INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP

Social Action Formats: Conversational Patterns in Embodied Interaction

17-19 May 2011
University of Oulu

PROGRAM AND ABSTRACTS
Workshop Program

Time                 Tuesday 17 May 2011

11.30–12.00  Coffee and opening words

12.00–13.00  **Plenary**
Barbara Fox:
Social action formats revisited: exploring action and grammar

Short break

13.15–14.00  Elise Kärkkäinen and Tiina Keisanen:
Social action formats in embodied interaction

14.00–14.45  Marika Sutinen:
Conversational patterns for resuming suspended tellings

14.45–15.15  Coffee break

15.15–16.00  Trevor Benjamin:
Grammar, sequential position, and the formation of social action

16.00–16.45  Inka Koskela, Ilkka Arminen and Hannele Palukka:
Embodied production of second pair parts in the instructional sequences of air traffic control training

Short break

17.00–17.45  Arja Piirainen-Marsh and Leila Kääntä:
Configuring social action in the classroom: practices of joint reasoning during a practical physics experiment (data session)

Time                 Wednesday 18 May 2011

9.00–9.45  Markku Haakana and Laura Visapää:
Eiku-utterances as formats for repair and other actions

9.45–10.30  Aino Koivisto:
Conversational patterns for turn-final conjunctions in Finnish conversation

10.30–11.00  Coffee break

11.00–11.45  Elizabeth Couper-Kuhlen:
Responding to requests, proposals and suggestions

11.45–13.00  Lunch

13.00–14.00  **Plenary**
Cecilia Ford:
Multimodal formations in transition spaces
Short break

14.15–15.00  Tiina Keisanen and Mirka Rauniomaa:
Two multimodal formats for responding to requests

15.00–15.30  Coffee break

15.30–16.15  Alexandra Kent:
Time to respond: How embodied responses to verbal directives can be
incorporated into the turn-taking structure

16.15–17.00  Alessandra Fasulo and Giorgia Galeano:
Understanding imperative directives through participation framework

Time  Thursday 19 May 2011

9.00–9.45   Joe Blythe:
Inverting conventions: Kin-based teasing in Murriny Patha conversation

9.45–10.30  Trine Heinemann and Kristian Mortensen:
Imitative gestures: an embodied practice for doing intersubjectivity

10.30–11.00 Coffee break

11.00–11.45 Charles Antaki:
Interrupting an established activity to check understanding: The dilemma
of support vs. education

11.45–12.45 Lunch

12.45–13.30 Leelo Keevallik:
Formats of challenge (data session)

13.30–14.15 Maria Frick:
Singing and codeswitching in sequence closing account sequences

14.15–14.45 Coffee break

14.45–15.30 Anne-Danièle Gazin:
The orderliness of instruction sequences in driving lessons (data session)

15.30–16.15 Pentti Haddington:
Pointing gestures and mobility (data session)

16.15–16.45 Final discussion
**ABSTRACTS**

**Plenary presentations**

Cecilia Ford  
University of Wisconsin, Madison

**Multimodal formations in transition spaces**

Using verbal turns as reference points for the position of post-(possible) completion, this study examines multimodal formations in the massively recurrent, socially significant, but always contingent and negotiable temporal and structural juncture of the transition space. Multimodal formations in transition relevance spaces are positionally related, and in some cases compositionally comparable, to turn increments (Davidson, 1984; Schegloff, 1996; Ford, Fox and Thompson, 2002; Walker 2002; Couper-Kuhlen and Ono 2007): they are produced as turns arrive at possible completion and as speaker transition becomes relevant. However, the cases examined in this study are not primarily verbal. Rather, I scrutinize a collection of instances where work beyond a transition relevance points is done through bodily-visual means, sometimes combined with lexico-grammatical forms.

This research builds on the groundbreaking findings of Charles and Marjorie Goodwin on the interactive construction of turns and sequences, and on the orderly coordination of talk, gaze, and the body, both within and between turns. It also contributes to long-standing as well as current findings regarding gesture, gaze, and bodily movement at points of possible turn completion and at the starts of new turns (e.g., Steeck and Hartge, 1992; Mondada, 2007; Perakyla & Ruusuvuori, In press).

Cases presented in this talk support the following claims:

1) Bodily-visual formations in transition spaces do actions related to, but distinct from, the actions of the verbal turns they follow.

2) The particulars of bodily-visual formations in transition spaces are fitted to actions of just-(possibly)-completed verbal turns.

3) Bodily-visual formations in transition spaces can be coordinated with verbal forms, particularly with grammatical forms that project further trajectories of verbal action. Such cases involve abandonment of verbal trajectories in favor of bodily-visual formations, in constructing prompts for recipient uptake.

4) Patterns in the collection suggest a distinction between prospective (forward moving, response pursuing) vs. retrospective (back looking, stance modifying) actions implemented through formations in transition spaces.

This study aims to further our understanding of multimodality and social action formation with reference to the “dense interactional considerations” managed at turn boundaries (Schegloff, 1996).


Lerner, G. H. (2004). On the place of linguistic resources in the organization of talk-in-interaction: Grammar


Social Action Formats revisited: exploring action and grammar

This talk explores the following questions, taking as primary data three types of assessments in American English conversation (based on work with Elizabeth Couper-Kuhlen and Sandra Thompson):
1) How do speakers construct appropriate social actions using relevant grammatical formats?
2) What kinds of relationships do we see between social action and grammatical format?
3) What do we learn about social action and grammar by engaging with these questions?

The three sequential environments examined are second assessments, assessments during extended telling, and sequence-closing third assessments. In examining assessments in these three sequential locations, we find that each location has a set of ‘dedicated’ grammatical, prosodic and bodily-visual exponents, and that each set is delicately fitted to the particular kinds of actions relevant to the location. These facts lead to a discussion of the various kinds of actions to which grammatical formats attend, and it what ways they attend to them.
Interrupting an established activity to check understanding: the dilemma of support vs. education

When supporting someone in performing a repetitive physical task, a teacher may complement their verbal instructions with demonstrations, mimicry, and other embodied actions (e.g. ‘bodily quoting’, Keevallik, 2010), so as to establish the physical rhythm of the task from initiation to completion. This cycle may need constant monitoring and refreshment, if the task is demanding and the student’s performance found wanting (Hindmarsh et al., 2011). I discuss a case in which a volunteer garden worker is helping a man with intellectual impairments to put seedlings into pots. The volunteer steers a line between, on the one hand, allowing the service user his own autonomy in carrying out the task, and, on the other hand, making sure that he is fully engaged with it physically and intellectually. This requires her to make sensitive judgements as to the service-user’s competence, his interest in the task, and the understanding of what it means. I shall concentrate on her management of an episode in which she attempts (by mimicking the cutting of a plant at a certain point, Figure 1) to prompt the service user to display his understanding of what he is doing. This action seems to cause him to disengage from the activity (Figure 2). I shall try to bring out the issues of knowledge vs understanding (Hindmarsh et al., 2011; Koole, 2010) at stake, and identify how it is that the service-user deploys gaze, body posture and body torque to display his apparent resistance to the task at hand.

References

Figures

Fig 1: Volunteer indicating where the plant may be cut
Fig 2: Service user orienting away from the volunteer
Grammar, sequential position, and the formation of social action

Grammar is called on to handle a diverse array of interactional tasks in the formation of social action. It is, for instance, a resource for managing the claimed distribution of knowledge between participants (see e.g. Raymond, 2010 on yes-no-type actions), for signaling problems in the ongoing course of action (see e.g. Fox, Thompson 2010 on answers to Wh-questions), and for managing the contingencies inherent in particular action types (see e.g. Curl, 200x on offers). The present paper demonstrates a further, rather different, role played by grammar in the formation of action. It is shown that grammatical design can index where an action occurs. Specifically, actions which are produced ‘out of place’ are routinely constructed using more prolix grammatical forms than those which are in their default sequential position. To illustrate this phenomena, the presentation will focus primarily on two practices of other-initiated repair in English: understanding checks marked with ‘you mean’ (compare ‘you mean John’ with ‘John’) (Benjamin, submitted) and wh-questions embedded in deictic frames (compare ‘who is that’ with ‘who’) (cf. Egbert, frth. on German). In each case, the more prolix (non-minimal) form is systematically used with other initiations of repair which are out of place, i.e. non-contiguous with the talk they target for repair. Some evidence is then presented that this phenomena—the use of non-minimal grammar to index non-default positioning—extends beyond the domain of repair.

References
Benjamin, T. submitted. ‘Handling non-contiguity through grammatical design: the case of ‘you mean’ marked understanding checks’
Curl, T. 2006. ‘Offers of assistance: constraints on syntactic design’ In: Journal of Pragmatics 38/8, p. 1257-1280
Inverting conventions: Kin-based teasing in Murriny Patha conversation

Just as interlocutors can manipulate physical objects for performing certain types of social action, they can also perform different social actions by manipulating symbolic objects. A kinship system can be thought of as an abstract collection of lexical mappings and associated cultural conventions. It is a sort of cognitive object that can be readily manipulated for special purposes. For example, the relationship between pairs of individuals can be momentarily re-construed in constructing jokes or teases. Australian classificatory kinship systems are flexible entities because they can easily incorporate cultural outsiders as kin. This flexibility can be usefully exploited in constructing humorous teases.

Murriny Patha speakers associate certain parts of the body with particular classes of kin. When a group of Murriny Patha women witness a cultural outsider performing a forearm-holding gesture that is characteristically associated with brothers-in-law, they re-associate the gesture to the husband-wife relationship, thus setting up an extended teasing episode. Many of these teases call on gestural resources. Although the teasing is at times repetitive, and the episode is only thinly populated with the telltale “offrecord” markers that characterize teasing proposals as non-serious (Keltner et al., 2001), the proposal is sufficiently far-fetched as to ensure that the teases come off as more bonding than biting (Boxer and Cortés-Conde, 1997).

References
Responding to requests, proposals and suggestions

The social actions of requesting, proposing and suggesting, although distinguishable from one another, form a natural class: they all involve the speaker attempting to influence the future behavior of the recipient, albeit with varying degrees of 'force'. One indication of the family resemblance between these actions is the fact that many of the same linguistic constructions are used to implement them (e.g., in English: imperatives, modal verb constructions, why don't you constructions).

These linguistic formats for implementing requests, proposals and suggestions establish relevancies for the shape that turns responding to them can take. For instance, in a next turn to the imperative-formatted suggestion Get it in the tube, referring to ointment for treatment of a toenail fungus, a recipient can signal compliance by replying I will, i.e. with a partial repeat, or I will get it in the tube, with a full repeat. In addition, particles such as alright or longer forms unrelated to the prior such as I'm going to the drugstore right now can be used to signal compliance.

In principle, any and all of these lexico-syntactic formats (partial repeat, full repeat, particle, unrelated long form) can be used for both complying and non-complying responses to requests, proposals and suggestions. In practice, however, the recipients of specific initiating actions choose one specific way to comply or to resist complying on a particular occasion. How do they decide which format type to use? The argument here is that the choice is not accidental. Instead, significant patterns of use can be identified, only some of which can be accounted for by preference structure or, e.g., by a principle of minimization. In this paper the different response formats will first be described and illustrated. Then an attempt will be made to pinpoint what motivates the choice of a given response type in a particular sequential and interactional environment.

The paper is based on joint work with Barbara E. Fox and Sandra A. Thompson on forms of responding in interaction (Fox et al, to appear).

References
Understanding imperative directives through participation framework

Directives at the imperative forms are considered the more authoritative forms of a request of action; however, that they may be used in an unmarked fashion when interactants are involved in joint activities (Goodwin 1990) or when parallel courses of action are under way, as a way to minimize disruption in the flow of the main activity (Ervin-Tripp 1976).

We will analyse the multimodality of directives at the imperative form, showing how they are part of a flow of action entailing gestures within a shared semiotic environment. Data comes from different corpora of family interactions, and include both adult-child and adult-adult exchanges.

We argue that imperative forms are commonly used when interactants are engaged in a common activity so that they can be considered a participation unit: the directive does not appear to exercise authority but to progress action in the most economical way. Time is a key aspect of the use of directive: they imply immediate relevance of the proposed action within the concerted activity. By using a form that does not require verbal response but is satisfied by compliance, speakers are able to orient the hearer either to next action or to some aspects of it, such as pace or location. In fact, we find that often imperative directives do not introduce an altogether new action, but specify some dimensions of its delivery.

The participation framework specific of the sequences we will consider explains the absence of mitigation, which is typically found when a speaker request an action to her advantage or encourage the hearer to begin a new activity: In the latter cases, speakers acknowledge the interactional threat by underplaying the authority in their request; when acting working together at a common “project”, on the contrary, imperatives index a commonality of agency and the absence, for the time being, of separate situated identities. We propose that, rather than the macro social context and the fixed identities of the speakers (such as asymmetrical roles of the participants) it is their situated identities and the participation framework induced by the ongoing activity that is relevant for the understanding of the forms used. In this sense, directives not only reflect but index and construe participation units.

References
Singing and codeswitching in sequence closing account sequences

According to Schegloff (2007:186–187) sequence closing sequences are a resource for closing longer sequences or topics. It’s basic form is composed of three turns (ibid.):

1. turn, that often returns to the beginning of the sequence or summarizes it - eg. assessment, idiom or aphoristic formulation
2. turn a) aligning = preferred response
   b) resisting => expansion of the sequence
3. turn (optional): a final closing token or assessment
3. or next turn: new topic or sequence

This paper investigates a collection of turns that initiate a closing sequence of a request sequence. The base action of the sequences is a request that gets a dispreferred response from the requestee: the request is not granted. This is followed by an account or several accounts - an explanation of why the request cannot be granted. The accounts are often in the form of an assessment and are spoken or sung by the requestee, requester or by a third participant. They form the first turn of a sequence closing sequence. Others align with the accounts and the sequences come to an end when a new topic is started:

- Request
- Dispreferred response
- Account(s) (1. turn of the sequence closing sequence)
- Aligning turn (2. turn of the sequence closing sequence)
- New topic

The dataset is compiled of sequences that contain either codeswitching from Finnish to Estonian or singing in the account(s). A conclusion is made, that the singing and codeswitching are instances of double-voicing (Bakhtin 1994), that they function as contextualisation cues that signal a change in the speaker’s footing. They can be interpreted as non-serious, which might contribute to the fact that alignment is achieved and the topic can be closed. Furthermore, singing and codeswitching are raised as new topics. The participants start talking about singing in general or the particular song - or, in one case, codeswitching is followed by a metalinguistic topic comparing the two languages. In these new sequences the participants are fully aligned.

References:
The Orderliness of Instruction Sequences in Driving Lessons

Instruction sequences are recurrently observable in the interaction during driving lessons. On the basis of a corpus of seven driving lessons in Italian and drawing on Conversation Analysis, I am investigating the ways in which instructions are given and executed. Considering the verbal (lexical, syntactical, prosodical) and non-verbal (gaze, gesture, body movements) resources that the participants employ, I focus on three dimensions of instruction sequences: a) the sequential organisation of instruction giving/executing episodes; b) the temporal unfolding of the instruction; c) the spatial environment in which the instructions occur. The following excerpt is taken from a collection built on the instructor’s ("ins" in the transcription) request to "turn left":

In this piece of data the instruction sequence can be described as follows: a direction indication (l. 3), an accomplishment by the student (l.8), an instruction related to the gear (ll. 10-13), the accomplishment by the student (l.11) and an 'okay' (l. 15) with which the teacher displays that the turning has been accomplished. Such instructions are recurrent and are sequentially organised: the request concerning the direction (to turn left) is followed by instructions concerning the manoeuvring of the car. These are sensitive to the student’s unfolding execution of the direction instruction. My aims are a) to describe the underlying interactional pattern(s) and b) to analyse how instructions are sensitive to the constant temporal and spatial reshaping of the interaction that is taking place in a moving car. In the data session I would thus like to focus on the analysis of patterns in instruction sequences and on how the different modalities are constantly adjusted to the changing environment.

References
Eiku-utterances as formats for repair and other actions

The paper is part of an ongoing research project in which we concentrate on the use of the particle eiku in Finnish conversations. Our presentation has two objectives: First, we will give an overview of the functions that eiku-initial utterances have in interaction. Second, we will concentrate on some cases of face-to-face interaction in order to analyse the multimodal aspects of actions performed with the particle. Up to this point, our analysis has concentrated on instances of telephone conversation, but for the purposes of this sub-study we expand the analysis to the embodied features of, for instance, sequences of repair and correction.

In previous studies, eiku has been referred to as a grammaticalized particle that derives from two elements. It combines the negation word ei (cf. English no) and the conjunction ku, which is a conjunction/particle that can carry several kinds of meaning: temporal, causal or contrastive (cf. Herlin 1998). Even though eiku clearly has these two elements, in spoken Finnish, it is typically produced as one prosodic unit – it is a particle of its own, and it is not transparent, for instance, what kind of meaning the ku-part carries in this combination.

Previous studies have shown that eiku is used in self-repair (Sorjonen & Laakso 2005) and in corrections in which a speaker corrects an error in another speaker’s talk (Haakana & Kurhila 2009). Thus, the particle has a strong reputation as a “particle of repair/correction”. However, as we have suggested (Haakana & Visapää 2010), in addition to its clear repair uses, eiku is also conventionally used in contexts in which there seems to be nothing that would require repair. It is used to redirect the course of interaction, when, for example, certain implications or expectations have arisen that need to be “negated” before the speaker can proceed with or get back to their original point. eiku is thus used not only to repair what was said but also to redirect the interactional situation back to the line of the intended agenda.

In the present study, we want to discuss the ways in which eiku functions as a tool for creating recognizable actions, be that in the contexts of repair of a linguistic unit and its interpretation (self- and other-repair), or repair in a more abstract sense (as explained above). In the presentation, we aim to detect how the functions of eiku-utterances we have found (especially in telephone conversations) are actualized in contexts where the speakers have such resources as gaze and gesture available.

References


Pointing gestures and mobility

Pointing is central to social interaction (e.g. Goodwin 2003). Research in interaction analysis and gesture studies has shown that pointing gestures are used, for example, for pointing at and identifying objects, places, entities and referents (often together with deictic structures), or for locating features in a visual field. All in all, they are used for establishing common ground for an interactional activity. In addition, they are often used for turn-allocation purposes, such as selecting the next speaker or for self-selection (Mondada 2007).

The data in the suggested data session come from interaction in cars. The car data provide a rich resource for analysing pointing gestures, since in-car participants frequently point at referents outside the car. The proposed data session will focus specifically on situations in which an in-car participants point at a referent outside the car. Some general questions that can be discussed on the basis of data are:

- What are the actions in which pointing gestures are used in cars?
- What kinds of linguistic formats are used together with pointing gestures (see Keisanen to appear)?

Previous research has shown that pointing gestures always receive their meaning relative to the situated context in which they are produced. In this respect, studying pointing gestures in cars is very interesting, because cars are special places for interaction (Haddington, et al. to appear in 2011). On the one hand, cars are almost constantly on the move. Recent research has shown that mobility often impacts on and organizes the ways in which in-car participants interact with each other. In relation to this, possible questions to be dealt with the proposed data session are:

- How does the fact that the in-car participants are on the move impact on the timing, shape, trajectory and duration of pointing gestures?
- How are pointing gestures coordinated temporally and sequentially with respect to possible other activities in a car? How does this reflect the demands of the mobile situation?

On the other hand, in-car participants often have to organize their actions inside the car’s ‘interaction space’ (Mondada 2009) with events in the ‘mobile space’, outside the car. By analysing excerpts in which participants inside the car (i.e. in the car’s interactional space) point at a feature or object outside the car (i.e. mobile space), the following questions can be discussed:

- How does the design of the pointing action (i.e. the shape of a pointing gesture and the design of talk) show that it is made available for a particular recipient in the car? In other words, how does the pointing action establish common ground between participants?
- How does the design of a pointing gesture reflect the spatial configuration of the car interior and the demands this configuration imposes on the participation framework (e.g. backseat vs. front seat) (e.g. Noy to appear in 2011).

The study of how pointing gestures are used and designed in mobile situations is relevant for multimodal conversation analysis, mobility research and safety research.
Imitative gestures: an embodied practice for doing intersubjectivity

In this paper we investigate the use of imitative gestures (i.e. gestures that are produced first by one participant, then reproduced in a similar or identical manner immediately after by another participant). Focusing on video-recordings of user-driven innovation workshops in which arthritis patients work together with engineers and designers to develop new tools to help arthritis patients cope with everyday challenges, we show that imitative gestures embody the activity at hand with the material world. They are, in McNeill’s (1992) words *iconic gestures* and their realization display a socio-cultural understanding of the use of the specific artifact in “real life”. For instance, the imaginary gesticulation of the opening of a milk bottle is done in a relevant distance from the table and thus enacts not just the opening of the bottle, but also the bottle, with its semantic properties, itself. Second, we identify the sequential position, in which imitative gestures are typically used to accompany and embody understanding or agreement/disagreement. Imitative gestures are thus employed by the participants as part of particular social actions that are aimed at establishing intersubjectivity. Finally, we show that the participants, through the way they employ imitative gestures, position themselves within the epistemic landscape of arthritis as being either someone with subordinate, equal or superordinate access to knowledge about “having arthritis”. Thus, whereas arthritis patients typically use the imitative gestures as a way of agreeing/disagreeing with other patients, hence claiming equal access to “knowing” what it feels like to have arthritis, the other participants primarily use imitative gestures in positions of checking/displaying understanding, hence positioning themselves as “less knowing” about matters relating to arthritis than the person whose gesture they imitate. In this way, our paper shows how the material world is enacted in and through social interaction in order to establish intersubjectivity.

References:
Formats of challenge

This study focuses on utterances that draw attention to an unwanted behavior and call another participant to contest. Challenges are disaligning by nature, they intervene with the sequence of actions so far, but may also be used non-seriously for friendly banter. Oppositional moves take an authoritative stance (Goodwin 1998) and are thus socially awkward. In contrast to directives, which can also be implemented to authoritatively change the course of actions, challenges do not propose an alternative action.

Challenges are regularly formatted as questions, such as “What are you doing?” and “Why are you drinking all the time?”. As other social actions, they are locally occasioned by the behavior of other participants. The video-recorded data collection for the current study includes a kid throwing a balloon on another, a dance student performing a wrong move, and a telemarketer displaying too little sympathy with the economic situation of the client. All of these situations trigger a challenge. Prior studies have shown how challenges emerge sequentially within verbal action trajectories (Keisanen 2007, Heinemann 2008). This study includes embodied action trajectories and also discusses to what an extent the body alone can accomplish a challenge. It thus addresses the theoretical issue of action assignment in embodied interaction. The label challenge will itself be problematized because of its basis in the linguistic format. Its relationship with complaint and accusation also needs to be clarified.

As a rule, questions constitute first pair parts and initiate sequences. However, questions used for challenging do not make relevant a literal response (Koshik 2002). They have in particular attracted attention with regard to their answerability and accountability (Heritage 2002, Egbert & Vöge 2008). It has been argued that the social action of challenge determines whether and what type of response is provided. In the current data, the participants either ignore the challenge, accomplish the action implicitly asked in it (correction of a dance move, display of empathy), contest it, or give a literal response to maintain the jocular trajectory. All of them in different ways witness of recipient orientation to the prior action as a challenge.

References


Two multimodal formats for responding to requests

The paper discusses action sequences that concern the transfer of an object or service, namely requests and responses to them. We focus specifically on responses, describing how interactants construct them with linguistic resources, embodiment and the use of material objects. The paper thus relies on the observation that human actions are situated in complex social-interactional and material settings (e.g. Goodwin 2000). Previous research within conversation analysis has mainly focused on the design of first pair parts in request and directive sequences (e.g. Craven & Potter 2010, Curl & Drew 2008); the current study complements these findings and contributes to ongoing research on the employment of various semiotic resources in respective second pair parts.

The data, a total of 16 hours, are drawn from video recordings of casual face-to-face and in-car conversations in English. It is characteristic to the requests in the data that they deal with concrete objects and events in the immediate semiotic environment and with present activities. The majority of the requests are granted and/or complied with. We will discuss how granting and compliance are achieved, by examining two social action formats for responding to requests, and showing how language and embodied practices are variously employed in the two.

References
Time to respond: How embodied responses to verbal directives can be incorporated into the turn taking structure

Using conversation analysis I have analysed sequences of talk where one party tells another to do something during a family mealtime conversation (conventionally called issuing a directive). In the presentation I will sketch out a prototypical directive sequence and examine its boundaries in terms of how directive sequences get started, and how participants return to normal mealtime conversation afterwards. I do not mean to claim a general pattern about the boundaries of all directive sequences. The aim is to describe some of the recurrent features of typical directive sequences found in the data and to suggest some implications arising from them. A particular interest will be in how verbal directives can be responded using an embodied action within the turn taking structure.

When studying the sequence organisation of directives it quickly became apparent that there are such things as readily identifiable bounded sequences of talk in which ‘directing’ actions get done. This echoes findings by Kidwell (2006) that the directive and response together constituted a sequence of talk. I will suggest that these sequences have a recurrent structure that typically contains some or all of the following features:

- A **directive** that is sequentially disjunctive and cuts across the ongoing topic to launch the directive sequence without orienting to the talk already in progress.
- An **embodied response** that typically displays compliance with the directive
- A **gap** in the verbal talk that provides sequential time and space commensurate with the time reasonably required to demonstrate compliance
- No sequence closing third or third turn positioned token to acknowledge or comment on the response

This presentation will focus specifically on the embodied response following the directive. The response type most commonly evidenced in the data was embodied compliance. This is not the only response option, but in terms of mapping out a typical directive sequence it is important to note that most directive sequences gain compliance. Equally note that directives tend to receive an embodied rather than a verbal response, even though many are formulated as information solicits.

One immediate consequence of an embodied response to a directive is that there is often then a gap in the verbal conversation. The length of the gap after a directive appears to relate to the length of time one might reasonably expect compliance to take. It can be extremely short (barely more than a micro pause) or a considerable silence. Participants appear to orient to the need for sufficient time to comply. However they are also sensitive to a gap stretching into an uncomfortable silence or awkward pause in the conversation and take steps to avoid this happening. The presentation will consider how the gap following a directive might be one mechanism through which embodied actions can be brought into, and treated as relevant to, a turn taking structure that normally only deals with verbal actions.

References
Conversational patterns for turn-final conjunctions in Finnish conversation

In spoken interaction, not all grammatical constructions are syntactically complete or well-formed. This paper examines the use and recognizability of utterances ending in a conjunction in Finnish conversation. My data show that despite the apparent syntactic incompleteness of these utterances, the recipients often treat them as interactionally complete by taking the next turn. This can be taken as evidence of the fact that conjunction-final spates of talk can form recognizable units in interaction. These utterances often also carry phonetic features that are typical of turn-endings in Finnish (see Ogden 2004). In addition, conjunction-final units of talk seem to implement recurrent conversational activities and carry certain lexico-grammatical features. This paper shows that identifying these conversational patterns is crucial in explaining the interactional functions of conjunction-final turns and in reanalyzing conjunctions as turn-final elements (or particles, cf. Mulder & Thompson 2008 on final but). The data for the study come from telephone conversations and videotaped service encounters.

The paper focuses on turns that end with conjunctions ja (‘and’) and mutta (‘but’). It will be shown that both of these final conjunctions have their own typical contexts of occurrence. Final ja tends to occur in list constructions that have a specifying or argumentative function. In this context, ja seems to imply that there are other list members of a similar kind which need not to be specified. This creates an impression of a nonexhaustive or an open list (cf. Jefferson 1990; Selting 2007). Final mutta, on the other hand, almost exclusively occurs in concessive turns in which the speaker retracts from her earlier claim. Final mutta is then used to mark a return to the earlier claim. That is, the final mutta conveys an implication that the earlier claim still holds despite the retraction. This practice is comparable to the pattern called “concessive repair” discussed by Couper-Kuhlen and Thompson (2005). The existence of these recognizable and recurrent patterns for final ja and mutta proves that final conjunctions are not a random phenomenon but indeed a conventionalized and meaningful feature of talk-in-interaction.

References


In this paper, we analyze a standard pattern of instructional sequences of trainer-trainee interaction in air traffic control (ATC) training. The analyzed instructional sequences consist of adjacency pair: trainer prompt – trainee’s embodied response. The prior research on instructional sequences or “instructed actions” has mainly concerned sequences in which teacher prompt invites the student display his/her understanding either by producing turns of talk (IRF/IRE/SLA studies) or by showing mutual direction of attention towards the task at hand (e.g. Goodwin 1994, Goodwin & Goodwin 1996, Hindmarsh, Reynolds & Dunne, in press). Less attention has been paid to the instructional prompts that project other kinds of second pair parts, namely multimodal task accomplishments (except Martin 2004, Nishizaka 2006, Melander 2009). This paper connects the detailed study of talk with the study of multimodal organization of action to examine the ways in which trainee’s task accomplishment is both projected and produced as sequentially relevant (multimodal) next in the instructional sequences of trainer-trainee interaction. Specifically, we examine various designs of trainer prompts and their temporal and sequential positions in relation to the larger activities in progress and trainee’s preferred and dispreferred embodied responses to these prompts. The analysis is based on videotaped data (39 hours) gathered during tower control simulator training and on-the-job training. The study not only expands our understanding on the embodied nature of expert-novice interaction, but respecifies the ways in which talk and embodied conduct reflexively shape and structure the sequential organization of action and interaction, in general. As such the study touches upon some central concerns of contemporary CA and ethnomethodologically based studies, i.e. multimodality, embodiment and materiality as key aspects of participants’ sense making processes.

References
Social action formats in embodied interaction

The workshop explores the notion of ‘social action formats’ (for convenience, SAFs), or conversational patterns for routinely enacting particular activities and actions in interaction. Social action formats can be broadly understood as recurrent conversational patterns or turn-constructional formats which originate in the interactional needs of participants in talk-in-interaction, and encompass both language and embodiment.

This introductory presentation will first provide an overview of the papers to be given in the workshop, in order to stimulate and facilitate discussion during the three days. The presentations explore SAFs within different languages, by variously focusing on the relations between linguistic form, sequential organization and embodiment.

We will discuss the following theoretical approaches and assumptions observable in the papers:

- Starting points for papers: when searching for conversational patterns in interaction, we can begin with linguistic form, social action, turn or sequence organization, or embodied action. Does the starting point matter (for SAFs)?

- Features of conduct: papers examine and contribute to several areas of conversational research relevant for social action formats. How are the findings on SAFs related to and relevant for current research concerns in conversation analysis and related areas?

- Different understandings of social action formats: the papers employ a multiplicity of terms for what we understand as SAFs, and thus explore the limits of SAFs, i.e. their relationship to units, formats, practices, patterns, functions and actions. What is the scope and reference point of the terms used?

Second, as one prominent focus in the workshop is embodiment, we will provide a synthesis of our current understanding of different analytic foci for SAFs and for studying language and the body in situated interaction. We will try to encourage discussion and a search for some common ground on the above pertinent issues throughout the workshop, to be pulled together in the final discussion.
Configuring social action in the classroom: practices of joint reasoning during a practical physics experiment

In this data session we present our ongoing research on practices of joint reasoning in the context of classroom interaction. We approach knowledge-based reasoning as a set of observable practices, actions and inferences through which participants jointly develop an understanding of a classroom task and embark on different courses of actions in order to solve the problems related to the task at hand (cf. Garfinkel 2001, Coulon 1995). Reasoning is concrete and context-bound and involves sequences of action through which participants see, feel, describe, propose and jointly coordinate moves that help them solve the task. We present a sample of data (c. 90 seconds) from a physics lessons taught in English in Finland, where a group of 13-year-old students jointly configure a practical experiment as part of learning to understand the concept of torsional moment. The experiment involves balancing a plank with the help of an eraser and two different weights.

Our analytic approach builds on multimodal interaction analysis (see e.g. Goodwin 2000, 2007) through which we explore how the students’ joint reasoning is made visible and traceable in and through peer interaction. We examine how reasoning is carried out through online instructions, requests and offers of advice. These social actions are embedded in the material environment of the experiment. They are highly contingent, overlapping and accomplished through a combination of verbal utterances, the use of gaze, gestures and practical actions. We hope that discussion generated by the data will shed light on the following questions related to social action formats:

1. what kinds of turn constructional formats are used in the activity and how are they adjusted to the interactional needs of the participants for accomplishing the task?
2. how do the different modalities and the material world figure into the organization of the students’ instructions and advice (and other related actions) addressed to each other?
3. how are embodiment and practical actions (e.g. moving the weights on top of the plank) organized relative to the turn-organization and sequential organization of the task based institutional activity?

References
Conversational patterns for resuming suspended tellings

It is not uncommon in everyday casual conversation that when a speaker produces an extended, multiunit turn at talk (such as a storytelling sequence or some other type of extended description or explication), various types of topical digressions or disruptions may occur which seem to momentarily steer the talk away from its present course. In sequential terms, such a digression constitutes a side sequence (Jefferson, 1972) embedded within the main sequence, causing the main telling sequence to become temporarily suspended before it has reached its projected completion. This creates an interactional problem for the conversational participants, who face the task(s) of closing the intervening side sequence and returning to the main sequence as soon as possible so that the suspended telling can continue. Thus, the return to the main sequence does not happen automatically but requires interactional work and cooperation between participants.

This paper discusses one type of return practice, namely resumption, in English face-to-face conversation. The resumption is typically done after an expanded digression sequence which consists of multiple TCUs and often more than one turn. The data consists of 27 hours of video-recorded everyday conversations in English and Finnish. Some relevant research already exists on side sequences and resumptions in interaction: see e.g. Jefferson (1972) for side sequences, Mazeland & Huiskes (2001) for resumption in Dutch interaction, Auer (2005) for broken-off units and their delayed repair in German interaction, and Wong (2000) for repetitions in English conversation. However, these have mostly concentrated on shorter interactional sequences, where the digressions and resumptions occur within the space of only a few TCUs. There still exists very little research on resumptive practices in English interaction where these would be examined in more complicated interactional sequences consisting of extended, multiunit turns or even multiple turns at talk.

In the presentation I will examine how interlocutors systematically orient to and accomplish the action of resumption, and how they display their orientation to this interactional work not only through their talk but also through their bodies. In other words, resumptions yield recognizable conversational patterns. Typically, the resumption is prefaced with a discourse marker (such as but, anyway, or so), which is then followed by a recycle of the last suitable telling component from the talk prior to the digression. I will also explore what kinds of prosodic and bodily practices might be involved in the accomplishment of resumption. Such practices have not been examined in much of previous research on resumptions (but see e.g. Local 1992 for prosodic characteristics of doing ‘continuation’ in interaction).

References


