Feeling by Doing

The Social Organization of Everyday Emotions in Academic Talk-in-Interaction
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Abstract


The present dissertation is concerned with the social organization of emotions in talk-in-interaction. Conversation analytic procedures were used to uncover the practices through which participants in social interaction convey, understand, enact, and utilize emotions that are made relevant to the interaction. The central aim is to describe such practices and the contexts in which they are deployed, and to link emotions to the social actions that they perform or contribute to performing within situated activities. Conversation analytic work has generally not addressed emotions explicitly for reasons discussed in the dissertation, and a second aim was therefore to test the applicability of conversation analysis to emotion research, to theoretically bring together separate fields of inquiry, and to discuss advantages and limitations of a talk-in-interational approach to emotions. Furthermore, the analytic approach to emotions is restricted to displays and orientations that are made relevant by participants themselves.

Data consists of video recordings of six graduate school seminars at a large university in the United States, as well as interviews with all 22 participants. From the analyses, three themes emerged; “frustration”, “embarrassment”, and “enjoyment”, and within each, an assortment of practices for doing emotions were found. Frustration was primarily located in the context of violations of activity-specific turn-taking norms. Embarrassment was found to do multiple interactional work; for example, in contexts of repair, teasing, and culturally delicate matters. Enjoyment was found to be collaboratively pursued between and within institutional activities; for example, through reported speech dramatizations, utilization of activity-transitional environments, and playful ‘mock’ emotions. Timing of gaze aversion, laughter, and gestures were also found to be key to the display and perception of emotions.

The findings indicate that emotion displays can be viewed as transforming a situated action, opening up alternative trajectories for a sequences-in-progress, and also function as actions in themselves. Furthermore, it was concluded that conversation analysis is indeed a fruitful empirical route for understanding emotions and their role in social interaction.

Keywords: conversation analysis, emotions, social interaction, talk-in-interaction, institutional, embarrassment, frustration, enjoyment, academic seminars
Acknowledgements

My memories of working on this dissertation definitely center on those who have made this otherwise lonely journey a bearable, rich, and also pleasant experience. My interactions with these people have reminded me that life, as well as good scholarship, is primarily about participating in social interaction rather than writing about it. Similarly, this book on emotions as collaborative achievements in talk is also laced with traces of socio-emotional interactions with participants in the different conversational contexts of my life. Here, I would like to acknowledge their contributions.

My advisors, Moira Linnarud and Birgitta Johanson-Hidén, both inspired and encouraged me to pursue an academic career, and wholeheartedly supported me in combining my interests in language and social psychology in my dissertation. In the insecurities and doubts inherent in thesis work, Moira has been a haven of open-mindedness, reassurance, involvement and prompt feedback, and not once has she discouraged me from opting for this somewhat unconventional path in English linguistics. Birgitta, who introduced me to talk-in-interaction research, has always spurred me to see things from alternative vantage points and challenged me on ideas and concepts. In addition, she has attended to my well-being by gauging my blood pressure, serving me lunch, and arranging for countryside writing retreats. To both of you, thank you for generously sharing your experience, knowledge, and laughter with me.

For inspiration and advice in the initial stages of formulating the scope of the project, I am grateful to Sally Planalp, currently the University of Utah, for taking the time to discuss my ideas on the communication of emotions. I am also thankful for the opportunity to spend time as a visiting scholar at the School of Communication, San Diego State University, supported by grants from STINT and the ALFA scholarship fund. This was a crucial phase of the process and gave me a unique opportunity to collect data, do library research and interact with other scholars. I must especially thank Wayne Beach for guiding me toward my academic home in conversation analysis, and Peter Andersen, Brian Spitzberg and Patricia Geist-Martin, for making sure I could make the most of all that their academic environment had to offer. Furthermore, I must acknowledge the students and professors who allowed me to record their interactions. With your openness and interest, collecting data was an enjoyable process. Last but far from least, my deepest thanks to Tony Flores and Mike Meyer (and our feline ‘kids’) for giving me a home and a family of my own in San Diego. I could not have asked for a more supportive and loving environment for this endeavor.
A million thanks to Nikki Townsley, University of Colorado, for sharing this experience with me, for being a friend, mentor, co-author, and omnipresent discussant. You have contributed immensely to my professional development, and your friendship has proved that geographical distance is only a minor obstacle in remaining close on a daily basis. In addition, our panel at NCA 2002, where I was forced to articulate my ideas clearly in 6 minutes, was an important turning point.

My buddy and colleague Jeffrey Good, UCLA, deserves a world of praise for all the inspirational talks and e-talks about CA and social interaction, for prompt and insightful feedback on my analytic and transcriptional problems, for references, and also, for putting up with my endless doubts, complaints and whining about it all. You have been an invaluable resource to this project, and repeatedly renewed my faith in this approach when my own was weakened.

Many thanks to my linguist colleagues, Solveig Granath, Thorsten Schröter, Marika Kjellen-Simes and June Miliander, who have read each half-finished text I have produced, and offered valuable feedback at each seminar. Thanks also to Andreas Lind, my personal phonetics encyclopedia, for being such a resource when I had problems describing vocalities of talk, and for the supportive hugs. Furthermore, thanks to the participants in the course on the Sociology of Emotions under the lead of Bengt Starrin. The seminar had a significant impact on the writing of chapter 3 and one of the embarrassment analyses. I am also indebted to Marie Pettersson who has rescued me from many mental breakdowns when my computers (or I) suffered various technical breakdowns.

Anna Lindström, Uppsala University agreed to be my discussant at the final seminar, and I am very grateful to her for providing concise, constructive and supportive feedback in the final stages of preparing this text. Her trained eye helped me sharpen my argumentation and make the text more reader-friendly. Many thanks also to Thomas Denk, Political Sciences, Karlstad University, for being kind enough to read, offer rich commentary on, and discuss each new chapter draft I sent him, which helped me articulate my analytic perspective and findings more clearly.

My family and friends have, willingly or by sheer coercion, been highly involved in my work. My immediate family, Inger, Curt-Ove and Kristofer Sandlund, has contributed immensely, with love, life wisdom, financial aid, five-star service during my writing camps back home, and “express housekeeping service” from my Dad who came to Karlstad for the critical final stage of my writing. You have unconditionally supported me in any turn my life takes, and I am incredibly grateful. Thanks also to my ‘bonus parents’ Ulla and Leif Rosevall
for decompressing my stress level with love, food, and doggy-sitting. I collectively thank all my friends for all the fun, warmth and wisdom they bring – and I must particularly acknowledge the talented Anna Markström, who has been by my side for more than two decades and also did the layout of the dust jacket; Kristina Tryselius for her timely suggestions on chapter 4, for our writing camps, and for providing breathing space with great food, sports and conversation; Annacarin Granlund and Jenny Bengtsson for persistently checking up on me even though I was completely antisocial, and for celebrating each sub-goal I reached; Henrik Bergman, Per Kristensson and Jonas Matthing for always telling me that I’m good enough when I cannot see it, and Helena Hyttinen and Yvonne Friman for all the comforting walks, talks, laughter and commiseration.

Finally, thanks to my beloved Thomas Rosevall, for being You - my sanctuary, my home wherever we are, my best friend. For always loving, listening, and picking up the pieces – figuratively, but also very much literally. And lots of goodies to our dog Tussilago, for making sure Mommy got oxygen, exercise and furry love every day.

I dedicate this book to my grandmother Anna Öberg (1909-1994), an extraordinary woman of wit, courage, and joie de vivre, whose name deserves to be printed in much more spirited books than this one. I know she would have loved to be at the celebration for this; at the center of talk and social interaction, as always. I miss you.

I did it, Grandma!
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1. The Social Organization of Everyday Emotions

1.1 Interaction and emotions— an introduction

There is no doubt that emotions are an integral part of social interaction. We can become angry with a conversational partner and make it known that we are, or we can become deeply embarrassed when private information is revealed in the context of non-intimates. We can scream and shout, weep and laugh hysterically, and we can be shaky and anxious about speaking in front of a large group. We talk about the emotions of others; “he was jealous”, “she was furious”, “they both seemed nervous”, and “you don’t have to be so defensive” – yet, we often have problems labeling our own feelings at a given point.

In cases where we do not talk explicitly about our own and others’ feelings, we nevertheless have ways of bringing emotions into interactions with others, although we do not necessarily describe the feelings in words. We hear others laugh and distinguish between sarcastic laughter and genuinely thrilled laughter, we become skilled at recognizing certain conduct that signal to us that our partner is angry, happy or stressed, and we can make it known to others that we are displeased with some new information even if we verbally respond affirmatively. We may report to others that a mutual friend seemed “unhappy” because she replied unenthusiastically to questions about her life. However, at the time we made that inference, we had access to a wide variety of contextual resources that we cannot possibly account for in retrospect, since we perceive them almost automatically, as part of our social knowledge of how to interact.

Furthermore, emotions do things when we make them public in talk and interaction. When we raise our voice in anger in response to someone who has insulted us, we give the other person a new context from which to formulate a next action. Similarly, by laughing heartily at a joke, we display appreciation of the joke as well as of the joke-teller. It is this doing of emotions, in talk and interaction, that is the focus of the present dissertation.

Historically, the emotions have constituted a fuzzy and complicated domain for scholars, and for extensive periods of time, a politically incorrect topic of inquiry for academics. Emotions have been “ignored, denigrated, and cut off from the rest of social experience” in much of Western philosophy (Planalp, 1999:1) and emotions have been “suspected of subverting rather than
informing the intellect” (Margolis, 1992:13). Not only are emotions ‘intangible objects’ for systematic study, but finding a generic definition of what emotions ‘are’ has proven to be one of the major challenges facing social scientists. And, perhaps most importantly, why should we study emotions?

This dissertation is aimed at excavating one of the possible pathways toward understanding emotions in social interaction; that of emotions in situated talk. It is also concerned with bringing together separate fields of social scientific investigation; applied linguistics, micro-sociology and interdisciplinary emotion research, into application in the empirical realm of social interaction in the academic classroom. The work seeks to test an alternative approach to understanding emotions in social interaction, and to demonstrate the importance of considering emotions within the program of conversation analysis (CA). Finally, it also joins the body of CA work that has strived to bring the perspective of a “participant’s syntax” (Lerner, 1991:455) to the domain of linguistic inquiry. In this chapter, the aims, the theoretical and methodological frameworks and the empirical data are briefly introduced. Finally, a preview of the chapters in this book is offered.

1.2 Aims, scope and delimitations

The present work seeks integrate interdisciplinary work on emotions, social action, and language-in-use, and to contribute to CA, interactional sociolinguistics and emotion research. The rationale behind the study lies in gaps located in the separate areas of inquiry. On the one hand, social scientific research on emotions has generally not examined how emotions are organized in mundane talk-in-interaction. Conversation analytic work on the other has not addressed emotions as a topic of inquiry in itself. An integration of the two areas, if successful, could therefore constitute a valuable contribution to both.

Aside of the research area merger, the central aim of the present work was to learn more about how emotions are organized in talk-in-interaction. More specifically, the study sets out to describe, understand and explicate how everyday emotions are embedded in sequences of talk-in-interaction, and to unearth the methods that interactants utilize for doing and analyzing emotions made socially available. The research question, then, is two-fold. Firstly, can these separate fields of inquiry be fruitfully integrated by applying CA to emotions in social interaction? Secondly, how are emotions socially organized in talk and embodied practices?

The scope of the study is delimited to the observable conduct of participants in situ, and no claims as to the emotions of participants before or
after the actual interactions will be made, or about the intensity of emotional experience for individual actors. Rather, the analytic procedures set out to demonstrate how interactants themselves display orientations to emotions that in some way become relevant to the ongoing talk. In other words, the study is concerned with how people make available and negotiate emotions in social interaction, in talk and embodied actions, within situated activities. The analytic focus lies in detailed unpacking of each instance examined. Each interaction is considered to have its own logic to be unearthed through rigorous examination of video-recordings transcripts, and global generalizability is not central.

The empirical application for the study is classroom talk, recorded at graduate seminars in the United States. However, comprehensive evaluations of academic seminars in general lie outside the scope of the study. Instead, the study focuses on how participants in these particular seminars socially organize emotions. In essence, this is first and foremost a study of emotions in talk that seeks to identify and understand the minute components of emotions, language use, and embodied conduct, and the ways in which these are utilized and analyzed by participants in the turn-by-turn organization of social life. The two central frameworks that are to be integrated in this work; conversation analysis and emotions in social interaction, will next be briefly introduced.

1.3 The area - emotions and social interaction

For extensive periods of time, the dichotomization of emotion and reason in Western cultures and the precedence given to the latter pushed human emotions to the back alleys of both academic interest and social life. However, in recent years, scholars have realized the importance of emotion research in understanding all forms of social behavior. Present-day approaches to emotions in the social sciences are diverse, and range from evolutionary perspectives to psychobiological, cognitive, and culturally oriented views, among others.

The development of the social constructionist paradigm (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Gergen, 1999) also gave rise to a social constructionist view of emotions. Whereas extreme constructionists view emotions as sociocultural products alone, most contemporary scholars agree that they are products of physiological arousal and sociocultural processes (Oatley, 1992; Whalen & Zimmerman, 1998). The approach emphasizes the role of language and culture prescriptions in the construction of human experience, including emotions. We learn rules for “appropriate” emotion appraisal and expression, and these rules govern our “emotional performances” in a given situation. Rather than viewing
emotions as ‘passions’ that we are overcome by, constructionists often view emotions as actions for accomplishing individual and interpersonal goals (Averill, 1980). Similarly, Gergen (1999:132) points out that “We gain much by replacing the image of private “feelings” with public action; it’s not that we have emotions, a thought, or a memory so much as we do them”.

Despite the interest in the social construction of emotions, where language, social interaction and social actions have a theoretically central place, very little attention has been given to detailed examination of emotions in naturally occurring interactions. We still have limited knowledge of how people, in Gergen’s terms, do emotions. In his work on the organization of face-to-face interaction, Goffman (1967:23) mentions that “emotions function as moves, and fit so precisely into the logic of the ritual game that it would seem difficult to understand them without it”, but his work did not offer a method for examining emotions in natural interactions. The fundamental level of emotional organization in everyday talk remains a relatively underdeveloped area of constructionist research, partly because the constructionist approach lacks a systematic empirical method for studying emotions in ongoing social interaction.

Within linguistics, and particularly within the area of syntax, emotions have not generally been ascribed any systematic value (Fiehler, 2002). With some exceptions (e.g. Ochs & Schieffelin, 1989), linguistic contributions to emotion research have centered on the semantics of emotion concepts (e.g. Kövesecs, 1990; Wierzbicka, 1992), and the relationship between language and emotions in conversation has remained a relatively untouched area in linguistics. The English language has around 400 words describing emotions (Harré, 1986:6). Yet, people formulate candidate understandings of the emotional state of others even if these others did not use any emotion words (Bedford, 1986), and we display and understand strong affective stance even when this stance has not been defined by words (Goodwin & Goodwin, 2000).

What, then, are the resources and methods of inference people use to do and analyze emotions in social interaction, and how can conversation analysis contribute to unearthing them? To preview the analytic approach (detailed in chapters 2 and 3) I will briefly introduce conversation analysis (CA) here.

1.4 The method - conversation analysis

As mentioned above, the present study also seeks to be an application of conversation analysis (e.g. Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson, 1974; Goodwin & Heritage, 1990; ten Have, 1999) to the area of emotions. Conversation analysis
(CA) is an established approach to studying human interaction, and is applied across disciplines such as sociology, linguistics, anthropology, communication, and social psychology. A central thesis for conversation analytic research is the close inspection of recordings and transcripts of naturally occurring conversational interaction. Talk is primarily viewed as social action rather than as a means of communication, that is, conversation analysts are interested in the ways in which people accomplish various social activities, goals and tasks, although the units of analyses; the smallest cells of language-in-use and embodied action, may appear to be primarily a linguistic enterprise.

CA centers on the notion of talk-in-interaction as orderly, and the analyst’s task is to describe and interpret people’s methods for organizing social interaction. Over the last three decades, numerous CA studies have described a variety of practices that people utilize to perform various social roles, to accomplish social goals, and to continuously update understandings of the ongoing talk. The heart of conversational interaction can be described as follows (Heritage, 1984a:259):

“[...] conversational interaction is structured by an organization of action which is implemented on a turn-by-turn basis. By means of this organization, a context of publicly displayed and continuously up-dated intersubjective understandings is systematically sustained” (emphasis in original).

This means that each new turn builds on aspects of prior talk, and through the production of a new turn, speakers exhibit their understanding of the state of talk. Since these understandings are made publicly available, they are also available for scientific study. The conversation analytic approach allows for repeated and fine-grained examination of the details of interactional organization that display participants’ orientations to contingencies of social encounters. Next, some central aspects of how emotions are defined and approached in the present work are specified.

**1.5 Analytic delimitations regarding emotions and social actions**

In light of the introduction of emotion research and CA, a few points regarding the conceptual apparatus and analytic scope of the present study are necessary.
1.5.1 Everyday emotions

The views regarding affect versus emotions differ in the literature. Guerrero, Andersen & Trost (1998:5) mention that ‘affect’ can be defined as simply the positive or negative valence of emotional experience. The scholars for whom the distinction between affect and emotions is central are generally concerned with the inner experiences of participants (for example, in psychology). ‘Emotions’ then refers to “internal mental states that are focused primarily on affect” (Ortony, Close & Foss, 1987:325).

However, in most of the sociological and social constructionist literature, the term ‘emotions’ has precedence over affect, and the reasons behind the general preference for “emotions” over “affect” in the present work, even though they could be used interchangeably without altering the analytic scope, are three-fold. Firstly, since the aim of the study does not go beyond what is made publicly available between interactants, no stand regarding specific, universal, or individual psychological or physiological experiences needs to be taken in defining ‘emotions’. Therefore, ‘emotions’ here does not only denote particular inner states defined in the psychological and psychobiological literature, such as fear or anger. Secondly, since the analyses cover any aspect of emotions that becomes relevant to the interaction, including trembling, blushing and other involuntary or voluntary embodied actions, the term ‘emotions’ covers more than just a positive or negative valence of an individual’s experience. Thirdly, the general preference of emotions over affect is paradigmatically oriented. Since one aim of the study was to integrate research on emotions with the conversation analytic approach, it was important that the conceptual apparatus spoke to these audiences. Despite differences as to how emotions are approached in the social sciences, ‘emotions’ seemed to resonate with a wider audience. Analytically, however, ‘emotions’ and ‘affect’ could be used interchangeably in this study, since it concerns observable conduct of people where emotions are somehow made relevant; regardless of whether they are actually ‘felt’ by an individual or not.

Secondly, the phrase everyday emotions was chosen for this text. With everyday emotions, the analytic scope goes beyond so-called basic emotions (see ch. 3) and to any orientation to affect that participants exhibit in mundane social interaction. Rather than dealing with a particular set of emotions or with particularly strong affective states, everyday emotions concern the mundane negotiation of the social aspect of emotions in interactions with others, that is, the type of affect that we negotiate on a daily basis, in any interaction. This
involves not only displays of emotion, but also strategies for avoiding emotions
and for utilizing emotions as interactional resources.

In the type of materials examined here; academic classroom interactions,
it could be expected that students and professors would not verbalize that they
are “elated”, “frustrated”, “ashamed” or “sad” in the midst of activities during
which certain feelings are experienced. Rather, everyday emotions are likely to
be exhibited in the how’s of turn construction and organization, sequence
trajectories, gestures, gaze, laughter, and characteristics of vocal speech delivery
within the realm of situated activity. This is not to say that academic interaction
restricts the type of emotions that can be experienced or made relevant.
Hypothetically speaking, grief from having lost a loved one can be made
relevant in academic interaction, just as can anger, hope, fear, and contempt.
Human social interaction makes possible a wide variety of emotional experience
and expression in any interaction between people. Instead, it is about the
emotions that we make publicly available, across an assortment of social
actions, for co-interactants to analyze and respond to. It can be suspected that
these interactions will not be charged with extremely strong emotions such as
hysteria, shock, extreme happiness of grief. This does not mean that they are
unemotional. The relatively smooth flow of everyday interaction is not devoid
of emotion, as will be demonstrated in chapters to follow. It is the local
organization of everyday emotions, and the social practices deployed by
interactants that form the center of the analytic endeavor in the present study.

The selection of emotions examined here has also been guided by my
gradual familiarization with the data collected. In formulating the original aim
for my doctoral dissertation, I had no idea as to which these emotions would
be, and with data from an emergency room, a psychotherapy session, a
conversation between best friends, a heated political debate, or the locker room
after a soccer game, the thematic division could have been entirely different.
Therefore, the emotions examined in this dissertation are emotions that
interactants in this corpus of data made relevant to their talk and conduct.

1.5.2 Emotions and/as social actions

The choice to place emotions up front in this study rather than the social
actions they perform or contribute to performing, is a deliberate one, and
emerged from the aim to test the applicability of conversation analysis in
studying emotions. Particularly within interaction research based in sociology,
there is a strong grounding in describing social actions that members perform,
and this has probably been the central reason for why emotions have remained relatively understudied, at least explicitly, within these approaches.

However, since the aim of the study included empirical explorations of the possibilities and limitations of this approach to emotions, emotion themes rather than action themes guide the presentation of findings. Consequently, the focus lies in unearthing the various social actions that are found in the context of emotions, and in examining whether emotion displays and orientations in themselves can be viewed as social actions or as contributing to performing other social actions. At first glance, this may appear a risky enterprise to conversation analysts, but in fact, the difference is strategic rather than analytical and lies first and foremost in the second aim of bringing together separate areas of investigation. It is still social actions that are examined, only in the specific context of emotions.

1.6 Rationale behind book outline and a preview of chapters

Writing a monograph involves the negotiation of different constraints, and a brief rationale behind the organization of chapters in this book may be useful.

Most conversation analytic work up to now has been published as journal articles or chapters in anthologies, and not many monographs have been written. The journal articles often begin with presentation of data that supports the main argument, and relevant previous research is then discussed alongside the analyses. The guiding principle is that as an analyst, you can not pre-determine which pieces of previous research that will prove relevant until you have analyzed your own material, as described below by ten Have (1999):

“The usual CA format does not include a required ‘review of the literature’ section. Some papers do have such a section, however, sometimes at the request of a more conventionally oriented editor. A more usual way to refer to published sources is to do so at the moment it is needed to support the argument that is being developed. Such references may support a concept being used, suggest a pattern that has been proposed by another researcher, or even provide a piece of data quoted from the source referred to. […] The function of the literature is, therefore, different from the one in other types of social science research” (ten Have, 1999:205).

The format of dissertations for talk-in-interaction work presents a challenge, as it becomes problematic to have a review of literature section without having it appear as if theoretical constructs are ‘imported’ into the empirical data as hypotheses or pre-set categorizations. In the case of this particular dissertation,
another problem was to determine what could be considered ‘relevant’ literature, since very little conversation analytic or emotion research has approached emotions from the vantage point of participants’ orientations in ongoing talk-in-interaction.

However, this study seeks to be both an application of conversation analysis to emotion research and an addition to the literature that has brought forth the benefits of analyzing language from the perspective of interactants in linguistic research. In light of these matters, the review of literature was designed to suit the purposes of integrating the different perspectives. The two literature exploration chapters are designed as follows:

Chapter 2 is to be read as a review of the theoretical and methodological approach that has guided the analytic process in this dissertation. Talk-in-interaction research is situated in relation to other discourse analytic approaches, and the domains of application of CA are discussed. The roots of CA in relation to developments in related disciplines are reviewed, with particular attention to its main influences; Harold Garfinkel’s program of ethnomethodology, the work on social interaction of Erving Goffman, and the seminal work of Harvey Sacks, Emmanuel Schegloff and their colleagues. Basic assumptions about social interaction, and methodological implications, are explicated. Finally, the relevance of conversation analytic research to linguistics is brought forth. In terms of the empirical study, chapter 2 may appear detached from the analyses since it is concerned with fundamental principles of this type of research. Again, this set-up is deliberate, since an understanding of the CA approach, in itself and in relation to emotion research, is necessary in order to realize the theoretical aim of integrating fields of inquiry.

Chapter 3 takes a different approach to previous research. Instead of accounting for one particular approach that is applied to the empirical material, chapter 3 seeks to place the current approach to emotions within social scientific research on emotions. This is accomplished in three steps: an overview of perspectives on emotions, an account of how to identify emotions in interaction, primarily based on literature from the communication discipline, and finally, a review of conversation analytic work that has explicitly or implicitly dealt with emotions in talk-in-interaction. Limitations and potential of a talk-in-interactional approach to emotions are also discussed.

Chapter 4 deals with the integration of perspectives, its implications for designing the empirical study, and the specific methodological choices, particularly the different sets of data used, the data collection, transcription
procedures, and the process of working with data. The emergence of the three analytic themes is also detailed.

Chapters 5 to 7 present the findings, and each chapter deals with an emotion-relevant theme. Chapter 5 deals with the social construction and management of ‘negative emotions’; in this particular case, ‘frustration’ and ‘defensiveness’ as interactional achievements. The four fragments examined are instances of the giving and receipt of verbal feedback in the academic seminar. Methodological issues with using self-report data versus recordings of authentic interaction are also discussed. Chapter 6 has bearing on Goffman’s (1967) claim that embarrassment is a constant threat in all social interaction, and moments where embarrassment or the threat of embarrassment is managed interactionally are examined. Chapter 7 deals with positive emotions; in particular, the interactional pursuit of ‘enjoyment’.

Chapter 8 summarizes the findings and seeks to bring the lessons from this study into a discussion of theoretical and methodological implications. The contributions made to linguistics, conversation analysis, and emotion research are outlined and discussed. Finally, some words of caution and encouragement for future research on emotions within situated activities are offered.

1.7 Feeling by Doing – some concluding introductory comments

Lastly, I hope that the title of this dissertation, “Feeling by Doing – the Social Organization of Everyday Emotions in Academic Talk-in-Interaction” has acquired deepened meaning. The feeling represents our everyday terming of emotions as ‘feelings’, as well as the present progressive aspect of the verb ‘feel’, which emphasizes the in-progress nature of interactional organization. Similarly, the doing has dual function. It serves to underpin emotions as actions, as something we ‘do’, while it also stresses the fluctuating and continuously evolving aspect of social actions-in-progress. Finally, the sub-heading refers to the way in which emotions are organized in the mundane and everyday achievement of social life; in this case, in the particular setting of six graduate seminars in the United States. By way of summary, this is a book about some of the ways in which emotions can be constructed, managed, utilized, and understood by participants in academic seminar talk-in-interaction – the ways in which we socially construct and organize emotions by doing them in talk and embodied action.
Chapter 2

2. Talk-in-Interaction - The Organization of Social Encounters

2.1 The study of talk in interaction

Talk is at the core of human activities. It is in and through language and actions in social interaction that we manage relationships, make decisions, accomplish political change, negotiate meaning, and sustain social order, and yet, the serious scholarly interest in the social world as constructed within and by face-to-face interactions did not gain any firm empirical ground until the 1960s. Today, research on social interaction is conducted by sociologists, linguists, social psychologists, communication scholars, and anthropologists; naturally, with varying research interests and methodological approaches.

What, then, can we learn from studying talk and actions in interaction, and what resources should be used by the analyst in doing so? Consider the following excerpt from an interaction between a doctor and the parents of a child with a heart condition:

[Silverman 1987:58]

1 Dr: Hm (2.0) the the reason for doing the test is
2 I mean I'm 99 per cent certain that all
3 she's got is a ductus
4 F: Hm hm
5 M: I see
6 Dr: However the time to find out that we're
7 wrong is not when she's on the operating
8 table

Note that in line 2, the doctor uses the first person pronoun (I'm 99 per cent certain), while in line 6, he shifts to "we". The shift here is not just a coincidence, as evidenced from many conversations of this type where the preference for using "we" instead of "I". The doctor can use this lexical change to avoid saying "the time to find out that I am wrong", and thus also avoid to openly "raise the possibility of his being personally responsible for a clinical
error" (Drew & Heritage 1992:31). Based on this excerpt and similar instances, analysts have learned that how participants opt to use a certain pronoun can be related to the type of interaction, that is, interactions where participants orient to some institutional role, in this case, that of a physician and that of mother and father of a child in that physician's care.

The example shows one way in which talk-in-interactionists analyze ordinary and institutional conversations and study how social order 'gets done' by participants in interaction. However, lexical aspects are only one of many features of interaction studied in this line of research. Consider also the following excerpt from a phone call placed to an emergency hotline:

[Sacks, 1992:76]

A: This is Mr. Smith. May I help you?
B: Well I don't know. My brother suggested that I call you.
A: I see, well he must have had some reason for making the suggestion. Has there been some personal problem or difficulty that you’re experiencing?
B: Yes, I just lost my wife and I feel awfully depressed.

The excerpt above illustrates a feature of conversational contributions often referred to as accountable actions; in this case specifically, the reason-for-a-call (Sacks, 1992:773; ten Have, 1999:17). What this means for the interactants above is that calling someone you are not on an intimate basis with, for example, an official of some kind, means that on the first possible opportunity to talk after greetings, the caller should appropriately provide a reason for the call. The call itself, to a non-intimate, is thus an accountable action that needs to be justified. In a call between friends or family members who speak on the phone on a daily basis, the 'slot' where the reason for the call is appropriately and relevantly occasioned usually comes later, if at all, in the call. The reason for a call can also be used as a pre-closing of a phone conversation ('well, I just felt like chatting'), and then it preannounces the closing of the call. In this example, the analysis lies on the level of turn components and placement, and the analysis concerns the way in which participants seem to 'know' that this is an accountable action.

In the third example I will give here, the authors examine something beyond particular words or sequences. The excerpt is taken from an emergency call that in many ways 'failed', and in which the outcome was very fateful; because of an argument between the call taker and the caller-for-help, the
ambulance was delayed and the patient was already dead at the time of its arrival. The excerpt below illustrates a short sequence from the longer phone interaction (Whalen, Zimmerman & Whalen, 1988:337-38). N is the nurse-dispatcher, and C is the caller.

[from Dallas FD/B1 53-78]

53 N: How old is this person?
54 C: She is sixty years old.
55 (1.1)
56 N: Where is she now?
57 (0.3)
58 C: She is in thuh bedroom right now
59 (0.4)
60 N: May I speak with her please?
61 C: No you can't she's (ch-) she's (.) seems like she's incoherent.
62 (0.5)
63 N: Why is she incoherent?
64 C: How thuh hell do I: know
65 (.)
66 N: Sir, don't curse me
67 (.)
68 C: Well I don't care, you- ya'stupid ass
69 (anit-) questions you're asking
70 (3.0)
72 C: Gimme someone that knows what they're doin'
73 why don't you just send an ambulance out here?
74 (0.6)
75 N: Sir, we only come out on life threatening
emerg[encies, okay?]
77 C: [Well this is life threatening
emerg[ency=
((cont.))}
The 'case' caused by this conversation received lots of attention in the media, where the recurrent question was "How is it possible that that sort of thing can happen?" (Whalen et al., 1998:339), meaning, how this particular emergency call conversation could go so fatally wrong that it may have caused an unnecessary death. In their analysis of the full recording, the authors were able to provide an answer to that question: the interaction 'failed' because of a number of utterances achieved another meaning than they intended to because of their sequential placement and their relation to prior utterances. Here, I find it necessary to quote the authors at some length:

It is the sequential context within which words are produced and the local, interactional treatment they thereby receive that is crucial for whatever status and consequences they come to have. In this case, the caller's informings failed as reports of priority symptoms because they were for the most part embedded/placed in sequential positions where they did the work of, or were tied to, disputing and opposing (or were so heard and treated by co-participants). Moreover, we have shown how the emergence and preservation of this dispute, and the consequent termination of the call without the dispatch of an ambulance, was not the responsibility of any one individual. Conversation, including calls to emergency numbers, is locally organized. Each successive turn taken by a participant in the talk leading up to the dispute and during the dispute afforded an opportunity to either let stand or repair any "virtual offenses", and to either escalate or downgrade the conflict, there being tools available to do each (1998:358).

The three examples above illustrate three of the levels at which talk-in-interaction research operates; the lexical level, the sequential level, and a level of social relations and epistemology. Research on language in social interaction is today practiced in different disciplines, with different methodologies and different origins. Although Conversation Analysis (CA), the approach underlying the present dissertation, developed as an offspring to traditional sociology, concurrent developments in other fields gave the conversation analysts models of comparison, and contributed to acceptance, application and development of interaction research in other areas, for example, linguistics.

One of the aims of the present work is to theoretically bring together separate fields of inquiry, mainly, conversation analysis and research on emotions in social interaction. In order to demonstrate the relevance of interactional work on emotions, and to elucidate theoretical and methodological convergences and divergences, this chapter is to be read as a review of the origins, development, foundations, methodology, and areas of application of conversation analytic work. In chapter 3, then, emotion research is introduced and reviewed, and finally, theoretical and methodological connections between
the two frameworks relevant for the present study are made. As mentioned in chapter 1, although the present chapter may seem detached from the actual empirical study, the foundations of this approach are a necessary prerequisite for understanding the relation to emotion research proposed here, and for understanding the historical hesitation toward tackling emotions in the conversation analytic literature. This review will begin with a sketch of the academic scene in the social sciences and humanities in the 1960s, when studies using talk-in-interaction as primary data began taking shape.

2.2 Developments in the 1960s

Contemporary advances in several disciplines facilitated the development of Conversation Analysis and strengthened the position of scholars interested in people’s everyday production of language and actions in interaction. Within linguistics, the prevailing focus on language as an abstract system of rules analyzable as autonomous from their social context (de Saussure, 1916; Chomsky, 1957) was loosening up, and the interest in the actual application of such abstract rules (parole, in de Saussure’s own terminology), was increasing. Initially, the presumably disorderly world of parole, (or later, the similar concept of performance in Chomskyan terms) seemed to have little to offer linguists, who at the time considered that the proper object of study was the built-in capacity for language; the lexicon, grammar and phonology within each individual (Robins, 1967). An important step toward the study of language in social contexts was the developments in sociolinguistics, where linguists were presented with a new range of challenges for considering the contextual influences on language production. One such example was Labov’s work on systematic phonemic variation in ‘casual’ versus ‘careful’ speech contexts (Labov, 1966). Sociolinguists and social anthropologists discovered mutual interests in the social factors affecting speech, and while the anthropologists began showing serious interest in language and communication data in ethnographic studies of cultures, linguists were realizing that many of their central questions could not be resolved without information of the social contexts for verbal communication (Gumperz & Hymes, 1972). Gumperz and Hymes both contributed greatly to the discussion on contextualization of speech and language; Hymes in his development of an ethnography of speaking (1972) and Gumperz (1982) with his demonstrations of how any aspect of linguistic behavior can function as a contextualization cue; a signal to listeners as to which aspects of the context are made relevant.
Furthermore, the development of speech act theory within pragmatics and language philosophy recognized units of speech as action, the meaning, understanding and actions that were accomplished by streams of speech. The intersection between linguistic and sociological interests that speech act theory offered was an important development toward an empirically grounded theory for studying the organization of social action (Drew & Heritage, 1992). Austin (1962), followed by Searle (1969), and later, Labov and Fanshel (1977) and D’Andrade and Wish (1985) continued to work on the power of speech in accomplishing action, also in different social and cultural contexts for each act. Another speech act offspring with a more explicit interest in the syntax of interaction was that brought forth by linguists Sinclair and Coulthard (1975). Their model was described in terms of exchange structures in classroom interaction, and was formalistic in character, seeking to uncover the well-formed ‘grammar of action’ in speech. Also, in psychology, the work of Bales\(^1\) (1950) was an important contemporary methodological contribution in that he used the recently available tape recording techniques and developed a category system for analyzing interaction-in-progress.

Finally, in sociology, the work of Erving Goffman (e.g. Goffman, 1967) had paved the way for a new generation of scholars who were dissatisfied with current models of sociological inquiry and were searching for an empirically grounded mode of investigating Goffman’s insights (ten Have, 1999). Goffman’s ideas also inspired empirical elaboration in several other disciplines, for example, Tannen and Wallat’s (1987) linguistic analyses of how speakers manage to shift between different registers (i.e. Goffman’s concept of ‘frame’ given linguistic valence). Last, and particularly important for the development of Conversation Analysis, was the sociologist Harold Garfinkel, who was developing a new research agenda in sociology called ethnomethodology. The program centered on how members of a certain community, through communication, construct and re-construct their social reality on the basis of commonsense knowledge and practical reasoning (Garfinkel, 1967).

Thus, even though there were some differences and disagreements between the different advances, the developments in different disciplines between the 1950s up to the early 1970s were contributing to the growing interest in how people manage their everyday activities through language in social interaction. I will return to some of the influential developments below.

\(^1\) Interaction Process Analysis (Bales, 1950).
2.3 The study of talk: discourse analysis and/or talk-in-interaction

Before following the development of conversation analysis and its current basic assumptions, I will pause briefly at the larger empirical domain of using talk as primary data, since the optional pathways to take from this vantage point are almost infinite. I will sort out the objectives behind turning to talk in understanding social structures and action, and clarify some conceptual tools necessary in understanding the different takes on talk and interaction. In the different disciplines using natural interaction data, there are, naturally, different reasons for studying talk, as well as different analytic points of departure. Although the various developments mentioned above brought forth an acceptance of interaction data as worth investigating in its own right, there are some essential differences in what one wants to accomplish by studying talk.

2.3.1 The analysis of spoken discourse –conceptual ambiguities

A general term that is often applied to a plethora of research using coherent sequences of language in use as primary data is discourse analysis. It is safe to say that the lexical term for what comprises ‘discourse’ includes a wide range of theoretical and methodological approaches, and the concept is vague. At the most basic level, and particularly within linguistics, discourse is often defined as:

Language above the sentence or above the clause” (Stubbs, 1983:1).

Finding this definition far too vague, some have proceeded to a more nuanced core definition, for example, the following:

The analysis of discourse is, necessarily, the analysis of language in use. As such, it cannot be restricted to the description of linguistic forms independent of the purposes or functions which these forms are designed to serve in human affairs (Brown & Yule, 1983:1).

Moving even farther away from discourse as purely linguistic structures, a third statement includes language-in-use as a form of action:

Discourse is for me more than just language use: it is language use, whether speech or writing, seen as a type of social practice (Fairclough, 1992: 28).
If we take Stubbs’s definition as representing one extreme, the theoretical influences of Michel Foucault on discourse analysis and its connection to ideology can be placed on the other:

Instead of gradually reducing the rather fluctuating meaning of the word ‘discourse’, I believe I have in fact added to its meanings: treating it sometimes as the general domain of all statements, sometimes as an individualizable group of statements, and sometimes as regulated practice that accounts for a number of statements. (Foucault, 1972, cited in Jaworski & Coupland, 1999:2).

Although different in their approach to discourse data, the two latter statements can be separated from the approaches treated in this dissertation in that they both hold a critical view toward discourse(s). These types of discourse analysis have a socially engaged and political agenda for deconstructing hidden power relations, providing critical commentary and promoting engagement and action for change (see, for example, Jaworski & Coupland, 1999; Willig, 1999; Winther-Jörgensen & Philips, 1999) and treat discourse as a very broad domain of inquiry. In this type of scholarship, the ‘discourse of heterosexuality in the United States’, is a possible topic, and the methodologies used vary from analysis of written documentation to interview narratives. The critical approaches include written and spoken media, and differ from the interactionist traditions in the critical versus descriptive approach to discursive manifestations.

The purpose of the descriptive approaches is, as implied by the term, to describe and understand discourse as is, whereas the critical approaches have a further aim of uncovering hidden power structures, injustices or oppression embedded in language use. The critical approaches, and the approaches dealing with multiple levels of discourse, have little in common with the interactional perspectives, and these will not be dealt with in this dissertation.

2.3.2 Interactional approaches

After making this first delimitation, there are still a number of different discourse analytic perspectives dealing with 1) talk as data, and 2) description and understanding of structural and functional procedures in social interaction. Among these are, for example, speech act theory, interactional sociolinguistics, Conversation Analysis (CA), and Discourse Analysis (DA), although all these have different disciplinary origins (in given order, pragmatics/the philosophy of language, sociolinguistics/anthropology, sociology/ethnomethodology, and linguistics) and are based on different assumptions about discourse, interaction,
and communication. There are, naturally, many ways of distinguishing them from one another. Any extensive coverage of these is not relevant here; instead, some important differences will be dealt with in the discussion of CA below².

However, in very few studies based on conversation analytic or talk-in-interaction approaches is the term ‘discourse’ or ‘discourse analysis’ actually used. Although it can be said that analysis of language in social interaction falls within the wide scope of discourse analysis, or rather, the analysis of discourse, very few talk-in-interactionists refer to themselves as discourse analysts. This distinction lies in the sole focus on naturally occurring interaction data, since the wider concept of discourse analysis includes other forms of language use. It is not discourse and its meanings per se that is the focus; it is studying the orderliness of social conduct and sense-making processes between interactants within each specific context. Within the scope of talk-in-interaction research, the convergence between different methodologies lies in the focus on the organization of language and embodied conduct as vehicles of social action. Social interaction is a general description of how people engage in social activities and negotiate social relationships, through talk and non-vocal action.

Conversation analysis is thus one out of several approaches studying talk in social interaction; talk situated in the local context (both the broader social context, for example, a family dinner or a medical consultation, and the local interactional context, the sequentiality of interaction) in which it occurs. The term talk-in-interaction, proposed by Schegloff (1987a), is today established in reference to both conversation analysis and other interactional approaches, and most conversation analysts agree that the term conversation is a misnomer, since it falsely indicates that it is only the art of conversing together, and not also performing all sorts of institution-related activities with a wide range of linguistic and non-linguistic resources (Pomerantz & Fehr, 1997). However, the name Conversation Analysis, or CA, is firmly established as a particular form of interaction research, and in this dissertation, talk-in-interaction will refer to all work within the study of naturally occurring talk and interaction (for example, interactional sociolinguistics), whereas ‘conversation’ will only be used in the restricted sense of CA work. This is not to say that CA today is a homogenous approach, or that the only ‘real’ CA work is the work that has originated from Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson and colleagues. Today, CA’s approach to language in social interaction is found in many variants of conversation analysis, and rather than being defined as Conversation Analysis, much current work is

² For extensive comparison of these different approaches, see Schiffrin (1994) and also Drew & Heritage (1992).
instead identified as rigorous study of human interaction, within sociolinguistics, linguistic anthropology and communication, to name a few. For the sake of simplicity, however, “conversation analysis” will henceforth be used in this text to refer to the type of work on talk and actions that deals with participants’ orientations in ongoing talk-in-interaction.

Thus, although language in social interaction research is often grouped under the umbrella of discourse analysis, the convergence between the different talk-in-interaction approaches lies in the focus on describing and understanding how people go about their daily business and social activities in talk and embodied action in interaction, how such practices reflect broader social structures, and they all operate on the fine details of turns and sequences. The following sections will further describe conversation analysis, with some reference to other approaches to talk in interaction.

2.4 Background of CA: The legacy of Goffman, Garfinkel and Sacks

Efforts to provide a chronological presentation of influences on and development of conversation analysis will inevitably fail, since so much was happening in sociology, linguistics, language philosophy, and other disciplines in the early 1960s. Some developments were parallel, others directly influential through collaboration between scholars, and yet others were more subtle influences of the current time. The purpose of this section, however, is only to provide an introduction to the theory and method of conversation analysis as an approach to social organization, by sketching some of the major influences that pulled the early analysts toward its current directions. Although CA today is not a homogenous approach, the core ideas and concepts are better understood in relation to a few of the early influences. Below, I will discuss the sociological roots of CA through the lenses of Goffman’s interaction order, Garfinkel’s ethnomethodology, and Sacks’ lectures on conversation.

2.4.1 Goffman’s spadework

In many of the accounts of the historical roots of conversation analysis, Erving Goffman is almost always mentioned as a contemporary influence; however, often only mentioned in passing and when noting that Harvey Sacks and Emmanuel Schegloff, two of the central scholars in developing CA, were students of Goffman’s (e.g. Drew & Heritage, 1992; ten Have, 1999; Drew,
what did these influences consist of? This section is not to be read as a comprehensive review of Goffman’s ideas, for example, the dramaturgic perspective on social behavior (Goffman, 1959) for which Goffman perhaps is most widely known, and neither will I in detail account for the Goffmanian approach in relation to other dominant texts, for example, those of Durkheim (see e.g. Collins, 1988). Instead, I have selected a few themes and will account for their direct relevance for conversation analytic work with the purpose of providing a background for the rise of CA in the 1960s.

In his now classic sociological writings, Goffman (e.g. 1959; 1963; 1967; 1974), had begun sketching his theories of the fundamentals of social life in his rich descriptions of ordinary everyday interactions. Goffman’s focus on mundane face-to-face transactions as the primary site for sociological inquiry was new even though his methods of investigation were often unsystematic observations and field notes (Manning, 1992), and he often used invented examples and anecdotes to illustrate his ideas (Silverman, 1998). To contemporary sociologists, Goffman’s writings were sometimes dismissed as purely descriptive, but Goffman himself was determined to bring forth this descriptiveness; as Schegloff notes, to “get ordinary behavior descriptively right” (Schegloff, 1988:90). According to Schegloff, Goffman

“(…) let us see – those who would see – that there were investigable things here, and important ones; and that it was possible to get an uncanny grasp of the head and the heart of sociability by examining these occurrences.”

For someone as widely cited as Goffman, there is a surprising absence of a distinct Goffmanian paradigm of followers in his footsteps. Drew & Wootton (1988) attribute part of this absence to Goffman’s evasiveness in accounting for his research strategies, his shifting conceptual distinctions across his different writings, and the presentation of his findings; often, he (consciously) did not make clear his influences, his methodologies, or his empirical material, and thus made it difficult for followers to re-inspect his propositions (1988:2). Also, his collected writings reveal a shifting focus on the individual (for example, his texts on face work and embarrassment) versus the social machinery (for example, the program of frame analysis from 1974) and caused some conceptual dilemmas for psychology on the one hand and sociology on the other. Especially his early writings had the 'self' and the moral ritual in focus, as opposed to the system of interaction, despite the fact that he claimed to be

3 E.g. The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life (1959), Asylums (1961), Stigma (1963)
mostly interested in the 'traffic of behavior' as opposed to the 'drivers and their psychology' (Schegloff, 1988:94). But even though the direct alignment with Goffman's legacy is difficult to pinpoint in traditions associated with his work, many of his ideas and concepts continue to surface in current research into social life, and gave the early conversation analysts an impetus to work from.

First of all, what was an essential starting point for the development of CA was, as mentioned above, Goffman's determination in recognizing talk and interaction as a fruitful site in its own right for studying social behavior and action. Goffman called for a new agenda in sociological research, and stated that the “proper study of interaction is not the individual and his psychology, but rather the syntactical relations among the acts of different persons mutually present to one another” (Goffman, 1967:2). A much cited quote from the same introduction proposes that sociologists should study “Not, then, men and their moments. Rather moments and their men” (1967:3). What Goffman was getting at was the order of social life in the form of collective efforts to maintain it; he wanted to show how people's everyday understanding of situations shape them and make them functional. Secondly, he viewed interaction as a larger class, where 'conversation' was one enactment, and spoke of an 'interaction order' (Goffman, 1983), that is, the order and orderliness of interaction in its own right. He provided concepts that facilitated talking about phenomena related to interaction, most notably perhaps the concept of an interaction order, the concept of frame, the related concept of footing, and various concepts describing the syntactical relations between acts in interaction.

Of the various concepts Goffman coined, the concept of frame (1974) may have been one of the most important convergences between his work and subsequent talk-in-interaction research, and has parallels with Gumperz' linguistic concept of 'contextualization cues' (1982). 'Frame' refers to the definition that people in interaction give to the social activity they are currently participating in, including what is going on and what the roles between participants are in this situation. His analysis focuses on how participants, in a given situation, understand the 'frame' they are in at the moment, for example, how a doctor and a patient orient to the asymmetrical roles between them and the type of activity they are engaged in, for example, a medical examination, in conversation. Goffman also coined the related notion of 'footing' (1981) which refers to the reflexive and fluctuating character of frames, together with the moment-by-moment reassessments and realignment which participants may

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4 Levinson (1988) has provided an extensive discussion of the relationship between Goffman's "footing" (participation structure in Levinson's terms) and its relevance for linguistics.
make in moving from one frame to another" (Drew & Heritage, 1992:8). These two concepts involve participants' experience and interpretation of a social situation, and have consequences for how they will conduct themselves in interaction. The consequences are negotiated through various linguistic and paralinguistic cues and markers in talk, and closer examination of such choices will provide insight into how the social context for talk and interaction can shift within the same external context, and also reveal which details of the social context (the frame) that is made relevant by participants in the inferences they make of what another speaker means. Thus, both Goffman's concepts of frame and footing and Gumperz' ideas on contextualization cues provided important analytic openings for talk-in-interaction analysts in understanding participants' orientation to the situational context (Goffman, 1974, 1981; Gumperz, 1982; Drew & Heritage, 1992; Clayman, 1992).

Although there are other convergences between what eventually became Conversation Analysis on one hand, and the work of Goffman on the other (see, for example, Silverman, 1998), mapping out what clearly came from Goffman is a difficult task, partly because Goffman's later writings were published at a time when CA was becoming an established form of inquiry of its own, and Goffman's writings were in part responses to the new tradition that was developing. Schegloff (1988; 1992a) acknowledges that Goffman was the most influential of his teachers, and his writings were also very important to Sacks (Silverman, 1998), but also that Goffman gave them something to develop empirically. On the surface, CA's focus on the procedures and practices that people use to organize everyday face-to-face interaction seems identical to Goffman's agenda. Neither Goffman nor Sacks were interested in building "data-free grand theories" or using laboratory methods and interviews that detached the interactants and their actions from their contexts. A specific methodological approach to such interactions, however, was never made clear by Goffman, even though he promoted an inductive approach to access how participants themselves, and not the analyst, oriented their conduct to features in interaction (Drew & Wootton, 1988). Goffman, who variously used invented and observed fragments of interaction to illustrate his ideas, gave his readers little or no insight into his analytic procedures or data (Schegloff, 1988), and did not explicitly encourage his readers to move from field observations and hypothetical examples to 'real' recorded naturally occurring data. He also, as mentioned above, used various issues (such as 'impression management', face work, or the self seen from theatrical backstage and frontstage domains) to
drive his search for a description of social life, as opposed to segments of the interaction itself, which are the basic working units in CA (Schegloff, 1988:116).

In essence, the conversation analysts had problems with Goffman’s lack of a solid method that could be taught to others and with the lack of empirical insight that could yield replication and re-inspection (Psathas, 1995:11). Goffman also maintained his interest in the ritual, the moral, the normative and structural aspects of social activities, and constantly tried to connect his observations to rather general and abstract theoretical concepts. The conversation analysts and the ethnomethodologists (the latter which I will return to below) insisted on studying the interaction itself, and how members of a certain community jointly produce their orientation to a local order, and not a larger normative order. Nevertheless, Goffman's pioneering work gave the early conversation analysts the opportunity to develop his insights empirically by using natural data that could be recorded and inspected in detail. The divergence between the early work of Sacks and his teacher Goffman began when Sacks wrote his doctoral dissertation, and some of these crucial divergences between what later became CA and Goffman's work is discussed by Schegloff (1988). In his introduction to a volume containing the late Harvey Sacks' transcribed lectures, Schegloff notes the "degree to which Goffman influenced more specifically the work for which Sacks is known remains an open question" (1992a:xxiv). The details of these divergences are less relevant here; however, as often mentioned in introductions to the methodology of conversation analysis, Goffman was one of several contemporary influences, and his insights gave Sacks and others impetus to provide a solid methodology for studying the interaction order. Sacks\(^5\) was the one to begin this endeavor by using recordings and transcripts of authentic interactions (Silverman, 1998).

For the present dissertation, another important aspect of Goffman's work, which, according to Schegloff (1988), is of less interest to CA because of the focus on the individual and his/her psychology, is his work on emotion-related phenomena, such as impression management and embarrassment. I will return to Goffman's tackling of these issues in chapters 3 and 5.

As should be clear from the text above, the work of Harvey Sacks has played a crucial role in developing the conversation analytic approach to social interaction. Sacks wanted to study the local production of the interaction order in much greater detail than Goffman found necessary (Silverman, 1998:35), and to do so, another important contemporary influence was Garfinkel and the research program he referred to as ethnomethodology, which maintains a strong

\(^5\) See 2.4.3 below on Harvey Sacks' work.
connection with CA work. Before moving on to the early contributions of Sacks and his collaborators, this influence deserves some attention.

2.4.2 Garfinkel's ethnomethodology

Ethnomethodology, in Harold Garfinkel's own words, refers to the “investigation of the rational properties of indexical expressions and other practical actions as contingent ongoing accomplishments of organized artful practices of everyday life” (Garfinkel, 1967:11). Garfinkel was interested in finding a way of explaining how people construct a stable social world through utterances and actions, and was dissatisfied with the reigning approach to sociological inquiry, in particular, that of his own dissertation chair, the sociologist Talcott Parsons (Goodwin & Heritage, 1990). In Garfinkel's view, “sociology's trouble” lay in the tension between research strategies and the type of data that sociologists based their theorizing on, and that the "failure to scrutinise the nature of sociological phenomena themselves […] explains the continued production of dubious and equivocal results" (Lee, 1987:22).

One such problem involved the views on social action. While the other schools in sociology treated social action as the outcome of adherence to shared norms of conduct, Garfinkel was particularly interested in the everyday experiences and reasoning skills that people within each specific subculture use in constructing their social reality and understanding situated courses of action. The background knowledge that people have, and the practical reasoning that they use together, enable actors to understand and recognize the social circumstances in which they are acting, to understand the intention of others, and to accomplish mutual understanding (Goodwin & Heritage, 1990). How this mutual understanding is achieved is what interested Garfinkel. Ethnomethodology also suggested a "bottom-up" strategy, where the organization of social life is viewed as emerging from a joint accomplishment by members acting within local situations, as opposed to "top-down" strategies of investigation, where pre-set structural categories (for example, class, gender, positions etc.) are deployed as normative motivators for social action, which was the case for most sociological theory at the time (Clayman & Maynard, 1995:2). Garfinkel's approach has sometimes been described as "the pursuit of a single question - how do social actors come to know, and know in common, what they are doing and the circumstances in which they are doing it?" (Heritage, 1984a:76). Thus, ethnomethodology refers to the various methods that people use to describe and make sense of the activities in which they
participate, and these methods are what the program of ethnomethodology encourages us to study. This means, in essence, that it is the researcher's task to find these strategies and show how they are made relevant to those who use them in understanding how social life is organized. As I will show below, this is a central concern also for CA, and specifically in talk-in-interaction.

The ethnomethodological approach was strongly influenced by the phenomenological writings of Schutz (Clayman & Maynard, 1995) and the ordinary language philosophy of Wittgenstein (Psathas, 1995). Schutz had argued that intersubjective understandings emerge from interactional processes, and what interested Garfinkel was how this understanding was created "locally, in situ" (Silverman, 1998:39). Through his empirical studies, he demonstrated how the practical theorizing or commonsense knowledge about mundane social reality could be accessed for empirical scrutiny, since it seemed that the background knowledge people have is 'invisible' even to themselves, it is taken for granted, and was seemingly not reflected upon consciously. His proposition was that the commonsense methods of intelligibility and accountability of social action and courses of events remained invisible as long as they functioned properly, and if disrupted, the absence of some procedural feature could be predicted and observed. That is, if understanding breaks down, we should pay attention to what is not there and work backwards to discover its importance in 'normal' situations (Clayman & Maynard, 1995).

To demonstrate how these tacit resources are procedural means toward a practical end, Garfinkel conducted his so-called 'breaching experiments', where norms were randomly and senselessly violated in order to see what the subjects' reactions would reveal about the 'natural' way of things, when we mundanely, routinely and without problems relate to the social world. For example, Garfinkel asked students to engage in conversation with an acquaintance or friend, and then insist on having their conversational partner explain and clarify "commonplace remarks". The students then wrote accounts of the conversations, as in the following example copied from Garfinkel (1967:42):

The subject was telling the experimenter, a member of the subject's car pool, about having a flat tire while going to work the previous day.

(S) I had a flat tire.

(E) What do you mean, you had a flat tire?

She appeared momentarily stunned. Then she answered in a hostile way: “What do you mean, ‘What do you mean?’ A flat tire is a flat tire. That is what I meant. Nothing special. What a crazy question!”
Excerpts like this convinced Garfinkel that we should study the “seen but unnoticed” background of common understandings (1967:44) and the “adequate” recognition of ordinary events. In other experiments, Garfinkel had his students to spend time in their own homes, and without revealing the experiment, pretend that they were boarders there and acting in accordance with this assumption. Students reported that their family members responded to their unusually polite, private, and information-seeking behavior with “astonishment, bewilderment, shock, anxiety, embarrassment, and anger” and with “charges by various family members that the student was mean, inconsiderate, selfish, nasty, or impolite” (1967:47). Family members also demanded explanations to why students responded in ways they usually did not. Consequently, when people attempt to conduct everyday affairs in a way that does not match sanctioned understandings of how they are supposed to be done, the actor can still do it, but has to count on being held accountable for the breeches. Members treat their social settings as “essentially self-explicating” (Lee, 1987:22) and violations of shared norms of conduct are noticed.6

Similarities with Garfinkel's breaching experiments can be seen in CA's treatment of 'deviant cases', that is, when a regularity in talk-in-interaction practices has been observed, cases that do not match this regularity are treated as illuminative of the underlying order; however, for CA, these cases may not be treated as 'deviant' or 'breaching' by interactants, and if not, it is the analyst who needs to revise the components of the pattern described (ten Have, 1999). Thus, deviant patterns are signals to the analyst that the initial formulation of how social order is achieved in these instances may need further inspection. This methodological concern of CA is commonly referred to as analytic induction (Clayman & Maynard 1995:7).

The relevance of the ethnomethodological approach to the development of CA was a result of the collaboration between Harvey Sacks and Garfinkel, who had met in the late 1950s and continued to collaborate until the early 1970s (Schegloff, 1992a). The collaboration between the two resulted in one publication from 1970 (Garfinkel & Sacks, 1970), on indexical expressions, that is, utterances that cannot be understood without reference to the context, including the speaker, the situation, and the circumstances in which they are uttered. In linguistic terms, examples of indexical expressions are, for example, pronouns and adverbs that acquire their meaning in relation to the local environment, i.e. deixis (Clayman & Maynard, 1995:10).

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6 For more details on the breaching experiments, see Garfinkel, (1967) or Heritage, (1984).
The ethnomethodological view of social reality as a practical accomplishment achieved though commonsense knowledge and practical reasoning resonated well with Sacks, and although Garfinkel also studied talk, conversation analysts argued that the practical reasoning is to be studied exclusively in recordings and transcripts of authentic talk-in-interaction.

2.4.3 Orderly talk – Sacks' lectures and the first papers

As seen from the sections on Goffman and Garfinkel, it was Harvey Sacks who was to be the major force in the development of CA. Although Sacks himself published relatively little during his career\(^7\), his contributions have been very influential. What Sacks saw as a primary goal of a new approach to how social actions are organized was the empirical grounding, and in accordance with this objective, he also recorded his own lectures, which were later transcribed and circulated, and published posthumously in 1992 (Sacks, 1992a,b). He began studying recorded telephone conversations to a suicide research center, at which he was employed in 1963 (Pomerantz & Fehr, 1997), and examined matters such as opening lines. It was in these materials that a 'discovery' central to the subsequent development of CA was made; the "Rules of conversational sequence", as this particular lecture was posthumously titled when Sacks' collected lectures were edited and published in 1992 (Sacks, 1992a:3-11). Important was also Sacks' insistence on recorded materials, which was a clear contrast to Goffman's field observations (Psathas, 1995). The sole empirical focus on recorded 'conversations' (later talk-in-interaction), too, came to differentiate the CA approach from both Goffman and ethnomethodology.

In the material presented in this first lecture, Sacks was able to demonstrate how the actions of callers and call-takers in calls to a suicide prevention center were mutually dependent on each other. Sacks had learned that call takers had trouble extracting the name of the caller, and began looking at why this difficulty seemed to occur, and saw that it appeared as if the callers were reluctant to give their names even if they did not explicitly say so. For example, when the call taker used his or her name in answering the call, the appropriate next action for the caller would be to respond with returning the greeting including a name, so that the person who speaks first in a telephone conversation has the opportunity to choose the form of address, and thereby creating an expectation as to what the slot in the response should "naturally" contain. He uses several examples of this procedure (e.g. "Hello" - "Hello",

\(^7\) Harvey Sacks died in a car accident in 1975.
"This is Mr Smith may I help you" - "Yes this is Mr Brown") and shows that an utterance sequentially placed in adjacent position to a next utterance by another speaker appeared to tailor the format of the next utterance. By using the second strategy involving the name, Sacks also showed how the call takers, whose job it was to extract the callers' name as early on as possible\(^8\), were able to extract that information without actually posing a question (see Sacks, 1992a:3, Silverman, 1998:98), instead of asking directly, which could involve completely different responses by the caller, for example "No", or "Why?". By contrast, the first "Hello" in the "Hello" - "Hello" does not provide an 'automatic' slot for giving names. What Sacks noticed in these examples was that the actions came in pairs, as a unit, for example, greeting-greeting, and this observation, in combination with the discussion on "slots" in conversation that were designed by the previous utterance, later came to be developed into the base concept of CA, that of the adjacency pair which I will return to below.

Naturally, what could be considered an appropriate response to a first part in a unit does not always follow. Sacks also provided a third example:

A: This is Mr Smith may I help you
B: I can’t hear you
A: This is Mr Smith
B: Smith

Here, the slot after the first part of the pair is filled with a different object than what the first utterance provided an expectation for. The caller's "I can't hear you" is a request for repetition on part of the call taker, to which the caller responds by repeating the name again, not his own name. This was one strategy used by callers to avoid giving their names that Sacks identified. Sacks also saw that often, when directly asked for their name later on in the call, the caller would refuse and/or request an account of why the name was necessary. Thus, the first opening utterance in the example above was also a way of asking for a name without having to provide any reasons for the asking. The action is non-accountable because of its placement in the initial position of a call between two people who have not met before. At the end of the lecture, Sacks' comment about 'methods' echoes the ethnomethodological point of departure:

Some of these objects can be used for a whole range of activities, where for different ones a variety of the properties of those objects will get employed.

\(^8\) Given that it was a suicide prevention center, extracting the caller's name was of utmost importance in the preventive work.
And we begin to see alternative properties of those objects. That's one way we can go about beginning to collect the alternative methods that persons use in going about doing whatever they have to do. And we can see that these methods will be reproducible descriptions in the sense that any scientific description might be, such that the natural occurrences that we're describing can yield abstract or general phenomena which need not rely on statistical observability for their abstractness or generality. (Sacks, 1992a:11)

Sacks returns to the issue of "slots" and "paired objects" in conversation in one of his 1966 lectures (1992a:308). Slots are described as places where "certain second activities may properly occur after a particular first activity" (Silverman, 1998:99). He demonstrates, which is important, that these slots are not just his categories as an analyst, but that members themselves routinely orient to the issue of whether a slot is used in an appropriate or expected manner. A demonstration of people's awareness of these 'rules' are when such an appropriate action is absent, for example, when someone does not reply to a greeting they clearly heard (Hello) with a corresponding greeting. The fact that we will react negatively to such an absence reflects our awareness of the paired action greeting procedure and its initial placement in a conversation. Observations of this kind gave birth to CA's consistent focus on describing the procedures that people employ in accomplishing everyday social actions.

In Sacks' collected lectures (1992a, b, see also Silverman, 1998) recorded between 1965 and 1972, he continues to deal with a myriad of topics on the machinery of social interaction, for example, accountable actions, sequencing, next-speaker selection, interruptions, utterance completion, turn-taking, and laughter, and during those years, CA was becoming an established form of inquiry. His collaborator Schegloff, also a former student of Goffman, was the first to publish a paper in what came to be the CA discipline (Schegloff, 1968). Based on a collection of more than 500 telephone calls to a 'disaster center', Schegloff discussed features of so-called Summons-Answer sequences. The "summons" was often the ringing of the phone, and the "answer" was the first part utterance by the answerer, and this led to an extended discussion of what Sacks had noted about paired actions; in Schegloff's terms at the time, conditional relevance. This referred to the relationship between a first and second part, for example, with a greeting, a second part in the form of a greeting is expected. When this second part is non-occurring, it is noted as absent. Schegloff also discusses what he calls "the property of immediate juxtaposition", which meant that the second item should be produced in the next-position slot, but that the 'next' slot could allow for other properties to be inserted in between (see ten
The outcome of these early studies was the concept of *adjacency pairs* (Schegloff & Sacks, 1973; Sacks, 1992b), which I will return to in 2.5.

### 2.4.4 CA – a radical break from tradition

By way of summary, the work of Goffman, Garfinkel and Sacks all played vital roles in the development of present-day conversation analysis. In the historical account above, continuities between the early CA work and contemporary schools have been emphasized. It is however important to note that what was not developing into its own approach was also a radical break from traditional sociology, and also from concurrent linguistic work. Even though Goffman was a pioneer in showing that everyday interactions and their details were rich resources for understanding a variety of phenomena and he followed the development of CA closely, he remained critical toward many of the new propositions⁹ and maintained his focus on the ritual, moral and normative aspects of interaction, in contrast with the focus on sequential organization of CA. Other branches of sociology accustomed to coding and category systems even in qualitative research criticized CA for not having a large enough number of instances of each phenomenon described and the sometimes single case focus was considered unreliable, from a traditional epistemological position (Psathas, 1992:9). CA’s ‘obsession with details’ has also been criticized as not generalizable or not ‘enough’ as primary data for doing sociology.

In linguistics, as mentioned earlier, there is a time-worn reluctance in studying talk, stemming from the days of Chomsky. Furthermore, linguists are generally used to syntacists’ categories of language description rather than participants’ own, and quantification and prescription have had precedence over rich description of single instances, although this view has become gradually more flexible. At this point, suffice it to say that CA in many ways and across disciplines represented a radical break from prevailing views on social action, social interaction, language-in-use, methodologies, and types of description. To clarify this further, I will now turn to a brief overview of some of the basic findings of CA research, among them the discoveries of adjacency pairs, turn-taking, and preference organization, which still constitute the foundation of our knowledge on social interaction.

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⁹ See particularly *Forms of Talk* (Goffman, 1981).
2.5 The machinery of social interaction – some basic findings

2.5.1 Adjacency pairs

The notion of adjacency pairs (APs) originated from the observation that there was a conditional relevance between a first utterance and the next, and that a first action creates expectations for a reciprocal action, at the "first possible opportunity after the completion of the first" (Goodwin & Heritage, 1990:287), as in the telephone conversation openings; summons-answer sequences and greeting-greeting exchanges. The first action "empirically projects and normatively requires the relevant occurrence 'next' of a complementary second action to be produced by another speaker (Heritage, 1989:25). In their 1973 study of how conversations are brought to a close (note: not how a conversation ends, but how it is actively brought to a close by participants), Schegloff and Sacks found the same relationship between the closing properties. The conditions for an adjacency pair proposed by Schegloff and Sacks are still considered valid, although the discussion has been taken further in subsequent studies. The conditions can be summarized as follows (c.f. 1973: 295-296):

1. an adjacency pair consists of a sequence of two utterances
2. the two utterances have adjacent positioning
3. different speakers produce the first and the second action
4. adjacency pairs are of different "types, for example, greeting-greeting, offer-acceptance/refusal, question-answer, and the first action (e.g. offer) conditions the selection of a second part from the same 'type' as the first for the second speaker, when the second speaker recognizes the first part as a certain type of action.

In essence, by selecting an appropriate and relevant second action to a first action produced by a co-interactant, the second speaker can demonstrate understanding of the action that the first part aimed to accomplish, and acceptance or declination of that aim. The first speaker can, then, from the second part, infer whether the intentions were accepted by the second speaker, and produce next actions accordingly. If, say, the second speaker indicates that the first was misunderstood or misheard, and the first speaker can infer this from the production of a different type of second action than anticipated, "appreciations, failures, corrections etcetera can be themselves understandably attempted" (1973:297). The following example from the data used in the present dissertation illustrates the AP of question-answer:
Here, the first speaker Jennifer is asking a question for clarification (is this your job now), and Brandee provides an appropriate second part by answering Jennifer's question (uhm yeah) at the first possible opportunity after the completion of Jennifer's first part of the AP. The discovery of adjacent positioning became a strong indicator of the maintenance of intersubjectivity in that speakers themselves as well as overhearing analysts could pinpoint the display of understanding of prior talk through the production of a next action, which in turn provides the basis for the production of a third turn (e.g. corrections, clarifications, comments) by the first speaker. As Heritage (1989:25) notes, the AP provides a framework for the continuous "updating of public, intersubjective understandings". The sequential placement of an utterance is repeatedly stressed in the Sacks & Schegloff paper; for example, in the illustration above, the "yeah" only obtains its characterization of an "answer" because of its directly adjacent positioning after a question. With CA, it was possible to demonstrate that speakers themselves oriented to the sequential relevance of an appropriate second part of an adjacency pair, and that absence of such an appropriate second part becomes a matter of "natural accountability" (Lee, 1987:36). In the excerpt below, the natural second part of the pair is missing, which is noted by the first speaker in that she initiates a more detailed account of what she meant by her question when the addressee does not provide an answer to the first question:

Here, the first speaker Jennifer is asking a question for clarification (is this your job now), and Brandee provides an appropriate second part by answering Jennifer's question (uhm yeah) at the first possible opportunity after the completion of Jennifer's first part of the AP. The discovery of adjacent positioning became a strong indicator of the maintenance of intersubjectivity in that speakers themselves as well as overhearing analysts could pinpoint the display of understanding of prior talk through the production of a next action, which in turn provides the basis for the production of a third turn (e.g. corrections, clarifications, comments) by the first speaker. As Heritage (1989:25) notes, the AP provides a framework for the continuous "updating of public, intersubjective understandings". The sequential placement of an utterance is repeatedly stressed in the Sacks & Schegloff paper; for example, in the illustration above, the "yeah" only obtains its characterization of an "answer" because of its directly adjacent positioning after a question. With CA, it was possible to demonstrate that speakers themselves oriented to the sequential relevance of an appropriate second part of an adjacency pair, and that absence of such an appropriate second part becomes a matter of "natural accountability" (Lee, 1987:36). In the excerpt below, the natural second part of the pair is missing, which is noted by the first speaker in that she initiates a more detailed account of what she meant by her question when the addressee does not provide an answer to the first question:

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understanding of the 'rules' and a 'noticing' of that absence (c.f. Schegloff, 1968). However, it has been demonstrated that participants in interaction have access to a variety of choices for varying this order. One example is what has been called "insertion sequences" (e.g. Sacks, 1992:528), where the AP is intact but the two parts of the pair do not have adjacent positioning. For an invitation - acceptance/refusal AP, the provision of the second pair may delayed in that it can require some further information from the first speaker:

[Sacks, 1992:529]
A: Can I borrow your car?
B: When?
A: This afternoon.
B: For how long?
A: A couple of hours.
B: Okay.

Sacks' illustration of the sequencing operating in this example, with the main AP in capital letters, is [Q [q-a] [q-a] A]. The insertion sequences give the second speaker a sequentially appropriate method of delaying the answer. Another example is the organization of so-called pre-sequences. A pre-sequence to a question-answer AP, for example, a request, can serve as a device of reconnoitering the conversational grounds and prepare for a possible refusal of a request. Pre-sequences can also be ways of asking for something without asking, and ways of preparing the co-participant(s) for bad news. Consider this fictional example (c.f. Sacks, 1992:529), where a pre-signal makes an invitation an appropriate next action:

Pre-sequence part 1 C: What are you doing tomorrow night?
Pre-sequence part 2: D: Uh nothing
Target sequence part 1: C: Well would you like to come over for dinner then?
Target sequence part 2: D: Oh I would love to!

Depending on the response to the first part of the pre-sequence (here, an indication that an invitation is appropriate), speaker C can proceed to the main objective (i.e. inviting D to dinner). Pre-sequences are frequent, but less frequent for the AP of greeting-greeting. The analysis of pre-sequences can be seen as a CA treatment of what speech act theorists refer to as indirect speech
acts (Levinson, 1983). The 'indirectness' in an utterance such as "Are you wearing your watch?" may imply and be treated as a direct request for information about the time. Participants in conversation 'read' that as a request and thus skip the answer (yes I am wearing it) to the question and proceeds to answering the question implied in the indirect speech act (It's five p.m.).

Instead of treating all such initial parts, regardless of their form, as indirect speech acts that perform the same actions as the direct act (What time is it?), Levinson explains the occurrence of indirect speech acts by reference to contractions in conversational sequencing. If the contracted sequence is extended, we would have a pre-sequence + target sequence (cf. the example above.). Again, this shows CA's commitment to participants' orientation to sequential structures, and to the ways in which participants analyze the actions produced by co-participants in order to produce relevant actions in return.

2.5.2 Turn-taking and overall organization of conversational activities

An important step in connection with the discussion of the AP structure was the application of the term turn-taking for the system underlying conversational activity, and further specifications of what a 'conversation' entails. A general, and empirically grounded, idea is that talk proceeds on a turn-by-turn basis, and that each turn will generally be heard as directed at the prior turn unless some specific technique is used to show that the utterance is directed at some other talk. The production of a next utterance also signals the speaker's analysis and understanding of that turn (Heritage & Atkinson, 1984).

Although the Schegloff and Sacks (1973) paper was devoted to closings in conversations, it was noted that topic organization, for example, needed investigation on a more overall scale of conversational organization (1973:292); thus, different foci of interest in CA work requires attention to different levels of conversational structure - the turn-by-turn, or even within-turn organization, as well as overall conversational structure within a single conversation. Two basic features of 'conversation' realized in situ by participants' use of turn-taking were also noted (Schegloff & Sacks, 1973:293):

1. at least, and no more than, one party speaks at a time in a single conversation
2. speaker change recurs
Turn-taking was defined as "the 'machinery' for ordering speaker turns sequentially in conversation" (Schegloff & Sacks, 1973:293) and provides for the "orderliness of an indefinitely ongoing conversation" (ten Have 1999:19). The turn-taking machinery also provides opportunity for repairs of failures to meet the two characteristics above, for example, a moment of non-speech when the appropriate next turn from a second speaker should have occurred. The non-speech slots in flows of conversation are perceived as "silence" by the other participant, unless it is part of the closing of a conversation. On such occasions, one speaker's completion of a turn does not occasion another speaker's talk, but the non-speech here is not, because it is a closing, perceived as "silence" (Schegloff & Sacks, 1973:294).

The completion of one speaker's turn and the onset of another speaker's turn, are naturally also relevant issues of CA investigation. How do speakers make relevant the transition from one speaker to the next? A 'turn' consists of one or more 'turn constructional units' (TCUs); that is, the material of which the turn is built (Norrby, 1996:99), and interactants manage the transition from one turn to the next with minimal gaps in between through their knowledge of what can constitute the completion of a turn. What constitutes a turn-constructional unit can vary; it can be a clause, phrase, or any audible sound. At the point where the turn-constructional unit projects a completion of a turn, change of speaker is made possible. The system of turn-taking is the traffic rules of conversation, and speakers know when the light turns green for a next turn. Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson (1974) noted that the gaps between turns were generally few, and that when there were overlaps or longer pauses, these were noted by participants as 'deviant' from the rules. Also, the turn itself appeared to be systematically related to its local surrounding in three ways:

Turns display gross organizational features that reflect their occurrence in a series. They regularly have a three-part structure: one which addresses the relation of a turn to a prior, one involved with what is occupying a turn, and one which addresses the relation of the turn to a succeeding one (1974:722). What is described in this structure thus relates the turn backward to the prior utterance (e.g. a response token), to what it is accomplishing (e.g. a joke), and forward to the next turn (e.g. a first part of an adjacency pair). Sacks et al (1974) list three consequences of this for interactants: the need to listen attentively, the understanding of a turn, and the display of this understanding in next actions.

There also appeared to be systematic features with regard to how these turn transitions were done in interaction, and the system was found to be general and independent of the topics talked about, the size of each turn, the
number of participants, and the length of the interaction. It was also clear that the operation of the turn-taking system was context-sensitive in the sense that the local environment of talk had implications for each next turn (Psathas, 1995:36). The ‘place’ where a next speaker can begin a new turn, immediately after the completion of the prior, is in CA parlance often referred to as the transition-relevance place, TRP. The TRP can be made relevant and displayed by the current holder of the floor by a variety of techniques, for example, falling intonation, a longer pause, a direct speaker appointment, or any other linguistic or paralinguistic device that is recognizable as completion for other participants. At the TRP, the turn allocation can proceed according to two principles and three sub-rules (Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson, 1974):

**Principle (1)**

a) The current speaker can select the next speaker, for example, by directly addressing that person

b) Self-selection of next speaker at the completion of the current speaker’s turn.

c) If no new speaker self-selects, the current speaker may continue to speak

**Principle (2)**

The system is recursive in that if none of the rules (a) or (b) operate at the initial TRP, and the current speaker continues, the rules a-c will reapply at the next possible turn-transition relevance place and until transfer of speakers occurs (Psathas, 1995:37). The priority order of the three rules of turn shift is as shown above, that is, the first speaker selection precedes self-selection, and the continuation of the current speaker’s turn comes after the possibility of self-selection.

A “simplest systematics” for the organization of turn-taking in conversation, as the title of the Sacks et al (1974) article suggests, could account for all the instances in the material covered. The machinery has also been confirmed in further studies, and the system was also observed to minimize gaps and overlaps. The ‘rules’ of the system do not tell the participants what they must do next, but they include a range of options that are available. The turn-taking machinery of conversation made it possible to see how the system of conversation as such was self-organizing; a system that reproduces itself as the product of participants’ joint accomplishments. The system makes participants “intrinsically motivated to manipulate the internal structure of turn-constructional units” (Goodwin & Heritage, 1990:290), and requires the moment-by-moment coordination and mutual adjustment of activities in
interaction. However, Sacks et al restricted their system of turn-taking to mundane conversations, and interactions in institutional settings present other constraints on turn allocation and turn-taking (see 2.8 below).

On a more sociological level, the turn-taking system illustrates how a conversation as such is a social system of its own; a system to which interactants orient, and which has order and organization that is produced and achieved in situ. The simple systematics of turn-taking has also been shown to direct the orderliness of a range of phenomena that initially seemed to have little to do with this system (Lee, 1987:42). For example, even though overlaps seem to be rare, the overlaps we do find can be explained in terms of participants’ orientation to the turn-taking organization (1987:46).

Besides signaling a place where a next speaker may speak, the construction of a turn is said to be recipient-designed (Sacks et al, 1978:42). This means that turns-at-talk are constructed in ways which display an orientation to the co-participant(s). This can be done through a variety of techniques, and recipient design can be seen in word selection, topic selection, ordering of sequences, and choices made in how to start and close a conversation. In designing a turn, a speaker can also indicate the kind of next turn that is expected, or structurally preferred. I will now turn to a discussion of another central CA concept: that of preference organization.

### 2.5.3 Preference organization

As I have indicated above, preference in conversation is related to turn design. The concept of preference structures has often been misunderstood; in describing certain conversational acts as “preferred” or dispreferred”, it is easy to think that the concepts refer to personal desires of conversationalists, or individual dispositions (Heritage, 1989:26). Instead, the concept of preference refers to the relationship between utterances, where although a number of options are available to participants, one may be preferred, and this can be indicated in the design of the previous turn (ten Have, 1999:120). The concept has similarities with the concepts of marked and unmarked forms used by linguists, where the preferred response to a given turn is the unmarked turn design, whereas the dispreferred could be said to be marked. A preferred second part is often produced simply and directly, without longer delays or hesitation components. A dispreferred second part is often delayed, embedded, or produced with hesitation or indirectness (Atkinson & Heritage, 1984b:53).
One strong preference structure in conversation is that of agreement as opposed to disagreement (Pomerantz, 1984; Sacks, 1987). If someone says “You’re coming to my party tonight, right?”, the shape of the turn itself implies that an affirmative response is what the speaker is looking for. What the research on preference organization has seen in cases like this is that people tend to avoid direct disagreement to turns shaped like above, and instead stall or mitigate a possible negative response. A disagreeing response here is the dispreferred turn type, so the speaker manages this preference by saying something like “You know, I would have loved to, but my boss just said I have to work late tonight so I don’t think I will be able to”. Such a turn design shows participants’ orientation to the underlying preference organization in that they display unwillingness to use dispreferred turn types, and instead they try to delay the disagreement, or mitigate the direct “no” response. The delay also provides for the possibility of withdrawing the first pair part altogether. Silverman (1998:123) notes that because of preference organization, basic textbooks on research interviews always tell us to avoid posing questions that imply an expected answer. In the case below, it is primarily the word “really” that establishes the underlying preference for a “no” answer:

A: Well is this really whatchu wanted?
B: Uh…not originally? No. But it’s uh…promotion? en it’s very interesting.

The second speaker orients to this expected turn shape by initial agreement with the negatively valenced question (uh…not originally?) and delays the disagreement turn components (no). Turns can thus be packaged or formulated in distinct ways that display their preference status (ten Have, 1999:120). Similarly, for invitations, the preference is acceptance, whereas rejection is prefaced, delayed, and/or followed by accounts of the rejection.

CA studies have shown that in local talk contexts where both preferred and dispreferred turn options are available to a next speaker, the dispreferred turn shape is avoided, delayed or withheld, and that when dispreferred turn shapes are opted for, they are routinely accomplished in distinctive ways. One telling example is the case of assessments (Pomerantz, 1984). When an assessment is provided by a first speaker, a second assessment is routinely invited, preferably an agreement, and if an agreeing assessment can not be provided, the second speaker usually provides an account of the reason for
disagreeing, or prefaces the disagreement with agreement turn components. Consider the following example (Pomerantz, 1984:70):

(SBL:2.1.7.-14)
A: (         ) cause those things take working at,
   (2.0)
B: (hhhhh) well, they [do, but
A: [They aren’t accidents,

Pomerantz refers to this particular type of disagreement strategy as “no immediately forthcoming talk”, that is, speaker B’s initial response to the assessment is silence, which in itself indicates that a disagreement is on the way. The pause is followed by the disagreement turn, which is mitigated through “agreeing first”, that is, orienting to the preference for agreement, and then showing the disagreement in using “but”. In cases of agreement, an array of devices are available to the second assessment provider, for example, same evaluation as the previous speaker, an upgraded agreement that is an even stronger assessment than the first, or even a downgraded assessment that is slightly scaled down agreement with the first assessment. In essence, in terms of assessment, Pomerantz was able to show how agreement was the preferred structure, with an interesting “deviant case”: that of self-deprecation. If a first speaker says something in the lines of “Oh gosh I’m so fat!”, then, the preferred turn shape for the next assessment is disagreement, and agreement in such cases are noted as dispreferred. Pomerantz (1984:64) describes preferred/dispreferred turn shapes as follows:

Two types of shapes are of interest: One type is a design that maximizes the occurrence of the actions being performed with them, utilizes minimization of gap between its initiation and prior turn’s completion, and contains components that are explicitly stated instances of the action being performed. The other type minimizes the occurrence of the actions performed with them, in part utilizing the organization of delays and nonexplicitly stated action components, such as actions other than a conditionally relevant next. The respective turn shapes will be called preferred-action turn shape and dispreferred-action turn shape.

Another interesting case is compliments. Research has shown that there are problematic structural features associated with responding to a compliment: on the one hand, the preference structure promotes agreement to a first assessment, but the social risks associated with agreeing with a positive
assessment of oneself is, naturally, being perceived as boastful or self-conceited. In accepting a compliment, Pomerantz (1978a) has shown that responses like “thank you” seem to be selected over direct agreement and that the receiver of a compliment may choose from a variety of turn-shape resources to disagree with the positive assessment. Receiving and responding to a compliment is consequently a complex interactional process involving multiple constraints (Psathas, 1995; Norrby, 1996; Golato, 2002).

The fact that we try to avoid dispreferred or disaffiliative structures can be explained from the inherently social character of conversations where we orient to the needs and preferences of our co-participants. Research on laughter, for example, has shown that laughter placed in a sequentially dispreferred context, e.g. as a response to someone talking about a problem, is seen as disaffiliative, even though the first speaker has structurally invited the co-participant(s) to laugh. The preferred response to invitations to laughter in talk about troubles is to not laugh in response (Jefferson, 1984a; Glenn, 2003b).

Preference research also has connections to an interest in repair in conversation. It has been demonstrated that there is a preference for self-repair in cases of slips of the tongue (Schegloff, Jefferson & Sacks, 1977), preferably before the completion of the speaker’s own turn, and the only sequentially appropriate slot for other-initiated repair is the second turn. Consequently, conversational organization offers more possibilities for self-repair. Pre-sequences, which were discussed above, can illustrate another example of preference organization; a preparation for avoiding dispreferred actions.

Another interesting aspect of preference structures concerns speakers’ choice to complete another speaker’s ongoing turn and converting an initiated or expected dispreferred response with a preferred one. Lerner (1996:303) demonstrated how second speakers use anticipatory completion of the current speaker’s ongoing turn as a device to “preempt an emerging dispreferred action and change it into the alternative preferred action”, which, at the same time, can be interpreted as a way of saving ‘face’ for self and others in interaction. Preference organization of interaction appears to be strongly associated with the avoidance of threats to ‘face’ and the avoidance of conflict (Goffman, 1955; Brown & Levinson, 1987; Heritage, 1989). I will return to other studies on face concerns in chapter 5. Taken together, research on preference and its various expressions has demonstrated how the design of turns and sequences are tied to larger social processes (Goodwin & Heritage, 1990).
2.6 Basic assumptions about interaction and context

Although far from exhaustive in terms of the plethora of talk-in-interaction studies in the literature, the overview of interest areas in CA research above has revealed some of its basic discoveries about interaction that have guided subsequent research. As mentioned above, the ethnomethodological heritage in CA lies in the interest in the everyday methods that people use to understand and participate competently in social interaction. Furthermore, an underlying assumption is that conversational interaction is not disorderly, as has often been assumed within linguistics, but in fact is both structured and orderly. I will next examine the four cornerstones of the conversation analytic view on interaction.

2.6.1 Core assumptions

The four core assumptions about interaction within CA are often summarized as follows (see Heritage, 1989:22):

1) All interaction is structured
2) All contributions to the interaction are both context-shaped and context-renewing
3) All details of and in interaction are of potential relevance for its sequential development, thus, the analyst can not dismiss any aspect of interaction as irrelevant, disorderly, or accidental
4) The study of interaction and its fine details is to be conducted on naturally occurring interactions

I have touched upon structure and orderliness in interaction and how these conversational organizations are to be viewed as structures in their own right, which, “like other social institutions or conventions, stand independently of the psychological or other characteristics of particular participants” (Heritage 1989:22). This order and structure of interaction have several levels, and although there has been some reluctance to refer to these levels as either micro-level or macro-level organizations, the individual turns and their components can be roughly said to represent microstructures, whereas overall conversational organizations such as episodes or topical structures lie on a more global level of the interaction. The adjacency pair structure, for example, lies in between these end points (Norrby, 1996). CA work operates on all these levels of interaction – from the local turn shifts to the larger structures of topic organization.
By context-shaped, Heritage refers to the way in which each turn is shaped by its immediate social and local context and cannot be understood without reference to the ongoing sequential context to which it contributes. The fact that each turn also is context-renewing refers to how each turn inevitably forms the context for the next action in a sequence so that each turn will contribute to the contextual framework in which the next action will be understood by participants. The local context for each turn is this negotiated and changed with every new contribution to interaction.

The third point has methodological consequences for CA, on two levels that both align with the objective of CA to describe and understand actual, particular social actions in situ. The first implication involves studying interactions as they naturally are. Since it is members’ own methods and understandings that also form the analyst’s resources, any detail in interaction can be of potential relevance in that participants themselves may be orienting to combinations of contextual cues, to gestures, to any vocal sound that in other types of discourse analysis would be considered to be of lesser importance. Any idealization of the empirical material, such as the exclusion of pauses, inhalations, laughter, and overlaps, faces the risk of ignoring the conduct in interaction that is meaningful for participants themselves in constructing next sequences of interaction. The analyst, consequently, can and should be able to demonstrate how participants “do” something interactionally, with clear examples from the material as opposed to aggregations of data, statistical or otherwise. The second implication of this involves CA’s resistance toward using premature theoretical constructs that are applied to a set of materials, with the risk of imposing analysts’ categories on a material where these are not necessarily relevant to participants.

It is important to note that although “talk” is what is emphasized in most analyses as well as indicated in the description of the object of study, ‘talk-in-interaction’ or ‘conversation’, CA originated as a form of sociology without a particular interest in language per se (Schegloff & Sacks, 1973). Furthermore, both names (falsely) indicate that it is talk, and only talk, that CA sets out to study. Actions constituted in talk need to be understood in relation to both talk and other aspects of interaction, such as pauses, restarts, sound quality, gestures etc (Pomerantz & Fehr, 1997:65), and more recent conversation analytic work (e.g. Goodwin, 1981; Goodwin, 1986; Heath, 1988; Lerner & Zimmerman, 2003) has examined in detail the relationship between talk and other features of conduct visually available through video-recorded interactions. Within other social scientific approaches to communication, verbal and nonverbal aspects of
human communication have traditionally been treated as separable and separate areas of investigation (LeBaron, Mandelbaum & Glenn, 2003:9), and more recent conversation analytic, as well as other language in social interaction research, has contributed to bringing the two together, and proposing the separation to be both misleading and analytically unnecessary.

The fourth level was emphasized in the early stages of CA’s development by Sacks (e.g. 1984a), that is, the necessity of using naturally occurring interaction as data, as opposed to constructed examples, observation, field notes, or experiments. The access to recorded data that can be inspected repeatedly makes it possible to access the fine details of the interactional machinery necessary for analyzing conversational interaction. Also, since a goal of CA was to describe social structure, action, talk and behavior as they are accomplished, using ‘real’ data that can be shared is not merely an advantage; it is a necessity. The objective is to understand the “organized procedures of talk as they are employed in real-worldly contexts between real persons in real relationships whose talk has a real consequentiality and accountability” (Heritage, 1989:23). I will return to some other methodological implications of the CA approach to talk and action below, as well as in chapter 4.

2.6.2 Context as locally negotiated

Returning to Heritage’s second point, the notion of ‘context’ is an important one to conversation analysts, as seen from the view on the production of talk as “doubly contextual” (Heritage, 1984:242). The notion of context has since long been a central concept in many approaches to human social organization, for example, pragmatics, sociolinguistics, and the ethnography of communication (Goodwin & Duranti, 1992). The concept is used as referring to both the larger external (societal, social, cultural) context, and the internal (local, linguistic) context for a certain action or utterance. Within traditional sociolinguistics, it is the external context, and factors such as age, gender, class, ethnicity, that have been central in interpreting linguistic variation (Norrby, 1996).

On the contrary, within the interactional paradigm of sociolinguistics, Gumperz’ notion of contextualization cues (Gumperz, 1982) proposed a more dynamic view of context for talk, and showed how participants in their talk invoked those details of context that were relevant at each given point, and demonstrated how a range of linguistic options were used in the contextualization process (Drew & Heritage, 1992). Gumperz’ work indicated how the context for talk is constantly reborn within and by the interaction
itself. Gumperz’ notion of context and how participants in interaction utilize perceptual, sequential, and global inference resources in understanding intentions and goals of the other speaker(s) is related to, but somewhat wider than, the notion of context in CA. One of the core methodological assumptions within CA has been to avoid the application of static categories (such as gender, status, ethnicity, age) unless it can be demonstrated that participants themselves orient to these categorizations. This is in line with the ethnomethodological heritage, where the analyst’s focus should be participants’ own understanding as opposed to categories imposed on the material by the analyst.

The analytic focus of CA has almost exclusively been on the local, linguistic context and the sequential relationship between utterances (Heritage’s second point), and viewing each utterance as both shaped and shaping of this context “suggests the inadequacy of any view that treats context as a static field surrounding the sentence, speech event, or other action” (Goodwin & Heritage, 1990:289). However, especially in work on institutional interaction, CA has faced criticism from other disciplines regarding the narrow conception of context (see e.g. Koole, 1997). It has been argued that the analysis of interaction in institutions and organizations requires a widening of the narrow focus on the local context because of the fact that other, larger social constraints operate on the interaction. Heritage's third point, however, raises a conversation analytic defense of this view of context treatment: since it is the analyst’s job to understand which parts of the context influence members’ talk and linguistic choices, the categories that an analyst may think ought to influence the interaction (e.g. asymmetrical relations between participants, gender) may not be the ones that the participants themselves orient to at that specific point in interaction, plus, the range of contextual details that participants can invoke is infinite, and by choosing a few of these as the most significant for the interaction, the analyst risks missing what is really going on and what participants themselves orient to in the context of talk. Therefore, all details are of equal potential relevance, and none can be dismissed as irrelevant.

Instead, what is dismissed is advance idealization and generalization of the material, and it is this type of criticism that conversation analysts have leveled against the decontextualized models of interaction proposed by the linguistic Discourse Analysis school (Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975) and speech act theory (e.g. Searle, 1969), where categories of ill-formedness and well-formedness of sentences or a predetermined number of possible speech acts guide the analyses. The ‘local’ context within the DA tradition is often the grammatical context within the sentence, basically decontextualized, whereas
CA places the contextual focus on sequential organization within which action is accomplished. Within speech act pragmatics, the focus lies on the internal ‘power’ of each utterance to accomplish an act (a promise, a threat, an assessment), with less attention to the context of that utterance. The role of the co-participants in constructing the interactional event is neglected for the intention of the individual speaker. Heritage and Atkinson (1984:6) describe the contextual focus on sequences within conversation analysis as follows:

No empirically occurring utterance ever occurs outside, or external to, some specific sequence. Whatever is said will be said in some sequential context, and its illocutionary force will be determined by reference to what it accomplishes in relation to some sequentially prior utterance or set of utterances. As long as a state of talk prevails, there will be no escape or timeout from these considerations. And, insofar as unfolding sequences and their constituent turns are unavoidable analytic concerns for interactants, they provide a powerful and readily accessible point of entry in the unavoidable contextedness of actual talk.

Thus, conversation analysis focuses on how participants interpret the context, and how context is a negotiated process that the interactional contributions expand, shape, and renew with each turn. I have provided a simplified account of context as it is conceived of in the actual analysis of fragments of talk10.

2.6.3 Some other CA particulars

Aside from the conversation analytic interpretation of ‘context(s)’, there are a few other features that are distinctive to CA in relation to other prominent discourse analytic approaches. As mentioned earlier, the disciplinary origin of different discourse analytic approaches can in part explain the differing initial objectives of CA, speech act theory, Discourse Analysis, and interactional sociolinguistics respectively. The action focus of CA stems from a sociological objective to understand the organization of social life, whereas the DA approach, specifically the exchange structure model of Sinclair and Coulthard, had a more ‘syntactic’ point of departure: describing the structure of discourse (particularly classroom interaction) based on a predetermined model of moves and exchanges that is applied to an empirical material. Here, we find one of the most pervasive differences between DA and CA: the methodological order of procedure is reversed. In CA, the analysis focuses on an open, inductive approach to the data, whereas the DA model applies a theoretical model

10 For a comprehensive account of different approaches to context in research on language as an interactional phenomenon, see Duranti and Goodwin (1992).
deductively to an empirical material (Norrby, 1996). Whereas CA set out to describe social order and action, DA aimed to describe the ‘grammar of interaction’ on the level of language alone, with less interest in social relations. Instances that do not match the model proposed are dismissed as rule-breaking or ill-formed, whereas CA has a special interest in the ‘deviant cases’ (ten Have, 1999) and how these are perceived as perfectly understandable by participants themselves based on their knowledge about interaction. CA also does not make any assumptions about participants’ intentions, as do speech act theorists. The focus on the local context alone and what participants make relevant there distinguishes CA from the interactional sociolinguistics of, for example, Gumperz, who places a greater emphasis on the external sociocultural context and how different sociocultural groups use contextualization signals differently.

A long-standing problem for social scientists has been how meaning and understanding is accomplished, particularly how to access the actors’ definition of a situation, and how this translates into actions resulting from this understanding (Lee, 1987:43). The conversation analytic solution to this problem was to study the process of interpretation of a situation in the interaction itself, since participants display their understanding of prior talk and the situation with each contribution. Heritage (1984:254) has referred to this process of socially shared understanding as “an architecture of intersubjectivity”. Schegloff (1991:151) has exemplified the process of sustaining understanding in conversation through the organization of repair: when a speaker treats some aspect of prior talk as problematic in terms of understanding, there is a sequentially provided opportunity to deal with this problem of understanding. These examples are, according to Schegloff, the “last structurally provided defense of intersubjectivity in conversation”, that is, in interaction, speakers continually display publicly their understanding of the preceding talk to which their next action is addressed. Here, the adjacent positioning of utterances provides a framework for “continuous updating of public, intersubjective understandings” (Heritage, 1989:25).

I will now make a few notes on the methodology of CA before moving on to another important division of CA work, namely, that of ordinary conversations, and interaction in various social institutions.

2.7 Methodological implications

CA’s view on social interaction, social order, and intersubjective understandings are intimately related to its methodology. CA’s methodological objective is to
describe and analyze social actions and the organization of interaction. The interest lies in describing the how; the orderly ways in which people go about their daily tasks and activities in interaction, and it is the structure of interaction, and the why questions are primarily answered through explanations from the interaction itself, rather than from the ethnographic particulars of participants or the setting (Psathas, 1995). CA researchers insist on recording naturally occurring interactions, on audio recordings, and more recently, video recordings, with the advantages of being able to re-inspect data, to share analyses, and to link non-vocal actions to talk. The process of transcribing interaction in detail and to be able to find and illustrate fine-grained details of importance to participants is characteristic of CA data treatment.

The working order is inductive, and the analyst is to approach the material without specific assumptions, theories, or pre-selected topics. Frequencies of an observation are less interesting; one single instance of an interesting phenomenon is sufficient if the analyst can demonstrate how it is organized. Subsequent examples of the same pattern are not necessarily proof that the analysis is adequate; instead, they show another instance with the same method in action (Psathas, 1995:50). Overall empirical generalization is not the primary goal; it is the analyst’s task to show the ‘unique adequacy’ (Garfinkel & Sacks, 1970) of each analysis. However, collections of instances are often gathered, and often show the complexity and variation of options chosen by participants. This is, for example, the case with Schegloff’s collection of telephone conversation openings (Schegloff, 1968).

As mentioned earlier, CA sets out to uncover members’ own inference making, and therefore, it becomes essential that the analyst never imposes his or her own categories without demonstrating that these methods also what participants use in a particular sequence. This is probably the most complicated restriction for conversation analysts, but participants’ biographies, theoretical constructs, or assumptions about ideas, feelings or intentions are set aside unless it can be demonstrated in interaction that participants orient to these aspects. It is this methodological frame of restrictions that I find both challenging and promising in approaching emotions from a conversation analytic perspective: to see how participants themselves orient to emotional expression during the actual production of social interaction, and not how they account for these orientations of experiences in interviews, surveys, or how they are interpreted by investigators in experimental or hypothetical situations.
2.8 Applied CA – institutional interaction

Although the early conversation analytic studies utilized material other than ordinary conversations (calls to emergency services, suicide centers etc.), the distinction between ordinary conversations and interactions in institutional settings was not problematized until later. The focus was not on whether the conversations occurred in specific ‘institutionalized’ settings, but on structural generalities of the conversations as such, for example, conversational sequencing, turn-taking, openings and closings (e.g. Schegloff, 1968; Schegloff & Sacks, 1973; Sacks, lecture 1, in Jefferson, 1992). Sacks and his collaborators then gradually moved from using institutional data toward ‘ordinary’ conversations as they believed that non-institutional data provided better examples of the structural basics needed to understand materials with other types of restrictions (ten Have, 1999).

Later followers have however increasingly turned back to institutional materials, ‘applying’ the basic knowledge acquired from ‘pure’ conversations to see how the various social institutions researched were “talked into being” (Heritage 1984:290). Paul ten Have (1999:8) refers to the latter type of interactions as “applied CA”, and the first as “pure CA”, and other frequent concepts are “institutional interaction” (Drew & Heritage, 1992) or “talk and social structure” (Psathas, 1995; Boden & Zimmerman, 1991), reflecting a sociological interest in structural relations of the context. Examples of such research include court proceedings (Drew, 1992; Maynard, 1984), medical interaction (Heath, 1986; Peräkylä, 1997, 2002; Haakana, 2000, 2002), interaction in educational settings (McHoul, 1978; Benwell & Stokoe, 2002; Waring, 2002), news interviews (Greatbatch, 1992; Clayman, 1992; Clayman & Heritage, 2002), and job interviews (Button, 1992), to name just a few. At this stage, it is necessary to clarify a few concepts.

2.8.1 Institutional talk

It is essential to pause here and make clear what concepts like ‘institution’ and ‘institutional interaction’ actually refer to for conversation analysts11. An interaction is institutional not only or per definition by an institutional setting in which it occurs, but insofar as “participants’ institutional or professional identities are somehow made relevant to the work activities in which they are engaged” (Drew & Heritage, 1992:4). The consequence is that even in institutional

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11 Other significant contributions to the study of institutional talk and Institutionality are, for example, Drew & Sorjonen, 1997; Sarangi & Roberts, 1999.
settings, conversations may be non-institutional, and institutional identities may be invoked in conversational settings outside of institutional settings.

Ethnomethodological/conversation analytic perspectives view settings and actions as interrelated, but the social structure in itself does not necessarily determine or shape actions pervasively, which has been the dominant view in many sociological approaches (Psathas, 1995). Social structure has often been viewed as defining context and interaction, as an independent force affecting of determining social action. According to conversation analysts, this is a theoretician’s construct that cannot be conceived of in such a way unless participants themselves display this orientation to structural constraints (Psathas, 1995:65). The task has instead been to uncover and describe the ways in which (again, the how) social order and the institution are ongoingly achieved and produced through the actions of participants themselves and their understanding of the institution. The analyst should not assume a causal relationship between social structure and interaction patterns, and instead focus on the ways in which participants’ actions show such constraints. Furthermore, the focus of conversation analytic work on institutions is the interaction order rather than the institutional order (Sarangi & Roberts, 1999:7).

For reasons stated above (i.e. the setting does not automatically make an interaction institutional or vice versa) many have argued that a pre-analytic distinction between informal conversations and those in institutions is analytically unnecessary (Pomerantz & Fehr, 1997:64). However, the literature on ‘institutionalized’ features of interaction have revealed some general differences between institutional and non-institutional talk (ten Have, 1999:165), and three themes may be viewed as central for investigation of institutional talk-in-interaction (summarized from Heritage, 1997:163-164):

1. Institutional interaction normally involves the participants in specific goal orientations which are tied to their institution relevant identities.
2. Institutional interaction involves special constraints on what will be treated as allowable contributions to the business at hand.
3. Institutional talk has connections to procedures and frameworks of inference that are particular to specific institutional contexts.

Although institutional interaction may require these considerations, it is the structure of mundane conversations, in which we have been socialized, that exists behind these specifics. The ‘machinery’ for talk is there, and we utilize those methods and procedures, although with additional frames of inference-making; basic forms of talk “constitute a kind of bench-mark against which
other more formal of ‘institutional’ types are recognized and experienced” (Heritage, 1989:34). Regarding the specifics of interactional organization in institutions, it has been proposed that systematic features can be found on six levels: turn-taking organization, turn design, sequential organization, lexical choice, overall structural organization, and social epistemology/asymmetries (Drew & Heritage, 1992; Heritage, 1997). Research on institutional interaction builds on the CA conception of context as something that participants shape and recreate together during the course of interaction, and that the extent to which the larger institutional context influences participants’ options is to be studied in how members display this orientation to legal constraints, professional identities, role asymmetries, knowledge, or format. The six levels where the specifics of interaction in institutions may emerge will be discussed in more detail next. Specific considerations regarding the institutional nature of the data used in the present empirical study will be discussed in chapter 4.

2.8.2 A research agenda for institutional interaction

Heritage (1997) suggests a list of talk characteristics that should merit extra attention in research on institutional talk-in-interaction. In terms of turn-taking organization, a courtroom proceeding may be an extreme case of turn-type pre-allocation, i.e. it comes with the roles of doing ‘being’ the prosecutor versus the defendant who gets to ask questions, and who is confined to answering them. The specifics of such turn-taking systems are shown through how participants display shared orientations to the taking of turns. Sacks et al (1974) mentioned how turn-taking organization may differ between different interaction systems. There are degrees of ‘formality’ in this, and if court proceedings may be one extreme of a continuum, a face-to-face meeting between a few individuals in an organization may be more or less ‘conversational’ in character with no pre-allocation of turns, and turn-taking is managed as in any informal conversation. In between these extremes, we may find classroom interaction, doctor-patient interaction, entertainment interviews, and more formal board meetings with a chair responsible for allocating turns. The analyst’s task is to show the local management of external constraints on turn-taking.

Turns, then, are designed in two ways. One is the activity that the turn is designed to perform, and the other is the components of the turn chosen to accomplish that action (Drew & Heritage, 1992:32). The action selected for a turn to perform could be, as in Sacks’ examples of call-takers setting out to extract a suicidal caller’s name. In addition, there is a range of ways in which
each action could be performed, but the syntactic, lexical, or prosodic features of a turn design chosen are of interest to conversation analysts because of their implications on next actions. Drew and Heritage (1992:35-36) provide an example where a school official uses a passive construction when calling a child’s parents to inform them that their child had been absent from class (“he was reported absent” instead of “he was absent”, alternatively “your son skipped class”) to maintain neutrality and not assert the absence as a ‘fact’.

Lexical choice can represent institutional orientation through the use of institution-specific inferences, “lay” versus “technical” vocabulary (Drew & Sorjonen, 1997), person references and temporal references, level of formality and use of standard versus slang forms (Drew & Heritage, 1992:29), or the use of official, neutral, and non-reproachable forms (ten Have, 1999:170). As seen in the Silverman excerpt, the doctor’s switch from “I” to “we” was significant, and persons representing organizations often refer to themselves as “we” in conversation to indicate their orientation to an institutional identity; a representative of an organization rather than the individual speaker himself.

Sequential organization, the heart of CA’s enterprise, is naturally also of great interest in institutional talk-in-interaction. Sequence organization involves analyzing how participants accomplish actions in the local context, for example, question-answer sequences in news interviews (Clayman & Heritage, 2002) or perspective-display sequences in medical interviews (Maynard, 1991). Sequential analysis is also frequently comparative in the sense that analysts describe differences in sequence organization between ordinary informal conversations and institutional ones (Drew & Sorjonen, 1997:106). Comparative treatment has also been considered for overall structural organization of institutional vs. conversational interaction (Drew & Heritage, 1992:43). In mapping the entire interaction into sections, phases, or episodes, it is possible to see how participants pursue various sub-goals (Heritage, 1997:167) and how each task is managed and closed down. In ordinary conversations, there are very few standard patterns of orientation after the routine openings of the talk, whereas many types of institutional interaction have a “task-related standard shape” (Drew & Heritage, 1992:43) through which actions are implemented. This could be, for example, an agenda in front of participants that is being followed. Another aspect of the overall sequential organization related to ‘standard patterns’ of achieving certain goals is the repetitive nature of a specific task for an institutional professional, for example, a call taker or an employee at an information counter. These professionals may be performing similar routines many times a day, which gives them more experience of routines that effectively
accomplish a given task. A telling example is emergency calls to 911 numbers, where the main goal for the call taker is to extract the necessary information as fast as possible (Drew & Heritage, 1992:43), and to move the conversation to a close as soon as that information has been extracted. Often, there are also explicitly stated organizational routines and manuals for processing this institutional task. Because of various features of turn design, this was not accomplished in the Whalen et al (1998) example examined earlier (see 2.1).

Finally, institutional interaction also calls for examination of how social relations and other epistemologies are accomplished. Orientations to broader social concerns of the context may be displayed at any or all sequences of interaction. They can be related to asymmetries in several ways; in terms of unequal participation rights, of uneven distribution of institutional knowledge and experience of routines, of rights of access to knowledge, and of so-called professional ‘cautiousness’ and neutrality from the professional in relation to laypersons (Heritage, 1997; ten Have, 1999). It is important to note here that asymmetries are not exclusively features of institutional interaction, although there may be more formal constraints regulating these. Any social interaction is asymmetric on a moment-to-moment basis (Linell & Luckmann, 1991).

In essence, institutional interaction is institutional in the sense that participants display orientation to some aspect of the membership in or relation to an institution, and this may involve institutional roles, identities, tasks-at-hand, or pre-set structural procedures. The six levels of analysis suggested by Heritage (1987) are, as seen above, not mutually exclusive, but overlap and interact. The task for the analyst is explicatory rather than explanatory (Psathas, 1995:66), and interaction is viewed as the institution ‘talked into being’, so that by studying institutional talk and action through a talk-in-interaction lens, knowledge about institutional practices, norms, procedures, and participants’ relation to these, can be richly and empirically demonstrated.

2.9 Within and between disciplinary boundaries

It is clear that talk in interaction has relevance for, and is today practiced within, a number of disciplinary enterprises, for example, sociology, linguistics, sociolinguistics, anthropology, social psychology, and communication (Drew, 2003). However, these disciplines were initially not very hospitable to the kind of studies that were brought forth by conversation analysts and other talk-in-interactionists, mainly because the scope of the subject matter within each discipline was defined so that the relevance of studies on talk fell between the
boundaries of these disciplines. Although a surface look at the materials and analyses that constitute the heart of CA may look like the linguist’s arena, the early scope of CA was not defined in terms of a linguistic enterprise:

[...] achieving a naturalistic observational discipline that could deal with the details of social action(s) rigorously, empirically, and formally. For a variety of reasons [...] our attention has focused on conversational materials; [...] not because of a special interest in language, or any theoretical primacy we accord conversation. Nonetheless, the character of our materials as conversational has attracted our attention to the study of conversation as an activity in its own right, and thereby to the ways in which actions accomplished in conversation require reference to the properties and organization of conversation for their understanding and analysis, both by participants and by professional investigators (Sacks & Schegloff 1973:289-290).

Thus, in the early stages of CA’s emergence, it was made clear that the questions the new program sought to answer were sociological ones, and not linguistic, and the work initially seemed of little interest to linguistics. It was argued that findings such as the AP and the turn-taking system, although interesting, were too simplistic, and did not contribute theoretically to an understanding of how a conversational ‘function’ is systematically realized in linguistic form (McIvenny & Raudaskoski, 1996:266). Furthermore, the preference for quantitative studies as opposed to explaining single instances within linguistics, and the fact that linguists did not insist on using natural data, also contributed to the lack of appreciation of CA. This has changed, and today, conversation analytic procedures are used across disciplines, including sociolinguistics and linguistics.

Linguists have generally been concerned with the structure and function of language in interaction through a priori theoretical models (Lee, 1987:50), and there has been resistance toward viewing ‘disorderly’ talk as ‘orderly’, partly because of Saussure’s early definition of the scope of linguistics. Chomsky’s proposition that linguists ought to work with idealized sentences constructed by the analyst has also long had a grip on linguists, which has made them refrain from interaction studies, and speech act theorists have also placed much greater emphasis on units of speech extracted from their social context (Goodwin & Heritage, 1990:285). Within sociology, talk and language were set aside as systems of investigation in their own right in favor of building large-scale

12 Although the early papers were published in linguistic journals, e.g. the Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson (1974) paper, which was published in Language.
13 It may be noted that in Sweden, CA has mainly emerged from sociolinguistics rather than sociology.
conceptual models of societal systems, and it was assumed that studies of language and talk belonged to linguistics, and since CA scholars only used talk empirically to study “action, not communication” (Drew, 2003:133), the enterprise was all but linguistic. Social psychology has emphasized hypothesis-testing experimental approaches to communication, where individual characteristics (i.e. gender, personality etc) have been used as independent variables affecting talk and interaction. In relation to varying disciplinary objectives and preferred methodologies, it is not surprising that it has taken some time for talk-in-interaction studies to find multiple disciplinary ‘homes’.

By now, there is no serious doubt that language as used in talk and interaction is highly contextual, and that much of the structures of language-in-use can only be explained from the fact that language has developed for face-to-face communicative purposes (McIvenny & Raudaskoski, 1986:269). Many linguists interested in various aspects of spoken language have adopted CA views with productive outcomes, for example, studies on language acquisition as a profound interactional socialization process (e.g. Ochs & Schieffelin, 1984; Ochs, 1986; Ochs, Schegloff & Thompson, 1996), and interactional perspectives on relative clauses in social interaction (Fox & Thompson, 1990).

Furthermore, CA research on what social psychologists have called back-channels, for example, particles like ‘uh huh’, ‘oh’, ‘mm-hm’, and ‘yeah’ has demonstrated much more complex actions that these particles can accomplish than merely back-channeling in communication (Hopper, 1989:50); empirical insights that have been extremely useful for all disciplines working with spoken interaction. Findings like these, and others, have also caused reconsideration of methodological approaches within linguistics, where the situated use of language has been severely neglected in favor of decontextualized investigation of language (McIvenny & Raudaskoski, 1996). Instead of constructing a decontextualized ‘grammar of conversation’, the approach proposes a “participants’ syntax” (Lerner, 1991:456), i.e. participants’ own orientation to talk as segmented and structured, and encourages analysts to move away from traditional syntactic thinking when it comes to conversational grammar.

On the other end, linguistics, with its rich terminology for describing sub-systems and units of language, has offered a vocabulary for conversation analysts to work with, applied to interactional contexts. Also, a hitherto relatively limited area of CA where linguistics can make contributions in terms of systematic description in transcription is phonetics (e.g. Local & Kelly, 1986; Couper-Kuhlen & Selting, 1996). Furthermore, unlike sociologists, linguists are already familiar and comfortable with micro-level analyses of language, and are
thus particularly suited to study structures-in-action in talk. In addition, sociolinguistics and other subfields with an interest in discourse, spoken language, pragmatic concerns, culture or communication could become more integrated with, and contribute greatly to, the social sciences in general if its research begins showing an even greater interest in more social, contextual, and ‘human’ aspects of language-in-use; emotion being one example.

2.10 Summing up: Conversation Analysis

In this chapter, my objective has been to provide a general framework for the empirical study conducted as part of the present dissertation. The history and development of the conversation analytic approach provides the base against which I have collected and analyzed my data corpus, and more importantly, constitutes a frame of reference when situating the present approach within interdisciplinary work on emotions.

Current developments in CA show an increasing interest in more ‘human’ concerns, on a larger scale than a particular discourse particle or task sequencing, such as talking through illness, managing optimism, and constructing relationships (see e.g. Beach, 1996; 2003; Mandelbaum, 2003). Considering the setting and topics of much CA research, for example, medical interaction, classroom interaction, courtroom proceedings, criminal interrogations, deepened understanding of how people ‘do’ emotion should be highly relevant. In chapter 3 next, research on emotions in social interaction is reviewed and discussed, including conversation analytic work that has implicitly or explicitly addressed emotion phenomena.
Chapter 3

3. Emotions and Social Interaction

3.1 Introduction – emotions and social life

The scientific study of emotions is currently one of the fastest growing areas in the human sciences. Research on emotions has multiple academic homes; psychology, sociology, speech communication, philosophy, biology, anthropology, and human geography, to name a few. However, during nearly the entire 19th century, emotions were pushed to the back stages of scholarly attention in the social sciences in favor of cognitive theories and rationalistic approaches to human behavior (Kemper, 1990). Only in the last few decades have scholars seriously turned their attention to emotions in social interaction, and the body of literature with a social focus presents a wide range of theoretical as well as methodological approaches; from self-reports, experiments, psycho-physiological measures, and behavioral observations to discourse analysis, in-depth interviewing, and anthropological fieldwork.

As mentioned earlier, the number of studies with an explicit focus on emotion within talk-in-interaction scholarship is still very low. The present chapter will therefore present a review of approaches that view emotions as inextricably linked to their social context, in order to frame the approach to emotion taken in this dissertation in relation to other perspectives, and also to highlight relevant frameworks that emphasize the role of the social situation.

After a brief overview of emotion research in the social sciences, the presentation in this chapter is divided into three stages. First, I will present the general conceptual framework of social constructionism, and emotion research from a constructionist perspective. Social constructionist approaches to emotion view emotions as social actions that emerge within social interaction according to “emotional standards” set within a specific culture during a specific time. The constructionist approach shares some basic assumptions about social interaction, social behavior, and the role of language with ethnomethodology, conversation analysis, and discursive psychology. Secondly, and on a more applied level, I will present selected research on the communication of emotion (covering vocal, verbal, and nonverbal expression) and on emotions in institutions; research which stems from different approaches and methodologies, but that is relevant in identifying and interpreting emotions in social interaction. Thirdly, I will review work on talk-in-
interaction, mostly from a CA perspective, that in one way or another deals with emotions in talk and interaction. I will show the relevance of talk-in-interaction scholarship on emotions, and I will address both the potential of such studies, and the problems associated with approaching emotions from this vantage point.

3.1.1 Emotion research in the social sciences: a brief overview

Mapping out the origins and disciplinary foundations of emotion research is a challenging task. The branches overlap a number of disciplines, such as biology, medicine, psychotherapy, anthropology, psychology, philosophy, sociology, linguistics and communication, and the definitions of what an emotion is are as diverse as their origins. The scientific study of emotions dates back to the late 1800s; the earliest and most widely recognized text was Darwin’s (1872) work on the expression of emotions in humans and animals. Darwin, who focused on the biological similarities of emotional expression between animals and humans, made a significant mark in the history of emotion research, and much of the terminology he used as well as the emphasis on the nonverbal rather than the verbal aspects of emotional expression still dominate, particularly in research that emphasizes biological and evolutionary aspects of human emotion. A present-day follower of this approach can be seen, for example, in Paul Ekman’s (e.g. 1994) work on facial expressions of emotion, their universality, and people’s recognition of them.

In psychology, traditionally viewed as the discipline that “owns” emotion (Kemper, 1993:41), the biologically oriented perspectives (primarily the Darwinian and the Jamesian, see Cornelius, 1996) remain strong, along with the cognitive perspective and the social constructionist approach. Freudian psychoanalytic treatment of emotions (Freud, 1920/1975; 1933/1965) have naturally also influenced approaches to emotions within psychology, and in these, emotions are viewed as underlying forces, *drives*, that directly influence behavior. According to Freud, only parts of our emotional life becomes manifest in verbal behavior since defense mechanisms prevent direct access to them. Instead, emotions surface as symbolic acts, whereas dreams and fantasies can reveal stronger emotional cues.

The Jamesian perspective, following the early texts by William James (1884) focuses on emotions as bodily changes. We perceive and interpret these changes as certain emotions. In essence, we have emotions after we have sensed some bodily change, and these changes are the result of the perception
of something important to us in our environment. James’ most extreme proposition was that if we adopt a certain facial expression, we will experience the emotion associated with that facial expression. The Darwinian and Jamesian approaches are not relevant for this study, since they do not attach much weight to social concepts that influence emotional experience and expression.

In the cognitive perspective, which is part of the larger cognitive paradigm in the social sciences, emotions are the result of how we perceive, “appraise” a situation and the meaning we ascribe to events. Emotions require thought, and each individual’s perception of an event leads to an appraisal, which in turn leads to an emotion (Cornelius, 1996). A famous offspring of the cognitive approach to emotions is Lazarus & Folkman’s (1984) theory of stress as a result of appraising a situation. The cognitive perspective has been very dominant, but also has some problems. Often, the social aspects of how we appraise situations have not been considered (i.e. the appraisal process does not just involve ‘self’ but also others’ standards when we appraise a situation). Furthermore, appraisal has often been viewed as a one-shot evaluation instead of as a process of constant negotiation and re-appraisal. Since emotions are experienced in situ and in response to a constantly fluctuating environment, it is natural to think that appraisal is a process that is re-negotiated moment-by-moment. In contrast to the cognitive perspective, the social constructionist approach to emotions targets the social context for emotions, and I will return to this in the next section. By way of summary, psychological approaches to emotion range from little or no interest in social aspects of emotions to an explicit focus on emotions as ultimately social products.

Within sociology, emotions did not gain serious attention until the 1980s (e.g. Hochschild, 1983; Scheff, 1990; Collins, 1990), although earlier work (for example Cooley, 1922; Elias, 1939/1978; Goffman, 1956) had dealt with "emotions" in social life. Kemper (1993) outlines five dominant sociological approaches to emotions, in which two emphasize our “place” in social relationships and interactional outcomes; one stemming from Goffman’s (1967) work on interaction rituals and Durkheim’s (1912/1954) theory of solidarity as the “glue” that holds society together, and another proposing emotions as responses to power and status dimensions in social relationships. Both models emphasize how social relationships/social interactions are “antecedents of emotion” (Kemper, 1993:44), and in the interaction ritual approach, how different power and status interactions variably produce different kinds of emotional energy (Collins, 1990). Many of our human emotions are seen as “results from real, anticipated, imagined or recollected outcomes of social relations”
(Kemper, 1993:42), and the power/status dimensions of a particular interaction determine if the interaction produces good or bad feelings about our ‘selves’. Goffman himself (1967) had laid the foundation for a comprehensive theory of a particular human emotion that was central in all social rituals, namely embarrassment, and according to him, we are constantly making efforts to avoid embarrassment (of self and others) in interaction. Embarrassment is the “result” when something has gone wrong in a social interaction, that the interaction ritual is disrupted and threats to interactants’ preferred ‘self’ in the eyes of others occurs. In essence, social interaction, albeit often studied from a macro-perspective, are viewed as central to elicitation and experience of emotions. Scheff (1990), the third approach described by Kemper, proposes shame as the fundamental component in sustaining social order.

Another approach to the sociology of emotions was brought forth by Arlie Hochschild (1983). Her approach involved the cultural dimension of emotions to a greater extent than the others mentioned, and emphasizes the role of “feeling rules” for the experience of emotions. Emotions serve a signaling function, indicating to us where we stand in the world, and sociocultural considerations guide the emotional norms we adhere to in everyday life. Hochshild is best known for her work on emotion management among flight attendants. Another trend involves symbolic interactionism, and the idea of emotions as role-taking (see Kemper, 1990; 1993). Basically, sociological perspectives center on emotions as a regulator in social life.

Anthropologists have, quite naturally, given precedence to cultural aspects of emotions (White, 1993; Kitayama & Markus, 1994). Work in the discipline has given us a plethora of studies on the linguistic encoding of affect in different languages and a substantial critique of approaches that assume universality in how we classify emotions. Furthermore, anthropological work has challenged the Darwinian view of emotions as “natural” in humans as opposed to dependent on sociocultural facts (e.g. Lutz, 1988). Within sociolinguistics and anthropological linguistics, there is now a substantial body of research into the lexicology of emotions in (see e.g. Russell, Fernandez-Dols, Manstead & Wellencamp, 1994).

As seen from above, emotion research in the social sciences spans over many disciplines and epistemological frameworks. Of particular interest for this study is the branch of emotion research that views emotions in terms of contextual and social processes, and not solely as biological responses within
the individual. These theoretical frameworks consider the mere presence of others as central in eliciting, altering, and working through emotions, and that socially prescribed sets of concepts within a culture determine our emotional experience and expression. This vantage point lies under the larger paradigm of social constructionism, and despite variations in the emphasis on emotions as purely social constructs versus a combination of psychobiological, evolutionary, and social factors, the social constructionist perspective emphasizes social interaction, process and context in the understanding of emotions.

In contrast to other dominant views on emotions, the social constructionist perspective accounts for societal practices and views emotional experience and behavior as both protean and locally regulated (Oatley, 1993). Obviously, a conversation analytic project neither sets out to determine the origin of emotions, nor describe their biological correlates, and the social constructionist approach provides ample space for analyzing emotions on a social level, within interaction. The next sections will account for social constructionism, constructionist understandings of emotions, and gaps in the current constructionist literature on emotions.

3.2 Emotions and social constructionism

3.2.1 The social constructionist paradigm

The social constructionist (or, constructivist, depending on the writer’s preference and affiliation) approach to emotions has mainly developed within a larger program of social constructionism in the social sciences (see for example, Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Gergen, 1999; Coulter, 1989). A rationale of the social constructionist approach is how different aspects of “reality” (e.g. knowledge, gender, self) are constituted, embedded and maintained in social and cultural practices, including language. Reality, according to social constructionists, is socially negotiated and language is central in that people’s and society’s verbalization of experiences and knowledge determines their experiences of the world. Language works as a framework through which

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14 Although even the most extreme social constructionists have not been able to entirely exclude psychobiological aspects of emotions.
15 I will refer to the program as social constructionism rather than constructivism when referring to this umbrella paradigm. I have chosen to not make a distinction between the two suffixes since I find no differences in how they are applied by different scholars significant to the current review. Consequently, my discussion of social construction does not exclude the work of scholars using the –ivism suffix, nor does it mark a personal standpoint. I merely find the use of the –ivist suffix less linguistically aligned with the main noun “construction”, and any theoretical distinction is of little relevance here since I am mainly addressing the general ideas behind all social constructionist approach to emotions.
human experience is interpreted, and the bits of language that we are exposed to also favor some interpretations over others. Thus, the social processes involved in human experience and knowledge about the world around us are partially selected for us through language practices, and this means that there are power relations associated with social construction through language. Constructionist work attaches great weight to discourse/discourses in shaping social reality (e.g. Nightingale & Cromby, 1999).

### 3.2.2 A social constructionist approach to emotions

The social constructionist perspective on emotions follows the same basic ideas as the general umbrella of social constructionism, and it is claimed that emotions are not just influenced by cultural practices, but they are actually “products of culture” (Cornelius, 1996:150). Emotions, according to social constructionists, cannot be fully understood as physiological or evolutionary responses, nor as chemical processes that our bodies interpret and that give rise to certain emotions. These models fail to explain the social processes involved in both generating emotions and interpreting them, and constructionistically oriented emotion scholars encourage us to work with the social level of analysis in understanding emotions (Averill, 1980:309). Adopting a social constructionist perspective to emotions as exclusively sociocultural products is perhaps more dramatic (to scholars of other vantage points) than constructionist approaches to other phenomena, since it will be difficult to deny the psychobiological and evolutionary aspects of, for example, tears falling when we are crying.

James Averill, a social constructionist psychologist, defines emotions in terms of socially prescribed responses that are to be exhibited in a given situation, thus, he also emphasizes that emotions, to a great extent, are learned as part of our socialization processes:

The emotions are viewed here as transitory social roles, or socially constituted syndromes. The social norms that help to constitute these syndromes are represented psychologically as cognitive structures or schemata. These structures - like the grammar of a language - provide the basis for the appraisal of stimuli, the organization of responses, and the monitoring of behaviour (Averill, 1980:305-306).

Consequently, we learn sets of rules for “appropriate” appraisal and expression of emotions, and these rules govern our “emotional performances” in a given situation, and these learned responses vary between different cultures (Cornelius, 1996:154), i.e. people react differently to someone making an
offensive remark in different parts of the world. Averill also argues that in everyday life we still, to a great extent, think of emotions as “passions” – a force that we are temporarily overcome by, which is also displayed in our language. We are gripped by fear, seized by anger, and we fall in love, and these expressions also imply the non-accountability of actions relation to the emotion we are experiencing, i.e. they are out of our personal control. We interpret our emotional experiences as passions, but Averill argues that emotions are actions rather than passions; ways of accomplishing various social and individual goals.

Similarly, Gergen (1999:132) points out the problem with everyday views of emotions as individual experiences out of our control: “We gain much by replacing the image of private “feelings” with public action; it’s not that we have emotions, a thought, or a memory so much as we do them”. Emotions, according to the most literal interpretation of social constructionism, are all social products shaped by culture, language, and beliefs. The aspect of passivity associated with interpreting emotions as passions is perhaps strongest when it comes to love and anger, where we can interpret our own behaviour as a result of temporarily not being ourselves, but overcome by emotion. Thus, we are not to be held accountable for our actions when under the influence of “passions”. Averill (1996b) is also critical of the way in which “psychophysiological symbolism” in metaphors portrays emotions as both primitive and physiological, which goes far beyond what is supported by research.

However, not all social constructionists take the extreme position that emotions are purely social constructs; in fact, most social constructionist emotion scholars prefer a more moderate interpretation, which acknowledges a limited set of natural emotion responses (Oatley, 1993:344). The task, then, is to determine the extent to which emotions are determined by social construction through culture, language and belief systems, how this construction occurs, through which social components, and why. This is researched in both emotions that have no equivalents in the animal world (for example, contempt) and for emotions that are considered more likely to be pre-wired in humans as a result of biology and evolutionary survival. It is often argued that even though a certain physiological response seems to be predetermined, there are social components that determine the extent to which these are a predominant expression of a certain emotion. Thus, although anger may be associated with physiological arousal, social factors may influence our interpretation of the arousal and our behavioral responses to the feeling:

[...] a basic emotion occurs when the brain enters a particular mode of functioning on recognition of an event relevant to a goal, such as progress toward something
one wants, a loss, a frustration, a conflict of goals – but conscious knowledge about what counts as something to want, as a loss, as a frustration, as a conflict, or about which of such events caused the emotion, to whom it is directed, and so forth, is added to the basic emotion mode. This knowledge can be largely culturally determined, and it emerges in the emotion terms used in a culture (Oatley, 1993:345).

As we can see, the social constructionist view argues that how we come to experience certain emotions is to a large extent dependent on sociocultural scripts. Consider, for example, jealousy associated with romantic love. In some cultures where polygamy is the norm, extramarital affairs are not met with the feeling Westerners define as jealousy since our concept of jealousy requires a cultural concept of “exclusive ownership, a future-oriented premonition of losing something important and even losing self-esteem” (Ratner, 1989:213).

Similarly, the social concepts required for anger involve a notion of personal responsibility for the source of anger, and this leads social constructionists to claim that even though animals may display expressions we interpret as “anger”, the feeling is not the same as in humans. They may display aggression and frustration, but to be “angry” in a human sense means understanding whom or what to be angry at, and why. Likewise, the emotion “shame” requires an ethical notion of right and wrong, and emotions such as contempt or romantic love lack parallels in the world of animals (Ratner, 1989). Consequently, according to social constructionists, the social scripts in a culture are necessary pieces in understanding emotional experience and expression. Few social constructionists have made any great effort to study the universality of emotions across cultures – a characteristic of much naturalistically oriented research on emotions (Cornelius, 1996) because of this view of the cultural specificity of social concepts related to emotions. Also, many social constructionists see little point in categorizing emotion into groups of “basic” and other types of emotions; a society can shape and mold an infinite number of emotional states that can be functional within that social system (Averill, 1980:326). The number of emotions that are to be considered “basic” or prototypical varies between naturalistically oriented scholars, for example, Izard (1977) described ten different emotions, Plutchik (1980) argues for eight, and Ekman (1992) seven. Some occur in all these lists, e.g. fear, joy, and anger. These are to be viewed as more “basic” than other emotions because

16 These ideas present clear challenges and refutations of naturalistic and evolutionary theories of emotions.
of their universality across cultures (e.g. in terms of facial expressions) and their evolutionary functions in human survival (Cornelius, 1996:41).

However, social constructionists are not convinced by arguments that certain emotions are to be considered more basic than others merely because of their association with biological systems, and since different biological systems have been demonstrated to be involved in different emotional experience, it becomes impossible to determine why any of them should be more basic than others. Social constructionists have no particular interest in such classifications – instead, they are interested in the emotional norms that a culture prescribes, and how emotions function to maintain value systems in a society (Cornelius 1996:175). The emotional norms, (the “feeling rules” in Hochschild’s terms), govern emotional expression and our interpretation of emotional experience.

At present, the social constructionist approach to emotions is more of an approach to the components of emotions than a distinct theory (Oatley, 1993). No standards are set for methodological approaches, and thus, adopting a social constructionist view does not mean that a scholar approaches emotions in a certain way, or that there is agreement in terms of emotion categorization (e.g. basic emotions versus ‘social’ emotions). Oatley (1993:346-351) has outlined five dimensions where social constructionist work on emotions has made significant contributions to the field of emotion research. These are 1) cross-cultural comparisons of how emotional meaning is determined (either through anthropological field work in foreign cultures or studies of historical change), 2) cultural prescription studies, where the task is to find out social practices concerning when and how certain emotions occur, 3) infant/childhood development of emotion recognition and socialization, 4) the social construction of particular emotions in adulthood, and 5) the social accomplishments of emotions. The different dimensions all involve the degree to which we are socialized into feeling a certain way at a certain time in certain contexts. In essence, the way in which emotions are social constructs that change over time and adapt to new environmental circumstances.

### 3.2.3 Summing up: the essence of social constructionism and emotions

In essence, the social constructionists view emotions as emergent in social interaction rather than as a result of evolution, biology and individual characteristics, as serving social functions, and as culturally determined over biologically fixed. Emotions arise out of the normative context of each culture, which is also reflected in our talk and linguistic denomination of emotions.
Such normative prescriptions also guide emotional experience and behavior, and this is evident, for example, in how different cultures prescribe different emotional behavior for women than for men (see e.g. Fisher, 2000). Emotions are central features of interpersonal relationships, they are constructed in discourse, and how we talk about emotions and give them embodiment in social interaction is highly influential in how we experience emotions (see e.g. Lutz, 1985; Ochs & Schieffelin, 1989; Cornelius, 1996; Gergen, 1999). Therefore, Parrott & Harré (1996) suggest that must begin all studies of emotion by examining the various emotion concepts in that specific setting, or we will face the problem of not knowing if what we are looking for is the same as what our participants mean.

Emotions are expressed in a series fitted to the norms of the culture and context for the interaction, and thus prescribe the next appropriate action in that sequence (Gergen, 1999, see also Harré, 1986). As can be seen from the wording in this paragraph, the essence of a social constructionist approach to emotions has many parallels to CA’s core ideas of social actions and local norms. For the present work, the social constructionist view on emotions is relevant in terms of the importance given to language and cultural practices in actions accomplished by emotions. It is therefore natural, as a conversation analyst, to adopt a social constructionist approach to emotions in social interaction, and to focus one’s studies on the local regulation and treatment of emotions, and to remain agnostic in terms of the influence of biology and evolution on emotional experience and expression.

Returning to Oatley’s (1993) outline of constructionist work on emotions above, the work reviewed below perhaps fits best under the fifth category; that of what emotions accomplish in social life. The reason behind the selection of work below lies in the perspective adopted in the present dissertation; that of what emotions “do” in talk and social interaction, and that of how emotions are related to a particular institutional culture. A closer examination of what emotions “do” from constructionist perspectives follows.

### 3.2.4 What emotions “do” – routes to emotions in social interaction

#### 3.2.4.1 Emotions as social control: the ‘social’ emotions

A seminal piece on how emotions function as social regulation and control is Goffman’s (1967) *Interaction Ritual*, particularly his essay on embarrassment and social organization. Goffman viewed embarrassment as the primary social emotion in that the avoidance of embarrassment guides social behavior, and
that the occurrence of embarrassment is a clear indicator of what is considered “wrong” or inappropriate in society. Although this particular essay focused on embarrassment, Goffman did little in terms of defining emotions or empirically demonstrating how embarrassment functioned in face-to-face interaction. Rather, the essay is built around the idea of embarrassment as fundamentally significant in upholding social and moral principles in human interaction.

Goffman understood embarrassment as moments in face-to-face interactions where an individual becomes flustered, momentarily loses self-control, and is unable to comfortably participate in the systematically organized procedures that conversation requires, and relates these instances to conflicts between presentation and perception of self and identity in face-to-face encounters. The ‘flustered’ behavior that follows act in direct contravention to the complex mutual coordination of activities in face-to-face interaction, and embarrassment stands out as disorganized and irrational. We can be embarrassed both for ourselves and for the sake of others, and we organize our ‘interaction rituals’ as to avoid embarrassment. We also use embarrassment in more strategic ways; we have practical jokes, we tell stories of embarrassing incidents, and we joke about our own embarrassment. Goffman’s idea of embarrassment as central to social interaction has not been without critique, for example, Schudson (1984:638) points out that Goffman reduces human beings to merely “embarrassment-avoiders”, that he excludes the possibility that we sometimes are oblivious of the threat of potential embarrassment, and sometimes we choose to risk it anyway. Hence, Goffman’s view of embarrassment as the be-all and end-all of social interaction is exaggerated.

Another critique, as Heath (1988) has emphasized (see also below, 3.4.3), is the lack of empirical examples of how embarrassment functions socially. Goffman’s ideas of the constant negotiation of ‘face’, the impression we wish to project to others, laid the foundation for Brown and Levinson’s (1987) politeness theory, where it was suggested that strategies of politeness were routinely employed to avoid embarrassment for participants in social interaction. The politeness theory, in turn, has strong connections both with Goffman’s and others’ writings (e.g. Ting-Toomey, 1994; Cupach & Metts, 1994) on ‘face work’. Face work is the term used for the ritual maintenance of the image we wish to project to others in interaction (see chapter 5). In chapter 6, I also discuss embarrassment and embarrassment research specifically.

Scheff (1990) takes a similar approach to emotions as regulating social behavior, but instead of embarrassment, Scheff proposes shame as the
fundamental social emotion. Scheff argues that shame signals the state of the social bond between individuals. In short, humans are fundamentally social beings, and maintaining our important social bonds is our most crucial human motive. His ideas have been applied empirically to discourse primarily by Retzinger (1991), who has accumulated lists of vocal, verbal, and nonverbal markers of shame in discourse. Scheff also states that Harvey Sacks’ early work on phone calls to a suicide prevention center “hints at the role of shame and the absence of social bonds” (Scheff, 1990:197) although Sacks had a rather different approach to his materials.

A central tenet to these various works on embarrassment, shame, and facework is the idea of the (negative) social emotions as signals of something in the interaction/in the social bond that needs to be attended to. It has been demonstrated that there are efforts made to avoid the experience and display of shame, embarrassment as well as loss of face, and that the maintenance of a stable interaction/social bond requires some kind of mirroring process, where the individual monitors the behavior of her/himself and others and remains perceptive of the reactions of others. These ‘self-conscious emotions’, as the family of shame, guilt, embarrassment and pride are sometimes categorized, all involve some form of self-reflection/self-evaluation, and according to most scholars, they require a developed ‘self’; a clear recognition of a self as separate from others (Tangney, 1999), as opposed to the so-called basic emotions. According to this view, these emotions are secondary to the primary emotions (e.g. anger and fear) in that they require developed cognitive abilities and a sense of the self, which also means that children gradually develop the self-conscious emotions – they are not “pre-wired”. These emotions are social in the sense that they arise in interpersonal contexts, and they are shaped by socialization, social and moral standards, and cultural knowledge. These emotions, then, serve to maintain social structure and moral order, and although they seem to be ultimately related to the self, the outcome of interactional episodes with these emotions is deeply connected to the interactional actions of ourselves and others.

There is however little empirical evidence of how these emotions actually function in social interaction, other than studies of behavioral patterns frequently associated with self-reported experience of, for example, embarrassment. In short, the approaches to emotions as a form of social

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17 Scheff (1990) also draws parallels between shame and embarrassment, and mentions that Goffman’s choice of “embarrassment” instead of the stronger form of shame may be an example of the taboo associated with shame in modern society, and that embarrassment, the mild form, is more applicable in “normal” interactions and not, for example, psychotherapeutic discourse.
control emphasize the role of interpersonal relationships in maintaining social order and behaving according to cultural and moral standards in interaction.

3.2.4.2 Emotions as cultural prescriptions: the case of social institutions

Since the present empirical study was conducted in an institutional setting, specifically academic seminars, a short introduction to emotions in organizations/institutions is necessary. The scholarly interest in emotion within organizational studies has grown rapidly in the past few decades, and the role of emotions in the workplace has been upgraded significantly.

Substantial work on the relationship between organizational culture and emotional experience and display follows in the footsteps of Hochschild’s (1983) studies of flight attendants and bill collectors at Delta Airlines. Her work showed how social norms and so-called “feeling rules” shaped behavior at work, and that although organizations display many of the emotion norms in society, they also construct their own feeling rules and a sense of what is the “right” behavior and display in different organizational contexts. The work of managing emotions and displaying appropriate emotions in these settings require real work, or emotional labor, in Hochschild’s terms, for example, flight attendants are trained to always display friendliness and service-mindedness toward their passengers, even in cases where they experience strong contempt, injustices, rudeness from their customers, or personal fatigue. Hochschild was interested in what the outcome of such emotional labor was for the employee, and concluded that in many cases, the “surface acting” that the flight attendant had to do resulted in another form of emotional management, deep acting, where the employee, in order to display a feeling that is as genuine as possible, uses various cognitive strategies to actually be able to display a genuine emotion. One strategy used was to imagine a situation where the appropriate emotion would be experienced, which in turn made it easier to display that emotion. Hochschild showed how emotions were relevant to airline workers (flight attendants and bill collectors) on two levels; that of emotion management (i.e. learning to manage one’s emotions, and particularly their expression) and emotional labo(u)r, i.e. the actual work of managing emotions and their expression, which can take different forms. Hochschild's work has many followers and sparked the debate on social construction of emotion, but since her analyses involve the internal, personal level of feeling and were primarily based on interview data and observation, we know little about what such interactions looked like other than how they were reported afterwards by
her respondents. Since the present work does not make any claims to determine organizational or individual outcomes of emotional labor or feeling rules of the academic interactions studied, suffice it to say that work on emotional labor has made a permanent footprint in research on emotions in institutions.

Fineman (2000:1) characterizes organizations as emotional arenas, where workday emotions “are deeply woven into the way roles are enacted and learned, power is exercised, trust is held, commitment formed and decisions made”. The route to emotions as connected to the way in which power and status positions are constructed and maintained has been taken by many sociologists (see e.g. Kemper, 1990). Feminist scholars have studied how the depiction of women as emotional and men as rational is interconnected with the subordination of women in society (see Fisher, 2000); a point also addressed by Hochshild (1983). Another angle is the dichotomization of emotion versus reason/rationality, a long-standing philosophical debate going back to Aristotle (Robinson, 1996; Naess, 1999). Organizations are traditionally viewed as rational enterprises, and emotions as interferences, as irrational and non-cognitive phenomena that distract from proper thought and action. However, recent work has shown that emotions actually make possible the processes we see as rational. Emotions and rationality are not mutually exclusive, nor is one the master process over the other. Instead, they interact and help us make decisions, prioritize, and relate to our co-workers (Damasio, 1994; de Sousa, 1987).

Of particular interest to the present work is the social constructionist view that social institutions have their own emotional codes, rules or norms for how and which emotions are to be appropriately displayed, and how they are responded to within the institutional setting. Fineman (2000:13) points out that expressed emotions and private feelings do not necessarily correlate (which was clear from Hochschild’s study where the flight attendants were specifically instructed to display pleasantness at any cost, regardless of their private feeling). Furthermore, Fineman argues that emotions are negotiative and changing according to interpersonal and structural influences, that boundaries between discrete emotional states are fleeting and we will not always be able to tie a specific emotional expression to a discrete emotional state or an object at which it is directed, and the larger society as well as particular institutions favor the production of certain emotions.

18 Other reviews on the role of emotions in organizations are, for example, Ashkanasy, Hartel & Zerbe (2000) and Ashforth & Humphrey (1995).
What, then, are the norms of emotional experience and display in academe, where the empirical data for this study was collected? Some work on academic communication has touched upon the topic of emotions in academe, for example, Tracy (1997) and Margolis (1992). Tracy’s interviews with graduate students and faculty members participating in colloquia revealed tension regarding the place of emotions in intellectual discussions. On the one hand, most of her respondents did not see emotions as generally inappropriate in colloquium talk; on the other, they seemed aware of the fact that the general preference in academic talk means downplaying one’s own feelings. It was also expressed that too much personal engagement would distract from the task at hand, whereas complete absence of emotions would make discussions too abstract and dull. Emotional displays toward an idea or theory could also be seen as either attacking others or as defensive of self. The risks associated with expressing a personal passion toward an idea were seen as greater than talking about ideas in a non-passionate, decontextualized and abstract fashion; the risk being to be perceived as less intellectual.

Similarly, in her interviews with university students about talk in the academic classroom, Margolis found that students, particularly women, felt that emotions were devalued and that in order to be perceived as a serious scholar, worrying about interpersonal dynamics or “feeling” something about a topic was to be avoided at all cost. It is through the ability to maintain discussions at a high level of abstraction, among other things, that gives access to prestigious symbolic capital in academe (Gunnarsson, 1999). The tension between the rational, the abstract, and the de-personalized on one hand, and the relational and the social on the other contributes to making academic interaction a fruitful site for studying how emotions are managed or perhaps avoided. However, none of the studies mentioned above have specifically looked at how the downplaying of emotions gets done, or how the “feeling rules” that apply in academe are reconstructed in actual interaction. One difficulty of such an enterprise would determining where institutional norms determine expression, and when emotions are negotiated as a function of any social interaction.

3.2.4.3 Research on emotions, language and discourse

Above, it has been established that language and discourse play a vital role for the social constructionist approach to emotions. What, then, do we know about the relationship between emotions and language? Cross-cultural work on emotion words and emotion concepts in different languages was mentioned
above, (3.1.1), and there is also work on lay theories of emotion, of children’s theories of emotion, and metaphors for describing emotional experience and expression of self and others (see Russell et al., 1994). The work in this area is relevant for labeling an emotion phenomena observed and in interpreting self-reports of emotion; however, the present work focuses on the interactional displays and management of emotion, and therefore, the identification of emotions is more relevant than their classification. Therefore, this section focuses on studies of emotion in talk and discourse as they are identified and understood both by scholars and interactants.

A common lay theory of emotional expression seems to be that semantic content or syntactic structures are subordinate to ‘the way something is said’ meaning intonation, facial expressions, and prosody, and that the lexicon is the primary means through which we specify emotional meaning. Ochs and Schieffelin (1989) were interested in the linguistic means through which people understand the affective keys of others, and conclude that contrary to expectations, we key the emotions of others from all levels of the linguistic system, and these are culturally variable between different languages. The choice of the first pronoun could, depending on the language investigated, communicate assertiveness, sympathy, affection or level of intimacy. Also, the English –ing form was perceived as communicating dynamism and vividness in a statement such as “I am missing you terribly” as opposed to “I miss you terribly” (1989:12). Code-switching to baby talk had affective meaning between lovers or toward a pet in certain societies, and case-marking (for example, the Spanish dative in a sentence like “mi hijo no me come nada” – my son won’t eat anything for me’) intensifies the speaker’s involvement in an issue. Ochs and Schieffelin (1989:14) term the linguistic features that communicate emotions affect intensifiers and specifiers that 1) modulate the affective intensity and 2) specify particular affective orientations utterances, for example, conveying irritation or pity. These, in turn, function as affect keys, which may operate on a referent, a proposition, or a sequence of propositions. Our ability to decode the affective meaning in linguistic structures is essential to friendships, intimate relationships, and to our assessment of political moves.

The process of recognizing and responding to the affective needs and attitudes of others is framed as social referencing, which is part of our social and cognitive development. Other linguistic work has dealt with intensifiers and their relation to emotions, for example, the use of cursing and swearwords. Hirsch (1985) proposes a relationship between different types of swearing and different types of consciousness, where those aspects of consciousness
characterized by sensations, drives, emotions, and attitudes seem to be strongly associated with highly expressive and/or evocative language. Thus, this particular study has more in common with psychobiological theories of basic emotions than the social constructionist view of emotions.

Somewhat related to the social constructionist efforts to examine the “emotionologies” of different languages (Parrott & Harré, 1996:40) is linguistic-constructionist research that focuses on talk about emotions. Much research in this area uses non-interactional data; more specifically, data where one individual is asked to account for an emotional event to a researcher (for example, Bamberg, 1997). This type of research is highly relevant in understanding how emotions can be viewed as linguistic constructions situated in a frame of situational frames and references, and can be very useful in, for example, understanding interview data. Bamberg’s studies give important information on how, for example, linguistic constructions taking different perspectives discursively serve to construct, for example, blame or face-saving. However, what is lacking as a point of reference for the present work is data showing the inference-making and production of response by a second participant, the listener. We know little about how the second speaker makes use of the prior turns in producing a second turn, and we do not have examples drawn from “natural” talk (i.e. speech not elicited for the purpose of research alone) of how narratives like this may be used. Bamberg’s study thus offers a monological perspective for work on emotions in interaction.

A more interactional approach is taken by Günthner (1997), who used naturally occurring conversations to study how feelings are contextualized in reported dialogues. A number of strategies were used for making the listener “hear” the original dialogue, for example, shifting between direct and indirect forms of reported speech, restaging the original interaction, and marking one’s personal evaluation or feeling toward the reported interaction through prosodic features and voice quality instead of direct commentary. Comments made about inappropriate language use in the original interaction showed reconstructions of cultural norms and ideologies concerning how emotions are to be controlled, and reported speech with strong increases in volume and high pitch, lengthenings and tense voice seemed to indicate the speaker’s stance as disapproving of the “out-of-proportion, exaggerated and hysterical” reaction in the original dialogue (1997:269). Günthner’s study reveals important ways in which interactants reveal their emotional stance toward past interactions when restaging them, as well as how they utilize syntactic, prosodic, and vocal resources to construct someone else’s speech as “angry”, “furious”, or
“hysterical” In investigating reported speech, we gain access to the important inferential processes through which we make sense of other people’s feelings.

Finally, I have selected a sample from the growing body of work under the heading of discursive psychology, which is a social constructionist and discourse-centered approach to psychological phenomena. Edwards (1999:288) emphasizes that we need to approach discourse and emotions as social practice rather than mental expression, where “mental states are talk’s categories and concerns, rather than its causes”. So-called discursive psychology deals with all forms of discourse, not just interactional data, but Edwards provides examples of talk in marriage counseling sessions, where it was observed how the two parties construct emotions descriptively, in similar ways as in Günthner’s work on reported dialogues. Words such as “obviously” are sequentially placed in a narrative on the behavior of their significant other to endorse emotional reactions as expectable and normal. When describing the reactions of her husband to her affair with another man, Mary (1999:276) constructs his reactions as understandably emotional rather than rationally appraising her actions. In addition, Edwards found that emotions are constructed in discourse as either temporary states of mind or more enduring dispositional qualities of a person. Edwards concludes that emotions are discursive phenomena that can be studied as part of how talk performs social actions (1999:279).

By way of summary, there is definitely a growing interest in not just the emotionologies of language, but also the social context of emotion talk. Research on emotions, language and discourse provides tools for the identification of emotions in talk, but there is little research on how we do ‘everyday emotions’ in interaction. There also seems to be a preference for finding linguistic correlates of basic emotions rather than of social emotions, such as embarrassment or hope; perhaps because there are fewer generalities in their expression than, for example, anger. Furthermore, we may communicate emotions in combinations of linguistic and non-verbal means, and below, I will take a look at another aspect relevant to the understanding of emotions in social interaction; that of the channels of our communicative system.

3.3 Communicating emotions – channels and cues

3.3.1 Turning to applied communication research

Moving away from both theoretical foundations and from purely social constructionist work, I will now turn to some applied research on emotional
expression in social interaction. I will delimit this review to work on the recognition of emotion messages in face-to-face communication, and leave out the various models of the role of emotion in interpersonal relationships and communication, since the approach taken to talk as structured action has already been selected in my choice of conversation analysis. Specific findings concerning, for example, nonverbal correlates of embarrassment, will be discussed in connection to the analyses. I will also avoid discussions of mood, affect, and emotion (e.g. Bowers, Metts & Duncanson, 1985; Andersen, Guerrero & Trost, 1998) since my analytic focus is the in situ management of emotion rather than long-term moods or the more general term affect.

### 3.3.2 Working with emotions in talk - some conceptual tools

Interpersonal communication is central both as a primary elicitor and response to emotions, and the expression of emotions in interpersonal communication is a crucial feature of the emotional experience (Andersen & Guerrero, 1998b; Planalp, 1999). Expression and experience do not necessarily match, and emotions can be communicated both intentionally and unintentionally; the latter may present problems in interaction, especially when negative emotions are involuntarily communicated and perceived. The possible discrepancy between emotional experience and expression has presented challenges for communication scholars interested in linking communicative behavior to a certain type of emotional experience, but since the present work makes no claims as to emotional experience of participants, work reviewed here will only include the expressive side. I will also not include the literature on elicitors of emotion in interpersonal communication, since the aim is limited to the interactional work emotions accomplish in the sequences where they occur.

A common way of conceptualizing emotion messages is according to cues and/or channels (Planalp, 1998). While cues refer to specific observable nonverbal and verbal behavior that communicates various states of affect to others, channels refer to the sensory modes through which these cues are communicated. Although a combination of cues and channels are often the basis for interpreting emotion messages, research has for the most part started out with separating expressions from different channels. Since talk takes place in all sorts of media, we are sometimes left with only vocal and verbal cues for decoding emotion messages, for example, in telephone conversations, whereas in face-to-face interactions, all channels possibly communicate emotions. Cues that recur in the literature are physiological, facial, gestural, vocal, verbal, and
action cues. Consequently, channels are, for example, visual channels and auditory channels. I will now take a closer look at some work on different cues.

3.3.2.1 Physiological cues

Physiological cues to emotion are largely communicated involuntarily, and are based on physiological arousal. Such cues may be clearly observable to co-communicators, such as heavy sweating, trembling, facial redness, tears in one’s eyes, and fast breathing, whereas other physiological changes are unobservable to others, or only barely registered by the person experiencing them (Bowers et al., 1985; Planalp, 1999). Only those that are observable to others can be viewed as interpersonally communicative, and even then, their primary function is not communicative but reactive. We may tremble from anxiety when delivering a public speech, and we may blush when we accidentally make a social faux-pas, and perhaps physiological cues are expressed rather than communicated. Physiological cues (or physiological leakage, Bowers et al., 1985) are difficult to simulate, and are favored by naturalistically oriented scholars.

According to Goffman (1967), the potential for embarrassment is always high in all social interaction. The most frequently observed physiological cue to embarrassment ought to be blushing (Edelmann, 1994:234), and Retzinger (1991) observed blushing in the context of shame. Blushing is under very little conscious control, and seems to communicate that some kind of social norm has been violated (Planalp, 1998:35), and people rarely blush when they are alone. Physiological cues for anger could manifest themselves as a flushed face and body tightness (Canary, Spitzberg & Semie, 1998:204). Physiological cues can be very subtle, depending on the social context, the individual and the elicitor of anger, or displayed for interpretation of co-interactants. Research on physiological leakage has often required instruments measuring bodily changes, such as increased heartbeat and changes in skin temperature, but for the present work, only physiological cues that are observable to others and that may be used for inference when producing a response are relevant.

3.3.2.2 Facial expression

Research on facial expressions has a central place in emotion research in general as well as in interpersonal communication research, and there is more work on facial cues than on any other emotion cue. As mentioned earlier, Ekman (e.g. 1992; 1994) has focused partly on the universality of facial expression, and there
is some agreement in terms of universal facial cues of happiness, sadness, fear, anxiety, surprise, and disgust/contempt (Bowers et al, 1985:524). Eyes widen with surprise and narrow with anger. Much of this research has been based on experimental inducement of emotions and careful studies of the facial muscles, or on photograph recognition of different emotional states, and it has been demonstrated that people are rather skilled in recognizing certain emotions expressed in facial signs (Planalp, 1998:31). However, it is more difficult to distinguish between different negative emotional expressions (sadness, anger, fear, disgust) than positive emotions (joy, happiness), and the face may communicate more than just one distinct emotion at a time, such as combinations of anger and shame.

One critique of coding systems for facial expressions (e.g. Ekman & Friesen’s facial action coding system, 1978) is that they assume distinct emotions instead of combinations. Also, most studies of facial expressions deal with the so-called basic emotions, and there is little discussion about emotions that may not have one distinct facial expression, for example, embarrassment or hope. Furthermore, conducting precise and accurate studies of facial expression in social interaction requires video camera technology that adequately captures facial expressions of each participant equally well. In addition, since talk-in-interactional work adopts the participants’ perspective, an analyst’s recognition of a certain facial cue may not be used as a resource for participants in all circumstances. Therefore, an interactional study of emotions, especially with multiple interactants, cannot rely completely on facial expression coding, although lessons from this type of work can be valuable, primarily for recognition of the basic emotions.

3.3.2.3 Gestures and gaze

Body movements are more difficult than facial expressions to induce experimentally, and evidence for specific gestural patterns associated with certain emotion states is rare, perhaps due to the great degree of individual and contextual variation, since gestures are much more controllable than physiological cues. However, some studies have indicated that diagonal and angular movements display threat, while round gestural patterns convey warmth, and that movement away or toward others is indicative of emotional states (Planalp, 1998:34). Similarly, Retzinger (1991) includes “hiding behavior” (such as covering one’s face and lowering or averting one’s eyes) as visual indicators of shame, whereas a tendency to lean forward in a challenging stance...
was observed in combination with other cues for anger. Embarrassment, on the other hand, is not characterized by the hiding behaviors of shame (that of wishing to hide, disappear or “die”), but is instead often accompanied by ambivalently avoidant body posture, shifting gaze, and often smiling (Lewis, 1993:571). Laughter is not necessarily associated with joy, but exhilarating joy accompanied by laughter is often observed with the head of the laugher thrown backwards, which facilitates the expulsion of air (Ruch, 1993:606). Depressive states, as seen in therapeutic and medical treatment procedures, are often characterized by less gestures and a lower head position than nondepressed states (Planalp, 1999:47).

As for gaze as an emotion cue, Bowers et al (1985:524) summarize empirical findings concerning gaze and mention that gaze increases and decreases with liking and disliking respectively, that ending eye contact signals rejection in a relationship, that constant gaze from near proximity increases anxiety, and that gaze avoidance may signal appeasement to aggression. Furthermore, gaze, including winks and blinking, expresses a wide variety of emotional states (e.g. a ‘knowing look’, or a flirtatious or ‘meaning’ gaze). Both gaze and gesture are central and expressive aspects of interpersonal communication, whether voluntary or more or less involuntary. There is substantial work on the connections between communication, language and gesture, although not specifically with an emotion focus (see e.g. McNeill, 2000), and any attempt to cover the various approaches and findings here would become too comprehensive; instead, relevant empirical work will be discussed in relation to the analyses. Gaze has been observed to be systematically related to speech in face-to-face interactions (e.g. Goodwin, 1981; 2000, Bavelas, Coates & Johnson, 2002). In talk-in-interaction research, the evolution of video technology has spurred the interest in the role of gaze in the coordination of talk and action

3.3.2.4 Vocal cues

Vocal cues to emotion mainly involve three perceptual dimensions: loudness, pitch, and time (Pittam & Scherer, 1993), and research has shown that people are rather accurate in inferring emotions from vocal cues (Planalp, 1998) but

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19 For example, the role of gestures and gaze in the interactional management of emotional issues, see Beach & LeBaron, 2002.
scholars debate whether it is only arousal that is detected, or specific emotional states. With a few exceptions (anger, sadness and boredom being most easily recognized, followed by joy and fear) (Pittam & Scherer, 1993; Scherer, Banse, Wallbott & Goldbeck, 1991), little is known about direct relationships between discrete emotions and vocal quality. However, it is established that in general, arousing emotions (e.g. fear, anger, joy) are associated with higher pitch, loudness and speed, whereas the opposite is true for arousal-dampening emotions (sadness). Also, studies of subject recognition of vocal emotion cues indicate that we can distinguish between positive and negative emotions based on vocal cues so that, for example, happiness is more easily confused with other positive affective messages than with negative ones.

Goffman’s observations regarding the “flustered” behavior that accompanies embarrassment also described vocal behavior: “stuttering, an unusually low- or high-pitched voice, quavering speech or breaking of the voice” (1967:97). Embarrassment is not included in the basic emotion lists, and perhaps that is partly why there is little or no systematic evidence of vocal or facial correlates of embarrassment in the extensive work of either Ekman and colleagues (facial expressions) or Scherer et al (vocal cues). Another explanation can be inferred from Goffman’s description; that the vocal correlates of embarrassment vary, and all, some, or none of the vocal cues above may be found in the context of embarrassment. Retzinger’s work on shame in marital quarrels (1991) proposes that the wish to hide when experiencing shame is evident also in vocal markers of hiding (vocal withdrawal, overly soft voice), as well as in irregular speech rhythm, stammering, rapid speech, mumbling, laughed words, monotonous voice and lax articulation. For anger, she observed staccato speech, loudness, heavy stress on certain words, harsh voice qualifiers, straining, and sing-song patterns (in ridiculing).

Much of the research on the acoustics of emotion messages has been conducted with computerized instruments measuring exact pitch, speed, and loudness levels, and often in laboratory settings. However, in natural face-to-face interactions, people judge emotional messages of others through “simply” auditory channels, and when people meet face-to-face, interactants also have access to other cues in making inferences about emotions. It is therefore important to pay attention to when participants themselves orient to a turn as “emotional” in relation to the cues available to them, and among these are the vocal messages.
3.3.2.5 Verbal cues

A long-standing debate concerning verbal and nonverbal communication has been whether verbal communication can be trusted at all in terms of its ‘truthfulness’. In almost any introductory textbook to nonverbal communication, students learn that words may lie, and nonverbal signals do not. The dismissal of verbal messages, mostly due to Freudian psychoanalytic views and some early communication studies (see Telfer & Howe, 1994 for a review) can be detrimental to the understanding of emotion communication (Planalp & Knie, 2002) since talk is embodied, and verbal and nonverbal cues in combination may communicate combined emotional messages.

Research on verbal cues has shown that outright descriptions of how a person is feeling, such as “I’m very angry right now” are rare (Planalp, 1999:48) (except perhaps in intimate relationship talk). However, indirect verbal cues are common, and people can often learn how someone is feeling through phrases like I just want to kill him!. Other verbal indicators, as described by Bowers et al (1985) are language intensity, verbal immediacy, and restricted vocabulary. Retzinger’s work (1991:69-71) perhaps provides the most detailed descriptions of verbal behavior for the particular emotional states of shame and anger. She identified, for example, verbal mitigation, abstraction, denial, defensiveness, withdrawal, distraction, and fillers as verbal hiding behaviors found in the context of shame. For anger, verbal interruption, sarcasm, blame, criticism, questioning, other-attribution, prescription, and threats were observed. Edelmann (1994) identified apologizing, accounts /justifications, humor and verbal aggression as strategies used to mitigate the effects of embarrassment.

More interactional approaches to the verbal communication of emotions were mentioned above (3.2.4.3), and conversation analytic studies with relevance for the present study will be reviewed below (see 3.4 below). Suffice it to say that verbal emotion messages can take infinite forms, and that relying entirely on one emotion cue, whether verbal or nonverbal, for researching emotions in social interaction is not encouraged in previous research. However, verbal messages also communicate emotions, and interactional work should not give one type of cue precedence over another, unless the only sensory channel available is auditory as in the case of telephone conversations or when interactants are temporarily turned away from each other. Even in such cases, studies have demonstrated that we utilize the channels available to make inferences about emotions.
3.3.2.6 Action cues

As a final emotion marker, Planalp (1999) mentions action cues. In an argument between lovers over the phone, an action cue indicating some negative emotion (probably anger or frustration) could be to hang up the phone abruptly. When those same lovers feel happy together, actions displaying happiness and comfort may be kissing, caressing, or moving closer to one another. Action cues can be closely related to gestures (for example, instantly kicking the table against which you accidentally hit your thigh) or less spontaneous, such as getting up and leaving in the middle of a discussion. There is little research on action cues, but just as verbal messages of emotion, action cues can take many shapes, forms and channels, but nevertheless, the actions of interactants may provide important information.

3.3.3 Summary: lessons from communication research

In essence, applied communication research on the communication/expression of emotions contains valuable information about how we encode and decode emotions; however, much of the work reviewed above has been carried out using experiments or self-reports. Studying emotions in naturally occurring interactions, especially with multiple participants, presents additional challenges, and since vocal and verbal information is often the most accurately represented in video-recordings of conversations, these cues may, necessarily, the most important ones. I will now turn back toward talk-in-interaction research to discuss how emotions have been dealt with in a selection of studies that explicitly or implicitly deal with emotion phenomena.

3.4 Taking the interactional turn to emotions

3.4.1 The CA route to emotions

A very high percentage of studies relating to emotions in social interaction concern either 1) participant reports of emotion or 2) observational studies in laboratory settings. Only a few talk-in-interaction studies directly address emotion as locally managed in natural, everyday interactions, however, the empirical materials used in talk-in-interaction research have great potential for contributing to both theoretical constructs and to methodological tacks to emotions in face-to-face interactions. I propose this claim for two reasons,
which I will discuss below. There are also potential problems associated with this route to understanding emotions, and these will also be discussed.

3.4.1.1 Potential

I suggest two reasons why talk-in-interactional research should be a highly relevant complement to the social constructionist literature on emotions.

Firstly, talk-in-interaction research presents a way of studying emotions at the level where we conduct our everyday affairs; personal and professional, and it is here that our management of and responses to emotion displays have consequences for our social life. The focus on the outer, manifest social behavior is what has led emotion sociologists and psychologists to conclude that Goffman’s approach was insufficient in building large-scale theories of emotions and their crucial role in social life; however, it is in these manifestations of emotions in social life that we live and accomplish our relationships and everyday tasks, and consequently, we need more empirical evidences as to how these processes are ‘done’. Such an approach does not depreciate the value of research on an individual psychology of emotions, of cognitive appraisal of events, or a denying of physiological correlates of emotional states; while appreciative of these efforts, a talk-in-interactional route to emotions can cast some light on some central issues in emotion research. I will return to the possibilities of a CA approach to emotions below.

Furthermore, there is a need for contextually based empirical studies on how features of the interaction itself can be generative, managing, and resolving of emotion episodes, and of how our intersubjective understandings of others’ affective stances are accomplished in talk. Language cannot be reduced to cognitive knowledge of meaning of isolate segments, or a mere reflection of thought; it is a social tool for organizing groups, shaping alignment and identities in social settings.

Secondly, Garfinkel illustrated an important point in his early work. He demonstrated how mundane reality, including feelings, are members’ accomplishments, and we put a lot of work into keeping our social world and our interactions “ordinary”, into doing “being ordinary” (Sacks, 1984:413). Garfinkel’s ethnomethodology demonstrated that we have limited cognitive capabilities, and that when the confederates of his ‘breaching experiments’ violated the interaction order (by providing random replies that violated the everyday conventions we use to construct a sense of social order), his subjects
often responded with strong emotional displays\textsuperscript{20}. The ethnomethodological conversation analytic approach, then, with its insights into the procedures and inferential resources of the interaction order, should be highly suitable for providing sequential explanations of emotional responses and joint management of these in conversation.

\subsection*{3.4.1.2 Problems}

From the rich body of conversation analytic work, and the lack of studies focusing specifically on emotions in this bulk of studies, it is to be suspected that combining the two interests faces some potential problems. As seen in chapter 2, the focal point of conversation analytic work has been, and is, social actions in interaction, and how such actions are accomplished interactionally, by using the same resources that are available to participants in each segment of interaction. Invoking emotions as the \textit{reason} for a particular social action then becomes problematic with this methodology, where the analyst is to describe what is happening and how “that”, whatever the action is, is accomplished, as opposed to the reason \textit{why} something happens, unless the explanation can be found in the structures of interaction itself. Since emotions clearly vary in expression and duration over the course of a single interaction, tying participants’ emotions (say, “fear”, “anxiety”, “shame”) directly to a particular action can be difficult. Such analyses will face the risk of speculating about intentions and inner psychological states instead of on the interactional manifestations. Technically, emotions are always present in all social interaction, and the dilemma is to link them to actions in talk and interaction, and finding the appropriate emotion vocabulary to describe these observations, without stepping out into the minefields of the individual’s psychology or describing a number of feeling states under one label. It is therefore not surprising that some of the talk-in-interaction studies dealing with emotion-related phenomena use quotation marks around an emotion word, as to indicate the problem with classifying the observations as certain feeling states\textsuperscript{21}.

The publications on emotions in talk-in-interaction are few; however, highly promising in proposing an alternative route to participants’ social and

\textsuperscript{20} A connection between Garfinkel’s ethnomethodology and a ‘sociology of emotions’ has also been discussed by Collins (1990:29-30), who proposes Goffman’s work on the interaction ritual and Garfinkel’s ethnomethodology to be the two most important micro-sociological contributions to an understanding of emotions as social processes.

\textsuperscript{21} Some examples of this ‘quotation mark approach’ to emotions in interaction are Beach, Easter, Good & Pigeron (in press) where “fear” is used cautiously and within inverted commas to describe the emotion in focus, and also Whalen & Zimmerman (1998) where “hysteria” is used to describe the intense emotional manifestations.
emotional processes. By using a certain degree of caution both with the methodology and the emotion descriptions, this route can fertilize other approaches to emotions in interaction with rigorous analysis of authentic interactions. Also, as I will demonstrate below, much conversation analytic research deals with psychosocial and emotional phenomena, without participating in the larger debates in the social sciences concerning emotions, partly for the reasons discussed above. We will now take a closer look at what some of them have illustrated.

3.4.2 Emotions within talk and embodied practices

In a recent paper, Goodwin & Goodwin (2000) demonstrated how emotions are social phenomena analyzable as systematic, timely practices deployed in the process of situated interaction. In one set of data, the authors examine video-recordings of young girls playing hopscotch, focusing on how they vividly communicate emotion without ever using emotion descriptors. Instead, they effectively display emotional ‘stance’ toward actions by their co-participants through precise coordination of pitch elevation, intonation, syntactic choice, timing, and gesture. Furthermore, their next actions after displays of affective stance display their interpretation of the affective ‘stances’ as opposition, and produce next actions displaying this interpretation. The elevated pitch displays heightened involvement in what is going on, but not as a decontextualized display; it functions as a display of affective stance only because of its embedding in a sequence of action; it vividly contrasts the prior action (a rule violation by one of the other girls) and occurs in the first possible position after the prior turn’s completion. In contrast to studies on the preference for agreement in assessments (Pomerantz, 1984), for these children, the objection comes immediately, without mitigation or delay. The disagreement is accompanied by embodied practices: the girl producing the disagreement replays, physically, how the other girl “cheated” in the hopscotch game, while she points her finger accusingly at the other girl. Consequently, the embodied displays of emotional stance toward a certain action worked as assessments of another interactants performance (the triggering event).

Their second analysis involves Rob, a man with severe aphasia, who only has four words in his vocabulary: Yes, No, And, and Oh. By varying the tone, pitch, and force in these words, as well as producing them in selected sequential slots in the conversation, Rob is able to participate competently in the interaction, and display excitement, disagreement and agreement with prior
turns produced by his co-participants. The authors conclude (2000:41-49) that powerful emotional statements could be built into interaction through use of sequential positioning, resources in the setting where the action occurs, and “artful orchestration of a range of embodied actions” (gesture, intonation, timing etc.). Also, Goodwin & Goodwin showed how emotions emerge within talk, as opposed to in reports of talk, and their analysis showed the precise deployment of resources with strong social consequences.

3.4.3 Medical interaction: pain, embarrassment and coping

One of the largest collections of applied conversation analytic research falls under the broader category of medical interaction. Given the specific nature of these institutional settings – the fact that people often come in contact with medical staff when physically ill, concerned about their health, or for various consultations and therapies, it may seem surprising that emotions are directly addressed only in a very small number of these studies. As I mentioned above, there are some methodological explanations for this ‘neglect’; however, some fairly recent studies that reveal an increasing interest in emotions and other “lifeworld concerns” (Beach, Easter, Good & Pigeron, in press) of patients and doctors. I will describe a selection of these below.

Heath (1988) reexamined Goffman’s (1967) proposition of embarrassment as the fundamental component in social interaction, which arises if assumptions about a participant’s identity are somehow threatened in interaction. Goffman treats embarrassment as the outcome of contradictions and conflicts in self-presentation and perception of others in interaction, and Heath’s detailed analyses of sequences from a medical examination demonstrated that although many of the interactional features described by Goffman were also found in his materials, Goffman’s analysis remains on the “boundaries of the phenomenon and leaves unexplicated the actual conduct of human beings during such moments of social life” (Heath, 1988:154).

The analyses showed that when patient and doctor momentarily lacked a focus of mutual attention (a sufficient elicitor of embarrassment in the medical examination procedure), their talk and actions became more fragmented and dysfluent, their gaze shifted back and forth, and their embodied actions displayed precise coordination and sensitivity to the actions of the other. Also, participants’ shifting degree of interactional involvement revealed distinct stages of the embarrassing event – from the ‘flustered’ stage that Goffman described and up to the closing of the embarrassment sequence where the participant
regains control and selects a new course of action. “Embarrassment” is, in this analysis, demonstrated to be a much more complex and sequentially organized interactional event than merely ‘loss of control’ or ‘inability to participate’ in interaction. Heath concludes that although Goffman’s observations of behavioral components associated with embarrassment were recognized in the analyses, it was difficult to conceive of the observations in terms of self, identity and impression management alone and relate these directly to moments in interaction. Without suggesting that there is no relationship between these issues and embarrassment, Heath shows how such conceptualizations may cause the analyst to overlook the actual conduct and interactional methods that participants themselves utilize in emotion-laden encounters. The study shows how embarrassment is sequentially organized and coordinated by participants in interaction, and emerges in relation to actions produced by a co-participant.

In two other studies (Heath, 1989; 2002), the same author addresses the social organization of vocal and gestural expressions of pain and suffering during the medical consultation. The ‘emotion’ in the first case (1989) is real physical pain inflicted by the physician while twisting and bending the patient’s sore foot. Heath demonstrated how the patient struggled to negotiate two almost incompatible interactional demands; that of the physical pain itself, and of participating in the medical agenda that the doctor is pursuing. The patient’s cries of pain were carefully tailored to fit the interactional environment, and the revelation of pain was context-sensitive and socially organized. The doctor, in pursuit of the medical agenda, does nothing to encourage the patient to express or describe further pain, and after the first cry of pain, designed to assist the doctor in locating the problem, the patient cooperates with the doctor in not producing additional cries of pain even though the doctor continues to inflict pain. It is concluded that there is no direct correspondence between inner sensation of pain and their expression, but the expression is tailored to fit the institutional format of interaction and to bring the examination forward.

Also, when asked to describe previously experienced suffering, the patient reenacts the physical pain experienced, and Heath concludes that certain visual and vocal behavior can engender certain emotions. In another study (2002), Heath shows how patients use gesture and bodily enactment of suffering to provide valid reasons for seeking medical help, and demonstrates how these enactments are organized to fit the local environment and the actions and orientations of the medical practitioner. Similarly, as demonstrated by Beach and LeBaron (2002), patients become highly emotional when reporting past sexual abuse during a medical history-taking interview, which
was observed in vocal and gestural reenactments, the use of physical artifacts, and gaze shifts; all finely coordinated between co-participants.

The interactional management of “optimism” in coping with cancer is the topic of a recent study by Beach (2003). Although no instances of the word “optimism” were located in the corpus of family interactions over the phone, family members were observed to collaboratively do “hope work” in talk and practical actions while working through the mother’s cancer diagnosis and treatment. Some of the actions observed included steadfast reliance on medical expertise, shifts between bad and good news, collaboration and joint ownership of Mom’s illness, humor, and pushing for hope and resistance to troubles even with Mom’s gradually declining health. “Hope”, along with other so-called defense mechanisms like anger, denial, and depression, is proposed to be more than psychological states within the individual’s experience. Instead, these actions of coping are interactionally generated and managed, mutually coordinated, and designed to shape understanding of illness and family relations. Whether "hope" is to be considered an emotion has been debated elsewhere, mainly because it becomes difficult to link hope to distinct physiological or behavioral components22, but Beach's analysis avoids all such theorization of hope and optimism, and focuses on the interactional management of a family crisis where it becomes essential to remain "hopeful".

Breaking news about failed treatments to cancer patient is naturally a difficult task for treating physicians, and a highly emotional interactional process for participants to manage, as discussed by Lutfey & Maynard (1998). The study addresses death and dying as social processes and the authors use recorded interactions between a physician and three different patients (and their dependents) where the topic of failing treatment and terminal illness is cautiously approached by participants. Their findings illustrate that the trajectories of delivering the bad news were highly dependent on the actions of the patients and their family members. If the recipient of the bad news resists participation in the topic initiated by the doctor, as particularly one of the patients and his partner did, the doctor’s efforts to topicalize the patient’s non-recovery eventually derails (1998:338). Strategies used by recipients of bad news (with highly emotional consequences for themselves and their family members) included declination to invitations for providing additional information, silences at particular slots in the interaction, introduction of competing topics,

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22 See Averill (1996a), who argues that hope exhibits many features similar to those of “prototypical” emotions such as anger, fear or love.
euphemistic and allusive talk regarding death and dying, and “stoic” minimal acknowledgement responses (1998:337) to the physician’s information.

Strategies deployed by the doctor observed in the material included introducing the topic of dying through stepwise movement toward the focal topic and through questioning sequences, through euphemistic and vague references to death, disease and failed treatments (“it”, “the problem”, “this”), through glosses, and though cautiously inviting the patient to participate in the delivery of the bad news. By providing slots of possible turn transition throughout the news delivery and by inviting the patient to participate, the doctor attempts to co-implicate the patient in the interactive process of talking about dying. The outcome of delivering news about terminal illness was shown to be highly dependent on the collaborative work of the patient and doctor.

The authors do not set out to discuss the emotional components in their material specifically; however, given the nature of their data, their analyses show important ways in which interactants manage emotions during the course of a highly problematic topical agenda. The resistance to participate in the topic of death displayed by some of the patients and their family members, and the “stoic” minimal responses to the doctor’s pursuit of the medical agenda of informing the patient about the failed treatments show how powerful emotions can be kept at bay in dealing with bad news. Other studies on doctor-patient interaction deal with emotion-related phenomena without addressing them specifically. However, the fact that most medical interaction studies do not discuss emotion or emotion theories directly is not solely a matter of neglect or lack of interest on part of the analysts. Firstly, the organization of other and/or more specific social actions, such as news delivery, diagnosis, and lay-professional understandings, have been the foci in these studies. Secondly, inherent in the methodology of conversation analysis is a resistance toward theorizing about phenomena that cannot be directly linked to actions and talk demonstrable in transcripts and visual data. I will return to this dilemma below.

3.4.4 Intense situated emotions: emergency calls

Calls to emergency services (9-1-1) were mentioned in chapter 2 in relation to the Whalen, Zimmerman & Whalen (1988) study of how an interaction went fatally wrong. Although the study focused on the sequential development of the dispute, displays of anger and frustration were seen in the transcript, for

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23 See e.g. Bredmar & Linell (1999) on how ‘normality’ and reassurance of normality is achieved in interactions between midwives and expectant mothers.
example, in the production and response to cursing. In a study published ten years later, Whalen and Zimmerman (1998) deal more directly with displays of emotion; in particular, the interactional management of “hysteria” in emergency calls. The label “hysteria” was chosen, since the call takers often use this term when describing callers to ambulance or police personnel ordered to the scene, and “amounts to an account of a kind of situational incompetence – namely, the inability to cooperate appropriately in the work of the call” (1998:144, emphasis in original). Their analyses were based on recorded calls as well as ethnographic data (interviews and field observations) retrieved from the field work in the organization. The analyses target the in situ displays and management of “hysteria”, why the expressions of this particular emotion become problematic for the interaction and why call takers classify callers as “hysterical”, and not “the emotional state per se nor its correct diagnosis” (1998:147).

Initial observations of their data shows callers speaking in an extremely loud and distorted voice, gasping for breathy, sobbing or crying, and exclamations, as in the following extract (Whalen & Zimmerman, 1998:146):

```
1 CT: nine one one what is yur emerg- ((cut off by static))
2 (0.2)
3 C: ((howling/shrieking voice)) GO::D!, MY WIFE (JUST SHOT
4 HERSELF)! (0.3)THIRTY EIGHT FIVE NINE ( ) AVENUE
5 HURRY U::::P!
6 (0.2)
7 CT: What happened?
8 C: (0.2)
9 C: ((howling/shrieking voice)) (AR:: = SHE JUS SHOT
10 HERSELF!=
11 CT: =SHE FELL?
12 (0.2)
13 C: SHE SHOT HER SELF WITH A SHOTGUN!
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As seen in line 11, and as the call continues in line 14 (not included here), the call taker (CT) is having some problems understanding the caller (C), and a second call taker urges the first CT to tell the caller to “quit shouting”. The major task for a CT is to collect and codify necessary information to be forwarded to emergency units, and when callers are “hysterical”, the call becomes problematic for the CT in that the inability to cooperate and the
difficulty in discerning the information delays the acquisition of essential facts. The authors’ detailed analyses of a number of emergency calls showed where in the call the emotional arousal of callers became problematic, and various strategies used by call takers to perform their major task of extracting information. Emotional expressions characterized as justified cries of pain and distress in one context are deemed “hysterical” in another, and the authors stress that the issue at hand is the institutional implications of such displays:

Here, the issue is the intersection of physiological arousal and emotional display with a particular activity system characterized by sequentially organized actions. Therefore, when we refer to the “social construction” of emotion, we are pointing to the consequences of this situated confluence of affect with action (1998:158, emphasis in original).

The key point with this particular study is that the authors successfully demonstrate that emotional displays can be studied as in situ accomplishments by participants in interaction without adopting a firm standpoint toward emotions as primarily “biological” or “cultural” processes. Instead, by studying the displays and management of emotions in naturally occurring interactions, regardless of their origin, we can learn more about how expressions of arousal or feeling are “given shape and organized into meaningful cultural objects” (Whalen & Zimmerman, 1998:141). Another example of research dealing with emotions in emergency call interaction (although not conversation analytic) is Tracy & Tracy’s (1998) study of how call takers manage their own emotions in dealing with their organizational tasks through a variety of devices.

3.4.5 Laughter in interaction

Finally, I will briefly review the body of interaction research on laughter as a structurally organized activity in naturally occurring interactions. Research on laughter spans over a variety of interactional contexts, such as everyday conversations on the phone or face-to-face (Schenkein, 1972; Jefferson, 1979; Jefferson, Sacks & Schegloff, 1987; Glenn, 1995) medical settings (Haakana, 2001; 2002) job interviews (Adelswärd, 1989) and service encounters (Gavioli, 1995) and covers the organization of laughter in, for example, talk about troubles (Jefferson, 1984a), in establishing conversational rapport and intimacy (Jefferson, Sacks & Schegloff, 1987; Straehle, 1993), in displaying affiliation/disaffiliation (Drew, 1987; Glenn, 1995) and in dealing with delicate topics (Haakana, 2001). Conversation analytic research on laughter has shown
that laughter is an organized, structured and systematically positioned activity in interaction that performs a variety of tasks. Laughter is “specifically invited by a variety of techniques” and becomes “due” from recipients (Heritage, 1989), and can serve to “acoustically highlight a first speaker’s transition-relevance place” (O’Donnell-Trujillo & Adams, 1983:179).

A pioneer in the detailed analysis of laughter is Jefferson (1979). An *invitation* to laugh often consists of a first speaker’s laughter, which is succeeded by immediate laughter from a second speaker. In such cases, the second speaker accepts the invitation to laugh, but it can also be *declined*, usually when the second participant produces speech as a next action as opposed to laughter, and thus rejects the relevance of laughter in that particular slot. A particular site where invitations to laugh frequently occurs is, as shown in Jefferson’s (1984a) work, in talk about troubles, where the recipient(s) rarely join in the so-called ‘troubles-resistant’ laughter, but instead, treats the occasion of laughter as a key to remain troubles-receptive, as in the following example from Jefferson (1984a:346).

G: You don’t want to go through all the hassle?
S: .hhhh I don’t know Geri,

( )

S: I’ve I’ve stopped crying uhheh-heh-heh-heh-heh,
G: Wuh were you cry::ing?

The “troubles-teller” S is talking about something problematic, and produces an utterance in the third line followed by laughter. The “troubles-recipient” G does not laugh, but produces a “serious” response to S’s turn. Although at first glance, the lack of reciprocation of the laugh may be perceived as G not displaying affiliation with prior speaker, Jefferson observed that the next speaker on occasions like this oriented to the trouble expressed in prior talk instead of to the turn-final laughter, and thus does affiliate with the prior speaker’s position on something told. In comparing instances of ‘troubles-telling’ to other instances where the second speaker declines to display amusement through laughing back, this specific kind of laughter exhibits “troubles-resistance” on part of the speaker, “although there is this trouble, it is not getting the better of him; he is managing; he is in good spirits and in a position to take the trouble lightly” (Jefferson 1984a:351).
To the recipient, such laughter (turn-final or within turn laugh particles) signals that the speaker’s task is to take the trouble expressed seriously and display “troubles-receptiveness”, in Jefferson’s words. Other instances where the troubles-receptiveness is temporarily delayed were also found in which the recipient of the troubles-telling did produce laughter, but these instances were found to be sequentially placed in segments of so-called buffer topics or time-outs from the trouble, after which the recipient oriented back to the trouble and produced a serious response. Although not problematized from the perspective of emotions involved in troubles-telling and recipiency, Jefferson’s work is highly relevant in identifying trouble in interaction, and in understanding the preference structures of sequences involving laughter, in cases where responding with laughter to a first speaker’s laughter may be a dispreferred response and perceived as disaffiliative instead of affiliative.

Another classic paper by Jefferson, Sacks & Schegloff (1987) extends the discussion of affiliation/distancing accomplished through laughter in the "pursuit of intimacy" (1987:152). In an example provided, the authors demonstrate how laughter is deployed in the negotiation of an appropriate level of affiliation in talk about an "impropriety" (1987:190). As with Jefferson's other work, laughter was found to be precisely fitted to surrounding talk; highly systematically produced and routinely oriented to by participants in interaction. Jefferson's (1985) work also contributed greately to subsequent work on laughter in her demonstration of how detailed transcription of laugh particles within speech revealed structural and functional information not accessible from transcripts where the occurrence of laughter is just noted within parenthesis, and she was able to show how laughter in interaction is finely coordinated with surrounding features of talk. However, most of the work on laughter has dealt with dyadic interaction or multi-party interaction with a relatively low number of participants (e.g. Glenn, 1989), and few, if any, attempts have been made to transcribe laughter in interactions where more than six participants laugh chorally. Such transcriptions would be difficult to produce since it is almost impossible to discern who produces which sounds in multi-party laughter.

Also of interest to a conversation analytic approach to emotions in social interaction are studies on laughter deployment in dealing with interactional problems or delicate topics. Glenn (1991/1992; 2003b) shows how one speaker constructs a self-tease (which functions as a "laughable") and provides an opportunity for shared laughter at a crucial point in a conversation as a strategy for overcoming potential interactional difficulties resulting from a rejected invitation. Laughter sequentially organized as in Glenn's example can be
deployed by participants "to extricate themselves from or remedy interactional difficulties" (Glenn 1991/1992:151). Glenn's examples, as well as similar instances examined by Haakana (2001) in medical interactions where patients and doctors deal with "delicate" topics show organized procedures through which participants use laughter as an interactional device for dealing with the "emotions" of themselves and their co-participants when there is 'trouble' or potential trouble in the interaction itself. The emergence of "interactional problems", for example, dispreferred responses, first speaker candidate understandings that are rejected by second speaker (see Haakana, 2001:191), or jokes gone wrong, should be fruitful sites for studying how laughter can be linked to "emotions" as elicited and managed in social interaction.

The studies on laughter reviewed above primarily target the social organization of laughter in turns-at-talk, and not the emotional correlates of the deployment of laughter in interaction. (However, such connections have been done in non-interactional research24). As pointed out above, this is not because conversation analysts deny any kind of relationship between laughter and emotions, but rather because the type of analysis conducted operates on the surface structure of interaction and makes no claims about causal relationships between interactional features and events or circumstances outside the interaction itself. Conversation analysts working with laughter are interested in what laughter does in interaction, how certain actions get done through laughter, why it occurs in certain slots in a sequence, and how it is oriented to by participants, and it is the organization of laughter in talk that has been in focus, and not the wide continuum of "emotions" (e.g. embarrassment, anxiety, nervousness, joy, contempt), that can take laughter as one expression.

The work on "troubled" interactions, as well as the mention of laughter in connection with embarrassment come the closest; however, for the latter, this may be because there are other visual indicators of embarrassment (e.g. blushing) that makes it more legitimate to apply an emotion term than with more ambiguous emotional expressions, for example, distinguishing between different levels of anxiety-related feeling states. As with all conversation analytic research, analytic categories imposed on the material by the analyst are avoided, and just as participants have access to a spectrum of "roles" in interaction that can be only momentarily relevant to the interaction, it is to be assumed that the same fluctuating and locally negotiated characteristics also apply to feelings/emotions/affect in interaction.

24 Edelmann (1994) is one example where laughter is directly linked to embarrassment.
3.4.6 Summing up: emotions in talk-in-interaction

Without specifically mentioning emotions or socio-emotional concerns of participants in interaction, many CA studies in fact touch upon issues related to human feeling. The main concern of most conversation analytic work has been to describe and understand the structure of interaction, and this objective toward social actions may have hindered CA scholars from entering the scientific dialogue about emotions in the social sciences.

As mentioned above, many conversation analysts adopt what I refer to as the “quotation mark” approach to emotions and take an agnostic stand in terms of what emotions ‘are’, other than that they are intimately intertwined within interactional processes. Given the methodological rationale, such caution is wise, both in preserving the analytic induction characteristic of CA and in avoiding trespassing on psychological minefields since no claims about the ‘inner’ feeling states of participants are made. However, the studies reviewed above demonstrate the possibilities with the CA approach in that only through examining naturally occurring interactions can we obtain a fuller picture of how people manage everyday emotions in talk and action. In addition, research on spoken language and conversations benefits greatly from understanding how emotions are organized into the linguistic system in use. A conversation analytic approach to emotions will not be a replacement for other approaches to emotions in social interaction, but complementary, in understanding how emotions can be viewed as interactionally accomplished in each moment of social interaction.
Chapter 4

4. Integrating Fields of Inquiry – The Empirical Study

4.1 Toward an empirical study of the social organization of emotions

In chapters 2 and 3, the two fields of inquiry; conversation analysis and research on emotions, have been outlined and discussed. The review of literature shed light on the primary reasons for the reluctance toward studying emotions through a conversation analytic lens. Firstly, the scope of CA’s enterprise centers on the way in which members of society accomplish various social actions in talk and embodied practices. This does not mean that conversation analysts see these social actions as devoid of or unaffected by emotions; however, emotions have not been addressed explicitly since emotions as such, even if made available in the interaction, have not been considered as social ‘actions’ in themselves. Instead, affect has been traced in descriptions of, for example, actions performed in the context of “delicate” matters or interactional “trouble” (c.f. 3.4). Secondly, it is by no means unproblematic to tie specific interactional conduct to any feeling state a participant may be experiencing in the moment where that action is performed.

Although these foci are legitimate, these studies will not be easily located in database searches on “emotions”, even though they deal with highly relevant topics in understanding emotions as social phenomena. The aims of the present study included taking this vantage point one step further and investigating whether emotions can be a topic of inquiry in itself for conversation analysts. Consequently, the recorded material was approached with conversation analytic procedures of analysis, but with a deliberate focus on emotions rather than particular types of actions as the overreaching scope.

In chapter 3, we also saw that there is a gap to be filled in the research on emotions in social interaction. Many of the popular methodologies do not permit the type of close examination that conversation analytic procedures can offer, and in terms of understanding emotions displayed and managed in social interaction, there has been a heavy reliance on either interview data or experimental procedures. Furthermore, the social constructionist approach to emotions, which theoretically emphasizes emotions as actions (c.f. Averill, 1980; Gergen, 1999), has yet to find systematic empirical methods for investigating emotions as actions in ongoing social interaction. The aim of
bringing together these separate fields of inquiry could therefore be tested by
the application of conversation analysis to emotions in social interaction.

In order to have emotions as the center of the analytic process, emotion-
relevant sequences must be identified. The abundance of studies in
communication research on the expression/communication of emotions
provides this study with tools for identifying characteristic displays of particular
emotional states, which is necessary since no other measures of affective
experience were conducted. Furthermore, as discussed in 3.4, some
conversation analysts have adopted what I refer to as the “quotation mark”
approach to emotions and avoid speculations of what emotions ‘are’, other than
that they are intimately intertwined with interactional processes. I have adopted
the same caution for the sake of preserving the analytic characteristic of CA and
for avoiding trespassing on the minefields of individual’s psychology.

In addition to integrating separate fields of inquiry, the present work
aimed to investigate patterns of the social organization of emotions. In this
chapter, the emphasis lies on the specific methodological considerations for the
present study, including the empirical scope of application, the data collection,
and working with the data. Finally, the emergence of the analytic themes
presented in chapters 5-7 will be described.

4.2 Initial considerations for fulfilling aims of the study

The conversation analytic procedures as the primary means of studying the
social organization of emotions included an assumption that recordings of
naturally occurring interactions would be used as primary data. Therefore, the
first step was to find an empirical setting where the negotiation of everyday
emotions could be studied and where recording would be possible.

A second consideration involved the participants’ accounts of their
experiences of the interaction. As mentioned earlier, individual interviews are
one of the primary methods used in social scientific research on emotions in
social interaction, and in order to elucidate advantages and disadvantages of
different methodological approaches to emotions in talk, I decided to also
conduct interviews with all participants. The reason for conducting interviews
in addition to the interaction analyses emanated firstly from methodological
curiosity, and the guiding question was whether the different sets of data would
enrich each other or reveal fundamentally different aspects of emotional
experience versus action. Secondly, others, e.g. Koole (1997) and Arminen
(2000) have suggested that in order to sensitively analyze institutional practices,
the analyst must possess sufficient knowledge of the institutional context. The interview data also served to explicate topics and background facts that were relevant to understanding the interactions, and to enhance my own understanding of the institutional context in which data came to be collected.

4.3 Selecting the empirical setting

4.3.1 Academe – an institutional setting

The next step was to select interactions to record. The initial reasons for choosing the higher education setting were several. Predominant institutional goals are related to the acquisition and production of knowledge, and the traditional dichotomy between reason/rationality and emotion/subjectivity has since long been embedded in academic practices. The literature on academic discourse frequently mentions this tension (e.g. Margolis, 1992; Tracy, 1997), as something that many members of those institutions find problematic. Also, this social institution as such is based on individuality more than collectivism, and the individual student, instructor or researcher proves his or her possession of status and symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1988) by displaying knowledgeability and being compared with peers. Such competitive institutional practices encourage the maintenance of prestige, and perhaps the successful management of emotion increases social status, as in many other organizations (Fineman, 2000).

As my work progressed, the initial reasons became less relevant. Rather than focusing exclusively on the institutional nature of patterns observed, the interactions examined are first and foremost viewed as social interactions, and the focus lies on the interactional organization of ‘everyday’ emotions. The fact that the data was collected in an institutional setting cannot be overlooked; however, distinguishing between the specific institutional aspects of participants conduct is a matter for the analyses of the empirical material rather than an issue of principal interest for the study. Like others, I see the distinction between ordinary conversation and institutional interaction as an empirical one, and that it is, first and foremost, participants’ own orientations that should guide my analyses regarding whether the academic classroom setting in these specific recordings in any way, shape or form have bearing on their conduct.

This is, of course, easier said than done. I do not assume, as a general construct, that the interactions examined are always shaped by institutional constraints on turn-taking, roles, and tasks. Conversely, it is assumed that participants are first and foremost social beings that utilize mundane
interactional routines for talking in the academic seminar. However, I was prepared to pay particular attention to conduct that can be analyzable by participants themselves (and accordingly, by me as the analyst) as orientations to this particular setting. In essence, this is primarily a study of emotions in social interaction, and secondly, a study of emotions in the particular institutional context of academic seminars. Nevertheless, traditional views of academic discourse as rational and unemotional made it particularly interesting to study the mundane, everyday emotions of interactants as social beings, even when accomplishing institutional tasks and goals.

Obtaining permission to video-record interactions is not always easy. Since I was given the opportunity to spend part of my research education in the United States, it was possible to obtain permission to collect data at a university there. The institution, “State University”, is described in 4.3.3.

4.3.2 Permission for the study

In order to protect research participants from harm and discomfort, and prevent possible legal actions that could result from an unethical, dishonest or deceptive conduct from the researcher, most institutions have appointed ethical committees to scrutinize and approve research projects, including intentions and precautionary measures taken by the investigator. The investigator should also assess whether the costs and potential risks of the project outweighs the benefits, and take measures to minimize stress, anxiety and discomfort of any kind (Bowers & Courtright, 1984). Participants must give their informed consent to participate, and should be provided with all information that might reasonably influence their decision to participate. Participants should also be informed of their right to withdraw from participation at any time. Confidentiality and handling of collected data are also key issues in the research protocol review.

Permission for the study was granted by the ‘State University’ Committee on the Protection of Human Subjects after a detailed research protocol had undergone thorough review. The ethical guidelines were comparable with those prescribed by The Swedish Research Council, albeit even more restrictive than those, since there is a greater risk for legal action in the target culture. The researcher was instructed to take precautionary measures for participants who would not want to be videotaped or interviewed, and to describe the entire research process in detail including institutional support, supervisors, data collection procedure, confidentiality, data processing and
publication. Participants were asked to sign a consent form agreeing to participate in the study of which they received a signed copy (see appendix 1).

4.3.3 The institution

The institution selected was a large state-affiliated university in the United States, here labeled “State University”, and it was decided that graduate seminars would offer more interactional data than large-scale undergraduate lectures. The empirical setting for the present work is graduate seminars that were video-recorded at a large university in the United States. To Scandinavian readers, the term ‘seminar’ may need some further explication. When we speak of seminars in Swedish postgraduate education, we usually mean a colloquium-type forum in which either a scholar presents his or her work for critical commentary, or where a particular theoretical topic is dissected amongst peers and superiors. Sometimes, but not always, higher seminars have one particular respondent that is responsible for leading the critical discussion and commenting on another scholar’s work. Doctoral students are usually required to present their dissertation work on at least a certain number of so-called ‘higher seminars’ throughout their enrollment in the program. In this context, the term ‘seminar’ refers to a wider range of class-based activities, including scheduled lectures, discussion sessions, and exams. Consequently, the seminars recorded for the present work are classes, or lessons, for graduate students.

In selecting seminars to record it was important that the graduate seminars held discussion type seminars where students participated actively in discussion and/or presented parts of projects, theses or assignments. Several departments contacted were willing to participate in the study; however, some of these were excluded since their graduate seminars had lecture-type format, practical lab work or had too large student groups to facilitate any kind of group discussion, e.g. business administration, computer sciences and history.

Finally, three graduate seminar series in the communication department were selected. The director of the graduate program advised me in selecting appropriate seminars, and instructors were contacted in person. The seminars selected all dealt with various topics within interpersonal communication, and were similar in type and class size. A total of nine class occasions were selected for recording; three from each type. The instructors described the seminars as combinations of lecture and discussion with an emphasis on active participation from the graduate students. Eventually, six of the nine recordings came to be
used because of the extensive empirical data in each. The six recordings belong to two groups; the three IN seminars and the three OG seminars.

4.3.4 Participants

Participants in the six recordings analyzed were two professors: one male, Dr. B, the IN seminars, and one female, Dr. A in the OG seminars, as well as their graduate students. The OG seminars had up to sixteen participants, whereas the IN seminars ranged between five and ten.

To make sure that my analyses would not be misled by lack of understanding of institutional activities or specific references made in interaction, I decided to collect as much data as possible in case my analyses warranted their later use. Participants were asked to fill out a brief demographic questionnaire at the time of the first recording. The information in these questionnaires was primarily used for reference purposes and for obtaining contact information for interviews, and the demographic information was not used in analyzing data in relation to age, gender or ethnicity. Certain information, such as education background or professional goals, was however used for forming introductory or follow-up questions in the interviews (see appendices 2-6 for questionnaire, seminar description, corpus size, participant distribution, and seating arrangements).

4.4 Collecting data

4.4.1 Collecting the interaction data – the seminars

The recordings were done on video. In using video material, non-vocal conduct could be included in the analyses, and the visual data also facilitated transcription. A camcorder on an extensible tripod was used for the recordings, along with a tape recorder and two flat extension microphones placed at the center of the seminar room table. The sound uptake was of good quality, and the main problem for transcription was not the sound quality, but rather, simultaneous/choral activates by multiple interactants. Digital video was not available at the time of the data collection.

A total of nine seminars were recorded on three occasions of each seminar type, during a period of four weeks. The instructors and students were informed of the project a few weeks in advance and about the fact that they would be videotaped. A possible problem when using video and tape recordings is termed Observer’s Paradox, that is, the local sensitivity of
participants to the presence of a researcher and recording equipment. However, it has been argued that it is impossible to be sensitive to the camera for a longer period of time, and that people go about their business as usual after a while (Norrby, 1996). An additional precaution taken was to sit in on a few seminars in each class before the recording began, in order to become more familiar with the seminars, and to make the participants comfortable with my presence. In the interviews, questions about the participants’ reaction to and experiences of being taped were included, and students and instructors reported in interviews that they had been oblivious to or comfortable with the camera.

Most of the graduate seminars in the were scheduled in the late afternoon since many of the students had part-time work or worked as Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTA’s) and taught undergraduate classes during the day. The seminars recorded took place once a week between 4 pm and 6.30 pm (the OG seminar) or 7 pm to 9.45 pm (the IN seminar) in a regular classroom. Participants were given a few minutes to read through and sign the informed consent form and to fill out a participant questionnaire at the time of the first recording. All students and professors agreed to participate and signed the forms. I was present to answer any questions at this point, and all participants were provided with my contact information. During the recording I was a silent observer in a corner, managing the recording equipment and zooming while taking field notes and drawing maps of the seating in each seminar. All recordings proceeded smoothly and as planned.

4.4.2 Conducting interviews

Two separate interviews were constructed, one for the graduate students and another for the four instructors (see appendix 7 and 8). The interview guides were partially inspired by Margolis’ semi-structured interviews on communication academic classrooms (1990). A central purpose, however, was to show the informants selected sequences of the video recordings and have them respond to these. In choosing this procedure, I was inspired by theories of empathic accuracy in clinical contexts (Ickes, 1997; Ickes, Marangoni & Garcia, 1997), that is, the inferential skill to achieve accurate insights into the thoughts and feelings of others by providing exposure to past interaction in the form of recorded material. Similar procedures have been used by other researchers wishing to enrich their analyses of recorded interaction with spontaneous recollections of the communicative situation from participants (e.g. Echeverri, 1999). Since the sequences were selected from an analyst standpoint rather than
a participant perspective, not all sequences that participants got to see in the interviews came to be used in the final presentation of analysis. Some of the sequences viewed did not ‘ring any bells’ for participants, and consequently, they were not used. In chapter 5, however, three out of the four fragments analyzed were also viewed on video (excerpts 2-4). I have not conducted any analyses of the “accuracy” of participants’ descriptions of others’ feeling states, simply because any measurement of individual feeling states was outside the scope of this study; rather, the exposure to the recorded materials, in some cases, elicited data for comparing the interactional data with participants’ own narratives about specific incidents.

After all the seminars had been recorded, the informants were contacted by phone or email for interview scheduling. An hour was scheduled for each interview. One student, who initially agreed to participate, had to cancel the interview entirely due to lack of time. A total of 28 interviews were conducted, with graduate students and instructors. However, as mentioned above, the corpus was large, and eventually only six out of the nine recordings were used. Consequently, interviews with students not participating in those six recordings were not included. Four of the students participated in both the OG and the IN seminars, and they were interviewed about both classes on one occasion (“Lisa”, “Will”, “Tracy” and “Lin”, see appendix 6).

Furthermore, since the interviews were conducted in connection with the recording work, I had no way of knowing which interactional sequences that would prove especially relevant in the analyses as a whole. Ideally, my informants would have viewed the entire corpus of recordings and commented on moments they remembered; however, since each participant would have had to sit in on watching around ten hours of recordings, this was not realistic. Instead, the informants viewed a few sequences from each recording, but were also asked to comment spontaneously on moments they remembered not included in these vignettes. Consequently, large parts of the interview data were not used in the present work, and were saved for future use.

All interviews were recorded on a tape recorder, and were conducted in an office on campus. The interview opened with remarks on confidentiality, permission to record, and questions from the informant. After working through the interview guide, the informant viewed the selected video sequences for a total time of around eight minutes. The interview was rounded off after additional comments or questions from the informant.
4.5 Transcription

Any researcher working with recorded material has to make a decision regarding transcription. Tape-recorded interviews are common in the social sciences, but transcription is not often problematized as a matter of subjectivity and interpretation, although all transcription work will involve decisions on the part of the analyst. A guiding principle when determining the extent of detail that the transcription should depict is, naturally, the research question itself.

In the present study, great weight is attached to detailed transcription, since it is of utmost importance that all details that are of potential relevance to participants can be included in understanding the interaction (see chapter 2). Pauses, aspirations and laughter can all be important signals of the presence of emotion, and I have therefore adapted a transcription notation system that covers those aspects in addition to verbatim transcription of the words. However, there is no such thing as a full, all-encompassing transcription and each listening will add new nuances to the previous version. A comprehensive model of transcription was developed by Gail Jefferson (Atkinson & Heritage, 1984a:xix-xvi) and is widely used in conversational research. I have used the basic ideas this system and altered a few notations to suit my purpose.

Table 1. Transcription notations used in the present study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Notation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>Simultaneous turns or parts of turns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[</td>
<td>Onset of overlapping talk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>=</td>
<td>Latching turns are marked by equal signs and represent a link between either the utterances of two different speakers with no clear interval between (and no overlap) or between the same speaker’s talk when there is a short utterance from another speaker in between</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1.2)</td>
<td>Length of pauses in tenths of a second</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(.)</td>
<td>Brief micropause of less than (0.3) seconds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>Abruptly cut off words or stammering quality of talk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>↑↓</td>
<td>Rise/fall in tone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“talk”</td>
<td>Hearable emphasis on words or parts of words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TALK</td>
<td>Talk produced louder than surrounding talk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“talk”</td>
<td>Talk produced more quietly than surrounding talk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.hh</td>
<td>Audible inbreaths</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hhh/(hh)</td>
<td>Audible aspirations, possibly laughter, between or</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
First, rough transcripts of all nine recordings were produced. Then, as the analytic process intensified, sequences were transcribed in more detail with each viewing. Because two extension microphones placed on different sides of the room were used when recording, gaps in audibility could in many cases be resolved by listening to the uptake from both microphones.

Previous CA work has not included much analysis done on multi-party interactions, and even though the transcription notation system includes symbols to cover overlaps, simultaneous speech and laughter, the task of transcribing as many as fifteen participants laughing and talking at the same time is challenging. In cases where there was any uncertainty as to what each participant’s contribution was, this has been noted in the transcripts with empty parentheses. I have instead attempted to provide detailed descriptions of these interactional events in footnotes. Unless gaze direction of non-speaking participants was relevant to the analyses, it was left out of the transcript, since marking the continually shifting gaze of all participants would have made the
transcripts difficult to read. On occasions where non-vocal activities were demonstrably used as interactional resources by participants, a separate figure was produced in addition to the original transcript. Furthermore, to make the dense transcripts reader-friendly, I decided to not transcribe words exactly as they sounded. For example, “really” was transcribed according to its spelling and not as “rilly”, unless it was markedly clear that participants’ pronunciation was different than surrounding talk (“b’cuz”). In cases where separate words were produced as one particle (yknow), the transcription depicts them together.

4.6 Procedures of analysis

4.6.1 The conversation analytic working process

The first step of the analysis was the repeated viewing of the recordings. I also took notes of the content, form, and temporal aspects of each recording. The notes facilitated subsequent transcription since the exact time of topic and speaker changes were noted. The repeated viewings also provided me with intuitive ideas of sequences where emotions appeared to be made relevant to participants. This stage is often referred to as “unmotivated looking” (Psathas, 1995). The scope was then narrowed down to six recordings; partly because the six recordings constituted enough material, and partly because the third set of recordings had fewer participants, longer lecture sequences, and contained fewer features of interest to this study. Participants’ names were also changed to avoid identification. However, the fictive names always had the same number of syllables as the real names so that I would not change the conversational rhythm when these names were mentioned in the course of talk.

In working with the data, I have followed similar procedures as those described by Pomerantz & Fehr (1997:71-74) (my summary):

1. Select a sequence
2. Characterize the actions in the sequence
3. Consider how the speakers’ packaging of actions, including their selection of reference terms, provides for certain understandings of the actions performed and the matters talked about. Consider the options for the recipient that are set up by that packaging.
4. Consider how the timing and taking of turns provide for certain understandings of the actions and the matters talked about. For each turn in the sequence, describe how the speaker obtained the turn, the timing of the initiation of the turn, the termination of the turn, and whether the speaker selected a next speaker.
5. Consider how the ways the actions were accomplished implicate certain identities, roles, and/or relationships for the interactants.

The approach I have adopted takes into account the structure and sequencing of talk, the embodiment of actions, as well as attention to specific linguistic markers and discourse particles— in essence, any means through which participants demonstrated their orientations to the state of talk and the context. The focus on a comprehensive view on talk and other forms of action is not unique for my study, although it is a fairly recent development in conversation studies (LeBaron, Mandelbaum & Glenn, 2003).

4.6.2 Analyzing the interview data

The interviews were transcribed in their entirety according to the same principles as the interactional material (verbatim, orthographic accounts with characteristics of speech delivery marked in transcription). Non-vocal conduct was not noted since the interviews were not video-recorded.

My emphasis for this dissertation was on the narrative sequences that further explicated specific interactions that were discussed or shown to participants. The comments and narratives concerning sequences viewed will be presented in connection with these specific instances in my analyses; however, not all instances viewed in the interviews turned out to be relevant to the topics raised in this study. Consequently, interview materials will only be brought into the analytic descriptions when directly relevant or illustrative of the analyses.

4.7 Toward the findings – the emergence of three analytic themes

As the analytic work progressed, a vast assortment of emotion-relevant sequences was located in the corpus. Closer inspection of the various instances eventually led to the division into three themes under which different findings were sorted for presentation. The three themes that emerged were labeled “frustration”, “embarrassment”, and “enjoyment” respectively. As will be evident in reading chapters 5 to 7, these themes are rather different in terms of scope and presentation, and the structure and content of the chapters may need some additional explication. To introduce readers to the analytic process, the emergence of the themes and analyses in chapters 5-7 is described below.
4.7.1 The ‘frustration’ theme

Chapter 5, centering on emotion orientations labeled ‘frustration’, was the first analytic theme that emerged. It was the theme that most closely resembled the initial reason for collecting data in academic seminars, since the specific activity-in-progress in these instances was the giving and receipt of verbal critical feedback on written papers. In the OG seminar feedback activity, students were to present a written assignment, and then the other students and the instructor were to offer critical feedback on everything from the presenter’s writing to methodological issues in the presenter’s study. The feedback activity represented a core feature of academic interaction at seminars in academe on the whole, where personal feelings toward a product a writer works hard on and the receipt of criticism on that product creates tension and face threats (c.f. Tracy, van Dusen & Robinson, 1987; Tracy, 1997).

The interview material also provided some guidance in opting to analyze these particular sequences, since many of the respondents in the OG seminars spontaneously recollected these specific instances, and also reported that they found the feedback activity as such problematic and filled with tension. The chapter centers on detailed analysis of four fragments from one of the OG seminars, which makes chapter 5 the narrowest chapter in terms of its data scope. The type of open display of negative affect described in chapter 5 was rare in the corpus, and the four instances examined in detail show particularly extreme variants of ‘frustration’ in this context. The reason why there were not many more examples of this tension lies in situationally specific turn-taking norms - students were explicitly told to remain silent while receiving feedback from their peers, and only occasionally did students violate this norm. Consequently, in many cases, the feedback activity was hindered from becoming an interactional event between writers and their critics, and since I was interested in this particular aspect of the academic endeavor, it was the instances where feedback recipients actively participated that were interesting. As will be demonstrated, it is in the clash between the tensions in giving and receiving feedback, and the local norm to not respond to feedback, that ‘frustration’ becomes an interactional concern.

However, even though this constraint was unique to the OG seminars, the instances examined illuminate some problems with critical feedback in academic seminars, and also, particularly clearly illustrate instances where ‘negative’ emotions are achieved and managed in social interaction. Since participants also particularly recalled and spoke about these instances as problematic even before I had shown them the video clips from these
interactions, the four instances presented a unique opportunity to compare the interview data with the interactions themselves. This was not possible with many other analyses presented in chapters 6 and 7 since I had no way of knowing which parts of the corpus that would become analytically relevant at the time of interviewing the participants. In essence, chapter 5 operates on two analytic foci; that of the social organization of ‘frustration’, a negatively valenced emotion display, and that of verbal critical feedback as an institutional activity at the heart of academia.

4.7.2 The ‘embarrassment’ theme

Chapter 6 deals with what has been called the most social of all emotions, namely, embarrassment. Encouraged by Heath’s (1988) important work on the interactional organization of embarrassment, the analyses presented in this chapter deal with the display of embarrassment in its most familiar form, with blushing, stuttering, and temporary disorientation, but also with other embarrassment-relevant practices, such as interactional environments where embarrassment is a threat, and embarrassment resistance and avoidance.

In contrast to the presentation of analyses in chapter 5, as described above, the sequences examined in chapter 6 were located across activities and contexts in the six seminars. Many of the instances examined deal with the kind of everyday embarrassment that is a frequent feature of social interaction, and very few of these instances were spontaneously recalled in the interviews. Therefore, the interview material became less relevant as comparison data in chapter 6. A number of the analytic themes in chapter 6 emerged from examination of multi-party laughter sequences in the materials. In many of these sequences, joking and teasing activities appeared to be central. A closer look, however, unearthed that many of the instances with varying participation structures were also embarrassment-relevant. Other analyses propose different practices through which the threat of embarrassment is managed.

4.7.3 The ‘enjoyment’ theme

Chapter 7 is the broadest analytic theme of the three, and emerged out of an interest in practices through which participants in these seminars pursue and do shared enjoyment and a lighthearted interactional atmosphere. The emotion scope is broader than in the two previous chapters for several reasons. First, the ‘positive’ emotions, for example, joy, happiness, exhilaration and contentment,
are a broader, less distinct group of feeling states than, for example, embarrassment, and they have also not been given nearly as much scholarly attention as have shame, anger, or fear. Consequently, we know relatively little about how these affects are organized in social interaction, other than in laughter and smiling. Furthermore, laughter and smiling as decontextualized cues are not reliable indicators of a warm, positive and lighthearted interaction since laughter and smiling occur with other emotional states.

For the present work, this meant that narrowing down the focus on ‘positive’ emotions in social interaction to one particular emotion, as was done with the theme of chapter 6, was more complex. Instead, the emotion scope is more generous than in the two preceding chapters, and the emphasis lies on unearthing practices through which participants seek and achieve shared ‘enjoyment’. Under the scope of shared enjoyment, the practices examined encompass, for example, joy, exhilaration, lightheartedness, intimacy, and interpersonal warmth, without delimiting the scope to a particular intensity or type. The analyses also cover very brief moments of shared enjoyment, and also longer sequences where participants together actively and collaboratively pursue shared laughter and alignment. Interestingly, however, the moments of shared enjoyment were only mentioned in rather general terms when the interviewees were asked to recall positive interactions from the seminars recorded.

4.7.4 Coda

By way of summary, the three emotion themes to be presented next are different in terms of scope, use of interview data, and in terms of their similarities with previous research. The ‘frustration’ theme, describing a negatively valenced feeling state made socially available, is narrower than the remaining themes in terms of the data set used, and as will be demonstrated, the specific activity and local norms play a significant role in interactional management of ‘frustration’. ‘Embarrassment’ has been a popular emotion for social scientific investigation, but the work presented in chapter 6 illustrate in detail moments in interaction where embarrassment becomes relevant to interactants, across contexts and activities, which is an underdeveloped area in embarrassment research. Finally, the ‘enjoyment’ theme presents a vast assortment of contexts and practices where participants collaboratively seek out opportunities for shared enjoyment within and between institutional activities.
Chapter 5

5. ‘Frustration’ in a Critical Response Activity with Restricted Turn-taking Norms

I remember getting oral feedback on papers back in grad school, as well as in undergrad too. It was an exercise in sheer emotional labor, for you couldn't smile, then people would think you were bragging, and you can't frown, because then people will know you are "stupid" and didn't do well. Instead, you are supposed to be pokerfaced and take it all in your stride as if it doesn't mean anything at all or it's just a formality. I think it's even harder for women—women too who came to academia late or are 1st generation academics—because our identities are so wrapped up in getting the master's approval for our work. If not, who are we?

“Amanda”, former graduate student

5.1 ‘Frustration’ as a negative emotion display - introduction

At conferences, thesis defenses, and faculty colloquia, critical feedback on others’ work is a key aspect of academic interaction, and as most of us have experienced, not an unproblematic one. In this chapter, the analyses center on four segments of interaction where critical feedback as well as local norms for the feedback activity in the OG seminars create tensions, and on the social organization of emotions on such occasions. ‘Frustration’ is here used as a rather loose label to describe the interactional displays of degrees of a wide variety of possible internal states such as anger, anxiety, dejection, aversion, shame, annoyance, and insecurity. ‘Frustration’ was located in the context of delicate interpersonal issues, in this case, negotiating institutional tasks and social relationships in the feedback activity. The analyses will show how displays of ‘frustration’ occasioned within the interaction get treated as ‘defensiveness’.

Displays of negative emotions to which co-participants demonstrably orient are rare in the corpus. This does not mean that negative emotions are not present, but it is when they are made available in the seminar interaction that they are also available for analysis. Close examination of four such instances were chosen for illustrating the social organization of ‘frustration’ displayed and oriented to during the activity of giving and receiving feedback on student

25Quote from an email written to me by a junior professor in the United States as part of a discussion on a conference paper on academic feedback I was writing at the time. I found it illustrative of the tensions involved in “doing feedback”, especially with regard to the conscious efforts to regulate of emotional expression.
papers. Interview data will also be used in the presentation of findings, since the excerpts examined were recalled as problematic in the interviews. The chapter also includes description of some devices used to establish norms for appropriate emotional stances in relation to the activity-at-hand. First, however, and in order to situate the analyses in a larger institutional context, some issues in the literature on critical feedback in academic interaction will be addressed.

5.2 Verbal feedback as a situated activity in academic seminars

As we all know, critical response to the work of others, and receipt of critical commentary, is at the heart of doing academic work. The refinement and testing of ideas in interaction with others, peers or superiors, is a central activity in ‘doing-being academic’, and through intellectual discussion, knowledge and “truth” is locally challenged, negotiated and produced in situ. An essential component in the intellectual discussion is the art of giving and receiving verbal feedback on ideas and writings. In the undergraduate and graduate classroom, students gradually learn the institutionally sanctioned ways of participating in this activity, which they in turn, as future scholars, will continue to reproduce at higher levels of academic interaction. Consequently, the activity is one of academic socialization as well as of examining knowledge presentation and the production of new knowledge.

Both being the recipient and the offerer of critical response can be problematic. The agonistic tradition of academic discourse often has the consequence that critical dialogue is synonymous with negative critique and a search for weaknesses in others’ work at the expense of seeking strengths (Tannen, 2002). Tracy (1997) examined academic interaction at faculty colloquia as situated occasions of talk, and demonstrated that presentation and critique in the academic seminar involves far more than objective, rational exchanges of knowledge. Multiple constraints have to be negotiated, and in essence, the “presentation of one’s own thinking is an inherently risky activity” (1997:39). A respondent in Tracy’s interview study brought up the identity work involved in presenting academic work, and concluded that “that’s what you’re doing, is presenting part of yourself”. Furthermore, participants in activities involving ‘constructive criticism’ negotiate several competing goals, primarily the conflicting goals of the traditional scientific methods of evaluating right and wrong ways of performing knowledge and that of friendship and cooperation (Allwood, 1993:46). In presenting written work or ideas, a presenter also lays bare his or her analytic skills, intellectual abilities, value systems, and knowledge.
In the verbalization of ideas, they are also put on record to be held accountable for; to be disputed, elaborated and defended.

In addition, giving what is to be interactionally perceived as “good” academic feedback is difficult (Tracy, Van Dusen & Robinson, 1987; Gunnarson, 1995; 1997) and peers may proffer feedback for reasons other than to ‘help’ their fellow student, e.g. coming across as intellectually superior, or because active participation is encouraged and expected in being a ‘good student’. In addition, there are pedagogical aims associated with the feedback activity and the way in which disagreements and ‘face’ concerns (see below) are handled in class (Rees-Miller, 2000), as critical reading of others’ work is a hallmark of academic work. In essence, verbal feedback in academe is interlaced with the negotiation and achievement of multiple goals.

5.3 Managing critical response in interaction – emotions and facework

In standing up to criticism of academic work, we are likely to be experiencing various degrees of threats to our social identity, as described in Tracy’s (1997) work. A general framework for the negotiation of the social image we wish to project in situations like this is the concept of face (Goffman, 1955; 1967). According to Goffman, participants in social interaction are constantly negotiating the ritual maintenance of face, that is, the positive social value a person desires of him/herself that is established through conversational interaction with others. Face is maintained when this positive social value is consistent – within that individual and supported and confirmed by evidence conveyed by other participants. A threat to face occurs when something in the interaction with others happens that alters the claims about self, other and relationship. Facework, then, is the continuous work we put into upholding a particular image in interaction with others, and includes strategies for averting threats to ‘face’ and repairing inconsistencies in our social image resulting from such threats. Just as a person has to make her own actions consistent with her positive face value, she is also expected to “go to certain lengths to save the feelings and the face of others present” If such considerations are neglected, they have implications on her own face as she may be viewed as either “heartless” of “shameless” (Goffman, 1967:10-11).

From a facework perspective, the analyses presented in this chapter can be said to deal with various face concern issues. However, since the concept of ‘face’ is closely linked to Goffman’s dramaturgic perspective and the idea that people in social interaction put on a socially desirable image, it emphasizes
individual conduct and strategies for upholding public appearance rather than the socio-emotional aspects of face threats that are displayed in interaction with others. Goffman did however speculate about the role of emotions in facework:

“It is plain that emotions play a part in these cycles of response, as when anguish is expressed because of what one has done to another’s face, or anger because of what has been done to one’s own. I want to stress that these emotions function as moves, and fit so precisely into the logic of the ritual game that it would seem difficult to understand them without it.” (Goffman, 1967:23).

However, although the concept of ‘face’ has been a fruitful framework for talking about interactional conduct, it is rather general and does not explain how the emotions associated with face threats are organized in social interaction. The analyses of ‘frustration’ presented in this chapter specifically deal with particular emotional displays and actions associated with moments in interaction where participants can be assumed to be managing threats to ‘face’ of self and others. In doing so, participants also treat the displayed emotional stance of co-participants differently. In essence, an individual participant may display an emotional stance, and that display becomes interactionally relevant if and when co-participants analyze and utilize that display for next actions.

5.4 The data

5.4.1 A restricted turn-taking system in the feedback activity

Understanding how various goals are accomplished in daily academic life requires attention to both practices and actions in the local context of where they are produced, as well as their relation to constraints of the institutional context. In order to understand the unfolding actions in the sequences analyzed here, some insights into the institutional activity-at-hand are necessary.

The feedback sessions analyzed are all taken from the OG seminars, where the feedback sessions are organized so that a student reads parts of a research paper to the class. The other students are then encouraged to provide verbal feedback on the presenter’s text, while the presenter is instructed to remain silent and take notes of the feedback offered. This format instruction was given at the first paper response session, and at the beginning of the seminar from which the four excerpts are extracted. In many cases in the three OG seminars using this format, students demonstrate their awareness of the ‘rules’ by not responding to feedback unless they were specifically assigned the
next turn by the agenda-holder, Dr. A. Consequently, the feedback activity is restrained by a local and normative turn-taking system where direct vocal interaction between feedback recipients and feedback givers is constrained.

In the four excerpts in this chapter, the presenters opt to violate this constraint and respond to feedback offered by their peers and professor. These violations all occur when some degree of negative feedback is delivered. In the entire corpus of three seminars in the same series using this feedback format, not a single norm violation occurred in response to positive feedback. In those cases, the presenter remained silent and perhaps produced a smile or a minimal acknowledgement (“m-hm”) in response. In the cases presented, the norm violations become treated as interactionally problematic, and norm violators’ displays of ‘frustration’ are treated as inappropriate. The interview data also revealed strong feelings toward the restrained activity, and next, some of the participants’ spontaneous commentary regarding the activity will be presented.

5.4.2 The feedback activity – interview narratives

In the interviews, I asked participants to recall aspects of the seminars I had recorded that they had found problematic, and moments where they had felt uncomfortable, angry, or in other ways experienced negative emotions. All the students from the OG seminars mentioned the feedback sessions as such an activity. Below, Linda brings up her feelings toward receiving feedback and asked to remain silent:

uhm I didn’t I guess I was really frustrated with the whole uhm the feedback on our projects uhm I didn’t like I understood the time constraints but I didn’t think it was very productive because they were only getting snippets and it was like everyone felt like they needed to comment whether they really had something to say or not either they hadn’t listened to what I said or it was something that was there but I wasn’t allowed to read it or it’s just they were commenting on things that weren’t relevant and very little of the feedback was constructive and most of it made me feel frustrated like “I have that” or “I did that” and I felt like they were criticizing rather than just to say something not to say like “you know I really would- I’m interested”

Linda mentions feeling “frustrated” with the feedback activity, and attributes part of the problem with the feedback offered to the fact that students felt like they “needed to comment” because participation was expected. She later continues with critiquing the norm of not responding to feedback as an unproductive “kind of dialogue”: 

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It was very hard and you could tell by looking at people ( ) look on their faces and like “ooops sorry I’m not allowed to talk” and to me that’s just the worst kind of dialogue with people talking AT you uhm you just feel attacked whether you’re told not to or not it’s very hard not to feel attacked I’m not that open and y’know-

Jenna also expresses the unpleasant nature of dealing with the criticism:

Like for me it was like really hard to get used to the reaction papers and like I didn’t talk about it like the first few weeks so I thought well just try to deal with it ( ) .hh and then when I was like “No I still don’t like this” like I’ve tried but I still don’t like it.

Lea mentions the difficulty in not being able to “defend yourself” and let the others know that she had indeed considered what the feedback offerer suggested, and also, the problem with obtaining the feedback she actually needed when she was not allowed to participate:

Yeah I had already thought about it and I wanted to say well “I can’t do that because of this or I chose not to” so it was really hard not being able to ( ) to talk or kinda defend yourself or ( ) uhm and I remember when I did mine I think I even said “Can I ask a question here” I- I had to ask permission to use my voice cuz I WANTED people’s advice on one thing or another so yeah it was hard

Others brought up specific feedback exchanges where the feedback recipient had seemed unwilling to accept the feedback as ‘help’, and where the result had been that feedback givers had felt angry, as Jennifer and Brandee recall:

the person whom we were talking to or giving ( ) criticism or ( ) advice eeh was really hostile and defensive and I DID say something ( ) and she kept fighting me and I- and I was just like “forget it I’m not gonna help you then”

I was MAD ( ) she wouldn’t make eye contact and I thought ( ) that was when it clicked for me like “I’m not going to sit here and try to help you – you’re making me feel like a jerk for saying something you won’t make eye contact” she wouldn’t even look up I was ANGRY ( ) and and that’s when I started ( ) you could see I started kind of stuttering ( ) when I realized it ( ) I don’t think I clued into how defensive she was then ( )

And yet others remember empathizing with the feedback recipient and feeling the “pain” of being criticized, as Jenna remembers:
So I think when she was doing that in that particular moment I was kind of like ‘yeah I feel your pain’ (laughs)) and I kind of looked over and she's like when she goes like “yeah I have that here” I think it’s kind of how a lot of us feel

Lisa on the other hand reflects upon her conscious effort to phrase criticism in a “nice” way since she is aware of the fact that her fellow students were “very protective and defensive about their writing”:

I remember something like that pretty much happened in every class (yeah it is frustrating for people when they can’t respond and uh) I was listening to my comment there and I was realizing that I think a lot of times especially in that class when I'm responding (to people’s papers uhm) I get really like “oh y’know that was really good but maybe you could do it in this way and I was just wondering” y’know really NICE (very unlike me (laughs)) because I know that people are very protective and defensive about their writing (I'm protective and defensive about mine too but but I always try to if I’m gonna make criticism at someone’s paper I say something positive about it too.

As we can see, the interviews reveal tensions involved in the feedback activity; both in receiving critique, and in not being allowed to respond to the criticism. Turning to the analyses below, four segments of data where these tensions are demonstrably brought into the interaction will be analyzed in detail.

5.5 ‘Frustration’ in the feedback activity - findings

The presentation of findings in this chapter is set up as follows. The first fragment analyzed, “Tina’s desk drawers”, is taken from a feedback session where the students have been asked to offer peer feedback on Jenna’s paper, which she just finished reading to the class. The remaining three excerpts were extracted from another feedback session where students are giving feedback to Linda’s paper. The four sequences share patterns in terms of how the norm violations are oriented to, but also illustrate different ways in which ‘frustration’ is occasioned, displayed, and treated. See also appendix 6 for a figure of how participants are seated in the OG 3 seminar.

5.5.1 ‘Tina’s desk drawers’

In this initial instance, Jenna has completed the reading of her written paper to the class, and the activity of giving peer feedback on her text has been initiated.
In her paper, Jenna has described a field observation she has conducted at a local gym, and also mentions an encounter with a male employee who, while talking to Jenna, was going through the drawers in the desk belonging to another, non-present employee, Tina. In line 1, Dr. A allocates the next feedback turn to Lisa. Jenna’s quiet turn in line 2 points backwards to preceding feedback from Will, who had asked why Jenna had not provided a fictive name for the male employee in her text. She points to the paper in front of her to assert, quietly to avoid openly violating the norm of responding to Will’s critique, that she did not know the name of the male employee and had therefore not provided a fake name. Lisa, (line 3), concentrates her feedback on Jenna’s description of the male employee opening Tina’s desk drawers.

5.5.1.1 Description of sequence (1)

(1) “Tina’s desk drawers”

1 Dr. A: Li:sa @
2 Jenna: @ it s:ays that *
3 Lisa: but then I would ask like hh (0.2) w- then- wh-
4 why is he asking for this stuff what was he he- (.)
5 and my question when I- when you read this was
6 (. ) w-hat was he doing in Tina’s desk drawers (. )
7 y’know did [he=]
8 Celia: [how did he know- he’s]
9 Will: [m-hmh @]
10 Lisa: =he obviously] had a u:h purpose of being there
11 (0.5) that I’m not getting=
12 Dr. A: =[yeah]
13 Lisa: =[from] this >like< [.hh (was he)
14 Jenna: [he was=
15 Dr. A: =we- you don’t need to defend this [this is-]
16 §23 §30
17 GROUP [#] # # # # # (4.2)
18 Jenna: >but)I don’t understa:nd because I WRITE that (. )

26 nods toward Lisa whose hand is raised
27 Jenna points to her paper, whispers almost as if to herself as a response to a question posed by Will concerning the name of the male employee.
28 nods
29 Dr. A shakes head, gestures with one arm
30 Jenna sighs (visible on video, not audible on recording)
he was an instructor he said he was an instructor
( ) we hadn’t met previously ( ) so am I
not clear when I read it or am I not clear
in the reading-
Lisa: no(h) [I mean I’m just-
Jenna: of it-
Dr. A: let- let- let her just finish hh
Jenna: I just don’t understand- (shakes head)
Dr. A: okay (. ) okay
Lisa: I’m asking like (. ) what was he doing in Tina’s
desk drawers like y’know do people generally
go through Tina’s desk drawers I- ( ) desk drawers
are to me usually pretty private .hh in a drawer
y’ (. ) probably
Dr. A: [It’s off limits
Lisa: yeah

The sequence above consists of three main actions under the activity of giving feedback on Jenna’s paper; Lisa’s feedback, Jenna’s attempts to explain and justify, and Dr. A’s direction-giving in the ongoing activity. Lisa’s feedback (lines 3-7, 10-11, 13) consists of a question which points to an aspect of Jenna’s paper that she feels should have been explicated further, and she is reinforced by Celia’s attempt to elaborate Lisa’s question (line 8) as well as Dr. A’s acknowledgement token [yeah] (line 12). At this point, we can see Celia and Dr. A. aligning with Lisa and the critical feedback she is offering.

Jenna initiates a response to the feedback in line 14, (he was–) but halts her attempt as Dr. A interjects “we- you don’t need to defend this [this is]”. Dr. A’s turn shows that she analyzes Jenna’s attempt to respond as a breach of the activity-specific turn-taking norm of not responding to feedback offered. In line 17, group laughter overlaps the end of Dr. A’s turn. The onset of the laughter does at first seem to occur as a response to Dr. A’s vivid gesturing and head-shaking, but a closer look at the videotape shows Jenna sighing just at the end of the word “defend” (line 16). The sigh is visible (chest is rising and sinking, gaze turns down, lips part at the exact time of the chest rising as in a deep inbreath) but not audible on the recording; however, it is likely that the was sigh also audible to the people seated right next to Jenna. Right after Dr. A produces the word “defend” and Jenna sighs, the group starts

31 agitated voice
32 pronounced as past tense of the verb
laughing loudly. After the onset of laughter, Jenna turns her hands to palms facing up in a ‘dejected’ gesture, and her neck and head retract. As she overlaps the laughter and begins talking again (line 18) her face is flushed and her speech is rapid and forceful.

Interestingly, Dr. A, Lisa and Jenna, the three central figures in this exchange, do not join in the laughter, which suggests a case of laughing at the preceding exchange instead of laughing with the interactants (c.f. Glenn, 1995; 2003), and also, that Lisa and Dr. A did not treat Jenna’s sigh as an invitation to laugh. While Jenna, Dr. A, and Lisa remain focused on the task at hand, that is, negotiating the feedback and Jenna’s attempt to “defend”, the remaining participants laugh, seemingly at her sigh. Also, the laughing participants were not directly involved in the exchange and their laughter could be viewed as less disaligning than if the main interactants had laughed.

Jenna then produces a fast-paced elaboration of her first attempt to explain and defend her text (>but I DON’T UNDERSTAND becuz I ↑WROTE that<), emphasizing that she did indeed write “that” in her paper. Pitch elevation, vowel stretches and raised volume suggest intensification of Jenna’s affective state (Scherer, 1981; Scherer, Banse, Wallbott & Goldbeck, 1991; Goodwin & Goodwin, 2000), so does her increased speech delivery pace. Here, Jenna is openly making available an emotional stance to interactants. At first, it appears as if Jenna’s forceful protest and defensive tone suggest that she feels unjustly ‘attacked’; that the feedback she received from Lisa and others was not relevant and that the answer to the question about the employee going through Tina’s desk drawers was to be found in her paper. As she continues (he was an instructor he said he was an instructor), she trails her finger along the paper in front of her as if reading the words as evidence in her case.

As we can see, there is a ‘conflict’ going on in the interpretations of prior talk, both in the interpretation of Jenna’s text and in Jenna’s attempt to respond to Lisa’s criticism. The negative nature of the exchange is particularly clear in Jenna’s ‘frustrated’ response in lines 18-22. What, then, occasioned this strong reaction, and how can we see the actions participants as orientations to the displays of ‘frustration’? A closer look at lines 1-28 can answer these questions.

5.5.1.2 Repair organization in (1)

As seen above, Lisa’s feedback (lines 3-7, 10-11, 13) is the initial source for the subsequent trajectory. In response, Jenna initiates what seems to be an explanation (line 14), which in turn Dr. A treats as an action of ‘defending’ (line
There is then Jenna’s fast-paced elaboration (lines 18-22), which is followed by Lisa’s disagreement token (line 23). In this sequence, interactants appear to be misunderstanding and correcting the ongoing talk, which gives a structural organization of repair (Schegloff, Jefferson & Sacks, 1977). To understand the repairing being done, the examination of this sequence will be starting close to its closing, with Lisa’s turn in line 23.

In line 23, Lisa latches onto Jenna’s turn and produces a third-turn repair (Schegloff, 1992b) with “no I mean I’m jus-(    )-”. Repair occurring in third turn position is a way of repairing a first turn that a recipient, in a second turn, displays an orientation to which does not concur with what was intended in the first turn. Third turn repairs are usually shaped to repair two types of problems with the response to a first turn. The first type is designed to correct a reference in the first turn that the repairer understands as the misunderstanding, for example, “I don’t mean X”, which can be followed by yet another component of the type “I mean Y”. The second type is designed to clarify the action that the first speaker has meant to be doing with the first turn, but that the first speaker hears as misconstrued in the second speaker’s turn, for example, “I’m not criticizing”, which can be followed by another component such as “I’m just wondering”. The repair sequence is however expanded in this case since multiple speakers and intervening talk is involved. If we view Lisa’s feedback in lines 3-7, 10-11, 13 as the first turn in the subsequent repair sequence, the first part of the repair takes the following structure:

1. Lisa’s feedback
2. Jenna’s initiated response

Consequently, Jenna treats Lisa’s feedback as something that should appropriately be responded to, whether she treats it as a regular information-seeking question or as displaying an incorrect understanding of Jenna’s text. Secondly, Dr. A (line 15) interjects with a turn that displays orientation to Jenna’s abandoned turn as an action of ‘defending’. Jenna sighs in response, there is laughter, and in line 18, Jenna continues with a longer ‘frustrated’ turn in which she can be seen as displaying orientation both to Lisa’s feedback and to Dr. A’s characterization of her action as ‘defending’. This is then followed by Lisa’s clarifying turn. The repair organization has the following structure:

1. Lisa’s feedback
2. Jenna’s initiated response which displays that there was some problem with the way in which Lisa formulated her feedback
Dr. A's turn that displays orientation to Jenna's initiated response as 'defending'

Jenna's longer turn that displays orientation to Lisa's feedback as uncalled for, and Dr. A's characterization of her action as unfair

Lisa's initiated third turn repair of her first turn, which is properly repaired in line 28

As we can see, Lisa's third turn repair occurs in fifth position because of the intervening talk, and this delayed repair organization has been demonstrated earlier (Schegloff, 1992:1318). However, in multi-party talk, interactants have to deal with not just the response to a trouble source turn, but also with intervening talk by another speaker that does not do the same thing as the trouble source turn was treated as doing. Thus, in Jenna's fourth position response, she displays orientation to the first turn with the trouble source in rejecting the feedback on the grounds that this was already written in her paper, and also to Dr. A's treatment of her initiated response in the second position. Jenna is also doing repair: she is repairing her own initiated explanation which was treated as an action that did not concur with her “intentions” with the turn. In essence, this is a repair organization on several levels in which Jenna exhibits her understanding to two prior displayed orientations (feedback + repair initiation), and where Lisa’s fifth position turn is actually the third position repair of Jenna’s displayed treatment of her own first turn.

In terms of the type of third position repair operating in Lisa’s repair, what Lisa is doing is displaying her reading of Jenna’s turn as depicting her own first turn inaccurately. Consequently, it is the second type that is active here, that is, Lisa is rejecting the type of action that she sees Jenna treating her turn as, and thus displays her understanding of Jenna’s turn in lines 18-22 as not adequately representing what action she had meant to be doing with her feedback turn. Her repair initiation and attempt to clarify is overlapped by Dr. A’s continued attempt to silence Jenna’s defense in line 25 (let- let- let her just finish (hh),) spoken more loudly than Lisa’s repair initiation. Jenna again emphasizes her confusion with the feedback, shakes her head and softly adds I just don’t understand (line 26). Dr. A’s first “okay” seems to be an acknowledgement of Jenna’s turn, whereas the second “okay” functions to project a shift toward next speaker, i.e. the continued feedback from Lisa. Lisa rephrases her question (line 28).

Lisa’s reformulation of the trouble source turn in line 28 and on is not actually that different from the original turn. Consequently, it can be concluded that Lisa did not feel that the feedback itself was the problem, but rather, the way in which Jenna reacted to the feedback. Lisa’s third turn repair comes after
Jenna’s longer ‘defense’, and although Jenna states what it is about the feedback that she did not understand, Lisa’s repair displays that Jenna misunderstood her feedback. My point here is that Lisa does not just repair/clarify her feedback with her third turn repair “no I mean I’m jus-( )-”, but she also displays some sensitivity to the emotional stance exhibited in Jenna’s turn, and repairs the way in which Jenna seemed to have treated her feedback as rather harsh criticism. In mitigating the type of action her first turn had attempted to perform rather than the content in it, Lisa displays that she has observed the ‘frustration’ exhibited in Jenna’s forceful response. In line 28 and on, she then continues to explicate that what she was asking for in her first turn was more specific than what she could find out from reading Jenna’s paper.

Leaving the repair organization momentarily, we are now going to examine the first feedback turn in order to learn more about the trouble source that contributed to the repair sequence and Jenna’s displays of ‘frustration’.

5.5.1.3 The feedback turn as a source of trouble and subsequent emotional orientations

At the core of peer feedback as an interactional activity is the “questioning” of the respondent’s work. This, however, is accomplished in a variety of ways by feedback givers, as examples to follow in this chapter will demonstrate. For now, let us take a closer look at the turn units in the feedback that Lisa offers:

3 Lisa: but then I would ask like hh (0.2) w- then- wh-
4 why: is he asking for this stuff what was he he-
5 (. ) and my question when I- when you read this was
6 (. ) what was he doing in Tina’s desk drawers ( .)
7 y’know did [he

10 Lisa: he obviously] had a u:h purpose of being the:re
11 (0.5) that I’m not getting=

13 Lisa: ={from this >like< [.hh (was he)

As part of the activity of giving feedback on someone else’s writing, the students are encouraged to comment on aspects in the writer’s paper that could be improved. What Lisa’s turn is designed to do here is not necessarily to elicit an ‘answer’ from Jenna to the questions raised; rather, she is pointing out questions that arose in the reading of Jenna’s paper that “I’m not getting
from this”. Instead, Lisa is raising questions that Jenna may need to make redundant for future readers of her text by providing additional information.

In terms of the construction of a question-answer adjacency pair, the definition of a first pair part question lies in the action it performs rather in its linguistic form (see Schegloff, 1984:31-36). Determining whether a first part of an adjacency pair is a question or not is a lot more complex in conversational syntax than in traditional linguistic categorization, and categorizing a turn type as a “question” is not necessarily a relevant distinction in the first place; the focus of analysis must be the action such a turn performs rather than what form it may have. Even though Lisa’s turn contains several items that on the surface look like questions (“I would ask like”, “why”, “my question when I- you read this was”, “what was he doing in”) they are not necessarily posed as questions given the participants know that feedback recipients are not supposed to respond to feedback, even in the form of ‘questions’ raised. Thus, by only considering the institutional constraints, Lisa’s turn is perhaps best described as giving feedback through reporting her own subjective experience as a reader of the text (“my question when I- when you read this”), making suggestions for improvement (implied in the questions she “would ask”), and legitimizing claims that she was not able to extract the missing information from Jenna’s text (“that I’m not getting from this”) rather than as posing questions that she expects Jenna to answer in a second pair part. Lisa’s turn appears to have reached a possible completion point as she produces an inbreath before she continues with what appears to be an elaboration (was he) whereupon Jenna seizes the opportunity to speak.

If, then, we are to determine what causes Jenna to initiate her response (he was-), there is little to go by since Jenna is abruptly cut off by Dr. A’s reminder of the feedback format. However, as established above in the description of the repair organization, Jenna subsequently treats the feedback as unwarranted, and it does seem as if Jenna treats Lisa’s feedback as an invitation to provide an explanation, perhaps because of the wh-questioning components of Lisa’s turn. In initiating an explanatory turn that perhaps was designed to publicly display Lisa’s feedback as not relevant, she consciously breaks the norm of remaining a silent feedback recipient. Furthermore, in initiating a response to the feedback, she orients to components of Lisa’s turn as either a request for information warranting an answer, or as some offensive action that requires a ‘defense’ or ‘justification’. Although it is plausible to assume that Lisa’s turn was not really a request for immediate response from Jenna, in an
interactional environment lacking the constraints of the feedback activity, the recipient would be invited to provide a response to the questions raised.

However, at this point, there are no visual or audible signs that Jenna may feel threatened or frustrated: her voice is calm and without any stuttering, audible breathing or extraordinary pitch, loudness or emphasis, and she remains still without gesturing or alterations in her torso position. These changes occur when she is interrupted by Dr. A: she sighs, and pursues to turn her palms up and her gaze down while her face reddens slightly. Note also that Jenna makes no attempt to continue her incomplete turn in line 14 and stops talking as Dr. A latches onto her turn.

As mentioned above, Dr. A’s turn that latches onto Jenna’s initiated response as well as the choice of the word “defend” (line 15, we- you don’t need to defend this [this is]) shows a treatment of Jenna’s attempt to respond not as “providing a clarification” to facilitate Lisa’s understanding of the text, but as a ‘defensive’ action. Immediately after this emotion-laden verb is pronounced, Jenna sighs, laughter breaks out, succeeded by Jenna’s next turn, which indeed appears ‘frustrated’ and ‘defensive’ based on several cues:

a) Vocal characteristics (increased pitch, loudness, pace and emphasis)
b) Embodied actions (gestures, facial redness, postural changes)
c) Turn construction: turn-initial “but”, reading from paper as if presenting “evidence” for her case, somewhat sarcastic formulation in asking if the unclarity lies in her “reading” of the text; in essence, soliciting confirmation that the answer to the unclarity was indeed to be found in her paper without specifically designating Lisa as the one at fault for the arising of the misunderstanding.

Jenna is suggesting that she is ‘right’, volunteers the proof for this, and invites the audience to confirm that she had provided the information asked for: “so am I not clear when I read: it it or am I not clear in the reading- of it:”. Her turn, including the two negations, invites the likely recipients to confirm or reject the proposition that her reading was the source of understanding problem rather than her text in the paper. She offers the question somewhat ironically; that it was she that had been unclear in the reading, and not the text in her paper.

Nevertheless, there has been a source of misunderstanding and Lisa initiates third turn repair of her first turn. The ‘no’ in these cases is not really a rejection of the prior speaker’s full turn, but on the contrary signals acceptance of that turn and does repair of what was misunderstood. So, when Lisa
produces “no”, followed by (hh) I mean, she is simultaneously displaying sensitivity to Jenna’s display of ‘frustration’ with having been misunderstood as valid given Jenna’s displayed treatment of the feedback, but invalid in the sense that the feedback had been misunderstood. Lisa then has the opportunity to elaborate on the third turn repair in line 28 and on as follows:

28 Lisa: I’m asking like (. .) what was he doing in Tina’s
desk drawers like y’know do people (. .) generally
go through Tina’s desk drawers I– (. .) desk drawers
are to me usually pretty private . hh in a drawer
y’ (. .) probably

32 Dr. A: [It’s off limits

Above, also notice Dr. A’s anticipatory completion of Lisa’s feedback in line 32, “it’s off limits”. This turn is hearable as an agreement with Lisa’s criticism of Jenna’s text, that is, desk drawers are off limits to others than their owners and Lisa is right by pointing out that additional information is missing in Jenna’s paper if an unknown man suddenly starts searching through Tina’s drawers. By completing Lisa’s ongoing turn, validation of Lisa’s elaborated feedback is granted, and Lisa is given assistance out of a troubling exchange. Lerner (1996a) showed how speaker utilized preference structures to avoid actions that could be regarded as face-threatening, for example that of disagreement (see Pomerantz, 1984, and also section 2.5.3). By anticipatory completion of another speaker’s ongoing turn through converting a structurally dispreferred action into a preferred alternative action, speakers can be viewed as orienting to face concerns through their knowledge of interactional organization. Although the actions above are different, Dr. A may be preempting any dispreferred or overly elaborated activities, and ‘rescuing’ Lisa from being held accountable by Jenna for her feedback, by completing Lisa’s turn before a turn transition point has been projected. In essence, by overlapping Lisa’s turn with a display of an anticipatory understanding of the point Lisa was making, Dr. A displays alignment with Lisa rather than with Jenna, and Lisa does not have to continue elaborating and justifying her initial feedback. Consequently, Lisa’s position as the feedback giver following the local rules is strengthened by Dr. A.

Lisa’s repair initiation is overlapped by Dr. A, who directs “let- let- let her just finish . hh” at Jenna, and again, Dr. A displays alignment
with Lisa rather than with Jenna. Jenna’s turn completion is delayed so that it occurs simultaneously with Lisa’s mitigation turn and Dr. A’s silencing of Jenna’s ‘defense’. Jenna produces a quiet “I just don’t understand” to communicate that she was not defending at this point, but rather, clarifying what the feedback was about, and makes clear that she does not understand what Lisa based her feedback on. Lisa then proceeds to repeat and clarify her feedback (lines 28-33). As we can see, Lisa reformulates her feedback and makes clear to Jenna that her point had nothing to do with the identity of the “instructor”, as Jenna’s presentation of evidence displayed, but instead with the motivation behind the instructor’s actions (to go through Tina’s desk drawers) as described in Jenna’s text. Consequently, although Lisa reformulates her original feedback turn in a similar way, she makes it clear that it was Jenna who misunderstood her feedback rather than that the feedback itself was unclear. Jenna remains silent during the remainder of her feedback session and does not respond to additional feedback.

5.5.1.4 ‘Frustration’- initial observations

In less technical language, some initial observations may be summarized from the detailed examination of the problematic feedback exchange. One such conclusion concerns the institutional constraints on turn-taking, that is, that feedback recipients are to remain silent. This is a problematic constraint for interactants who are simultaneously trying to manage mundane methods of inference in social interaction and the particulars of the feedback activity, and in this sequence, there appears to be a strong onus for replying to negative feedback despite these local norms. In addition to managing criticism and specific turn-taking procedures, interactants are orienting to institutional roles, which is perhaps most evident in the turn allocation asymmetry and differential participation rights for students versus the teacher (Linell & Luckmann, 1991; McHoul, 1978). Consequently, students in the feedback activity are managing multiple and conflicting interactional constraints.

To stretch this initial observation before moving on to the three other fragments in this chapter, it appears as if not being able to respond to a first pair part leaves the recipient with two options: orienting to the feedback giver’s turn, where ‘not responding’ comes off as a dispreferred option, or orienting to institutional norms where responding is the dispreferred alternative. Secondly, Jenna’s choice to respond makes public the differing understandings that she and Lisa had of the text reading, the text itself, and the feedback. This leads to
repair work, which in turn becomes problematic, since Jenna is violating the
norm as well as displaying treatment of the feedback in a way that Lisa could
not agree with. Thirdly, Dr. A’s work of upholding the feedback norm
intervenes with the repair sequence initiated, and adds a second dimension of
orientation for Jenna. Initially, Jenna appeared to be ‘just responding’ to Lisa’s
verbalized interpretation of her text. In response to Dr. A’s construction of
Jenna’s very short action (he was-) as ‘defending’, Jenna responds ‘defensively’
and opts to present evidence based on her writings to legitimize her norm
violation. In essence, when the initial action was construed as displaying a
particular type of emotional stance, an action that indeed could be observable
as that very emotional stance follows.

Another observation concerns the differing orientations of Dr. A, Lisa
and Jenna. While Lisa’s mitigation shows monitoring of Jenna’s ‘frustration’,
Dr. A is orienting to maintaining the norm in rebuking Jenna for responding
(line 15) and in allocating turn precedence to Lisa’s feedback (line 24). If viewed
from the perspective of “troubles” talk (e.g. Jefferson & Lee, 1992), Jenna is
doing a ‘frustration’ troubles-telling (that she does not understand the source of
the feedback), and her co-participants fail to act as troubles-recipients.

In orienting to the possible turn transition point after Lisa’s inbreath, we
can see similarities with Schegloff’s (1988/89:228) observations of a TV
interview that American news anchor Dan Rather conducted with vice-
president Bush, which gradually turned into an argument between the
interviewer and the interviewee. In Schegloff’s analysis of the interview
argument, he observed that Rather and Bush both violated turn-taking
expectations by, for example, opting to produce a response to what is not yet a
clear “question” - or, more generally, opting to start talking at a sequential slot
where continued monitoring of the first speaker’s turn is expected. When this
occurred, the “format” of the interview broke down in that participants were
no longer orienting to the expected turn-taking system of the context. In this
case, by seizing the next turn at a point when Lisa, other students, or Dr. A
should have proceeded, the feedback session as a feedback session momentarily
ceases to be, and this orientation results in a “dispute” about the talk itself.

In her interview a few weeks later, Jenna commented on the exchange,
and reported the interaction quite accurately, and also reports being ‘frustrated’
with the ambiguity of the feedback in whether it was her writing/telling that
was unclear or the recipients’ attentiveness:
[Interview 16, “Jenna”]

[…] and then everyone is asking their questions and they were like “Well (.) what about this and what about that what about this” and I was just like “that was in what I read” it was in what I wrote (.) and everyone was just like “what about this and what about that” and I was just like (.) and it was frustrating for me because I was just like “It is right there!” and I was just like “were you not listening to me?” or is it not written (.) and I remember I snapped at everybody I was like “Were you not listening or is it not written clearly” (.) and I was like “What part of ‘I didn’t know him’ didn’t you understand”? ((laughs)) and it was like it was frustrating and she was just like “well you know that’s not what we’re doing here, you just need to write this down” and I’m like “No I need to understand what you’re saying” if you’re saying you didn’t understand it (.) tell me! Did you not hear me say it or was it not clear to you (.) becuz if you were not listening then you weren’t listening but if what I wrote was unclear then that’s the problem […] (italics added)

The details of the reported interaction given in this interview strengthen, to some degree, the analyses of Jenna’s orientations above; however, what is not obtained from analyzing the interview data is the sequential progression of the exchange, nor do we see how specific units like “defend”, which is not mentioned here, actually convert an initiated “explanation” to an outright “defense”. As we can see, Jenna’s account is primarily focused on the relevance of the feedback itself as the source of her frustration, whereas the displays of ‘frustration’ are interactionally assembled in the actions of the participants.

In this first sequence, the social organization of ‘frustration’ was examined. A central point to the detailed analysis of (1) was to demonstrate how ‘frustration’ was made available and relevant to interactants, and the subsequent treatment of both ‘frustration’ and ‘defensiveness’ as inappropriate and contextually dispreferred parts of social actions. As demonstrated, the norm violation itself (or the dispreferred action, if you will) gets treated as exhibiting negative affect, namely, ‘defensiveness’. In response to being treated as exhibiting a certain affective state, ‘frustration’ is exhibited in the form of verbal aggression/anger, which frequently occurs in the context of criticism and identity threats (c.f. Canary, Spitzberg & Semic, 1998). However, the precedence given to feedback rather than to feedback response in this particular activity format makes possible disattending to exhibited anger, and the displays of ‘frustration’ are ignored in favor of the completion of the feedback.

In furnishing her second norm violation with vocal, verbal and embodied displays of ‘frustration’, Jenna nevertheless communicated a strong emotional stance toward prior talk. In doing so, she made available to others a sense of the problematic nature of the feedback activity as well as the norm of remaining silent in response to feedback. Next, ‘frustration’ will be examined in
a series of three sequences from the same feedback session where the displays of negative affect lead to different ways of upholding the norm, as well as different types of feedback turn designs.

5.5.2 “Field experience report”

The following three sequences are consecutive in the same feedback session, moving from when the student, Linda, has completed reading her paper to the class, through a series of feedback turns directed at her from her peers. The choice of three sequentially connected sequences was motivated by an interest in the gradual escalation of face-threatening emotions such as ‘frustration’ resulting in ‘defensive’ actions in a series of questions directed at a single respondent. I will demonstrate how the preceding interaction is relevant in the understanding of a single instance of giving and responding to feedback, and discuss how ‘frustration’ and ‘defensiveness’ can be viewed as interactionally assembled actions that do face-work in the interaction.

5.5.2.1 Overview of actions and activities

The first instance analyzed in the series of feedback directed at Linda’s paper illustrates the initial feedback comments offered to Linda, right after she completes the reading aloud of her paper to the class. Linda’s paper is a field experience report centering on an interview she has conducted as part of her class project with a representative of the organization she is studying. After the round of applause, Dr. A invites the other students to provide feedback to Linda, and Eric is allocated the first feedback turn (line 8). Linda responds to Eric (line 12), and just as in “Tina’s desk drawers” above, Dr. A addresses the feedback recipient directly about the violation of the feedback norm (line 15):

(2) “Field experience report”

1 Linda ((reads)) and the gendering of job breakdown and
2 description (. ) as well as subtly re-
3 emphasizing the role of communication throughout the
4 roles of the corporate company {stops reading})
5 (0.3)
6 xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx{Applause, 4.2})
7 Dr. A: .hhh okay feedback (. ) Eric
Eric: I’d like to know what you said were [fueling cuz=]

Linda: [I-I- (.)]

Eric: I think that’s kind of important

Linda: like I said I didn’t have any idea what

she [ meant ]

Dr. A: BUT- (0.6) you don’t need to respond [you just need to take notes]

Linda: [but I’m telling you: what I have]

Dr. A: [no (.)]

Linda: you [ I have too much information for you to get all in this ( )]

Dr. A: of course you do(.) that is always the case with everybody here so .hhh=

Jennifer: [what we’re looking for-.hhh=]

Linda: [don’t pat me right now Jennifer]

Dr. A: what we’re looking for is(.) that when you do a field experience report(.) what(.) would we: be curious about(.) and so we’re gonna respond to that(.) so you could always answer the question (0.9) there’s just not enough time there’s not enough space there’s not enough anything .hhh but we’re gonna use this as an entity in and of itself(.) and it may be: that we need to think about what could have been left out here(.) and why were we: curious as a reader(.) so (.). I don’t want anyone to answer the

33 Looks up from the table, shakes head slowly
34 Faces Linda
35 Leans forward, faces Dr. A
36 Waves right hand up/down toward Linda
37 Lowers right hand rapidly in a waving gesture
38 sound of chair scraping against the floor
39 Begins stroking Linda’s right upper arm
40 Hostile tone, clenched teeth, gaze averted
41 Jennifer takes her hand off Linda’s shoulder and stares down on the paper in front of her
question (.) I didn’t have enough space or time
I want them to think about whaddis the entity
(. of a field experience (. report (. and
what Eric is saying and I would agree is (.)
even if you have to sum up (. something that’s
significant you can’t give it all (.) to be able
to report at least a few examples of those (.)
it’s something I- I’m left with a big question
mark there (.) and a sentence (.) might do it (.)
OKAY (0.7) Cellia and then Will and then Jenna
and (0.2) everybody ((smiles and gestures))
## ## ## (2.4)
Eric’s feedback concerns the “gender breakdown” that Linda had mentioned at
the very end of reading her paper (see line 1), and he addresses Linda
specifically with the second person pronoun in “that you said were
fueling”. He continues by asserting his claim that this is something Linda
should have included in her analysis (cuz< I think that’s (.) kind of
important). Linda responds immediately, overlapping Eric’s turn (line 10),
and the phrase “like I said” (line 12) seems to indicate that she thinks that
his question had already been answered in the reading of her paper. Eric’s direct
addressing may be central in Linda’s choice to violate the norm in that it occurs
in overlap, and consequently, Linda is orienting to the fact that Eric addressed
her with his question. The mundane conversational preference for responding
to a turn with a specific addressee overrides the institutional norm, and the
norm violation is then a collaborative achievement between Eric and Linda.
In line 15, Dr. A intervenes with a remark directed at Linda (BUT-
(0.6) you don’t need to respond). To this, Linda leans forward,
directs her posture and gaze at Dr. A and produces “I (hh) know(hh):w “
through an outbreath, as a sigh, and proceeds on with her turn “but I’m
telling you: what I have”. Dr. A simultaneously continues with “you
just need to take notes”. Dr. A’s turn in line 20 (no (. ) >no I know
you don’t need<-) accomplishes agreement prefaced by two disagreement
tokens, “no”, rapidly succeeded by “I know” and “you don’t need to-“.
Taken out of their exact context, the exchange would look as follows:

Linda: I (hh) know(hh):w (.) but I’m telling you:
what I have
What are Dr. A’s negative tokens projecting? Jefferson (2002) investigated how “no” could do the work of an affiliative or acknowledgement token in response following negatively framed statements, especially in British English, whereas Americans in her corpus generally preferred a positive token (+) to acknowledge and a negative token (−) to affiliate. However, the corpora she examined did not show clear consistency in the deployment of negative tokens, and Jefferson concluded that the rules for the production of a positive or negative acknowledgement token are interactionally determined, and that negative tokens may be more closely related to negatively framed utterances shaped so that “no” would be interpreted as affiliative.

In this case, however, Linda is not producing an outright negatively framed statement, even if she produces a delayed and agreement-prefaced disagreement (I know…but). It may be that Dr. A’s “no”, or at least the first occurrence, is a caveat against Linda’s insistence on talking as a feedback recipient – a device for halting prior speech and it may perhaps also do the work of a continuer/acknowledgement token here; displaying a higher degree of active recipiency and a stronger move toward shifting from recipiency to speakership. “Yeah” has been demonstrated to be a more active acknowledgement token than, for example “mm hm”, which does not systematically project turn shifts (Jefferson, 1984b:200). The first “no” could also be doing agreement or continuer work, but it is unclear from this example. The second “no” produced together with “I know” as one discourse particle42 appears to do the work of affiliating with Linda, while projecting the last part of her turn, which tells Linda that although Dr. A acknowledges/affiliates with Linda’s troubles, Linda does not need to elaborate on “what I have” (line 19). Despite these caveats, Linda nevertheless continues to elaborate in line 21-22, with a further justification: “I have too much information for you to get all in this (   )”.

Dr. A acknowledges Linda’s claim that she has more information than she could offer in her paper (of course you do), but the agreement continues with a “generalization” of Linda’s concerns (that’s always the case with everybody here), which suggests that Linda’s situation is not

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42 See also Good & Sandlund (forthcoming) for a closer examination of different types of combined agreement particles.
unique, but applies to any paper presenter in the class. Such “extreme case formulations” (Pomerantz, 1986) have been shown to do the work of legitimizing claims and asserting the rightness or wrongness of a practice, which also seems applicable here. By using the individual concerns of Linda, Dr. A can also make use of the opportunity to address the entire group, however, in this case, the pronominal generalization “everybody here” and the time circumstance adverbial “always” also serve to downplay Linda’s concerns and to make clear that since this is a general and recurrent concern, it does not suffice as a valid excuse. After the refusal to accept Linda’s excuse as situationally valid, Dr. A shifts to the feedback task itself: “so .hhh what we’re looking for- .hhh”.

The activities that follow are of great importance to ‘frustration’ and ‘defensiveness’. Jennifer, who is seated on Linda’s right, begins to stroke Linda’s right upper arm just as Dr. A shifts from the caveat to the description of the feedback task. Jennifer’s eyes are focused on the paper in front of her, and Linda, also still looking down, responds by hissing quietly, through her teeth, “don’t pat me right now Jennifer”. Jennifer immediately takes her hand off Linda without moving her gaze, and proceeds to gaze down at the table. In the interview a few weeks later, Jennifer brought up the occasion:

[Interview 7, “Jennifer”]

(...) I can remember just trying to- like patting her or something and she was like “don’t touch me” and I went like O:::H .hhh I just didn’t wanna be there I just wanted to leave I just felt so ba:d (...) I honestly (...) I really wanted to break the tension and that’s why I was like patting her ((laughs)) and she was like “stop patting me” but again I mean it’s personality differences y’know (...)

Again, as we saw with Jenna above, Jennifer has a fairly accurate account of the interaction, except that the “O:::H” was not actually pronounced, but was an demonstration of her emotional state used in the interview. As seen above, Jennifer mulls over her own statements rather than the actions of her co-participants, and expresses her intentions with the gesture: to “break the tension” and thereby lend emotional support to Linda in a moment of frustration and discomfort. Jennifer also uses a description that can be viewed as an indicator of shame in “I just didn’t wanna be there I just wanted to leave I just felt so ba:d”. As mentioned in 3.3.2.5, verbal markers of shame (Retzinger, 1991) include an expressed wish to hide or disappear, verbally and/or non-verbally. Jennifer’s only action after Linda’s rejection is to take her hand off Linda’s shoulder and continue to stare down at her paper, and there is nothing
to evidence that co-participants orient to “shame” in Jennifer since she is not an active speaker at this point. However, it is clear that participant intentions are less relevant for the outcome of interaction - even if an action is motivated by the best of intentions, if it does not get treated as such, there is no causal relationship between intentions, interpretation, and interactional outcome.

From a ‘face’ perspective, a very general observation is that some type of ‘face threat’ is negotiated in the interaction between Eric, Linda, Jennifer, and Dr. A. Linda is in a delicate situation from several perspectives: when her academic performance was questioned in Eric’s feedback, by Dr. A’s alignment with Eric’s feedback, in Dr. A calling Linda out on ‘defending’, and finally, in Jennifer's nonverbal gesture that potentially may highlight Linda’s ‘frustration’ and “potential loss of control” to co-participants.

Goldsmith (1992) proposes three conditions necessary for the giving of social support to have favorable outcomes: the type of assistance offered must be appropriate for the situation, the support must be communicated “competently”, for example, through timing, and support offered must meet the goal of satisfying the receiver's face wants as well as the provider’s face wants (i.e. positive and negative face concerns). In other words, a person should be made to feel “accepted (positive face) and in control of his or her emotions and/or circumstances (negative face)” (Cupach & Metts, 1994:67).

From an interpersonal vantage point, Linda’s rather forceful rejection of Jennifer’s intentionally supportive action presents some evidence for the idea that at that sequential slot, while being counter-argued by Dr. A, the supportive gesture becomes an additional threat in an already delicate situation. A strategy for warding off a potential threat to face is avoidance, or even withdrawal from a particular interaction (Goffman, 1967:15), and Linda’s action forcefully averts the threat posed by Jennifer’s action. This interpretation is further strengthened in the interview data, where Linda expressed her frustration with being expected to just take notes of the feedback:

[Interview 12, “Linda”]

(….) I had the data I just didn’t have it on that piece of paper so that was one of the things when I was not supposed to be defensive and just think in my head that I had that data but again I wanted to justify to everyone in the room that I had that and that’s not what you were supposed to do- (….)

Linda accounts for knowing that she was “not supposed to be defensive” but also emphasizes her urge to “[justify to everyone” that she “had that” data. It appears from both interaction and interview data as if the source of her
frustration begins with Eric’s question, escalates because she is reprimanded for violating the format, and culminates when Jennifer tries to offer nonverbal support. Linda finds herself in a position where she fears ‘losing face’, and Jennifer’s gesture, visible to the entire class (see e.g. Cupach & Carson, 2002, on public delivery of face-threatening acts), presents an additional threat. Her face-saving strategy is to ward off the threat by snapping at Jennifer, but by remaining still, not looking at Jennifer and almost hissing through her teeth, she attempts to do the warding off discreetly and produces her imperative significantly more quietly than surrounding talk, and with monotonous prosody. Even if Linda indeed did perceive Jennifer’s touching as a sign of support and understanding, she is, at that moment, unable to respond gratefully to the gesture, and instead, has to avoid the face-threat in order to stay composed. Jennifer responds instantly by taking her hand off Linda and accepts Linda’s needs to “assemble” herself (Goffman, 1967:18).

However, analyzing participants’ actions through a face work lens indeed has some general relevance; however, it mainly rests on individual experience and is rather unspecific in terms of how emotions associated with potential loss or consideration of face are interactionally assembled. Instead, the argument proposed here concerns how actions of interactants together both bring about and manage “frustrations” and ‘defensiveness’ that certainly can be viewed as part of doing face-work. Turning instead toward the conduct of participants in (1) and (2), some observations can be summarized as follows below.

### 5.5.2.2 Compiled observations of the social organization of ‘frustration’ in (1) and (2)

In the excerpts examined so far, there are some systematic features to the social organization of ‘frustration’ in the format-constrained feedback activity:

- Opting to respond directly to the feedback giver could be explained by orientations to competing constraints; to components of the feedback giver’s turn that in general conversational organization would invite a response (I would ask, my question ... was, what, why, I’d like to know) and to the institutional norm of not responding.
- When opting to respond, the constraint that was neglected has repercussions in the form of caveats and attempts to shut down the response.
- Displays of ‘frustration’ exhibit a strong emotional stance toward prior talk and actions.
• ‘Frustration’ and ‘defensiveness’ are outcomes of the second, not the first action above, in particular when constructed as ‘defensive’ or as disaligned from the purpose of the feedback activity.

• ‘Frustration’ is initially displayed as “sighing” (Jenna, line 16; Linda, line 16) and by agreement-prefaced disagreement turn shapes or contracted disagreement, followed by a justification of the disagreement claim (“I know.. but I’m telling you:” and “but I don’t understand becuz”). ‘Frustration’ escalates in the ‘defensive’ actions from sighing to more forceful and aggressive parts of talk (Jenna’s raised pitch, volume, emphasis, pace, and ironic attribution of blame; Linda’s insistence on completing her defense despite attempts to close down her talk, snapping at Jennifer)

• The differing institutional roles of feedback givers and Dr. A can be traced in their orientations to ‘frustrations’. While students opt to orient to the feedback recipient’s “frustration” (showing sensitivity through repair and support), Dr. A orient to the violation and displays affiliation with feedback givers’ turns (supports claims and relevance of feedback, allocates turn completion precedence to feedback givers.

Having established the similarities between the two occasions of ‘frustration’, we can see that the displays of ‘frustration’ are intimately connected with the institutional constraints on the feedback activity on the one hand, and with the treatment of a norm violation as inappropriate. We will now return to the way in which the appropriateness versus inappropriateness of Linda’s actions are interationally treated and transformed.

5.5.2.3 Establishing a norm of appropriate emotional stance

The construction of a speaker’s talk as ‘defensive’ and “activity disaligning” deserves some additional attention. In the Jenna instance, we could observe Dr. A (i.e. the discussion leader) displaying orientation to Jenna’s attempt to respond to feedback as a defensive action rather than as a clarification. In (2), line 15, Dr. A deploys a similar turn shape but chooses the emotionally weaker “respond” instead of “defend” to characterize prior speaker’s action. However, other strategies are used in relation to the norm violations, and this section deals with the devices Dr. A utilizes to establish norms of appropriate and inappropriate emotional stances in the feedback activity.

As mentioned above, acknowledging Linda’s concerns as understandable but nevertheless general by using an “extreme case formulation” through the
adverbial “always” and the indefinite pronoun “everybody” appears to be doing the work of downplaying the validity in Linda’s claims. The longer monological turn by Dr. A (line 30 up to the abrupt turn allocation in line 52) offers participants with a detailed explanation of what the paper assignment and the feedback activity entail. In this turn, the pronominal address shifts between “you” and “we” and even “I”. As usual with the plural forms of first and second person pronouns in English, their intended reference can shift within the same turn, and there is a linguistic “in principle ambiguity” (Sacks, 1992:34843; Watson, 1987:269) with “you” in particular. The ‘in principle’ ambiguity means that whether the pronoun is to be considered ambiguous or not is an occasioned matter and an outcome of interactants’ analysis of the local context. Because of the range of possible interational work that pro-terms can perform, Dr. A’s use of pro-terms in her work of upholding and legitimizing the norms warrants close examination.

Such a close examination of the turn shows “we” being used to assume ownership of the group activity of reading and providing feedback, (i.e. spoken from point of view of the readership) and “you” to refer to the feedback recipient – Linda in particular or any feedback recipient in the class. The following list shows the distribution of pronouns and constructions, their likely referents, and “what” the activity is about:

a) Representing readership/feedback giver(s) including current speaker

1) what we’re looking for is
2) what (..) would we: be curious about
3) so we’re gonna respond to that
4) we’re gonna use this a:s an entity
5) it may be:: that we needtuh think about
6) why were we: curious as a reader

b) Representing feedback recipient(s) and/or paper author(s)

7) That when you do a field experience report
8) so you could always answer the question
9) even if you have to sum up
10) you can’t give it all
11) I didn’t have enough space or time
12) I want them to think about
13) what could have been left out here

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14) to be able to report at least a few examples of those
15) I don’t want anyone to answer

c) Representing current speaker’s viewpoint

16) I don’t want anyone to answer
17) I want them to think about
18) and I would agree is
19) I’m left with a big question mark

As seen above, “we” is used to include Dr. A as well as the entire group as readers and feedback profferers. It is designed to do the work of explaining what the feedback activity entails on part of the readers, and also, for modeling appropriate conduct. Example (5) could be argued to include feedback recipient as well, i.e. that it is not only the readers but also the recipient who needs to think about what “could have been left out” in the text. Examples 7-10 shift to “you” as feedback recipients and can be analyzed by participants either as referring to any paper writer or feedback recipient in the class, or as referring directly to Linda. Examples 13 and 14 show a passive construction and an infinitive construction without pronominal reference that both could be argued to refer to what the writer ought to have done, thus validating the relevance of feedback for the writer. Example (7) also refers to the writer, whereas examples 8, 11, and 15 all refer specifically to the act of responding to feedback. In using the first person singular form in example 11, Dr. A constructs direct reported speech (c.f. Holt, 2000) assuming reporting back to Linda’s response in lines 21-22 (I have too much information for you to get all in this). In examples 12 and 15, however, all feedback recipients could potentially be referenced through “them” and “anyone” as Dr. A formulates a model of an appropriate response (I don’t want, I want). In (15) though, the reference to “anyone” in the context of reconstructing an inappropriate response, the generalization to “anyone” also works to mitigate the retribution toward Linda.

Lerner (1996b) observed how participants resolved ambiguities with second person reference by orienting to speaker gaze direction. The video gives few clues as to the intended referents and their receipt since Dr. A appears to be addressing the entire group. The only time her gaze turns directly to Linda (who continues to gaze down) is after the completion of example 19, where Dr. A moves from pointing at a copy of Linda’s paper on the table to gazing at Linda before the pre-closing shift “okay” (line 51). Since Dr. A’s turn is closed with next speaker assignment (line 52) there is no evidence of Linda’s and
others’ treatment of the varying reference. Nevertheless, the “we’s” seem to do the work of assuming joint ownership of the feedback activity. The “you’s” and other recipient-oriented constructions may be carefully selected to avoid direct face threat to the recipient while simultaneously pre-empting similar actions from future feedback recipients. Finally, the “I’s” represent either direct formulations of appropriate actions (16 and 17) or personal viewpoint (19 and 20), with the exception of the reported speech44 (11), which is as close to referring directly to Linda as it gets in this particular sequence.

What, then, may be the relevance of analyzing the use of pro-terms and referents in a single monological turn in understanding the interactional management of ‘frustration’? Well, just as Jennifer’s displayed orientation of support to Linda’s displays of frustration and defensiveness is rejected, Dr. A’s treatment of both Jenna’s and Linda’s displays of frustration is done through orientation to activity constraints. In the “Tina’s desk drawer” case, the intervention was done through constructing Jenna as defensive and also giving precedence to the feedback giver to continue interrupted feedback. In the second example, the feedback giver had completed his feedback turn, and Linda’s ‘frustration’ and actions of ‘defense’ are not directed at the feedback giver, but to Dr. A (I’m telling you: what I have). Consequently, Dr. A treats Linda’s frustration as complaints about the norm that warrant justification and re-setting of the norm. The long monologue then does the work of justifying the activity format, of refusing to accept the validity of the form and sequential placement of the complaint, and of making direct requests for appropriate actions. This is accomplished through, among other devices and actions, careful selection of reference. Furthermore, Dr. A also formulates implicitly a set of criteria for feedback receipt which imply what type of emotional stance that is appropriate; in particular with the contrasts between “I want” and “I don’t want”, which depict ‘defensive’ actions as inappropriate.

To summarize the observations so far on a general level of structural organization, we can say that defensive actions performed with shades of ‘frustration’ are dispreferred displays in response to critical commentary in this particular institutional context, and that the management of frustration among participants depends on their orientations. Also, competing interactional demands seem to precede displays of frustration, as do treatment of norm violations as ‘defensive’ and dispreferred. I will return to the justification of activity format and the use of generic reference in the last excerpt in this chapter.

44 Similar types of reported speech constructions will be dealt with in detail in chapter 7.
5.5.3 “You just don’t get it here”

The next sequence was divided into two excerpts; (3) and (4), but they are consecutive and take place a few minutes after excerpt (2). Although the main observation in relation to excerpts (1) and (2) takes place in the second part of this sequence, what goes on in excerpt (3) below has implications for the analysis of excerpt (4).

(3) “You just don’t get it here”

1  Dr. A:  o[kay ((nods toward Jennifer))]
2       (0.5)
3  Jennifer:  [u:hm (. you had mentioned like that (. sh-
4        (.) she was willing to maybe do another interview
5        with you and so if you go back and ;interview
6        with her=
7  Linda:  =>no not (h)eer other people<
8  Jennifer:  >Not hear other people ;O:::(0.4) then even
9        a second interview with her might be interesting
10  bcuz (. I:: wanted to know more about when
11  She< ;sa::id (0.6) uhm ((begins reading))
12  there’s certain pe:ople (0.1) that depending on
13  the issue (1.1) ykno- I wouldn’t trust (0.5) a
14  lot of people within the u:hm (. corporate
15  company (0.5) hh where I work are women ((stops
16  reading)) >and so on like< that’s something that I
17  thought you could have [looked
18  Dr. A:                        [Yeah
19  Jennifer:  (. at[more
20  Dr. A:                        [Yeah
21  Jennifer:  [I wz=
22  Dr. A:                        [Yeh
23  Jennifer:  =interested-
24  Linda:  [I did:d you just [don’t get it he[re
25  Dr. A:                        [yeah [yeah
26  Jennifer:  [o ohkay o @
27  Linda:  [hhHUH HHUH HHUH HHUH [HUH (" ")
28  Will:  [huh huh hhh( )

45 Nods to Linda
46 Nods and smiles
After being assigned the next turn (line 1), Jennifer begins her feedback by referring to a statement Linda had made in her paper. Linda then quickly repairs Jennifer’s displayed interpretation of the identity of the organization employee Linda will interview next in her project. Jennifer repeats the repair and (not her other people) the new information and acknowledges it as news with the change-of-state token ↑O:::h↓ (see Heritage, 1984b). She then proceeds to provide feedback based on the new information, during which Dr. A produces a series of acknowledgement tokens (yeah), suggesting that Jennifer’s feedback indeed is both relevant and legitimate. As we have seen also in the previous two fragments, Dr. A continues to display alignment with the feedback givers. Jennifer’s feedback talk ends with “that’s something I thought you could have looked at more”, which displays criticism of Linda’s text, since the modal verb + perfect aspect construction implies that Linda had failed to make the most of her interview.

Linda’s response (line 24) overlapping Jennifer’s feedback is prosodically monotonous and initially “sharp”, and the stretched vowel and emphasis on did comes off as a bit whining. However, in contrast to this initial “sharpness”, Linda begins laughing loudly at the end of her turn; laughter which is not reciprocated by anyone except one other student (Will, line 27). In between the initial “I di:d” and laughing, Linda offers a justification for the disagreement in “you just don’t get it here”. The most likely treatment of this, as confirmed in Jennifer’s acceptance °ohkay° and nodding (line 26) is that Linda did ask her interviewee the questions Jennifer was interested in, only the information was not included in this paper.

However, another interpretation could be proposed. Jefferson’s (1996) paper on the ‘poetics’ of ordinary talk showed how language play, punning, spoonerisms and alliteration were built into syntactic and sequential structures of everyday conversations. Beach (1993), building in part on the work of Jefferson (1996)^47, examines the way in which language users non-coincidentally tailor their language to fit the activities in which they are caught up. By showing how participants may be viewed as orienting to multiple preoccupations (i.e. matters with which they are simultaneously preoccupied) in a given context,

^47 Jefferson first presented her ideas as a conference paper, and an elaborated version was published in 1996, after Beach’s paper.
Beach exemplifies ‘poetic’ language usage in interactions where interactants themselves often do not seem to be aware of these. Idiomatic expressions and other ‘poetic’ constructions seem to be produced in sequences where, for example, there is a potential conflict, troubles-telling, affiliation difficulty, or in the delivery of complaints.

In the conversation examined by Beach (1993) a grandmother and her bulimic granddaughter are talking about the granddaughter’s upcoming wedding while the grandmother also interjects allegations about her granddaughter’s eating disorder. The granddaughter states that it’s “hard fittin’ everyone in my wedding” and “there’s so many people different sizes” (1993:304) in the course of talk about bridesmaid dresses and the grandmother’s probing into her granddaughter’s bulimic behavior. The references to “fitting everyone into” and “people different sizes” are deployed during talk about wedding attire, but also have metaphorical connections to the state of mind of a bulimic person in denial about the disorder. It is within the interactants’ preoccupation with disjunctive problems (the wedding plans, the bulimia) that these ‘poetic’ descriptions can be found, even though interactants themselves seldom utilize them further.

Such post-hoc extractions on part of the analyst are of course somewhat problematic within the range of conversation analytic work, and Beach recognizes that they may be of random occurrence to participants themselves (1993:307). However, Beach points out how “these utterances get occasioned as descriptive resources, revealing just what these participants were and were not treating as significant” (1993:302). If we examine the units of Linda’s turn from this rather unconventional vantage point, a potential double meaning of “you didn’t get it” can be noted. In essence, while reporting that she had that information somewhere else than in her paper, Linda’s utterance could also imply a sarcastic and/or defensive “you are not getting the point”. Jennifer’s acknowledging “ohkay” does not display any treatment of the utterance as such. However, it is possible that Linda realizes the potential interpretation of the turn shape, since she deploys laughter as mitigation after possibly realizing that her utterance revealed her double preoccupation. The double preoccupation, in this case, is first with being ‘frustrated’ or annoyed with being unjustly questioned and criticized (an interactional trouble) and second, with justifying any shortcomings of her paper. All this is, of course, merely speculation, and only worth noting as a ‘poetic possibility’. As always, selecting how to package an action to be done with an utterance should be treated as a meaningful process from the set of relevant alternatives available to the
producer of that utterance. Therefore, an analyst always has to consider the possibility that the packaging of a turn, such as Linda’s “get it”, was meaningfully selected from the options she had available to her (for example, “I have that but I didn’t include it here”).

A less capricious interpretation of Linda’s laughter involves connecting it to the potential interactional “trouble” of the activity-at-hand. As mentioned in chapter 3, research on laughter (Jefferson, 1984a, 1985; Glenn, 1995; Haakana, 2002) has shown that laughter is an organized, structured and systematically positioned activity in interaction that performs a variety of tasks. Studies have shown laughter to be “specifically invited by a variety of techniques”, and to become “due” from recipients (Heritage, 1989). A particular site where invitations to laughter frequently occur is, as shown in Jefferson’s work, in talk about troubles. In troubles-talk, the recipient(s) rarely join in the “troubles-resistant” laughter, but instead treat the occasion of laughter as a key to remain troubles-receptive (Jefferson, 1984). Linda’s laughter (line 27) is only reciprocated by Will in the group of thirteen participants, and does not accomplish laughter from Jennifer, the primary recipient of her utterance. Instead, Jennifer remains focused on Linda’s response, offers a quiet “oh: kay” and an accepting nod. Linda’s laughter could be interpreted as multifunctionally troubles-resistant - to compensate for her shortcomings in the paper, to ‘save face’ by showing that she is in a “position to take it lightly” (Jefferson, 1984:367), and to mitigate her initially sharp tone in “I di:d” (alternatively, the “you didn’t get it” slip), as to remedy the threat to the social bond between her and Jennifer (Scheff, 1990; Retzinger, 1999). In any case, support of the observation of Linda’s laughter being troubles-resisting is primarily that co-participants do not treat it as an invitation to reciprocate it.

Note also that in her ‘poetic’ turn, Linda is again violating the norm of not responding, but this time she is not held accountable for it. Instead, and interestingly, Dr. A produces two acknowledgement tokens during the production of the ‘poetic’ turn. It may be that the dyadic interaction between Jennifer and Linda, the loud laughter, and Annie’s overlapping new feedback in line 31 leave no clear points of turn transition, and that the “yeah’s” are attempts to move toward speakership. It may be that these tokens are produced as a delayed response to Jennifer’s feedback, or that they only acknowledge active listening. However, as I will demonstrate below in excerpt (4), Linda is held accountable for this utterance some turns later. Linda’s turn is re-topicalized; it is only delayed sequentially.
5.5.4 “Us helping each other”

The fourth excerpt is a direct continuation of Annie’s initiated turn in line 31 above, and is produced as an overlapping turn to scattered laughter and quiet small talk. Annie’s feedback is followed by an outburst of group laughter (line 10). She reacts as if she did not specifically invite laughter with her utterance, and pursues to elaborate on her reflection:

(4) “Us helping each other”

1 Annie: =an’ I would just maybe] make a co:mment about (.)
2 her nonverbals cuz I:: (.) very subjectively was
3 like W:O:W she seems kind of like ha:::rsh like
4 (.).I dunno (.). I just I felt like it wuz a very
5 like (0.4) >I dunno< question answer {{gesturing}}
6 ((chair scraping))
7 I don’t know I just kind of felt like (.). I
8 don’t know if I wanna know her she seems like
9 really $4^8$
10 ### ### ### [ ] (4.2)
11 Annie: @49[ ] SEE:={
12 Annie: =I DUN’ KNO:W that’s VER:Y subject:ive $9^9$so I=
13 Dr. A: Ye:ah
14 Annie: =(wd just wanna kno:w
15 Dr. A: [but that’s your respon:se to what’s- what][
16 Annie: =[was she=
17 =actually [rela:xed ur-
18 Dr. A: [And so (.).- so when you say (0.1) again
19 you don’t :have it here I :have it (.). that’s not:-
20 (.). I -I just don’t want :anyone to be defensive
21 $7^7$this is <good work> this is what wur doing here
22 (.hh) I- I want you to say oh good I’ve :got that;
23 (.). not like- (.).hh $8^8$I have that and you didn’t
24 geddit it’s=
25 Jennifer: =RI:gh(h)t
26 Dr. A: = it’s you know [it’s-

48 Makes a ‘face’ with both elbows above table, turning torso sideways
49 Annie gestures vividly and her talk is louder in the outburst of laughter
50 Linda raises her head and turns sideways toward where Annie is seated, producing a smile
51 Pointing to copy of Linda’s paper
52 Mimicking in defensive/whiney voice

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27 Linda: "[I wz just helping ( )"]
28 Dr. A: Yeah I know (.) but >jus- jus- re:alize< (.) this
29 is not about what’s not there or what you did
30 or didn’t do-- eee- this is about us helping (.)
31 each other somebody else Brandee (.) did you
32 have a-
33 Brandee =Yeah I juzt (.) I- I wuz in
34

Annie’s feedback turn (lines 1-9) is not formulated as an invitation to the recipient to provide a response. Instead, her turn is formulated as making a “comment” and “very subjectively” reflecting on Linda’s text. However, although the personal opinion formulated concerns the personality of Linda’s interviewee, and her turn could be treated as such an evaluation of a non-present person, the “I just I felt like it wuz a very like (0.4)
>I dunno< question answer” (line 5) is grounded in Linda’s recapitulation of the interview. Consequently, the feedback concerns Linda’s performance as a summarizer of data rather than the character of the interviewee.

Her critical feedback of Linda’s writing and treatment of data, i.e. how she recounted the interview without any other description than verbal statements, is thus “veiled” in a “subjective” telling of her experience of the interviewee as a “ha:sh” person whom Annie does not know if she wants to “know”. Annie is thus embedding her critical feedback in a “my side” telling (Pomerantz, 1980), in which some contextual constraint on what is perhaps an “improper” social action is managed by implicitly leaving it up to recipients to volunteer the action “fished” for. For example, speaker A can implicitly fish for a party invitation from speaker B by offering “knowables” (1980:187) about the upcoming event, such as “I hear you’re having a party on Friday”. The recipient can then opt to treat the turn as fishing and volunteering an invitation, or not.

Annie is offering a characterization of Linda’s interviewee as she knows it from reading Linda’s paper, and can thus delicately fish for confirmation that it was Linda’s accounting of the interview that made the interviewee come across as unpleasant as opposed to the actual personality of this person. Similarly, Lisa’s feedback in sequence (1) of this chapter was offered as based on what she knew from her own reading of Jenna’s paper. Using this delicate packaging of a critical comment, and a disclaimer that an opinion statement is her own subjective experience of the text could possibly be chosen because of Linda’s preceding reactions to feedback; an orientation to potential interational trouble (‘frustration’ and ‘defensiveness’) in proffering direct critical commentary.
Furthermore, Winer & Majors (1981) examined verbal causes of supportive and defensive affective states, and found that ownership of statements through use of the “I” was seen as more supportive. Tying the avoidance of frustration to the larger ‘face’ framework, the packaging of criticism as a “my side” telling where a subjective knowable from experience cannot be refuted as a misreading, or as a sign of a low intellectual level (c.f. Tracy & Carjuzáa, 1993) can do the work of avoiding ‘threats to face’ for the recipient as well as for Annie herself as a good feedback giver. Also, Annie may be orienting to a threat to her own face by downgrading her own comment to “very subjective” in case others perceived her feedback as not ‘critical enough (c.f. Tannen, 2002:1662).

Annie’s turn-final grimacing is treated as an invitation to laugh by most of the other students. At the onset of laughter, Annie begins gesturing vividly and appears to treat the laughing as uninvited, as she proceeds to legitimizing her utterance without participating in the group laughter. In lines 11, 12, 14, 16 and 17, Annie appears to be directing her mitigation (line 12) and furnished justification of what her feedback implied (14, 16 and 17) to Dr. A (gaze and upper body position), and not to the laughers or to Linda. Despite the overlap with Dr. A’s turn (line 15), Annie proceeds to complete her turn, not yielding to Dr. A’s overlapping talk in completing her explanatory turn. In using this delayed completion device (Lerner, 1989), she reasserts the importance of completing her turn and shows an orientation to Dr. A’s interjacent turn as interruptive in what she needed to get across.

She is successful in completing her turn (I wd just wanna know: was she actually relaxed ur-), which more directly addresses what was packaged as her “my side” telling; that is, that Linda had not included information that she as a subject-actor presumably has access to, for example, if the interviewee had been “relaxed” or displaying some other stance during the encounter. She also ends her turn with “ur-“, and leaving possibilities open for alternative interpretations through an turn-final or-inquiry can be seen as marking the delicacy of giving feedback to Linda. Her insistence on completing her telling is further evidence that her first telling did not accomplish what she intended when it was treated as a laughable (Glenn, 1995) instead of as carefully packaged feedback on Linda’s text. Annie’s deployment of delayed turn completion, then, could be viewed as an act of ‘frustration’ that works as repair resulting from her reading of the group laughter as disaffiliative. The continued talk, in turn, shows Annie orienting to the laughter as potentially disaffiliative; as laughing at her feedback instead of producing some kind of agreement or
acknowledgement of its relevance, or laughing at her grimacing. In the second case, Annie joining the laughter would have given some clues as to whether she intended the grimace to be funny or not.

Dr. A’s interjacent turn (line 15) is initiated at a point in Annie’s turn when no clear turn transition point is displayed. This is a relatively frequent device used by the two professors in these materials, as well as in other asymmetric interactions where one speaker has institutional turn allocation privileges. The turn does the work of closing the potentially ambiguous feedback and any response from Linda, as well as formulating a candidate understanding of Annie’s feedback (but that’s your response to what’s-). By doing so, the candidate understanding also legitimates the relevance of the feedback, subjective or not. The reassertion of Dr. A’s intent to speak next is performed at the end of Annie’s turn (line 18), but she pauses briefly after “and so” during which Annie completes her turn. The turn components have parallels to the pro-term laden monologue in (2) above:

{And so (.).- so when you say (0.1) again
you don’t ;have it here I ;have it {.} that’s no:t-{.}
I- I just don’t want ;anyone to be defensive
this is <good work> this is what wur doing here
(.hh) I- I want you to say oh good I’ve ;got that;
(.). not like- (.).hh I have that and you didn’t
geddit it’s=

Here is where Linda’s ‘poetic’ utterance (see 5.3.3) is taken up as an orientation by Dr. A. “so when you say (0.1) again you don’t ;have it here I ;have it” is a paraphrase of Linda’s “I di:d you just don’t get it here”. However, the “so when you say” may be referring to Jennifer as the feedback giver producing a hypothetical “you don’t have it here”, while the “I have it” references Linda’s “defense”. By using again, Dr. A suggests a slight displeasure with having to repeatedly explain information already given about the feedback activity and past violations.

The next part of the turn contains an incomplete rejection of the action recapitulated (that’s not-), followed by a referent-unspecific characterization of the action as displaying the emotional stance ‘defensiveness’ (I- I just don’t want ;anyone to be defensive). In excerpt (3), Dr. A did not intervene at the point when Linda responded with her ‘poetic’ turn. However, as we can see, the corrective action was only delayed, and made possible at the
completion of Annie’s feedback, which immediately followed the laughter and simultaneous speech at the end of excerpt (3). Again, the emotion term, as with the requests for activity-appropriate actions in excerpt (2), an indefinite pronoun is selected to include both Linda specifically and other potential feedback recipients. This construction can consequently do multiple interactional tasks in relation to the norm as well as to past actions:

a) Reprimanding Linda for a past action that went unattended
b) “Warning” students against committing future norm violations
c) Reprimanding Linda without being held accountable for addressing her specifically, and modeling proper conduct
d) Displaying orientation to feedback response as ‘defensive’, as opposed to “clarifying”.

By displaying an orientation to Linda’s past actions as ‘defensive’, Dr. A also makes an evaluation, or assessment, of Linda’s actions as contextually inappropriate. Similarly, Edwards (1999:279) addresses emotion descriptions in narratives about past events, and notes that these function as social evaluations:

“Emotion terms occur not merely as one-off descriptions of specific reactions, but as parts of interrelated sets of terms that implicate each other (syntagmatically) in narrative sequences, and also (paradigmatically) in rhetorically potent contrasts between alternative descriptions. Narrative sequence and rhetorical contrast are ways of talking about things, ways of constructing the sense of events, and orienting to normative and moral orders, to responsibility and blame, intentionality and social evaluation”.

Dr. A then adds mitigation by contrasting with a positive assessment in the empathically pronounced this is <good work>, followed by “this is what we’re doing here”, which provides acknowledgement of Linda’s work (evidenced in the pointing to the paper copy) as on the right track.

Shifting back to actions following feedback, Dr. A produces an activity-appropriate action request (c.f excerpt 2): “I- I want you to say oh good I’ve ↑ got that↓”, which then is contrasted with a reported speech mimicry of an activity-inappropriate action (not like- (.).hh I have that and you didn’t geddit its-). The mimicry is uttered through a whiney, childish voice. Interestingly, the mimicry is produced in a form that closely resembles a ‘poetic’ interpretation, as discussed above; that Jennifer “didn’t get the point”. Also, out of the fifteen participants, the interactant producing an acknowledgement immediately after “geddit it’s-” is Jennifer (RI:gh(h)t),
which presents additional support if we want to stretch the ‘poetics’ analysis further. The mimicry is produced to imitate a “defensively” produced turn.

In line 27, Linda overlaps with a soft “I wz just helping ( )” while turning her left palm up in a gesture similar to Jenna’s in excerpt (1) when she produced a soft-spoken “I just don’t understand”. The gestures seem designed to fortify the ‘frustrated’ soft-spoken justifications of prior actions; to communicate a last “my side” defense of why the norm violations were committed at that specific sequential slot (offering clarification, not understanding the feedback), and to reveal some type of “helplessness” when their responses were treated as inappropriate. Given their sequential position – after repeated intervention from Dr. A – they appear to be about displaying the legitimacy of ‘frustration’ expressed by “having the last word”. Another similarity is the use of “just” in Linda’s and Jenna’s last turns. The “just” seems to do the work of also rejecting Dr. A’s interpretation of their prior actions.

In her interview, Linda talks about the problems with being explicitly told to remain unemotional/non-defensive:

[Interview 12, “Linda”]

(…) yeah she was talking to me like a child I thought she was patronizing me and not understanding how I was feeling at all or that I could be feeling differently than everyone else in the class uhm “don’t be defensive” (.) the minute you say that to someone ((laughs)) what’s the first thing you’re gonna do I’m gonna be defensive! I’m gonna be defensive because you just told me not to be (.) so that was just one of those classes where I just agreed (.) to just decide to keep my mouth shut for the rest of the semester I just- (…)

In the interview talk, Linda attributes her subsequent defensive actions specifically to being labeled as ‘defensive’, although we have seen above that the actions Dr. A depict as ‘defensive’ occurred before the labeling of them. However, the sighs of ‘frustration’ follow immediately upon the labeling. Consequently, what is reflected in Linda’s interview is her post-hoc sense-making of the interaction rather than her sense-making process of monitoring feedback givers’ turns before opting to violate the norm.

As in excerpt (2), Dr. A acknowledges Linda’s justification (yeah I know) but rejects the grounds for the justification (but >jus- jus- realize< this is not about what’s not there or what you did or didn’t do). Next, Dr. A makes a formulation concerning the activity type of giving and receiving feedback: “this is about us helping (. ) each other”. An activity type (Korolija, 1998; Levinson, 1992; Thomas, 1995) is a kind of situational definition that tells actors what is going on, what can be
expected to happen, and the definition guides interactants’ orientations to events that take place within it. In formulating what the activity is about, i.e. the good-natured exchange of ‘help’, Dr. A strengthens the view of negative emotions as inappropriate and unnecessary in response to feedback in the positively constructed context of “helping (.) each other”. Although she does not explicitly state that ‘frustration’ is dispreferred, this is how it can be heard in the construction of defensive actions. Thus, Dr. A also shifts the focus from Linda (you) to the activity of the group (us helping (.) each other) as a way of rejecting the validity of Linda’s claims.

As demonstrated, the longer turn deployed by Dr. A following norm violations is designed to do several things. It also has several parallels to the pro-term turn in excerpt (2). The reported speech constructions used implicitly convey Dr. A’s own attitude toward Linda’s actions, mainly through their prosodic features (c. f Holt, 2000 and chapter 7). In addition, Dr. A’s treatment of Linda’s emotional state as “defensive” rather than responsive is emphasized. Furthermore, the contrasts between positive assessments and negative assessments of preferred and dispreferred feedback receipt turn shapes, along with the activity-type formulation, can also be designed to neutralize the temporarily negative state of talk by re-presenting the purpose of the feedback activity format. The sequence is then closed and brought toward a new trajectory.

5.6 ‘Frustration’ in feedback interaction – summary and conclusions

In the four excerpts analyzed in this chapter, ‘frustration’ was examined in the particular interactional and task-specific context of giving and receiving critical feedback on an assignment. As an emotional state, ‘frustration’ is a rather general description of negative feeling states that cannot be specified from the perspective of analysts or co-participants (e.g. anger, anxiety, bewilderment, dejection, aversion, perhaps even shame) associated with actions produced in relation to face threats, complaints, and justifications of past actions. ‘Frustration’ was observed across a variety of embodied actions, turn constructions and turn productions:

- Changes in speech delivery pace, pitch and loudness (increased)
- Gestures and gaze changes suddenly accompanying talk, facial redness
- ‘Hostile’ rejection of support

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• Orientations to preference structures of everyday talk above activity-specific norms: negotiating competing interactional demands
• ‘Poetic’ construction bearing double meaning
• ‘Defensive’ actions: insistence on justification despite being reminded of norms. Using delayed turn completion as a justification strategy in managing frustrations occasioned by treating a prior action as disaffiliative. Packaging defensive actions as (ironically pronounced) self-deprecations. Addresser shifts: justifications are directed to Dr. A (activity-holder) and not feedback profferers.
• ‘Last word’ legitimacy of expressed ‘frustration’
• Sighing as demonstrations of frustration
• Troubles-resistant laughter

In terms of the interactional management of ‘frustration’, some features observed are activity and context-specific, whereas others could possibly be observed across contexts and activities. In the present analysis, displays of frustration were mainly oriented to in the following ways:

• Orientations to displays of ‘frustration’ as defensive, activity-inappropriate and unjustifiable. Acknowledging concerns but rejecting their relevance. Giving precedence to and aligning with feedback givers (Dr. A).
• Formulating the activity type of feedback giving, providing extensive justification accounts of the purpose of the activity, using ambiguous pronominal address (anyone, them, you) to reprimand violations and to model appropriate actions. Constructing joint ownership of the feedback activity (we). (Dr. A).
• Deploying emotion description terms in characterizing dispreferred emotional behavior (defensive, defend).
• Orienting to displays of frustration and producing repairing or mitigating actions: negotiating competing interactional demands of being a ‘good friend’ versus a ‘good student’. Packaging feedback as ‘my side’ tellings: subjective experiences or indirect questioning (I would ask, my question when I read this, I would like to know) to avoid occasioning ‘frustration’ (feedback-giving students)

As we can see, the sequences examined operate on two levels: the actual giving and receiving of feedback, and the interactional management of the giving and receiving of feedback, so that in cases where feedback recipients opt to respond, the interactional focus shifts from the feedback itself to the ways in
which feedback recipients responded or were expected to respond. Thus, ‘defensiveness’ operates both on the level of the recipient’s academic performance, and as ‘defending the defending’, depending on next speakers’ displayed orientation. This pattern is evidenced in all three feedback sequences (1, 2 and 3/4).

“Frustrations” arise in direct coordination between participants’ actions, and are closed down by Dr. A’s orientation to these displays as activity-inappropriate. Dr. A does so, for example, by making a complaint about the interactional behavior of the norm violator; something which Drew (1998) terms doing explicit moral work which is designed to openly condemn transgressions and misconduct based on normative standards of conduct. In requesting appropriate actions of conduct, Dr. A is also doing implicit moral work. In Drew’s examples, implicit moral work was usually done with defensive self-descriptions that depicted the speaker as conducting herself appropriately. In the current analysis, the implicit moral work is instead conducted with positive orientation toward described appropriate conduct.

Dr. A’s work is also a strategy for modeling appropriate responses from students, and for teaching and socializing the graduate students into academic practices. One particularly interesting strategy for rejecting the legitimacy of students’ frustration is the formulation of the activity type, such as “this is not about…” and “this is about us helping each other”. As mentioned, an activity type has previously been described as a kind of situational definition that tells actors what is going on, what can be expected to happen, and the definition guides interactants’ orientations to events that take place within it (Korolija, 1998; Levinson, 1992; Thomas, 1995). When Dr. A legitimizes the activity format of receiving feedback without responding, various formulations with shifting pro-terms are deployed. This type of ‘formulation’, which is not to be confused with those described as devices for paraphrase, translate or summarize some preceding talk (c.f. Schegloff, 1972; Heritage & Watson, 1979) recurs throughout the material, operates as a device for legitimizing, but also, in this case, for exercising the institutional role-related right to stipulate and momentarily ‘fix’ the meaning of what is going on. While other types of formulations may be designed to formulate what has been said, activity-type formulations, as I call them, formulate what is being done on a more overall interactional level. Activity formulations can consequently be oriented toward entire interactions or series of interactions as opposed to an utterance or sequence of mutual focus and attention. Just as other formulations, they concern a sense-making of interactional activities-in-progress, but can in this

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case specifically serve to both legitimize the norms and to downplay and/or reject ‘frustration’ as a contextually inappropriate reaction to being criticized.

While deployed in closing down ‘frustration’, these formulations can also do the job of constructing feedback giving and receipt as a positive, supportive and mutual activity, as in the following example from the same recording, which occurs as Lea’s feedback session is rounded off:

(a)

1 Lea: and I had all these (.i) Ideas [and
2 Dr. A: [yeah=
3 (.i) you’re just getting started
4 Lea: yeah it was like oh ye:ah this is=
5 Dr. A: =but now you have ideas from listening to us
6 giving each other feed[back
7 Lea: [yeah this is helpful

Here, Dr. A directs a turn where “us giving each other feedback” is offered as having positive and valuable outcomes for recipients and the reciprocity is marked by joint ownership; a candidate understanding that Lea accepts and elaborates on.

Also found in the corpus were examples where feedback recipients preface norm violations by question projections (Schegloff, 1980), which may be regarded as a strategy for avoiding scolding from Dr. A by displaying sensitivity to norms and asking for permission to violate them. In both (1) and (2), Dr. A conveys the option available to treat even these preliminaries as dispreferred actions by mocking disapproval (c. f. the analysis of ‘mock emotions’ in chapter 7), but also accepts them, perhaps because the norm violations were projected before they were performed:

(b)

Lea: that’s that’s if I (.i) can I say something
Dr. A: mmm-(hh)HM! {smiles, makes a face, enacting a sigh})

(c)

Brandee: can I interject something here really quick
Dr. A: Okay (.i) just kidding {(enacts sigh, pretends to be annoyed but smiles})
The constrained turn-taking system in this activity is central to participants’ orientations in the excerpts examined. It is the awareness of the turn-taking system that occasions the treatment of the violations, and it is in orienting to the norm violations as inappropriate that the aggressive responses of ‘frustration’ are displayed. Garfinkel’s (1967) breeching experiments demonstrated that when assumptions about shared interactional norms were violated, recipients responded with strong emotions, often anger. In his experiments, which were designed to have students consciously violate these shared norms, their family members often responded with anger and demanded explanations of the student’s sudden strange conduct. In this case, however, it is not the violation of the turn-taking rules that occasion the strong emotional responses, but rather, the treatment of the violations. As we saw, both Jenna and Linda responded rather angrily to Dr. A’s regulative actions rather than to the feedback givers’ criticism. From this, it can be inferred that the onus of replying to critique is stronger than the local norm. Also, the emotional responses displayed by Jenna and Linda also display displeasure with the turn-taking system when receiving feedback they considered unfair or unwarranted.

In vacillating between interview data and detailed examination of transcripts of the interaction, we could see how attributions of events were constructed quite differently from what was going on in the interaction to what was talked about in the interviews. What was considered problematic in the interviews was not necessarily what got treated as problematic in the real time of the interaction, and vice versa. The following segment from the interview with Jenna accounts for the dilemmatic nature of being criticized, which is then attributed as the cause for feelings “inside”:

[Interview 16, “Jenna”]

(...Like I know I don’t like being criticized (...) like sometimes you just have to sit there and you know like you have to tell yourself that this is not personal (...) but you know if it’s your paper (...) it’s your baby you know its’ like it’s just your work it’s just words on paper but it’s NOT cause you spent so much time on it (...) so you do have to somehow find a balance between- (...) y’know criticism makes you stronger but it’s never nice when you’re in it (...) no matter what the intent of it is and I think I know if you’re already struggling in the class as far as enjoying it and getting something from it and then you get criticized this and that and then you’re silenced (...) I think all of those things kind of build on themselves and just creates this ugliness (...) you know just kind of like that frustration that you feel inside (...) )

While Jenna uses the emotion term “frustration” to describe what she was feeling “inside”, it was demonstrated that “frustration” was not just felt inside,
but made available to the interaction in the course of the turn-by-turn weave of interaction. A display of ‘frustration’ also became an interactional concern that temporarily shifted the interactional focus from the feedback giving to the negative emotional response displayed.

The four instances analyzed in this paper are a first attempt to describe and understand the socially organized moments of ‘frustration’ arising in problematic activities. It is clear that all problematic or potentially problematic interactions involve the negotiation of ‘face’ concerns and continuous work to manage threats to face and display a desired image. However, this chapter focused specifically on one display of what, in Goffman’s terms, would be seen as threats to face; namely, ‘frustration’.

As mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, it is easy to assume that conflict, arguments, and negative emotions are generally dispreferred components of social interaction. As the analyses in this chapter have demonstrated, this preference organization is a local accomplishment built through receipt of norm violation, displays of ‘frustration’ and local norms.
Chapter 6

6. Negotiating Embarrassment: Sequential Environment, Displays and Management

In the wreckage left by embarrassment lie the broken foundations of social transactions. By examining such ruins, the investigator can reconstruct the architecture they represent (Gross & Stone, 1964:2).

6.1 Introduction – embarrassment in social interaction

Despite the fact that forty years have passed since Gross and Stone’s observation, very little research on embarrassment has actually examined the nature of the “broken foundations of social transactions” where the ‘wreckage’ actually happens, that is, face-to-face conversation. A search for research on embarrassment in a few of the main social science databases yields a plethora of hits, primarily in communication, sociology, and psychology. However, a closer look at the numerous studies reveals a strong preference for large-scale surveys and tests, self-report questionnaires and interviews concerning hypothetical or recalled embarrassing predicaments, or experimentally induced emotional situations. Although these studies have made significant contributions to toward an understanding of embarrassment, this “much maligned emotion” (Cahill, 1995) and its behavioral and social components, they fail to establish how embarrassment, or the avoidance of embarrassment is embedded in the orderly moment-by-moment flow of social interaction.

In this chapter, a number of instances where embarrassment is a real or potential outcome will be examined in detail. Instead of studying embarrassment as isolated physiological or facial displays, or from the perspective of self-reports, embarrassment displays here are treated as social practices in talk-in-interaction. In this chapter, a range of situated actions in the context of embarrassment are rigorously examined, and it is demonstrated that embarrassment does not occur ‘out of the blue’, but is carefully fitted into the sequential organization of actions in face-to-face-interaction.

Moments where embarrassment becomes manifest in interaction, as well as moments where embarrassment is systematically kept at bay, will be examined. The description involves the sequential environment and local occasioning
of potential of displayed embarrassment, as well as displays of and responses to embarrassment. In addition, structural patterns of embarrassment eliciting turns, receipt and outcome will be discussed.

In the corpus of data used, embarrassment was located in rather different sequential environments. The description in this chapter deals primarily with five distinct interactional environments in which embarrassment is made relevant by interactants. These involve teasing activities, delicate topics, topicalization of embarrassment, ‘gaffes’ or ‘faux-pas’, and social exposure. It is demonstrated that embarrassment occasioning can be understood from the sequential context in which it arises, and the outcome of a moment of everyday embarrassment is interactionally accomplished through an assortment of resources locally available to participants. It is also demonstrated how embarrassment is utilized as a resource and as a social action in itself, which yields different interpersonal outcomes. Furthermore, some advantages of the current approach to embarrassment in face-to-face interaction will be discussed.

6.2 Embarrassment

6.2.1 Shame and embarrassment – the ultimate social emotions

There is considerable overlap in much prior research on the so-called ‘self-conscious’ emotions, to which shame, guilt, embarrassment, and pride are often categorized as belonging. Most current work on these social emotions agrees that the members of this emotion family share a central feature: they involve some degree of self-evaluation or self-reflection in relation to perceived social standards (Scheff, 1990; Lewis, 1993; Tangney, 1999, see also chapter 3).

However, there is less agreement in terms of what makes these emotions distinct from one another, and in terms of how we should study them. Shame and embarrassment, in particular, have posed definitional problems since their antecedents can be similar, as can some of their expressions. Some have claimed that shame and embarrassment represent different intensities on the same emotion continuum (Izard, 1979; Tomkins, 1963; Scheff, 1990; Retzinger, 1991) whereas others view them as discrete emotional states with more differences than similarities (e.g. Keltner & Buswell, 1997; Sabini & Silver, 1997). Others, view embarrassment as more closely linked to shyness or forms of social anxiety (e.g. Crozier, 1990). Yet others have found parallels between certain types of embarrassment on the one hand and amusement on the other (Keltner & Buswell, 1997:255).
Early research on emotions that has laid the foundation for today’s embarrassment research is, for example, Cooley’s (1922) concept of the ‘looking glass self’ and so-called self-sentiments. These were, in particular, pride and shame. Cooley suggested that we routinely monitor our self-presentation in social interaction, and that this evaluation leads to either positive feelings (pride) or negative feelings (shame/embarrassment) about self. Elias (1939/1978) did not define shame or embarrassment specifically, but his work on the history of manners in Western societies points to shame as an underlying mechanism for the regulation of social conduct. Freud’s early work on the mechanism of repression relates to shame as a primary emotion, but was later abandoned for the concept of anxiety, and consequently, psychoanalytic theory have always put a greater emphasis on guilt than shame or embarrassment (Scheff, 1990).

Goffman (1956; 1967) understood embarrassment as moments in face-to-face interactions where an individual becomes flustered, momentarily loses self-control, and is unable to comfortably participate in the systematically organized procedures that conversation requires. Goffman mainly related these instances to conflicts between presentation and perception of self and identity in face-to-face encounters. The ‘flustered’ behavior that follows, according to Goffman, acts in contravention of the complex mutual coordination of activities in face-to-face interaction. Goffman’s ideas of the ritual negotiation of ‘face’, the impression we wish to project to others, laid the foundation for Brown and Levinson’s (1987) politeness theory, which suggested that strategies of politeness were routinely employed to avoid embarrassment in social interaction. Goffman’s texts mainly dealt with embarrassment as having negative consequences for individual(s) experiencing embarrassment and that people routinely avoid situations where the ‘flustered’ behavior he described might reveal our momentary social incompetence. Goffman (1967:111) also pointed out that embarrassment is “not an irrational impulse breaking through socially prescribed behavior but part of this orderly behavior itself”. Consequently, when individuals do suffer embarrassment in social interaction, they simultaneously display their orientations to shared norms of conduct.

Embarrassment, then, is the result breaches of social and moral standards and it typically arises in interpersonal contexts, which is not necessarily the case for shame, pride and guilt (Tangney, 1999). Previous research has shown that a wide variety of social predicaments can generate embarrassment, and the antecedents of embarrassment are not enough evidence to characterize it as distinct from other ‘self-conscious’ emotions.
Actions or events preceding displays or experiences of embarrassment are, for example, loss of body control, failure to maintain privacy, awkward social interactions, undesirable social attention, as well as mistakes, ‘gaffes’, physical pratfalls, and cognitive shortcomings (Keltner & Buswell, 1997:252). A relatively common distinction between shame and embarrassment is that when embarrassed, the individual views his or her own behavior or events as discrepant with how they want to appear to others, whereas when shamed, the individual perceives his or her own action(s) as “wrong” or “bad” (Hochschild, 1983). Lewis (1993) proposes two types of embarrassment; as self-consciousness, which primarily pertains to being subjected to unwanted public attention, and as mild shame, which is less intense form of shame caused by negative self-evaluation as viewed in the eyes of others. The debate concerning the causes of embarrassment – as either clearly defined social events, or just plain unwanted exposure, or if both alternatives are part of the same undesired scrutiny from of the actor by others (Meltzer, 1996:122) is ongoing between many contemporary scholars.

6.2.2 Embarrassment – function and displays

Although the body of research on embarrassment underlines the centrality of embarrassment in social interaction, its displays and interactional management have not been studied systematically in naturally occurring contexts. Gross (1995:267) pointed out that embarrassment has not been studied systematically. In addition, my own review of literature led to the conclusion that most of the research on embarrassment in social interaction actually utilized self-reports of embarrassing events, laboratory studies, or questionnaires. With the exception of Heath (1988, see 3.4.3), there is still little known about how embarrassment is lodged within situated practices in talk and interaction – as part of the “orderly behavior” of social organization that Goffman described.

Research on embarrassment and its distinctiveness from other social emotions has largely concerned its antecedents and expressions as well as the remedial actions taken by the embarrassed to ‘save face’, in Goffman's terms. In terms of expressions, blushing, often accompanied by smiling, has been proposed as a hallmark of embarrassment (Edelmann, 1994) whereas cues of shame indicate a wish to hide or disappear (Lewis, 1993). Because of the high public visibility of embarrassment through blushing, the individual’s gradual awareness of her physiological reactions to embarrassment can generate secondary embarrassment (Meltzer, 1996:131), so that the blushing itself
becomes an additional source of embarrassment. Other nonverbal behaviors often mentioned as indicators of embarrassment are fidgeting movements, shifting gaze, ambivalent body postures (Lewis, 1993), blinking, hesitation, absent-mindedness, vocal pitch changes, and stuttering speech (Goffman, 1967). Furthermore, research on the facial expressions of emotion (e.g. Ekman & Rosenberg, 1997) and work on vocal correlates of emotional states (e.g. Pittam & Scherer, 1993) have either entirely excluded embarrassment, or only briefly touched upon the subject.

6.2.3 Toward an interactional perspective on embarrassment

In one of the few studies on embarrassment in naturally occurring interaction, Heath (1988) shows how embarrassment, like any other phenomena in social interaction, is systematically and sequentially organized through actions that are coordinated by participants in situ (see 3.4.3). Embarrassment arises, peaks, and dissolves in relation to actions produced by a co-participant, and not solely within the individual in terms of perceived breakdowns in self-presentation. Heath points out that moments of open embarrassment are rare, even in his medical interaction materials where the potential for embarrassment is high (i.e. the role asymmetries, the focus on the body, undressing etc.) This is consistent with Goffman’s suggestions on the routine efforts of avoiding both causing and experiencing embarrassment. Along those lines, Heath (1988:148) also illustrates resources utilized by participants to keep embarrassment “at bay” based on detailed scrutiny of video-recordings (see chapter 3).

In this chapter, the analyses center on episodes located in this corpus where embarrassment is made relevant by participants themselves. In identifying embarrassment, I have relied on previous work on embarrassment displays, on everyday understandings of ‘flustered’ behavior, and on members’ own orientations to activities-at-hand. Episodes examined here involve both embarrassment avoidance and embarrassment display management. I leave matters of self and identity open, and concentrate on describing social actions accomplished by and surrounding embarrassment. Embarrassment is treated as a matter of empirical investigation located in the practices, actions, and activities of participants in social interaction. An overriding aim is to describe the conversational contexts and structures in which embarrassment is made relevant by participants.
6.3 Occasioning, display and outcome of embarrassment: an example

To introduce the work on embarrassment in this chapter, I will begin with a detailed analysis of one moment of embarrassment in academic talk-in-interaction. In this first example, the analysis will include how embarrassment is occasioned, displayed, and managed within a short sequence of interaction where embarrassment is occasioned by teasing.

6.3.1 The sequential environment of embarrassment: prior talk

Below, students and their professor, Dr. B, are talking about unreliable sources of knowledge on the Internet. Three of the nine students present, who are also graduate teaching assistants in the department, begin sharing interconnected reportings of their own undergraduate teaching. The moment of embarrassment begins in line 36 and on, after Jillian’s contribution to the reportings and Dr. B’s turn in lines 34-35. The non-vocal activities will be described in further detail in a separate figure.

(5) “Seniors”

[IN 3:1]

1 Ally: =I said I’m not gonna (.). just accept anything that
2 is (0.8) jus- (.). came (.). in from cyberspace out
3 of nowhere (.).I said-
4 Dr. B: yeah
5 Ally: I mean it’s (.). a lot of it tends to be fa:lse
6 there nothing to back it up and they (.). had
7 such a fit
8 Dr. B: but see part of that is that they don’t-
9 understand (.). what publishing invo:lves they don’t
10 understand the notion of blind [review for example
11 Ally:                                [MY students=
12 =didn't know what (.). the difference between a
13 journal and an edited book was (.). I had to
14 *explain it to’um*
15 Dr. B: but they’re freshmen (.). so
16 Ally: myyeah at least they have an excu:se ( )
17 (3.2)
Now, in order to understand how the moment of embarrassment emerges within this sequence, we must pay close attention to what is going on before the visual displays of embarrassment in lines 36, 39 and 40. How does Jillian’s embarrassment get occasioned?

As we can see, the sequence consists of three short narratives; three serial reportings produced by three different students (Ally, Leila, and Jillian). In each new reporting, it appears as if participants are upping one another, and
each consecutive telling reports something stronger or more horrifying than the prior. First, Ally reports a conversation she has had with her students about using information found on the internet in their class papers (lines 1-3), goes on to legitimizing her claims (lines 5-7), and ends her turn by reporting the outcome of the event (and they (.) had such a fit). Dr. B does not fully accept Ally’s narration, i.e. he does not produce a direct agreement, but offers a candidate explanation (line 8) of why the students “had such a fit”. Before a turn completion point has been projected, Ally overlaps Dr. B’s turn with an additional telling that references backwards to a contribution made by Dr. B about two minutes prior to the excerpt above. In order to demonstrate why embarrassment is later occasioned, a look at prior talk is necessary:

(6) “Is this a journal”

As we can see, Ally (excerpt 5, lines 11-14) recycled the content of Dr. B’s prior turn, that is, whether undergraduate students know the difference between an edited book and a journal. Her turn is hearable as a complaint, and is again rejected by Dr. B (but they’re freshmen (. ) so).
In light of prior exchanges, as seen in excerpt (6) above, this type of experience sharing telling occasioned “astonished” responses from co-participants, which is done through partial repeats and expressions of disbelief. However, when a student produces almost an exact replica of Dr. B’s earlier telling, its content is rejected with a turn that denies the similarity of Dr. B’s and Ally’s telling: Ally’s students are freshmen, whereas Dr. B’s telling concerned seniors. In essence, Dr. B denies Ally’s turn any “astonished” responses by rejecting its gravity. The sequences have similarities with Maynard’s (1997) news delivery sequences, but instead of conveying “news”, the tellings are designed to generate an affiliating reaction from co-participants, followed by elaboration of the telling. In that respect, Dr. B’s turn was a successful ‘isn’t this shocking’ telling and it was made recognizable as such for recipients with the frequent suspense-creating pauses (lines 1-5). After the first responses, Dr. B emphasizes “a senior” which works to further establish the telling as “shocking” news. Note also that Dr. B awaits a second round of “astonished” responses (the 3.5 second pause after “a senior” in line 9 and Ally’s ‘astonished’ receipt “wo::w” in line 10) before elaborating further on the problem with students’ insufficient skills in doing library research.

Returning to excerpt 5, we saw that the valence of Ally’s delivery of a serially connected reporting is rejected, and she agrees with Dr. B’s point (line 16). A 3.2 second pause follows, after which Leila produces a third narrative, or an analogous telling, of the ‘isn’t this shocking’ type. By analogous telling, I refer to orientations to some part of the prior speaker’s turn that is recycled by the next speaker in offering a ‘same type’ reporting but from the second speaker’s viewpoint. However, her turn is hearable as orienting both to the prior talk about students’ insufficient skills, as well as to the preceding rejection of Ally’s telling. Leila’s telling is analogous to prior sharing in several ways: a) she displays orientation to prior talk by emphasizing “mine” and leaves out the subject (students), b) by recycling the formulation “the difference between”, and c) displays that she recognizes the grounds for the rejection of Ally’s narrative by offering information that is more likely to occasion ‘astonished’ responses; that is, even non-academics can be expected to know the difference between a magazine and a newspaper. Leila also laughs during the production of her turn, which fortifies the astonishing character of her telling.

Lisa then produces what can be viewed as the preferred response type to ‘isn’t this shocking’ tellings, that is, an ‘astonished’ “wh:::t”. Leila orients to her ‘astonished’ turn by elaborating: “I think I got the (.) cream of the crop [HEH HEH >hehhehheh”. As with Dr. B’s telling in excerpt (6),
additional astonished responses are produced. First, Lisa (line 22) poses an ‘astonished’ repair initiation: “a magazine and a newspaper”
, in which the prosodically marked echoing of material from the prior turn indicates that something in prior turns had not concurred with the recipient’s expectations, i.e. the recipient is “surprised”, or “astonished” (Selting, 1996). Secondly, Ally offers a stretched “W(hh) 0: (hoh) (hh) w”.

In essence, Leila’s telling is, just like Dr. B’s in (6), a successful delivery and receipt of shocking facts. A successful ‘shock effect’ telling sequence, then, should consist of two main features:

1) a first turn displaying (prosodically, lexically, syntactically) some ‘astonishing’ informational item
2) ‘astonished’ second part responses (the preferred action) which can be displayed in the form of other-initiated repair structured turns

A third component can be elaboration of the item conveyed in (1) by the first speaker. In this case, where one such telling occasions several other analogous tellings, it seems as if the general activity is to establish ‘solidarity’ by participating in an activity that marks stance toward a non-present other, in this case, the non-present undergraduate students. Participation in successful consecutive telling activities should, then, increase group affiliation, intimacy, and encourage next contributions.

6.3.2 Embarrassment elicitor: teasing

With these initial observations in mind, Jillian’s (line 26) turn is hearable to co-participants as an analogy to prior talk as she accounts for the low exam grades of some of her senior students. Unlike after Leila’s announcement, there is a pause at the possible turn transition point projected where nobody claims the invitation to respond with ‘astonishment’. Jillian then continues with and—which could be an initiated elaboration, in line with what Pomerantz (1984b:152) has observed as a remedying strategy for pursuing a desired response when recipients fail to produce one.

An appropriate response is next produced by Lisa (line 28), who repeats the main ‘shock effect item’ “seniors” with rising intonation, which shows treatment of Jillian’s telling as being surprising. As in the tellings above, the

62 See Schegloff, Jefferson & Sacks (1977); Schegloff (2000a) and the section on repair below; 6.4.4.
response seems to invite elaboration from the teller. Next, Jillian produces her elaboration in an animated tone of voice “eh- .hhie: (hh) ah (.) .HNH °’s like° (.) and they’re gonna ↑GR(hh)A(hh) DUATE (.) OH MY ↑GO::D cause [it’s so:: (.) basic” . Laugh particles are embedded in “↑GR(hh)A(hh) DUATE”, and furthermore, “graduate” and “oh my go::d” are pronounced in a very high pitched, exaggerated/artificial voice.

In response to Jillian’s elaboration, Dr. B replies but that’s (.) obvious you’re just a- very very hard professor63, accompanied by a broad smile and a wink, turning his upper body toward Jillian and looking straight at her. His turn, although ambiguously hearable as a positive assessment or a compliment, is also hearable as teasing Jillian. Previous work on teasing activities (Drew, 1987:219) describes teases as mocking “kind of playful humorous jibes”. Drew (1987) found that teases are found in sequential environments where the recipient of the tease has been complaining, extolling, bragging etc. in a somewhat overdone or exaggerated way. The subsequent teasing by another participant works to humorously point out and control minor conversational transgressions, as in the following example (Drew, 1987).

Prior to the exchange quoted below, Bill has reported being sick from food poisoning and has elaborately described the symptoms to Arthur:

(from Drew, 1987:224)

Arthur: well you probably got at least a week.
    (0.4)
Bill: What of this
    (0.3)
Arthur: No a week before you die:
    (0.7)
Bill: Ohh vbe heh heh uh —hhh [hh
Arthur: [It’s a rare disease, see,
Bill: Yeh yeh yeh

In this case, the tease (“well you’ve probably got at least a week”) occurs after Bill’s detailed account of his symptoms. The tease implies that Bill’s food poisoning probably is so severe that he will die from it within a week. At first

63 Although Jillian is a graduate student and not a professor per se, undergraduate students usually refer to their instructors as “professors” regardless of whether they have a PhD degree or not. In essence, in the American context, “professor” can refer to “higher education teacher”, and not for a specific position or title, as the Swedish usage of the word does.
Bill does not recognize that he is being teased, but when it is explained to him, he laughingly agrees with the teasing. However, the most common receipt of teasing in Drew’s analysis was rejecting what has been literally proposed in the tease; by treating the teasing turn as something that warrants a serious response. This type of receipt display is referred to as “po-faced” receipt of teases (Drew, 1987), and could not be explained by the fact that recipients did not realize that they were being teased since the teasing turns were carefully designed to signal their nonseriousness. Despite such obviously exaggerated constructions, recipients treat them as requiring a serious response. Drew concluded that when the teases were designed to display skepticism about the prior speaker’s exaggerated claims, speakers being teased hold on to their earlier version by rejecting/correcting the suggestion made in the tease. A “po-faced” receipt of a tease can look as follows (Drew, 1987:222). The visitor has just arrived to Annette’s house accompanied by Annette’s mother:

Visitor: I saw your Mum at the bus stop so I
[(give her a lift) ]
Annette: [(and) you started yack[ing]
Visitor: No I give her a lift back
Annette: Oh:::

The tease here, inserted before the visitor’s turn has been completed, implies that the visitor saw Annette’s mother at the bus stop and started ‘babbling’. The visitor immediately rejects and corrects the tease with a serious informational response (“No I give her a lift back”), but by producing the rejection through laugh particles, the visitor also acknowledges being teased. In Drew’s corpora, only rarely did recipients completely go along with a tease, and if they displayed acceptance of it, usually by laughing, a serious response/elaboration usually followed at the completion of laughter and teasing elaboration.

In terms of excerpt (5), Dr. B’s teasing is recognizable in that it presents an exaggerated version of something in the prior turn (c.f. Drew, 1987:231), namely, that the only reason why Jillian’s students could have performed so poorly on her exam is that she is a “very very hard professor”. It is also recognizable in that the turn is pronounced in a smiling voice, and Dr. B turns toward Jillian with a wide smile. All three of the ‘isn’t this shocking’ tellings in this sequence display a view of students as being at surprisingly low intellectual levels compared to themselves, and can thus be hearable as displaying overly
pretentious positioning of themselves in relation to undergraduate students. Also, Dr. B did initially not encourage the consecutive telling activity since he rejected the valence of Ally’s tellings, and although the tease occurs primarily in response to Jillian’s exaggerated elaboration, it may be a device for closing the sequence of such tellings and implicitly mark them as exaggerated.

Having located the sequential environment for embarrassment and the embarrassment-eliciting turn, we will now look at the actual moment of embarrassment: the receipt of the teasing and its subsequent actions.

6.3.3 Embarrassment display and management

In accordance with Drew’s observations, a response treating the tease as serious does follow in this instance. However, the so-called ‘po-faced’ response does not follow immediately upon the tease. What occurs in between the tease and the serious response is a moment of ‘flustering’, very similar to what Goffman (1967) described as characteristic of embarrassment:

“An individual may recognize extreme embarrassment in others and even in himself by the objective signs of emotional disturbance: blushing, fumbling, stuttering, an unusually low- or high-pitched voice, quavering speech or breaking of the voice, sweating, blanching, blinking, tremor of the hand, hesitating or vacillating movement, absent-mindedness, and malapropisms. As Mark Baldwin remarked about shyness, there may be “a lowering of the eyes, bowing of the head, putting hands behind the back, nervous fingering of the clothing or twisting of the fingers together, and stammering, with some incoherence of idea as expressed in speech” (Goffman, 1967:97).

Jillian’s immediate response does indeed display some of these characteristics. She seems to be momentarily unable to produce a coherent response:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>rolls eyes</th>
<th>averts gaze</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>36 Jillian</td>
<td>.hh tY(H)HU:hh (.we:ll .hh &quot;hhhhuh&quot;)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Jillian also blushes slightly but noticeably, rolls her eyes before averting her gaze from Dr. B. The “.hh tY(H)HU:hh” has the vocal characteristics of exhalting in one outburst of air, and she simultaneously rolls her eyes to the ceiling. The subsequent deployment of “we:ll” is interesting in relation to Drew’s work on teasing receipt. With “we:ll”, she neither rejects or accepts the teasing proposition; she in fact displays some resistance to the jest by not laughing.
loudly and responding ‘well’ (c.f Glenn, 2003a:272). The first part of her utterance is produced with a tentative smile and through air, but it is not an outright laugh. It may be that the “y” sound in the first part of her response is an initiated agreement that is halted, and the “well” particle is a delayed disagreement token (c.f. Pomerantz, 1984a). Jucker (1993) found four distinct uses of the discourse marker well, out of which two may be of relevance here: a delay device, or a face-threat mitigator. The latter signal some problem on the interpersonal level, as in Pomerantz’s agreement-prefacing of disagreement turns. In terms of well as a delay device, Jucker concluded that the particle was used as a floor-holding device (1993:447), meaning that speakers deploy well when they need more time to produce a reply but the use of the particle also displays reluctance to yield the floor. However, in Jillian’s turn, the delaying work that well may be doing is probably not floor-holding, but rather ‘stalling’ while processing Dr. B’s tease and managing the ‘flustering’ occasioned by an unexpected response. ‘Stalling’ a response at this point gives an embarrassed speaker time to re-focus and select a desirable response. In the case of this particular tease; “but that’s (.) obvious you’re just a- very very hard professor”, a possible interpretation for the recipient could be that it is a compliment in that ‘hard’ equals ‘knowledgeable’ and ‘skilled’. Previous work (e.g. Cupach & Metts, 1994:19) has demonstrated that high praise and compliments are frequently responded to with displays of embarrassment. Jillian may be weighing the possible interpretations against each other and stalls her response in order to avoid displaying this particular interpretation in case it is mistaken. However, the laugh particles at the end of her turn point us toward the prior analysis; that she at this point displays recognition that she is being teased (Drew, 1994:230). After the uttering of “we:ll”, Jillian has averted her gaze away from Dr.B. Further evidence that we are dealing with embarrassment here is the timely gaze aversion and shifting eye movements (Heath, 1988; Keltner and Buswell, 1997:255), which differentiates nonverbal correlates of embarrassment from those of other emotions. The hiding behavior of embarrassment, as opposed to behavior in shame contexts, is also frequently accompanied by smiling and smile control (Edelmann, 1994; Keltner & Buswell, 1997).

What follows upon the display of embarrassment is an elaboration of the tease from Dr. B: “y- (.) although they probably have different words for it”, which suggests that the assessment is not unambiguously positive and that students may use more negative terms for Jillian’s supposed grading toughness. Also in this turn, the connecting thread is that the non-
present undergraduate students, “they”, are made the focus of the joking. Immediately following the tease elaboration is the ‘po-faced’ response Drew (1987) described: “>[many] freshmen get by< with be:s and a:s ‘nn (.)”. The ‘po-faced’ turn is hearable as Jillian treating the tease as requiring a serious response, and seems to be a justification of the talk that elicited the tease. Drew (1987:243) noted that recipients of teases hold on to the validity of their original claims by “rejecting/correcting the suggestion in the tease, in putting the record straight”, and what Jillian’s justification does here is to claim that it was still strange that her senior students received a D on her final exam since she also has freshmen who are getting much better grades. The justification has laughter tagged to it, which is hearable as mitigating the po-faced justification and displaying both troubles-resistance and acknowledgement of the tease. Jillian then produces a turn-final nasal inbreath and Dr. B shifts to a new topic. The teasing thus worked to close down the sequence of ‘isn’t this shocking’ tellings in a humorous way.

We have now looked closely at the sequential environment for this particular display of embarrassment, the embarrassment-eliciting turn, and the display and subsequent management of embarrassment. Most of the analysis so far has focused exclusively on the two primary participants in the eliciting and display of embarrassment; Dr.B and Jillian. However, by using the video recording, the analysis also covered actions of current non-speaking participants. The next section will demonstrate some features of co-participation in the moment of embarrassment.

6.3.4 Non-vocal activities: embarrassment and co-participation

There are several features worth dwelling upon in this excerpt, particularly the moment of embarrassment itself, beginning at the end of Dr. B’s teasing (line 26), where Jillian appears flustered and the co-participants’ gazing shifts swiftly between the teller of the joke/tease and the subject of the joke/tease. To illustrate the coordination of the non-vocal activities of Dr. B and Jillian, and co-participants, the scheme below shows the onset of these activities in relation to talk. The symbol Δ marks the onset of a non-vocal activity.
I want to pay particular attention to two things in the figure above: firstly, Jillian’s actions during the moment of embarrassment, and secondly, gaze coordination of non-speaking participants. To understand gaze direction in relation to seating arrangements, see appendix 6.

When Jillian produces her reporting of the low grades of her senior students, she appears to be addressing the entire group. Her gaze scans around the semi-circle in which her fellow students are seated, but since she is seated on Dr. B’s immediate left, she halts when her gaze reaches him. When Dr. B
initiates the tease, he turns his upper body toward Jillian and smiles directly at her. In response, Jillian averts her gaze, rolls her eyes toward the ceiling, turns gaze to her left and back to Dr. B (see figure 1). During the ‘po-faced’ elaboration, Jillian once again averts her gaze and turns down to the table in front of her to pick up a pen, and begins scribbling.

Non-speaking co-participants are also participating in the exchange. As Dr. B begins his tease, co-participants turn their gaze toward him, and begin smiling around the end of the teasing turn. Immediately before Jillian’s ‘embarrassed’ turn, their gaze shifts from Dr. B to Jillian in anticipation of a next turn from the teasing recipient. After Jillian has displayed ‘flustering’ and while uttering a quiet “hhhhuh”, co-participants’ gaze turns away from Jillian and back to their papers in front of them. A few non-speaking participants (Tracy and Lin, for example) briefly turn back to Jillian during her po-faced elaboration, but most remain focused on papers on their tables. After Dr. B’s hand gesture and Jillian’s nasal inbreath, co-participants re-orient to Dr. B in anticipation of a new topic.

As we can see above, gaze is intricately coordinated within a moment of embarrassment. We see Jillian appearing to have difficulties as to where to look (c.f. Heath, 1988:145, and also Keltner & Buswell, 1987:255) as she rolls her eyes, looks to the side at no one in particular, turning back to the teaser, and down to her paper and pen. The entire po-faced elaboration is produced while Jillian is looking down at her paper and playing with her pen. Heath (1988) attributed the momentary flustering in his data fragment to a temporary lack of a mutual activity to focus upon. Jillian appears to seek such an activity, and finds it in scribbling. Goffman’s observations also have parallels to Jillian’s various actions, as he noted that the “fixed smile, the nervous hollow laugh, the busy hands, the downward glance that conceals the expression of the eyes, have become famous as signs of attempting to conceal embarrassment” (1967:102). Gaze aversion, together with focusing on some object or new activity, give embarrassed interactants time to re-assemble themselves. Also, non-speaking co-participants show that they orient to the ‘flustering’ by averting gaze from the embarrassed participant. The coordination of gaze shift occurs at the exact same tenth of a second.

We also see how interactants recognize that the moment of teasing/embarrassment is over: Dr. B starts shuffling his papers during his own elaboration of the tease, only briefly passes by Jillian with his gaze during her elaboration, and then makes a hand gesture to signal that a new course of the interaction is underway. Jillian’s averted gaze and scribbling signals that she is
not addressing any speaker in particular, and finally, the turn-final nasal inbreath displays a turn-transition point.

### 6.3.5 Embarrassment – initial observations

Having examined this brief moment of everyday embarrassment carefully; the sequential environment for embarrassment, the embarrassment elicitor, and embarrassment receipt and management, some initial observations can be listed. The embarrassment sequence above can be described as having the following structural surface:

- **Sequential environment** → exaggerated shock effect tellings
- **Eliciting turn** → unexpected response – a tease
- **Receipt** → flustering/embarrassment displays
- **Management** → ‘side’ focus + ‘po-faced’ defense
- **Closing** → topic shift, not attending to ‘defense’

As we saw above, embarrassment was elicited at the production of an unexpected and structurally dispreferred response in relation to prior talk and turn design. By unexpected, I mean a response that could not easily be anticipated in a particular context, and in this case, after series of stories and second stories which had generated ‘astonished’ responses, Jillian is taken aback when the response is of a different kind. It can be argued that teasing is always unexpected to a certain degree since teases are built upon a reference to the preceding talk that is recontextualized in some way. Usually, we do not see a tease coming, even though there are probably cases where a speaker’s talk is an unusually easy target for teasing and the speaker him/herself may also realize this at the completion of the talk. Nevertheless, in this particular context, where an atmosphere of swapping stories with escalating degrees of shock effect, which has built up a sense of collegiality and alignment, the sudden change in footing that Dr. B constructs can be considered unexpected.

The tease itself is ambiguously constructed and hearable as both praise and teasing concerning Jillian’s teaching style, and the ‘flustered’ receipt may be a moment for processing how to analyze prior talk. The displays of embarrassment include gaze vacillation, blushing, and fragmented talk with a ‘stalling’ token (*well*) and laugh particles. Embarrassment is managed by averting gaze and focusing on an object and a new activity (pen, scribbling) while a delayed ‘po-faced’ defense is produced. In contrast to Drew’s (1987) examples,
Jillian is unable to display immediate recognition and appreciation of the tease, and the ‘po-faced’ defense is produced after the immediate moment of embarrassment displays. The closing of the embarrassment sequence is done by leaving it ‘the way it is’ – that is, not displaying any orientation to Jillian’s justification, and by signaling that a topic shift is underway.

Jillian’s moment of embarrassment is induced within the interaction, as a result of an unexpected/uninvited action from one of her co-participants. Rather than understanding embarrassment in relation to specific types of eliciting events or to incompatible projections of an individual’s self image, close examination of actual moments of embarrassment in multi-party interaction allows us to see how embarrassment is occasioned and managed within each different sequence of interaction. The episode of embarrassment is made relevant to and negotiated by participants across an assortment of actions-in-interaction; verbal accounts, vocal activities, shifts in gaze, and the coordination of speech and movement, and the moment of embarrassment is available to participants (thus analyzable) as a combination of these actions.

6.4 Embarrassment in academic seminar interaction – findings

The episode examined above illustrates a moment of mild and temporary embarrassment in everyday talk, and the elicitor, a tease/joke, also does interactional work: that of closing down a sequence of exaggerated tellings in a humorous and positive manner. Embarrassment, however, is not always recognizable as blushing, fragmented talk and overt difficulties as to where to look. Moments of embarrassment in social interaction are orderly and coordinated within that particular interactional context, and to a great extent, potential embarrassment is also avoided (e.g. Goffman, 1967:102; Heath, 1988:147; Edelmann, 1994:242). We will now turn to other instances where embarrassment is made relevant to interactants that were located in the corpus.

6.4.1 Strategic embarrassment - teasing

Previous work on intentional or strategic embarrassment (e.g. Gross & Stone, 1964; Goffman, 1967; Sharkey, 1992; Bradford & Petronio, 1998) suggests that interactants sometimes use planned communication strategies for triggering embarrassment in a co-interactant. They also suggest that the instigation of embarrassment in others is designed to achieve certain interactional goals. Such
goals may be designed to have both positive and negative outcomes, and are thus not always malicious acts to make others uncomfortable. A strategy for intentional embarrassment is teasing. As demonstrated above, the teasing itself does not have to be malicious to generate mild embarrassment in the original ‘transgressor’, but since the tease as such is designed as a humorous way of pointing out some transgression that perhaps annoyed the teasing instigator, there is also a component of strategy and potential embarrassment to teasing activities. The next example deals with teasing from the point of view of strategic embarrassment, but it is also an example of where the teasing fails.

6.4.1.1 An attempt at strategic embarrassment through teasing

Building on the observations presented in 6.3.1, an alternative course of action regarding teasing and embarrassment will be illustrated below. In this fragment, one interactant is attempting to amicably embarrass a co-interactant, but the outcome is ‘po-faced’ (Drew, 1987), and the strategic embarrasser responds by opting to clarify the humorouness of her prior turn, by laughing.

The topical context is a textbook chapter discussion. Dana is bringing up a point from the chapter regarding “repulsed partners”, that is, whether people can develop attractions for people they initially disliked or even were repulsed by. Dr. B. asks Dana what part of the chapter she is referring to (line 1), Dana identifies the paragraph (lines 3-4), and Dr. B. reads the paragraph with question intonation to solicit confirmation from Dana if this was what she was referring to. Dana connects the book quote to her own relationship (lines 12-16). Note Leila’s response to Dana’s telling (line 17):

(7) “Repulsed partners”

(IN 1:2]
1 Dr.B: where are you
2 (0.6)
3 Dana: uhm page twenny eight right at the very end that-
4 (1.0) the second tuh last paragraph-
5 Dr.B: ((reads)) =>if repul-
6 initial negative reactions with time they may
7 find that they begin tuh appreciate the
8 positive dimension of each other’s faults:<
9 Dana: ya:h (.) and she starts talking about (0.7)
Leila formulates her turn as an inquiry for clarification “thissus before you started dating him right”, but addresses Shana with a broad smile. Again, the context preceding Leila’s turn is recognizable as a sequential environment for teasing activities (Drew, 1987 and (5) above) and Dana’s telling is hearable as a somewhat exaggerated comparison: “I HAted my boyfriend when I met him” and that it took “six months before I- (0.5) ykno- started likin’im started dating’im”.

A tease exploits material in the prior turn, and usually “embellishes, satirizes, makes a play on, doubts, trivializes, finds a hidden meaning to” (Drew, 1987:235) units of the prior speaker’s turn. Here, Dana’s choice of the strong word “hated” in the context of describing someone with whom she is currently romantically involved is hearable as an overdone exemplification of the theory discussed, and Leila interjects a tease that suggests that the formulation “I HAted (...) when I met him” was exaggeratedly put. Leila also smiles broadly to make it clear that she is teasing Dana, but as we saw in (5) above,

64 Turns toward Dana, leans forward, smiles
65 slight smile emerges between “yeah” and “just”, disappears at “hung”.

10 yknow she starts talking about that and maybe
11 that i:s a possibility when you start out disliking
12 someone THAT’s what happened with my boyfriend
13 (. ) I HAted my boyfriend when I met him I didn’t
14 like him it took about (. ) well more than six months
15 before I- (0.5) ykno- started likin’im started
dating’im
16
17 Leila: thissus before you started dating him right @
18 (. )
19 Dana: yeah @ (0.7) just [kinda hung around-
20 Leila: [HEH HEH HEH HEH HEH
21 Dana: for six MONTHS .hhh >butImean< it does happen
22 that you actually like start- yknow people
23 kinda grow on you people say that a lot
24 that people grow on you and maybe that i:s (. ) a
25 preferable: scenario: possibly:
26 Dr. B: mhm
27 Dana: to- to avoiding that is (0.5) like (. ) people
28 that maybe you’re not initially that
29 attracted to
teases also do the work of pointing out that some transgression has been made by the prior speaker. Implied in the tease, built as a clarification inquiry, is an elucidation of the contradiction proposed in saying that you “hated” someone you now presumably love, and the oddness of disliking someone so strongly for as long as six months before falling in love. Leila emphasizes the temporal component “before”, which implies that Dana had produced her account somewhat carelessly; that Dana’s turn could have been interpreted as ‘I hated my boyfriend during our first six months of dating’, which would have seemed odd. The fact that Dana (lines 15-16) had stated that she had felt repulsion for her partner way before she “started likin’im started datin’im” is further evidence that Leila’s turn was designed to be humorous and not a serious repair of an error/information omission on Dana’s part. Instead, Leila recycles selected parts of Dana’s reporting for her tease.

In contrast to Jillian’s flustered response in (5), Dana produces a serious and utterly po-faced agreement (yeah), but at the completion of her agreement token, the corners of her mouth turn upward in a faint smile as if she at this point recognizes that she is being teased. There is also a brief pause after the smiling tendency, as if Dana is processing what she just agreed with. She does not offer any other displays of this recognition, but instead goes on to withholding her prior claim, that is, that she and her current boyfriend just “kinda hung around for six MONTHs”, during which she resumes a serious facial expression. Aside from the faint tendency to smile back at Leila, Dana completely refuses to play along with the tease or to produce some playful remark in return, and instead continues to hold on to her original version and to elaborate on the telling.

In (5) above, Dr. B’s teasing of Jillian is produced with a smile, but the exchange is void of laughter on part of the teaser, Dr. B. The only laughter in (5) is Jillian’s ‘flustered’ laugh particles during the immediate moment of embarrassment and the turn-final laughing mitigation of her po-faced defense. In (7), Dana’s refusal to acknowledge or play along with the teasing, and lack of ‘flustering’ displays may be hearable to the teaser as an unsuccessful outcome of an attempt at playful strategic embarrassment. Leila then begins laughing herself in a sequential slot where the intended embarrasssee/teasing recipient could have acknowledged and/or played along with the teasing. Leila’s laughter thus does the work of further displaying that her remark was intended as humorous and not as a turn that Dana should have treated as a serious question for clarification. The social goal of the tease; humorously pointing out that Dana’s formulation was exaggeratedly put, has failed and Leila’s laughter serves to
fortify the laughable character of the tease and simultaneously display that teasing recipient/audience laughter was missing at the slot where it could have appropriately occurred. As we have seen in the two previous examples, timing is central to teasing activities, for if they are to function as humorous social corrections, they have to be performed in the slot after the “transgression”.

It has been suggested in previous research (e.g. Bradford & Petronio, 1998) that intentional embarrassment is a risky interactional activity insofar as the strategic embarrassment plan may backfire and fail to embarrass the participant, and the situation instead potentially embarrasses the instigator. There are several possible interpretations of why Leila laughs in this sequential slot, and not in direct adjacency to her teasing remark. Laughing in the slot where the teasing recipient or the overhearers could have deployed laughter to show acceptance and appreciation of the tease could be occurring because the teasing instigator wishes to a) mark to co-participants the laughable nature of the teasing proposition, b) to mark troubles-resistance (Jefferson, 1979) when the attempt to playfully embarrass Dana failed or c) to furthering the strategic embarrassment by laughing at Dana’s non-comprehension of the teasing. Glenn (1995:49) has shown that in the course of laughing at a joke, a co-interactant’s displays of not getting a joke/tease often converts the laughing at the joke to laughing at the non-comprehending participant. Precisely what Leila is orienting to in Dana’s po-faced receipt of the tease is not clear from her laughter, but the sequential placement of her laugh is telling us something. Leila could have opted to laugh during the production of her tease or in turn-final position of the teasing turn, which would have indicated both the humorousness of her tease and marked an immediate mitigation of the strategic embarrassment. However, she does not. It seems as if the placement of Leila’s laugh indicates an orientation to the outcome of the teasing attempt, Dana’s po-faced receipt, instead of at the laughable nature of Dana’s exaggerated telling or the tease itself.

In line 21, Dana completes the turn that was overlapped by Leila’s laughter (for six MONTHs), and what follows next is a rapidly produced justification designed to further strengthen the validity of her original claim:

21 Dana: for six MONTHs .hhh >butImean< it does happen
22 that you actually like start- yknow people
23 kinda grow on you people say that a lot
24 that people grow on you and maybe that i:s (. ) a
25 preferable scenario; possibly!
The audible inbreath, her choice of the disagreement prefacing 'but' in “>butI\textit{mean}<”, her emphasis on “\textit{does}”, and her reference to what other people “\textit{say}” all show that prior talk has indicated to her that justification is warranted. The justifying turn construction suggests an orientation to Leila’s laughing as disaffiliative (Glenn, 1995), which could be further support of the idea that Leila’s laughter, whether intended or not, actually functioned to embarrass Dana enough to continue emphasizing the validity of her telling.

Furthermore, Dana’s account is focused on justifying the top\\ial proposition she had made, i.e. that it is entirely possible to strongly dislike someone you later fall in love with, which is distinctively different from justifying accounts described in much of the literature on embarrassment remediation strategies (e.g. Goffman, 1967:20; Edelmann, 1994:240; Cupach & Metts, 1994:26). In such justifications, the embarrassed individual offers information that admits to but explains a transgression, but Dana shows no intent to acknowledge a faux-pas imposed on her by another speaker. In fact, her turns do not display any recognition of being teased, other than the brief smile. Instead, her actions seem motivated by a reading of Leila’s turn as skeptic of the theoretical proposition she made.

6.4.1.2 \textit{Comparing findings from (5) and (7)}

Excerpt (7) is both distinctive from and similar to excerpt (5):

\textbf{Table 2. Comparing patterns in excerpts (5) and (7)}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>\textbf{Excerpt 5}</th>
<th>\textbf{Excerpt 7}</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>\textbf{Sequential environment}</td>
<td>Serial ‘shocking’ reportings with ‘astonished’ responses</td>
<td>Theoretical discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Embarrassment elicitor</td>
<td>Teasing</td>
<td>Teasing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turn prior to elicitor</td>
<td>Exaggeration</td>
<td>Exaggeration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receipt</td>
<td>embarrassment displays + po-faced defense</td>
<td>po-faced response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second receipt</td>
<td>no orientation to defense + sequence closing</td>
<td>laughter, embarrassment instigator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Embarrassment outcome</td>
<td>successful strategic embarrassment, mild</td>
<td>failed strategic embarrassment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The turns that either directly elicited or that were designed to humorously elicit embarrassment are, in both cases, teases that occur as seconds to tellings that include some overdone or exaggerated reporting. On the sequential level, the main difference between (5) and (7) lies in talk prior to the telling that was met with teasing. In Jillian’s case, it was hypothesized that the preceding sequence of similar tellings that generated ‘astonished’ responses made the tease in that sequential slot an unexpected or inappropriate action from the recipient’s perspective. In Dana’s case, there were no such serial tellings in preceding talk. Instead, Dana’s reporting was part of the topic-at-hand; the discussion of a book chapter on interpersonal attraction, about which she brings up a point for further discussion. Consequently, in light of the sequential environment in (5), prior talk had built up expectations of the kinds of actions that were being performed in a certain way, whereas the ordinary class task of commenting on readings had not built such expectations for a certain form of response. In essence, Dr. B’s teasing response in (5) stood out more in that context, and consequently elicited a stronger ‘flustered’ reaction.

It may also be that Dana in fact does not realize that Leila is teasing her, and that she treats Leila’s inquiry as a serious one. If we assume that Dana does not recognize that she is being teased, her subsequent justification could be viewed as defending the theoretical proposition about ‘repulsed partner attraction’, rather than defending her personal account of her initial ‘hatred’ of her current boyfriend. However, given her smile and the next positioned actions – Leila’s laughter and Dana’s rapid justification, it is more likely that she recognizes that she is being teased but opts to ignore it in favor of defending the non-personal part of her initial account. Recognizing and displaying recognition of a tease are two analytically separable activities (Drew, 1987:226), and although there are entirely po-faced responses to teasing, it cannot be automatically assumed that a recipient has not recognized the activity as non-serious. Perhaps the ignoring of the tease is a means through which a teasing recipient displays that the tease was not worth any laughing acknowledgement.

In terms of the potential embarrassment that can occur in response to teasing, as we saw in Jillian’s case, the po-faced receipt of Leila’s tease initially appears to be an unsuccessful attempt at strategically embarrassing a co-interactant. Leila’s own laughter, in a slot where acknowledgement and/or appreciation of the playful remark could have appropriately occurred, could be viewed as the interactional outcome of the attempt for the instigator, i.e. the teasing initiator must further display that it was a humorous remark when neither the recipient nor the overhearers do so. The outcome of that laugh, in
turn, seems to have achieved some kind of threatening action, since Dana responds with legitimization of her claims and maintains her original version, not displaying that she heard Leila’s tease as directed at her personal account.

What we are dealing with here is an attempt at amicable intentional embarrassment, and also potential embarrassment that is avoided by ignoring the innuendo inherent in the tease. By opting to display an alternative interpretation of the teasing action; the theoretical issue as opposed to the exaggerated formulation of the personal account, Dana effectively avoids displaying embarrassment, other than perhaps the very brief smile and 0.7 second pause. As a consequence, the ball is thrown back to the embarrassment instigator, who displays that she feels accountable for producing a next action to do the work that the initial tease did not do. Laughter is selected, which occasions an elaborated defense of the theoretical position.

In the literature on ‘face’ and face threats, teasing is often mentioned as an activity that poses threats to the identities that speakers want to project in social interaction (e.g. Goffman, 1967; Pawluk, 1989; Keltner, Capps, Kring, Young & Heerey, 2001). Drew (1987:249) successfully demonstrated that participants’ identities in the case of teasing are “being occasioned in sequences of talk as resources for realizing speakers’ purposes”, and that the identities of participants in situ are projected either in talk preceding the tease, or built into the tease itself. Consequently, explaining teases simply in relation to certain identities or to teases as innately face-threatening will not explain how a certain tease is constructed and received in its sequential environment.

The fact that teasing activities and conversational joking/humor in general are closely linked to embarrassment has been proposed earlier (e.g. Edelmann, 1994; Billig, 2001). What has not been demonstrated in the literature is how embarrassment is systematically elicited and managed within particular conversational activities and built into the sequential progression of talk-in-interaction. A preliminary conclusion regarding teases and receipt of teases is that embarrassment/potential embarrassment is intimately related to teasing and its sequential context. A sequentially unprojected tease may generate embarrassment-relevant actions, and attempts at strategic embarrassment can backfire on the instigator, who is then held accountable for the teasing.

6.4.2 Marking embarrassment resistance in delicate activities

As, for example, Jefferson (1979; 1984a; c) and Haakana (2001) have shown, laughter is routinely woven into talk in contexts where there is some kind of
‘trouble’ – talk about troubles, interactions with some kind of interactional problem, and in dealing with delicate aspects of matters-at-hand. We also know that laughter or smiling are frequently found in the context of embarrassment (Edelmann, 1994; Keltner & Buswell, 1997), whereas in the context of shame, smiles and laughter are usually absent (Lewis, 1993).

What will be examined here is ‘embarrassment-resistant’ deployment of laughter, a feature I also mentioned in 6.3.1 where Jillian laughed at the end of her justification. However, some differences in the deployment of ‘embarrassment-resistant’ laughter have been located in this corpus. In Jillian’s case, embarrassment resistance is related to a particular problematic activity-at-hand, such as attempts to retain or regain public composure through verbal accounts during or on the verge of a moment of embarrassment. Frequently, as Jefferson (1984a) demonstrated, such ‘troubles-resistant’ laughter is not treated by recipients as occasions to reciprocate the laughter. Such laughter is often found in turn-final position, after the production of some type of troubles-telling, account or justification (see 6.3.1 and also Jefferson, 1984a).

The type of embarrassment-resistant laughter examined here is instead frequently embedded within the talk of one speaker’s turn, and not in the turn transition between speakers. In particular, the type of troubles-related laughter examined here is found in a sequential context where the topic-at-hand is problematic for the speaker, rather than the actions of participants in prior or subsequent talk. Laughter in this type of talk can serve to avoid direct embarrassment and to signal a distancing from the topic in talk on problematic topics, for example, sexuality, which is a culturally presupposed taboo matter.

6.4.2.1 Within-speech laughter as embarrassment-resistance

In this first excerpt, Lisa is giving a short class presentation of her project on parent/child communication about sex. Note particularly lines 10, 22 and 23, where Lisa talks through laughter in the course of talk about sex and sexuality:

(8) “Have it”

[IN 3:1]
1 Lisa: ((cont.)) u:hm {0.7} and such@66 miscommunication
2 involves (. ) existing@67 relationship between parents an’ (. ) and their children (. ) as well

---

66 gesturing with right hand, gaze down, reading from paper
67 hands held together, one finger up
as 46 teen perceptions of parental support and control (.). hhh a::nd (.). u::h (.). @69
6 parental moral belief (.). about teaching
7 young people about sex (.). uhm (.). a lot of
8 people think you @ 70shouldn’t teach it becu::z (.).
9 then people *go out and ^@75>have it< (.).or kids will
10 → go out and @ 70shouldn’t teach becuze (.).or kids will
11 which actually the research says is not 76tr::u::e
12 (.).it will happen- [{ }
13 Leila: [tschh [(hh)
14 (group):
15 Lisa: [shhh- huh-
16 =huhhh [okay
17 Leila: [they’re gonna go out and have it anyway heh
18 Heh"heh heh heh"*
19 Lisa: @75 [they’re gonna go out an’have it anyway but now
20 they’ll go out and have it @76resPO:Nibly
21 >s(hoh)hoh ho::h< (0.5) uh (.). so @75pretty
22 → much that’s what the res(hh)e(hh)arch ON
23 → T(HH)A(ha)t says .HHHH u::hm (1.5) anyway (2.0)
24 what else
25 (1.5)@78
26 Dr. B: °what a-° (.). what are the speculations about why:
27 parents don’t communicate more in line with
28 what they think ought to be:: (.). happening

Haakana’s work (2001; 2002) on laughter in medical interaction showed that in the medical consultation, patients laugh at slots where a delicate interactional activity is underway. He writes that “activities that recurrently are produced with laughter tend to be delicate and dispreferred in nature […] and furthermore, they often contain culturally delicate issues […] (2002:226). On a

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68 second finger up
69 a third finger held up (counting the three points mentioned)
70 gaze up from paper – co-participants attentively meet Lisa’s gaze
71 both hands move to her left side in a gesture that emphasizes “go out and have it”
72 same gesture as in 15
73 high pitch laugh
74 smile voice, gesturing, smiling
75 gesturing vividly toward classmates with both hands, smiling
76 gestures and stops with both hands as if she was ‘holding a box’
77 Gaze down
78 Gaze toward Dr. B

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very general level, it can be assumed that talking about sex in the presence of non-intimates will always be a problematic activity that is “culturally delicate”.

In this particular institutional context, a graduate seminar on relational communication where the topic of sex and sexuality surfaces from time to time in the readings and discussions, the topic of sex *in itself* does not necessarily have to be problematic. The topic of sex and sexuality can be broached in rather clinical and detached fashion when talking about research, theories and empirical work. Instead, it is the *local context* of talk where talk about culturally delicate matters occurs that can become problematic and potentially embarrassing. I will explain this claim in relation to a few excerpts.

What Lisa is doing in her first turn, out of which the first thirty seconds have been omitted here, is telling the class what she has learned about parent/child communication about sex in a database search for previous research on the topic. As seen in the footnotes to lines 2-6, Lisa’s gaze is fixed on the written materials in front of her as she constructs a list of points that the database search had generated: “existing relationships […]”, “teen perceptions of parental support and control”, and “parental moral belief […].” While reading these points from the paper in front of her, she also counts the points with her fingers. The topic-at-hand here is factors that influence parent-child miscommunication, and ‘sex’ is only peripherally implied. No laughter is inserted into this talk and it is clear that she is reading these points that supposedly also have been formulated by *others*.

Gaze shifts are routinely utilized as resources for displaying speaker and hearer orientations (Kendon, 1967; Goodwin, 1981; Goodwin, 2000). We can note a shift in Lisa’s orientation when she turns her head and gaze up from her papers and seeks eye contact with her audience in line 8. The difference in orientation is observable as a display that Lisa is no longer reading pre-formulated sentences, but freely producing talk about sex education. Note also the ° symbol for onset of talk that is produced more quietly than surrounding talk in lines 9 and 10:

8   people think you @° shouldn’t teach it becu::z (.)
9   then people °go out and 8° have it< (. )or kids will
10   go out and °ha(h)ve(hh) it (huh)° HU:h 8°(. )

79 gaze up from paper
80 both hands move outward to the left in a gesture that emphasizes “go out and have it”
81 same gesture as in 15
82 high pitch laugh
What Lisa reports here is that according to the research she has reviewed, a lot of people believe that sex education is risky, because it may function as encouragement to “go and >have it<”. Although the overall topic here is ‘sex’, it is not until line 9 that actual sexual activity is mentioned for the first time, indirectly referenced as “it” (see Hanks, 1992). In addition to being pronounced more quietly than surrounding talk, “>have it<” is pronounced rapidly, as one particle, and is accompanied with an outward gesture with both hands to illustrate the kids ‘going out’, away from parents, part of her message. Following this, Lisa repairs her utterance and produces a restarted alternative: “or kids will go out and >have it<”.

The potentially ambiguous reference “people”, which is used to describe both the opinion-holders (people think) and the teenagers (people °go out and >have it<) is presumably the reason for the restart. The same outward gesture is used in the restarted utterance, and this time laugh particles are inserted within and after the direct reference to sexual activity: “>have it<”. In essence, what we see is the following actions:

1. Head and gaze up during the initiation of freely produced talk as opposed to reading information written down.
2. Co-participants’ gaze meet Lisa’s.
3. Talk is audibly quieter when the direct talk about sexual activity is introduced.
4. Talk is produced audibly more quickly in the direct mention of sexual activity.
5. Sexual activity is indirectly referenced even when it is not locally subsequent to the referent, as in line 8.
6. Laughter is inserted within and after the direct reference to sexual activity.

The laughter is not reciprocated by co-participants, despite a possible turn completion micropause displayed immediately after the laugh. Instead, Lisa continues, and invites laughter without actually laughing herself: she gestures vividly with both hands toward her audience, talks in a smile voice, and smiles. By doing so, she shows a different orientation than in the laugh above, and displays to co-interactants an appropriate place to reciprocate laughter. Leila is first to accept the invitation to laugh, and the others follow her initiative.

Leila builds on the laughable, that is, the causal relationship between talking about sex and actual sexual activity presented, and jokes that “they’re gonna go out and have it anyway heh “heh heh heh heh°”, which Lisa repeats and builds on:
Although she recycles the form of Leila’s joking turn, Lisa immediately orients back to the task-at-hand, that is, her presentation, and the fact that kids now will “go out and have it responsibly”. As we can see, the rest of the turn, lines 21-23, also has frequent laugh particles inserted within talk, and sexual activity is continually referred to indirectly by using “it” and “that”. In line 21, Lisa averts her gaze and turns back to her documents, and does not gaze up again until line 25. Note also that Lisa seems to have successfully averted the threat of embarrassment as she resumes a serious tone and face after the “HHHH” inbreath, and can re-orient back to her task of presenting different empirical studies on parent-child communication about sex.

In sum, Lisa displays that she recognizes the problematic nature of the task at hand; that is, talking about sexual activity in the presence of non-intimates. As we saw above, laughter and joking were not deployed as embarrassment-resistant devices in the entire sequence, even though sex is topicalized throughout the episode. Only when Lisa 1) talks freely without the support of ‘clinical’ formulations from academic texts and 2) broaches the topic of actual sexual activity is embarrassment-resistance displayed through a) within speech laughter, b) timely gaze aversion and re-orientation, c) indirect referencing of sexual intercourse, d) rapid and quiet speech delivery and e) acceptance of laughter invitation and production of joke from co-participants.

What can be concluded from this first examination of embarrassment in talk about culturally delicate matters is that embarrassment management is contextually and interactionally accomplished. A taboo topic in itself does not necessarily present interactional trouble even among non-intimates, but the simultaneity of mutual gaze and the ‘own words’ formulation of talk about sexual activity became problematic for the speaker. Embarrassment is here managed both by the embarrassment-threatened speaker and her co-

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83 gesturing vividly toward classmates with both hands, smiling
84 'holding a box' gesture
85 Gaze down
86 Gaze toward Dr. B
participants in the context-sensitive and timely deployment of laughter, joke and speech delivery characteristics. In comparison with 6.3.1 and 6.4.1, the embarrassment elicitor here is not talk or any dispreferred action by another participant, but rather, it is the matter-at-hand, which becomes problematic during the course of talk.

6.4.2.2 Converting embarrassment-resistance to an invitation to laughter and joking

The following sequence is extracted from the same occasion. Again, it is a discussion of Lisa’s project that is the task-at-hand, and similarly, laugh particles are inserted within talk to display recognition of the delicate topic. However, in this fragment, the potential embarrassment is converted into a joke with sexual overtones (see also chapter 7 on how jokes are interactionally assembled). The fragment is divided into two excerpts below; (9a) and (9b).

(9a) “Check stand”

[IN 3:1]
1 Lisa: and sheer terror p- parents have a lack of- (0.3)
2 of information themselves a:nd they’re afraid that
3 they’re gonna either come across as (.) uhm (.)
4 inept (0.7) on the t(hh)o(hh)pic .hh u:hm (.) o::i
5 that >they]us- aren’t gonna be able to answer
6 their children’s’< questions or (.). (an’so) that’s
7 why they shy away from the topic [:completely
8 Ally:                                  [I read (.)
9 something also (.).uhm >that I thought
10 was interesting< a lot of parents put off
11 (0.5) talking to their children about it becuz
12 they’re afraid that their children are gonna
13 start asking them (0.5) about their:ir own (.).
14 (0.5) experiences=
15 Lisa: =we- and the other thing is that p- (.). a lot
16 of parents if they do: talk with their kids
17 about it they’ll have that one talk when the
18 kid is >y’know< between ten and thirteen .huh
19 by the time a kid is ten and thirteen (.).
As we can see in 9a, Lisa inserts laughter within talk in lines 4 and 22. In line 4, laughter is inserted during the production of ‘inept on the topic’, which, in this turn, is as close to a direct mention of ‘sex’ as it gets. In the other parts of her turn, she talks about parents’ ‘lack of information’ and that parents are afraid that they are not going to be able to ‘answer their children’s questions’. The ‘topic’ here refers to explicit talk about sexual activity and sexuality between parents and their teens.

The inserted laughter in line 22 occurs in a slightly different context. Lisa is elaborating on other reasons for why parents do not communicate with their children about sex; a telling occasioned by Ally’s reporting (lines 9-14). In lines 15-18, Lisa is replying to Ally with the knowledge she has acquired in reviewing studies on parent-child interactions about sex, whereas in line 19, she appears to be presenting her own candidate interpretation of why it is too late for parents to talk to their children between the ages of twelve and thirteen. The laugh particles in line 22 seem to be inviting laughter, as she simultaneously gestures and smiles at her listeners. The fact that laughter serves an embarrassment-resistant function does not mean it cannot also invite laughter. If we now go on to look at what these laugh particles occasion in the next turn, we will see that Dr. B’s next action is to produce a joke. This can possibly be interpreted as Dr. B orienting to Lisa’s talk-through-laughter as an invitation to shared enjoyment.

(9b) “Stopped having sex”

[IN 3:1]
25 Dr. B: and by] the time the kids’ur (.) twelve and thirteen
26 the parents have stopped having sex
27 ## ## [## ## # (3s)
28 Lisa: @$$ [nah (.) I don’t @$$ remember anything
29 Dr. B: ye:ah (.) they’re they’re just worn out
30 ## ### # ((2.6))
The joke is intimately linked to the prior turn: Dr. B recycles part of Lisa’s turn in verbatim (by the time the kids’ ur (. ) twelve and thirteen) with the punch line “the parents have stopped having sex”. At the completion of Dr. B’s allusion, the group explodes in appreciative laughter that continues with varying intensity throughout lines 27-41. Between lines 28 and 40, Lisa and Dr. B take turns in weaving in further allusion to the initial joke while they themselves as well as the remaining group laugh. Norrick (1994) has shown that collaborative building of allusions to an initial humorous contribution serves “to modulate involvement in the immediate context and hence to promote rapport”, and that speakers “gain prestige any time they can successfully weave an allusion” into conversation. Lisa’s contributions consist of a talk dramatization where she takes the voice of a no longer sexually active parent speaking to a teenager (lines 28, 36-37 and 40) whereas Dr. B (lines 29, 34-35) agrees with and offers interpretations of the practical implications of his own joke and Lisa’s reported speech. The joke is ‘milked’ for several turn shifts, and it is then Maryann, who did not participate in the last group laughter, who effectively closes down the joking sequence by posing a serious question to Lisa concerning her project.

What we saw in excerpts 9a-b is a potentially embarrassing course of interaction that is successfully averted by using embarrassment-resistant laugh particles to *invite* laughter, which in turn opened a slot for an allusive joke. Interactants joke their way out of a potentially delicate topic, and once the joke

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90 outward gesture and high pitch voice
91 very high pitch voice
has been played out, the conversation shifts back to the serious task-at-hand. In essence, interactional sequences with threats of potential embarrassment also serve to increase participation, and interactants can opt to convert the potential threat to an occasion of collaborative humor.

6.4.2.3 Taboo avoidance turning embarrassing

Also related to embarrassment and humor is the next excerpt. However, of particular interest here is 1) the way in which a speaker opts to deal with a potentially delicate token, and 2) recipients’ treatment of this attempt. The excerpt below is a little difficult to decipher since the first speaker, Will, speaks rapidly with a heavy accent and fragmented syntax. Will is an exchange student from an Asian country, and it cannot be ruled that cultural factors associated with the degree of taboo regarding sex may influence his actions.

The class is discussing some theoretical concepts in a textbook chapter they have been reading in preparation for today’s seminar. Will asks a question that essentially deals with how to categorize different types of hurtful messages in interpersonal communication, and he wants to know what saying to someone that they are ‘such a bitch’ would be categorized as. However, he opts to not utter the taboo word ‘bitch’, which causes some repair work. I have divided this sequence, too, into two excerpts.

(10a) “Bitch”

[IN1:1]

1 Will: hRRM (.) 895(pt)uh 893 ff- for example if someone
2 asked you ‘bout (pt) (. ) accusation for example with
3 (. ) uh- and 894 I really mean that (. ) like (. )
4 → some people say he was such a (. ) b- BI(hh)- 895
5 (4.3)
6 896
7 Dr. B: he was such a what:
8 Will: =a bitch

92 lip smack
93 right hand raised with fingers “quoting”
94 Holding up two fingers on each hand as if indicating quotation marks
95 gesture toward Dr. B, nods “meaningfully” twice
96 Will turns gaze from Dr. B and to Jillian (seated next to him) at the end of the long pause
Who, then, is embarrassed here? Is anyone? As I will demonstrate below, embarrassment is highly present in this sequence and in 10b, and managed differently by different participants.

At first, it appears as if the confusion lies in Will’s pronunciation of “bitch”; however, while producing his question turn, Will holds up two fingers on each hand in quotation marks, and nods toward Dr. B after producing “he was such a (.b- BI(hh)-” Rather than being unable to pronounce the word intelligibly, Will seems unwilling to utter the full word, and the nodding and finger quoting are readable as ‘you know what I mean’. The pause that follows is long, and toward the end of the pause, Will turns his gaze, which had been turned toward Dr. B, to Jillian who is seated in between Dr. B and himself with a ‘flustered’ facial expression. Immediately following this gaze shift, Dr. B displays incomprehension of Will’s message and initiates a repair question: “he was such a what!”, and Will instantly produces the full word “a bitch” without hesitation, which further indicates that he was unwilling rather than unable to produce it. The immediate and accurate delivery does not indicate that he is repairing an error either, for he had had a long pause to do so earlier. Thus, opting to only indicate a lexical item that has culturally delicate connotations can be viewed as one strategy for how embarrassment is kept “at bay” (Heath, 1988:148).

However, the long pause that follows in which participants seem to have trouble analyzing Will’s message and producing appropriate next actions, is an additional source of embarrassment. Heath (1988) demonstrated that embarrassment was located at the juncture between competing orientations, or in slots where participants lacked an activity of mutual involvement while still remaining in close co-presence:

“Embarrassment emerges in relation to a specific action produced by a co-participant. The specific movement, for example which embodies the individual’s fluster, is designed in part with respect to the immediately preceding action, the offence, whilst simultaneously attempting to deal with related sequential constraints on their behaviour at that moment in time” (Heath, 1988:154).

In this case, the slot for embarrassment is opened by an attempt to avoid dealing directly with a potentially embarrassing matter-at-hand (between lines 4 and 7) that is misunderstood by Will’s listeners. During the long pause, participants are left basically gazing at each other during what is to be considered as an unusually long interactional silence while presumably analyzing Will’s turn and having difficulties in selecting an appropriate next action. Participants, in
particular Dr. B who is the addressee of Will’s question, have to negotiate several competing demands: analyzing Will’s turn and non-vocal behavior, analyzing what kind of reply should be appropriately provided to that question, and dealing with the silence growing in duration. Interactional disruption of this kind is what Goffman (1967) described as a typical embarrassing predicament, in which flustered and confused interactional behavior signal that something has gone awkward in the interaction. But just as ‘flustering’ and awkward interactional behavior can be a display of experienced embarrassment, these awkward moments can also be the cause of experienced embarrassment. Consequently, moments of uncertainty and awkwardness can both be the elicitor and the response to embarrassment (c.f. Keltner & Buswell, 1997:261).

At the end of the long pause, Will turns his gaze from Dr. B, who has not yet confirmed or rejected understanding of the production of “b- Bi(hh)-”, to Jillian, as if looking for help with the misunderstanding. It is after monitoring the gaze shift that Dr. B initiates a repair question that displays that he did not understand what Will was referring to. After Dr. B displays that the problem of understanding has been cleared up with a rising intonation and the change-of-state token “↑O:h” (Heritage, 1984b), Will pursues his question, not showing any orientation to Tracy and Lin’s smiling exchange and gaze aversion from him to each other. His talk is halted in line 7 and the gesturing is observable as word-searching. In line 13, Dr. B does not display any attendance to Will’s pursuit of his question, and instead, produces a joke referring back to the word ‘bitch’.

10b “Wrong bar”

9 Dr. B: ↑O:h okay
10 Tracy °hhhuhuhuhuh°@97
11 Will: so this is a- accusation but-@98
12 (0.5)
13 Dr. B: @97they don’t tell me that much any longer
14 Tracy: [thHPH hih hih hih hah hah .hhhh
15 Dana: [Huh huh huh hh
16 Ally: [THIH hih hih .hhhhhhhhhh

97 Smiles, turns away from Will and toward Lin who reciprocates the smile
98 gaze down, finger moving as if searching for a word
99 gaze turns toward the group
Lisa: [huh huh huh huh
Jillian: [uh huh huh huh huh huh
Will: [yeah [you say
Dr. B: I realized I was in the wrong bar when they called me that too
Tracy: [Huh [huh huh huh huh
Ally: [Huh huh huh uh huh
Lin: "Huh huh huh huh huh"
Will: yeah so [you say
Lisa [( negative
Will: [you s-
Dr. B: [yeah right [hhhh
Will: you say (. ) they use the words (0.5) okay you are such a liar this [kind=
Dr. B: [yeah
Will: of (. ) very subtle but he was such a (2.1) uh-
Dr. B: [that kind of words"
Dr. B: [or it it gets it- ye:ah the- there are places where you would think that (. ) the message
Will: is going to be very hurtful u:h (. ) uh {(cont.)}

The joke, “they don’t tell me that much any longer” is also sequentially made relevant. Dr. B opts to ignore the serious question, that is, that Will wanted to know what type of message that “you are such a bitch” would be categorized as, and instead treat the question as if Will had suggested that Dr. B had been subjected to this name-calling. A majority of the students start laughing in response, and as the laughter subsides a little, Will continues to pursue a response (c.f. Pomerantz, 1984b), displaying that a response has not been volunteered in the slot where it would have been appropriate. Again, Dr. B is disattending to Will’s pursuit and does not give him time to complete the fragmented utterance. Instead, he elaborates on the joke: “I realized I was in the wrong bar when they called me that too”.

100 addressing Dr. B
101 responds to Lisa, chuckles
The second part of the joke clearly implies a gender/sexuality issue, i.e. that if someone would call a male person a ‘bitch’, it probably takes place in a gay bar. A possible interpretation of why the joke occurs in this context can be traced back to line 4. Will, who is having some problems formulating his question in a non-native language, says “some people say he was such a b- (.) BI(hh) -“. It is possible that the cultural understanding of when the insult ‘bitch’ is to be used, that is, as a derogatory term for women or gay men, occasioned the joke in that Will’s example with “he” was analyzed as an odd, categorically marked choice. It is also possible that the opportunity to joke after a problematic interactional moment; a moment with taboo avoidance, taboo word production, a long uncomfortable silence, and repair, functions to lighten up the atmosphere and ‘shake off’ any lingering embarrassment.

Furthermore, we cannot rule out the possibility that Dr. B’s joke is a carefully designed tease designed to point out Will’s cultural transgression, even if it is not directly hearable as an assessment of Will’s prior talk. If compared to the sequence of situated joking in 9b, Lisa is an active participant in the collaborative joke-building, and through her actions she shows that she orients to Dr. B’s allusion as a joke and not a tease. Will, on the other hand, appears to treat the location of the joke as contextually dispreferred and does not participate in the joke, other than the possible acknowledgement “yeah ( ) you say I wah-“ (lines 19-20). Instead, Will pursues his original question, but his talk is even more fragmented than prior to the joke, and he pauses continuously when laughter and second joke-telling overlap his talk. Throughout the joking and group laughter, Will continues to persistently pursue the task of getting his question out there and responded to. Also, Will only briefly smiles in line 27, but remains focused on producing his message, and he does not go along with the laughter or joking. In that sense, we can see that Will either orients to the joke as a tease directed at him, to which he remains ‘po-faced’ while insisting on his initial task pursuit - or that he is having problems understanding the joke. Both language and culture aspects are probably involved in the trajectory of this sequence, and Dr. B does not orient to possible cultural/linguistic problems in his pursuit of the non-serious trajectory. Not until line 38 does Will’s question finally get oriented to seriously, and Will is momentarily excluded from the culturally bound activity of doing intimacy through joking about taboo matters and about Will’s taboo resistance.

Embarrassment, in this sequence, was found to be lodged within the practices in sequences of interaction as follows:
1. in the opting to only imply a culturally delicate matter
2. at the juncture of analyzing a first turn and producing a next action
3. in the long silence
4. in bystanders’ smiling exchanges and gaze aversion
5. in the tease/joke sequentially placed in after a moment without an explicit mutual focus of attention
6. in the misunderstood speaker’s insistence on remaining focused on completing his incomplete turn, whether because of incomprehension or unwillingness to participate in the joking
7. as an interactionally occasioned resource for ‘doing lightheartedness’ (see chapter 7).

Although ‘embarrassment’ is not explicitly mentioned in any of the excerpts examined so far, we have seen that this ‘flustering’ emotion is oriented to in a variety of ways. In the next example below, embarrassment is used as an interactionally occasioned resource for humor and joking; however, in a slightly more direct way – through topicalizing a potentially embarrassing situation.

6.4.3 Pre-empting embarrassment: topicalization

One way of managing potential embarrassment is to completely play along with it, as Ally does in the sequence below. The sequence is taken from the first of the three IN seminars where students briefly present the topic on which they will be writing a paper during the semester. Ally has finished her brief presentation and turns to Maryann to inform her about the type of paper she will be writing; a ‘proposition paper’. In prior talk, Maryann had asked another student about whether she was going to do a ‘proposition paper’ or an empirical study, and Ally volunteers this information to Maryann after she has completed her presentation. The word ‘proposition’ in relation to Ally’s project on the negotiation of sexual consent occasions an allusion joke in line 4:

(11) “Propositions”

[IN1:1]
1 Ally: @102 I’m doing a proposition paper
2 Maryann: okay @103
3 Dr.B: becuz if you’re talking about sexual
4 communication you need to make propositions

102 to Maryann
103 nods
What we see in this excerpt is an example of “embarrassment”, or potential embarrassment, used as an interactional resource by the potentially embarrassed participant herself. Ally turns to Maryann to volunteer information she previously did not mention, that her paper will be a so-called “proposition paper”. The topic of Ally’s paper, which she has talked about prior to this sequence, is sexual consent. Dr. B utilizes this contextual resource for a word play in “becuz if you’re talking about sexual communication you need to make propositions” (line 4), implying sexual propositions instead of scientific propositions.

The other students smile and laugh at this pun, and Ally’s response treats the joke as a serious statement, replying “yeah ex(h)actly”. However, she smiles, and although the structure of her turn displays that she is treating the joke seriously, she is playing along with it in her serious but smiling response. Lisa’s turn is partly inaudible since she almost whispers to Ally, seated next to her, but “make propositions” is discernable on the recording, and it can be assumed that she is elaborating on the joke further.
Ally’s response in line 9 seems designed to fit both Dr. B’s joke and Lisa’s subsequent comment, and she also smiles a little during the production of “you guys are making me blush right now you know that”. Co-participants begin laughing appreciatively at Ally’s open acknowledgement of embarrassability, although there are no clear visual signs (e.g. blushing) that Ally in fact is embarrassed. Lisa playfully continues with “it’s your topic”, which is hearable as a playful rejection of Ally’s proposed embarrassament, i.e. that there is no reason for Ally to be blushing since it’s her own topic that caused it. Lisa’s turn also does the work of shifting the weight of responsibility back to Ally. Dr. B laughingly supports Lisa’s point, and adds a teasing “can’t stand the ↓heat”. Ally’s gestural embodiment in line 18; waving her hands on both sides of her cheeks as fanning herself, is a clear enactment of our everyday view of embarrassament; that is, blushing. At the end of her gesture turn, she produces an inbreath and swishes her hair back, after which Dr. B allocates the next turn to another student who will begin presenting.

As we can see, Ally is pre-empting any possible embarrassment by topicalizing its most common display (making me blush), by smiling and laughing along with the joking, and by re-embodying its physiological symptom (fanning heated cheeks). These illustrations are carefully tailored to fit the local environment in which they are produced. In line 9, Ally’s response shows that she has picked up on the sexual innuendo of both Dr. B and Lisa’s second joke by referring to the effect these turns had on her. The construction she uses, “you guys are making me blush right now you know that”, specifically casts the blame for the potential embarrassament upon the actions of Dr. B and Lisa, the “you guys”, which shows Ally’s orientation not only to the immediately prior turn, but to the initial joke in lines 3-4. Lisa, jokingly, avoids ownership of the blaming111, and instead throws the blame back at Ally herself and the fact that it is Ally’s own topic, and not the joking, that is embarrasssing. In response to Dr. B’s teasing “can’t stand the ↓heat”, Ally displays her monitoring of Dr. B’s tease by enacting the feeling of ‘heat’ on her cheeks by fanning her hands along her face. The topicalization and gestural embodiment of embarrassament also displays to co-participants that Ally is accepting to be the ‘butt’ of the joking, and that she is an active participant in its development.

Whether Ally is really embarrassed by the sexual innuendo or not is of less relevance than its enactament. It is possible that Ally, as in prior excerpts where sexual activity is implied, is managing emerging physical symptoms of

111 See Pomerantz (1978b) for description of structural components of other types of responsibility attribution and blamings and their acceptance/rejection
embarrassment and pre-empting their display to others by openly acknowledging that the topic is making her ‘blush’. Furthermore, confessing to being embarrassed and exaggerating an illustration of an emotional display may be preferable to having co-participants monitor her gradually becoming ‘flustered’. The confession and dramatization takes the focus away from ‘real’ experienced embarrassment or threats thereof, and toward interactional joking. However, what is more interesting than trying to determine what Ally is feeling ‘inside’ and what her intentions were is how embarrassment is utilized as an interactional resource that invites laughter, involvement and finally closes the sequence in which Ally is at the center of attention. In very few places in the corpus are emotions directly topicalized, and it can be assumed that when they are, participants volunteer their actions to be accountable and make themselves vulnerable to others’ orientation and utilization of their expressed emotional stance. Ally could have opted to just remain silent, to reject the joking, or to accept it solely through laughter, but instead she chooses to bring potential embarrassment into the organization of turns.

The deployment of utterances and gestures in exact sequential position is not only designed to illustrate embarrassment, but is also shaped to invite co-participation from others. In line 9, Ally is allocating the blame for the embarrassment to two of her co-interactants. She reports what the offense is (that prior talk is making her blush) and assigns responsibility for the offense to Dr. B and Lisa. It is now up to Dr. B and Lisa to respond to the attribution of blame (Lisa’s rejection/re-allocation of blame in line 12 and Dr. B’s agreement in line 14). Dr. B’s teasing in line 16 is fitted in the sequential context to further establish Lisa’s re-attribution of blame in that it points out that Ally is in over her head with the topic if she is so easily embarrassed by it. Thus, the subsequent joking and playful cross-attributions of blame are shaped from an orientation to Ally’s “blush” turn as a serious one. By responding seriously to Ally’s blaming, the joking sequence is successfully developed from vantage point of Ally’s embarrassment and sensitivity to the culturally delicate matter of sexual propositions. Finally, Ally’s gestural re-embodiment of embarrassment is shaped as an acknowledging response to Dr. B’s teasing about heat.

Whether an interactant actually experiences a particular emotion displayed or not at a certain moment in time in which it is gesturally enacted is less interesting than the transformation of feelings into conduct and action. By analyzing video-recordings of medical consultation interviews, Heath (2002) demonstrated how patients utilized gestural demonstrations of past suffering to both give dramatic expression to the symptoms for which they were seeking
medical help, and to encourage particular forms of co-participation from the
doctor. Ally’s embodiment of embarrassment serves to display to others that
she is an active ‘butt’ of the joking, while also marking the delicacy of the
activity of joking about sexual propositions.

By topicalizing embarrassment and making it available as a resource for
the interaction both verbally and non-verbally, embarrassment is utilized as a
resource to promote participation and enjoyment, and also to keep ‘real’
displays of embarrassment at bay. Also, calling attention to potential
embarrassment and converting it into humor can turn “a potential loss of social
approval into a gain in social approval” (Edelmann, 1994:243).

6.4.4 Embarrassment in repair of gaffes or faux pas

6.4.4.1 Repair

In most of the literature, embarrassment is viewed as the result of a failure to
meet some social expectation or standard. The display of embarrassment, then,
functions to signal acknowledgement of shared social standards and failure to
meet these in terms of social conduct. The occasions of embarrassment can be
related to, for example, bodily matters that are involuntarily exposed, improper
dress, performance failures, and insensitive conversational contributions.

A ‘gaffe’ or ‘faux-pas’ in talk-in-interaction can take many shapes. In this
section, I will examine four cases where a problematic turn occasions repair
actions; either self-repair or other-initiated repair, and discuss repair patterns in
relation to embarrassment.

By ‘repair’, previous work refers to “practices for dealing with problems
or troubles in speaking, hearing, and understanding the talk in conversation”
(Schegloff, 2000a:207). Early work (Schegloff, Jefferson & Sacks, 1977)
demonstrated that there is a preference for self-initiation of repair. That is, they
showed that opportunities for self-correction come before structural
opportunities for other-repair (1978:376). Other-initiated repair operates on a
different trajectory than self-initiated repair in that the initiation of others’
repair functions to locate the trouble source for the first speaker instead of
actually repairing it. Repair initiations from others may, for example, be repeats
of the problematic turn component (“SIX hundred?”) or partial repeats with
the problematic component replaced with another word (“such a what?”).
6.4.4.2 Initiated self-repair → slot for embarrassment displays → other-repair

(12) “Korean”

[OG 2:2]
1 Jenna: something I’ve never thought of before and
2 I talk to you guys about this (. . .) all the time . hhh
3 are you translating (. . .) are your conversations
4 with your parents in Korean (. . .) and this is your
5 → English translation >Imean not Korean< (0.8)
6 → §112 sorry nn′ HOH HOH HOH HOH HOH=§113
7 Lin: °Taiwane:se°
8 Jenna: §114= forgive me (. . .) hhhhÜÜhmh §115
9 (0.4)
10 Lisa: Chine:se §116
11 Jenna: Taiwane:se (. . .) or Chi- (. . ) >I mean are< you
12 talking with your parents in English’ur

The context of this utterance is the kind of feedback sequence examined in chapter 5. In line 5, Jenna herself locates the troubles source, that is, that she said “Korean” for Lin’s native language, which she realizes is incorrect during the production of her own talk. Jenna thus initiates the repair (>Imean not Korean<), and proceeds to apologizing for the problem (sorry nn′ HOH HOH HOH HOH HOH (hh), but does not proceed to repair the problem immediately. Instead, Lin offers the repair °Taiwane:se°, while Jenna in line 8 is still preoccupied with orienting to her initiated apology (forgive me (. . .) hhhhÜÜhmh). In line 9, there is a brief pause in which Jenna could have confirmed Lin’s repair offering, but she does not, and in line 10, Lisa offers a second repair: °Chine:se°. Lisa’s repair seems a little odd since it is Lin’s native language that is the troubles source, and Lin has already offered the correct information, but it was spoken very softly to Jenna, seated on Lin’s left, and it is plausible that Lisa did not hear Lin’s first repair offering, or that she was so preoccupied with her own repair that she did not attend to Lin’s repair. Jenna then repeats Lin’s repair in line 11, but as we see next, she is also orienting to Lisa’s offering °Taiwane:se; (. . ) or Chi- >I mean are< you talking with your parents in English’ur). Jenna’s turn (lines

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112 left hand over face so that Lin and Will seated on her left cannot see her face
113 ’hollow’ high pitch laugh
114 gesture and rapid head movement toward Will and Lin
115 throat clearing, gaze down
116 serious, non-smiling response
11-12) still display uncertainty as to which repair she should treat as the correct one, and instead of further repair initiations or pursuits of confirmation, Jenna abandons the troubles source and re-formulates her turn, which is another type of repair (so-called third-turn repair, Schegloff, 1992b). Leaving the alternatives open to co-participants with the turn-final or-inquiry (English’s ur-) can be viewed as marking delicacy of the talk.

In terms of ‘embarrassment’, Jenna is smiling, hides her face with one hand as soon as she has initiated the repair in lines 5-6, and laughs a non-reciprocated troubles-resistant laugh (Jefferson, 1984a). Embarrassment is appropriately displayed in the slot where the troubles source has been revealed, that is, the ‘gaffe’ of not remembering the language spoken in her friend’s country of origin and native language. The repair initiation is produced rapidly “>I mean not Korean< sorry” and the laughter also does the work of delaying the actual self-repair. When not completing the initiated repair, others can utilize the slot for repairing for her, i.e. offering the information Jenna needs to complete her question. We also saw that Jenna’s embarrassment presented a new problem; responding to the repair of others. However, she displays later that she heard both repairs offered (Taiwanese or Chinese), but completes the embarrassment display sequence before orienting to the repairs.

Also, the ‘flustering’ seen in the initiated self-correction + micropause + apology + unreciprocated laughter + second apology + throat clearing seem to prevent Jenna from re-focusing on her question, and this momentary participation difficulty is a pattern we have seen in previous embarrassment excerpts. Furthermore, as I will argue below in relation to the last excerpt, displays of mild embarrassment + apology + laughter in this type of situation may be preferred in next position after gaffes. Edelmann (1994:240) noted that displays of embarrassment may “diffuse” a difficult situation, whereas absence of displays may be treated as taking a gaffe too lightly. The moment of embarrassment begins in line 5 with the repair initiation, and becomes obvious to co-participants as Jenna hides her face, apologizes, and begins laughing. It is closed down when Jenna is able to re-orient to the task-at-hand in line 12.

I have glossed over a number of technical points that could be raised about repair in this excerpt, but the main observation, before moving into the next few excerpts, is that repair constitutes another possible sequential context for embarrassment. The slot for embarrassment display occurs in between self-initiation of repair and other-repair. Participants show their orientations to the preference for self-correction by not offering next turn repair until Jenna has displayed a completion point (lines 8, 9) and still has not completed self-repair.
It can at this point only be hypothesized that since other-initiated repair is dispreferred, it is not until displays of embarrassment/trouble have been displayed by the first speaker that second speakers initiate repair.

Excerpt 13 illustrates a similar category of ‘faux-pas’. Forgetting the name of someone you are expected to know the name of can be embarrassing, and Sharkey and Stafford (1990) included this particular embarrassment cause in a list of categories of embarrassing predicaments. Below, the speaker, Lin, is accounting for her friendship with another student, Lisa, and in the course of her telling, forgets Lisa’s name.

(13) “We're close”

[OG 2:1]
1 Lin: and for me: I- (. ) I really enjo[ey
2 Celia:                      [hhRRR hhRRR]117
3 Lin: (. ) uh same thing in the beginning I think
4 i- it I expect it’s gonna be wonderful and
5 but as in time its uh extra pa(hh)er like
6 like I’d have to try to put it in like before
7 (. ) so I was (. )uh little bit tense before I
8 (. ) I- I left (. ) and but it was gre:at becu
9 (. ) uhm after (. ) in addition to all those
10 great experiences same thing uhm (. ) I think after
11 these three (. ) four days of conferences we-
12 we: are sort of bound: I- [we=
13 Lisa:                     [((nods))
14 Lin: found out like (. ) you know mo::re (. ) I-I found
15 out more about u:hm (2.1) @118 *I forgot it wasuh-
16 Lisa: Li:sa @119
17 Lin: [Li:sa]
18 [##] ## ## [##] ## ## ## ((initially very loud))
19 Lisa: [we’re close huh huh huh
20 Lin: 120@NOW I DON’T REMEMBER THE [NA:ME
21 [## ##
22 ## ## [##] ## ## [##] ## # 

117 clears throat/coughs
118 Bends over table, gaze down
119 smiles at Lin
120 Throws head back at “now” and laughs at the completion of “na:me”. Smile voice, high pitch.
As we can see, this sequence involves Lin making a social faux-pas by not remembering the name of the classmate she is describing as having become a close friend during a conference stay in another city.

The overall topic of the sequence from which the above excerpt is taken is a conference that the professor and three of the students present attended the week prior to this recording. Dr. A has asked the students to each share their experiences of the conference with the class, and Lisa and Will had just finished their reportings. Lin (a non-native speaker on English) connects back to Lisa’s prior telling (same thing) and how she had been a “little bit tense” before attending the conference. She then goes on to account for the positive experiences (lines 10-12) and points out that one of the greatest experiences of the conference was getting closer to her fellow graduate students, with whom she shared a hotel room: “I think after these three (. ) four days of conferences we- we are sort of bound”, and Lisa nods empathetically in response.

The ‘faux pas’ occurs as she continues with “I- we found out like (. ) you know mo::re (. ) I-I found out more about uh:hm (2.1) and becomes evident to co-participants as she acknowledges that she momentarily cannot recall the name of her friend she had just described as being “bound” to (“I forgot it wasuh-°”). It appears if Lin herself makes this realization at an earlier point of her own turn, as it is produced with delays/stalling techniques: micropauses, partial repetition, prolonged vowels, “uh:hm” and finally a 2.1 second pause. ‘Stalling’ devices seem to be connected to keeping embarrassment at bay for as long as possible.

As with excerpt 12 above, co-participants do not repair immediately but gives current speaker time to self-repair, but as both Lin and Jenna avert their gaze, others produce the repair. This supports previous work on a preference for self-correction in conversation (Schegloff, Jefferson & Sacks, 1977). Thus, not until Lin bends down over the table, gazes down at her hands and quietly makes it known that she cannot recall Lisa’s name, Lisa repairs Lin’s turn with the offering of the name searched for.
The ‘gaffe’ in this case is obvious – Lin is building her telling upon the fact that she is feeling much closer to Lisa after spending time together at the conference, and in the actual account of this, she cannot remember Lisa’s name. Thus, Lin’s telling is openly exposed as contradictory. Contrary to excerpt 12, the ‘gaffe’ is treated humorously by co-participants, and loud laughter breaks out immediately after Lisa’s repair in line 17. Lisa also shows an orientation to Lin’s faux pas as humorous, and jokes ironically in line 19: “we’re close huh huh huh”, which is overlapped with Lin’s open and laughing acknowledgement of the gaffe: “\textit{Now I don’t remember the name}”. It is at this point that Lin re-orient her gaze to the group, and ‘accepts’ the gaffe as embarrassing and also laughable. Lin’s acknowledgement occasions further laughter, and the joking continues with Brandee, who produces fictive reported speech “that girl over there (.) you know”. Lisa responds with what appears to be a connected joke, including the word “tight”, which presumably has to do with Lisa and Lin being “tight” friends.

The joking sequence is closed in a rather different way than excerpt 12. In 12, Jenna herself abandons the trouble source and reformulates her initial comment. In 13, Lin makes no attempt to restore order in the laughter and joking, but willingly participates in momentarily being the ‘butt’ of the teasing. Instead, Will (lines 25, 26) intervenes and changes the topic with a new telling from the conference, that is, that he and Lin had taught Lisa some Chinese during the trip. The slight overlap in line 25 (she-) Will initiates a topic shift is heard, and Will can recycle his turn beginning in line 26 (she learned Chinese) where a new turn can begin\textsuperscript{121}. In lines 27 and 28, Lin and Lisa both attend to Will’s turn with agreement and continued elaboration, and they can again share a mutual orientation focus.

The sequential placement of Will’s intervention; overlapping the last of a few turns of joking about Lin’s mistake while Lin is present, does something specific at this point. It calls for response from co-participants, and thus re-directs the course of the interaction, and invites participation from Lisa who was the one who was reported to have learned Chinese. Will’s turn thus draws Lisa away from joking about Lin, and calls for a demonstration of news receipt from the group, and confirmation or disconfirmation from Lisa. Although no claims about Will’s intentions can be made, we see that the interactional work accomplished by his intervention closes the gaffe sequence and re-directs the course of participants’ orientations. Mandelbaum (1989:119) observed that a

\textsuperscript{121} An extended discussion of the minimizing of gaps and overlap by turn beginning recycling is found in Schegloff (1987).
listener in a course of storytelling where a third and also present co-participant
is being made the ‘butt’ of the story’s punch line can do this type of “rescuing
the ‘butt’” work by producing a turn that calls for some specific type of
response from co-participants in a slot of the storytelling that prevents further
elaboration of the punch line. Consequently, regardless of Will’s intentions, his
re-direction works to ‘rescue’ Lin from any further dwelling upon the gaffe by
cooparticipants, and re-directs the course of interaction back to positive
experiences of rooming together at the conference. It may also be noted that it
is yet again Will, the non-native speaker, who displays reluctance toward
participating in the joking, and furthermore, his actions display affiliation with
Lin, the other non-native speaker who also is his girlfriend. Comparing the two
erexamples of repair of gaffes, we see the following pattern:

Table 3
Comparison of (12) and (13)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sequential environment</th>
<th>Excerpt 12</th>
<th>Excerpt 13</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>longer turn-at-talk (telling) by first speaker</td>
<td>longer turn-at-talk (telling) by first speaker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Embarrassment elicitor</td>
<td>‘gaffe’ by teller: choosing wrong language</td>
<td>‘gaffe’ by teller: not being able to remember name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repair</td>
<td>self-initiation within turn first repaired by person concerned (Lin)</td>
<td>display that repair is needed, repair by person concerned (Lisa)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Embarrassment slot</td>
<td>immediately after self-repair initiation</td>
<td>immediately at open display of locating the troubles source</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Embarrassment display</td>
<td>gaze aversion, face hiding, non-reciprocated laughter, apologies, throat clearing, orientation difficulty</td>
<td>stalling, gaze aversion, face down, gaze up at ‘surrender’ to embarrassment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Embarrassment outcome</td>
<td>abandoning troubles source, reformulation of gaffe turn</td>
<td>embarrassment acceptance, joking about gaffe, ‘butt’ rescue</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As we can see, the two sequences display similarities, but also differences in
outcome. Both Lin and Jenna display embarrassment in the slot where their
gaffes have been made relevant to the interaction. However, co-participants
orient differently to these displays. Jenna’s laughter is not treated as an
invitation to laugh, and repair is initiated by others when Jenna does not complete her self-repair. Lin’s gaffe, however, is treated as laughable.

The differing treatment of the gaffes tells us something about their severity: Jenna’s gaffe seems to be oriented to as serious by Jenna herself, perhaps because there may be racist connotations associated with lumping together Asian languages as more or less the same, whereas her co-participants treat it as more of a co-incidental slip not worth dwelling upon. Lin’s gaffe is treated as laughable by co-participants, and Lin gradually becomes aware of her own involvement and acknowledges the laughable in the gaffe. Lin actually teases herself in line 20 with the ironic acknowledgement of “NOW I DON’T REMEMBER THE NAME”. Lin’s acceptance of the gaffe and embarrassment functions to escalate the joking around the gaffe, and it is not Lin herself, but Will, who re-directs the course of interaction away from the gaffe and back to the reporting of positive experiences of the conference. The possible cultural/racist associations with Jenna’s gaffe, and the innocent forgetfulness of Lin’s, may be central to their treatment.

Goffman (1967) and others have indicated that embarrassment displays are avoided at all cost in interaction because of their face-threatening potential. However, these analyses indicate something a little different. The displays of embarrassment after the gaffes have been exposed are designed to fit the sequential context, to signal the speaker’s treatment of her own turn as problematic, and to acknowledge the gaffe made. The slot for embarrassment functions to indicate something about shared social standards (which Goffman and others also have suggested) and to display something like ‘apologizing’ for the gaffe, even if not done in talk, as Jenna did. Embarrassment displays also function to call for assistance from others, who do so by offering repair of the problematic part of prior speaker’s turn. In essence, others do not initiate repair before displays of ‘flustering’ have been oriented to. In this way, displays of embarrassment serve an important social function of directing the type of repair work that is initiated.

6.4.4.3 Other-initiated repair → analyzing repair → embarrassment

In (14) below, a more forceful type of repair initiation is done (line 4) where the repair initiator does not wait for self-repair. Caroline has just begun reading her paper to the class as part of the feedback activity described in chapter 5. In line three, the trouble source is displayed: Caroline’s reading of “find some subjects to study”.
(14) “Subjects”

[OG 2:2]
1 Caroline: ((reads))as I dropped off my two youngest children
2 Thursday morning for school I decided that I’d
3 better find some subjects to study [and-
4 Dr. A: 
5 (0.5)
6 ## @122
7 Dr. A: THAT’S A SURVEY [EXPERIMENTAL WORK]
8 like Sayin> .hh THAT IS ( )
9 =## ##=         
10 Will:       CAROline (. ) my- @126
11 =## ##=         
12 Will: MY [GO::D Caroline you [say SUBJECTS (      )
13 =## [## ## ## ##=         
14 Dr. A: [I’M SO:RY you didn’t KNOW that (1.1) so
15 willyou- change it to participants
16 =## ## ##=
17 Caroline: o(hh)kay
18 =###=#=#=
19 Caroline: >[Y’KNOW WHAT @128(. ) THAT’S what I felt I was
20 looking for and my ATTitude at the end of this=
21 Dr. A: okay
22 Caroline: =is much better than my attitude [(      )<
23 Dr. A: [well it may be=
24 Caroline: o(hh)kay! {(smiles)}
25 Dr. A: =that that tone needs to stay but just so you know
26 the hair rose at the back of my neck just now
27 okay go ahead
28 Caroline: okay .hhhhhh ((continues reading))

The group laughter in this sequence was difficult to depict in this excerpt, but note that there is continuous, non-subsiding group laughter between lines 6 and 19, and all other activities are done simultaneously with the group laughter.

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122 High pitched voice, “questioning” intonation, sounds like enacted astonishment/horror
123 Caroline turns gaze up from paper toward Dr. A, “flustered” facial expression, averts gaze again
124 Caroline looks up, begins smiling and joining the group laughter, blush visible
125 Caroline averts gaze down to paper, chuckles while blushing
126 Smiles, gestures, and points to Caroline’s paper
127 Caroline briefly meets Will’s gaze and then averts gaze again
128 Caroline looks up again
As we can see, the repair is initiated by Dr. A in line 4, which functions to locate the troubles source. The trouble source in this context is Caroline’s use of the word “subjects”, which is occasioned by the fact that the seminar emphasizes ethnographic methods of investigation. By using ‘subjects’ to describe interviewees in Caroline’s study, she makes a ‘discursive gaffe’ since the word has connotations to experimental approaches to empirical data, i.e. the gaffe is that she is using a word that belongs to another type of scientific discourse. The repair initiation overlaps Caroline’s reading, and is pronounced in a ‘questioning’ high pitched voice and with a rise in volume. There is a brief pause before the onset of loud group laughter in line 6 occasioned by the repeat of the trouble source in line 4 (c.f. Schegloff, Jefferson & Sacks, 1977:368).

Previous work on other-initiated repair has shown that ‘others’ withhold repair initiation if the trouble source is located within the first speaker’s turn, and that if trouble source turns are interrupted, they are usually interrupted by the trouble turn speaker (1977:373). However, Dr. A does initiate repair through interruption of Caroline’s turn. This may be a feature of asymmetric conversation where the interrupter has another institutional role than other speakers, and it may also be because Caroline is reading, and it is to be expected that no natural turn transition point will be displayed for the next few minutes. Thus, if repair initiation is to be contextually relevant, it has to be done in connection with the trouble source. Preference organization of repair is thus contextually negotiated, and in cases like this, where it is projected through the activity type (reading pre-written formulations) that the trouble-turn speaker will not initiate self-correction, others can either opt to delay repair until reading is completed, or to initiate repair in a structurally dispreferred place. Schegloff et al (1977:381) also note that an example of more frequent occurrence of other-repair is adult-child interaction, where socialization processes override the preference for self-correction in interactions where the trouble source speaker cannot be expected to initiate self-repair. In this case, the classroom interaction is also an arena of socialization, into academic practices.

During the duration of laughter and Dr. A’s loud repair elaboration, Caroline rapidly turns her gaze up from her paper and toward the repair initiator, and immediately averts gaze again. During Dr. A’s “[THAT’S A SURVEY EXPERIMENTAL WORD <thatiz like Sayin> .hh THAT IS (  ) “, Caroline moves from a flustered facial expression to smiling with gaze averted, and finally to joining the laughter, still looking down at the paper in front of her. The moment of embarrassment here is located immediately after the other-initiated repair. Caroline appears unsure as to what to orient to, and
within seconds, she looks up and down, looks up again, offers a smile, which is observable as a realization of the gaffe, and then averts her gaze down to her paper again while blushing and laughing. Co-participants have already oriented to the repair as occasioned by a gaffe, but for Caroline, it takes a little longer to move from the activity-at-hand of reading to analyzing the repair turn and its occasioning. As she displays acknowledgement of the repair/gaffe, she also displays willing participation in the laughing response to it.

As with Lin’s gaffe in (13) above, the gaffe occasions joking about it by an overhearer. Will’s jokingly exaggerated display of horror at the severity of Caroline’s discursive gaffe, initiated in line 10 during laughter and completed in line 12 (MY GOD Caroline you say SUBJECTS ( ) further establishes the treatment of the gaffe as laughable. Laughter continues, and Caroline is still laughing, but also blushing visibly. Caroline briefly meets Will’s gaze, and turns back down to her papers, and keeps her gaze down all the way up to line 19.

The embarrassment sequence is then taken forward by Dr. A, the repair initiator in line 14: “I’M SO:RRY you didn’t KNOW that (1.1) so willyou- change it to participants“. Dr. A smilingly apologizes for the abrupt repair initiation and can be seen as treating the outcome of the repair as ‘out-of-proportion’ in relation to the gaffe (i.e. the loud laughter and joking). Dr. A thus mitigates the embarrassment-eliciting turn(s), and makes it known that Caroline’s gaffe was not severe, as she was not expected to know the difference between the two methodological discourses, and she also requests what she wants instead (willyou- change it to participants). Caroline acknowledges Dr. A’s turn (o(hh) kay), still laughing with gaze down.

In line 19, Caroline seems able to re-orient to the topic again. She produces a justification for the gaffe. Dr. A acknowledges the explanation line 21 and first part of the turn in lines 25, and jokingly produces a justification of the repair in her next turn (25-26). In line 27, the sequence is closed by a requesting addressed to Caroline to proceed with the reading.

6.4.4.4 Repair initiation and embarrassment – comments on observations

As we saw in excerpt (14), other-initiation of repair without waiting for self-correction was made relevant by the activity-at-hand; reading as opposed to talking. When interrupted by such other-localization of trouble source, Caroline was ‘flustered’ and did not initially recognize what occasioned the repair initiation. In a group of fifteen participants, and while being focused on the task-at-hand, such other-repair is bound to occasion embarrassment. This is not
to say that embarrassment in (14) was any more intense than those in (12) and (13), but it was occasioned by the corrective action of some one else than the speaker of the trouble turn.

Displays of embarrassment are carefully fitted to the repair initiation sequence in the fragments examined. In cases of self-initiation, embarrassment is displayed immediately following the display of repair initiation. In the case of other-initiated repair, it can be hypothesized that embarrassment is displayed as soon as the occasioning of the repair initiation has been processed/recognized by trouble turn speaker. Consequently, embarrassment in all cases of repair is displayed when the trouble turn speaker realizes the gaffe.

Furthermore, there are contextual cues as to whether a gaffe is established as a ‘laughable’ or not. In these three examples, laughter by trouble turn speaker does not occasion group laughter, as in (12). Instead, Jenna’s apology + laughter in (12) are treated as troubles-resistant, and consequently the laughter is not reciprocated. In (13) and (14), the speaker making the gaffe does not invite laughter with laugh particles, but instead, others start laughing, and the ‘gaffe’ speaker joins the laughter at a later point when others have made clear what was laughable. Glenn’s (2003:119) examples of cases of laughing at someone include laughter following an error or misuse of a word. In these cases, the gaffes in (13) and (14) may be considered more laughable than Jenna’s since the trouble turn speakers themselves do not self-repair as actively as Jenna does. Jenna immediately and rapidly initiates repair within the trouble source turn (>I mean not Korean<) and laughs herself, and there is less of a call for laughing at the gaffe. Lin stalls the initiation of a clear-cut repair initiation: found out like (. . .) you know mo::re (. . .) °I forgot it wasuh-”° which leaves a space for anticipatory completion of Lin’s incomplete turn. Similarly, Caroline has not displayed repair at all, and does not realize the gaffe until it is pointed out by Dr. A. Consequently, it seems as if a clear self-repair + possible laughter does not make a gaffe as laughable for co-participants, whereas incomplete repair or no repair occasions the type of laughing at-laughter that Glenn (2003) describes.

By displaying active involvement in the laughing at the laughable, the embarrassed participant also acknowledges and accepts being the ‘butt’ of the gaffe. Both Lin and Caroline take an active part in the outcome of embarrassment by laughing along, and Lin also invites further laughing by smilingly acknowledging the irony of not remembering Lisa’s name in the course of talk about their new-found closeness. All three examples show embarrassed participants giving in to the momentary embarrassment after a
brief moment of orientation difficulties as displayed in gaze aversion, stalling, smiling, blushing etc. While Jenna’s abandonment of the trouble source and repair initiatives for a safer reformulation helps her re-orient to the task-at-hand, Lin re-orients through the joking and subsequently by Will’s ‘rescue’. Caroline re-orients to the task-at-hand after Dr. A’s apology and repair justification, and responds with further justification. Her justification serves similar purposes as po-faced receipts of teases in that it withholds the validity in using ‘subjects’ instead of participants – that it illustrated her learning process as the research process progressed.

Both self-repair and other-initiated repair occasioned embarrassment displays, and as mentioned in earlier analyses in this chapter, embarrassment then serves as a resource for laughter and humor if embarrassment is displayed after the repairable turn has been produced. Below, a final sequence in this chapter will illustrate yet another moment where embarrassment is made relevant to participants in interaction; that of being at the center of attention.

6.4.7 ‘To be observable is to be embarrassable’

Sacks (1972) once noted that for us Westerners, merely being noticeable is intimately related to being vulnerable to embarrassment: “to be observable is to be embarrassable” (Sacks, 1972: 280). Much of the literature on embarrassment includes this particular predicament, i.e. to be singled out for attention and social exposure, as a common antecedent of embarrassment (e.g. Edelmann, 1984; Parrott & Harré, 1996; Keltner & Buswell, 1997; Tangney, 1999).

When the attention of an entire group turns to one individual, that individual is often embarrassed, regardless if the attention is positive (praise, acclaim, compliments) or negative (singling someone out for blame or ridicule) or neutral (just plain undesired exposure). For example, it is common with displays and experiences of embarrassment when being at the center of attention during a chorus of ‘Happy Birthday’ (Tangney, 1999:554). The size of the interacting group or the audience also plays a role (Bradford & Petronio, 1998:102), and embarrassment is likely to be more intensely experienced in larger groups than in, for example, dyads. However, just because embarrassment is perhaps experienced more strongly does not automatically mean that it is displayed accordingly.

The following excerpt illustrates the type of ‘social exposure’ embarrassment described in the literature. The class has just been out for a coffee break, and participants are still getting their papers in order and chatting
amongst each other while having snacks. Dr. A’s announcement in lines 1-2 becomes the first action of mutual orientation after the break:

(15) “Just got engaged”

[OG 3:2]

1 Dr. A: and I wanna (. ) say (. ) congratulations to @129 Li:sa
2 @130 becuz she JUST GOT ENGAGED
3 (group) @131 WOOOOOOOOh
4 (group) XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX (8.2)@132
5 Dr. A: and she told me not to say=
6 =#### | (# @133
7 ?          [ (inaudible comment)]
8 Dr. A: no not re:ally she wz- (. ) she didn’t want to say
9 herself so
10 Will: Li:sa say something ((claps hands))
11 @134
12 Brandee: that’s so :gre:at @135
13 (0.7)
14 Annie: I didn’t even know you had a boyfriend @136
15 Will: huh: @137
16 Lisa: @138
17 Jenna: AN’ I’M CHANGING MY NAME DAMNIT
18 ? yeah
19 ? ( ) "seven years"
20 Annie: SEVen YE:ARS;
21 Lisa: ((moves lips ’six’))
22 Annie: @139 WHAT the heck >have you been< do:in
23 Lisa: (){shows six fingers, mimes ’six’})
24 (0.5)
25 Lisa: *six years*
26 Dr. A: six years: (0.5) ((knocks table as a fanfare ))

129 moves both hands toward Lisa, palms up
130 onset of very high pitched voice
131 several people cheer at the same time, a high pitched simultaneous “wo::::”
132 loud applause
133 sounds like WA::H-hah-hah-hah
134 Lisa turns gaze toward Will and smiles but does not respond
135 high pitch
136 high pitch
137 disbelief’ response directed at Annie’s line 14 turn
138 nods toward Annie
139 high pitch
In terms of structural organization, what participants are achieving above is a expanded sequence for news delivery (c.f. Maynard, 1997). The “and I wanna say () congratulations to Li:sa” in Dr. A’s announcement turn projects that ‘good’ news is underway, which is also produced in an excited high-pitched tone of voice. The actual news announcement; that Lisa just got engaged, follows within the same turn.

Lisa’s response to the announcement is strictly non-vocal, as I will demonstrate in a separate excerpt below, but nevertheless, Lisa is participating in the news delivery by producing an ‘embarrassed’ response. The group, on the other hand, displays the valence of the good news with a high-pitched “WOOOOOOh” and a subsequent round of applause in the slot for news receipt display. Dr. A then elaborates on the news telling (and she told me not to sa:::y) to which the group responds with open laughter (line 6). In response to the loud laughter, Dr. A ‘annuls’ her joking turn to mark its non-seriousness (c.f. Schegloff, 2001 on joke followed by serious ‘no’): “no not re:ally she wz- (. ) she didn’t want to say herself so”. Will’s turn, line 10, directly addresses Lisa “Li:sa say something”, accompanied by hand claps.

Lisa herself displays resistance to the attention and only smiles back at Will without accepting his request to comment on her engagement. As we can see in lines 12 and 14, co-participants are assessing the news (“that’s so gre:at”, “I didn’t even know you had a boy:friend”) and Lisa still only smiles while various assessments and requests for elaboration are being ‘fired at her’.

In line 16, one of the other students seated close to Annie quietly volunteers the information °( ) seven years° in response to Annie’s line 14 “I didn’t even know you had a boy:friend”, to which Annie responds with a rising intonation repetition of the information SEVen YE:ARS!. Note that Lisa has not produced any talk at all until line 25, where she mimes “six years” to Annie to correct the inaccurate description of the length of her relationship described as “seven years”. She still displays reluctance to speak up and perhaps risk having to elaborate further on her engagement and relationship. Annie does not display that she read Lisa’s lips but continues to display disbelief: WHATthe heck >have you been< do:in. Lisa simultaneously attempts again to get her correction across without speaking, and shows six fingers while miming ‘six’. In line 25, she displays further uncertainty about Annie’s assimilation of the correct number of years and
quietly utters “six years” toward Annie. Next, Dr. A’s “six years” in falling intonation ‘confirms by repeating’ what has been already said in the prior turn which does the work of confirming information that had been inexplicitly conveyed in prior talk (Schegloff, 1996). Dr. A also rhythmically knocks her knuckles against the table in a seven-beat fanfare, and closes the news delivery sequence with an assessment (that’s great) and topic shift display (okay).

Up to line 25, Lisa has only participated with gestures, facial cues, and smiling. I want to pay some extra attention to Lisa’s initial non-vocal response to the announcement that was not detailed in the transcript above.

1 Dr. A: and [I wanna () say(().) congratulations to[Li:sa
Lisa [gaze at Dr. A [rolls eyes
2 Dr. A: (becuz she JUST GOT ENGA::GED
Lisa [smiles with mouth closed, averts gaze from Dr. A
3 (group) WOOOOOOOOOH
Lisa ((smiles throughout))
4 (group) XXXXX[XXXXXXXXXXXXXX][XXXXXXXXXX (8.2)
Lisa [one laugh [shoulders pull up, chuckles=
5 Dr. A: and she told me not to sa:::y=
Lisa =and averts gaze ‘shyly’
6 (group) ={# ## ## #
Lisa [drops jaw and laughs but turns gaze down

We can recognize embarrassment already in line 1 when Dr. A turns her torso toward Lisa, makes a pointing gesture with both hands, and pronounces Lisa’s name. Lisa’s gaze has been set on Dr. A during the first part of the announcement, and about a tenth of a second following the attention-focusing (name and gesture), Lisa averts her gaze from Dr. A and rolls her eyes to the ceiling while smiling with her mouth closed. Lisa then continues to only respond to each new news assessment with smiling or gestures, but the sequential placement of all these gestures (e.g. the eye rolling, the gaze aversion, the controlled smile in lines 1-2 above, her smiling response to Will’s request, and her miming and gestural information repair) shows that she is not a passive recipient of the interaction about her, and that she displays involvement with each turn even though she remains silent. Lisa also displays an unwillingness to talk for as long as possible, until it is clear that her attempts at non-vocal repair have failed.
The sequential environment for the occasioning of embarrassment here is the sudden mutual orientation toward Dr. A’s announcement and the subsequent attention focus on Lisa herself. The embarrassment elicitor is, in this case, an enthusiastically prefaced good news announcement which singles out Lisa for the attention of all fifteen participants, and that also leads to a series of news receipt displays and news assessments from co-interactants. Embarrassment displays are, for example, Lisa’s wandering gaze and controlled smiling, her resistance to speak up and to elaborate on the news announcement. What has not been established yet is what embarrassment does in this sequence. I offer some thoughts on the actions performed with embarrassment participation next.

The first question to ask is whether the displays of embarrassment are elicited solely because Lisa is “observable” (Sacks, 1972:281) or “singled out even if it is in a self-enhancing way, as the recipient of honor and praise” (Parrott & Harré, 1996:40). The second question concerns the interpretation of Lisa’s silence. Previous literature has, as mentioned above, suggested that mere social exposure and attention is a common predicament for embarrassment. Lisa herself commented in her interview on the announcement occasion in line with the social exposure account of embarrassment:

[Interview 3, “Lisa”]

The thing that makes me uncomfortable is uncomfortable when all the attention is turned towards me. I think in both my classes my professors announced that I got engaged or something and then I was kind of “oh everybody’s looking at me!” I don’t like when people turn all their attention to me so I think when I’m making comments in class about other people’s papers for example in Dr A’s class I think that although it’s coming out of my mouth the attention is on them so even if I’m making a comment it’s about their work and so you know it’s coming from my mouth but the attention is on them so that doesn’t bother me but when people turn all their attention to me like “I have an announcement to make – Lisa got engaged!” and then I was like “Oh God”.

The question I asked Lisa was whether there had been occasions in the two seminars when she had felt uncomfortable in class, and she chose the engagement announcement occasion as the primary one. She twice emphasizes

140C.f. pictures of smile control during embarrassment in Keltner & Buswell (1997:255)
141 It is, of course, debatable whether being congratulated to an engagement is the same as being praised for an accomplishment or performance; however, in the North American context, “getting engaged” as a woman is culturally important, as we can see in the enthusiastic responses to the news, which make the event similar to praise for a victory or other types of accomplishments.
that she feels uncomfortable when “people turn all their attention to” her as the source of her discomfort.

However, there is also a structural component to all this. In her work on compliments, Pomerantz (1978a) showed that recipients of praise had to manage two competing constraints; that of the preference for agreement with a prior speaker’s assessment, and that of avoiding self-praise. In responding to compliments, recipients often selected a ‘mid-way’; for example, thanking the complimenter, which allowed them to avoid self-praise and disagreement. Emmison (1987) saw a similar pattern with congratulations of winners followed by praise at sporting events; recipients thanked the congratulator and seemed to prefer downgrading the praise or reassign the credit for their praise.

At this point, we do not know enough about the preference organization of congratulation sequences and receipt; however, the combined good news announcement and congratulation has some similarities with compliments. For example, by formulating the announcement with a prefacing of congratulation and producing the turn in high pitch, smile voice and emphasis on the news item, Dr. A is projecting something about next actions. Participants can analyze Dr. A’s positive announcement during its production and anticipate what type of response is the next appropriate action. What is projected is good-news receipt of acknowledgement, praise, appreciation, etc., and not responding at all would have been noted as a dispreferred receipt so such a happily announced news item. The group indeed responds with positive news receipt and news assessments, but Lisa opts to smile and avert her gaze, through which she displays resistance of further elaboration. She could have responded with turns like “yeah, isn’t it great?” or “thank you, I’m so happy” or simply elaborated on the news. But she opts to display some distancing to the shower of applause, ‘wooo’s, assessments and requests for confirmation/elaboration throughout the sequence. Further research needs to establish whether there is an underlying preference organization for downplaying happiness and marking resistance for elaboration when personal news are itemized in multi-party interaction. That is, whether there actually is a preference for displays of coyness and mild embarrassment when singled out for congratulations. Although Goffman (1967) and others have suggested that embarrassment is almost guaranteed to destroy one’s conduct in face-to-face interaction and that an embarrassed participant uses various remedial strategies to avoid displaying embarrassment and reconfirm a threatened social identity, it is possible that embarrassment in certain contexts is the appropriate response.
Leaving this preliminary observation as an exploratory suggestion about embarrassment and preference organization, it can be concluded that yet another way of managing embarrassment in social interaction has been viewed. Lisa displayed participation in the news delivery sequence, but only non-vocally, and thus displayed resistance to the overwhelmingly enthusiastic responses and assessments. Embarrassment displays, in this sequence, functioned to systematically resist the attention of others and to tone down her participation with whispering, gestures, smiling, and gaze aversion. These actions also left it up to the more active participants to assess and close the news delivery sequence themselves. Possibly, Lisa’s actions also do the work of preferred displays when singled out for positive attention of others.

### 6.5 Negotiating embarrassment - discussion

As seen from the analyses above, an episode of embarrassment in interaction is precisely organized across a number of actions produced and utilized as resources by participants. By closely examining sequences of naturally occurring interaction, it was possible to observe how embarrassment is lodged within the sequential organization of interaction; within, between, and across turns, and in slots relevant for displaying it. The observations concern the sequential environment for embarrassment, embarrassment elicitors, embarrassment displays, treatment of embarrassment displays, and outcomes of the moment of embarrassment. Some important findings will be summarized below.

#### 6.5.1 Embarrassment and its local contexts in talk-in-interaction

Gross and Stone (1964) once noted that embarrassment can occur when some central assumption in a transaction has been *unexpectedly* and unqualifiedly discredited for one or several participants. In the cases of teasing, and particularly in Jillian’s case, we saw that embarrassment was occasioned in a sequential environment where prior talk had projected a certain adjacency pair structure. In designing her turn to fit the local context, there is an expectancy of a response designed in a particular way. When a co-participant instead treats the sequence of tellings as ‘exaggerated’ and opts to produce a *tease*, embarrassment is a fact. Momentary orientation difficulties are displayed in dysfluent talk and gaze aversion, and in re-orienting toward an object, Jillian is able to move out of the troubling exchange. Embarrassment is collaboratively built through
participants’ treatment of actions in the context, through participants’ mutual orientation to the eliciting turn and the displays of embarrassment. Similarly, embarrassment is closed down collaboratively through finely coordinated gaze aversion and displayed orientations to new matters-at-hand. For example, Dr. B’s hand movement and gaze shift during Jillian’s po-faced justification display to observers that the interaction is moving forward. By responding to these contextual cues with displays of new mutual orientation (gaze turns away from Jillian to Dr. B, smiles fade), co-participants also work to close down the moment of embarrassment.

Teasing activities seem closely related with embarrassment or threats thereof. However, as we saw in (7), Dana resisted embarrassment by opting to ignore the teasing tone and treating the tease as a serious question. An immediate po-faced receipt can thus serve to avert embarrassment, and to throw the ball back in the instigator’s court. The instigator, then, is accountable for the tease that backfired and can opt to display further evidence that the tease was a non-serious proposition that was not meant to be responded to seriously, as was the case with Dana and Leila. Since Dana only minimally acknowledged the tease in a very brief smile tendency, the tease did not successfully generate mild strategic embarrassment. If a po-faced response is not produced immediately following the tease, as in Jillian’s case, a slot for embarrassment opens between the tease and the subsequent serious elaboration. If a po-faced response is immediate, the teasing recipient may nevertheless produce a justification of the teasing-eliciting turn, which can also be regarded as extended interactional work of keeping successfully averted embarrassment at bay. The analyses presented in this chapter thus both confirm and extend Drew’s (1987) work on po-faced receipt of teasing.

Embarrassment-resistance was also demonstrated in social management of delicate matters-at-hand, such as sex, sexuality, and taboo words. Within-speech laughter serves to display recognition of the delicate nature of talk, and to display some psychological distance to the topic. As demonstrated, the topic in itself does not necessarily have to be problematic, but it is when within-speech laugh particles are deployed that particularly delicate aspects are being dealt with. This was clear in Lisa’s case in (8), where non-reciprocated laughter occurred when sexual activity more explicitly was brought to the surface. Sexual activity was also indirectly referenced with “it”, which also worked to establish the delicate nature of her talk. We also saw that freely produced talk on the topic of sex and sexual activity was more problematic than talk built upon pre-
written text. Collaboratively built jokes in delicate topics also serve an embarrassment-resistant function.

Delicate topics can also be referenced by opting to only indicate them, as we saw in Will’s attempt to communicate a taboo word with partial production accompanied by head movements and gestures. The attempt is however treated as a conversational transgression, and analyzing the trouble source presented difficulties for recipients. A pause as long as 4.3 seconds in interaction is difficult to manage and the fact that participants momentarily lack a mutual focus of orientation is in itself generative of embarrassment (c.f. Heath, 1988), and a joking sequence wards off the discomfort for participants after an awkward interaction.

A rare and interesting way of dealing with a turn-at-talk that is designed as a pun on a taboo topic directed toward one specific interactant is topicalization. Ally pre-empts potential displays of ‘real’ embarrassment by making it the topic of conversation, which then serves as an invitation to laugh and joke about it. This strategy is contextually sensitive in that potential embarrassment is topicalized in the slot where the joke could be responded to. By being placed there instead of after joking and laughter has already been deployed by others, Ally successfully turns the laughing at her to laughing with her (Glenn, 2003).

Repair organization is, perhaps not surprisingly, another sequential context for embarrassment. Although there is a preference for self-correction, both types of repair occasioned embarrassment, whether by others or by the trouble turn speaker. Displays of embarrassment after the production of repairables show awareness of social norms, and in particular, of local interactional norms. Other-repair is not initiated until the speaker has clearly indicated a failure to self-repair (unless other constraints operate, such as reading a text), and displays of embarrassment are locally warranted after the display of such failures. When the trouble turn speaker displays embarrassment through laughing first at the gaffe, speakers do not reciprocate, but treat the laughter as embarrassment-resistant. When the trouble turn speaker does not laugh first but instead waits for and accepts other-initiated repair, the ‘gaffe’ can be established as appropriately laughable. Others may also close a sequence of laughing at someone’s gaffe by initiating a new orientation, and by virtue of doing so, work to rescue the butt of the joking. Parallels can also be drawn with Garfinkel’s (1967) studies, where recipients called attention to breaches of interactional norms, and also often responded with affect to these breaches.
Finally, excessive social exposure in a large group may generate a shyness-like embarrassment display. This type of embarrassment elicitor does not warrant any justification from the embarrasssee since the source of the embarrassment is not an action by the embarrassed individual herself. Instead, the embarrassment is occasioned by the sudden attention turned toward one interactant. On such occasions, embarrassment is resisted by restricted participation in the activity. By not actively providing additional talk, the embarrassed participant prevents additional embarrassment. Unwillingness to elaborate seems to be linked to positive embarrassment, that is, as a response to excessive congratulatory actions, applause and complimenting. Displaying resistance may be preferred to more active involvement, which could be treated as boastful.

6.5.2 Embarrassment elicitors

As we have seen, embarrassment is successively built through prior talk. However, the directly eliciting turns showed both differences and similarities in the actions they performed. Sequentially unprojected actions, such as teasing and abrupt other-repair, elicit embarrassment or embarrassment resistance. Difficulties in analyzing immediately prior turns also generate embarrassing interactional predicaments, as displayed in long pauses before trouble turn is repaired. Other embarrassment elicitors are direct talk about culturally delicate matters, repair initiations after gaffes, and sudden and excessive attention and praise. From examining only the present corpus, embarrassment elicitors emerged as anchored in the immediate context of ongoing talk, and future research will no doubt find many additional types of embarrassment elicitors in the social organization of talk.

6.5.3 Embarrassment displays and management

Embarrassment is most evidently displayed and oriented to in timely gaze aversion exactly in the slot where embarrassment is made relevant. Other displays were blushing, smiling, unreciprocated laughter, topicalization, face hiding, rapid or quiet talk, indirect referencing, and dysfluencies in talk, gaze and actions. Embarrassment was managed by non-speaking co-participants through timely gaze aversion, smiling exchanges not visible to embarrasssee, restricted vocal participation, po-faced responses, elaborations and
justifications, and searching for new orientations, for example, an object or a
new course of action. Others than the embarrassee usually are responsible for
bringing embarrassment to a close.

6.5.4 Interactional work accomplished by embarrassment

Embarrassment does not just disrupt the smooth flow of interaction, but also
serves to accomplish certain interactional goals. Examples of interpersonal
work accomplished by the relevance of embarrassment were sequences of
heightened involvement, joking and lightheartedness, to make participants
aware of a temporary lack of mutual activity to orient to, and to display
awareness of and sensitivity to local, cultural, and social norms. Embarrassment
serves to apologize for gaffes, to playfully embarrass a co-participant, to turn
laughing at to laughing with an interactant and vice versa, and to mark the
delicacy of matters-at-hand. In essence, embarrassment is not a social emotion
only in the sense of emerging within face-to-face interaction, but also, as an
action-in-interaction, in accomplishing various social and interpersonal goals.

6.5.5 Concluding comments

This initial effort to study embarrassment as a situated practice showed that
embarrassment does not erupt ‘anywhere’ in the interaction, but as a carefully
fitted interactional contribution designed to fit the sequencing of turns of
conversation. The orderly and coordinated conduct of participants in sequences
where embarrassment is made relevant makes it problematic to view
embarrassment experience solely from the perspective of the embarrassed
actor, as has been the case with much of the research on embarrassment. In an
interview, for example, participants could not possibly describe all the fine-
grained organization of an embarrassing moment in such detail as examination
of transcripts can. The fine coordination of gaze and gaze aversion, for
example, functions to locate to co-participants the embarrassment-eliciting
actions, and displays of embarrassment are actually projected and preferred in
certain contexts.

Much of the literature on embarrassment has mentioned embarrassment
causes that were also observed in the illustrations in this chapter, for example,
social exposure and gaffes. But instead of conceiving of these causes in terms
of the individual’s self-image being discredited, the account here focused on the
practices in interaction by which embarrassment is elicited or avoided. Conversation analytic work on embarrassment within a situated activity can contribute greatly to literature by focusing on the actual behavior of participants and how these actions are systematically designed according to immediately preceding actions, how the embarrassed participant deals with the immediate, often contradictory constraints of the situation while attempting to react proactively and predict subsequent lines of action.

Returning to Gross and Stone’s (1964) encouragement quoted at the beginning of this chapter, their call to examine the ‘ruins’ left by embarrassment proved successful from a conversation analytic vantage point. By examining social structures enacted in the architecture of conversational interaction, however, we did not find ‘ruins’ of them, but instead, orderly conduct. Participants deal with disruptions caused by embarrassment by re-orienting to the changed local context according to other orderly principles.

The complexity and transient nature of the social emotions calls for several approaches in research, and the richness of data from naturally occurring situations can provide a space not just for understanding the sociolinguistic features of interaction and emotion, but for a more complete picture of how we ‘do’ emotion using a wide range of interactional resources. Micro-analyses of actual conduct can also prevent far too general and abstract theorizations from glossing over the multifaceted and rich details of human behavior and experience by allowing us to repeatedly inspect and reconsider the prevailing emotion conceptualizations, as participants manage and negotiate emotions moment-by-moment, turn-by-turn, and action-by-action.
Chapter 7

7. Pursuing ‘Enjoyment’: Opportunities and Methods for Achieving Lighthearted Moments

7.1 Introduction

We tend to think of conversational joking as the main elicitor of positive feelings in interaction, and it is also often assumed that laughter is generally present when positive everyday emotions run high. However, there are many ways in which positive emotions are pursued and maintained in social interaction. In this chapter, an assortment of such methods will be described. In order to give as broad a picture as possible of how ‘enjoyment’ is situated within the practices of academic interaction, the themes presented in this chapter deal with positive emotions on several different dimensions of interactional practices. The analyses cover types of environments that recurrently make opportunities for shared enjoyment available, as well as particular actions located in these contexts.

Although the scope for this chapter is less restricted to one particular type of emotion compared to chapter 6, phenomena described have been selected out of a pool of other types, and there will be many issues concerning ‘joy’ and ‘enjoyment’ that will be excluded from the discussion. I have purposefully not included, for example, episodes where a joke told by one person occasions group laughter but does not lead to any further activities related to the joke production. I have also not focused on categorizing different types of joking activities, since it is not the structural composition of a particular joke that is of interest here. Furthermore, as Norrick (2003:1338) has argued, categorizing different types of humor in talk-in-interaction is not analytically productive since different forms of jokes, anecdotes, wordplay and irony fade into each other in the recipient-designed context of conversational interaction. Rather, the focus lies in participants’ orientations to a prior turn as humorous or non-humorous, and in a first turn’s projective qualities in terms of inviting a particular type of affiliation from recipients.
However, before moving on to data, a brief conceptual discussion of the type of positive emotions analyzed in this chapter is in place. The next section deals with some definitional aspects of analyzing positive affect in social interaction.

7.2 ‘Enjoyment’ as a collaborative achievement

Interestingly, ‘positive’ social emotions such as joy, happiness, elation and exhilaration have received much less attention in the emotion literature than has the “dark side” of emotions (Andersen & Guerrero, 1998:23). There has been considerable debate concerning, for example, the classification of ‘happiness’ as an emotion (Averill & More, 1992), since it is difficult to study happiness in terms of momentary and sudden experiences, as is the case for other basic emotions such as anger or shame. Instead, happiness seems to be “a way we evaluate life as a whole” (1992:617), and although we can experience moments of happiness, these are connected to global systems of values and general life satisfaction. Furthermore, there are few distinct behavioral characteristics of ‘happiness’ – laughter, for example, is not a very reliable indicator of any positive affect state, since laughter is also frequently found in other emotional contexts, for example, anxiety, derision (Giles & Oxford, 1970), embarrassment (Edelmann, 1994), and troubles-resistance (Jefferson, 1984a). In terms of the universality of positive affect states, it is usually only joy that is included in lists of so-called ‘basic’ emotions (c.f. chapter 3). Furthermore, extensive research on, for example, vocal cues of emotional states has exclusively focused on joy/elation, whereas the more “peaceful” forms such as enjoyment and happiness have been left unstudied (Kappas, Hess & Scherer, 1991).

As mentioned in chapter 3, there are many different models of classification for basic emotions, and not all of them include joy (Ortony & Turner, 1990). Others have included a range of exemplars of a particular prototype emotion, and the different exemplar dimensions share some core features with the prototype, for example, joy. Classification of emotions as ‘basic’ or not lies outside the scope of the present work; however, this illustration of the dimensions of the “joy family” gives an idea of the range of feeling states that are related to the core of joy; both in psychological research and in our everyday language (Guerrero, Andersen & Trost, 1998:20):
As we can see, joy is viewed to be associated with stronger affective states such as exhilaration as well as more “peaceful” dimensions like amusement and contentment. However, in the psychological literature, this type of classification primarily pertains to individual affect states. Similarly, as noted in chapter 3, much of the research on emotions in social interaction has concerned the individual’s experience of joy in social interaction, rather than the collaborative achievement of moments where individual joy is shared with others.

Conversely, the type of positive affect that the present chapter deals with is characterized by its social nature. It is positive affect that is made relevant and available to the interaction, that invites participation, and that is shared. The label I have selected for the shared positive feelings participants display and orient to is enjoyment. The reason behind this term was to have a conceptual proximity to one of the so-called basic emotions, namely joy, but still avoiding the individual psychological connotations of the basic emotions. Enjoyment here refers to the mutual sharing of and participation in moments where individuals may be experiencing ‘joy’, ‘elation’, ‘exhilaration’ and ‘excitement, which in turn is made available to interactants as opportunities for mutual enjoyment. In essence, enjoyment is about positive emotions and actions being made interactionally relevant in the pursuit of a lighthearted atmosphere. As usual, classification of participants ‘inner’ emotional states are avoided. Rather, the analyses concern the description of positive emotions as observable participant orientations in ongoing talk-in-interaction. Although laughter is a
recurrent feature of these moments, other indicators, such as vocal pitch, volume, prosody, smiling, and turn construction are equally relevant.

Questions guiding the analyses concern the understanding of how mutual enjoyment is actively pursued in interaction, and of the social actions that are utilized to accomplish moments of exhilaration, excitement, playfulness, heightened involvement and amusement that together contribute to shared enjoyment. Matters such as how participants manage shifts between serious and non-serious matters, how problematic issues are converted into amusement, and how participants both display and dramatize emotional involvement are discussed.

7.3 The social organization of ‘enjoyment’ - findings

In the course of analyzing data, a wide variety of environments in which positive affect is made an interactional concern were identified. Eight themes related to the active pursuit of mutual enjoyment were selected for detailed examination. The presentation of these themes will be as follows.

In the first part of this section, five separate action types that invite mutual enjoyment are examined: the deployment of reported speech/action dramatizations (7.3.1), the invoking of features of context in activity-transitional environments (7.3.2), the use of ‘mock emotions’ (7.3.3), code-switching (7.3.4), and finally, orientation to ‘redundant’ contributions (7.3.5). In the second part, activities that are collaboratively occasioned, managed and pursued are examined: the joint management of turn-taking problems (7.3.6), the drawing of mundane parallels to academic topics (7.3.7), and finally, collaborative telling, reporting and joke-building.

7.3.1 Constructing laughables through hypothetical talk dramatizations

7.3.1.1 Reported speech in interaction

A very frequent feature of talk-in-interaction is reported speech in which a speaker presumably ‘quotes’ what the speaker or someone else has said in a past conversation. Reporting what someone else has said by temporarily shifting to speaking with another person’s voice is also one of the more frequent and recurrent shifts in footing, or participant role, in conversation (Goffman, 1981; Levinson, 1988). In recent years, the interactional work of reported speech as examined in its local conversational context has demonstrated that this feature
can be contextually designed to simultaneously account for and implicitly assess the talk being reconstructed (e.g. Günthner, 1997; Couper-Kuhlen, 1999; Holt, 1996, 2000; Wooffitt, 2000). Prosody and intonation cues play a major role in designing reported speech for particular interactional purposes, for example, in constructing a dramatic mood in the course of telling a story or for parodizing the original speaker and thus implicitly marking a personal standpoint toward the speech that is reconstructed (Günthner, 1997; Holt, 2000; Müller, 1992). In direct reported speech, the teller lends his or her voice to the speaker being quoted, whereas in indirect reported speech, constructions like “she said that…” are used.

While reporting the talk of someone else, speakers often simultaneously offer implicit assessments and personal positioning toward the reported speech (Buttny, 1997). Furthermore, direct reported speech has been found to frequently occur in the context of making a complaint (Günthner, 1997; Holt, 2000), in which the reported speech is often prefaced by some device that indicates that a negative telling is underway. The explicit assessment of the complainable matter, however, is usually performed by the telling recipient in the next turn, such as this example from Holt (2000:446):

14 D: no (.) so I went over to him and I said er you
15 know last night after Richard’s gym I says I've
16 → just got a bill here for fifty quid he says ↑Oh
17 → I'm sorry it's nought to do with me.
18 K: → Oh:: the ↑rat
19 D: → [I know ↑O:ch I was absolutely furious
20 K: can’t you cancel it?
21 D: well I’ve told her now what can I do I’ve told
22 her you know you’re having your party here.

The complainable matter, that is, that D had received an unexpectedly high bill for renting a hall for her daughter’s birthday party, had been prefaced earlier in the conversation, and the talk of the person D approached about the invoice is reconstructed in lines 16-17. K, the recipient, then assesses the reported talk (Oh:: the rat), and D produces a second agreeing assessment. The assessment in line 18 has been projected as the appropriate type of reply earlier in D’s introduction of her telling as a complaint. The teller implies his or her own assessment of the complainable matter but does not frequently assess it
explicitly – instead, recipients can analyze the gravity of the complainable matter and assess it for him/herself.

Similarly, reported speech is found in contexts where an amusing incident is recounted. Direct reported speech is often used as the punch line in the telling of amusing stories (Bauman, 1986), and prosodic features of the reported talk, as well as embedded laughter invitations work to display to recipients what is laughable without specifically saying why or assessing the story punch line (Holt, 2000:447). The teller can laugh during the production of reported talk or in turn final position, or use prosody to show the recipient where the amusing part of the telling is located. The recipient can then opt to laugh first, or laugh with the telling, or decline the invitation to laugh. There are many examples of reported speech at the end of amusing tellings or stories, but since that has been thoroughly described in the literature, I will instead focus this section on a slightly different type of reported speech that is recurrently found in the context of laughter, smiling, and heightened participation.

In this section, I distinguish between what can be assumed to be designed as actually quoting past talk, and what is not designed to quote an actual person or conversation, but rather is designed to quote a hypothetical piece of talk or action of self or others. I refer to the first type as reported speech (direct or indirect reported speech), as described above, and to the second as talk dramatizations (hypothetical talk, inner speech/thoughts, or enactments of possible talk). This distinction has to be inferred from the conversational context; however, talk dramatizations are built on reported speech principles in that the speaker temporarily lends his or her voice to another, albeit hypothetical, speaker.

Talk dramatizations are a very frequent feature of the talk in my corpus. The high frequency of illustrations of possible utterances can partly be explained by the fact that the six seminars all deal with topics within interpersonal communication. Talk dramatizations are particularly frequent in the three IN seminars where the overall seminar topic is interpersonal communication, and the discussions often concern various types of problematic communication, such as threats, sexual harassment or conflict talk. Providing examples or personal anecdotes related to the topics discussed seems near at hand in this context. The three examples below illustrate the distinctiveness of reported speech and talk dramatizations. Example (a) contains both forms of regular reported speech, that is, direct and indirect reported speech. Example (b) is a borderline case of direct reported speech and hypothetical talk. Finally, example (c) represents a variant of a talk dramatization:
Example (a) above illustrates two examples of reported speech. In line 2, indirect reported speech is initiated as Dr. B reports a conversation with his friend and former student. Dr. B says that his friend “came tuh’m e and said that [...].” By including “that”, Dr. B indicates that he is not adopting the voice of his friend, but reports what this friend has “said”. Conversely, in line 5, Dr. B shifts to adopting the voice of the original speaker, quoted to him by his friend. A student “came to” his friend “holding” an “edited book and asked her”, and then the reported talk follows upon the brief pause phrased as a direct quoting of what the “senior (. ) communication student” had “asked” his friend. Through this construction, Dr. B lends his voice to his friend’s student in reproduction of the original utterance, supposedly as it was reported to him. Prosodically, the reported speech is also reconstructed with a question intonation to display it as a question.

In (b), there are two instances of talk reproduction. First, we have a borderline case of reported speech. The turn is part of a topical episode concerning how men deal with ambiguous messages from women. Prior talk
had argued that women spend a large portion of their conversations with their female friends dwelling upon things that men have said to them and what it could have meant. Lisa’s telling is an argument for the standpoint that men also dwell on past interactions and that they discuss the significance and meaning of certain statements with their friends, and she bases her argument on the fact that she has several male friends who ask her to interpret some statement a woman has made to them. This could be interpreted as reported speech from a specific encounter with one of her male friends; however, Lisa uses “a lot of guy friends who call”, which indicates that her example lies on a more general level than one specific conversation, and also, the reported speech is rather unspecific: “she said this and what does that mean”, with “this” and “that” as unspecific references to what her male friends actually said. In essence, Lisa is offering the gist of this type of scenario.

She then produces the second reproduced talk component: “I’m like I don’t know her I don’t know huh” which is another type of talk dramatization. Since we can infer from her telling that she is lumping a bunch of conversations together and making a general statement about their content, we can also infer that her self-reported talk is not necessarily designed to be heard as an actual reconstruction of her own reply to her friends’ questions in a specific conversation, but rather a prosodically dramatic enactment of her stance toward such questions. In essence, what I treat as direct reported speech has to be marked as a re-telling of an actual past conversation, whereas there are many other types of reported speech that is not designed to depict an actual conversation. These types I refer to as hypothetical talk dramatizations. As we will see in this chapter, reported speech as one comprehensive label does not suffice to account for the different actions that the various types of reported talk projects in ongoing interaction.

The third example, c, illustrates yet another form of talk-dramatization, and here we can tell from the context that the reported speech “God Lisa (. . .) Lisa really screwed up here” is not designed to be reporting actual talk. What Dr. A is illustrating with this turn shape is that “God Lisa (. . .) Lisa really screwed up here” could be one possible inner speech, or self-dialogue reaction to what is currently going on, i.e. giving critical feedback to Lisa about her paper. That is, Dr. A is designing her turn to display a verbalized interpretation in thought “Lisa really screwed up here”, which has not been uttered at all in prior talk. Consequently, the speech depicted here is not designed to be heard as reporting actual talk, but rather reporting a thought or an ‘imaginary’ turn. Dr. A is using
As seen in the examples, talk dramatizations represent imaginary, hypothetical or intra-cognitive speech. This particular type of reported speech has not been covered in the literature on reported speech in interaction, and as will be demonstrated, it can perform a set of particular actions in the pursuit of mutual enjoyment. The different types of reported speech can take many different syntactical forms, but it is through their place in a sequence, through prosodic cues and accompanying actions that the different forms can be distinguished. As an example, Günthner (1997) has shown how reported speech is used to convey the emotional stance of an original speaker. However, since we are dealing with hypothetical talk here, the teller of reported speech does not design the reporting to re-enact the emotional stance of an actual past conversation, but rather, a personal attitude toward what is being constructed, reported speech as joking, or dramatizations of an imagined scenario. In this section, I will demonstrate how talk dramatization in particular is used as a device for eliciting positive feelings, laughter and involvement, and as noted above, in modeling appropriate emotional responses.

7.3.1.2 Generating enjoyment through talk dramatizations

Excerpt 16 below illustrates the first example of talk dramatization, which is of the hypothetical kind. The class discussion concerns hurtful messages in interpersonal relationships. Prior talk has included mentioning of so-called informational messages as being the most hurtful type of message in close relationships, and in line 1, Dr. B asks the students why they think informational messages are more hurtful than others. Note Tracy’s turn in lines 8-10, 13 and 19 as well as Dr. B’s turn in lines 15-16.

(16) “Stupid”

(IN 1:2]
1 Dr. B: (hh)hy:
2 (1.2)
Dana: because you don’t have any way to: (3.0) fix
it or (.o) to (.o) react to (.o) perhaps
I’m not saying that right
Tracy: to dispute it
Dana: ye:ah
Tracy: |h|h|h|h like if someone says you’re ugly what
are you gonna |h|h|h|h you’re like
<oh ye:heh;ah>
Dr. B: >hhhuh< *huh huh huh*
[##### # #]
Tracy: [you got me :the:::-huh hoh hoh @#### HHHH
(2.1)
Dr. B: on the other hand if you say I’m- if someone
is ; stupid it’s like <I am ;no:::t>
Tracy: Huhh huh huh huh huh
Dr. B: yknoh-
Tracy: that’s like the best you can come up with
Will: mmh
Dr. B: yeah n’ no a- ee (;) informational messages are (;)
ut- I mean I think stupid or or ugly would be
considered more an evaluation
Tracy: oh okay

Dana provides a candidate answer to Dr. B’s question, which Tracy clarifies, i.e.
that informational messages are hurtful because they cannot be refuted by the
recipient. In line 8, Tracy provides an illustration of what she interprets as an
informational message: “like if someone says you’re ugly what are
you gonna |h|h|h|h you’re like <oh ye:heh;ah>”. What
Tracy accomplishes is a demonstration of a hypothetical dialogue, which is
hearsay as hypothetical in the use of “if”. Laugh particles are inserted in her
talk, and Tracy herself is smiling at the example.

Now, as we can see, the talk dramatization does not occur in a regular
storytelling sequence, and neither in the context of making a complaint about
some past interaction. The first instance of reported talk, “if someone says
you’re ugly”, can be interpreted as both direct and indirect reported speech.
If there would have been a ‘that’ inserted between ‘says’ and ‘you’re’, and if we

143 smile voice, smiling
144 lifts left hand in a ‘dejected’ gesture
145 gazes around the group

236
had had a case of reported speech where it was made clear that Tracy was referring to an actual conversation, it would have been relevant to determine whether Tracy was doing direct or indirect reported speech. In cases of talk dramatizations, such a distinction is generally redundant since we know that the current speaker is not taking the perspective of an actual original speaker. Instead, Tracy is painting a hypothetical scene with her example, and also displays her analysis of the topic, i.e. informational messages.

However, there is another way of looking at how the reporting gets done. In written registers, the use of quotation marks signals the left and right-hand boundaries of reporting clauses. In conversation, the beginning and end of reported speech is usually marked with changes in prosody/intonation (Klewitz & Couper-Kuhlen, 1999). Tracy’s “if someone says you’re ugly” is not produced with any particular prosodic markers, but is pronounced in a steady and relatively monotonous voice. Compared to the second part of the hypothetical dialogue, where Tracy illustrates the hypothetical response to the personal attack with “you’re like <oh ↑ ye::(heh)↓ ah>” continued with “you got me ↑ the::re huh hoh hoh”, the first hypothetical construction is not prosodically marked as ‘quoting’, whereas the second has the character of actual talk that could have been produced. Laughter is inserted, vowels are lengthened, and the prefacing with “you’re like”46 clearly marks the onset of talk enactment. Consequently, it appears as if the first part of the hypothetical illustration is not prosodically exaggerated, whereas the second, possibly hearable as the punch line of Tricia’s example, is prosodically more distinct from surrounding talk. Although the syntactic structure of the two types of talk dramatization is similar, they function differently. Tracy is pursuing a point with her example, and not until that point has been made (i.e. that it is difficult to dispute an evaluation of one’s appearance as ‘ugly’) does Tracy mark parts of her talk as a real response. Note also that the hypothetical talk is produced more slowly than surrounding talk, which contributes to mark it to recipients as separate from other parts of the turn. By displaying a possible turn completion point in the vowel lengthening of “[ye::(heh)] ah” by also including laugh particles, she also displays an invitation to laugh.

Dr. B catches on and laughs immediately following Tracy’s turn completion, and others join in the laughter (lines 11-12). During the scattered laughing, Tracy continues the talk dramatization with “you got me ↑ the::re huh hoh hoh”, which further illustrates Tracy’s point, i.e. that it is difficult to

46 See, for example, Romaine & Lange (1998) for an extended discussion on the use of “like” in marking the onset of reported speech or thought.
refute a turn that evaluates the recipient as “ugly”. After the laughter has ceased, Dr. B provides a similar example with an almost identical prosodic structure: “on the other hand if you say I’m- if someone is \(\text{stu}p\text{i}d\) it’s like \(<\text{I am }\text{no::t}>\)”, which he has a little trouble producing (indicated in the mid-turn self-repair). The first part signals that a piece of reported talk is about to be produced in “if you say I’m-”, but Dr. B repairs what has been initiated and continues with “if someone is \(\text{stu}p\text{i}d\)”. He also marks the onset of reported speech with the particle like, produces the hypothetical response more slowly than surrounding talk, and uses vowel lengthening and rising intonation on the last lexical item of the illustration. Tracy laughs at the completion of Dr. B’s example, and several other students smile without laughing audibly.

In line 19, Tracy continues with what is hearable as a hypothetical response to Dr. B’s example: “that’s like the best you can come \(\text{up}\) with” which is produced with a smile. There is no laughter in response to this illustration. In line 21, Dr. B orients back to the topic of hurtful messages by first acknowledging Tracy’s hypothetical response. Then, he displays a shift in alignment to prior talk by rejecting the concordance of the prior illustrations in relation to informational messages: “no a- ee (.). informational messages are” and so forth\(^1\). Consequently, even though Dr. B knew all along (at least this can be assumed since he is the instructor on the topic) that Tracy’s example as well as his own did not actually fit under the category of informational messages, he allows Tracy’s example to pass without correcting her, and he also provides a similar example himself before he re-orient to sorting out what an informational message is. Thus, Dr. B actively refrains from closing the lighthearted episode, and also contributes to it, before returning to teaching the graduate students about the different types of messages.

In this example of the relationship between the deployment of talk dramatizations and ‘doing lightheartedness’, the following has been observed:

1. Hypothetical talk that serves as an invitation to laughter is found just before the turn completion point, and is prosodically marked as such by vowel lengthening, slower tempo and rising intonation.
2. Laughter is appropriately deployed at the completion of the prosodically marked turn constructional units.
3. In the course of a serious-minded ‘academic’ discussion, providing illustrations and dramatizations of the topic discussed serves as an opportunity for joint

\(^1\) The use of an agreement token + a disagreement token produced in rapid succession is discussed in Good & Sandlund (2004/forthcoming).
enjoyment while still remaining on the topic. The talk dramatizations serve to temporarily ‘have fun’ and lighten up the serious-minded discussion, but they do not cause any problematic disruptions to the general topic. The dramatizations also, in this particular context, serve to unearth and resolve ambiguities about concepts discussed, as when Tracy’s dramatization presents an opportunity for Dr. B to correct her candidate understanding of the concept discussed.

Example (17) illustrates a similar structure. The IN seminar participants are discussing so-called *equivocal messages* in interpersonal relationships, that is, messages that are unclear and ambiguous. Dr. B’s (lines 1-6) turn is the end of a longer monologue/lecture sequence on equivocal communication. Here, Dr. B explicates the problematic nature of equivocal talk and the fact that we seldom ask producers of ambiguous messages what they mean by them. Jillian (line 7) orients to the central point of Dr. B’s turn, and comments on the content by providing an illustration:

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(17) “What did he mean”

[IN 1:2]
1 Dr. B: and so sometimes if you ask someone a question and  
2 they give you an equivocal response (.) you may  
3 find yourself dwelling (.) on the message (.)  
4 to try to: figure it out (.) cuz for some reason  
5 we often don’t call people point blank on their  
6 messages (0.5) whaddoyou mean by that  
7 Jillian: >huhuhuhuh< .hh (.) it would probably end a lot  
8 of conversation betweenuhm (1.2) between women (.)  
9 → hhHUH (.) ³âºwhat did he mean by that what did  
10 → he [me:an by th(hah)(hah)t  
11 Dr. B: [HUH HUH [HUH HUH  
12 Jillian: [huh huh huh huh I don’t know  
13 that guys do the same thing but [huh ³âº  
14 Lisa: [they do::  
15 Jillian: >do they< do they yeah  
16 Lisa: I have a lot of guy friends who call .hh ³âºykn  
17 → she said this >and what does that mean I’m

---

¹⁴⁸ pitch significantly elevated in the talk dramatization
¹⁴⁹ smile voice
¹⁵⁰ pitch elevated throughout talk dramatization
There are laugh particles in turn-initial position of Jillian’s turn, which is hearable as pre-facing an amusing telling. She references back to Dr. B’s turn by substituting the impact of the prior telling with “it”, and frames her upcoming illustration with “it would probably end a lot of conversation betweenuhm (1.2) between women”. A second laugh particle followed by a brief micropause prefaces the actual illustration (hhHUH (.) ), and the talk enactment is produced with a significant elevation in pitch: “what did he mean by that what did he mean by th(hah) (hah)t". Through the pitch elevation, laugh pre-facing and turn-final laugh particles, Jillian exhibits to co-participants that the illustration is meant to be humorous.

Dr. B treats Jillian’s dramatization as amusing and accepts the invitation to laugh (Jefferson, 1979) in overlap with Jillian’s second illustration. Within a second, Jillian joins the laughter and comments on her own illustration “I don’t know that guys do the same thing but hhuh” with a smile and smile voice. Lisa overlaps Jillian with an objection (they do::), indicating that it is not only women who ponder upon ambiguous messages from men. Lisa elaborates on her disagreement signal with some talk dramatization of her own (lines 16-18), which has been mentioned above in 7.3.1.1 above. Here, a prosodic marking begins at the prefacing “ykno-”. Intonation rises even more after the second prefacing, “I’m like” (lines 17-18) and the two “know”’s are emphasized. As with Jillian’s hypothetical illustration, laugh particles are found in turn-final position, and Jillian accepts the invitation and laughs back. The action that Lisa’s disagreement performs can be said to do two things – on one hand, by attending to Jillian’s dramatization, Lisa displays that it has contextual relevance, and broadens this relevance with a consecutive example. On the other hand, Lisa’s turn also eliminates Jillian’s argument by proposing that Jillian’s claim holds not only for women, but for men too.

As we can see in the two excerpts examined so far, the laugh invitations embedded in the talk dramatizations are mainly reciprocated by those directly involved in the exchanges. In excerpt (16), Dr. B accepts Tracy’s laughing invitation embedded in her talk dramatization construction, and the group laughter begins after Dr. B has laughed first. Tracy then reciprocates Dr. B’s dramatization and elaborates on it. In (17) above, Jillian invites laughter which Dr. B reciprocates, and then Jillian is the one to accept Lisa’s laughing
invitation. By exhibiting reciprocal acceptance and appreciation of co-participants’ involvement and elaboration of the current activity, interactants create and maintain a temporarily heightened mutual involvement. Furthermore, by highlighting laughable parts of turn constructional units using preacing devices, pitch elevation, intonation shifts (c.f. Selting, 1994), and laugh particles, interactants make available to co-participants invitations to share ‘joy’ and ‘cheerfulness’. By accepting these invitations, co-participants utilize prior speaker’s talk dramatization constructions to display appreciation of the action performed with them. Participants in these exchanges have successfully achieved a joint emotional stance and affiliate with each other by reciprocating each others’ laughables. Furthermore, by producing a next telling with a similar construction after a first talk dramatization telling has been produced, speakers treat the first talk dramatization as contextually relevant.

Exemplification through talk dramatization is also used in (18) and (19) below. Again, we see how unproblematically interactants shift between the main topic and the ‘lighthearted’ illustrations and back again. Note how the talk dramatizations invite and make possible heightened participation from the students in the midst of lecture-type talk:

(18) "Baby talk"

(IN 2;2)
1 Dr. B: people pleasing (1.0) thatu:h let’s see I have
2 mar( ) self amplification (.) thatu:h (2.6)
3 that we reinforce (1.5) appealing qualities and
4 actions (1.6) by complimenting and giving attention
5 to qualities (.) they in=tensify those things (.)
6 to the point that they become disgusting @151( .)
7 for example baby talk ( .) @152;oh you; are so cute no
8 ;you’re cute ;no no no< [.hh ;you:::re cute
9 Jillian: [t(hh)huh huh huh=
10 Tracy: @153;)huh huh huh=
11 Leila: @154 ;I luv ;YOU more; [huh HUH huh huh huh
12 Ally: [huh [huh huh= @155
13 Tracy: [@156

151 Tracy, Ally, Dana and Leila all gaze up from their books around here
152 smile voice
153 Tracy has her eyes covered with one hand, smiling
154 smile voice, girlish tone, exaggerated prosody
155 turns first toward Leila and exchanges laughing smiles, then tilts head back
To dramatize “baby talk”, Dr. B uses talk dramatization in a hypothetical three-turn exchange: “oh you are so cute no you’re cute >no no no< [.hh you:::re cute”]. It is after the second turn illustration that Jillian laughs, and after the third illustration, with extremely exaggerated vowel lengthening, Tracy also laughs. Leila displays her understanding of prior talk in an extended illustration of “baby talk”: I luv YOU more; huh HUH huh huh huh huh”, which also serves as an enactment of what the hypothetical enamoured couple is achieving with their “you are so cute” reciprocation, i.e. they playfully compete for the position of being the partner most in love with the other. Leila’s turn invites and occasions laughter. As the laughter subsides, Dr. B orients back to how ‘baby talk’ can become problematic in romantic relationships over time.

In (19) below, Maryann is presenting her research project on the role of emotions in interpersonal understanding. Her turn, spoken in second person, is designed to exemplify to listeners how a romantic partner’s sensitivity to your emotional state can become problematic:

(19) “What’s wrong tell me”

[IN 3:1]
1 Maryann: =and everything’s fi:ne or there may be some (.)
2 real subtle issue .hhh that was bugging you maybe
3 a- a student treated you bad that day but it
4 ;really isn’t a big deal and you wanna get over it
5 you just wanna have an enjoyable evening (.).hh but
6 (..) you partner can perceive that s-
7 just something a little bit is wrong (.).and then
8 they can bring up this whole issue and end up
9 kind of (..) ruining an’ evening or causing
10 tension there because (..) uh an emotion that
11 you wanned to hide that you couldn’t
12 care less about getting out cause you just
13 just wanted to >forget about it< (.).

196 smiles with open mouth and visibly displays laughing, but particles cannot be discerned on recording
ends up being perceived by someone who’s really close to you that you share emotions with and (.).
ends up turning into a big (1.1) big negative (.). u:hm (.). conversation (.)(pt) a::nd (.). some other good [stuff]
Dr. B: @ 157 [what’s wro:ng ↑ TELL me
(group) #|# # #
Maryann: @ YEA:ah and come o::n I know something is bugging you (.). @ 159
↑ NO:: (hh)
Dr. B: heh heh heh
Maryann’s talk is describing, but not illustrating, a conversation where one partner has quandaries about something but does not want to elaborate on it with a partner. Dr. B (line19) does the exemplification by parodying a concerned partner’s voice: “what’s wro:ng ↑ TELL me”, using an exaggeratedly soft voice and a sing-song prosody. As in the other examples, the talk dramatization occasions some laughter, and also, Maryann reciprocates the dramatization (lines 21-22, starting after the agreement token ↑ YEA:ah). Maryann’s illustration contains two hypothetical turns:

Speaker 1: ↑ YEA:ah and come o::n I know something is bugging you
Speaker 2: grrrr (0.5) ↑ NO:: (hh)

The response from the hypothetical second speaker is exhibited as laughable through her vivid embodied actions; clenching her fist in an attempt to illustrate a frustrated recipient who does not want to acknowledge or elaborate on any perceived negative emotion. Co-participants smile throughout the reported talk exchange, and Dr. B displays treatment of Maryann’s illustration as laughable. After line 23, Maryann continues with her class presentation.

In addition, as we can see above, Maryann’s presentation is a rather lengthy description of the point she is trying to make, i.e. that excessive probing into a romantic partner’s emotional state can be detrimental to the relationship. Particularly between lines 16 and 18 (ends up turning into a big (1.1) big negative (.). u:hm (.). conversation (.)(pt) a::nd (.). some other good stuff), we can note in the repair, hesitations and pauses that

157 using a softer voice, mimicking a concerned partner
158 seems to be illustrating ‘frustration’ vocally
159 loud shrieking “no” while clenching fist and gazing down
Maryann is having some trouble formulating what she means. Dr. B’s talk dramatization immediately following Maryann’s possibly incomplete turn then does the work of “summarizing” Maryann’s reportings, to which she agrees in an animated tone of voice (↑YE:ah). Heritage & Lindström (1998:432) examined interaction between new mothers and health visitors, and noted a propensity for interactants to use reported speech when depicting difficult or troublesome emotional states. Here, it is not the current speaker’s emotional state that is depicted, however, Maryann is exhibiting some problems with describing what she means, and Dr. B’s offering then not only displays his candidate understanding of what Maryann is attempting to describe, but also helps Maryann complete her current train of thought so that she can refocus on the topic and continue. In this particular context, the talk dramatization resolves a moment of interactional trouble for the speaker.

7.3.1.3 Initial observations: talk dramatizations

In the course of examining four selected moments containing talk dramatizations, some common features have been identified. First, the interactional work accomplished by talk dramatization is twofold: producers of hypothetical talk in direct adjacency to ‘talk about talk’ can simultaneously exhibit a candidate understanding of prior talk by illustrating it, and create an invitation to laughter/heightened involvement. By making a candidate understanding available to co-participants, recipients can consider and accept or reject the understanding, as we saw Dr. B doing in the case of enactments of informational messages. Secondly, producers of this type of talk dramatizations signal that certain turn constructional units are vocal dramatizations of hypothetical talk by using a voice that differs from surrounding talk, by exaggerating intonation, sound stretches, pace and prosody. Thirdly, producers of talk dramatizations can highlight the non-serious nature of their turn by inserting laugh particles as invitations to laughter.

Recipients of talk dramatizations utilize different strategies to exhibit their acceptance/appreciation of the enactments. The first strategy is simply accepting the invitation to laugh by reciprocating the teller’s laughter. The second strategy is to reciprocate the action performed by offering a second illustration. In these four, as in others in the corpus, a second speaker reciprocates the illustration with yet another exemplification. Interestingly, Dr. B delays his disagreement with the validity of Tracy’s exemplification, and does not elaborate on why “ugly” is not to be considered as examples of
informational messages until after he has reciprocated Tracy’s telling with an equally misplaced example (“stupid”). Opting to delay an immediate rejection of Tracy’s example may be further evidence to support the sequential pattern found in all four excerpts; that is:

→ Talk dramatization
→ Appreciation
→ Second talk dramatization
→ Appreciation
→ Acceptance or rejection of example validity
→ Shift back to the ‘serious’ topic that elicited the talk dramatization

This pattern of two consecutive illustrations was not found in other types of reported speech in the corpus. Take, for example, instances of direct and indirect reported speech. When one speaker is accounting for some prior incident or conversation, only speakers who were co-present at the time when the reconstructed talk was originally produced can be assumed to have access to knowledge about what was originally said, and how. Consequently, the participation framework during such tellings usually involves participation roles of teller and telling-recipient. Naturally, there can also be cases where two or more participants can be assumed to have access to knowledge about the conversation reconstructed, and these participants can collaboratively reconstruct an earlier interaction to one or more recipients.

However, the type of reported speech examined here does not shape participation or involvement from the vantage point of access to knowledge about an actual event; rather, participation is shaped by a participant’s understanding of the framework for contributions once that has been established. The framework, here, is established in prior talk, as in the example with informational messages → illustrations of what is taken to be informational messages. Consequently, once participants have monitored and made sense of the framework, anyone is free to make a contribution at a relevant slot, even if it can be assumed that Dr. B, who teaches the class, has access to this particular knowledge and students offer candidate answers that he can reject or validate. However, compared to storytelling activities where participants have differential access to knowledge, the illustration use of hypothetical reported talk makes possible a more active type of participation. By participating, then, participants make their understanding of the framework available for consideration of others. Just like jokes, talk dramatizations work as understanding tests (Sacks,
What participants deem as 'successful' is then interactionally achieved. In (16), the illustrations would be considered theoretically unsuccessful in the sense that they did not enact “informational messages”, which was what was talked about, but rather, evaluations. However, they were interactionally successful in the sense that participants exhibited appreciation of them at available slots, which temporarily increased the participation in a sequential surrounding of monological talk, both before and after. Group laughter immediately following the completion of a turn that is contextually cued as amusing works to not only appreciate the laughable nature of prior turn, but also to exhibit a positive evaluation of the teller’s performance as contextually appropriate (Norrick, 2003). Participants’ awareness of the interaction is intensified as they analyze the contextual framework and exhibit a positive emotional stance toward the activity-at-hand. Furthermore, the deployment of talk dramatizations in this particular context had consequences for the institutional task of assimilating knowledge – by making their understandings available to Dr. B and each other, any misconceptions could be rectified. Talk dramatizations, in this particular context, functioned as a device for exhibiting candidate understandings of the topic, which is made available for others’ consideration and response. Consequently, Dr. B could utilize his own as well as his students’ talk dramatizations to teach the topics in interpersonal communication at hand in these seminars.

In terms of positive emotions like joy and exhilaration, the central theme of the present chapter, the vocal projection of upcoming amusement in talk dramatization functions to cue co-participants into the framework, and invites their participation through shared laughter, enjoyment, and additional contributions. All four moments examined here take place in the midst of lecture-type interaction, where participation is shaped in a more restrictive fashion by Dr. B. The illustrations allow for temporarily heightened involvement, but also for sharing the activity of laughter, which Sacks (1992:571) noted to be “one of the few things lawfully done together” in conversation\textsuperscript{160}. The joy, or enjoyment, in these interactions is not primarily about the feelings experienced by participants, but rather about how participants

\textsuperscript{160} What Sacks meant is that the turn-taking system and the rule of ‘one party speaks at a time’ are temporarily suspended in the case of laughing together. Very few other conversational activities are appropriately performed chorally.
make displays of enjoyment available in the interactional weave for others to share. It is not the talk dramatization in itself that yields positive emotions, but how it is contextualized to recipients and how recipients treat these dramatizations. The talk dramatizations allow for a shift in the participation framework: listeners turn into active recipients who can show appreciation and build upon the interactional turn taken. By showing appreciation, participants also display positive alignment with each other and the activity-at-hand, and that the topics discussed also have relevance for their everyday social lives.

Much of the previous work on reported speech has centered on direct or indirect reported speech in the sequential environments of complaints, or in amusing stories of actual events or joke narratives (e.g. Holt, 1996; 2000). It has been demonstrated that speakers reporting speech offer implicit assessments of their enactments, while recipients routinely make direct assessments in next turns. Here, assessments displaying a personal stance toward the reported speech are not of the same relevance to participants since they are not depicting actual events that in some way affected them personally. However, by parodying/satirizing hypothetical talk, tellers do without exception display shared cultural understandings of communication in close relationships. For example, “baby talk” is depicted as ridiculous and repulsive, women’s talk is depicted as almost exclusively centering on ambiguous statements made by men in their lives, and exaggerated probing into one’s partner’s feeling states is depicted as overbearing/annoying. By exhibiting appreciation of these depictions, participants also display a shared understanding of them as accurate. Consequently, assessments are made about relational behavior of others, and laughing together at absent others also generates a feeling of strengthened group membership and rapport; perhaps in this particular case, a sense of ‘us communication experts’ versus the everyday person committing all the no-no’s of relational communication described in their textbooks.

Both reported speech and talk dramatizations are frequent features of talk in the corpus examined, and much of what other scholars have noted about the context and receipt of reported speech turns held for complaint tellings and joke narratives in the present material. The choice to focus on this particular type of reported talk, i.e. reportings of hypothetical talk designed to be enactments of the current topical task, was partly motivated by their contextual relevance in an instructional setting dealing with interpersonal communication. Secondly, the findings concerning hypothetical speech reportings fill a gap in the literature on reported speech in interaction.
7.3.2 Invoking features of the local context in activity-transitional environments

7.3.2.1 Activity-transitional environments

The next sequential environment for mutual enjoyment was found in between agenda-based activities. In these contexts, participants are managing a move from one activity to another, for example, the transition between one student’s class presentation to another’s, or shifting from a general discussion to a lecture-type interaction on a particular issue on the agenda. These shifts require re-orientation work for participants, such as browsing through a textbook to find the right chapter, or distributing copies of a paper to be presented.

In these ‘side-sequences’, I have observed that participants recurrently introduce some feature of the local context, which will then serve as a temporary mutual focus of orientation until the next activity can begin. This is a frequent scenario in all six seminars; however, in the three OG seminars, which has 12-16 participants, these side-activities are often split up into simultaneous dyads or other smaller constellations, so multiple interactional contexts, or schisming settings, are created simultaneously (c.f. Goodwin & Goodwin, 1992; Egbert, 1997) and different participants orient to different activities. In the three IN seminar recordings, ranging from six to ten participants, participants frequently orient to the same side-activity in such shift-implicative environments. It seems natural that it is easier to establish a mutual focus of orientation the smaller the size of the group is. By shift-implicative environments, I refer not only to the transition from one turn to another in which the second turn projects a move toward topic shift (e.g. Jefferson, 1993; Beach, 1993b), but to a sequential environment in which a projected next activity should appropriately be opened up at a point when preparatory activities have been completed. In essence, we are dealing with activities that are introduced while waiting for other activities to be completed so that participants can turn to the next task-at-hand. In these moments, participants are simultaneously monitoring the progression of preparatory tasks while also attending to introductions, build-ups and closings of transitional topics or actions.

What particularly interests me with the data presented in this chapter is the conjoined construction of joy and cheerfulness in multi-party interaction. I have therefore selected moments where all participants display orientation, through gaze or vocal participation, to such transitional activities. It will be demonstrated how the shift-implicative environment, where a prior activity has been closed and a next activity has been projected, functions as a slot that
participants can utilize for mutual enjoyment before shifting back to an institutional task. The choice to embark on a side-sequence is viewed as a meaningful one – participants could have just easily opted to remain focused on the projected next action, i.e. waiting for the next ‘serious’ matter to be opened. It is argued that by opening a temporary interactional trajectory at a point where a next activity has been projected, interactants can remain mutually oriented and in a state of readiness for the next task. As will be demonstrated, participants visibly exhibit awareness of the introduced activity as a *temporary* and *transitional* one.

### 7.3.2.2 Multiple activities in transitional places – three examples

In (20) below, the five IN students present are filling out a one-minute questionnaire I administered before each class, so this sequence is taken from the very first minutes of class time. This is the second recording occasion, so the group knows that they are to fill out the questionnaires before regular class activities commence, and that they will distribute copies of their homework assignments as soon as the test has been completed. Leila, who was not present at the first recording, has just asked which of the two tasks she should do first. While Dr. B, who finished his questionnaire, waits for the others to complete and hand in theirs, a few turns that elicit the attention of others are introduced; first, by Dr. B (line 4), then by Dana (lines 7, 9-11), and again by Dr. B (line 23).

(20a) “Uncertain”

```
[IN 2:1]
1 Dr. B: yeah (.) d- do the questionnaire frst=
2 Leila: =okay g\textsuperscript{161}
3 (4.6)
4 Dr. B: and I’ll only ask you tuh’do: ttwo things at once
5 Ally: "hhhhuh (.).okay huh." g\textsuperscript{162}
6 (7.3)
7 Dana: @\textsuperscript{163}h h h h h h
8 (1.2)
9 Dana: that’s ( ) hhhuh
10 @\textsuperscript{164}ihuh just crossed out my a(hh)[nswer for

\textsuperscript{161} turns back down to the questionnaire
\textsuperscript{162} smiles, through smile/laugh voice
\textsuperscript{163} hand over mouth
\textsuperscript{164} smile voice
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In line 1, Dr. B responds to Leila’s request for clarification, i.e. that she should fill out the questionnaire first. Leila acknowledges the new information, and turns her head down to the questionnaire again. As we can see, there is a longer pause in line 3 where students are completing their questionnaires, which is cut through by Dr. B who offers a delayed, smiling elaboration of Leila’s prior question: “and I’ll only ask you to do: ‘two things at once’. With the hearable smile voice and the joking exaggeration, i.e. that he is “only” requiring his students to do “two things at once”, Dr. B keys his turn as a playful/teasing exploitation of ‘serious’ material in Leila’s prior turn (c.f. Hopper, 1995 and also Drew, 1987). Ally displays that she recognizes the non-serious nature of Dr. B’s turn (“huh huh huh huh”), and another long pause of more than seven seconds follows while the students are focused on completing the questionnaire.

In line 7, Dana, still looking down at her paper but with one hand covering her mouth, produces a short laugh and a loud inbreath, which prefaces to others that she is about to explain why she is laughing. In line 9, she accounts for the laughing – she had accidentally crossed out one of the items on the questionnaire. All participants are now focused on Dana’s projection of an upcoming laughable, as visible on the recording with gaze shifts toward Dana and smiles. At the completion of Dana’s invitation to laughter, Leila begins laughing loudly, and others join in. This momentarily takes the focus off of the questionnaire completion, which is resumed in line 19.

The sequence above illustrates some aspects of the phenomenon of interest in this section; in particular, how the space in between formal activities
such as 1) getting physically seated and organized in the classroom, 2) filling out a questionnaire for the researcher recording their seminar, and 3) initiating regular class activity is utilized to remain mutually oriented although individually focused on a task. If we look at excerpt (20a) again, we can see that it is only in lines 1 and 2 that ‘serious’ actions are performed; actions that are necessary for the progression of Leila’s actions. In between lines 4 and 28, we find a number of ‘side-activities’ that carefully exploit material in the interaction itself or in features of the local context. These contributions — Dr. B’s playful second response to Leila’s question, Dana’s voluntary admission of having made a comic mistake on the questionnaire, and the appreciative laughter outburst, are not consequential actions for a movement toward a next projected activity, i.e. participants could have opted to remain solely focused on completing the questionnaire and moving straight to the next activity. Instead, these side-tracks are all temporary trajectories consciously invoked by participants, which permit interactants to remain attentive to each other’s co-presence while doing a non-interactional activity, i.e. individually filling out a questionnaire. The activities represent momentary affective flurries where the group members affiliate with each other by sharing the amusement. As seen above, both Dr. B’s playful turn in line 4 and Dana’s laughing-prefaced admission in lines 10-11 are volunteered after a longer pause, which means that they are not immediately occasioned by a first pair part that invites a response. They are also both cued as benevolent and ‘fun’ contributions during an otherwise ‘silent’ and individual activity.

The fact that on both occasions these actions are volunteered after a longer silence is significant. It appears as if interactants get impatient with the silence, and also, the silence essentially makes any unprojected contribution possible. A similar side-activity is introduced after the laughter has ceased in line 19 above, illustrated in excerpt (20b) below:

(20b) "Manta rays"

19 Ally: .HHHHnnHHHHH
20 (2.5)
21 Ally: hhuh huh
22 (9.7)
23 Dr. B: those microphones look a little bit like
24 @manta rays @
25 Dana: yeah they do::

169 moves right hand in front of torso, palm down, illustrating movement of a manta ray
170 several of the students shift their gaze to the microphones

251
Another long pause (line 22) follows Ally’s residual laughter during which students again work to complete the questionnaire. In 23, Dr. B topicalizes an object in the immediate context: “those microphones look a little bit like manta rays” while his gaze direction makes it known to co-participants that he is referring to the two extension microphones placed in the center of the room for sound uptake. By making his comment available for co-participants, Dr. B invites involvement from the still-busy students in this additional transitional topic. The hand gesture he makes while pronouncing ‘manta rays’ makes the recipients first gaze at the movement, and then at the microphones before offering agreement, and after having monitored both the turn and the object, Dana emphatically agrees (yeah they do:) with her gaze fixed on the object; the microphones. Another pause follows during which Dana shuffles the papers on her desk while others turn back to completing the test, and Dr. B then adds an alternative laughable to his prior turn (or black spe:rm), to which Ally and Tracy display appreciation (lines 27-28).

Dr. B’s simile about the microphones and manta rays is volunteered in the midst of a longer silence during which participants have not had any mutual orientation, but individual ones. Again, this voluntary introduction of a side topic increases participation/involvement and occasions displays of amusement/enjoyment. What we also can note about the progression of side trajectories in 20a and 20b is that the humorous contributions are not taken further than initiation → receipt. That is, in response to Dr. B’s teasing turn (“two things at once”) there is laughter and display of acknowledgement from Ally. In response to Dana’s laughing admission, there is multi-party laughter. In response to Dr. B’s manta ray simile, there is agreement, and in response to the alternative (“black spe:rm”), there is minimal laughter acknowledgement.

Since participants are preoccupied with multiple orientations, they display receipt and appreciation of the pastime contributions, but they opt to not develop them further or build on the producer’s turns. Instead, they smoothly shift back to completing the first transitional task; the questionnaire. My point is, that by only displaying appropriate recognition and enjoyment, participants
also exhibit an understanding of the current activity as pastime transitional. However, the black sperm contribution differs from the manta ray turn in their degree of delicacy in this context: the manta ray example generated spontaneous laughter and affiliation, whereas direct affiliation with the culturally delicate word “sperm” may be problematic for students. By only showing minimal acknowledgement, students can display appreciation of the joke without elaborating on a contextually delicate matter.

In the last part of this sequence in between projected activities, the space for side-trajectories is brought to a close. Students are now finishing up the questionnaires and handing them in one by one, organizing their assignment copies for distribution in the next projected activity and in other ways getting into a visible state-of-readiness for the activity they know will follow.

(20c) “Secretary Ally”

29 Tracy: °hhuh°
30 ((35 silent seconds during which students shuffle papers, hand in questionnaires and get their books and assignments to be distributed ready))
33 Leila: should we hold onto these until the: (.the end
34 (0.9)
35 Dr. B: yieah or you could- turn in the first one if you want to (.either way
37 ((Leila hands questionnaire to Amy))
38 ((Amy gets up and hands in both questionnaires))
39 Leila: thank you secretary Ally @171
40 Ally: you’re [welcome @172
41 Leila: >huh huh huh huh huh< (.personnal
42 a(hh)ssis(hh)tant(hh) A(hh)ll(hh)y huh huh=
43 Ally: =sure ((while walking back to her seat, smiling))
44 (.)
45 Dr. B: and- and I’d like to (.buy a (valve)@173
46 [°please°
47 Ally: [hHUH huh huh huh [huh
48 Leila: [huh HUH HUH huh huh
49 ((all students gaze down and all orient back to

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171 wagging head back and forth, smiling widely
172 smile voice
173 one finger raised as if signalling to a restaurant waiter, smiling
Leila’s ‘serious’ question in line 33 is produced when students shuffle their papers and exhibit that they have completed the questionnaire. Consequently, Leila’s question is asked in a shift-implicative environment where the flurry of activities project that the interaction is moving closer to the point where regular class activity will begin. When Dr. B informs Leila that she can hand in her questionnaire right now or after the class, she hands her questionnaire to Ally, who is seated closer to Dr. B and myself, who gets up and turns in the questionnaire. The moment where Ally gets up and walks to the front of the classroom then creates another trajectory – the shift-implicative slot is extended and the next activity cannot properly begin until Ally is seated again.

What we see happening then, as in 20a and b, is that the renewed transitional space creates an opportunity for anyone to make any contribution rooted in the local context while waiting for the next shift-implicative slot. Leila directs her turn at the walking Ally with a joking “thank you secretary Ally”, which is cued as an invitation to laugh in the exaggerated head shakes, smile voice, and the playful titling of Ally as her ‘secretary’. Ally smilingly acknowledges the joke with “you’re welcome”, which Leila overlaps with rapid laughter. Since Ally is still up on her feet, there is more transitional space to be utilized for enjoyment, and Leila continues the playful titling with “personal assistant Ally huh huh”. Both the titlings of Ally are used as membership categorization devices (c.f. Sacks, 1972b), i.e. she is associating Ally’s actions with the membership category of assistants/secretaries, which can be assumed to be a frequent feature of jokes and teasing. Ally smilingly accepts the joking (sure), and just before she is once again seated, Dr. B builds on Leila’s depiction of Ally as their ‘assistant’ with a playful request (line 45). Leila and Ally laugh appreciatively at this, and then withdraw their gaze and turn back to their papers, and by doing so, exhibit awareness of the new shift-implicative slot and the closing of the transitional joking. This time, Dr. B, who is the agenda-holder, opens the since-long projected class activity of taking turns presenting their class assignment.
3.2.3 Types of orientations in transitional activities

As demonstrated in examples (20a-c) above, participants frequently utilize time in between projected activities for heightening involvement and achieving mutual enjoyment. By introducing a focus of mutual attention, the group stays connected in each other's co-presence. Since these introductions take place during silences and individual activities, anyone and any topic grounded in the local context can be introduced, for example, a comment that makes an individual activity an interactional concern, or some reference to an object in the surroundings or to an embodied action in progress. This section will take a closer look at the types of orientations that participants frequently display in these activity-transitional environments.

The foci of mutual orientation introduced are usually cued as humorous, which again indicates that this is an opportunity that participants use to doing-having-fun together. Participants also demonstrate that they monitor preparatory actions for their completion before introducing a side-sequence, and once it is clear that the next projected activity cannot begin immediately, a slot for such contributions opens. By reciprocating each other's humorous contributions with laughter and appreciation, and by engaging in brief activities of conversational play, interactants make available an environment of “interpersonal warmth” (Andersen & Guerrero, 1998c:316-317). By exhibiting awareness of the context-sensitive nature of play in between institutional activities, the interaction can smoothly be brought from a playful episode back to agenda-based activities.

Excerpts 20a-c exemplified temporary trajectories invoked with orientations to two main contextual types:

1. *The local context of talk and actions*
   - volunteered (self-selected speaker) commentary on a prior turn
   - volunteered commentary on activity currently performed by self
   - volunteered commentary on embodied actions of others

2. *The local physical context*
   - turning attention to an object

To further elucidate how these environments are utilized for temporary play trajectories, a few examples of the different types follow below:
Here, the next activity is projected by Dr. B in lines 1-2. Lisa then jokingly names Lin as the next presenter. Lin and Will, who are collaborating on their assignment, immediately start exchanging looks and gestures in preparation of their presentation. While this is proceeding, there is a slot for introducing a mutual orientation, which Dr. B does by smilingly commenting on Lisa’s prior action “isn’t that nice how Li:sa (.) can just- volunteered ;you”.

Here, the next activity is projected by Dr. B in lines 1-2. Lisa then jokingly names Lin as the next presenter. Lin and Will, who are collaborating on their assignment, immediately start exchanging looks and gestures in preparation of their presentation. While this is proceeding, there is a slot for introducing a mutual orientation, which Dr. B does by smilingly commenting on Lisa’s prior action “isn’t that nice how Li:sa (.) can just- volunteered ;you”. Participants smile back at Lisa or Dr. B, and Lisa
laughs. Dr. B then addresses Lin with a joking “you should (. ) YOU should be able to call her something in Chinese now that she doesn’t know”, to which Lisa responds with a playful response cry “oh da::mn”, while others laugh appreciatively.

Will exhibits participation by producing three words in Chinese, and Lisa builds on Dr. B’s prior turn with “she can call me a fish (. ) I’d understand that”. Lisa laughs at the end of her turn and others join in. Lin displays that she has monitored Lisa’s turn by a repeat of a part of Lisa’s turn (a fish). Lin and Will then resume their quiet exchange with pointing and looks, and in line 21, Lin’s production of ‘okay’ is hearable as a transition device projecting a shift (Beach, 1993). While the next activity has not yet commenced, Lisa laughingly adds that she was ‘kidding’ by volunteering Lin as the first presenter. Since Lisa’s playful assigning of Lin as the next speaker actually occurred after a next activity had been clearly projected (lines 1-2), it is possible that Lisa’s mitigating “I was kidding” exhibits that she acted playfully in an environment where a ‘serious’ contribution was expected.

(22) “Computer problems”

[IN 2:1]
1 Jillian: I had (. ) computer problems I know it’s a cliché
2 (0.5)
3 Dr. B: [I think you-
4 Ally: [Don’t worry [we’=]
5 Leila: [we’ve [already had our { } for=
6 Dr. B: [I think you copied more thn-
7 Leila: =the evening=
8 Ally: =I forgot my reference list in the=
9 Jillian: we::ll (. ) [I didn’t-
10 Ally: ={back of a ca::r
11 Dr. B: looks like Jillian copied more than we nee:ded Ø[80
12 Jillian: well eh- (. ) I thought there’d be more
13 pe:ople here (0.5) plus mine is rather thick cuz
14 I:: (. )
15 Dr. B: you copied all the abstracts
16 Jillian: yeah and uh tha- books and I thou- didn’t you
17 need the abstracts
18 Dr. B: Ø[81 not for everyone else [just for me

180 smiles, facing Jillian
181 shakes head
In (22), Jillian, who was late to class, is the last student to distribute copies of her assignment and deliver a short presentation. As she begins to get her papers ready for distribution, she explains that she has had computer problems. As co-participants can watch Jillian getting ready to begin her presentation, Dr. B introduces a side topic in lines 3 and 6 with reference to an object, i.e. the pile of papers Jillian is holding in her hands. Simultaneously, Leila and Ally respond to Jillian’s apologetic first turn (lines 4, 5, 7, 8, and 10). This results in several competing mutual orientations, and Dr. B pursues his playful remark in line 11. Jillian’s response exhibits recognition of the teasing remark with a smile and playful prosody, but her talk is a serious response to Dr. B’s non-serious remark (c.f. Drew, 1987). Dr. B’s anticipatory completion of Jillian’s response (line 15), Jillian’s subsequent negatively valenced question (16-17), and Dr. B’s agreement with it (line 18) exhibit a serious part of this sequence, where information is asked for and given. The playfulness is brought back when Jillian smiles, gestures and gazes away in line 19, and since Dr. B knows that Jillian has still not gotten around to distributing her copies, there is room for additional transitional commentary (lines 21, 23). In line 24, Jillian’s “uhhm” and initiated body movement indicates that she is proceeding to the next activity, and the playful sequence is moved toward a close as Jillian gets up to distribute papers.

(23) “Anyone’s name”

[IN 2:1]
1 Dr. B: let’s begin (.). by having each of you:: tell us
2 a little bit aboutuh your abstract assignment (.)

---

182 gazes away from Dr. B, smiles, tilts head, lifts the pile of copies up and down
183 nods twice, smiles widely while gazing around the semi-circle in which they are seated
184 gets up and begins handing out copies
3 give us an idea of:: (0.7)
4 Dana: @ should we pass these out
5 Dr. B: what you have done .hhhh
6 ((Dr. B gets up to collect copies))
7 Ally: u:hm my name’s not on mi(hh)ne (hhh)
8 (2.8)
9 Dr. B: so >in other words< (. ) we can put anyone’s name
10 on it if we want to @
11 Ally: ↑yeah exactly
12 (2.6)
13 Dr. B: @↑thanks (5.1) @↑oh look at Leila’s
14 Ally: huh huh

In (23), Dr. B projects the next activity in lines 1-3, but until that activity can be
initiated, papers need to be distributed. In the midst of getting copies sorted
and ready, Ally volunteers a smiling/laughing “u:hm my name’s not on
mi(hh)ne (hhh)” . She is then referring to an object; the paper Dr. B just
collected from her hand and the information is volunteered while Dr. B is
walking around collecting papers from others. Dr. B treats the embedded
laughter as an invitation to amusement, and interjects a playful remark. Dr. B’s
next transition topic (line 13) is object-related – he glances at the assignment
Leila just turned in and calls attention to its appearance in a smile voice.

7.3.2.4 Activity-transitional playfulness – some concluding remarks

As demonstrated in this section, participants can invoke different features of
context in constructing a temporary focus of mutual attention while preparing
for a next projected action. In all the examples, these introductions were cued
as amusing and invited mutual enjoyment. Frequently, interactants pass the time
in between regular class activities by humorously commenting on some object
in the local context (papers, microphone), on some prior turn (Dr. B’s
commentary of Lisa assigning the next turn to Lin) or on some current
embodied activity (Ally handing in Leila’s questionnaire). There are few
constraints on the type of transitional contributions that could be invoked, but
participants display their careful monitoring of the local context in their

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185 to Leila
186 still standing up and receiving copies of papers
187 to Dana
188 looking at one of the papers he collected
introductions of side-sequences and creatively utilize the transition spaces for instigating involvement, shared laughter, and active co-presence.

7.3.3 ‘Mock emotions’ – a resource for playfulness

7.3.3.1 What is a ‘mock emotion’?

In the pursuit of interactional lightheartedness, conversationalists also utilize shared cultural understandings of emotions and appropriate emotional reactions by enacting various emotional states as part of conversational play. We have all probably exaggeratedly enacted laughter (“hah – hah – hah”) in response to someone teasing us, where we have displayed that we would have laughed sincerely in that slot had the joke/tease been funny. By enacting an emotional response, we can communicate a variety of other emotional stances; for example, that we were insulted, that a joke was bad, or that we playfully accept being made the butt of a tease although we do not laugh spontaneously at it.

An example of how a contextually appropriate emotion simulation worked to add enjoyment to a sequence of interaction has already been encountered in chapter 6 (see 6.4.3). To recapitulate that analysis, Dr. B makes a play on words concerning “propositions” (i.e. a proposition paper or sexual propositions), and Ally responds by topicalizing potential embarrassment. In the context of a making an allusion with an ambiguously obscene meaning, it is the recipient’s job to figure out the meaning of, and displaying alignment or disaffiliation with the “dirty joke” (Sacks, 1978:262-3), and what Ally does is to enact embarrassment rather than displaying the characteristic behavior associated with being embarrassed:

(24) “Propositions”

[IN 1:1]
1 Ally: @ 189 I’m doing a proposition paper
2 Maryann: okay @ 190
3 Dr.B: becu:z if you’re talking about sexual
4 communication you need to make propositions
5 Will: hhRRRm 191
6 Jillian: ye:s=

189 to Maryann
190 nods
191 clears throat
As discussed in chapter 6, Ally states that the joking is “making” her “blush right now”, and enacts that her cheeks are heated. In essence, Ally is making an enactment of embarrassment available for co-participants, and by doing so, she also draws upon shared cultural understandings of sex as an embarrassing topic. The fact that participants laugh appreciatively and playfully tease Ally about it being her essay topic shows that they have perceived the playfulness of Ally’s enactment, and that they understand it as contextually relevant.

The kind of enactment Ally does above is the central theme of this section. It will be demonstrated that by inserting enactments of certain emotions into precise points in the conversational weave, participants rely upon intersubjective understandings of when and how emotions occur and should appropriately be expressed. Furthermore, and central to the theme of this chapter, is that the ‘mock emotions’ function as cues to shared enjoyment and cheerfulness. Four different enactments were selected for this section.

7.3.3.2 Mock surprise

Below, we have an example of an emotion enactment, playfully exhibited surprise. The sequential environment is fairly similar to that of teasing activities (Drew, 1987) and the ‘mock surprise’ here in part also functions as teasing in

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192 Pronounced with a smile and while chewing on a piece of candy
193 whispering to Ally, seated next to her
194 teasing sing-song voice
195 waving both hands on the sides of her cheeks as if indicating that her cheeks are heated, gaze straight forward not looking at any participant in particular, smiling
196 swishes hair back with one hand
that it implicitly point out that an assumption made in the prior turn was
overdone or exaggerated. Note Ally’s turn in line 7.

(25) “Every six seconds”

[IN 1:2]
1 Dr. B: certainly we- our- our world around us is saturated
2 with sexual imagery (. ) u::hm (2.1) and there
3 are a lot of myths about how often people do:
4 thi- think about sex like I see it repeated
5 frequently that- that men think about sex like
6 every six seconds or something (1.0) u::hm
7 Ally: isn’t that true:
8 Dr. B: =nno
9 
10 Tracy: seven and a half
11 Dr. B: seven and a ;half &
12 
13 Dr. B: no the- the research I’ve seen u::h on sexual
14 fantasy indicates that u::h ((cont.))

Dr. B (lines 1-6) is talking about sexual imagery in society in relation to a book chapter discussed in this class, and illustrates his core point by referring to the general belief that men think about sex “every six seconds or something”. His choice of the word “myths” in line 3 has indicated that this view is inaccurate, so that the students can infer that his own personal standpoint on this issue is not in line with the general belief. In response to this serious reporting, Ally verbally exhibits ‘surprise’: “isn’t that true:” (line 7). However, by smiling directly at Dr. B and assuming an overly innocent tone of voice, Ally cues to co-participants that her question is non-serious. However, Dr. B responds quickly and very seriously “nno” and does not start smiling until the onset of group laughter. It is impossible to know whether Dr. B is playing along with Ally’s mock surprise in his serious response, or if he is displaying a po-faced receipt, but nevertheless, Ally’s simulated innocence works as an invitation to laughter. Tracy takes the joke a step further by offering an alternative to the proposed timeline of every sixth second, “seven
and a half”, which Dr. B repeats, this time with a smile. After the second rounds of laughter have ceased, Dr. B continues with a ‘serious’ response.

In essence, Ally’s feigned surprise conveyed through an ‘innocently’ asked question worked to temporarily increase involvement in a lecture-type sequence, and co-participants all display (Dr. B with some delay) that they did indeed perceive Ally’s turn as non-serious. It may be that Dr. B’s reporting exaggeratedly conveyed a myth that the students present did not want to be viewed as sharing, and Ally’s teasing rectified any such suspicions. In any case, it is clear that Ally designed her question to be humorous, and it functioned in generating momentary enjoyment.

7.3.3.3 Mock annoyance and resignation

Across the corpus, a couple of occurrences of the type of ‘mock annoyance’ illustrated below were found. The context for this exchange is the feedback activity (see chapter 5) where students offer peer feedback on each others’ writing after one presenter has read his or her paper to the class. Here, Brandee is the feedback recipient and is thus expected to only take notes of the feedback and not respond or ask for clarification. Brandee displays her orientation to the ‘silent recipient norm’ by using a preliminary action projection (Schegloff, 1980), that is, she is prefacing an upcoming question by inviting confirmation that she can produce the action she is projecting. In response to this, Dr. A sighs exaggeratedly and accepts the projected action with “ohkay”:

(26) “Really quick”

[OG 3:1]
1 Brandee: can I interject something here really quick
2 Dr. A: .HHH(hhh)@199ohkay (.} [just kidding]
3 Brandee: [>really quick<] cuz this
4 might be (.} applicable ((cont.))

What Dr. A’s response is exhibiting is a sigh of slight annoyance and resignation to Brandee’s request, but it is exaggerated to the point that co-participants can tell that she is not seriously bothered by Brandee’s insistence on responding. A variant of her enactment would have been sigh + “if you must” or something similar. As we can see, she also adds “just kidding” in a
smile voice to emphasize that her sigh and displays of annoyance/resignation were non-serious. Brandee, however, simultaneously initiates a justification for why she is violating the norm and does not display that she interprets the enactment as playful.

As with teasing activities, this type of mock resignation serves double interactional functions. The enactment introduces humor and brief enjoyment (audience smiles) into a serious-minded exchange, but it is also hearable as another reminder of the established norm. Thus, by playfully enacting that she only mercifully allows Brandee to “interject”, Dr. A can also implicitly convey a local norm, but without risking interactional trouble. Furthermore, we can see how the emotion simulator draws upon cultural knowledge on how certain emotional stances would be conveyed if she had been serious.

7.3.3.4 Mock horror / being appalled

In lines 1-2, Ally apologetically makes it known that she has accidentally left part of her homework assignment in her boyfriend’s car. After u:hm, she lowers her forehead slightly as if furtively offering her request for confirmation to Dr. B. Her voice breaks down with feigned tearfulness (laugh particles and prolonged vowel on ca:r) at the end of her turn:

(27) “My boyfriend’s car”

[IN 2:1]
1 Ally:  uhm @200(.) is it okay if I bring my
2 references next week I left them in my
3 [boyfriend’s ca:r .hh (hhh)uuh @201
4 Dr. B: [.He:::::::H @202
5 Tracy: [.HHHHH @223
6 Dr. B:      [u::h
7 Ally:      [my car is in the sho:p
8 Dr. B: do you have this on comput:er{(.) can you email it

The ‘mock emotion’ exhibited by Dr. B is best described as ‘feigned horror’, i.e. he takes a loud deep inbreath that has a stretched vowel sound to it, as if he will be deeply and personally traumatized without Ally’s reference list.

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200 turns gaze toward Dr. B
201 at the uttering of “car”, Ally lowers her head apologetically and enacts that her voice is breaking down from crying
202 gasps loudly
203 Leila turns toward Ally, opens her mouth and gasps, and fakes being appalled
Simultaneously, Leila turns toward Ally, opens her mouth with lowered jaw and a simulated expression of ‘shock’. Ally smiles, but continues with the apologetic role she is enacting and elaborates on why the reference list is missing. The “my car is in the shop” is pronounced in a whiny tone of voice.

What we have here is a case of 1) exaggerated wariness in confessing to not having brought a complete assignment and 2) mock ‘horror’ and ‘shock’. Participants smile and go along with the playfulness, and the little role-playing game of potential scolder/scoldee both increases a playful interactional rapport and makes a potentially delicate topic, the confession, an activity for enjoyment. In (28) below, the continuation of this sequence will be described.

7.3.3.5 Mock remorse

The first part of this sequence has already been dealt with as an example of mock horror. What happens later on in this excerpt is another enactment: mock ‘remorse’ (lines 22-29):

(28) “The other students”

[IN 2:1]

1 Ally: uhm @204(.) is it okay if I bring my
2 references next week I left them in my
3 [boyfriend’s car [.hh (hhh)uuh @205
4 Dr. B: [.HU:::H H @206
5 Tracy: [.HHHHH @207
6 Dr. B: [u::h
7 Ally: [my car is in the sho:p
8 Dr. B: do you have this on comput:er{I.) can you email it
9 Leila: [email it< (0.5)
10 Ally: Ya:h (.I can {email’em"
11 Dr. B: (yeah) do that
12 (0.6)
13 Ally: it’s in tha:t it’s just– no:t (.I don’t have
14 it on the:se

@204 turns gaze toward Dr. B
@205 at the uttering of ‘car’, Ally lowers her head apologetically and enacts that her voice is breaking down from crying
@206 gasps loudly
@207 Leila turns toward Ally, opens her mouth and gasps, and fakes being appalled
16 Dr. B: o:h
17 Ally: so (.) on the a:abstract
18 (2.6)
19 Dr. B: in that case just bring copies(.) next [week
20 Ally: [next week=
21 Dr. B: =[yeah]
22 Ally: ={okay} (.) I’m so:rry
23 ((slammering noise)) (0.7)
24 Dr. B: you don’t owe me: an apology you owe the other
25 stu:dents [an apology §208
26 Ally: → §209“I’m very so:rry other stu(hh)dent(hh)ts.> hh
27 (hh)hhh [huh [huh huh huh
28 Tracy: °heh heh heh°
29 Leila: [heheheh

Between lines 8 and 21, the interaction turns serious again, and Ally and Dr. B establish whether she should email the abstracts to her classmates or if she should bring it to next week’s seminar instead. That sequence is closed in line 22 with Ally’s acknowledgement (okay). Next, she offers what seems as a serious apology for the trouble (I’m sorry).

Dr. B’s response is offered through smiling, and playfully re-directs the apology Ally addressed to himself: “you don’t owe me: an apology you owe the other stu:dents [an apology”. Ally smilingly displays that she perceived the non-serious tone in Dr. B’s corrective action, and overlaps his turn with ‘mock remorse’: a slowly and emphasized “I’m ve:ry so:rry other stu(hh)dent(hh)ts.> hh (hh)hhh [huh [huh huh huh”. The laugh particles inserted at the end of her turn are hearable as Ally not being able to remain serious throughout her act of mock ‘remorse’, and also invites and occasions laughter.

7.3.3.6 Mock emotions – comments

As demonstrated above, conversationalists are skilled in both enacting and analyzing feigned emotions so that co-interactants can hear which emotional stance their contributions are designed to display and that they are offered playfully/non-seriously. Playfully pretending to experience and express some

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208 smile voice
209 smile voice, leans forward
contextually appropriate emotional state allows participants to play little interactional games with each other while also performing actions that in some way are relevant for the current activity. All of the mock emotions examined in this section do multiple interactional work; as a combination of conveying something about the topic or activity-at-hand and achieving lightheartedness.

In addition to creating enjoyment, the five excerpts examined all conveyed social information of some kind. For example, in (24), the topicalizing of embarrassment conveyed culturally shared standards about sex and sexuality as taboo and embarrassing topics. In (25), the mock surprise also pointed out that all people do not take myths seriously. In (26), the mock annoyance/resignation simultaneously reminded students about Dr. A’s general attitude toward responding to feedback. In (27), the feigned ‘shock’ both teased Ally for her forgetfulness and conveyed a standard about complete homework assignments. Finally, in (28), the playful scolding and exaggerated apology functioned to make it clear that Ally’s forgetfulness affected her peers negatively. Consequently, the enactment of various emotional states also reveal something about commonplace events and shared social norms, in similar ways as Garfinkel’s (1967) studies revealed taken for granted aspects of social interaction. Along those lines, Hopper (1995:66) noted that interactional play is constructed to be analyzable as “both playful-ironic and serious-consequential”.

7.3.4 Code-switching: misaligned lexical items as laughables

7.3.4.1 Intentional and unintentional deployment of ‘marked’ lexical items

In the course of examining shared laughter in the corpus, I came across a recurrent pattern of turn design. The turns in question were formulated so that a lexical item at the end of the turn distinctly stood out from the rest of the turn in terms of style or level of formality. In so-called code-switching (Trudgill, 1974:75), speakers switch between different language varieties when the situation calls for it, for example, between the use of a regional dialect and a standard variety of that language. In this case, the code-switching concerns the use of particular lexical items or formulations that markedly stand out from the language used in surrounding units of that turn. Frequently, a slang word or a colloquial construction was included when the ‘punch line’ of a telling was delivered. In response, recipients treat the within-turn deviant item as marked by laughing after its production. Usually, tellers also cue the item as marked through prosody and emphasis, which speaks for the fact that tellers invite enjoyment or laughter. Excerpts (29-32) presented in this section illustrate...
moments of shared laughter where a single participant’s turn design works to create a brief moment of enjoyment through code-switching. However, there were also cases where a turn constructional unit is collaboratively established as laughable, and where tellers display that they did not consciously invite laughter. Below, examples (29) and (32) illustrate such unprojected laughables, whereas excerpts (30) and (31) are demonstrated to invite laughter.

Sequence (29) below is extracted from the feedback activity described in chapter 5. Students are giving feedback on Jenna’s paper and presentation, and prior to this excerpt, there have been discussions about the actions of a man described in Jenna’s paper (see 5.5.1 regarding the male instructor who ‘went through’ a colleague’s desk drawers). It is Celia’s use of “weird” and “wa:cked” that are responded to as laughable:

(29) “Just weird”

[OG 3:2]
1 Dr. A: okay (. ) okay (. ) anything else (. ) that you
2 wanna know
3 (6.3)
4 Celia: maybe he: was just ;weird (. ) that’s what \[\]
5 [kind of came up with . hh=
6 \[## # #
7 Celia: \[\]becuz I mean like< [y- you (.]=
8 Will: \[\]
9 Celia: \[\]you e- now it’s your focus like (. ) men
10 aren’t allowed to go back there (. ) . hh but
11 obviously he went back there because he ;knew:
12 that Tina’s desk (. ) . hh had (. ) had music in it
13 (. ) he knew that there was music back there (. )
14 . hh he knew (. ) that (. ) things that were back
15 there an’ stuff but then he didn’t wanna ;take it
16 (. ) . hh so maybe hez just ;wa:cked
17 \[## # [##
18 Dr. A: \[yeah
19 Jenna: \[o(kay) { } { }^{210}
20 Dr. A: \[and- and giving something more about his
21 words would {{cont.}}}

^{210} starts smiling
In response to the preceding discussion about the male instructor’s actions, Celia (line 4) offers a candidate interpretation of his behavior for the consideration of others: “maybe he was just weird”, followed by a declaration of ownership of the idea: “that’s what I kind of came up with”. Celia does not include laugh particles in her talk and only emphasizes the two pronouns, so there is no evidence that she, at this point, invites the brief laughter outburst in line 6. Co-participants, on the other hand, treat Celia’s comment as laughable, and given that it was not observably invited by the first speaker, this is an indication that the laughter is disaffiliative, i.e. laughing at Celia (Glenn, 2003:113), or that co-participants simply see the humor in what Celia said before she recognizes it.

Celia’s next action helps us uncover her own treatment of the laughter outburst. Her quick third-turn repair initiation (Schegloff, 1992b), which indicates that there was something problematic in co-participants’ treatment of her prior turn design, works to disambiguate her candidate understanding of the male instructor as “just weird”, and to make clear that her turn had a serious content, despite its formulation: “becuz I mean like you’re now it’s your focus like men aren’t allowed to go back there. hh but”. As demonstrated in chapter 5, feedback formulation is a delicate interpersonal activity, and given that this comment occurs shortly after Jenna’s displays of frustration (with only three turns in between excerpts 1 and 30), Celia is perhaps responding to a potential threat to Jenna’s face, and mitigates her original formulation in this turn.

Her turn continues to display a claim for legitimacy of her prior comment; however, she concludes the turn with an almost identical reformulation of the trouble source turn, but this time including an even more marked lexical item: “so maybe he was just woke”. This time, she uses rising intonation and emphasis on the colloquial lexical item, and more clearly marks her word choice as deliberate. Although it is difficult to prove in this case, Celia may be building upon the outcome of her first attempt by more consciously displaying that laughter is acceptable in response, and by choosing a more strongly marked word, her turn works to convert the prior laughing at to an affiliative laughing with (Glenn, 2003:117). This time, the shared laughter lasts a little longer than in line 6, and Jenna also laughs along and verbally displays a receipt of the comment (although not discernable on the tape). However, Dr. A disaffiliates with the group laughter and instead affiliates with the ‘serious’ content of Celia’s turn, and pursues to re-orient the interaction to Jenna’s text.
In (30) below, Dr. B is talking about the dangers of an over-reliance on Internet sources in finding accurate sources of knowledge. The last part of his turn includes the phrasing “any ya::hoo with three: :synapses”, which occasions laughter:

(30) “Yahoo”

Prior to the uttering of “any ya::hoo”, Dr. B’s turn is rather academically formulated, for example “to de:termine the q:uality”. The “any ya::hoo” contributes to emphasizing his point – by his “extreme case formulation” ‘any’ (Pomerantz, 1986) plus the noun ‘yahoo’, which is an almost poetic construction (Jefferson, 1996) in the context of internet searches given that one of the main search engines is called “Yahoo”, Dr. B can underline the importance of his telling. Furthermore, the emphasis on ‘yahoo’, ‘three’, and ‘synapses’ prosodically signals to co-participants to pay attention.

In (31) below, Leila is trying to find out how to deal with a homework assignment. Students have been asked to do critical reading of a popular press book on relationships, and the discussion concerns how to deal with the lack of references to actual research in popular press literature:

(31) “Asshole”

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In (31) below, Leila is trying to find out how to deal with a homework assignment. Students have been asked to do critical reading of a popular press book on relationships, and the discussion concerns how to deal with the lack of references to actual research in popular press literature:

(31) “Asshole”

Note: Title of Deborah Tannen’s (1991) bestselling book

270
4 reading for you (.)
5 Dr. B: right
6 Leila: and so she’ll cite one thing an- (1.2) years ago I
7 had read {{ 212 }}
8 which is kind of along the same (1.5)
9 [claim field=
10 Dr. B: [yeah
11 Leila: =a::s ‘you just don’t understand’ but
12 he didn’t cite anything (.)
13 ?
14 Dr. B: =yeah great (.) yeah {1.3} @213 we- that’s because
15 he’s an asshole (.)
16 ### [#
17 Leila: [no (.) and so-
18 Dr. B: @214 that’s the technical term for [what he is
19 [### [#
20 Leila: [so she could be
21 citing (.) mo:re (.) more scholarly ((cont.))

The laughter in line 17 follows almost immediately upon the completion of “asshole”. The shift from a seriously voiced concern to Dr. B’s attribution of the lack of references in the popular press book to the writer’s personality is abrupt, and although the co-interactants laugh appreciatively, Leila only smiles briefly in acknowledgement. Instead of joining the laughter, she pursues her line of inquiry in line 18, which Dr. B disattends in favor of elaborating his joke: “that’s the technical term for what he is”. This is met with more laughter. Because of the non-serious response to Leila’s voiced concern and the subsequent elaboration, we can be relatively certain that Dr. B’s word choice was non-accidental and that he intended the register shift to be laughable.

In contrast, the code-switching in (32) below is displayed as unintentional. Dr. A’s introduction of the expression “fire away” seems less consciously designed, and it is the orientation of others to the phrase that occasions the subsequent two laughables: 1) that Brandee became “nervous” when her peers are encouraged to “fire” feedback at her, and 2) that Dr. A subsequently assumes responsibility for an inappropriate choice of words:

---

212 title of another famous popular press writer’s book
213 smile voice
214 smile voice
“Fire away”

[OG 3:1]

1 XXXXXXXXXXXXxx[xx  
2 Dr. A: [okay we’ll try to be good about  
3 (. ) keeping track of our ti:me here so let’s  
4 just +fi:re awa:y  
5 (4.5) g  
6 Brandee: >makes you ne:rvous everybody st(hh)a:r-<  
7 # # # # #  
8 Jenna: [rFI:RE AWaY hhuh hhuh huh g  
9 =(# # # #)=  
10 Dr. A: [no I kno(hh)AND I VO::WED NOT TO USE VIOLENCE  
11 in my LAi:NGuage and then I use that stupid]g  
12  
13 Dr. A: [metaphor.hhh (. ) o:h-kay (. ) let’s- g  
14 Jennifer: =begi:n  
15 Dr. A: [let’s begin let’s let’s (. ) take this g  
16 # # #  
17 Dr. A: [invitation to provide feedback to Brandee g  
18 # # #  

The initial production of the impropriety in line 3 is not prosodically or facially cued as something to be treated as funny. As demonstrated in the 4.5 second pause after its completion, recipients do not immediately orient to the phrase as laughable either. It is when Brandee makes it known that it makes her nervous that everyone is staring at her that group laughter sets on. After the laughter onset, Jenna repeats the laughable expression in a loud and high pitched voice and continues to laugh with the others. In line 10, Dr. A displays recognition of her choice of words as what is laughable, at least from the vantage point of Jenna’s repeat, and she also accepts culpability for having used the phrase, against her own personal standards for proper language usage: “no I kno(hh)AND I VO::WED NOT TO USE VIOLENCE in my LAi:NGuage and then I use that stupid metaphor”. With a broad smile, she displays a
shift (o:h-kay) and then, with some trouble, goes on to repair what was problematic with her first directive; an endeavor that is treated appreciatively with group laughter.

7.3.4.2 Code-switching: some comments

An initial hypothesis about the selection of turn materials when projecting non-seriousness and enjoyment can be formulated from examination of the corpus. A speaker who consciously constructs a turn to be non-serious, teasing, or joking can utilize the device of including a lexical item that is hearably distinct from other materials in the turn near a turn-completion point. If the marked part of the turn is also accompanied by smiling or exaggerated prosody or emphasis, it is hearable as an intentional invitation to enjoyment.

If, on the other hand, the marked lexical item(s) either occurs at an earlier point in the turn, or is produced without any particular voice or speech delivery alterations, and if third-turn repair (Schegloff, 1992b) is initiated, the speaker had not intentionally projected a laughable. In both cases, however, recipients treat the turn design as laughable – either immediately following the completion of the item, or close to the repair initiation from self or others.

By laughing, recipients also exhibit awareness of social norms about context-appropriate talk styles, and the repair work functions to allocate and assume responsibility for violations of social standards. In all cases, participants display shared enjoyment, but in the unintentional cases, enjoyment is at the expense of producer (laughing at). In contrast, intentional word selection yields shared enjoyment (laughing with).

7.3.5 ‘Redundant’ contributions – a resource for fun

In this section, a particular type of joking/teasing activity designed to be momentarily amusing will be examined. In chapter 6, Drew’s (1987) description of the sequential environment for teasing activities was discussed in relation to embarrassment. Drew concluded that teasing often followed talk of a prior speaker whose turn was hearable as exaggerated in some way, for example, bragging, extolling, overdone complaints or elaborations.

In terms of immediately prior talk, the next three excerpts have similarities with the environments for teasing; however, the action that follows is less aggressive than teasing turns, and occurs after a turn that in some way
gets treated as ‘redundant’. With redundant, I refer to turns that project a next action that could have been inferred from prior talk, and by playfully ‘pointing out the obvious’, recipients of redundant turns indicate to the first speaker that the turn was superfluous, and also playfully make the producer a ‘butt’. Unless ‘pointing out the obvious’ actions are particularly aggressive, which they are not in this corpus, the ‘butt’ accepts the joking and laughs along and does not exhibit ‘po-faced’ serious responses. Consequently, these actions are generally much more benevolent than teasing activities. These moments are typically swift, and usually not elaborated for more than two turns, but they spice up a serious sequence with brief mutual enjoyment.

In (33) below, a prior turn is treated as asking a question with an obvious response. The overall topic is Jillian’s class project on family communication and schizophrenia. The excerpt is taken at the end of the topical episode, where Jillian has accounted for the many methodological and practical problems associated with studying causal relationships between the development of schizophrenia and family communication patterns. As mentioned earlier, students in the IN seminar can choose between doing a ‘proposition paper’ and an empirical study. Given the fact that students have limited time for their projects, and the problems with schizophrenia research Jillian has just accounted for, it may seem obvious that Jillian will do a theoretical paper instead of an empirical study, even though it has not explicitly been mentioned. In line 1, Lin asks Jillian whether she plans to do a proposition paper or an empirical study. First, Jillian offers a serious response, but Lin’s ‘redundant’ asking is utilized as a resource for inviting laughter in line 6:

(33) “Not doing a study”

[IN 1:1]
1 Lin: Jillian are you going to do a study or a proposition paper
2 Jillian: [(pt) o::h proposition (.) paper
3 (2.9)
4 Dr. B: yeah so for a [long time
5 Jillian: [I’m N(HH)OT doing a st(hh)u(hh)dy
6 on that hhhuh huh huh (huh
7 ?
8 Will: [huhhuh
9 Jillian: >hhi[yeah<|huh [huh huh
10 Jillian: >hhi[yeah<|huh [huh huh
11 Dr. B: [a long time they thought-=
12 Tracy:   [huhhuh
13 Dr. B: =they expected that schiz- (. ) that families
14 in which there were schizophrenic children
15 or adults ((cont.))

As we can see, Dr. B pursues a theoretical issue in line 5 without attending to Lin’s question as misaligned, but Jillian overlaps his turn with a laughing denial of the implication that she would do an empirical study on schizophrenia: “I’m N(NH)OT doing a st(hh)u(hh)dy on that hhhuh huh huh huh huh”. Her laughter is reciprocated by Will, and several others smile in response. Someone makes an inaudible comment in line 8, with which Jillian affiliates through laughter (line 10). This time, Tracy chuckles with Jillian and whoever made the comment (Lisa, Leila and Lin are momentarily out of camera range in lines 8-15), while Dr. B repairs his interrupted turn and pursues his task.

Excerpt (33) illustrates a typical case of ‘playfully pointing out the obvious’ after ‘redundant’ turns, in which the first turn is treated as superfluous. In (34) below, we see a similar sequential structure: the ‘redundant’ turn is first given a serious response, and in the next turn, the same speaker (Dr. B), does the ‘pointing out the obvious’. Just prior to this excerpt, Dr. B has distributed graded copies of last week’s assignment to students. The assignment, in this case, was collecting at least ten abstracts from databases on a certain topic, and writing a summary of the findings in these studies. Students have handed in both copies of the abstracts and their own summaries:

(34) ”Abstract pages”

[IN 3:1]
1 Leila: should we be looking for comments on the abstract
2   pages @222
3 Dr. B: no
4 (0.5)
5 Leila: @223okay (. ) I just wanted to make sure that if I
6 needed to look through the whole thing I should
7 and I [didn’t (I-] @224
8 Will: [scHHHHhhh

222 question prosody
223 smile voice
224 Dr. B nods twice and smiles
In lines 1-2, Leila addresses a request for information to Dr. B: “should we be looking for comments on the abstract pages”. In line 2, Dr. B first offers the serious response, which is negative. Leila displays comprehension of his response (okay) and goes on to explain why the question was asked. Here, it can be inferred that Leila herself suspects that the question was a bit superfluous, since she justifies it, and Dr. B nods with a smile at the end of her turn. In line 9, Dr. B does the ‘pointing out the obvious’: “no I- I figured it’s probably too late to edit something that’s already been published (.)so .hhhhhuh”, which is delivered with visible chuckling and a broad smile. In response, Leila laughs heartily, Jillian joins in, and several others smile in recognition. After line 14 where Dr. B builds on the joking, Lisa makes an affiliating comment and laughs.

In (35) below, we have a shorter episode of the same phenomenon. In line 1, Dr. B allocates the next turn to Lin in the rounds of taking turns presenting class projects as above. Lin is shuffling papers when she is addressed, and appears to be looking for the right piece of paper before she can begin her presentation:

(35) “For someone else”

[IN 1:1]

1 Dr. B: Lin
2 Lin: U:::h for me::: .hrrrrm θ
3 Dr. B: NO: for someone ;else θ
4 # # # # # # # #
5 Lin: I’m doing u:h {{cont.}}

225 smiles, adjusts his position on his chair, and chuckles twice after the completion of ‘so’
226 smiling
227 shuffling her papers and seems to be looking for something. Clears throat.
228 smiling, delivered with exaggerated emphasis on ‘no’ and ‘else’.
In response to Lin’s prolonged “U:::h for me↑ hhrrm”, Dr. B plays on the pronoun and upward intonation “me↑ “, and responds with pretending that he heard it as a real question, i.e. that Lin was really confused as to whom he was addressing. There is little doubt that Lin knew very well that she was the next speaker, since the students are seated in a semi-circle and the presentations were done in order of seating. Lin was to be next in turn after Lisa, who just finished her presentation.

Similarly, there is little doubt that Dr. B knew that Lin was aware of the fact that it was her turn to speak, but Lin (who is also a non-native speaker of English) does use a somewhat misplaced question intonation prefaced with the dative form “for”, which sounds a little odd in response to a direct addressing. Since Lin is busy getting her papers in order, it appears if her construction is deployed to delay/stall her onset of presentation talk, but Dr. B utilizes the slot made available by the incomplete turn to ‘point out the obvious’ in response to a ‘redundant question’: ‘↑ NO: for someone ↑ else”. This, as with the other examples in the corpus, invites and occasions appreciative laughter. There is also a possible delicacy in this joke, since Dr. B’s playful remark may be interpreted as making fun of Lin’s non-nativeness and the misuse of a word; however, it is not possible to establish if the group laughter is directed at Lin’s mistake or at Dr. B’s joking.

7.3.5 Making fun of ‘redundant’ contributions – concluding remarks

It could be proposed that ‘pointing out the obvious’ is in the family of actions doing irony, especially in the last example where Dr. B deliberately pretends ignorance in saying that he really meant ‘for someone else’. However, this is not applicable in the two first examples, where recipients of redundant turns are not saying the opposite of what they really mean, or playing ignorant. The interactional work accomplished by ‘redundant contributions’ → ‘pointing out the obvious’ is twofold: they are playfully produced rather than aggressively and thus contribute to a lighthearted moment, but they also playfully make visible a conversational transgression or turn design problem. In that sense, these activities have the social corrective function that teasing has, but since recipients of ‘pointing out the obvious’ turns usually treat them as laughable and non-threatening, they seem to be more closely related to conversational play and joking activities than to regulative actions. A moment of shared enjoyment is created, and participants can proceed into the next serious matter-at-hand still smiling.
7.3.6 Joint management of disorder: lighthearted topicalization of turn-taking problems

7.3.6.1 Turn-taking problems

The next four excerpts are taken from shift-implicative environments where either two speakers initiate talk in the same slot, or there is momentary ambiguity about what next or prior speaker has projected. Collisions in the interactional traffic are more frequent in multi-party interaction conversation, where multiple speakers can monitor transition spaces and initiate talk in projected transition slots. However, as we know from the literature on turn-taking organization (see chapter 2), speakers have access to methods for dealing with simultaneous talk onset; in particular, methods of repair (Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson, 1972). Repair, as we have seen in chapter 6, can be a risky interpersonal activity, but in other cases, minor repair is done without any problems or any particular emotion displays.

The cases examined below share a common feature: when repair is initiated because of simultaneous talk onset or because of some misreading of prior talk and action is made apparent, participants topicalize the problem and make it available as a laughable for the interaction. In most cases I have come across in this corpus, the joint management of the trouble source is swift and the problem gets repaired rather quickly, and mutual enjoyment functions to close the activity. In one case, the trouble source is used as a resource for making a laughable allusion, which takes the activity a little further to include response cries (Goffman, 1981) and subsequent assessments of the joke. It will be demonstrated that turn-taking problems, if not just repaired but topicalized, function as a resource for temporary enjoyment. I have located three variants of lighthearted management of turn-taking problems: simultaneous turn onset in transition space, acknowledged misinterpretation of the location of transition space, and acknowledged misreading of a projected next action.

7.3.6.2 Simultaneous turn onset in transition space

In (36) below, there is a 2.2 second pause after a longer turn by Dr. B. At the exact same time, Tracy and Ally initiate talk, and then halt abruptly when as they become aware of the problem:
(36) “Can’t stop”

[IN 2:2]
1   (2.2)
2 Ally:  [u:hm]
3 Tracy:  [there’s] (0.4) "I’m sorry" @229
4 Ally:  >oh no go ahead<
5 Tracy:  >"no you go"< @230
6 Ally:  no:: you go (.).HHHHH @231
7 Tracy:  @ 232°can’t stop sorry° (.).HHHHHH U:HM (.). @233 I  
8 do it all [the ti(hh)me @234
9 Ally:  ["no you: go huh huh" @235
10 (0.5)
11 Tracy:  I guess there’s the notion of (.). two people
12 can be similar in ((cont.))

As we can see, Ally’s “u:hm” and Tracy’s “there’s” occur simultaneously, as an outcome of the two of them having monitored the pause as the transition space it is, and accidentally initiate talk at the exact same time. The overlap is thus very brief, and resolved “in one beat” (Schegloff, 2000b:22) as both speakers drop out of the simultaneous talk. Tracy is the one to initiate repair of the trouble source with an apology (line 3). Ally responds by dismissing the apology and offering to Tracy to complete her initiated turn (>oh no go ahead<), to which Tracy smilingly replies ">no you go". Ally again rejects Tracy’s offer, this time with a prolonged vowel and emphasis on the pronominal reference: "no:: you go (.).HHHHH". An audible inbreath in turn-final position, combined with Ally’s visible chuckling and body movements, show treatment of the back-and-forth yielding and rejection as humorous. Instead of resuming her original talk from line 3, Tracy produces a theatrically whispered account + apology + extended account: “°can’t stop sorry° (.).HHHHHH U:HM (.). I do it all [the ti(hh)me”. The inbreath is produced with a wide smile, while she averts her gaze from Ally, and she chuckles at the end of her turn. In line 10, Ally overlaps Tracy’s account with a reported talk dramatization and subsequent laughter. Meanwhile, other co-participants have been smiling at the playful exchange.

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229 smiles
230 smile voice, smiling at Ally
231 throws head back and laughs – laugh is inaudible on tape but visible on recording
232 whispers theatrically
233 averts gaze, shakes head
234 covers mouth with her hand
235 gestures with both arms forward, chuckles, and re-enacts the prior exchange
Because of participants’ treatment of the turn-taking problem as humorous – through laughter, smiling, dramatizations and playful repetition of offers and rejection, the interactional problem becomes a slot for temporary enjoyment in between serious matters. The turn-taking collision problem is also actively prolonged although several opportunities for closing it have been made available - Tracy could, for example, have continued her halted turn at the completion of Ally’s first offer, which is a frequent pattern in everyday conversation, or Tracy could have resumed her talk without offering a second apology and acceptance of responsibility. Alternatively, Tracy or Ally could have continued their overlapping talk until one of them would have dropped out and their own turn comes “into the clear” after the overlap (c.f. Schegloff, 2000b:13). Although practices of etiquette in turn-taking warrant repair work when rules are violated, such as Tracy’s acknowledgement of responsibility in line 3, the repair is actively overdone in this sequence. By repeatedly offering each other the opportunity to complete the halted turns, Ally and Tracy display generosity toward each other; however, this is also done competitively through each speaker’s insistence on obtaining acceptance of their offers. The playful competition is also displayed as humorous through the continuous smiling, subsequent laughter, and dramatized reported talk.

Now, where did the episode go from regular repair to playfulness, and why? The fact that Tracy was first to initiate repair may have projected that Ally show the same kind of ‘generosity’, so that if Ally would have resumed her regular talk immediately after Tracy’s apology, it would have appeared as if Tracy was solely responsible for the accidental overlap. In reciprocating Tracy’s action with an offer, Ally is probably only orienting to what was constructed in the prior turn. When Tracy rejects Ally’s offer and quietly makes an offer of her own, Tracy is smiling coyly, which again is treated by Ally as insufficient grounds for accepting the offer. I argue that the playfulness starts with Tracy’s smiling rejection + offer in line 5. For the playfulness to be effective, however, both Tracy and Ally must carefully monitor ongoing talk for any projections of an immediate desire to resume regular talk. Their sensitivity to ongoing talk is also visible in the first overlap. Although the initial overlap in lines 2 and 3 was brief, only one syllable, Ally and Tracy halt their talk at the exact same time.

Opting to enter into a playful competition after routine and necessary repair initiations have been made does the interactional work of topicalizing the interactional problem. By not only repairing the problem, but also making the repair work the topic of a short exchange, speakers can neutralize any possible
negative effects of interruptions\(^{236}\), for example, threats to face in terms of being perceived as rude or as non-generous in terms of turn yielding. Furthermore, prolonging the repair sequence to the point of comical competition allows participants to exchange smiling, gazes, and laughter. This type of activity, where overlaps/simultaneous speech are made available as accountable actions, are probably more frequent in less intimate interactions, such as institutional settings, where there may be a greater preference for politeness and agreement. Extensive accounts of overlapping talk, for example, Jefferson (1986) and Schegloff (2000b) did not include cases where simultaneous talk occasioned apologies, accounts or topicalizations of the turn-yielding problem. However, the overdone politeness and generosity in excerpt (36) are not to be taken as overly formal actions where Tracy and Ally display extreme cautiousness in seizing the next available turn. In contrast, the smiling, laughing and almost identical repeats of prior turns indicate playfulness rather than extreme politeness. Although the sequence interrupts the flow of regular class talk, it provides an opportunity for both enjoyment and enhanced rapport.

In (37) from a different recording, we have a similar instance, but one that is closed at an earlier point. Leila and Tracy monitor the transition space after Dr. B’s prolonged vowel, and start talking at the exact same time:

(37) “Uh-uh”

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[IN 3:2]
1 Dr. B: uhm (. ) other [other negative]
2 Maryann:[( )]
3 Dr. B: (0.5) uses that people put (. ) these technologies to:
4  
5 Leila: [uhhm]
6 Tracy: [we’ve-] oops so[rry @237
7 Leila: [>oh go ahead<=
8 Tracy: =you go=
9 Leila: =uh-uh @238
10 Tracy: [uh I used it a lot and=]
11 Leila: [hhhiHUH HUH HUH HUH huh huh
```

\(^{236}\) I usually prefer not to refer to simultaneous talk or overlaps as “interruptions” since its vernacular usage has analytical problems in terms of participants’ own treatments of such occurrences. However, what I am referring to here is not the interactional practice of talking while someone else is talking, but to the interpersonal effects of simultaneous talk or overlaps, that participants may view as “interruptive” of their own speech, depending on the onset place.

\(^{237}\) smiles

\(^{238}\) shakes head and smiles, averts gaze, dismissively waves one hand
Interestingly, the overlapped turn components are almost identical to those in (36): Leila’s “uhm” and Tracy’s “we’re”. This similarity may be entirely coincidental, but nevertheless, the speaker who uses “uhm” is the one who eventually wins the little competition of who gets to yield. A tentative explanation is that Tracy, in both cases, has initiated what appears to be an already pre-formulated turn (“we’ve” and “there’s”), whereas Leila and Ally have only projected forthcoming talk; a willingness to speak, with their “uhm” tokens (e.g. Clark & Fox Tree, 2002). Consequently, the “uhm” producers may be monitoring the other speaker’s initiated talk as having advanced further than their own, and they may insist on yielding because they do not mind extra time to prepare their talk, or because they treat the overlapping turn as being more relevant than their own projected turn at this particular point. However, there is nothing that evidences that the yielders even perceive the exact formulation of the other, since overlapping talk often prevents hearability of other turns.

In any case, both speakers drop out of the overlapping talk in “one beat”, and Tracy goes on to display registration of the problematic overlap (oops) and to apologize (sorry). The apology itself is overlapped by Leila’s rapidly produced offer (>oh go ahead<), which in turn is rejected by Tracy’s latched second offer (=you go=). Leila rapidly rejects the offer by shaking her head, smiling and making a dismissive gesture with one hand while producing “uh-uh”. Leila’s rejection is more forceful than Ally’s and Tracy’s in (36), and her conduct is observable as “I won’t hear of it”, rather than the more suggestion-like rejection that Ally made (no:: you go). Tracy does not pursue any more offers of turn yielding, and takes up talking again in line 10, which is completely overlapped by Leila’s laughter in line 11.

There is less playfulness in this exchange and the turn-yielding problem is resolved more quickly, but nevertheless, both the speakers involved in the overlap, and smiling co-participants display that they find the occurrence amusing rather than interruptive. The overlap incident is in itself treated as interactionally problematic since speakers drop out of overlapping talk and initiate repair procedures, but the actions of apology → rejection + offer → rejection + offer → rejection are eventually treated as laughable, and as a playfully resolved problem. An initial observation, at this point, is that when speakers make available accountability and solutions to each other, turn shift problems can actually enhance enjoyment instead of decreasing it.
7.3.6.3 Repairing misinterpretation of projected talk onset

The next case is rather different from the two prior examples. It does not involve turn-initial collision, but rather, a misreading of a projected next turn. The context here is the feedback activity, and a new feedback session is about to be initiated. Prior to this excerpt, Dr. A has been soliciting information on which of the fifteen students are going to present their papers after the break. A few students had raised their hands, and Dr. A had confirmed with them that they intended on presenting their papers after the upcoming break. Lisa is seated next to Dr. A, who does not perceive that Lisa has her hand raised. Will makes it known that Lisa’s hand is raised and Dr. A turns toward Lisa to confirm that she also plans on presenting later the same evening. However, as is made clear in the next turn, Lisa had not raised her hand in order to be counted as one of the students who were planning to present; instead, Lisa is still focused on the feedback giving and had raised her hand to “make a comment” on Annie’s paper to be discussed next:

(38) “Gonna comment”

\[OG 3:2\]

1 Dr. A: oh-kay
2 (1.8)
3 Will: Lis- ²
4 Dr. A: \(\) Li:sa you need to go too
5 Lisa: “I wuz gonna make a comment”
6 Dr. A: oh you were gonna \underline{COMMENT}; [I’m so(hh)rry]\(\)
7 [ ## #
8 # # [## ## # # #
9 Dr. A: \(\) NOW I’M \underline{REALLY GETTING NERVOUS HERE (.)
10 OH:kay (.) we’re \underline{moving to Annie’s

In line 4, Dr A turns toward Lisa and asks whether she needs “to go too”, meaning, to present her paper, after the break. Once Dr. A realizes that Will’s “Lis-” had been misleading in interpreting Lisa’s gesture, she displays a new understanding of Lisa’s turn prefaced with the change-of-state token “oh” (Heritage, 1984). Group laughter sets on as Dr. A continues with “I’m so(hh)rry”, and by joining the laughter, Dr. A also exhibits willingness to be

² gestures toward Lisa whose hand is waving
²² turns toward Lisa
²⁴ smiles, adjusts her position on her chair, averts gaze from Lisa
²⁴ smiles broadly
laughed at. In line 9, she jokingly states that she is “↑REALLY GETTING NERVOUS HERE”, after which group laughter in progress increases in volume and pitch. Dr. A’s actions in this moment, both verbally and non-verbally, are similar to those of Lin (excerpt 13). In (13), Lin managed her initial embarrassment of having made a faux-pas by willingly and actively being part of the activity of being laughed at. Consequently, potential embarrassment in repair sequences can swiftly be converted into occasions of mutual enjoyment.

The turn-taking problem here has nothing to do with yielding, but it does involve a problem with turn allocation. Lisa’s hand is raised in a slot where another activity is in progress, i.e. finding out which of the students that are going to present papers later, and Will apparently reads Lisa’s hand gesture as signing up for presentation. The slot for the Lisa’s talk projection is what is problematic, but nevertheless, Dr. A assumes responsibility for the trouble source. Once the problem has been repaired, the trouble becomes a laughable. Initially, we probably have a case of laughing at, whereas Dr. A’s embedded laugh particles, subsequent laughter and joking converts the laughable to an occasion of laughing with her. Enjoyment, in this case, was not initially pursued, but once the other students have displayed treatment of the problem as amusing, Dr. A acknowledges and consolidates the moment of enjoyment by willingly and with exhibited humor accepts the problem as amusing.

7.3.6.4 Repairing possible mis-monitoring of transition space → joke

In (39) below, a self-repair initiation becomes a laughable. Because of its turn constructional units, it is also converted into an allusive joke.

(39) “Are you done”

[IN 1:1]

1 Ally: uhm (.).hrrrm (..) I’m planning on doing
2 something with (..) sexual miscommunication and
3 consent and non consent and we have talked (0.6)@243
4 and that’s pretty much ( ) where I am
5 .hhhuh right now yknow I’m just reading
6 (0.5)
7 Dr. B: so if I say no you can’t do that you’ll understand
8 I really mean ;yes @244

@243 addressing Dr. B at “we”
@244 smile voice
Without going into details about the first 17 lines of the excerpt, we can see that there has already been some joking about the topic of Ally’s class project on sexual consent (lines 7-8). The students are seated in a semi-circle, and students take turns according to the seating arrangement in briefly presenting their research. The problem occurs after the first joking and laughter sequence between lines 7-17, when Lisa initiates talk about her project without specifically having been allocated the next turn. Consequently, by initiating talk where Dr. B stops laughing, she displays having analyzed the joking and laughter, and Ally’s lack of further talk about her project, as a completed topic. She begins talking about her own project, but halts her talk abruptly after “becuz I’m doing mine-”. At this point, it appears as if she retroactively realizes that she perhaps did not analyze prior talk accurately, and she initiates repair directed at Ally: “are you done”. She does not appear to be inviting laughter, as her facial expression is a bit ‘flustered’, but the remaining participants start laughing loudly in response. Almost immediately after the

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245 nods, smiles
246 other co-participants smile at the joke
247 smiles, facing Ally
248 Lisa abruptly turns to Ally seated next to her
249 smile voice, ‘mock horror’
onset of group laughter, Lisa begins laughing heartily herself. It is at this point that Dr. B introduces a “semantic script-switch trigger” (Norrick, 2003:1336) with his surface treatment of Lisa’s repair “are you ↑done” as referring to reaching orgasm: “that’s a TERRIBLE thing to say in the midst of sexual communication”. The group laughter increases in both volume and pitch, and Tracy and Ally make choral assessments of Dr. B’s pun.

The interactional problem in (39) resulted from having seized the next turn in a slot where a transition point had been projected, but where there was some ambiguity for Lisa as to whether the topical episode had come to a close. Lisa’s repair occasioned immediate laughter and joking, and the turn-taking confusion is actively made available as a laughable with subsequent joking. The laughter in line 22 is much stronger than in earlier slots, and several participants tilt their heads back while laughing, which indicates exhilaration rather than enjoyment (Ruch, 1992:606). The sequence is then unproblematically closed as Lisa resumes her talk by repeating her initiated turn.

7.3.6.5 Interactional problems actively converted to laughables – some comments

As demonstrated, interactional problems can be converted into moments of mutual enjoyment and exhilaration through voluntary topicalization of the problem. Various interactional problems such as simultaneous talk, self-initiated repair or an ambiguous transition space do not in themselves create an immediate environment for mutual enjoyment and lightheartedness. Instead, as we have seen above, the enjoyment is actively and interactionally pursued by participants after repair has been initiated using context-sensitive strategies, such as playful competition for turn yielding, actively accepting responsibility for a trouble source, or other-initiated joking about the problem. By making interactional problems available as a topical resource, negative interpersonal outcomes can be neutralized, and involvement can be temporarily increased.

There are, naturally, other occasions where interactional problems are not topicalized in this corpus. Some disruptions are not treated as problematic at all, and others are resolved instantly by the dropping out of one speaker. The main reason I decided to include these particular types in this chapter is that they illustrate creative ways in which problematic turns can be utilized as resources for mutual enjoyment by participants in multi-party interaction. For further investigation into these matters, I am particularly curious about the role of accountability for the trouble source in converting an interactional problem into playfulness, as in (36) and (37). This initial investigation showed that the
person who first assumes responsibility for the trouble source is the one who finally loses the playful battle over who gets to display generosity and yield.

More research is needed in order to better understand whether this organization is context-sensitive or relatively context-free. These environments could also have embarrassment-relevance (see chapter 6) in that they involve repair and a momentarily awkward interaction that is converted into a laughable in the pursuit of embarrassment avoidance. However, in the analyses in this section have focused particularly on interactional disorder that participants orient to as potentially enjoyable, and in which they actively pursue enjoyment through their actions. In displaying direct orientation to the interactional problem, and doing so in a playful manner, participants actively converted these problems into matters of mutual enjoyment.

7.3.7 Similes and parallels to serious matters – adding lightheartedness to the academic endeavor

7.4.7.1 Vacillating between serious and non-serious matters through mundane parallels

This section is concerned with humor, but with a particular type of humorous activity; namely, the playful introduction of mundane life parallels to academic topics discussed. On the surface, these activities deviate from the regular class activities being pursued, but they are also carefully designed to fit the local context. Furthermore, these actions serve to volunteer understanding of the topics being discussed, and their occurrence in the midst of lecture-type activities display close monitoring of ongoing talk as well as emotional involvement with the topics-at-hand. In addition, the comparative action of making a mundane parallel to an institutional matter-at-hand makes possible a moment of enjoyment with only a minor digression from the lecture-format trajectory. The excerpts are rather long, and the analysis will be focused on the immediate surroundings of these devices, so other structural features will be explicated in gross terms. The central points are marked with arrows.

Excerpt (40) below has been divided into two segments. In the first segment, the class is discussing research on co-dependent relationships based on chapters and articles that were assigned as reading for the current seminar. As we can see, Dr. B is explaining the notion of “too much invested to quit”, i.e. when people choose to stay in abusive relationships because so much time, effort or material things have been put into the relationship construct that it is difficult to leave. Note how Leila’s turn in line 8 displays her candidate understanding of the notion by volunteering a comparison.
(40a) “Bad stock”

\[ IN \ 2:2 \]
1 Dr. B: and of course that- and that gets into another
2 thing that keeps people in in abusive
3 relationships and that’s I think I mention in here
4 the notion of too much invested to quit (. ) that
5 there are times when we feel like we’ve just- (.)
6 .hh okay (. ) I’ll stay a little bit longer (. ) to
7 see if it gets better (. ) [stay a little bit lon-
8 Leila: [it’s like holding
9 onto a bad stock
10 Dr. B: hm;
11 Leila: [it’s like holding onto a bad stock=
12 Dr. B: [yeah exactly
13 Leila: [heh heh HEH HEH (. ) people should
14 approach relationships with the ten percent
15 ru(hh)le (. )
16 Dr. B: @ 250yeah=
17 Leila: =[HUH HUH HUH HUH HUH HUH HUH HUH
18 Ally: ={e(hhh) heh heh ah ah
19 Dr. B: yeah ( )
20 Dr. B: we- and it=
21 Leila: =well actually maybe not if it’s the gross ten
22 percent you’re supposed to sell too
23 [s(hh)o (hh) huh huh

As we can see, Dr. B has introduced exemplification of what the notion implicates in close relationships by dramatizing a hypothetical turn or thought in the form of reported talk “I’ll stay a little bit longer (. ) to see if it gets better”. The design of Leila’s turn is hearable as a comparison (“it’s like”), as she compares Dr. B’s description to “holding onto a bad stock”, which is repeated after Dr. B’s repair initiation (lines 10-11). In line 12, Leila’s candidate understanding of “too much invested to quit” is accepted by Dr. B’s emphatically produced agreement “yeah exactly”.

After the initial agreement token has been produced, Leila overlaps Dr. B’s turn with laughter, which prefaces the laughable inference she has made from her own comparison and Dr. B’s agreement display: “people should approach relationships with the ten percent ru(hh)le”. Ally also

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displays affiliation with Leila’s actions (line 18). In lines 19-20, Dr. B attempts to pursue the theoretical talk, but Leila displays having second thoughts about the validity of her comparison in lines 21-23, and Dr. B’s talk initiation is delayed until line 24 in (40b) below.

What excerpt (40a) illustrates is highly relevant for the instructional activity. Although Leila’s simile is entirely volunteered, it is carefully fitted to surrounding talk in that it is volunteered as an upshot of Dr. B’s explanation. Her first action is produced at a slot where Dr. B has made available a possible transition point, and the talk onset is simultaneous with Dr. B’s initiated repetition of the reported talk dramatization. It would be to go too far to say that it was invited, since during this part of the recording Dr. B is doing most of the talking, but it is offered as a practical extension of the notion Dr. B has been describing. By displaying a candidate understanding, Leila not only makes her own reading of prior talk known, but she invites an affirmative response. When Dr. B treats Leila’s simile as valid, this particular inferencing is made available to other participants. In this way, participants in instructional activities negotiate the meaning of the topic discussed and can work to collaboratively resolve incorrect or incomplete understandings (c.f. Lerner, 1995).

Leila’s turn functions to bring the academic talk into a new semantic domain, that is, stock management. However, invoking a different semantic domain does not necessarily have to be ‘less serious’ than the academic activities in progress. It is the interactional treatment of such a shift or comparison that turns it into something enjoyable for participants and this is particularly accomplished when Leila utilizes the inference made to make a joke about the similarities between the stock market and romantic relationships.

Contextually relevant inferences like this are, in this corpus, relatively frequent, and not all of them are marked (prosodically or with embedded laughter) as amusing semantic shifts. Some primarily function to display and negotiate candidate understandings, and once confirmed or rejected, the topic talk progresses from there. However, it appears as if the greater the semantic domain leap is, the more the inference turn is marked as ‘amusing’ and laughter-inviting. The sequence continues below:

(40b) “Ice cream”

24 Dr. B:  [yeah (. ) we- s- same thing with gambling yknow
25 a lot of people set strict limits yknow okay
26 (. ) twenty dollars (. ) t- for the evening (. )

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and then I go do something else uh and other
people they get to that twenty dollars and if
it’s like they’ve had a couple-

Dr. B: of hands that did well but they but they’re
down to twenty dollars and they’re thinking oh
you know I can [get that back] on that next bet-

Ally: [( ] .hhhh

Dr. B: or I can get that back on this next bet .hh or
one more bet yknow (?) and so there’s this never
ending progression

Dana: I’m like that with ice cream

[I’ll just have ONE bowl yknow an’ that’s IT
and then I’m like oh maybe just a little more]

Leila: you should get those little carnation cups

Leila: ( ) with vanilla ice cream with the little hot
fudge in it or the raspberry strawberry jam in ;it

Dana: and then you got one serving

Leila: and that’s IT y’all you get (hh)et

Leila: heh heh heh heh heh

Jillian: course you could ( then get another one )

Dana: yeah (.hhhhhh

Dr. B: [I can I can see Dana w- writing her

Jillian: HUH HUH [HUH huh

Dr. B: okay disrupted- (. ) disrupted

interpersonal relationships ((cont.))

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The talk about compulsive behavior continues with Dr. B’s continued comparing of the “too much invested to quit” notion to another context –

297 switching to high-pitched childlike voice, scoops ‘ice cream’ with one hand
gambling. Again, he uses reported speech constructions to exemplify the gambler mindset. In line 40, Dana volunteers a simile that is indexically marked as a comparison with talk in her prior turns: “I’m like that with ice cream”. The semantic domain leap here is rather distinct, and participants immediately orient to her turn as non-serious by laughing chorally and loudly. Dana elaborates on her comparison in lines 40-41, and here, she shifts into a child-like voice when she produces a talk dramatization to illustrate her own thought. As demonstrated in 7.3.1, the use of exaggerated prosody and voice alterations in talk dramatizations are frequently deployed for inviting laughter. Co-participants smile, and for the rest of the sequence, participation is significantly elevated as students take turns contributing to the resolution of Dana’s ice cream obsession. In line 54, Dr. B displays orientation to prior talk by jokingly accepting Dana’s simile: “I can see Dana (. . .) w- writing her popular press book (. . .) if relationships were ice cream”.

7.4.7.2 Making mundane parallels in ‘serious’ talk: some comments on 40a-b

As demonstrated above, the volunteering of a mundane parallel to something discussed as part of the institutional activities in the seminars functioned to momentarily create amusement. The pattern described here is rooted in the institutional activity of discussing readings, and makes possible both the achievement of intersubjectivity and the shift to a less formal perspective display on matters-at-hand. This is perhaps the pattern in this chapter where the institutional nature of the accomplishment of enjoyment is the most obvious.

Noteworthy about sequences (40a-b) is that the first comparison is dealt with as a serious and accurate application of the theoretical notion (even though Leila herself displays that it was laughable), whereas Dana’s turn occasions multi-party involvement and joking. Given that the semantic leap in Dana’s turn was hearable as a non-serious comparison, it also functions to invite further joking. Dr. B does not exhibit any unwillingness to allow the joking to continue, and thus, a moment of mutual enjoyment is actively pursued collaboratively by interactants. Depending on how the display of candidate understanding is designed, they are treated either seriously or as a resource for playfulness. By volunteering assessments of, or parallels to, topics-at-hand, participants also exhibit excitement about matters discussed and display their willingness to excavate practical implication of theories by bridging personal experience with academic matters. Although Dana’s simile about ice cream clearly derails the serious topic at talk, it makes possible a less restricted turn-
taking system in which anyone can participate, and offers both a break from ordinary activities and a moment of shared enjoyment.

7.3.8 Creating heightened involvement: collaborative storytelling and joke-building activities

7.3.8.1 Collaboratively constructed stories, reportings and jokes

Shorter or longer reportings, narratives or stories are recurrent features of social interaction. Conversation analysts have since long been interested in participation frameworks and collaborative constructions of stories, narratives, and narrative jokes\(^{252}\). Work in the area has demonstrated, for example, that narratives and jokes are not products of one narrator, but the trajectory of a storytelling or joke narrative is shaped by co-participation. Because of the interactional nature of such activities, fixed roles as narrator, or teller on the one hand, and observer or recipient on the other, are unproductive as analytic constructs. Such classification simplifies the in situ negotiation of participant frameworks that fail to account for how narratives, stories, and jokes get co-constructed through involvement invitations and recipient actions that shape the trajectory of a telling. Also, it has been demonstrated that a variety of interpersonal goals can be achieved via actions taken in the course of a telling.

Storytelling activities and conversational joking are extremely rich areas of investigation for talk-in-interaction researchers. For the present chapter, I only aspire to demonstrate how certain reportings and joking activities are related to heightened involvement and the achievement of intimacy and shared enjoyment in multi-party interaction, and not to offer any extensive accounts of the interactional structures of these activities in themselves. Shorter joke narratives, narratives cued as amusing, and storytellings in between serious class activities are relatively frequent in my corpus. However, to demonstrate the collaborative nature of a reporting that is subsequently converted into a joke, I have selected one example that is particularly illustrative of the heightened involvement that generates enjoyment. Here, the collaborative nature of a humorous telling works to elicit multi-party enjoyment, exhilaration, and increased participation. In (41) below, a lecture-type monologue is temporarily derailed by an amusing co-occurring incident, and participants collaborate in

\(^{252}\) For extensive descriptions and analyses of conversational narratives, joke narratives, and storytelling that have informed my interest and thinking about these activities, see e.g. Jefferson (1978); Polyani (1982); Goodwin (1984); Mandelbaum (1989; 1993); Sacks (1992a, b); Schegloff (1997); Beach (2000); Norrick (2000).
prolonging the mutual enjoyment by disattending to projected completion points. Reported speech and talk dramatizations will be recognized, but the central point to the analysis is the overall organization of a collaboratively built reporting which turns into joking.

7.3.8.2 Collaborative reporting → collaborative joking

The excerpt below is taken from a sequence where Dr. B is in the progress of a longer monologue. While Dr. B is talking, just prior to line 1 in this excerpt, Lisa and Leila are whispering to each other, and eventually, Leila leans down and picks something up from her bag which she gives to Lisa. Lisa puts the tablet Leila gave her in her mouth and takes a sip of water from a bottle. Tracy, Will and Dana, seated across the room, are monitoring the quiet exchange between Lisa and Leila and begin whispering and laughing quietly. Dr. B observes the movement and quiet talk, and treats Tracy’s talk as an attempt to get a comment across (line 1). The interaction then embarks on a new trajectory as Tracy explains what the chatting was about, and others collaborate in explaining to Dr. B what just took place:

(41) “Drug interaction”

[IN 3:2]
1 Dr. B: so e- u:h Tracy did you have a-
   (0.5)
2 Tracy: u::hm :no(hh)huh huh [huh (. ) we were laughing=
4 Will: [huhhuh
5 Tracy: =at the [drug intera:ction over here=
6 Dr. B:         [↑o:h
7 Tracy: ={huh huh
8 Jillian: {hhu:h huh
9 Lisa: [I’m sorry ( ) (. ) I said I have a headache=
10 Leila: ={she said she had a headache ( )
11 Lisa: ={and SHERZ like O:H :here and she( )=
12 =a [ha:ndful of :pills §23. hhh=
13 Jillian: ={do you want [some drugs too:
14 Lisa: ={huh huh huh huh huh huh
15 Tracy: {ye:ah [she’s like ( )
16 Dana: [sschhhhh

§23 holds cupped hand in front of chest

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The transcription cannot fully do the animated flurry of activities justice, and parts of talk were impossible to decipher since it is produced during loud laughter, but as we can see, the sequence is built upon collaborative narrative and joke building around the “drug interaction” that took place during Dr. B’s monologue prior to the exchange above.

As we can see, it is Tracy who volunteers the introduction of the topic. Dr. B’s incomplete turn treated Tracy’s laughter/quiet comments as a projected comment on the current topic, and Tracy responds by rejecting that understanding (uhhm ;no(hh) huh huh huh (.)). After some laughter, she

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goes on to account for her prior actions: “we were laughing at the drug interaction over here”, and Dr. B displays assimilation of this new information with the change-of-state token “↑o:h “ (Heritage, 1984). There is additional laughter and smiling, and Lisa, who was part of the drug interaction, collaborates in explaining what happened, since she has direct access to knowledge of the prior event. Her turn is prefaced with an apology (“I’m sorry (   )”) and continues with a reporting of her own prior talk: “I said I have a headache”. Leila, who was also part of the event now topocalized, overlaps the second part of Lisa’s turn with a repeat of Lisa’s telling “she said she had a headache (   )” while Lisa continues with “and SHEZ like O:Hi here and she (   ) a handful of pills .hhh”. Here, Lisa uses like-prefixing (Romaine & Lange, 1991), intonation and prosody to make clear that she is reporting Leila’s speech. Jillian (line 13) simultaneously inserts a talk dramatization turn: “do you want some drugs too”. In line 20, Tracy switches from re-telling the actual event into exaggeratedly dramatizing it by enacting Leila’s role in the drug interaction: “dividing u::p” and “THESE are G00:D these are BA::D”.

There is a possible closing point in line 23, which Tracy notices, displayed in the marking of her own accountability in the episode initiation (sorry), but Dr. B opts to make his own contribution to what now is a joking sequence: “did she take out a little plastic tray and-“. Tracy is instantly drawn back into the conversational play, agrees with Dr. B, and makes yet another enactment of Leila’s role as the classroom pharmacist: “these are five dollars these are fif(hh)teen”. All these contributions also occasion laughter in between turns. In line 29, another possible episode completion point is made available as Jillian’s laughter fades, but Lisa turns to Leila and seems to be playfully enacting that she and Leila will get together later for another ‘drug dealing interaction’. This occasions more laughter, and Dr. B continues with another playful question regarding how Leila distributed the aspirin: “did she give you instructions like take- yknow three minutes after eating and-“. There is additional group laughter, and Lisa playfully calls attention to the fact that this interaction is being video-recorded, “↑HEY this is all on ↑film (. ) heh hehheheheheh”, which invites and occasions another round of laughter. The episode is closed when Will raises his hand and Dr. B assigns him the next turn, and Tracy again makes it known that she was responsible for the initiation of this joking trajectory.

There are several points I want to raise regarding the choices participants make in this particular sequence. The episode comes into being interactionally...
when Dr. B notices that Tracy and others are interacting ‘on the side’. The topic is immediately cued as amusing when Tracy laughs mid-utterance in explaining she had been talking although she did not intend to comment on the theoretical discussion. Interactants could have utilized the slots of shift implicature made available, but instead, they chose to re-actualize the reporting with laughing reported speech, elaborations, talk dramatizations, and dramatizations of Leila’s presumed actions as the class ‘drug dealer’. The choices participants make demonstrates that they enjoy this non-serious break from serious talk, including Dr. B, who could have worked to bring the initiated reporting to a close and return to serious matters-at-hand. What I particularly want to underline with this sequence is the build-up of joint enjoyment and exhilaration, accomplished through high and simultaneous involvement, and the stepwise movement from collaborative and competitive reporting on a preceding event to collaborative joking.

First, the group laughter, particularly in lines 17 and 27, is loud and high-pitched, and the video shows all interactants sharing in the laughter. If I were to describe the sound of the group laughter, it moves from initial “heh” sounds to a more wide-open “hah” sound toward the middle of the laughter. Ruch, for example, (1992:608) describes the laughter of exhilaration as moving from e-vocalizations to a-vocalizations in the expulsion or air. If we look at the sequential place of the two loudest laughter occasions, we also see that they occur at turning points of the episode: the line 17 laughter comes after the highly involved and simultaneous reportings of what had actually happened, and the line 27 laughter comes after the joking sequence has been re-opened after a possible completion point. In that sense, both these group laughs are ‘first’ laughs after the interaction has taken a new turn – one after the reportings of the actual event, and another after the interaction has moved away from mere reportings to Dr. B’s contribution has displayed that the sequence has turned into joking instead of reportings.

Secondly, the unusually high involvement, with several students doing reporting at the same time, speaks for heightened arousal. In other ‘enjoyment’ sequences in the corpus, speakers still strive to make their contributions according to the ‘one at a time’ rule of conversational interaction. But as we can see, that rule is temporarily suspended in favor of multi-party involvement in re-telling and joking about the prior event. What, then, are the simultaneous contributions doing interactionally? The actions between lines 3-18 can be summarized as follows:
Between lines 9 and 16, all the turns partly or completely overlap the talk of others, and what this does is that it presents different versions of reality in recounting an event from different participation roles. Interactants are simultaneously collaborating in accounting for the event and competing in getting their own version out there. The competitive and collaborative narration of the event thus provides an opportunity for “proposing, inferring, reposing, and inferring again, versions of reality” (Mandelbaum, 1993:247). The event was made available in the interaction from the perspective of an observer, Tracy. Although Tracy is formally responsible for de-railing Dr. B’s train of thought, Lisa then accepts responsibility for the disruption with her “I’m sorry” and subsequently telling her version of what caused the interruption (I said I have a headache and...). Leila, who was also part of the talked-about event, also goes on to present her version (she said she had a headache), and by appointing Lisa’s talk as the initiator of the event, she also resists full responsibility of it, and presents her own subsequent actions as ‘responses’ to Lisa’s complaint a headache. In the course of Lisa’s (line 9) reporting, Leila is faced not only with analyzing Lisa’s turn as reporting her own talk, but also Leila’s own participation in what is being told. The context constructed provides for different types of participation and actions for different participants, which partly explains the “differentiated but coordinated actions that are constitutive of the story as a social activity” (Goodwin, 1984:243).

While Leila repeats Lisa’s turn construction, substituting only pronouns and verb forms, Lisa simultaneously completes her reporting by describing Leila’s actions (and SHEZ like O:H there:re and she ( ) an handful of pills). Lisa’s reporting, using indirect reported speech (c.f. 7.3.1.1) that is lively dramatized with prosodic shifts, emphasis and an illustrative hand gesture (presumably demonstrating Leila handing her a handful...
of tablets), is tagged with laugh particles and invites laughter. While her reporting of her own talk was not prosodically marked to attract attention to it, her reporting of Leila’s talk is, and this design works to highlight Leila’s response rather than her own complaint. In doing so, Lisa also displays that what is laughable is Leila’s actions, and not her own, which also in a way designates Leila as responsible for the event.

Simultaneous with all this, Jillian and Tracy also participate: Jillian’s talk enactment of what Leila possibly had said to Lisa (do you want some drugs too:) displays that she has monitored and understood the prior reportings, and Tracy’s (ye:ah she’s like (   )) is yet another attempt to re-tell what happened from her perspective as the observer263. In any case, Tracy, Leila, Lisa, and Jillian all collaboratively and from different participation frameworks cast light on both the event itself and the funniness of it. Through their eagerness to contribute and their smiling/laughing voices, participants display that the current trajectory is enjoyable, and that they are excited to take part in the humorous re-telling and talk dramatization telling.

In line 19, Tracy takes the re-telling to the next level by humorously enacting what had occurred. She also embodies Leila’s presumed actions by gesturing and illustrating that she is ‘dividing up’ pills and ‘describing’ different types of painkillers. Here, the interaction moves from focusing on constructing a fair narrative about what happened to a plain pseudo-reconstruction of it, but Dr. B could easily have closed the sequence here since it was his teaching talk that was derailed. Instead, Dr. B continues with question-formatted dramatizations of Leila’s actions (lines 25 and 32-33), in between which Tracy continues along the same lines as her prior dramatizations. These actions work to extend the joking sequence beyond what was projected.

Through collaborative efforts, Leila is made the ‘butt’ of the real-event reconstruction and subsequent dramatizations. We can see that individual actors both assume and avoid ownership and responsibility of the interaction derailing, but in a playful manner, as demonstrated in the affiliations through laughter. Although Leila herself does not make any further verbal contributions, she laughs heartily at the dramatizations with the others, and displays that she affiliates with the tellings. Will, who has been attempting to signal that he wants to speak, also laughs when the others laugh, but in shift-implicative environments, he has attempted to make eye contact with Dr. B and make it known that he wants to be assigned the next turn, which goes disattended until

263 However, it is not possible to determine with any certainty whether Tracy’s incomplete turn is designed to actually re-tell what she overheard, or if it is a hypothetical enactment like Jillian’s.
In the end, however, Will’s hand gesture and Dr. B’s attending to it is what brings the sequence to a close. When Tracy notes the projected shift, she again assumes responsibility for the derailing sequence with “okay sorry”.

The turn that this interactional sequence takes is not happenstance, but purposefully achieved through a series of actions by multiple actors. Speakers display affiliation with prior talk by laughing, agreeing with, or escalating the ongoing enjoyment, and opportunities to close the extending joking are disattended; instead, participants repeatedly move the joking forward until it is brought to a close in lines 37-38. However, Lisa’s “HEY this is all on ↑ film” just prior to the closing is different from the other invitations to laughter in that it shifts the focus from re-telling or dramatizing the prior event to calling attention to the external context, i.e. that their joking about ‘drugs’ is being recorded. What Lisa is doing is enacting a ‘mock stance’ in visibly pretending that the recording could lead to negative consequences.

Jefferson, Sacks & Schegloff (1987:170) noted that laughing-together sequences are usually brought to a close at a point where affiliation through shared laughter has been reached, and suggested that this may be because interactants have achieved a heightened “level of intimacy”, and opting to escalate the sequence at this point could possibly lead to disaffiliation. By avoiding orienting to Lisa’s turn with potentially escalating comments after affiliative laughter has been shared in line 36, interactants can preserve the achieved intimacy and shared enjoyment/exhilaration by utilizing the shift-implicative environment for topic closing and opening.

7.3.8.3 Collaboratively pursued enjoyment – concluding remarks

By way of summary, excerpt (41) demonstrated how participants purposefully extended a topic derailing that could have been closed down in several slots made available, in the pursuit of mutual enjoyment and heightened involvement. The ‘drug interaction’ became an issue of interactional concern through stepwise movement in collaboratively and competitively reporting of the incident to playful enactment of it, and the high involvement showed participants collaboratively, yet competitively, bringing their version of the event into the interactional weave. By playfully assuming and avoiding ownership of the event, and through prosodic and gestural orchestration of reported turns, participants jointly established the event as ‘fair game’ for joking.

By repeatedly making slots for closing available, students also give Dr. B a chance to resume his talk and close the joking. This indicates the
asymmetrical nature of seminar interaction in that students display sensitivity to participant frameworks, i.e. that Dr. B has an institutionally sanctioned right to direct talk and topics. When Dr. B disattends Tracy’s pre-closing offer in line 24, for example, he simultaneously makes it known that he did not mind the derailing, and that further escalation is okay. Another aspect of interactionally negotiated participant frameworks (Goffman, 1981) is the multiple involvement in the re-telling (lines 1-18). Here, the roles of observers, tellers, recipients, and principal characters of the telling fluctuate with each contribution to the story, and all become co-reconstructors of the narrative sequence.

Narratives, reportings, joke narratives and storytelling activities in interaction provide a rich environment for studying how shared positive emotions are purposefully pursued and interactionally achieved. By inviting subsequent laughter and escalation, the local context provides a welcoming environment for multi-party participation. However, excerpt (29) presented a sequence that was a little longer compared to the many other similar collaborative joking sequence in the corpus - joking and subsequent by-play activities such as (41) usually never last longer than a seven to ten regular turns. Most of the sequences are collaboratively closed at an earlier point, corresponding approximately to line 24 in (41) above. Participants thus skillfully demonstrate that their primary orientation is the class activities, that they can smoothly shift back to the task-at-hand, and that joking sequences should be closed after sufficient enjoyment and affiliation has been displayed.

Although this section has only scraped on the surface of collaboration and heightened participation in the pursuit of joy and lightheartedness, it was demonstrated that multi-party collaboration in reportings, tellings and subsequent joking about the reportings constitute animated displays of mutual enjoyment through series of actions. In his analysis of a collaboratively constructed ‘gossip story’, Beach (2000:399) noted that “attempts to share ownership and to move talk toward increased intimacy necessitate the coordination of shared knowledge”, and that arriving at these points may “prove to be an inherently ambiguous and relational undertaking”. Inviting collaboration can pursue and accomplish affiliation, intimacy and mutual enjoyment, but it can also be a delicate and risky activity where disaffiliation or other negative social/identity-related consequences of accepting or rejecting ownership are potential outcomes. Multi-party interactions are a fruitful site for studying the interactional construction of enjoyment, and further research should, for example, look into how different ways of assigning and avoiding ownership of the event reported can pave for maximum avoidance of un-
enjoyable trajectories, and maximum potential for only positive outcomes of conversational play.

7.4 Enjoyment in social interaction – discussion

In this chapter, mutual enjoyment has been inspected as a situated practice. We have seen that although participants do not explicitly make assessments of the interactional events as humorous, enjoyable, exhilarating or cheerful, nor made available individual conceptualizations of emotions experienced, they can collaboratively work to create contexts in which enjoyment can be shared.

Naturally, the environments of shared enjoyment do not necessarily reflect emotional states that individual participants experience, i.e. displaying appreciation of a joke does not necessarily mean that all participants who laugh find the joke extremely amusing. Nevertheless, what stands out in the analyses here is participants’ careful monitoring of how prior talk has been cued and what it projects in terms of next actions, so that when a turn-at-talk is marked to invite affiliation (through laughter or other types of attentive participation), participants routinely volunteer expressions of enjoyment to the interaction. By attending to a joke or an amusing reported talk construction, recipients also implicitly assess the prior talk as sequentially relevant and amusing. Although they do not use phrases such as “that was funny”, they are displaying treatment of the actions as opportunities for mutual enjoyment. Enjoyment is particularly displayed and made available through heightened involvement, laughter, and reciprocity in attending to surrounding talk.

A number of methods that participants can choose to utilize to elicit and maintain emotional involvement and enjoyment have been discussed in this chapter. Overall, prosody and other characteristics of speech delivery, as well as gestures, were central resources for participants in analyzing prior talk as ‘amusing’ and inviting enjoyment. Although the fact that language is highly contextual and that the same kind of linguistic construction can perform a variety of social actions depending on their placement in the sequential structures of talk cannot seriously be doubted at this point, the analyses here supply us with more evidence of the importance of the immediate context of talk in understanding the action that a certain utterance accomplishes. The ‘pointing out the obvious’ actions are a particularly telling example of this, in that they accomplish not what the words express but some other action through the deployment of particular vocal and non-verbal resources.
Enjoyment is not inherent in the topics discussed or in the introduction of jokes. Instead, as we have seen, enjoyment is actively pursued in contexts where the participation framework allows for or invites certain types of contributions, for example, during activity transition slots. Episodes of enjoyment are also actively brought to a close – not only by the instructors, but by any participant who has monitored a shift-implicative environment for an activity shift. We can also note that analysis of playful activities as strategic or planned from the vantage point of participants’ intentions would be problematic: the trajectory of a sequence of enjoyment is collaboratively built depending on participants’ displayed orientations to prior talk. The only way in which participant intentions can, and should be conceived of, is the way in which subsequent actions by the producer display any evidence as to whether the action had invited a particular response, or if co-participants, for some reason, treated something as enjoyable without affiliation from the first speaker.

The ‘mock emotions’ are a particularly illustrative example of how emotions are utilized as resources. By relying upon shared understandings of appropriate sequential placement and display cues of particular emotions, conversationalists can successfully accomplish completely different actions than ‘genuine’ displays of that emotion would have projected. The four cases of ‘mock emotions’ examined here all do the work of interactional playfulness, and as discussed in chapter 6, the ‘mock embarrassment’ may also be pre-empting ‘real’ embarrassment. Through playing with emotional displays, interactants can also implicitly assess something in the local context, and consequently, the utilization of emotions as resources can also serve a social-corrective function by pointing out some conversational transgression.

Finally, it can be proposed that enjoyment is a fruitful conceptualization of the social construction of positive affect in ongoing interaction. As opposed to “joy”, with its connotation to heightened positive arousal within the individual human in the literature on the psychology of emotions, enjoyment can represent a shared mood that is actively pursued and accomplished in sequences of interaction. From this vantage point, enjoyment is the prototype social emotion that represents a variety of intensities in the joy family, only on a social interactional level. The achievement of enjoyment is collaborative, and it is made possible to careful monitoring of appropriate slots for actively pursuing this shared social emotion.
Chapter 8

8. Emotions in Situated Activities – Summary and Conclusions

8.1 Introduction

This study has investigated some ways in which everyday emotions are made available and managed in academic talk-in-interaction, using a conversation analytic approach. Three central emotion themes emerged from working with data, which formed three analytic themes: frustration, embarrassment, and enjoyment. The three themes were examined in terms of their sequential environment, their interactional elicitors, their management and closing. Here, apart from summarizing the findings and relating them to previous work on emotions, language and conversation analysis, I will also raise some methodological issues for the different approaches concerned, and offer some suggestions for further research.

8.2 Summary of findings

Chapters 5 to 7 have each examined an emotion theme and various ways in which these emotions are realized in talk and embodied actions. Here, I will raise some central points that emerged from each sub-theme.

8.2.1 ‘Frustration’ within a restricted turn-taking system

In chapter 5, displays and management of ‘negative’ emotions were examined in the context of the specific activity of giving and receiving feedback on an assignment. A specific constraint on the interaction was that feedback recipients had been explicitly told not to respond to feedback, and in some of the instances, feedback recipients opted to violate the norm of remaining silent. In turn, their response was treated as dispreferred and ‘defensive’. Prior to being labeled as ‘defensive’, feedback recipients had responded to feedback without any particular displays of ‘frustration’, whereas following the emotion label, feedback recipients responded ‘defensively’ by justifying their norm violation. Consequently, the treatment of a particular action as negatively ‘emotional’ was what in turn occasioned the negative emotion display.

By exhibiting frustration, then, the feedback recipient also, rather forcefully, rejects the emotion label ascribed to her and also withholds the legitimacy...
of their norm violation. In two cases, the legitimacy was further exhibited through delayed turn completion (‘last word legitimacy’). For feedback recipients, the displays of frustration, then, did the interactional work of exhibiting displeasure with upholding the norm in contexts where their initiated clarifications were seen as justifiable norm violations. Furthermore, the displays of frustration displayed disaffiliation with the emotion label ascribed to past actions. The public display of a negative emotion works to communicate an assessment of prior turn more forcefully – by displaying anger-related emotions, the current speaker can effectively display a disaffiliating standpoint in relation to prior talk. While the surface structure of these ‘frustration’ turns did other social actions, such as a justifying account, the account produced with an emotion also functioned as an evaluation of past actions.

The evaluative stances expressed through the displays of frustration are central to interactants in the feedback sequences, and they leave little doubt as to how feedback recipients both reject the grounds for being reprimanded and resist the emotion labeling. Goodwin & Goodwin’s (2000) examination of girls playing hopscotch (see 3.4.2) noted how displays of heightened emotional involvement were fitted into the sequential structure of the hopscotch interaction in a slot where they were hearable as assessments of another player’s actions. In the feedback data, the displays of frustration followed immediately upon Dr. A’s assessment of norm violations as ‘defensive’ actions, so that the feedback recipients’ ‘frustrated’ responses evaluate and reject the prior assessment. Similarly, Fiehler (2002:85), in critiquing the heavy focus on informational aspects of language within linguistics, noted that “evaluations are always communicated as part of any exchange on any topic. Some of this evaluative content is communicated via emotions”.

The negative emotional reaction made available to co-interactants also had implications on feedback givers and on Dr. A. Feedback givers displayed the potentially delicate matter of giving critical feedback on the work of a peer by carefully packaging their feedback turns as subjective experiences rather than as ‘facts’. Other actions that were observed were attempts at embodied support and feedback mitigation from peers. Conversely, the displays of frustration occasioned longer monological turns from Dr. A, who simultaneously justifies the feedback format (activity-type formulations) and ‘scolds’ the norm violator both directly and indirectly through shifting pronominal address and reported speech mimicking. Direct reported speech, as Holt (1996; 2000) has demonstrated, can implicitly convey the current speaker’s assessment of the reported turn, and the vocal reproduction of the ‘frustrated’ student’s talk in
this case leaves little doubt as to Dr. A’s attitude toward it. In conclusion, the displays of frustration worked to convey an emotional stance toward prior actions in a way that the same turn shape would have not without the affective characteristics.

8.2.2 Embarrassment negotiation

In chapter 6, embarrassment was examined both from the vantage point of avoidance and management. Embarrassment-relevant episodes were identified across a variety of sequential environments: teasing, delicate topics, ‘mock’ embarrassment, repair initiations, and public praise. Embarrassment was found to be carefully fitted into the local context of talk in slots immediately after some embarrassing action has been made relevant to the interaction; for example, the public availability of some interactional transgression, turns that caused interpretation problems, being teased, or talking about culturally delicate matters, such as sexual intercourse or taboo words.

The evaluative function of emotions that was observed in the frustration episodes can also be inferred from the embarrassment analyses. For example, the ‘po-faced’ justifications that followed embarrassment-relevant moments are also hearable as rejections of both the implications made in the teasing proposition and the laughability of them. Furthermore, it was demonstrated that in between a tease and the ‘po-faced’ receipt that Drew (1987) illustrated is the appropriate slot for displays or resistance of embarrassment. It was also observed that when embarrassment resistance was displayed, the teasing instigator was accountable for the failed attempt to strategically embarrass a co-interactant. In addition, it was concluded that displays of ‘flustering’ and dysfluencies in talk and gaze for embarrasses were related to the sequentially unprojected nature of teases.

Embarrassment management in dealing with delicate aspects of ongoing talk was demonstrated in the interactions about sex, sexuality, and taboo words. Characteristics of speech delivery in the direct mention of sexual activity were markedly different from surrounding talk, and both troubles-resistant laughter and laughter invitations were observed in these contexts. Culturally delicate matters, such as sexual intercourse, were indirectly referenced, and it was also observed that excessive caution in the mention of taboo topics (i.e. partial pronunciation of a taboo word) presented interpretation problems for co-interactants, and the temporary lack of a mutual focus of orientation generated an additional threat of embarrassment for interactants. Furthermore, turning a
culturally delicate matter into an opportunity for joking and mutual enjoyment was also observed as a strategy deployed for embarrassment-resistance.

The fact that emotions are used as resources for interactants is more striking in the context of embarrassment than in the frustration sequences, as demonstrated in the transformations of embarrassing moments into slots for mutual enjoyment, joking, and building affiliation and group membership. Another example, as was also demonstrated in chapter 7, is the 'mock emotions'. The topicalization of embarrassment, whether genuine or not, was utilized as a resource for converting laughter at one interactant to laughter with that interactant. In this way, participants’ actions provide for “micro-moments of transforming social structure” (Glenn, 2003:165). Repair sequences, particularly in the context of some social gaffe, were also utilized as resources for enjoyment, however, not until the interactional transgressor has displayed acknowledgement of the gaffe by initiating repair. This conversational rules can however be suspended in contexts where it can be anticipated that no repair initiation will be made by the transgressor, as in the reading of a paper.

Finally, it was demonstrated that embarrassment resistance in moments of intense social exposure was managed through restricted participation on the part of the embarrassee. This type of embarrassment is however different than, for example, embarrassment following teasing. The ‘flustered’ behavior that Goffman (1967) described as characteristic of embarrassment was not observed in this context; rather, the embarrassment displays have closer resemblance with displays of shyness (c.f. Crozier, 1990).

Whether embarrassment is dealt with as momentarily disruptive, as a resource for fun and joking, or as an occasion for appropriate displays of ‘coyness’, embarrassment was observed to open up opportunities for alternative trajectories of a sequence-in-progress. When embarrassment is made relevant by an interactant, co-participants are given clues as to how the embarrassee had oriented to prior talk, and next actions can either move to close the embarrassing episode, to turn it into something enjoyable, or even to ‘rescue’ a nominated butt. Consequently, embarrassment displays contain valuable information about the state of talk and about social relationships that work as contextualization cues (Gumperz, 1982) in selecting next actions. Devoid of these signals, participants would have oriented to other aspects of ongoing talk. It is also through displaying awareness of culturally delicate matters that shared social standards are intersubjectively oriented to, and embarrassment displays also mark accountability and apologizing for conversational transgressions. The contexts where embarrassment was located also revealed something about
cultural standards. For example, the high praise of Lisa’s engagement, the joking that implied heterosexual orientations, and also the stance displayed toward undergraduate students as intellectually immature, exhibit shared social and cultural norms.

8.2.3 Enjoyment as an interactional accomplishment

In chapter 7, attention is turned toward the generation of ‘positive’ emotions in multi-party interaction, particularly ‘enjoyment’. As was the case with embarrassment, enjoyment was located across a number of different interactional contexts; namely, dramatizations through reported speech and hypothetical talk enactments, activity-transitional environments, playful displays of ‘mock’ emotions, code-switching, ‘redundant’ contributions, turn-taking problems made relevant, mundane parallels to academic talk, and collaborative reporting and joking. As noted in chapter 7, these environments are only selections of a wide variety of practices available to interactants in the pursuit of mutual enjoyment and a ‘lighthearted’ atmosphere. Some examples of how enjoyment was observed to be pursued in the data will be summarized below.

Previous research on reported speech (e.g. Volosinov, 1929/1973; Goffman, 1981; Holt, 2002) has mainly focused on indirect and direct reported speech, in which an actual past conversation is reconstructed in a new context. The type of reported speech examined in chapter 7, however, is of a different kind, and involves the deployment of reported speech-like turn constructions although it is clear to co-interactants that it is not an actual past dialogue or telling that is reconstructed. Rather, the reported speech turns examined are designed to enact hypothetical talk or to exemplify some particular phenomenon discussed. The turns were produced with voice alterations and sometimes laugh particles, and served to invite laughter. The talk dramatization was found to occasion laughter and shared enjoyment, and deployed for modeling appropriate emotional responses, for collaboratively enacting a hypothetical scene humorously, and for teaching and displaying understanding of topics in interpersonal communication.

The ‘mock emotions’ are a particularly telling example of culturally shared perception of the type of emotional expression that is appropriate in a particular context and in response to particular actions, and also shared knowledge about the way these emotions are usually conveyed. Interactants assumed ‘mock emotions’ in a playful manner, and co-interactants usually played along with the feigned emotion displays as if they had been genuine.
Emotions then, can be made relevant in interaction regardless of whether that emotion is ‘genuine’ or not, but for them to work as invitations to shared enjoyment, it must be made clear, through vocal characteristics and embodied actions, that they are offered non-seriously, as demonstrated in the examples.

It was also demonstrated that participants actively pursued enjoyment even in the midst of institutional activities. In the case of collaborative reporting/storytelling/joking, slots for closing and transitioning were recurrently made available, but participants opted to pursue mutual enjoyment. However, an occasioned joke can only be milked so far, and students’ close monitoring of Dr. B’s participation in the joking activities displayed sensitivity to the serious matters-at-hand, and to giving the instructor precedence in closing the joking. Also, activity-transitional environments were utilized for building affiliation and remaining co-present while simultaneously focusing on another task, for example, by explicit orientation to objects in the local environment, or to embodied actions by self or co-participants. In addition, other environments where opportunities for enjoyment were pursued were within-turn code-switching, in pointing out that a prior speaker’s turn was ‘redundant’, in moments of traffic collisions in turn-taking, and in applying academic topics discussed to everyday parallels.

Common to all the environments examined is that enjoyment is a collaborative achievement where participants actively work to achieve a certain trajectory. Central to most of the analyses is the heightened involvement when an opportunity for enjoyment is presented. It was also concluded that speakers can use a variety of strategies to invite enjoyment; particularly embedded laughter, smiling, and marked shifts in prosody, voice pitch, and lexical genre.

8.3 Academe – emotions in an institutional context

The materials used in the present dissertation are institutional in the sense that they were recorded in an institutional setting while participants are doing institutional roles (students, professors) and accomplishing institutional tasks (lecturing, presenting, discussing readings and assignments). I would like to address some points concerning the way in which the interactions could be said to be shaped by institutional constraints.

Obviously, the sequences in which ‘frustration’ was examined were highly constrained by local institutional norms. It is in the context of a norm violation that frustration becomes relevant, and the norm of not being allowed to respond to questions and comments is a very particular constraint on the
interaction that is usually never found in any everyday conversational contexts. In fact, the one institutional context in which this type of restricted response to allegations is frequently found is in courtroom interaction. The turn-taking system in, for example, cross-examinations is constrained by pre-allocated restrictions of turns at talk (Drew, 1992), and if an attorney is working to discredit a defendant while interrogating a witness, the defendant is not free to contest the allegations made. In the courtroom, this system is a legitimate constraint, but everyday conversational interaction is usually not regulated by explicit norms for talking and silence.

The format of the feedback sequences was partly warranted by time constraints because of the large number of student presenters on each class occasion, as Dr. A repeatedly explains to the students in the three recordings. The second reason brought forth was pedagogical in nature, in that it was believed to facilitate peer response participation since everybody was welcome to make comments about the reading of a text without risking that each feedback turn would generate a long discussion between the feedback giver and recipient. Although students were aware of the norm as well as the reasons given for it, the norm became a problematic constraint, in particular when feedback turns were treated as misrepresenting something in the written text and feedback recipients initiated clarification responses. Different participation frameworks were also illustrated in the treatment of violations – whereas students exhibited orientation to ‘everyday conversational’ turn-taking procedures of responding to questions or critical comments, Dr. A displayed orientation to the institutional turn-taking system.

In addition, the feedback activity was set up so that the central pedagogical focus was to practice giving critical feedback, as opposed to practicing receiving and responding to critical feedback. There is an element of socialization into academe here, where the graduate students are trained in what is perhaps academia’s trademark activity; that is, critically scrutinizing scholarly work. Dr. A’s longer turns in between feedback turns exhibit aspects of modeling appropriate feedback receipt and giving. The faculty colloquia that Tracy (1997) and Tracy & Baratz (1993) examined can be seen as the next level of this socialization process, and the graduate seminars work as preparatory activities for the profession. Similarly, Tannen (2002:1662) describes graduate school as “battle training”. Furthermore, since participation in the feedback activity is expected, there is an implicit onus of delivering feedback that is ‘critical enough’. In Tracy and Baratz’ (1993) interviews, faculty members conveyed a clear attitudinal stance toward graduate students who offered highly critical
feedback, which was valued, versus supportive feedback, which was valued much less. In my own interviews, students mentioned that their peers seemed to offer critical feedback for the sake of giving feedback rather than because they really had something valuable to add, as Linda noted:

[...] everyone felt like they NEEDED to comment whether they really had something to say or not [...] 

The dilemma observed here, of tensions between modeling, socialization, and pedagogy on the one hand, and a helpful and productive session of commentary on the other, is a problem for academic interaction on the whole.

Similarly, we noted that in conversational interaction, there is a strong preference for responding to critique. The agonistic and antagonistic nature of the characteristic oppositional debate interaction in academe would be problematic in non-institutional settings, but since it is a core aspect of the activities, i.e. finding flaws with others’ work, it is depicted as a rational exchange of ideas (Tracy, 1997). Tannen describes this norm as “fiction”:

Because agonism is ritual combat, attacks on colleagues’ work are not supposed to be taken personally. We maintain this fiction even though everyone (at least everyone I have ever spoken to) is personally pained by having their work attacked (Tannen, 2002:1663).

What Tannen proposes is more or less what Jenna noted in her interview:

[...] like sometimes you just have to sit there and y’know like you have to tell yourself that this is not personal (). hh but y’know if it’s your paper () it’s your baby y’know it’s like it’s just your work it’s just words on paper but it’s NOT cause you spent so much time on it [...] 

As we also saw, the emotional responses of participants when they 1) responded to critical feedback and 2) were reprimanded for breaching the norm were rather strong. With the dilemmas inherent in academic discourse in general, and with the local turn-taking restrictions, there is bound to be occasions where ‘frustration’ seeps into the interactional weave. 

Even though the turn-taking constraints of these interactions were particular to this institutional activity, there is no reason to believe that ‘frustration’ occasioned orientations to some prior claim by challenging it is unique to the OG seminars, or to institutional interaction in general. It is very likely that ‘frustration’ resulting in ‘defensive’ actions occurs across interactional
contexts where a person feels misunderstood, misrepresented, unfairly treated, or unheard. Furthermore, the central point to this is not the type of affect that can be generated in a certain interactional context, but rather, how an affective display is treated by co-participants. This is just as important as the format of the interaction.

In terms of the activities-in-progress throughout the corpus, institutional features were primarily identifiable in topics discussed and in the roles of students and professors in their separate responsibilities as ‘learners’ and ‘instructors’. There is, naturally, a turn allocation pattern that can be explained by the classroom context, for example, when professors give the “green light” for next contributions to students. Also, in the fragments examined, the instructors were always active participants. In addition, in many of the excerpts, the instructors take the role of either validating or rejecting student propositions. This was, for example, noted in sequences where Dr. A models appropriate responses (e.g. the feedback sequences and the “subjects” example, and in the bridgings of personal experience with academic topics-at-hand, where Dr. B allows for students’ tellings but then either supports or rejects the propositions in them. Instructors also used various devices for modeling appropriate emotional responses, which was particularly clear in the “Lisa really screwed up here”, where talk dramatization/reported speech was used to enact an inappropriate conception of the critical feedback. We can also see differences in the closing of sequences, in which professors can opt to initiate closing of a sequence without awaiting further contributions, and where students make available transition slots for professors before they further develop, for example, a joking sequence. Perhaps also the way in which delicate topics are approached, as in the careful referencing of sexual activity, in laughter as a marker of delicacy, and the way in which off-color jokes are treated (c.f. the “black sperm” joke) are shaped by the particular context and the roles of students and professors.

A particularly important feature of participation frameworks in the analyses is how the different seminars allow for different types of involvement. Particularly in chapters 6 and 7, we saw that in the IN seminars, Dr. B actively refrained from immediate pursuit of the agenda in favor of temporary digressions, which was not often the case in the OG seminars. This can partly be explained by number of participants and activity types, i.e. the IN seminars had more time to actively discuss issues in the readings as opposed to longer presentations and feedback activities. However, as demonstrated, the emotion-relevant sequences are interactional achievements through the actions of
participants, and made possible through the projection of next actions. Consequently, the sequences are occasioned by participant orientations rather than by the external context.

I also want to point out that although the IN seminars may have been perceived as filled with joking and playfulness, whereas the OG seminars contained the ‘frustration’ sequences, I am by no means implying any evaluation of the quality of the six seminars as academic interactions. Evaluating the generic outcome of the frequency of or the different types of emotion-relevant episodes was not within the scope of study for several reasons: first, the conversation analytic approach does not generally ‘diagnose’ entire interactions on a quality basis. Instead, CA is descriptive and I have applied CA to examine particular features of social interaction and emotions, rather than the academic interactions per se. Secondly, the sequences presented in this dissertation were selected on the basis of their emotion-relevance, and naturally, much of the remaining material includes completely different types of sequences, such as longer lecture-based sequences, or discussions where emotions were not made publicly relevant. Obviously, that does not mean that the rest of the material is interactionally ‘unemotional’, but rather, that they represented different or less evident types of emotion displays than the themes selected for this study. For example, surprise-related emotional displays such as ‘astonishment’, ‘disbelief’ and ‘bafflement’ are frequent features of the interactions in the corpus, as are various degrees of ‘interest’ and ‘disinterest’.

An interesting aspect of using both interactional data and interviews was that when respondents were asked to spontaneously recall both positive and negative memories of specific interactions in the seminars, the ‘positive’ interactions were not recalled, but mentioned in general terms. The institutional constraints on interaction are perhaps the most visible in participants’ recollections of occasions where the context, in some way, affected the way the thought of, remembered, or reportedly had acted, as we saw in the interview data concerning the feedback interactions. The following extract from Jillian’s interview is another example of such a memory, and even though the question I asked Jillian concerned positive experiences of the IN seminars, she also mentions an instance where another student reportedly felt that she had overstepped the boundaries of how much joking is appropriate in the context of an academic seminar, and in particular, a tease directed at a “a professor”:

There’s a lot of laughter and jokes in this class uh ( ) yeah ( ) I think like ( ) a lot of the jokes in that class are like circumstantial and like wordplay kind of jokes and uh and yeah I think there are times when we’re really serious in that class but I
think for the most part it’s pretty lighthearted (.) y’know you can feel free to say (.) to throw out jokes when you want to (.) after our last class actually one person had said something teasingly to Dr. B during class and she was like “oh my God I can’t believe I said that to a professor!” and we were like “he doesn’t care!” we give him crap all the time (.) or maybe he does care I dunno ((laughs))

Jillian first talks about the IN seminars in general as “pretty lighthearted”, and then mentions one specific occasion another student told her about, where the hierarchical relationship between students and professors is brought up as a reason for why the tease may have been inappropriate. We can see in the way the speech is reported that the other student voiced some ‘embarrassment’ about having teased Dr. B, and that there is an awareness of the institutional context for the joking, even though Jillian says that “you can feel free to throw out jokes” in this “lighthearted” context.

The intensity of certain emotional experiences, for example, as in the public announcement of Lisa’s engagement, may be partly occasioned by the institutional context in which private information is not usually shared. However, this is probably more closely related to degrees of relational intimacy rather than to the institution as such. Most importantly, however, I have not set out to speculate about the emotional experience of individual participants, but focused on describing and understanding when such experience is made available for public scrutiny. Consequently, it can be concluded that the institutional context and the particulars of the activities were not always central to participants’ treatment of affective displays.

8.4 Implications for emotion research

Although this dissertation is an initial and selective investigation of emotions as actions-in-interaction, some insights toward a comprehensive understanding of emotions as fundamentally social phenomena can be formulated. These concern 1) methodological approaches, 2) emotion labeling, and 3) emotions as interactional resources.

Explicit investigation of the relationship between emotion and social interaction is a relatively new turn in the research on emotions, and this relationship is handled differently within different academic disciplines and research traditions. Within macro-sociology, this connection is often made on a theoretical level, where theoretical models are developed to either be left untested or imported directly into an empirical material. Kemper’s (1990) model of the elicitation of emotional energy in social interaction and its lasting effects is one
example where a theoretical construct is developed from Durkheim’s (1912/1954) ideas on solidarity and Goffman’s (1967) interaction ritual, which is then offered as a theory-derived model to be applied to empirical data.

A central problem with these approaches, as is so often emphasized in the CA literature, is the “use of concepts (‘a descriptive apparatus’) based on unexplicated assumptions” (Silverman, 1998:46, paraphrasing Sacks). These unexplicated assumptions involve the reliance on commonsense reasoning that forms the basis of operationalization in this type of inquiry. Consequently, a certain type of social reality that people ‘respond to’ is taken for granted. By assuming that certain basal facts of society are ‘there’, much of the research has failed to describe the full extent to which emotions are made relevant in social interaction; in particular, the research that remains on a level of theoretical description and classification.

What is and what is not a social norm for appropriate emotional reactions is another area of emotion research where the reliance on theories or members’ post-hoc accounts can become problematic, since this research does not study local interactional norms and participant orientations. This is not to say that the research on causes of embarrassment is by virtue misleading – only to emphasize that we cannot develop a comprehensive model of, for example, embarrassment based on a commonsense assumption that a specific set of social events and acts are always embarrassing. Such a model of the emotion embarrassment must base its theorizations in empirical data of embarrassment in naturally occurring social interactions. My own examination of the different contexts in which embarrassed-relevant conduct was located indicates that a certain degree of caution is warranted in terms of classifying embarrassment in terms of breakdowns in self-presentation as a result of particular circumstances. Instead, embarrassment was located by examining the practices of how it is made available to co-interactants – information that could not reliably have been inferred from the interview data.

Theoretically, I have also demonstrated a certain degree of compatibility between the social constructionist approach to emotions on the one hand, and the conversation analytic framework. Both focus on the role of social interaction in social construction, and both focus on the doing of emotions. Although the social constructionist approach has been very successful in demonstrating the cultural specificity of emotional expression, there have been few attempts to study to how this is constructed in the local cultures in the
interactions that make up our everyday realities. The present study has demonstrated the applicability of CA to emotion research, and with its focus on naturally occurring interactions, the conversation analytic approach presents to social constructionists a systematic empirical method for studying the social construction of emotions. The social constructionist approach to emotions should benefit greatly from being able to demonstrate the actual emotion-relevant conduct of participants by carefully inspecting recordings and transcriptions of social interactions across contexts and cultures.

As demonstrated in the present study, emotions that are brought into the interactional weave have direct consequences for the trajectory of the activities-at-hand. Emotions were also made relevant to the interaction in precise slots of sequential structures, which supports the ideas brought forth by, for example, Heath (1988), Whalen & Zimmerman (1998) and Goodwin & Goodwin (2000); that is, that emotions that are made relevant in interaction are socially organized phenomena. Emotions are “made visible as a consequential event through systematic practices that are lodged within the processes of situated interaction” (Goodwin & Goodwin, 2000:48), and displayed emotions, such as joy, embarrassment, and frustration, are resources for orientation that tell interactants something about a speaker’s analysis of the state of ongoing talk and actions and what a appropriate next action would be.

Another problem with a large part of the literature on emotions and interpersonal communication concerns the heavy reliance on self-reports of emotional experience in explaining emotions in social interaction. Common ways of approaching the role of emotions in social interaction are a) having informants produce written narratives of a social occasion in which they recalled experiencing a certain feeling, b) interviews where some past emotional interaction is recalled, or c) questionnaires. The illustrations of interview data regarding a specific interaction versus transcripts of that same interaction, particularly in chapter 5 of the present work, cast some doubt upon a sole reliance on interview data in explaining emotions in social interaction. For example, interview respondents frequently use talk dramatizations to illustrate what they were thinking/feeling in a specific moment in interaction, but some of these thoughts or feelings were never made intelligibly present to the interaction. Furthermore, it is important to remember that post-hoc sense-making of interactional events is just that: constructions according to hindsight; perhaps biased by the respondent’s striving to allocate blame to another

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264 One example of a clear social constructionist perspective on how emotions are defined by participants in the context of naturally occurring interaction is Coulter (1986).
interactant for a problematic event. These accounts, although important in other ways, do not yield reliable empirical evidence as to the particular actions and their precise location in a sequence of actions. Another interesting finding was that in the interviews, participants particularly recalled the instances where ‘negative’ emotions had been experienced or observed, as mentioned above. This also shows a potential danger with relying exclusively on interview data in researching emotions in social interaction, since respondents’ recollections may be colored by instances they experienced as ‘face-threatening’, rather than instances where positive emotions were central to the interaction.

It is obvious that interview data, no matter how closely they resemble the actual turns in interaction, can never give us the amount of detail we need to explicate the turn-by-turn organization of emotions and their displays. Furthermore, the interview data revealed the problematic nature of describing emotional experience from the vantage point of speaker intentions. It did not really matter whether Jennifer (ch. 5) had intended her gesture (stroking her distressed friend’s arm) to “break the tension” since it was not treated as such. This is a central point of the present work and a point worth repeating – that in terms of describing how emotions ‘work’ in social interaction, it is really of little relevance what individual participants report that they were feeling or thinking, unless it is transformed into actions.

A third problem with the methodologies applied to the study of emotion and interpersonal communication is the detachment of emotion cues into separate areas of investigation. Examining embarrassment, for example, only in terms of blushing or other physiological displays, would not account for the range of talk and embodied practices that made available together work as resources for co-participants’ orientations. The empirical work in the present dissertation further supports the arguments made by scholars working with rigorous analyses of human interaction (e.g. Kendon, 1967; Goodwin, 1981; Streeck, 2003) regarding the analytic necessity of including all aspects of conduct in understanding both social actions and language-in-use.

Finally, the ‘mock emotions’ illustrated something important about people’s shared knowledge of these emotion displays and the appropriate place where they can be displayed. By not limiting the description of emotions to what is perceived as ‘genuine’ emotions, it became clear that it is not the experience of emotion or the expression of emotions per se that determines the relevance of emotions in social interaction. Rather, it is about how they are made available for others to work with, regardless of the correspondence between an inner feeling state and the outer expression. Consequently, the
degree of sincerity of an emotional expression does not determine its relevance as an interactional resource for conversationalists.

A problem I encountered, which I also had anticipated from reading CA work that in one way or another dealt with emotions, was the difficulty in placing an emotion label on the phenomena observed. Just as the Garfinkel/Sacks position warned us about applying mundane language understandings of social actions as technical descriptions of mundane phenomena, the application of emotion terms that we use in everyday language in emotion research is not unproblematic. How do we, for example, draw distinct boundaries between displays of fear, anxiety, and shyness, and between enjoyment and exhilaration? This is no doubt a central challenge for an interactional approach to emotions, and probably one reason why conversation analytic work dealing with various ‘human concerns’ has not attracted the attention of emotion researchers.

However, conversation analysts may be particularly sensitive to this problem, and as a result, being overly cautious in describing interpersonal phenomena with traditional labels. In all fairness, no approach to emotions can be completely convincing in terms of the labels that researchers place on the object of investigation. In all emotion research, there will inevitably be a question of labeling in using people’s self-reports of particular affect-related experiences. Consequently, I would like to take an initial step toward killing the myth that any approach is more accurately descriptive of different emotional states than others. There is, ultimately, no be-all and end-all method of proving a strict correlation between physiological changes, feeling experience, and outer behavior. They just capture different aspects of what emotions are, do, and feel like, and no contribution is less important in understanding the full extent of what emotions are and do. I strongly encourage more interdisciplinary work on emotions where independently developed theory-driven models, interview data, and rigorous analyses of recorded human interaction are compared. Perhaps we can come a step further in understanding differences between the ‘feeling’ of emotions and the ‘feeling by doing’ of emotions, and avoid classifications that have no relevance for participants in social interaction.

8.5 Implications for conversation analysis

There is a time-worn reluctance within CA to prematurely decide to study a particular phenomenon before empirical data has been collected and examined. However, this clash between the reality for scholars and CA’s methodological
assumptions is not as problematic as it sounds. In most applied CA research, data is collected with some intuitive idea in mind of what would be interesting to study, for example, questioning practices in news interviews (Heritage & Clayman, 2002) or the implementation of Family Systems Theory into clinical counseling practices (Peräkylä, 1995). Consequently, a pre-formulated interest in emotions as a general phenomenon was not problematic and the analytic induction could be preserved in that the kind of emotions studied were entirely determined on the basis of repeated inspection of the entire corpus of data.

The lack of CA work explicitly focusing on emotions can be explained by the sociologically driven focus on social actions as realized in the structures of conversational interaction. It is the practices through which certain interpersonal relationships, goals, tasks, or roles are accomplished that have been the core of the applied CA enterprise, so that even in clearly emotional interactions, the focus has been on the devices used to accomplish certain social actions, such as blamings, accusations, and affiliation/disaffiliation. Emotions in themselves have not generally been treated as actions that have specific interactional characteristics associated with them, and since the analysis remains strictly focused on the structural organization of interaction, it does become more problematic to study something that clearly can be associated with internal psychological processes, physiological arousal, and individuals’ appraisal. Furthermore, as mentioned earlier, it is not unproblematic to label the emotion phenomena, and to link them directly to social actions.

However, as the present work demonstrates, emotions can indeed be viewed as social actions and parts of social actions rather than as internal states. It is, after all, a matter of what participants themselves make available in the interaction that CA sets out to study, and an emotional display, for example, blushing, becomes part of participants’ orientations. I would go as far as to say that there is a danger in not viewing emotions as socially active, or as categorizing actions without including the emotional content they communicate. We know that affect of various degrees is ever-present in all human interaction – it is only a matter of finding the precise ways in which emotions influence action, and offer descriptions of how participants in social interaction orient to affect made available. The key issue is, as always, participants’ own treatment of a particular turn as, for example, an “accusation” rather than as a “request for information”, and we ought to study not only the next action that this participant takes, but also the emotional message that that action communicates. If we, as analysts of interaction, pay even more attention to emotions that participants make socially available in their actions, we will
come even closer to describing the fundamentally ‘social’ aspects of talk-in-interaction. This is particularly true for applied conversation analysis, which generally has an aim beyond just describing context-free organization of talk.

Conversation analytic work could contribute greatly to emotion research in the social sciences; both new work explicitly focusing on emotions, and the large body of literature on interactional organization. However, the technical descriptions of social actions and language-in-use that we usually see in the titles of CA papers do not indicate to scholars of other scientific orientations that these studies could broaden their understandings of emotions as social achievements. In line with other analysts before me, I have attempted to resolve this problem by indicating the plasticity of emotion labels by using single quotation marks around a certain affective phenomenon described. The emotion labels used for each chapter are viewed as place holders rather than definite descriptors; however, I still propose that conversation analysts do this, to make their work accessible to other audiences interested in the social organization of affect. The present work has demonstrated that conversation analysis indeed is applicable to emotion research, and that if we just use the same conceptual caution used in conversation analytic work already, there is no reason for CA scholarship to stay out of social scientific dialogue on emotions. Although the present study is only an initial step toward bringing together emotion research and CA, theoretically and methodologically, it has shed some light on the possibilities for CA in terms of the development of a body of studies on how emotions are interweaved into practices in interaction.

Furthermore, in the context of emotions in the interactions examined here, some interactional devices previously not examined in detail in existing literature were observed. For example, it was observed that Drew’s (1987) work on conversational teases held for the sequences examined here, but that the ‘po-faced’ receipt and subsequent ‘serious’ response could be even better understood in terms of embarrassment ‘flustering’ and embarrassment-resistance respectively. In addition, the frequent uses of talk dramatizations were found to be associated with invitations to laughter and enjoyment. Furthermore, the ‘activity-type’ formulation observed as a strategy used by Dr. A in setting a particular version of reality straight revealed an interesting way in which a constructed constraint is legitimized and asserted. Yet another example is the way in which ‘mock emotions’ are used as an interactional resource that plays upon shared understandings of preference organization and the communication of emotions. By way of summary, I think that it is in the interest of conversation analysis, as the established discipline it has become, to...
begin tackling issues of affect/emotions in the interactions we study. Not only will we understand some of the organizations we describe better, but a significant contribution to linguistics and to the social sciences can be made.

8.6 Implications for sociolinguistics and applied linguistics

Fiehler (2002:79) noted that linguists “have had difficulties handling the connections between emotionality and conversational behavior, and more generally, the interrelations between emotions and language”. Just as in other disciplines, this is partly due to the dominance of cognitive theories, but there is an increasing awareness of the importance of considering both the linguistics of emotions and the emotionology of linguistics, as indicated in many studies on how emotions are communicated and conceptualized in everyday language (see e.g. collections edited by Niemeier & Dirven, 1997, and Fussell, 2002).

Linguists have come far in terms of investigating the grammar of conversation since the days when Chomsky (1957) described speech as irrelevant and flawed data for linguistic inquiry. However, an even closer consideration of the ways in which people design their turns in conversation to communicate enjoyment, invite playfulness, successfully embarrass a co-interactant, and transform anger into turn constructions and embodied action is definitely relevant for our understanding of the interactional power of language. Furthermore, as demonstrated in this study, consideration of prosody, intonation and other phonological features of speech is an area where linguistics can contribute greatly to the understanding of how emotions are communicated.

Ochs and Schieffelin (1989) demonstrated that affect is communicated on all levels of the system of language, and that “interactants seek out affective information from significant others in their social environment to better understand and respond to uncertain information” (1989:21). This is an important insight for, for example, research on bilingual interaction and language acquisition, where interactants may not have access to the full extent of the target language, but still manage to construct attitudes, affect, and information intelligibly in talk.

Others (for example, McIvenny & Raudaskoski, 1996) have eloquently argued the mutual relevance of conversation analytic work and linguistics, so I will only make a few points here. Even though CA today is widely practiced by linguists, the findings of CA research have certainly not made it into most grammars. Although unusually comprehensive in terms of describing less
idealized grammatical categorizations of spoken language, the *Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English* (Biber, Johansson, Leech, Conrad & Finegan, 1999) does, for example, not include any examples of what I have termed *talk dramatizations* and the specific type of interactional work that its deployment can invite and accomplish. I propose the new knowledge concerning a variant of reported speech as a contribution to linguistic theory on reporting clauses. Furthermore, consideration of larger units than a separate turn in describing the grammar of interaction can explicate ways in which a syntactically ‘informational’ message can in fact be more of an emotional evaluation than anything else, depending on its place in the local context of talk.

8.7 Directions for further research

Obviously, we are still far from any general understanding of the ways in which emotions are elicited, managed and resolved in social interaction, and any research in this direction will contribute to a better understanding of how we ‘do emotions in talk and actions. I will only address a few issues here in terms of further research, based on my review of literature and my analyses.

A first important step is to recognize the arbitrariness of all emotion descriptions, regardless of theoretical and methodological orientations. Therefore, any extreme caution in explicitly addressing emotions from a conversation analytic perspective is no more warranted in this type of research than in others. As long as we, as analysts, remain aware of the problem of classification, and make this awareness explicit, we can definitely describe how people make emotions publicly available in interaction, and how they are oriented to. Claims about the definite inner states of participants are of lesser importance since participants themselves do not have direct access to the inner state of someone else. What is important is how participants make emotions relevant to the interaction, and as long as we as analysts keep this perspective in explicating our data, there is no reason to stay out of scholarly discussions on the role of emotions in social interaction.

Secondly, there is a plethora of studies within communication research on cues and channels of emotion communication. The accumulated knowledge can be used to identify emotion displays and strengthen our tentative labels of emotions-in-interaction, as long as we can demonstrate that they are relevant to participants themselves. In contrast, theoretical constructs of what emotions are and do should not be imported directly into data as explanatory frameworks without grounding in the data.
Thirdly, any interaction is a relevant site for studying the social organization of emotions, since there is no such thing as a social interaction completely devoid of emotions. Future work should examine emotions both in institutional and non-institutional contexts, across cultures and languages, and within mundane conversations. We can hypothesize that some settings, for example therapeutic discourse, suicide hotlines, marital arguments and political debates will be more visibly emotional than, say, a routine administration meeting. It is probably true that certain types of emotions occur more frequently in certain contexts, but this does not mean that ‘everyday emotions’ are any less prevalent in interactions, or any less relevant to examine. After all, it is within ‘everyday conversational practices’ we spend most of our waking hours.

I have only scratched the surface on some of the many interesting issues made relevant in this corpus, for example, the ways in which emotions are constrained by certain academic practices in general and not just in this corpus. What we have seen in chapters 5-7 are emotions being made relevant during regular class activities, but there are more constrained types of interaction within academe, such as thesis and dissertation defenses, or regular faculty colloquia. Tracy’s (1997) interview data indicated that there is an identity dilemma for recipients of academic criticism, and the negotiation of competing interpretations (such as “I am opposed to your idea” versus “I think you are stupid”) naturally has strong emotional consequences, as mentioned earlier. Although not analyzed from an identity-emotion perspective, this is probably what we saw happening in chapter 5. Examining how such personal emotions creep into the actual interaction between interactants with different institutional roles would illuminate the ways in which we ‘do knowledge’ in higher education, and how academics simultaneously negotiate tasks and identities. In addition, some of the practices observed warrant more investigation, for example, the activity formulations analyzed in other contexts, the reported speech dramatizations in contexts where the topic itself, interpersonal communication, does not determine their frequency, and embarrassment avoidance on occasions of being the focus of attention.

Furthermore, as I have indicated earlier, bilingual interaction in educational settings would be a fruitful site for studying emotions as doing interactional work where other types of resources cannot be used fully, as was the case with the aphasic man in Goodwin & Goodwin’s (2000) analysis. This was noted, but not analyzed in any greater detail, with the non-native speaking participants in my study (Will and Lin). Their contributions were on occasion
utilized for joking at the expense of linguistic and cultural problems. Exactly how and where such interactions become emotionally problematic should be studied in detail, since the academic classroom is a multicultural setting where nativeness versus non-nativeness may become an issue of participation.

A methodological aspect of the present study to be noted for further research is that in a limited set of materials, there is not much room for any extensive deviant case analysis (c.f. ten Have, 1999:39) where an interactional rule formulated on the basis of data can be further supported by presenting participant orientations in sequences that deviate from the instances presented. Since this study has presented such a wide variety of practices, actions and patterns, a larger pool of data to draw from is needed in order to compare many different instances of each phenomenon and discover what, if anything, distinguishes them from one another on a more general level. For further research, I suggest an exclusive focus on each phenomena examined, but with data from a variety of settings, in order for deviant case analysis to be performed, and for specific local and institutional aspects of emotions in social interaction to be discerned.

A second methodological aspect concerns the type of recordings used. With the recent availability of digital video recording techniques and the possibility to include frame grabs from the recordings in the presentation of data, analysts can more clearly demonstrate embodied conduct and its coordination with vocal aspects of interaction. I have attempted to compensate for the lack of images by using detailed descriptions of non-vocal conduct in footnotes and separate figures; however, in understanding the social organization of emotions in interaction, digital video data presented in connection with transcriptions of talk will, to a greater extent, unearth the fine coordination of talk and embodied practices in emotion-relevant sequences. For further research, I recommend using digital data, and to make sure that the permission for the study allows for image presentation in publications.

In addition, lots of existing conversation analytic work contains data that could be analyzed with a more explicit focus on how emotions are done; for example, work on medical interaction, assessments, disagreement, laughter, and repair organization. In making these contributions more clearly relevant to the study of emotions, not only conversation analysts, but also other approaches will have a rich source of empirical studies that improve our understanding of the social organization of emotions.
8.8 A social interactional approach to emotions and a socio-emotional approach to language-in-use – concluding remarks

The present study has examined how emotions are lodged within sequences of academic seminar interaction. A striking finding of the present study was the extent to which emotions are used as interactional resources by participants. In all three chapters, displays of emotion, a possibility of an emotion display, or a strategic action to elicit an emotion, did interactional work. In this sense, emotions that are made available in the interaction work as social actions – they can work as social actions in themselves, and they also contribute to the accomplishment of other actions. With the availability of emotions for interactants, they are also available to analysts for rigorous study.

A central aspect of the analyses presented here is how exactly timely and coordinated the actions of participants were. This is, of course, a basic assumption in conversation analytic work, that is, that all actions in interaction are produced at a particular slot for a particular reason. However, it may be that timing is even more central to interactions where emotions are omnipresent, and where the careful management of interactional trajectories is key to avoiding certain types of socially problematic issues while maximizing other, positive interactional developments.

In his analyses of AIDS counseling interactions where dreaded issues such as illness and death are brought into the interaction in a stepwise, carefully preparatory manner, Peräkylä (1997:240) discusses the concept of *kairos*, the “right time” (Erickson & Schultz, 1982). In essence, the “right time” for a particular action is gradually built in the progression of an activity. Many of the fragments examined here illustrate particularly evident cases of where kairos, or timing, is of utmost importance for orientations to emotions. One example is the teasing activities. The timing of a tease is central to its success – a tease needs to be produced in a next slot from the turn that the tease exploits, and also, the ‘embarrassed’ reaction to a tease, as demonstrated in the “Seniors” example, seemed occasioned by the fact that the tease was sequentially unexpected and unprojected in a context where group affiliation was being built. Displays of embarrassment were also carefully fitted into repair sequences, and the exact timing of embarrassment signals guided the repair initiations by others. Similarly, the timely gaze aversion of participants in embarrassment-relevant sequences, as well as the embodied emotion enactments in the ‘mock emotions’ analyses illustrate the exactness of action deployment. The timing of jokes and laughter in contexts of delicate topics or activities was also central, i.e. participants laughed the closer they came to
interpersonally delicate matters that threatened to cause embarrassment, and also worked to shift the focus from a potentially problematic event or topic. Thus, our sensitivity to emotion displays and shared knowledge about contexts where social standards threaten to make an interactional sequence problematic help us determine the exact slot in which to produce a particular action.

In this dissertation, I have sought to bring together interdisciplinary work on emotions, to apply conversation analysis in the pursuit of a description of emotions in social interaction, and to point out some benefits and some problems with an interactional approach to emotions. Empirically, I have described three broad emotion themes and a selection of the many actions-in-talk that make possible and relevant the joint achievement of moments of ‘embarrassment’, ‘frustration’, and ‘enjoyment’. It was demonstrated that although emotions can be located within any activity in the academic seminars examined, they are purposefully achieved through the coordination between participants and their actions, and furnish the institutional activities with interpersonal affiliation and disaffiliation.

Emotions are in different ways made relevant to interactants, regardless of whether they are genuinely experienced or not, and it is in this way that emotions are important interactional resources for the achievement of intersubjectivity, social relationships, and context-specific activities. In conclusion, I hope to have contributed to paving the way for a social interactional approach to emotions on the one hand, and a socio-emotional approach to language-in-use on the other.
References


Appendices

Appendix 1 Consent to act as a research subject

You are being asked to participate in a research study on language and social interaction. Before you give your permission to be videotaped during this seminar, it is important that you read the following information and ask as many questions as necessary to be sure you understand what you will be asked to do.

**Investigator:** Erica S. Sandlund, Ph.D. degree candidate of Karlstad University, Department of English and Department of Psychology, Sweden, presently adjunct assistant professor of the XXXX University. The faculty supervisors for this study are Dr.MMMM, Dr. NNNN, and Dr. YYYY. The faculty supervisors in Sweden are Prof. Moira Linnarud, Department of English, and Dr. Birgitta Johansson-Hidén, Department of Psychology, Karlstad University.

**Purpose of the study:** The purpose of this study is to obtain data for a study on social interaction. Seminars at XXXX University will be recorded, from different graduate seminar courses with different instructors.

**Description of the study:** If you agree to participate, the entire seminar will be videotaped and audio-recorded. You will also receive a background data sheet and two 1-minute paper-and-pen tests where you are asked to rate how you are feeling right now on a scale. I will also ask you to leave your contact details, so that if applicable, I can contact you within three weeks and conduct a short interview about the seminar. The material will undergo conversation analyses after being transcribed. No one but my supervisors and I will have access to the material. All information will be treated as strictly confidential and no personal identities or details will be revealed. The recordings will take place in class and the total amount of time for each recording is about the same time as your usual seminars. Three seminars in the particular series of seminars/course you are enrolled will be recorded.

**What is experimental in this study:** None of the procedures or questionnaires in this study are experimental in nature.

**Risks or discomforts:** The risks of participating are minimal. Your decision to participate has no impact on your grades in this class. If you for any reason should feel uncomfortable during the recording, you can always leave the room, or just sit out of camera range.

**Benefits of the study:** The collected data will contribute to the body of research on spoken interaction and will focus on interaction in an academic setting. The data will be used to analyze social interaction for my doctoral dissertation, and any conclusions of this study are important to our understanding interactional structures and conduct. I cannot guarantee, however, that you will receive any benefits from participating in this study.
Confidentiality: The data collected will be treated as strictly confidential. Numbers on questionnaires are only for comparison with the recorded data and will not be used for other purposes. No personal contact information will ever be used for any other purpose than to contact the participant within a few weeks. Records will be kept by the primary investigator only. The recordings will be stored safely by the investigator and will be viewed only by the investigator and her supervisors. Confidentiality will be maintained to the extent allowed by the law.

Incentives to Participate: No incentives or payment will be offered in this study.

Costs and/or Compensation for Participation: There will be no costs for the participants of this study, and it takes place during regular class time.

Voluntary Nature of Participation: Participation in this study is voluntary. Your choice of whether or not to participate will not influence your future relations with XXXX University. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw your consent and to stop participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are allowed.

Questions about the Study: If you have any questions about the research now, please ask. If you have questions later about the study, you may contact Erica Sandlund, at erica.sandlund@kau.se. If you have questions regarding your rights as a human subject and participant in this study, you may call the Committee on Protection of Human Subjects at XXXX University for information. The telephone number of the Committee is XXXX. You may also write to the Committee at: XXXXXX

Consent to Participate: The XXXX University Committee on Protection of Human Subjects has approved this consent form as signified by the Committee's stamp. This consent form must be reviewed at least once a year and expires on the date indicated on the stamp. Your signature below indicates that you have read the information in this document and have had a chance to ask any questions you have about the study. Your signature also indicates that you agree to be in the study and have been told that you can change your mind and withdraw your consent to participate at any time. You have been given a copy of this consent form. You have been told that by signing this consent form you are not giving up any legal rights.

Name of Participant (please print):

_____________________________ Date
Signature of participant

_____________________________ Date
Signature of Investigator
Appendix 2 Participant questionnaire

Name: ______________________________ Seminar: _________

Female ☐ Male ☐

Age: ______________________________

Native language: __________________

Previous education:
Highest college/university degree completed and year: _________________
School: __________________________
Current occupation/student status: _________________________________

Present area of study/specialization: ________________________________

Number of semesters at XXXX ____________________________
Career goal: _________________________________________________
Expected degree (mo/yr) ________________________________

Since my research needs more individual comments to the recorded seminars, would you mind if I contacted you within the next three weeks for an interview? Please leave your contact details below and I will be in touch! This is extremely important for my research and is greatly appreciated. Thanks!

Name: __________________________________________
Phone number: _________________________________
Email: __________________________________________
Best hours to call: __________________________________
Appendix 3 Seminar description

Seminar OG 1
The OG seminars are the largest in terms of participants, and include a maximum of fifteen students. The theme of the seminar series is organizations and gender, and students are working on a larger research project during the entire semester. The seminar begins with a long monologue (around 40 minutes) by the Dr. A concerning a conference paper. The sequence includes lots of laughter and choral talk. After an hour, the students are to present parts of their term paper to the class. The format for project feedback is that each student reads a sequence of a paper to the class, and afterwards, the class and Dr. A provide their reflections and suggestions to the author. While receiving feedback, the students are instructed to take notes of the comments and not respond or elaborate on matters that were unclear to feedback givers. Five students present papers, with feedback sessions in between. After the coffee break, the seminar alters between instructor monologues, student questions about papers, and discussion regarding the readings assigned for that class.

Seminar OG 2
The seminar opens with information from Dr. A and talk about practical matters. A conference that four of the students and the instructor participated in the week before is discussed for around 25 minutes. The discussion continues to this week's readings, and about research methodology; a sequence that can be described as traditional lecturing. After the break, the students distribute copies of their papers, and five students present their papers and receive feedback from the class and the instructor for the next 40 minutes. The class ends with small talk.

Seminar OG 3
Dr. A opens the seminar with talk about practical matters and the agenda for the evening. The students pass around copies of their papers and there is some discussion about the organization of the presentations for about fifteen minutes. 8 students present their papers and receive feedback. After an hour, there is a short coffee break. After the feedback sessions, Dr. A lectures for 20 minutes, during which the students ask questions and make comments. After almost two hours, the class begins watching a movie until it is time to leave.

Seminar IN 1
The IN seminars consist of a maximum of ten participants. The overall seminar theme is relational communication, and the seminars alternate between lecturing and class discussion of the readings. At the beginning of the seminar, each student makes a short presentation about their final research project, and Dr. B and the others students
ask a few questions, share references and offer suggestions for each project. The first 45 minutes are spent on the projects and general guidelines for thesis writing and the research process. The class then moves on to readings, where Dr. B lectures and discusses theory with the students for 25 minutes. This continues after a ten-minute break. The group then engages in a lively discussion about the readings. The class continues altering lecture and brief discussions throughout class time.

**Seminar IN 2**
The first ten minutes are spent on distributing completed assignments, after which the class moves on to discussing the assignments. The students are asked to briefly present their findings in the completed assignment, and Dr. B comments on the theoretical aspects of their work for the first hour of class. The students participate actively in the theoretical discussion, and Dr. B holds shorter lecture-based monologues in relation to the students’ research projects. The class then moves on to discussion of the readings assigned for class. The seminar then alters between lecturing activities and discussions regarding interpersonal relationship theory for the remainder of class time.

**Seminar IN 3**
The class begins with questions and discussion regarding the next assignment; a review of a popular culture book on relationships or relational communication, and continues to general matters concerning research, publication, and the use of data bases for the next thirty minutes. The students that did not present their assignments last time are then asked to distribute paper copies and present their findings. The presentations are followed by discussions around the students’ research projects and longer monological contributions from the instructor, which continues for the next 45 minutes. Lecturing and class discussions alter during the remainder of class time.
Appendix 4 Overview of the recordings

Table 4. Recording length

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Seminar</th>
<th>Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OG 1</td>
<td>2h 30 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OG 2</td>
<td>2h 34 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OG 3</td>
<td>2h 12 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IN 1</td>
<td>2h 39 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IN 2</td>
<td>2h 27 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IN 3</td>
<td>2h 31 min</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Appendix 5 Participants

Table 5.
Number of participants not including the two professors Dr. A (female) and Dr. B (male)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Seminar</th>
<th>N Students</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OG 1</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OG 2</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OG 3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IN 1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IN 2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IN 3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 6 Seating arrangements

Figure 3. Seating in OG 1

Figure 4. Seating in OG 2
Figure 5. Seating in OG 3

Figure 6. Seating in IN 1
Figure 7. Seating in IN 2

Figure 8. Seating in IN 3
Appendix 7 Interview guide - students

- Welcome and thank the respondent. Inform about interview procedure, video, confidentiality, names will be edited out.
- How do you feel about speaking in class?
  - In general
  - Throughout higher education
  - In this particular class
  - Listen for how, when, possible obstacles
- Self-presentation in class
  - How do you want to come across when speaking in class?
  - How do you feel that you usually come across in class? How do you feel when having spoken in this class, satisfied or dissatisfied?
  - How do you think others perceive your contributions?
- Can you describe classroom situations where you feel uncomfortable speaking up?
  - Listen for and probe with class size, instructor, ideological disagreements, peer influence, gender, classroom physical setting, interaction styles, lectures versus discussions, knowledge level, self-consciousness of self-presentation, interest and confidence in subject matter
- Have you ever spoken up in this class and regretted that you did? Describe!
- Do you sometimes refrain from saying something when you feel that you wanted to? Why? How does that make you feel?
  - Listen for strategies, emotions, frustration, acceptance, dejection
- Can you describe classroom situations when you feel comfortable speaking?
  - Listen for and probe with class size, instructor, ideological disagreements, peer influence, gender, classroom physical setting, interaction styles, lectures versus discussions, self-consciousness in self-presentation, confidence and interest in the subject matter
- How would you describe the communication climate in this class?
  - Listen for and probe with comparison to other classes, hesitation, instructor, student interaction, confidence and interest in the subject, equally distributed talk, opportunity to talk, time constraints, amount of feedback
- Do you feel that there's a preferred/encouraged communication style or language use in this class/in academia in general?
Listen for instructor’s communication style, peers, perceived expectations, pressure to come across as “academic”, jargon, readings, relation to the respondent’s feelings about talking in class

• How do you usually feel when you are in this class and about this class?
  o Listen for expectations before class, when thinking about this class, during class, after class. Interest, reasons for the above.

• What kind of emotions do you experience in class?
  o What makes you excited/happy/engaged in class (instructor, peers, topic, talk)
  o What makes you annoyed/angry/quiet in class (instructors, peers, topic, talk)
  o Describe such moments during these three recordings occasions

• Do you feel that there is room for emotion in class/in academe in general?
  o Describe. Perceived as positive or negative? Examples, comparisons, reactions to expression of emotion among peers and instructors, about expressing own emotion, how do you manage emotion in class settings and at seminars?

Video sequences:
  o I would like you to try and recall these seminars, and comment on if you remember what you were feeling or thinking or experiencing before, during and after this specific interaction. (3 sequences are viewed)
    ▪ Listen for tension, happiness, excitement, boredom, how this instance was remembered, what effect it had on behavior/talk.

• Sum up: I am interested in classroom interaction and emotion – is there anything else you would like to add that I might not have asked you? Thank the respondent and inform about confidentiality.
Appendix 8 Interview guide – Instructors

- What type of classroom communication do you want to establish?
- Do you usually feel that this is achieved in this seminar?
- How would you describe interaction / communication climate in this seminar? Compared to other seminars you have taught in this subject area?
- When leaving the seminar, how do you usually feel about expectations you had before the seminar?
- How would you describe yourself as a communicator in this seminar?
- How do you think the students perceive you?
- What types of situations make you excited or happy or pleased in this seminar?
- What types of situations make you uncomfortable, annoyed, angry etc in this seminar?
- How do you handle possible tension between students or towards you, if it would occur?
- How do you usually feel about and in this seminar?
- How do you feel about displaying/students displaying emotion in class?
- Video Sequences: remember what you were feeling or thinking, comment
The present dissertation is concerned with the social organization of emotions in talk-in-interaction. Conversation analytic procedures were used to uncover the practices through which participants in social interaction convey, understand, enact, and utilize emotions that are made relevant to the interaction. The central aim is to describe such practices and the contexts in which they are deployed, and to link emotions to the social actions that they perform or contribute to performing within situated activities. Conversation analytic work has generally not addressed emotions explicitly for reasons discussed in the dissertation, and a second aim was therefore to test the applicability of conversation analysis to emotion research, to theoretically bring together separate fields of inquiry, and to discuss advantages and limitations of a talk-in-interactional approach to emotions. Furthermore, the analytic approach to emotions is restricted to displays and orientations that are made relevant by participants themselves.

Data consists of video recordings of six graduate school seminars at a large university in the United States, as well as interviews with all 22 participants. From the analyses, three themes emerged; "frustration", "embarrassment", and "enjoyment", and within each, an assortment of practices for doing emotions were found. Frustration was primarily located in the context of violations of activity-specific turn-taking norms. Embarrassment was found to do multiple interactional work; for example, in contexts of repair, teasing, and culturally delicate matters. Enjoyment was found to be collaboratively pursued between and within institutional activities; for example, through reported speech dramatizations, utilization of activity-transitional environments, and playful 'mock' emotions. Timing of gaze aversion, laughter, and gestures were also found to be key to the display and perception of emotions.

The findings indicate that emotion displays can be viewed as transforming a situated action, opening up alternative trajectories for a sequences-in-progress, and also function as actions in themselves. Furthermore, it was concluded that conversation analysis is indeed a fruitful empirical route for understanding emotions and their role in social interaction.