated when the girls disagree and the negotiation sequence grows into a lengthier dispute (cf. also Kangasharju in this volume). The sequential structure of their disagreement looks like this:

- |   |       |   |
|---|-------|---|
| 1 | Alli  | proposal (with turn-initial <i>jooko</i> , line 12)                           |
| 2 | Hilma | silence + particle <i>no</i> ('well') (projected disalignment, lines 13–14)   |
| 3 | Alli  | revised proposal (with turn-initial <i>jooko</i> , line 15)                   |
| 4 | Hilma | disalignment + self-repair (with <i>eiku</i> ) + counterargument (line 16)    |
| 5 | Alli  | counterargument (with turn-initial <i>eiku</i> ) + new proposal (lines 18–20) |
| 6 | Hilma | counterargument (with turn-initial <i>eiku</i> ) + new proposal (lines 21–23) |

According to Laakso & Sorjonen (2003) the lexical repair initiator *eiku* (appr. ‘no I mean’) in Finnish typically initiates replacement where the negation word *ei* marks the preceding word or longer segment of talk as “erroneous” and something to be cancelled, and the particle *ku* projects a replacement to come (explanation for the cancellation). This particle combination is lexicalised for repair purposes in Finnish (Sorjonen & Laakso 2005; see also Haakana & Kurhila in this volume). Our observations confirm this basic finding in another context: here the girls use the particle combination to reject each others proposals. The resistance is made obvious right at the beginning of the turn as *eikus* (both in line 18 and 21) are in the strategic turn-initial position (Schegloff 1996; Goodwin 2006: 42–44). In this sequential place and in turn-initial position the particle combination thus works as a device of disaligning and also projects a new, replacing proposal to come.

Both the usage of the particle *eiku* and the length of the argumentative turns show that the girls are not avoiding conflict. In fact, they are displaying it verbally quite explicitly as has been also found in other studies (see, e.g., Goodwin 2006). However, they, at least in the beginning of their disagreement (see Extract 2), also orient for sustaining mutual play and self-repair: either alter their proposals to perhaps better suit the other player’s interest (as Alli does in line 15) or mitigate their disalignment by changing stance (as does Hilma in line 16). They do not proceed with the pretend play scene but argue and counter-argue for their own interests as has been found in other studies on girls’ peer play (cf. Kyratzis 1992). In sum, in the negotiation of disalignment the girls, Alli and Hilma, have different interests concerning the design of the play, and they are skillfully using specific linguistic structures to mitigate and negotiate their disagreement.

### *Boys in action*

When we looked at the two boys playing with each other, we soon noticed that there was no such explicit verbal negotiation of the play design that we found with the girls. There were no proposals beginning with *jooko* in the whole transcribed hour of the boys’ play. Instead, boys’ peer play appeared more rough than the play of girls. More comprehensive analysis of the data showed, however, that the boys were making proposals concerning the details of the play, but their proposals differed in form from the ones that the girls made. Instead of using specific linguistic structures like *jooko* and conditional verb forms to construct the proposals, the boys tried to get the other player’s attention towards their own doings. In seeking the other player’s attention, boys made use of such attention seeking devices as imperatives *kato* (‘look’) and *arvaa mitä* (‘guess what’). They also used address terms (such as the name of the playmate) and *hei* (‘hey’). Prosodic changes such as raising the voice volume were also prominently present. The actual proposing actions were often nonverbal such as showing the other the play materials, handling toys, or acting as the pretend play character. If boys’ proposals were verbal they were intertwined in the play itself: they were making the sounds of vehicles or saying the lines of play characters. Thus, the practices of making proposals were extremely multi-modal and focused on getting the other’s active involvement in the suggested play activity.

In Extract 4 there are play proposals by the two boys Matti (4;0) and Ilkka (5;6) who are playing in the living room at Matti's home. The videotaping has just started and the boys are still examining the play materials. In the same way as the girls in Extract 1, they are in a phase where they are figuring out what to do next and what to play with; they are also trying to get the other interested in the same materials and activities they are interested in. As neither of them immediately joins in the other's play, there are parallel competing play activities going on: Matti is interested in the Duplo construction set whereas Ilkka is playing with the toy truck and cars.

In Extract 4, proposals are marked with arrows (=>) in the transcript. Matti's proposals are in lines 1, 6 and 8, and 11–12, and Ilkka's proposals are in lines 10, 15 and 19. However, there are no explicit verbal responses to the proposals. Boys' proposals may receive the other's aligning attention in the form of nonverbal action, e.g., the gaze, or the other may even join the proposed play activity. On the other hand, disalignment can be seen in the absence of joint attention and in involvement in one's own activity (e.g., in lines 3, 7 and 9 Ilkka ignores Matti who is addressing him with imperatives). The slightly aligning responses to the proposals are seen in brief moments of the recipient looking at the toys offered (in line 13 Ilkka briefly looks at Matti's toys, and in lines 16–17 Matti looks at Ilkka's play and also comments on it). These two nonverbal responses in which the proposal gets the other player's attention are marked with an arrow (→) in the transcript. Note again that square brackets indicate the beginning and the end of overlapping speech or nonverbal actions of different participants, whereas an asterisk marks the beginning and end of co-occurring nonverbal actions by one participant.

(4) Matti and Ilkka, recording C

- 1 Matti: => [\***KATO** **TÄS** on OHje miten ne tehdään\*  
 [ look-IMP here is guide how they do-PAS  
 [\***LOOK** here is **GUIDE**line how you do those\*  
 \***MATTI SHOWS GUIDELINE PICTURE TOWARDS ILKKA**\*
- 2 Ilkka: [ILKKA HANDLES TOW TRUCK STRING
- 3 (1.2) ILKKA TURNS HIS HEAD AND LOOKS AWAY FROM MATTI;  
 ILKKA GRABS SOMETHING FROM THE FLOOR
- 4 Ilkka: [\***Tää** ] hinaa.  
 [\***This** ] tows.  
 [\*ILKKA PUTS SOMETHING TO BE TOWED BY HIS TOY CAR
- 5 Matti: [\***(tämä)**]  
 [\***(this)** ]  
 [\***MATTI TRIES TO ATTACH THE STAND AND THE ROOF OF**  
 [**A TOY SUNSHADE TO EACH OTHER**
- 6 Matti: => \***Kato** (0.8) **ka:to** (0.4) **arvaas mitä** [(0.2) **ARVAAS MITÄ** (0.4)=  
 look-IMP look-IMP guess-IMP what guess-IMP what  
 \***Look** (0.8) **look** (0.4) **guess what** [(0.2) **GUESS WHAT** (0.4)=  
 \***MATTI WALKS TO ILKKA AND SHOWS TOY SUNSHADE PARTS TO HIM**

- 7 Ilkka: [ILKKA DRIVES TRUCK AWAY  
FROM MATTI
- 8 Matti: => =\***ARVAAS** ↑**MI:TÄ**:  
=\***GUESS** ↑**WHA:T**:  
\***MATTI WALKS BY ILKKA SHOWING HIM THE SUNSHADE PARTS**
- 9 (0.6) ILKKA STOPS BUT DOES NOT LOOK AT MATTI
- 10 Ilkka: => **Katso** (0.5) läää a:pua::: se on syy- tää on [taksi  
look-IMP help it is (guilty) this is taxi  
Look (0.5) läää he:lp:: it is guil- this is [a taxi
- 11 Matti: => [**KA:TSO**  
[**LO:OK**
- 12 => [(.) **kato** (.) **kato** \*(3.5)  
[(.) look (.) look \*(3.5)  
[ \***MATTI ATTACHES THE STAKE AND ROOF OF**  
[ **THE SUNSHADE TOGETHER**
- 13 Ilkka: → [ILKKA LOOKS AT MATTI; CONTINUES TO LOOK AS MATTI  
[ATTACHES THE PARTS
- 14 Matti: äh[h (0.8) se menee .hh  
uh it goes  
u[hh it goes .hh
- 15 Ilkka: => [**Arvaa mitä** (.) \*tuossa (0.2) [poliisi  
[guess-IMP what there police  
[Guess what (.) \*there (0.2) [a policeman  
\***ILKKA TAKES THE POLICEMAN FROM THE FLOOR**
- 16 Matti: → [MATTI TURNS TO LOOK AT ILKKA
- 17 Matti: Poliisi pyörällä ajaa.  
police bike-ADE rides  
The policeman rides a bike.
- 18 (2.5) MATTI PUTS SUNSHADE ON THE FLOOR
- 19 Ilkka: => [**Kato** (.) \*Tiiiiiiuuuuuu[ää viuviuviuviu  
[Look (.) \*Tiiiiiiuuuuuu[ää viuviuviuviu  
\***ILKKA MOVES POLICE MOTORBIKE ON THE FLOOR**
- 20 Matti: [HANDLES TOYS [Mittari  
[Meter (measuring device)
- 21 Ilkka: @Varokaa poliisi tulee @ bängbängbäng @ÄÄÄÄÄÄHH (0.8)  
beware-IMP police comes  
@Beware police comes @ bängbängbäng @ÄÄÄÄÄÄHH (0.8)

Matti's several attempts at getting Ilkka's attention to look at him are not very successful. First, in line 1 Matti shows a guideline picture to Ilkka and tries to catch his attention by saying *kato* ('look'); in doing so Matti makes a proposal to use the picture guideline to help in the construction play that they could play together. However, during the pause that follows (line 2) Ilkka turns his head away and continues his own play activity with a tow car. Second, in lines 6 and 8 Matti makes an upgraded and aggravated proposal by using two attention seeking practices, *kato* ('look') and *arvaa mitä* ('guess what'). He combines these attentions seeking devices with the nonverbal activity of walking towards Ilkka and showing him the toys (stake and roof of a sunshade). However, Ilkka continues driving his car, and even moves away from Matti (line 7). Matti reacts to this by repeating the attention getting device *arvaa mitä* ('guess what') with almost a shouting voice; he also follows Ilkka as he moves (line 8). Despite the rise in intensity Matti does not get Ilkka's attention. Finally, Matti's proposal in lines 11–12 catches Ilkka's attention: Ilkka looks as Matti shows the nonverbal activity of attaching the sunshade parts together.

Ilkka on his behalf invites Matti to play with cars. First this happens in line 10 by saying *katso* ('look') after which he makes a proposal by vocalising and saying a line of role play *a:pua::: se on syy-* 'help it is gui(lty)-' and then stating that the tow car stands for a taxi in the pretend world (*tää on taksi* 'this is a taxi'). It is noteworthy that Ilkka does not formulate his plan verbally as a suggestion (as did the girls), and neither does he get the co-participant's agreement to the proposal. Instead, Ilkka's proposal gets neglected and overlapped by Matti's own proposal (line 11–12). In line 15, Ilkka makes the second proposal starting with the attention getting device *arvaa mitä* ('guess what') and a nonverbal action, bringing a police figure into the car play. In line 19 there is the last proposal made by Ilkka in this extract. Again, it is a combination of verbal and nonverbal action: There is an attention seeking device *kato* ('look') combined with a vocalization representing the sound of the police vehicle that Ilkka is moving on the floor.

As we have seen boys' proposing actions differed from the verbal and meta-communicative negotiation sequences of the girls in at least two ways. Firstly, the proposing actions of the boys were often multi-modal: the recurrent design of a turn containing a proposal was an attention seeking device followed by a nonverbal action proposing a new course to the play. Secondly, there was no verbal sequential structure of negotiation as the aligning or disaligning responses were mostly shown by nonverbal means in boys' play. Here below is Matti's proposal from lines 11–12. He is using attention seeking devices and a loud voice and combines this with his nonverbal action of attaching the parts of a toy sunshade. You can also see that Matti lowers the volume of his voice when Ilkka starts to look at him and his actions.

|            |        |                           |                  |                            |
|------------|--------|---------------------------|------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 proposal | Matti: | KA:TSO [ (. ) <i>kato</i> | (. ) <i>kato</i> | *(3.5)                     |
|            |        | look-IMP                  | look-IMP         | look-IMP                   |
|            |        | LO:OK [ (. ) <i>look</i>  | (. ) <i>look</i> | *(3.5)                     |
|            |        | [                         |                  | *M ATTACHES STAND AND ROOF |
|            |        | [                         |                  | OF THE TOY SUNSHADE        |

2 alignment Ilkka: [ILKKA LOOKS AT MATTI-----

The result of the negotiation was seen in the succeeding course of the play: If successful, the proposed action was absorbed in the play, if unsuccessful it was simply neglected. The boys' negotiation was thus comprised of successive competing proposals and some nonverbal responses to them, and can be described as follows:

- 1 Matti: proposal 1a (line 1)
- 2 Matti: proposal 1b (lines 6, 8)
- 3 Ilkka: proposal 2a (line 10)
- 4 Matti: [proposal 1c (lines 11–12)
- 5 [I's aligning attention to M (line 13)
- 6 Ilkka: [proposal 2b (line 15)
- 7 [M's aligning attention to I (lines 16–17)
- 8 Ilkka: proposal 2c

In sum, boys did not begin a negotiation with a verbal proposal using specific linguistic devices. Their proposals neither received an explicit verbal acceptance or rejection, as was the case with girls, but were handled nonverbally. Thus there was no explicit verbal meta-communicative negotiation of the play but the negotiation, if it can be said to exist, was more implicit than with the girls.

### *Comparing same-sex peer play of boys and girls*

In the extracts studied above, the girls and the boys were in quite similar situations in their play. In all cases the children had separate interests concerning the next move in the play and they made proposals in order to direct the future course of the play in the direction they preferred. Despite the similarities, the means by which the competing interests were tackled were different for girls and boys: boys were trying to achieve a joint attentional framework to their play activities, whereas the girls negotiated verbally about the future course of the play. In particular, the interactive practices of proposing the next actions in the play differed: the girls used specific linguistic constructions, whereas the boys used attention seeking devices combined with multi-modal action. To inspect further our observation of different ways of making proposals by the girls and the boys we counted the linguistic forms they used in play negotiations in the whole two-hour corpus. The frequencies of different linguistic forms used by girls and boys can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1. Frequencies of linguistic forms used by girls and boys in negotiations

|       | <i>jooko</i><br>'yeah'+Q-CLI | <i>eiku</i><br>'no I mean' | <i>hei</i><br>'hey' | <i>kato</i><br>'look' | <i>arvaa(s) mitä</i><br>'guess what' |
|-------|------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Girls | 48                           | 38                         | 59                  | 13                    | 2                                    |
| Boys  | 0                            | 7                          | 11                  | 44                    | 8                                    |

The particle combination *jooko* ('yeah'+Q-CLI), and also the specific construction *jooko et V-isi*, was used only by the girls. This strengthens the finding that girls in particular rely on verbal negotiation. The repair particle *eiku* (appr. 'no I mean') was also frequently used by girls: this shows that girls tended to handle their disagreements using specific linguistic practices. However, it was also used by boys in some cases. On the other hand, the attention seeking imperative *kato* ('look') was much more often used by the boys than the girls, which shows the boys' preference for multi-modal negotiation by requesting looking and showing the other the play materials. The other attention seeking imperative *arvaa mitä* ('guess what') was used less frequently in the corpus but it was also more a practice of the boys. However, the exclamatory interjection *hei* ('hey') which is not an imperative but seeks attention more generally, was somewhat surprisingly used much more often by the girls than the boys. In comparison, boys and girls in our data seemed to differ both in the sequential construction of the negotiation, as was shown in the extracts analysed, as well as in the frequency distribution of the linguistic practices that they used in making proposals.

## Discussion

On the basis of the two situations analysed here, one can conclude that the negotiation practices of boys and girls in their same-sex peer play were different: girls relied on explicit verbal negotiation whereas the boys expressed their interests multi-modally. This suggests that children of different sexes seem to be acquiring gendered linguistic skills and that they also socialise to use different interactive practices in their same-sex peer play. In our study, girls and boys used at least partially different linguistic means for negotiation in their play. Furthermore, their interactions differed in the whole sequential construction of negotiation aimed at achieving collaborative play. Thus, the development of social and linguistic practices by the children appears deeply intertwined.

However, can we, on the basis of our findings, say that the boys were more competition oriented and the girls more collaboration oriented as some previous research (e.g., Maltz &orker 1982) suggests? According to our observations, the competition of interests is present both in the interactions of girls as much as it is in the play of boys. Both boys and girls were trying to promote their own interests concerning the future course of the play, and they were also making proposals in order to achieve that. As they were actively trying to attract the other player to accept their proposals, we can say that both boys and girls were seeking for collaboration and a shared play frame. Thus, there are similarities in goals although there appear to be differences in the means used: girls rely on explicit verbal negotiation and boys use more implicit means; this is also reflected in the sequential construction of negotiation. However, in our data, disagreement was expressed much more explicitly by the girls: they argued and counter-argued for their own interests and explicitly rejected verbally the proposals made by the other player. Thus one could say that the competition of interests was made more obvious by the girls. Because the boys ignored the other player's proposals when they disaligned with them does not emphasise the competition of interests but rather avoids open conflict. Thus our observations support the previous findings that girls do not avoid conflict but instead express it very clearly (for a review see Goodwin 2006: 32–36).

Our study was limited in scope and we still need much more investigation of both same-sex and mixed peer play in a larger database to confirm these findings. Our observations on four five-year-old girls' dyads show that the girls frequently and skillfully use *jooko* constructions in their play negotiations (Tykkyläinen & Laakso 2010). The use of attention seeking devices, however, is infrequent. As the girls studied are quite well-developed in their verbal negotiation skills and girls also generally tend to develop earlier than the boys (see, e.g., Leiwo 1986: 69–70), one should analyse play negotiations of older boys in order to find out whether they develop more specific linguistic practices later on<sup>7</sup>. We also need to study contextual variation more closely as some situations may maximise, while others minimise, gender marking (cf. Kyratzis 2004). We have observed that in a mixed boy-girl play dyad of our corpus the boy occasionally uses *jooko* construction when playing with his sister (Kuosma 2008). Thus, the gender of the playmate may affect the ways in which the proposals are formulated. Furthermore, differences in language and interaction patterns can also reflect other aspects of social relations than gender: power-relations and social class may play a role as well. Studying Hilma, one of the girls we studied here, playing with her sister, Forstén (2007) found that, instead of making proposals to the 3-year-old sister, Hilma frequently used imperatives to direct the course of the play. Interactions with siblings may thus differ from the interactions between equal peers and further studies are needed. In our case we can point out three challenges for further studies: Firstly, the linguistic development of girls and boys can be different. Secondly, the play context and materials may affect the language used, and, thirdly, some of the observed differences can reflect also the power-relations between the children. Thus, more comparative studies on Finnish children of different ages, with varying peer relations playing in diverse contexts are definitely needed.

To conclude, we observed that negotiations in children's play were often short and transient phenomena or sometimes evolved into longer disputes, but in any case they were an essential part of the play activity that developed and directed future actions. Play interaction with peers is an important arena for children to acquire skills for managing interactions in later life.

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7 Interestingly, *jooko* seems to be a practice of child language that disappears: when the same girls were videotaped playing as eight-year-olds, they did not use it anymore although they still relied on verbal negotiation (Tuula Tykkyläinen's observation during the recording).

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## Question design as a comparative and historical window into president–press relations

### *Introduction*

This chapter synthesizes recent research on how speakers formulate questions in a particular institutional environment, namely journalism as practiced in U.S. presidential news conferences (Clayman & Heritage 2002b; Clayman et al. 2006; Clayman et al. 2007). The research focuses on variation in question design, exploring how the act of questioning presidents has changed over time, and how it varies under different social circumstances. It is thus an exercise in applied conversation analysis in a comparative mode, where question design serves as a window into the institution of journalism and its evolving relationship to the state.

The theme of this chapter and of this volume is ‘comparative analysis.’ Perhaps the dominant impulse underlying this theme is that of cross-linguistic and cross-cultural comparison. What does our conversation analytical research tell us about commonalities and divergences in the ways in which speakers of different languages address common interactional contingencies? Startling similarities are beginning to emerge across very diverse sets of languages (Stivers et al. 2009), while intriguing differences inhabit languages as closely related as British and American English (Jefferson 2002).

A second level of comparison is represented by Curl and Drew (2008). This level is language and culture-internal. Curl and Drew investigate the possibility that different ways of designing requests are specific to informal conversation on the one hand, and more task-based ‘institutional’ contexts on the other. Ultimately, the authors argue that this possibility is not the case, and that different request forms encode differing balances between the entitlement of the requester and the contingencies that may attend the granting of the request, and that this distinction holds across contexts.

Curl’s and Drew’s conclusion for requests notwithstanding, there clearly are significant and major differences in the ways that talk is organized in different settings within a single culture. There are notable differences in the management to turn-taking in the law courts (Atkinson & Drew 1979), news interviews (Greatbatch 1988; Clayman & Heritage 2002), and classrooms (McHoul 1978; Mehan 1979), and all of these differ from ordinary conversation (Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson 1974; Drew & Heritage 1992). These differences may scale down

many levels of granularity. Twenty years ago, Heritage (1985) argued that a specific practice – formulating or summarizing prior talk – could be heard as withholding and disaffiliative in ordinary conversation, but appropriate and professional in the news interview context. Subsequently Drew (2003) broadened the range of comparisons to show how contextually specific and multifunctional these summative formulations can be.

Between these two forms of comparative analysis – cross-linguistic and language-internal – lies a profound methodological divide between “etic” and “emic” perspectives. Conversation analysis is, of course, an emic enterprise which grounds its claims about interactional practices in “the demonstrable orientation and understanding of the parties to the interaction as displayed in their consequent conduct” (Schegloff 2009: 8). Cross-linguistic comparisons can, of course, arise from this form of emic analysis in separate treatments of each language. However, by their very nature, cross-linguistic comparisons cannot be directly grounded in the “demonstrable orientations” of the parties. Language- and culture-internal comparative analyses, by contrast, can be and are generally thoroughly ‘emic’ enterprises.

We introduce these distinctions in part to problematize them. Our study of question design within American presidential news conferences is located within a single institutional and cultural context. It is nonetheless a comparative study encompassing both historical variation on the one hand, and diverse socio-political circumstances on the other. Although data are drawn from what is ostensibly a single linguistic and cultural domain, the scope of our comparison – a nearly fifty year span of news conferences (1953–2000) – may raise doubts that we are examining a ‘single’ homogeneous linguistic and cultural entity. Our study indeed documents long-term changes in the style and substance of presidential questioning, as well as dramatic turning points in the language and culture of the news conference (Clayman et al. *frth*). It has often been observed that language undergoes a process of slow incremental change and, correspondingly that, although speakers act in their daily lives on the assumption that they are speaking the same language, imperceptibly the language changes to the point that its users are not able to understand its earlier or earliest incarnations. Given this process of change which can be very much more rapid in institutional contexts (Clayman & Heritage 2002a), together with the changes in the presidential news conference that we will document, there are grounds to question whether our study is indeed monocultural in its focus, and thereby amenable to an essentially ‘emic’ treatment or whether, alternatively, we are engaged in what amounts to a cross-cultural and unavoidably ‘etic’ comparison.

A further complication arises from the fact that our historical comparison necessitates the use of quantitative methods. The categorization of questioning practices used in this study was developed in fully ‘emic’ fashion from case by case analysis of questioning in a variety of journalistic contexts (Clayman & Heritage 2002a). Yet the aggregation of cases in quantification inevitably removes us from the specificities of the participants’ orientations in any particular case. Moreover, aspects of context to which our work makes reference – historical change, the state of the economy etc. – are broad, and their relevance and impact are diffuse. Accordingly, it is much less easy to demonstrate their salience within singular cases of question design than it is, for example, to demonstrate the salience of

the identities of journalist and president. We will return to these themes in the concluding section of this paper.

### *The phenomenon*

The main axis of variation examined here is between modes of questioning that are (1) polite, cautious, or deferential, as opposed to (2) vigorous, aggressive, or adversarial. To illustrate this distinction, consider how the issue of the federal budget was put before two U.S. presidents spanning almost three decades – Dwight Eisenhower and Ronald Reagan.

(1) [Eisenhower 27 Oct 1954: 9]

1 JRN: Mr. President, you spoke in a speech the other night of  
 2 the continued reduction of government spending and tax cuts  
 3 to the limit that the national security will permit.  
 4 Can you say anything more definite at this time about  
 5 the prospects of future tax cuts?

(2) [Reagan 16 June 1981: 14]

1 JRN: Mr. President, for months you said you wouldn't modify  
 2 your tax cut plan, and then you did. And when the  
 3 business community vociferously complained, you changed  
 4 your plan again.  
 5 I just wondered whether Congress and other special  
 6 interest groups might get the message that if they  
 7 yelled and screamed loud enough, you might modify  
 8 your tax cut plan again?

Although both questions concern budgetary matters and tax cuts, the question to Eisenhower is in various ways more deferential. Its agenda is essentially benign – indeed, it is framed as having been occasioned by Eisenhower's own previous remarks, and contains nothing that is argumentative or oppositional. It is also non-assertive – it displays minimal expectations about what type of answer would be correct or preferable, and is thus formally neutral on the subject of inquiry. Finally, it is cautiously indirect – it exerts relatively little pressure on the president to provide an answer, and even allows for the possibility (“Can you say anything...” in line 4) that he may be unable to answer.

Reagan's question, by contrast, is more aggressive. This question is similarly occasioned by the president's previous remarks (lines 1–4), but here the journalist details contradictions between the president's words and his actual deeds, contradictions that portray the president as weak and beholden to special interests. This prefatory material thus sets an agenda for the question that is fundamentally adversarial. Moreover, the adversarial preface becomes a presuppositional foundation for the question that follows (lines 4–7), which assumes that the preface is true and draws out the implications for the president's general susceptibility to pressure. And far from being neutral, the preface assertively favors a *yes* answer, thereby pushing the president to align with the adversarial viewpoint that the question embodies.

So these questions are indeed massively different. Moreover, they index very different stances toward the chief executive, ranging from deferential to adversarial. The study of question design here thus has ramifications beyond interaction per se. It engages what is perhaps the central issue in research on the news media in democratic societies, namely the relationship between journalism and the state.

Various models have been proposed to capture the journalism-state relationship. The model of journalism as an independent watchdog competes with other models emphasizing either subservient (e.g., Herman & Chomsky 1988) or oppositional (e.g., Patterson 1993) relations. Since journalistic conduct is circumstantially variable, such static models should give way to a more dynamic conception of the specific conditions under which journalistic vigor rises and falls. When, exactly, does the journalistic “watchdog” bark? Answering this question requires some way of tracking journalistic aggressiveness in a systematic way, and this is where the study of question design comes into play.

### *The question analysis system*

Our question analysis system, grounded in prior conversation analytic research, decomposes the phenomenon of aggressive questioning into five dimensions:

1. Initiative – the extent to which questions are enterprising rather than passive in their aims
2. Directness – the extent to which questions are blunt rather than cautious in raising issues
3. Assertiveness – the extent to which questions invite a particular answer and are in that sense opinionated rather than neutral
4. Adversarialness – the extent to which questions pursue an agenda in opposition to the president or his administration
5. Accountability – the extent to which questions explicitly ask the president to justify his policies or actions

Each dimension is operationalized in terms of features of question design that serve as indicators. Below is a brief sketch of the coding system (for a fuller discussion, see Clayman and Heritage 2002b; Clayman, et al. 2006).

Initiative. Journalists exercise initiative when they (1) preface their question with statements that construct a context for the question to follow, (2) ask more than one question within a single turn at talk, or (3) ask a follow-up question. Each of these practices embodies a more enterprising posture on the part of the journalist.

Directness. Directness is measured by the absence of various practices that embody an indirect or cautious stance toward the question. Journalists are markedly indirect when they precede their questions with **self-referencing frames** (e.g., “*I wonder whether...*,” “*I want/would like to ask...*,” “*Can I/Could I/May I ask...*”) invoking their own intentions or desires before launching into the question proper. Indirectness is also manifest through the use of **other-referencing frames** that invoke the president’s ability (e.g., “*Can you/Could you tell us...*”) or willingness (“*Will you/Would you tell us...*”) to answer the question, and hence allow for the

possibility that he may be unable or unwilling to answer. Both self- and other-referencing frames are optional choices in question design that reduce the level of coercion encoded in the question. Moreover, in some instances such frames provide an escape route – a way of not answering the question that is licensed by the design of the question itself (“Can you tell us...” -> “No, I can’t tell you”). Conversely, the absence of such frames represents a more forceful way of putting issues before the president.

**Assertiveness.** Assertiveness is measured only for yes/no questions, which are easier to assess. Yes/no questions can be designed to invite or favor either a *yes*- or *no*-type response in two distinct ways: (1) through a prefatory statement (i.e., “*Unemployment rose sharply last month. Are we in an economic downturn?*”); or (2) through the linguistic form of the question itself, which can be negatively formulated and thus tilted in favor of *yes* (i.e., “*Aren’t we in an economic downturn?*”).

**Adversarialness.** An oppositional stance can be encoded (1) in the preface to the question only, or (2) in the design of the question as a whole. Prefaces are coded as adversarial if they disagree with the president or are explicitly critical of the administration. It is also noted whether the subsequent question focuses on the preface (i.e., “What is your response to that”) and thereby treats it as debatable, as opposed to presupposing the truth of the preface. In the former case, only the preface is adversarial; in the latter case, an adversarial posture runs through the question in its entirety.

**Accountability.** Accountability is operationalized as questions that explicitly ask the president to explain and justify his policies. Because such questions decline to accept policy at face value, they are to some extent aggressive, although the degree of aggressiveness depends on the linguistic form of the question. *Why did you*-type questions invite a justification without prejudice, whereas *How could you*-type questions are accusatory, implying an attitude of doubt or skepticism regarding the president’s capacity to adequately defend his actions.

Table 1 summarizes the question analysis system. For the dimensions involving multiple indicators, composite measures or scales were constructed with higher values corresponding to more aggressive practices or multiple practices used in combination (see Clayman et al. 2006). Are these scales, which we treated as ordinal variables, valid? A test of the assumption of proportional odds confirms ( $p < 0.05$ ) that a single construct is indeed being measured ordinally throughout each scale. That this construct involves aspects of aggressiveness is validated by prior conversation analytic research, which demonstrates that the indicators – elementary features of question design – are treated by interactants themselves as aggressive conduct (Clayman & Heritage 2002a). The measures are thus validated both as constructs and as measures of aggressiveness per se.

The question analysis system is also reliable, in part because most indicators are relatively formal aspects of question design. Coding was performed by a team of 14 coders working in pairs, with decisions requiring consensus and problem cases resolved in consultation with the entire research team. A recoded subsample of ten conferences yielded Kappa scores above .80 for with 3 out of 4 scales, with the 4<sup>th</sup> just shy of that level (.78). Since Kappa scores above .75 are generally understood to indicate at least 90% agreement and even greater agreement for coding categories with few codes (see Bakeman et al. 1997), the system is demonstrably reliable.

Table 1. The Question Analysis System

| MEASURE         | ITEM (INDICATOR)                    | DESCRIPTION  | ITEM VALUES   | ITEM KAP PA | SCORING  | MEASURE KAP PA |
|-----------------|-------------------------------------|--|---|-------------|--|----------------|
| Initiative      | Statement Prefaces                  | Q preceded by statement(s)                                   | 0 No preface<br>1 Preface   | .93         | 1 if any two of three items is "1";<br>0 otherwise | .93            |
|                 | Multiple Qs                         | 2+ Qs in a single turn at talk                               | 0 Single Q<br>1 Multiple Qs   | .99         |  |                |
|                 | Follow-Up Qs                        | Subsequent Q by the same journalist                          | 0 Not a follow-up Q<br>1 Follow-Up Q  | .71         |  |                |
| Directness      | Absence of Other-Referencing Frames | Frame refers to president's ability or willingness to answer | 0 No frame<br>1 <i>Can/Could you</i><br>2 <i>Will/Would you</i>                                   | .88         | Sum of two items                                   | .87            |
|                 | Absence of Self-Referencing Frames  | Frame refers to journalist's intention or desire to ask      | 0 No frame<br>1 <i>I wonder</i><br>2 <i>I'd like to ask</i><br>3 <i>Can/May I ask</i>             | .91         |  |                |
| Assertiveness   | Preface Tilt                        | Preface favors <i>yes</i> or <i>no</i>                       | 0 No tilt<br>1 Innocuous tilt<br>2 Unfavorable tilt   | .67         | Sum of two items                                   | .80            |
|                 | Negative Qs                         | <i>Isn't it . . . ?</i><br><i>Couldn't you . . . ?</i>       | 0 Not a negative Q<br>1 Negative Q  | .94         |  |                |
| Adversarialness | Preface Adversarialness             | Q preface is oppositional                                    | 0 Nonadversarial preface<br>1 Adversarial preface focus of Q<br>2 Adversarial preface presupposed | .79         | Sum of two items                                   | .78            |
|                 | Global Adversarialness              | Overall Q is oppositional                                    | 0 Not adversarial overall<br>1 Adversarial overall  | .66         |  |                |
| Accountability  | Accountability Questions            | Q seeks explanation for administration policy                | 0 Not an accountability Q<br>1 <i>Why did you</i><br>2 <i>How could you</i>                       | .76         | Single item  | .76            |

## *Data*

This project encompasses the administrations of Eisenhower through Clinton (1953–2000), a timeframe that roughly spans the era of the public news conference. Using transcripts reprinted in *Public Papers of the Presidents*, four conferences were sampled per year from 1953 to 2000. To maximize the power to detect associations with time, the conferences were staggered quarterly over the course of each year. Conferences held beyond White House grounds, and those involving other officials in addition to the president, were excluded from the sample. This yielded a database of 164 conferences and 4608 distinct questions.

## *Historical trends 1953–2000*

All five dimensions of aggressiveness rose over the course of the sampling period, and ordinal logistic regression models demonstrate that the upward trends are all statistically significant ( $p < 0.05$ ). All trends thus indicate a long-term decline in journalistic deference to the president and the rise of a more aggressive posture.

However, as graphs of the trends demonstrate, this generalization glosses over some important issues concerning both the aggregate level of aggressiveness and the shape of the trendlines. Figures 1–5 show the percentage of questions per four-year term embodying each form of aggressiveness. The lines on each multi-line graph are “stacked” or cumulative, with each line showing the proportion of questions embodying either that amount of aggressiveness or lesser amounts.

Concerning the aggregate level of aggressiveness, most questions are not aggressive even during the most contentious of times. With the exception of directness, which characterizes a majority of questions, all other dimensions peak at much lower levels (initiative at 35%, assertiveness at 15%, adversarialness at 18%, and accountability at 6%). Thus, even when the press corps has been at its most vigorous, most of the questions put to the president are not aggressive.

Concerning the shape of the trendlines, the pattern for directness (Figures 2a and 2b) stands out as more gradual and unidirectional than all other dimensions. Over most of the sampling period (except for the earliest and latest years) direct questions (Figure 2a) have monotonically increased, while all indirect forms (Figure 2b) have monotonically decreased. Thus, where journalists in the 1950s were exceedingly cautious in their questioning (often asking questions in the form “Would you care to tell us...,” “Can I ask whether...,” etc.), they have steadily become more straightforward in putting issues before the president.

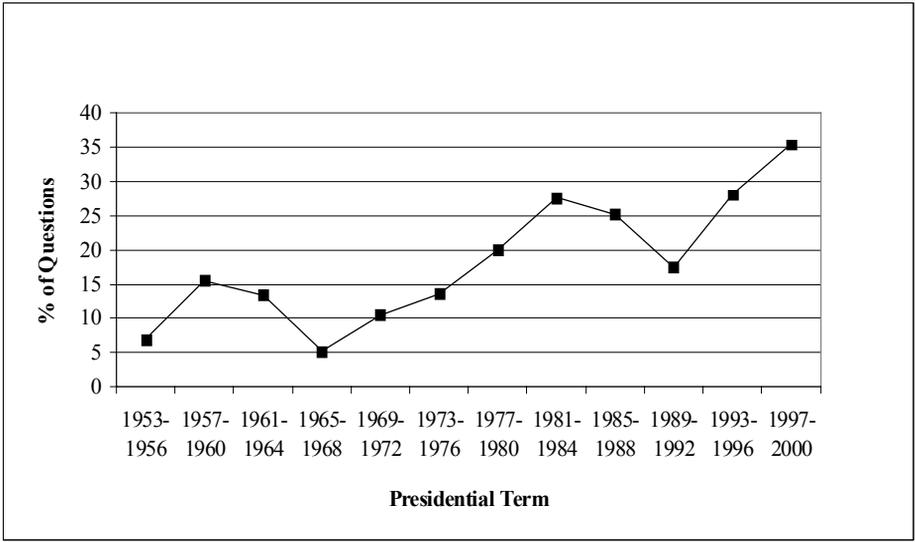


Figure 1: Initiative.

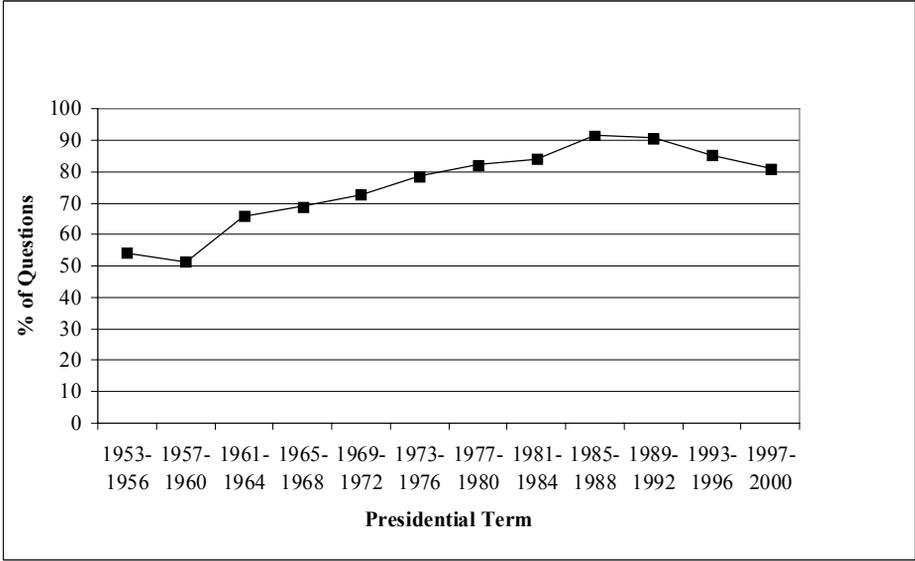


Figure 2a: Directness.

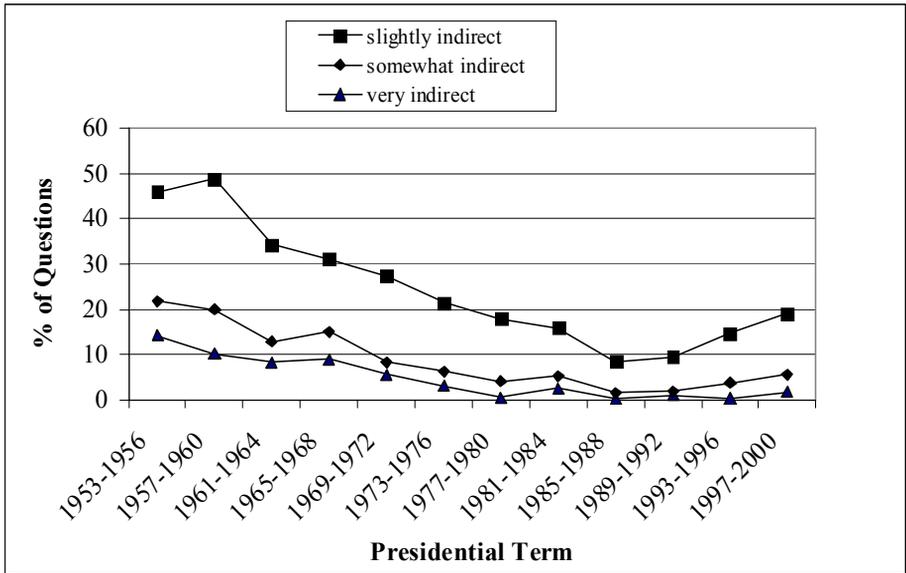


Figure 2b: Indirectness.

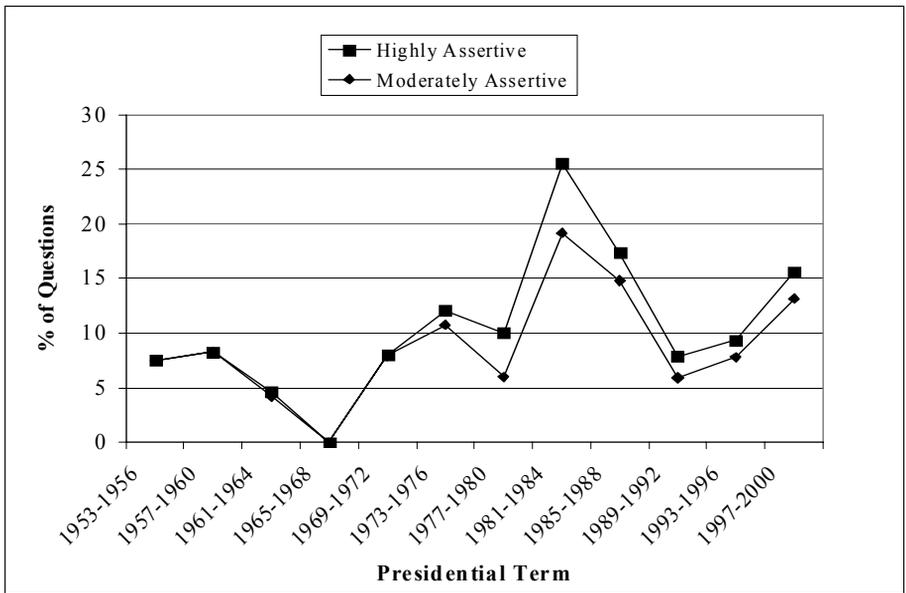


Figure 3: Assertiveness.

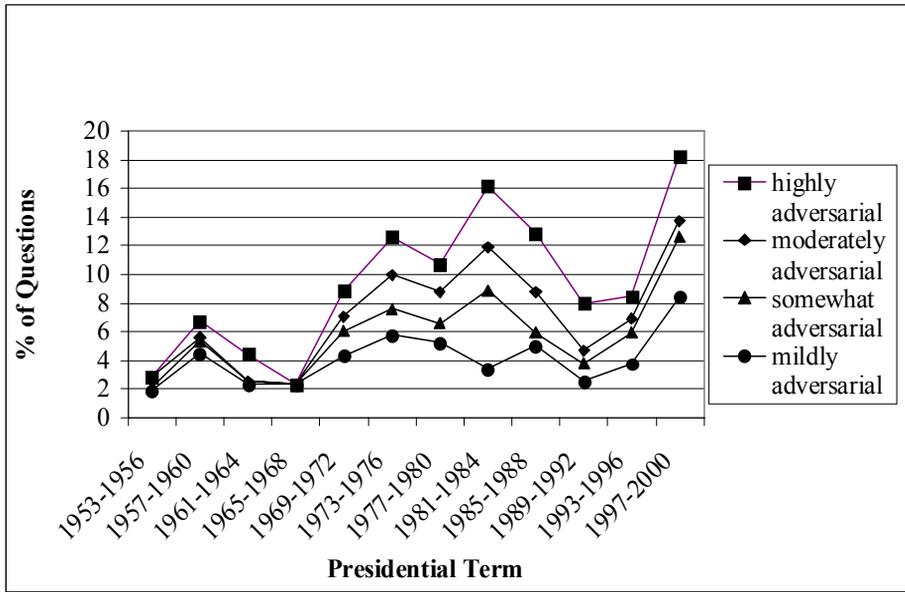


Figure 4: Adversarialness.

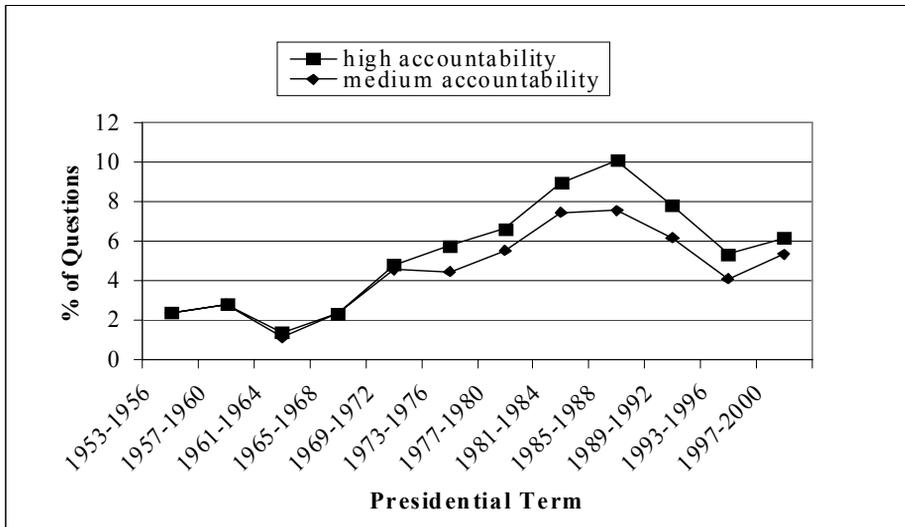


Figure 5: Accountability.

By contrast, the other dimensions – initiative (Figure 1), assertiveness (Figure 3), adversarialness (Figure 4), and accountability (Figure 5) – are more historically volatile, rising in a more concentrated manner in certain historical periods and falling in others. Moreover, these patterns of growth and decline are highly correlated across the four dimensions, such that four phases in the development of aggressive questioning may be distinguished.

The first phase spans the administrations of Eisenhower through Johnson (1953–1968). During this time, all four dimensions of aggressiveness remained at a relatively low level, albeit with some fluctuations. The second phase spans Nixon through Reagan’s first term (1969–1984). Over the course of this 16-year period, the dimensions of aggressiveness rose almost continuously. The only partial exception to this continuous upward trend occurred during the Carter administration – questions addressed to Carter were less likely to embody adversarialness, although his questions were more aggressive in most other ways.

The third phase begins with Reagan’s second term and continues through Bush (1985–1992). During this time, aggressive questioning was generally on the decline, although it would not fall as far as pre-Nixon levels.

The fourth and final phase spans the two Clinton terms (1993–2000), during which time aggressiveness was again on the rise, and one dimension (adversarialness) grew to levels exceeding the previous peak in Reagan’s first term.

### *Predictors of aggressiveness*

What might be driving these trends? More generally, what social conditions are journalists responsive to in the design of their questions? To address this, a series of ordinal logistic regressions were run with a variety of social condition indicators as predictors. Table 2 summarizes the conditions examined and their indicators, and Table 3 outlines the sequence of models through which they were examined. Factors not significant across outcomes were removed from subsequent models. Table 4 presents the results yielded from the final model set (set 12 in Table 3).

Table 2. Independent Variables

| Conditions                | Independent Variables                            |
|---------------------------|--|
| Administration Life Cycle | 1st conference versus later 1st-term conferences |
|                           | Linear trend across first term                   |
|                           | 1st term versus 2nd term                         |
|                           | Time lag since previous conference               |
| Presidential Popularity   | Gallup job approval rating                       |
| The Economic Context      | Unemployment rate                                |
|                           | Consumer price index                             |
|                           | Prime interest rate                              |
|                           | Dow Jones  |
| Foreign Affairs           | Domestic versus foreign/military questions       |
|                           | Foreign x time interaction                       |
|                           | Foreign x prime interest rate interaction        |
|                           | Foreign x unemployment interaction               |
| Historical Trends         | Year   |
|                           | Year squared                                     |

Table 3. Sets of Regression Models

| Model Set      | Independent Variables  |
|----------------|--|
| 1 (Base model) | Year, Year squared <sup>a</sup>                                      |
| 2              | Model Set 1 + time since last conference                             |
| 3              | Model Set 1 + first conference indicator <sup>b</sup>                |
| 4              | Model Set 1 + time in administration <sup>b</sup>                    |
| 5              | Model Set 1 + 2nd term indicator                                     |
| 6              | Model Set 5 + unemployment   |
| 7              | Model Set 5 + prime interest rate                                    |
| 8              | Model Set 5 + Consumer Price Index                                   |
| 9              | Model Set 5 + Dow Jones average                                      |
| 10             | Model Set 5 + unemployment, prime interest rate                      |
| 11             | Model Set 10 + Gallup Poll   |
| 12             | <b>Model Set 10 + foreign indicator</b>                              |
| 13             | Model Set 12 + foreign x time  |
| 14             | Model Set 12 + foreign x unemployment, foreign x prime interest rate |

<sup>a</sup>Only directness and accountability outcomes retained quadratic terms.

<sup>b</sup>First terms only.

Table 4. Predictors of Aggressive Questioning

| CONDITION                             | PREDICTOR                                    | OUTCOME                    |                        |                           |                             |                             |  |
|---------------------------------------|--|----------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|--|
|                                       |  | Initiative                 | Directness             | Assertiveness             | Adversarialness             | Accountability              |  |
| Administration<br>Life Cycle          | 2nd terms<br>odds ratio<br>p value           | More initiative<br>1.79*** | Less direct<br>.82*    | More assertive<br>2.04*** | More adversarial<br>1.68*** | More accountable<br>1.44*   |  |
|                                       |  | <.001                      | .019                   | <.001                     | <.001                       | .028                        |  |
| Economic<br>Context                   | unemployment rate<br>odds ratio<br>p value   | More initiative<br>1.15*** | —                      | More assertive<br>1.17*** | More adversarial<br>1.22*** | More accountable<br>1.12*   |  |
|                                       |  | <.001                      | .082                   | <.001                     | <.001                       | .024                        |  |
| Foreign<br>Affairs                    | prime interest rate<br>odds ratio<br>p value | —                          | —                      | More assertive<br>1.06*** | More adversarial<br>1.05**  | —                           |  |
|                                       |  | 1.02                       | .98                    | <.001                     | .001                        | .97                         |  |
| Secular Trends                        | foreign/military Qs<br>odds ratio<br>p value | .96                        | —                      | Less assertive<br>.52***  | Less adversarial<br>.40***  | Less accountable<br>.58***  |  |
|                                       |  | .428                       | .635                   | <.001                     | <.001                       | <.001                       |  |
| time squared<br>odds ratio<br>p value | time   | More initiative<br>1.11*** | More direct<br>1.23*** | —                         | More adversarial<br>1.08*** | More accountable<br>1.18*** |  |
|                                       |  | <.001                      | <.001                  | .99                       | <.001                       | <.001                       |  |
| time squared<br>odds ratio<br>p value | time   | —                          | Leveling off<br>.98*** | —                         | —                           | Leveling off<br>.97**       |  |
|                                       |  | <.001                      | <.001                  | <.001                     | <.001                       | .003                        |  |

Note: For the unemployment and prime interest rates, odds ratios are standardized.

The Administration Life Cycle. Presidents are widely believed to enjoy a honeymoon period in their dealings with the press, an initial period of congeniality followed by more contentious relations (Grossman & Kumar 1979; Manheim 1979; Smoller 1990). However, efforts to detect a honeymoon period – by comparing first conferences with later conferences, and by testing for linear trends across first terms – yielded no significant results. Granting the limitations of our sparse data sample, the results do not support the idea that presidents are treated differently early on. On the other hand, they do seem to be treated differently following re-election, receiving much more aggressive questioning in the second term as opposed to the first.

Presidential Popularity. Journalists see themselves as surrogates for the general public and as asking questions on their behalf (Thomas 1999). This, coupled with the fact that the president's standing in opinion polls receives much news coverage, suggests the hypothesis that aggressive questioning may be inversely associated with presidential popularity. However, a test of the president's Gallup job approval rating yielded minimal results. Approval ratings were, as expected, inversely associated with some outcome measures, but these effects were weak and became insignificant when economic variables were added to the models. Accordingly, this appears to be a spurious association, with the economy driving both presidential popularity and aggressive questioning.

The Economic Context. Is the business cycle associated with aggressive questioning? Such an association is plausible, given the watchdog role of the press and the post-New Deal tendency to view presidents as managers of economic affairs. Two measures of the business cycle emerged as robust predictors: 1) the unemployment rate, and 2) the prime interest rate. Both are directly associated with greater aggressiveness, with unemployment exhibiting stronger effects across more outcomes. Journalists thus appear to monitor presidential performance vis a vis the economy, and their sensitivity to the economy is multidimensional. It encompasses both conditions on “Main Street” (unemployment rate) as well as on “Wall Street” (interest rate), although the “Main Street” economy appears somewhat more salient.

The Foreign Affairs Context. How does the well-known “rally ‘round the flag” syndrome and the maxim that “politics stops at the water's edge” bear on aggressive questioning? Our sparse sample was not suited to studying the impact of exogenous events like military actions, but the underlying “water's edge” phenomenon was investigated via question content and the distinction between domestic versus foreign/military affairs questions. As expected, questions about foreign and military affairs were significantly less aggressive on most dimensions than were domestic questions. Further statistical investigation showed that the greater aggressiveness of domestic questions relative to foreign questions is a constant proportion over time and across varying economic conditions. This does not, of course, exclude the possibility of short-term variations in this proportion. Nevertheless, the long-term stability of this proportion is revealing, suggesting that when journalists have been generally inclined toward an aggressive posture, that inclination has tended to extend to foreign affairs questions. For journalists, then, politics does not stop at the water's edge, but it becomes measurably more restrained.

## Discussion

Prior to this project, quantitative studies of press behavior in presidential news conferences were rare, and multivariate analyses were nonexistent. Indeed, the consensus among political communication scholars was that journalistic deference/aggressiveness is too elusive to measure in a systematic way (e.g., Smith 1990). Of course, a mode of human conduct is “elusive” only insofar as its instantiation in actual behavior is not fully understood. Conversation analysis, by explicating how such modes of conduct are enacted in concrete, real-time courses of action, can provide for the defensible quantification and measurement of diverse phenomena that are grounded in human conduct. This study of presidential news conferences provides one illustration of how conversation analytic insights can be applied, in this case to address core theoretical questions in the study of political communication and the news media. Moreover, although this study has focused on the U.S. context, the question analysis system developed here can in principle be adapted – with modifications to handle linguistic and pragmatic differences – to illuminate press–state relations in any national context that permits direct interactions between journalists and officials.

At the beginning of this chapter, we problematized the emic/etic distinction in the context of long term historical comparisons. In conclusion we revisit this issue by posing three questions about our data and findings.

First, were our journalists operating within a single linguistic context across the half century we have investigated? In this connection, we note that certain practices of question design have vanished from the journalistic repertoire. For example, certain conventionally indirect question frames (*Can I ask...*, *May I ask...*) have effectively fallen out of use. By contrast, other practices (*Isn't it the case that....*, *How could you...*) have become recurrent, if not commonplace (Clayman & Heritage 2002b). Notwithstanding the persistence of these practices of question design within the general culture, their active use as journalistic resources has undergone an absolute change. Clearly the useable linguistic repertoire of the White House press corps is not a constant.

In a related vein, we can ask whether the social meaning associated with specific questioning practices has changed with changes in their relative frequency of use. If certain highly aggressive practices such as negatively framed questions become significantly more frequent, does this mitigate or otherwise detoxify their aggressive import? Taking these two points together, could all of this mean that the linguistic context of presidential questioning has changed?

Second, although the body of findings reported in this chapter index the association between questioning and various cyclical changes in the economy, presidential terms in office, and so on, other research documents a seismic and unidirectional shift in questioning during the Nixonian era (Clayman et al. frth a). During this period a single large ‘stair-step’ increase in aggressive news questioning took place, yielding a new plateau of vigorous journalism that has persisted for at least three decades. At the same historical turning point, male and female journalists, who were previously distinct, converged in their levels of aggressiveness (Clayman et al. frth b). Could all of this mean that the cultural context of presidential questioning has changed?

Third, the findings reported here and elsewhere clearly document a measure of diffuseness in the impact of the economic and other contextual factors that are associated with changes in White House questioning. For example, increases in the unemployment and interest rates that are associated with more aggressive questioning about domestic policy, are also associated with proportionally similar changes in questioning about foreign policy (Clayman et al. 2007). Clearly economic trends have diffuse consequences for questioning on matters regardless of whether they have economic content or not. It is not easy to see how findings of this sort are accessible to 'emic' case by case analysis.

Attempts to investigate the salience and consequentiality for interactional conduct of broad and diffusely relevant contextual dimensions – such as historical eras, socioeconomic conditions, political cultures and so on – may require an infusion of additional methods and procedures to supplement extant CA methodologies. The increasing relevance of CA techniques and findings for an ever broader range of fields and disciplines may eventually mandate just such an infusion.

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