Everyday Construction of Gender Identity in a Sex-reassigned Child
Negotiating Membership Categorization

A case study of an Iranian family in Sweden

Azar Raoufi Masouleh

Supervisor: Professor Leelo Keevallik
Co-Supervisor: Dr. Ali Reza Majlesi
Examiner: Associate professor Mathias Broth

30 credits thesis
Fall 2014
Abstract

Conversation analytic (CA) and ethnomethodological (EM) techniques are employed in this study to explore the ways speakers within and between interactional turns build and resist gender category by resisting its activities/predicates. It aims to reveal how a sex-reassigned child’s identity is pertinent to the construction of membership categorization and the doing of resistance towards category-tied activities/predicates. It attempts to explain how the child tries to design her answers in a way that - both explicitly and implicitly - resist both the gender membership categorization she is being assigned to be and its ties (predicates/activities) she is being asked to accomplish. Membership categorization analysis (MCA), formulated by Sacks (1979), is employed here to show that the identity categories used in talk are tools by which participants organize and perform activities/predicates to establish their categories. The human subject that this project concentrates on is an immigrant family having a sex-reassigned child called Aidan. The data, which is analyzed, was collected during a dispute around the haircut and clothing style for the sex-reassigned child between the child and the parents. During the interaction the parents try to generate the category predicates for building up a set of activities around what might be considered ‘normal’ within a community that enables them to define and validate the child particular membership category. The main resistance strategies adopted by the child are dispreferred actions such as refusals mainly through accounting (e.g., justification and explanation) and disagreement.

Keywords: Ethnomethodology, conversation analysis, the doing of gender identity, membership categorization, resistance
Acknowledgments

I would like to express my deepest appreciation to my supervisors Leelo Keevallik and Ali Reza Majlesi for the patient guidance, encouragement and most insightful advice they have provided throughout my time as their student. I extend my sincere gratitude to Mathias Broth for being my examiner, who graciously offered me his stimulating comments and thought-provoking observations on my thesis. The considerable discussions we had and the professional comments and suggestions they made on my work were extremely constructive and helped me improve the scientific quality of this study.

Last but not least, my special thanks go to my family, especially to my mother Mahnaz who have unconditionally supported me all this time.

Linköping, November 2014

Azar Raoufi Masouleh
# Table of Contents

1. Introduction ......................................................................................................................................................... 1

2. Aim of the study ....................................................................................................................................................... 2

3. Theoretical Background ............................................................................................................................................. 2
   3.1. An ethnomethodological perspective ..................................................................................................................... 3
   3.2. Conversation analysis .............................................................................................................................................. 4
   3.3. Doing Membership Categorization ....................................................................................................................... 5
   3.4. Identity and gender .................................................................................................................................................. 6
   3.5. Resistance .............................................................................................................................................................. 8
     3.5.1. Practices of resistance ......................................................................................................................................... 9
     3.5.1.1. Overt practices .................................................................................................................................................... 9
     3.5.1.2. Covert practices ............................................................................................................................................... 9
     3.5.2. Doing refusals as a resource for resisting category-tied activities/predicates .............................................. 10
       3.5.2.1 Accounts ......................................................................................................................................................... 10
       3.5.2.2. Dispreferred refusal ........................................................................................................................................ 11
     3.5.3. Earlier literature on gender construction in interaction ..................................................................................... 14

4. Data and research methodology ............................................................................................................................... 17
   4.1. Participants ......................................................................................................................................................... 18
   4.2. The empirical data ............................................................................................................................................... 19
   4.3. Video-recordings: prospects and consequences ................................................................................................. 19
   4.4. Consent ............................................................................................................................................................... 20

5. Analysis ..................................................................................................................................................................... 20
   5.1. Resistance via accounts ...................................................................................................................................... 23
   5.2. Resisting the relevance of linguistic gender membership categorization ......................................................... 36

6. Concluding remarks .................................................................................................................................................... 47

References .................................................................................................................................................................... 49

Appendix: Transcription conventions .......................................................................................................................... 54
1. Introduction

The focus of the project is on the correlation between gender category construction as a social phenomenon and resistance. The research will be allocated for the ‘sex-reassigned child’s membership categorization’ and resistance from a conversation analytic methodology (Sacks, 1979) and an ethnomethodology approach (Garfinkel 1967), to show how she deals with a sense of belonging/non-belonging to a particular gender/sex category. The direction in which conversation analysis (CA), ethnomethodology (EM) and membership categorization analysis (MCA) analyses of the relationship between gender and talk proceed is from the particularities of each utterance to what it tells us about participants’ orientation in talk. I will look at the normative procedures of what occurs in their daily routines and activities and how they as members of these settings contribute to them. I will investigate their practical methods of engagement in the activities and their prevailing accomplishments in and through those activities in relation to the current research topic.

A variety of terms have been used in the study such as membership categorization analysis (MCA), category bound predicates/activities, and the doing of gender, to express a certain theoretical assumption about the object of study. The view adopted in this study follows a CA line of work, that identity emerges and is accomplished in interactional contexts, rather than being a pre-determined feature (Bucholtz and Hall 2005).

The methodological approaches of EM/CA, and MCA are used to analyze video-recorded and transcribed interactions of a single family. This study explicitly investigates the instances of MCA and resistance as observed in an episode of naturally occurring interaction in this family. The episode occurs in the same evening talk and involves a dispute around the haircut and clothing style for the child while getting ready for a party. The study specifically analyzes how the child draws upon the action of resistance in her dispute and also justificatory and explanatory accounts and mitigation as she attempts to deal with it.

What differentiates my research from the previous studies on resistance is my attempt to make a correlation between MCA and resistance, whereby I aim to show how a sex-reassigned child reveals and establishes her preferred gender identity by resisting the gender category-bound predicates/activities she is being asked to possess and perform. Based on the notion that accountability is constructed in the interaction rather than being a predefined phenomenon (Drew 1998), this research focuses on the issue regarding how gender contexts and identities are related to the doing of resistance and the construction of membership categorization.
2. Aim of the study

The objective of the present paper is the analysis of data in an attempt to understand how the sex-reassigned child’s identity is negotiated through the construction of membership categorization and the doing of resistance towards category-tied activities/predicates. Across the different analytic sections, I see how speakers produce and resist a category’s situated meanings.

By looking at the interactional practices, members’ methods, and the reality of their daily routines and everyday activities, this project tries to employ the members’ perspectives as to answering two broad research question addressed:

1. How does a sex-reassigned child construct his/her own identity by doing resistance as a resource to countervail the gender membership categorization and its ties she is being assigned to?

2. How can resistance and non-answers be understood as a transgression of gender and social norms?

The study is organized into four sections, the first describes a theoretical presentation of the notions of EM/CA, MCA, the relevance of gender, resistance, and earlier literature on gender construction in interaction, the data collected and the methodology used are discussed in the second section and the third section consists of analysis of part of the data. The analysis sections focus on how participants orient themselves to gender identities and social norms about gender attributes, and form gender categories, and the last section is related to the concluding remarks.

3. Theoretical Background

EM and the way it has developed in CA base the analysis on the normative facets of interaction (Heritage 1984). Both ethnomethodological and conversation analytic approaches seek to identify general practices within micro-level social interaction of people by which “social order” is achieved, rather than being “order” as a framework within which actions take place (Garfinkel 1967; Sacks 1992). Through ethnomethodology the social management of sexual status and the establishment of gender identity are studied (Garfinkel 1967). Within a CA/EM approach, gender is procedurally relevant to talk in an interaction only when participants are obviously oriented to it (Schegloff, 1997), through which the mundane
gendering, the everyday establishment of social identities and the rules that regulate interactions can be explained (cf. Stokoe and Weatherall 2002).

Membership categorization analysis, as a part of CA, is an ethnomethodological method for analyzing and uncovering the interactional and methodical practices that members use to make sense out of the world, and understand the commonsense routines and everyday activities (Fitzgerald, Housley, and Butler 2009).

This research underscores the view of ‘doing gender’ (Butler 1990, Kessler and McKenna 1978; West and Zimmerman 1987, 2002) rather than ‘having gender’, and the issue that how the doing of gender identities are related to the conversational tools of MCA and resistance.

3.1. An ethnomethodological perspective

Ethnomethodology (Garfinkel 1967) studies the nature of social interaction by empirically focusing on the micro-levels of everyday life and routines using the techniques such as experiments, participant observation, interviews, case studies and the likes. It seeks to find the analytical methods by which participants make the sense of order generally called society (Garfinkel 1967). The approach concentrates on the social order as an achievement; norms and rules as resources of analysis and participants’ actions and orientations as sources of the meaning (Clayman and Maynard, 1995; Heritage 1984). The key concepts within ethnomethodology refer to “forms of action, not to forms of social structure/institution” (David and Sutton 2004: 123).

EM discusses social actions and talk as indexical, i.e., the realization of meaning of a phenomenon is relied on the further inquiry and the participants’ orderly achievement. Garfinkel notes that ethnomethodologists need to listen to conversations many times to understand the occurring action. Indexicality is a concept in which he argues that meanings may not be the same between two or more individuals (e.g., speaker-hearer) in a conversation. The emergent meanings may be created by the individual meanings within a social interaction and the shared meaning can help individuals understand each other. Heritage defines indexicality as “the intelligibility of what is said rests upon the hearer's ability to make out what is meant from what is said according to methods which are tacitly relied on by both speaker and hearer. These methods involve the continual invocation of common-sense knowledge and of context as resources with which to make definite sense of indefinite descriptive terms” (1984: 144).
Reflexivity refers to the achievement of meaning by categorizing specific events and explaining them in and through the specificity of their context of occurrence and within “general patterns” (David and Sutton 2004: 123). For Garfinkel ([1948] 2006), reflexivity is a feature that does not happen in the mind; rather it is created through the witnessable order of a sequential chain of action. Individuals create social reality through actions and the way an individual observes the actions and defines the meanings are different to others. Heritage (1984: 242) notes “reflexivity means that members shape their actions in relation to context while context is constantly being redefined through actions”.

Within EM, sexuality is illustrated as a practical and prevailing accomplishment of members through their daily activities and routines and gender role was viewed as crucial in the development of ethnomethodological ideas. This may be constructed through talk. Ethnomethodological conversation analysis emphasizes talk as a way of doing through which people manage their conduct during actual interaction to be revealed as what might be considered ‘normal’ within a community (Sacks 1992: 215-221).

In EM “from the standpoint of persons who regard themselves as normally sexed, their environment has a perceivedly normal sex composition. This composition is rigorously dichotomized into the "natural," i.e., moral, entities of male and female” (Garfinkel, 1967; 116). In this regard, this approach introduces a list of features to show adult members’ attitude toward “normally sexed persons” in a society (Garfinkel, 1967: 122-8). The pivot of the description is that society is populated by only two sexes, ‘male’ or ‘female’ and emphasizes the dichotomy of sex as a morally legitimate order. All members of a society count themselves as one sex or the other and are normally either male or female. For normals the essential “insignia” for males are the possession of a penis and for females a vagina and that people will not willfully or randomly change their sex status. In the case of sexual ambiguity, there is a likelihood of individuals being classified as either male or female. Thus a transgressing procedure of moving from one sex to another is not only a sexual change process from a medical point of view but it is also a social passing whose achievement is socially constructed (Garfinkel, 1967).

3.2. Conversation analysis

From within and yet beyond ethnomethodology, Harvey Sacks (1992) created CA as an analytic approach to the study of real events and everyday naturally occurring conversation. CA developed a systematic method for analyzing “talk-in-interaction” (Silverman 1998) and
thereby a view that everyday talk forms the base of social analysis for intersubjective understanding of social actions dealing with common sense at the level of everyday reasoning (Heritage 1984). CA concentrates on talk and other actions as “sequentially organized and ordered” phenomena to which participants orient in actual interactions and through which they understand the “normative” form of “social actions” (Arminen 2005: 8; see also Hutchby and Wooffitt 1998; ten Have 1999). CA as an analytical tool basically focuses on the routine, provides the fine and basic details of interaction data, and relies upon members’ categories rather than theoretical concepts and constructs (Silverman 1998: Ch. 4). CA established a field of study to examine the way people make the context relevant for themselves over an occurring interaction.

The analytic hypothesis of conversation analysis, that is “order-at-all-points” (Sacks 1992) developed this approach as an ‘orderly organized and structured whole’ (Sacks et al. 1974; Schegloff and Sacks 1973); “even the finest levels of conversational detail, every speech error, pause, overlap or lexical correction, might be there as a “designed” or consequential feature of a social action” (Edwards and Potter 1992: 6). That is, to demonstrate the complexity of the interplay, even tiny fragments of talk and details of interaction should be scrutinized.

### 3.3. Doing Membership Categorization

MCA stems from Sacks’ (1992) ground-breaking *Lectures on Conversation*, and concerns the accomplishment of a “common-sense knowledge” focusing on members’ social categories, and in particular, their use in establishing members’ activities in and through talk (Francis and Hester 2004: 21). A central element is the notion of membership categorization device (MCD), which bases on collections (e.g., gender) of related categories (e.g., male/female) (Sacks 1992, as cited in Schegloff, 2007). MCDs are “assembled objects” (Hester and Eglin 1997: 20) and concentrate on the formation of different kinds of categories in talk. Categories are “inherently inference-rich” and can be described as “the storehouse and the filing system” for our common-sense knowledge about how people behave and act (Schegloff 2007: 469), not as “storehouses of decontextualized meaning” (Stokoe 2004: 114). That is, they are inspired with meaning in their interactional contexts. Categories are related to certain actions (‘category-bound activities’), attributes or characteristics (‘natural predicates’) (Sacks 1972; also see Hester and Eglin, 1997a, b) through which members’ normative behaviors are constructed according to expected rights and obligations. The
attributions related to each category are constituted through the category-bound activities that are treated by individuals (Stokoe 2004: 113). The ‘semantic nature of categories’ (Edwards 1997) carries category-bound activities, predicates, and obligations that are typically associated with those categories.

MCA is an analytic tool for studying the process in which identity is constructed through category labels and related activities by which participants reproduce ‘‘normative gendered practices’’ (Stokoe 2004: 119). To study the ‘categorical’ aspects of gender, MCA focuses on members’ categories and the ways through which categories “might be relevant for the doing of some activity” (Sacks 1992 vol. 1: 597) and everyday approaches of gender are adopted, reformulated, and resisted in talk.

Within EM the sense made of categories, devices and predicates is a “situated, contextually embedded sense” (Hester and Eglin 1997b: 11). “That activities and predicates are category-bound – and that categories can be positioned hierarchically and organized duplicatively or in standardized relational pairs – can become a resource for action” (Stokoe 2012, 281). Categories, activities/predicates are treated either as “going together” or as “disjunctive” (Stokoe 2004: 114). Going together “is achieved and is to be found in the local specifics of categorization as an activity” (Hester and Eglin 1997b: 46), not in a decontextualized way.

MCA may be employed as a method to study the (re)production of normative assumptions about gender during interaction (see Stokoe and Smithson 2001, cf. Weatherall 2002b) to make members’ categorizations, “observable–reportable for the occasion as those of gendered beings” (Stokoe and Weatherall 2002: 710). It shows “how people achieve gender as an accountable aspect of their situated activities” (Eglin 2002), and how they are oriented to gender and gendered categorizations in their interactions as they categorize their gender identities and others. Members’ practical categorizations form part of what ethnomethodologists refer to when they describe the ongoing production and realization of ‘facts’ about social life, including members’ gendered ‘reality analysis’ (Hester and Francis 1997). Through MCA the mundane and everyday gendering of interaction concentrates on the routine accomplishment of “taken-for-granted facts about gender-appropriate behavior and characters” (Stokoe 2006; 475-76).

3.4. Identity and gender

Traditionally, identity, what Bucholtz and Hall (2005) called a centrally linguistic phenomenon, is negotiated as an ‘intersubjective’ accomplishment rather than ‘individual’
that emerges in interactional contexts. Identity is not an “inherited” phenomenon, rather it changes over time as a person ages (Keevallik 2010: 178). Both directly and indirectly, social contexts and linguistic interaction influence the circulation of identity and subject it to a variety of beliefs, behaviors, and attitudes. Identity can alter with or without personal recognition depending upon different situations in life. It can be reflected in our almost conscious choices and decisions based on which we try to make our clothes, behavior, and speech sufficiently pleasing and agreeable (Keevallik 2010: 178). Language as an “act of identity” (LePage and Tabouret-Keller 1985) is influenced by the ever-changing phenomenon of identity (see also Keevallik 2010: 178). Through a sociocultural linguistic perspective (see Bucholtz and Hall 2005: 586), identity is a rational and sociocultural phenomenon evidencing in a discourse rather than a stable structure expressing fixed social categories, which is dealt with diverse and collective approaches of sociolinguistics, linguistics anthropology, discourse and conversational analysis, and psychology.

Sex/gender as a socially constituted phenomenon rather than ‘individual’ emerges in social interactions (e.g., Butler, 1990), and is better described as a “continuum” rather than “dichotomy” (Bing and Bergvall 1996; 3). That is sex and gender do not belong to different ‘realms’ and respectively are biologically and culturally determined given (Butler 1990). Rather, both sex and gender are socially constructed, a controversial view that challenges the idea of the sex/gender distinction. “Perhaps this construct called ‘sex’ is as culturally constructed as gender; indeed, perhaps it was already gender, with the consequence that the distinction between sex and gender turns out to be no distinction at all” (Butler 1990: 11).

From the sociological point of view, gender is “a situated accomplishment: the local management of conduct in relation to normative conceptions of appropriate attitudes and activities for particular sex categories” (West and Fenstermaker 1993: 156). This means that the establishment of gender occurs in accordance with the normative attitudes toward women and men.

The view of ‘doing gender’ rather than ‘having gender’ discusses that gender is never complete but is accomplished and achieved through the process of becoming gender (Butler 1990). An ethnomethodological account of gender is that the doing of gender consists of managing “occasions so that, whatever the particulars, the outcome is seen and seeable in context as gender appropriate or, as the case may be, gender inappropriate – that is, accountable” (West and Zimmerman 2000; 12, see also Kessler and McKenna 1978; West and Zimmerman 1987). Accountability in CA points out the argument within EM that in all
conversation “participants construct or design their talk so as to be understood in the way they wish to be understood” (Drew 2005: 94). The concept of accountability is used in analyzing the process of action and interaction in which people try to behave normatively accountably (e.g., using or not using accounts in a question-answer sequence). Social actions are “essentially accountable” and should be described through practices and language use in essence (Drew 1998). That is, accountability is constructed and negotiated in the interaction, rather than being a predefined phenomenon.

The accomplishment of membership and accountability occasionally occurs in “interactional arenas” (West and Zimmerman 1987: 126). The doing of gender may expose one’s performance as normative to the risk of gender assessment and accountability due to the obligations of gender categories – “an ever-present possibility of having one’s actions, circumstances, and even, one’s descriptions characterized in relation to one’s presumed membership in a particular category” (West and Fenstermaker 2002: 541). “The ‘doing’ of gender requires vigilance on behalf of members who must manage their behavior according to cultural norms with regard to gender” (Stokoe 2006: 469). Women and men can challenge gender assessment if they do not possess a normative understanding of femininity or masculinity.

From the standpoint of the normal, sex transformation and any changes in “the population's composition” can be only limited to three factors of “birth”, “death”, and “migration” (Garfinkel 1967:125). For the normal member, such changes are limited to “occasions and practical circumstances” (e.g., masquerading, play-acting, party behavior, convention behavior, spying, and the like) after which the person is expected to change and act in the way s/he “really is” (Garfinkel 1967:125). Indeed the social statuses are obliged to be accomplished in accord with the majority assigned attitudes, appearances, dress, style of life, and the like regardless of persons’ desires or interests.

3.5. Resistance

Resistance and non-answer is a “complex and multifaceted course of action” (Clayman and Heritage 2002: 250) and can be used as a strategy of resisting a question, request, invitation, and so on. Resistance is distinguished into two dimensions; in the negative aspect answers are mainly ‘partial’ and ‘incomplete’ (e.g., yes-or-no reply) and accompanied by refusals. The positive dimension occurs when respondent moves beyond the ‘parameters’ of a question (Clayman and Heritage 2002: 254). This dimension can also take place when the answers are
according to the ‘topical’ parameters of a question, but the respondent goes beyond what the question specifically requested and called for.

In feminist CA, resistance is viewed as a “concrete” practice (like ‘misunderstanding’) rather than “abstract” (Kitzinger 2000: 188-189). To be a typical ‘male’ or ‘female’ is not a “permanent state of affairs” (Stokoe 2012: 290). The production of resistance to category-bound activities/predicates can transform the “commonsense meanings of categories” through which categorization becomes the main pivot of social change (see Baker 2000). That is, the doing of social actions is embedded in the local constitution of categories and their ties (activities and predicates).

3.5.1. Practices of resistance

Two strategies applied in the construction of resistance are overt and covert practices; in the first, the doing of resistance is overtly and clearly produced, and in the latter, no explicit verbal articulation of resistance occurs at all.

3.5.1.1. Overt practices

In the action of resisting a question overtly, an explicit resistance takes place in the turn construction. An overt practice of resistance has a clear disadvantage: it presents an obvious resistance. But it minimizes the risks related to “a resistance course of action” (Clayman and Heritage 2002: 258). It means that although overt practices explicitly break norms, such practices make justifications possible. Refusals are a type of overt practices and justificatory accounts are strongly applied when someone overtly refuses to answer a question. “Blanket refusals” are a form of resistance that can constitute the strongest “breach of contract” (Clayman and Heritage 2002: 264) in which a person refuses to answer a question under any circumstances.

3.5.1.2. Covert practices

Covert practices are mostly related to the context of positive resistance in which the answer departs from the agenda of the question and moves beyond the question (Clayman and Heritage 2002: 269). The agenda shift and departure can take place in the “verbal tense” of an ongoing talk, for example in an open-ended question regarding a problem; the addressee faces two or more alternatives. But s/he chooses neither of them and rather changes the verbal tense of his talk-e.g., from past to present and pushes the problematic aspect of talk into the past. “Word repeats” (i.e., the deliberate repetition of a word or phrase at the beginning of several
successive verses or clauses) and “anaphoric pronouns” (i.e., the use of a linguistic unit, such as a pronoun, to refer back to another unit) (Clayman and Heritage 2002: 275) are the other strategies applied as covert practices.

3.5.2. Doing refusals as a resource for resisting category-tied activities/predicates

Refusals are concerned with responses to offers, questions, requests and the like (Heritage 1984) and are mostly accompanied by the ‘standard’ elements of a dispreferred action such as accounting, delay, and mitigation. Therefore, the structure of refusals in everyday interaction relies on the analysis of the “micro-level features” with “interactional relevance” (Kitzinger and Frith 1999; 301). Some of the features formulated by Levinson (1983: 334-5) are: delays (e.g., pauses, hesitations); prefaces and hedges (e.g., uh, um or well); palliatives (e.g., appreciations, apologies, token agreement); and accounts (e.g., explanations, justifications or excuses). Refusals can threaten the ‘face’ of the speaker and the ‘relationship’ between two parties in a conversation and are commonly accomplished by accounts (Heritage 1984: 270). In what follows, I will focus on one of the most distinctive features of dispreferred format – accounts - to illustrate this notion.

3.5.2.1 Accounts

Accounts are understood as the ways that speakers explain their actions which are often unusual or unexpected (Heritage 1984). They serve as “conflict-avoidance procedures” to maintain “social solidarity” in the process (Heritage 1984: 272). Like all conduct, accounts are accountable in themselves, and can be recognized as appropriate or inappropriate (Drew, 2005: 295). Some accounts can have the “effect of depersonalizing” refusals (Clayman and Heritage 2002: 268), that are not applied as a personal answer to a specific question from a specific person rather as a general strategy of responding to all question of that sort.

Different structures and scales of alignment emerge from responses to questions in both conventional and institutional interaction (Schegloff 2007: 58). Refusals are practically accompanied by accounts such as justifications or explanations (Labov and Fanshel 1977: 86–8). They can serve as a “minus response” (Schegloff 2007: 59) that can cause a distance between the person who is supposed to answer and the question and also a delay in the activity of answering. Distancing responses can be treated as mitigating or irritating actions. The major feature of such responses that are known as “dispreferred” responses is the use of accounts during the sequences (Heritage 1984: 269- 72). The terms “preferred” and “dispreferred” are “simply descriptive of the different ways in which acceptances and refusals
are routinely done in ordinary talk” (Kitzinger and Frith 1999; 302) and possess “affiliative” and “disaffiliative” characters respectively (Heritage 1984: 269). This approach is emerged from the concept of “preference” structure in CA (Heritage 1984: 265); the actions that are directly carried out without delay (e.g., acceptances, agreeing) are described as preferred, and ones that are delayed, qualified and accounted (e.g., refusal, rejections, disagreeing) as dispreferred.

3.5.2.2. Dispreferred refusal

Generally speaking, dispreferred format of refusals to answers are categorized into two different forms of actions:

1. The action of directly refusing (examples 1,2) in which the disagreement is explicitly taken place.

2. The action of indirect refusals (Examples 3, 4, 5,6) in which accounts are employed to ‘mitigate’ or ‘justify’ the disagreement.

The first distinguishes two types of “opposition moves” (Goodwin, M.H. 1990: 151-52) to show how subsequent terms are designed by the elements of opposition:

a) “Disagreement or refusal to perform some requested action”:

(1) 0:02:58 Video 3

*Discussing Aidan’s dress*

1 Mom: *bia bahamdege (.) xoshkel konim=

Let’s get (.) beautiful together

2 Aidan: *ne:mix:am?*

I don’t: wa:nt?

In the above example, using the modal auxiliary verb, *I don’t want*, Aidan indeed constructs the account in terms of ‘unwillingness’- the distinction between unwillingness and inability accounts is not sharply defined and easily understood- (Heritage 1984: 270). The unwillingness account in dispreferred responses is what Heritage (1984: 271) argues as “face-threatening” in ordinary conversation. By saying, *I don’t want*, Aidan positions herself in relation to the suggested action and displays that she is unwilling to ‘get beautiful’. 
b) “Return and exchange moves”:

(2) 0:03:55 Video 3

1 Mom: *boro in pirhano bepush*
   go and wear this dress

2 Aidan: *xodet (. ) xodet boro pirhan bepush*
   You ( . ) you yourself go and wear the dress

In this excerpt a “reciprocal” action occurs in an opposition move, in which “the participants’ framework” changes, while “the relationship of action”, “current speaker”, and “current recipient” all are preserved (Goodwin, M.H. 1990). In such an argumentative turn, the emphasis is on “the agent of the action or subject”, rather than the “validity” or “invalidity” of a statement, because there is no attempt to “prove” or “disprove” a perspective.

The second form consists of “indirect response” (Halliday and Hasan 1976: 206-17) distinguished by two actions of “disclaimer” and “commentary”; the first one does not oppose to or disagree with the prior and requested actions, rather it rejects and challenges their “relevance”, and the latter comments on a prior turn (Goodwin, M.H. 1990: 153-56).

In the following excerpts, the responses contain the prefaces of ‘so’, ‘well’, and ‘none of my business’ as disclaimers by which the recipient is placed in a position what Marjorie Goodwin (1990: 153) have termed a “disadvantageous position”; that is the second speaker considers the first speaker’s talk “to be of no consequence”.

(3) 0:02:28 Video 2

Discussion Aidan’ dress

1 Mom: *<Aha:n> hala aslan (. ) Hamishe Aidan (. ) hamishe to dust dari [tipe*

2 *pesanume bezani*

   *<Yeah> Now Never (. ) Aidan (. ) you always like to dress [like a boy*

3 Aidan: *dust daram ama to nemizari*

   *[Xob [Well, I’d like to but you don’t let me!*

(4) 0:02:45 Video 3

The mother is trying to persuade Aidan to wear a jacket
1 Mom: *maman jan sarde doxtaram*

Sweetie it’s cold my daughter!

2 Aidan: *Xob sard nist*

Well I don’t feel cold!

(5) **0:07:33 video 4**

*The father is saying to Aidan that if she doesn’t wear a dress, she will have to stay at home and just have soup for dinner.*

1 Dad: *age ta 12 shab ham ashe duq boxori hast (0.2) beshin haminjuri ashe duq boxor*

There is enough soup you eat till 12 midnight (0.2) stay and just eat up soup!

2 Aidan: *xob man nemiam (.) pirhan dust nadaram bepusham*

so I won’t go (.) I wouldn’t like to wear dress!

(6) **0:03:12 Video 1**

*Discussing the girls’ hairstyle in Aidan’s football club*

1 Mom: *chiz ina chera muhashuno kutah nemikonan rasti?*

Why don’t they have their hair cut by the way?

2 Aidan: *>UNA BADESHUN MIAD MAMA:N < (0.9) man chi kar konam?*

>THEY RESENT IT ((short hair)) MOM< (0.9) It’s none of my business? hih:::

3 Dad: *kia?: (1.04) ham-timihat?*

Who?: (1.04) Your team-mates?

4 Aidan: *°are dige (.) man chi kar konam°*

°Yes well (.) it’s none of my business°

5 Dad: *are una [hamashun=*

Yeah they [all=

6 Mom: *=[hamashun az dam muhashun [bolande]°*
they all have long hair.

Dad: [are] [Yeah]

Aidan: °are Man chi kar konam°
°Yeah none of my business°

The disclaimers of so, well and none of my business used in the above-mentioned examples argue “the irrelevance of prior speaker’s talk” (Goodwin, M.H. 1990: 154) to show ‘warning’ (ex. 5) and ‘criticism’ (ex. 3). In the example 4, Aidan uses the word well, to acknowledge a statement, the weather is not cold. None of my business in example 6 can be considered as an opposition move to show “oneself at an advantage vis-a-vis others” (Goodwin, M.H. 1990: 154) that Aidan uses to avoid disputing other girls’ hairstyle.

3.6. Earlier literature on gender construction in interaction

The literature review focuses on the theories of CA/EM, and MCA and organizing as key concepts necessary to discuss the correlation between gender category construction and resistance to particular category predicates. It briefly examines prevalent issues facing gender identity as a construct, which is evoked in interaction as including membership categories, and category-bound activities/predicates.

In 1967, Harold Garfinkel established Ethnomethodology to introduce an approach towards the organization of social world through everyday interaction whereby a groundbreaking work has been developed on “the social production of gender” (Stokoe 2006: 467). Through the analysis of “passing and the managed achievement of sex status”, Garfinkel (1967) conducted the case study of Agnes, a transsexual who had become ‘a practical methodologist’ and learnt how to be a woman by learning behavioral patterns and becoming ‘highly attuned’ with an awareness of conventions and expectations, and the routine, but ‘unnoticed workings of social structures’. He scrutinized that “how, over the temporal course of their actual engagements, and “knowing” the society only from within, members produce stable, accountable practical activities, i.e., social structures of everyday activities” (Garfinkel 1967: 185). Garfinkel demonstrated “that and how normal sexuality is accomplished through witnessable displays of talk and conduct” (Garfinkel 1967: 180). Through Agnes’s methodological practices, he reached the conclusion:
[...] that normally sexed persons are cultural events in societies whose character as visible orders of practical activities consist of members’ recognition and production practices [...] that members’ practice alone produce the observable-tellable normal sexuality of persons, and [they] do so only, entirely, exclusively in actual, singular, particular occasions through actual witnessed displays of common talk and conduct.

(Garfinkel, 1967: 181)

Garfinkel’s work is considered an effort to study “the forms of commonsense reasoning” used in everyday life and the methods that regulate the “seen but unnoticed” construction of gender identity (Stokoe 2006: 467). He formulated EM to show how people make their everyday affairs “visibly-rational-reportable- for-all-practical-purposes” (Garfinkel 1967: vii) and achieve sense of the world. Garfinkel describes Agnes as a methodologist studying everyday social situations:

Her studies armed her with knowledge of how the organized features of ordinary settings are used by members as procedures for making appearances-of-sexuality-as-usual decidable as a matter of course. The scrutiny that she paid to appearances; her concerns for adequate motivation, relevance, evidence, and demonstration; her sensitivity to devices of talk; her skill in detecting and managing ‘tests’ were attained as part of her mastery of trivial but necessary social tasks, to secure ordinary rights to live. Agnes was self-consciously equipped to teach normals how normals make sexuality happen in commonplace settings as an obvious, familiar, recognizable, natural, and serious matter of fact.

(Garfinkel 1967:180)

Stokoe and Smithson (2001) argues that CA is a useful tool for exploring the relevance of making gender in talk-in-interaction concerning the speakers’ orientations and the contexts in which they make gender relevant. Rather than the explicit orientations, CA has been used to demonstrate whether gender may be indexed implicitly during a conversation or if gender can be a relevant part of the context including implicit gender references to sexuality, appearance, demeanor, or gendered activities (Hopper and LeBaron 1998: 171). Conversation analysts suggest that “linguistic indexes of gender may occur at every level of language. So, even if gender is not explicitly privileged by participants as relevant to the
It is suggested that “omnirelevance” of sexual statuses (Garfinkel 1967: 118) to be employed to explain the pervasive nature of gender in members’ daily activities (Weatherall 2002a,b; also see West and Zimmerman, 1987). Using CA and MCA, focusing on the issue of “gender omnirelevance”, Weatherall for example demonstrates “how and that the pervasiveness of gender is achieved in talk-in- interaction” (2002b: 767) by drawing on children’s talk in a New Zealand school. She shows “the interactional mechanisms underlying the omnirelevance of gender in daily life” by drawing upon the conversational tools of repair and MCA. She suggests that “repair sequences may be one of the conversational devices that achieve the arguable omnirelevance of gender” (Weatherall 2002b: 779). Through MCA, Weatherall has demonstrated “how particular activities or characteristics are normatively associated with certain categories” using Garfinkel’s (1967) approach towards participants’ orientations to gender norms.

By benefiting from the conversation analytic tradition of Schegloff and Sacks, researchers such as West and Fenstermaker focus their study on the local organization of sequences in talk through which gender and gendered aspects appear as relevant to speakers. Within gender and identity, gender and gendered identities are socially constructed (e.g., Bucholtz, et al., 1999; Hall and Bucholtz 1995, 2005). Bucholtz and Hall (2005) propose a model for analyzing identity within linguistic interaction. The framework consists of five principles: “emergence”, “positionality”, “indexicality”, “relationality” and “partialness”. The first two principles deal with identity through psychological and static perspectives within the social and cultural science. The emergence principal emphasizes that identity is not a pre-existing source of linguistic and other semiotics practices originating from individual psyche, rather emerges from concrete forms of linguistic interaction. Through the positionality principle, identity includes; 1) macro-levels demographic categories of gender, race, age, and social class, 2) local, ethnographic/cultural positions, 3) temporary and interactionally emerged stances and roles. The indexicality principle views identity as the social positioning of self and other in discourse. It is related to ideological structures and based on social meanings and cultural beliefs and values. It deals with a broad spectrum of linguistic structure such as overt reference of identity categories and labels; and the ideological relationship between language and the appearance of individuals’ identity. The relationality principle discusses the relational base of identity and sees identity as an intersubjective construction accomplished in an interaction through different aspects of similarity/differences, genuineness/artifice, and
authority/delegitimacy. Finally, the partialness principle focuses on the inherent partialness of identity and the ideological interaction of identities in a contextual discourse. It discusses the limits and constraints on individual intentionality by considering the fact that how effective is deliberate and conscious social action in the accomplishment of identity.

By adopting the social constructionist understanding of both gender and gendered identities, the main foci of research within gender and identity are on; how members ‘do’ gender as a routine accomplishment in talk (Butler, 1990; Kessler and Mckenna 1978; West and Fenstermaker 1993, West and Zimmerman 1987, 1991; Stokoe and Smithson 2001); how gender is occasioned in social interaction through discourse (Stokoe 1998) and what is pertinent to the doing of gender as “an ongoing activity” in daily interaction (West and Zimmerman 1987: 130). The studies also emphasize how participants regulate femininity or masculinity by pointing to instances in which they talk about what could be associated with females or males (i.e., category predicates). Femininity and masculinity are mostly defined in society based on “cultural norms” and “stereotypes” which heterosexuals talk about (Stokoe and Smithson 2001: 219). They focus on “gender dualism” according to which speakers do one of masculinity or femininity (Kessler and McKenna 1978:164).

Butler (1990) questions the naturalness of the male/female dualism- of gender, and for her, the process of gender constitution is accomplished through “the stylized repetition of acts through time” and “the stylization of the body” (1990: 179).

Gender ought not to be conceived merely as the cultural inscription of meaning on a pregiven sex (a juridical conception); gender must also designate the very apparatus of production whereby the sexes themselves are established. As a result, gender is not to culture as sex is to nature; gender is also the discursive/cultural means by which "sexed nature" or "a natural sex" is produced and established as "prediscursive" prior to culture, a politically neutral surface on which culture acts.

(Butler 1990: 7)

4. Data and research methodology

The data that I have collected is from an Iranian immigrant family in Sweden having a sex-reassigned child. The episode involves a dispute around the haircut and clothing style for the child while getting ready for a party between the child and the parents.
4.1. Participants

Here is an individual, raised as a girl who has not made a conscious choice to live as a different social being, to become a boy, rather than a girl. Aidan is a 14-year-old child who suffers from congenital adrenal hyperplasia (CAH) and was born in an ambiguous genitalia condition. It was initially difficult to identify her external genitalia as male or female and, a sex-reassignment surgery (SRS) was performed on her. Of necessity, from the early childhood she has had to learn a set of social practices (certain activities, procedures, processes) to be recognized as a girl, the sex that her parents assigned to her.

As Aidan reported, she feels a sense of belonging to both genders of girls and boys. However, according to her, she is more oriented to the gender category of boys and the activities and predicates related to it than the girls’ category and ties. But as she is still involved in gender confusion and does not specify her gender category, I have used the pronoun of ‘she’ for her in this study, a gender label that is socially and conventionally assigned to Aidan.

As the parents reported during the interview, they chose the sex change surgery for their child to help her to get rid of so-called gender limbo and consequently, many obstacles that an intersex child may encounter in a gender dichotomized society. Due to better and more successful cosmetic and functional results of construction of female external genitalia compared to construction of male genitalia, the vast majority with sexually ambiguous genitalia prefer to be surgically assigned female, regardless their genetic, gonadal or prenatal hormonal condition (Schober 1998). Therefore, the parents were advised by the physicians that their child should be assigned to the female gender and receive feminizing surgery. The parents attempted to raise the infant as a girl. Nevertheless, as they reported, they saw there is a mismatch between Aidan’s reassigned sex and her gender role (e.g., playing with boys, interesting in boy toys, clothes, and accessories) that is compatible with the religio-legal framework and the community's values. Based on the interview, it was an even harder time for the parents to be confused about their child’s gender.

Aidan as a child who received genital surgery, and tried to grow up with sexually unambiguous genitalia, revealed a correspondingly ambiguous gender identity. From the parents’ point of view, society considers these people deviant. In 2011 when Aidan was at age 11, the family immigrated to Sweden in order to avoid an atmosphere of secrecy and shame surrounding intersex conditions in an Islamic country. Aidan also suffers from salt-wasting adrenal hyperplasia due to the revision of the external genitalia she had at her early age.
4.2. The empirical data

The data collected consists of around 10 hours of video-recordings of family activities. 28 minutes of the video recordings are transcribed, digitized, closely observed and the selected excerpts are analyzed in detail for the purpose of the study. The ethnographic fieldwork notes in the setting are also used to complete the course of analysis.

As to the methodology of research, the ethnomethodological (Garfinkel 1967), and conversation analytic (Sacks 1992) methods are applied to this research project. Family talk has been analyzed focusing on what the participants do, how they design utterances and turns, and how they respond to each other. The transcripts analyzed in this study are translated from Persian. I have personally attended to various resources in activities including talk which allows me to see the resources in the construction of the activities and also the consequences of their use.

The analysis is “constituted by the action and reactions of the members” of the studied settings (Pike 1954: 8). That is, the social organization of the family activity, their practices and methods when accomplishing those activities are demonstrated (cf. members’ perspective in Garfinkel’s terminology, 1967). Data gathering in several occasions has helped me to have a rich overview of the family activities, to get to know them better, and collect as much data as I can in connection with the family’s internal relations, and their co-engagement with the issue of child’s sex-reassignment. A close observation of the family in order to collect information about their way of holding their family relations and the development of such relations concerning the topic of the project is also significant in the course of analysis.

4.3. Video-recordings: prospects and consequences

The use of video camera as a methodological tool has some benefits as well as some difficulties. As Mondada (2009) argues, the ways that videos are produced are always based on biased choices, and, therefore, they simply do not allow the researchers to transparently see the entire social field vis-à-vis the participant-observation ‘out there’ in the setting. Besides, the presence of cameras in the field might also be disturbing and the participants might feel uncomfortable in front of the recording devices, consequently, the setting may not keep its naturalness intact.

Having said that, the benefit of the video-recording augmented by fieldwork outweighs the problems of its use, because, simply, there is no other alternative when it comes to detailed
study of human conduct, especially nonverbal behavior in a multimodal action-based study. There is no better way to sketch the multimodal character of social practices but using excerpts from videos to display the evidence of the members’ methods while forming an action (see e.g. C. Goodwin 2013).

4.4. Consent

I have the formal consent of the family and the child to observe their daily activities and to collect video-recordings of those activities. Pseudonyms are used in order to secure the anonymity of the persons involved. These video-recordings are used as the main source of data. As the child is under the age of consent, throughout the research, ethical rules are strictly followed according to the advice given by the ‘Ethical Review Board’ and ‘The Swedish Research Council’.

5. Analysis

The study aims to identify and unpack the “category-gendered features” (Jayyusi 1984) that get tied to participants and the actions they accomplish (Stokoe 2012: 283) through MCA and resistance. Looking at speakers’ explicit and unambiguous formulation of the “relevance of categorical phenomena” (Stokoe 2012: 282) is my main concern, through which the participants’ orientations to gendered categories and the activities/predicates they tie to them in the ongoing interaction are discussed.

The notion of MCD used in the data analysis of the sub-episode is to show how gender identity is used in talk when people are cast into categories. Most of the family conversation is based on the topic of gender dichotomies and through their talk participants resist or invoke aspects of their gender norms and identities.

The following examples are analyzed to examine the deployment of identity categories and the practices and category-bound activities/predicates that get them produced. MCA is a tool to examine “how normative assumptions about gender are (re)produced during interaction” (Weatherall 2002b: 776). Sacks (1995: 259) argued that the everyday use of categories is based on some “relevance rules”, e.g., “for an observer of a category-bound activity, the category to which the activity is bound has a special relevance for formulating an identification of its doer” (Sacks 1995: 259). That is, the identity of the doer can be established by observing a category-bound activity being done.
The recorded data in this section unpack and reveal the relevance of these rules to the doing of membership categorization and also category-bound activities/predicates based on which categories in this family are defined to formulate the identities of those activities’ doers. The most relevant “concepts” (Stokoe 2012: 281) used in this analysis are membership categorization device (MCD) (i.e., the device through which categories are realized to ‘belong’ to a ‘collective category’), the standardized relational pair (i.e., pairs of categories that have rights and obligations in relation to each other), the category-tied predicates (i.e., category’s characteristics), and the category-bound activities (i.e., activities that are locally related to categories).

The following extract provides a good example to view talk as “sexism in action” or as “doing sexism” (Stokoe 2004: 119) in which the mother is doing sexist talk and Aidan is objecting to her sexism. During the excerpt, it is demonstrated how Aidan reveals some resistance towards the gendered and sexist assumptions of her mother.

(7) 0:0:14 video 2

Aidan and her parents sit in the living room. Disputing the haircut for Aidan between her and her mother. The mother considers a difference between girls’ and boys’ hairstyle and Aidan tries to resist it based on her anecdotal evidence about a girl’s short haircut.

1  Mom:  doxtar ke muhasho kutah nemikone ke Aidan = ((tightening Aidan’s ponytail))

A girl doesn’t make her hair short Aidan=

2  Aidan:  =chera mikone °maman° ((starts untying her ponytail))

=why not ((they)) do °mom °

3  Mom:  eee hameye doxtara muhashun kuta:st?

eee all girls have sho:rt haircut?

4  Aidan:  ye nafar injast ke muhash kuta:he.

one here has short haircut.

5  Mom:  kodum bud?

who?

6  Aidan:  Hhh ()
Mom: () (1.0) xob in chize (0.2) in muhash muxore oftade bud kutah kard
() (1.0) well this what’s-its-name (0.2) she had split ends and had a haircut

This excerpt demonstrates how Aidan positions herself as non-sexist in this part by challenging “the generalizability of sex differences” (Stokoe 1998: 224) regarding differing hairstyle of girls and boys. In the first part of the excerpt, by saying, *a girl* (category) *doesn’t make her hair short* (predicate), the mother talks about girls based on gender differentiation in appearance and generalizes about girls. Billig et al. (1988) argue that within the theory of gender categories, there is a conflict about the generalizability of gender behaviors. They discuss the use of gender categories in conversation and also “ideological dilemmas” concerning “how far one may generalize about women” (1988: 130). Here, the mother adopts the generality of gender as an organizing factor in creating an appropriate gender in accordance with heteronormative rules. In this part, she introduces having short haircut as a category-bound predicate. She presents an explicit formulation of the “relevance of categorical phenomena” (Stokoe 2012; 282) about girls that is they do not make their hair short. The mother relies upon her category knowledge to make this categorical decision. It can be also said that she uses an implicit gender reference to boys’ appearance (cf. Hopper and LeBaron 1998). The mother implicitly says that short haircut is a gendered feature that is bound to the category of boys.

On the other hand, line 3, *why not! They do mom*, exemplifies Aidan’s non-sexist identity in this part and reveals her resistance, using the preface of ‘*why not*’, towards the gendered and sexist assumptions of her mother. It illustrates that unlike her mother, she reveals no difference between boys’ and girls’ hairstyle in this. In her words, *why not, they* (girls; category) *do* (make their hair short; predicate), the concept of category-tied predicates is seen, in which short haircut as a predicate (i.e., an expectable feature, characteristic, behavior etc.) is expected to be done by both categories of boys and girls. Here it can be interpreted that in this sequence the mother treat category and predicate as “going together” but Aidan as “disjunctive” (Stokoe 2004, 114).

The mother’s use of the words, *all girls*, in line 4 suggests that she still insists to support her idea of the generality of gender. She as a heterosexual tries to formulate femininity based on cultural norms and stereotypes in which short haircut is not generally associated with the female category: *all girls have short haircut* (line 4).
Aidan, having mentioned her anecdotal evidence about one (a girl)’s short haircut, again tries to resist her mother’s statement. She shows that she is more oriented to the individuality of gender rather than the generalization: *one here has short haircut* (line 5) she challenges her mother’s “stereotyped preconceptions” (Stokoe 1998: 225) regarding girls’ and boy’s hair style and concludes from a single case that short haircut is not only related to boys. Indeed Aidan considers a reflexive relationship among the members of a category so that an action of a member can be ascribable to the category as a whole. In the last line, the mother, having justified an action (cutting hair) taken by another person, tries to reformulate her explanation of sex differences in haircut: *she had split ends and had a haircut* (line 9). The production of justification applied in this line by the mother itself constitutes the doing of resistance.

In this sequence Aida rejects the conventional attributes of gender categories by resisting the category labels and their tied predicates and activities. For example, the predicate of ‘having short haircut’ need not be accomplished in terms of its link to ‘boys’.

5.1. Resistance via accounts

Considering how Aidan’s identity is related to resistance and in the construction of accounts, the following examples (8, 9, 10, 11) are analyzed to show how she tries to design her answers in a way that both explicitly and implicitly displays that the actions (category-bound activities) and characteristics (predicates) she is being asked to do would be an inappropriate transgression of her gender norms. The types of opposition moves I have examined also provide some indication of how Aidan attempts to accomplish her activities/predicates through the actions she aims to imitate and adopt. In all below sequences, she talks about the copying of men’s hairstyles she sees around (e.g. her father, friends, and movies).

The examples show that Aidan rejects the activity she is being asked by providing the accounts of justification and explanation for noncompliance:

(8) 0:033 video 2

*They all sit in the living room and keep talking about Aidan’s hairstyle. During her talk, Aidan is playing with her hair band, touching her hair, and finally gathering it up into a ponytail. The parents are looking at her and her hair while speaking.*
Dad: (khob) (. ) aslan muye boland dust nadari xodet?
(Well) (. ) don’t you like long hair at all?

Aidan: > na: < (0.2) muye boland (. ) nemibande. °maman° ((playing with his hair band))

= No: < (0.2) Long hair (. ) doesn’t braid it ((hair)) °mom°

Mom: NEMIBANDE? (. ) [pas=
DOESN’T BRAID IT? (. )[So=

Aidan: = [yani mibandi bazi ogat faqat qor mizani o [migi
((touches her hair and Starts gathering it with hands))
=I mean you do sometimes you just nag and [whine

Dad: [akhe () faqat

moshkelet tu bastaneshe?
[so () only your problem is with ((hair)) braid?

Aidan: °are° . hhh <Muye kuth: du:st dara::m> (1.08) kachal. ((keeps gathering her hair up into a ponytail))

°Yeah° . hhh <I like short: hair > (1.08) bald

Mom: muye kuth: xob adam qarch mizane na dige [pesarune ke maman
Short hair so have a bowl cut, not in a boy style sweetie!

Aidan: [QARCH, man unjuri dust

daram. ((points to the father))
[BOWL cut, I like this style.

Dad: che juri?

how?

Aidan: unjuri (2.6) ((Aidan again points to her dad, mom first take a look at his hair and then Aidan’s. The father takes a look at Aidan)) [mesle Said=
that style (2.6) like Said

Dad: = [hala bebin

(.) az ru saat (0.9) 30 sanie ham tul nemikeshe bexay har ruz bebandi
muhato ((his eyes move up and point towards Aidan’s hair))

It wouldn’t (0.9) even take 30 seconds if you wanna tie your hair everyday

In this example, the turns consist of issuing and responding to directives. In response to the father’s question, don’t you like long hair at all? (line 1) we have a direct ‘No’ with a jump-start that Aidan addressed the father and said in rush quickly that accompanied by account, doesn’t braid it mom (line 2) in which the word of mom is markedly said quiet and almost uttered unclearly that can be interpreted as an act of hesitating due to a state of uncertainty or fear. Ethnographic observation provides background evidence that rather than being her real reason for failure to have long hair, the second part of Aidan’s response, doesn’t braid it mom, is a justification she uses to show her disagreement and distaste. Kitzinger and Frith, (1999: 301) argues that the accounts such as justification and explanations possess a “no-blame quality, which avoid the implication that [an activity] is unattractive or unwanted”. Indeed these accounts can be interpreted as a strategy that Aidan uses in order to qualify and mitigate resistance and avoid “negative and critical consequences” (Kitzinger and Frith 1999: 301, see also Potter and Wetherell, 1987: 86) in challenging the gender category-bound activities/predicates she is asked to possess and perform.

In line 4, the mother shows her dissatisfaction with the non-compliance through the words, doesn’t braid it, in which she addresses herself as a third person, uses actually Aidan’s words, questioning the credibility and rationality of the argument, as if initiating repair toward something incomprehensible. Aidan interrupts her and tries to formulate her previous justification (i.e., doesn’t braid it mom) that she used as an account to display her resistance towards having long hair, as, I mean you do, sometimes you just nag and whine (line 5). Here, an action of rejustifying is designed by Aidan in order to mitigate the irritating aspect of her previous response. She takes her accusation back, I mean you do sometimes you just nag and whine. So, there is this accusation or rather confrontation, that Aidan is saying, mom wants me to have long hair but she doesn’t braid it for me, and the mother demands some sort of correction by repeating part of Aidan’s turn in a rising intonation. Aidan downgrades her oppositional move but gives an account which is still confrontational/oppositional with a provocative accusation.

In line 11, the directive is formed as a proposal in which the mother distinguishes between girls’ and boys’ haircuts and places bowl cut in girls’ category. Her words Short hair, so, have a bowl cut, not in a boy style sweetie (line 11) further reveal her sexist- identity based on
which she orients to hair as a ‘sexual’ rather than an ‘anatomic’ category (Stokoe 2004: 119). Her choice of category and alternative description of girls, provide some evidence for her ‘endogenous’ orientation to sexism. In line 11 the mother tries to design her directive in a way that she does not reject the requested action by Aidan, *I like short hair* (line 10), but discounts it in order to mitigate the directive, that by adding the word *sweetie*, this mitigation in directive is intensified. In response (line 12), Aidan first addresses the specific content of the directive, *bowl cut*; she explicitly deals with the issue of resistance. Later she counters the directive with an implicit return by showing her father’s hairstyle.

In this example, the directives in lines 1 and 7-8 are requests for information. The question asked by the father, *only your problem is with ((hair)) braid?* (lines 7-8) is designed according to the words Aidan used in the first adjacency pair as justification, *doesn’t braid it ((hair)) mom* (line 2). It is not the question that asks for a decision, but Aidan uses this description of the action in designing a resistance that is hardly “self-evident” but is rather “strategically constructed in interaction” using justification as part of a non-answer (cf. Ekström 2009: 693). Her response in line 9 which embraces ‘Yeah’ (an acceptance which is not self-evident) followed by an explanation, *I like short hair, bald*, and also in line 15-16, of this answer-question sequence, *that style, like Said*, she departs from justification and orients to the normative framework of her own identity. In lines 13 and 15-16 by pointing to her father’s hair and talking about one of her male friends called Said, Aidan intensifies her opposition to her parents’ directives created based on female-bound predicates. She constructs a form of resistance in which actions are offered as imitation.

Aidan chooses a resistance, in the construction of the first and second turns. That is justified in relation to her “inability” rather than “unwillingness” (Heritage 1984: 270) to braid her hair. She tries to externalize the responsibility for the failure to do what she is asked to do by accusing mom not being helpful with the long hair, what Heritage (1984) argues it as the responsibility for dis-preferred responses. On the contrary, in the last three turns (lines 9-10, 13 and 15-16), she frames her accounts in terms of unwillingness instead of inability, and she accepts the responsibility for the failure to have long hair. In this part, through the process of doing resistance, a situation is in fact constituted in which Aidan overtly orients to norms and accountability of her actions, *I like short hair, bald, and that style, like Said* (lines 9-10, 15-16). Nevertheless, in the last part of the sequence, by saying, *It wouldn’t (0.9) even take 30 seconds if you wanna tie your hair every day*, the father orients to Aidan’s inability, regardless of her unwillingness. He shows a positive resistance in which he covertly resists Aidan’s prior
action and departs from its parameters and moves beyond Aidan’s willingness, that is having short haircut.

Goodwin, M.H. (1990: 104) argues “justification specify conditions within the framework of the activity which make compliance difficult”. In the turns 1 and 2 using justifications such as doesn’t braid it mom or I mean you do, sometimes you just nag and whine, Aidan accepts the validity and relevance of the prior actions (Goodwin, M.H.: 1990: 104), while she rejects it. That is she shows that the resistance occurred during these two turns is not due to her disagreement with having long hair, rather her mother’s failure to braid her hair. On the other hand, in lines 9-10, 13 and 15-16, she challenges the validity and relevance of category-bound predicate (having long hair) the parents discuss. Using the words such as, I like short hair, bald, she reveals her disagreement.

(9) \(0:2:39\) Video 4

_They sit in the living room and the mother wants to fix Aidan’s hair. She resists the way her mother is going to do it._

1  Aidan: \textit{chetori mixay bebandi?} \\
   how do you wanna tie it?

2  Mom: \textit{az inja bebandam (shows on her hair to tie a single knot with the two sides behind your head)}
   I wanna tie in this way!

4  Aidan: \textit{NA:::}
   NO:::

5  Mom: \textit{Mesle man, mesle male man}
   Like mine, like my hair.

6  Aidan: \textit{Na untori to xeili (.) untori inja ro xeili mohkam mibandi bad mixam dar biaram=} \\
   ((shows on her hair)) (.) vaisa ((tells the father who brings the mother a brush))=
   No in that way you really (.) in that way you tie it really tightly, I wanna untie it later (.) wait=

9  Mom: \textit{=Na AHAN AHAN xodam vasat dar miaram}
No AHAN AHAN I’ll myself untie it for you

Aidan:  
Na: (to the mother) (. ) in bores baba borese xodamo (to the father)  
No: (.) this brush dad my own brush

((15 lines deleted (51 seconds) in which the father brings a hairbrush for the mother to fix Aidan’s hair. They make a joke (verbally and non-verbally) of Aidan’s brush which handle is broken and also the way she utters some words and all laugh))

Mom: bia psihe maman  
come to mom

Aidan: °nemixam° ((working with her laptop))  
°I don’t want°

Mom: zud bash maman!  
come on sweetie!

Aidan: aslan mixam muhamo injuri konam ((points to a boy’s photo on laptop))  
you know what! I wanna cut my hair in this way

((4 lines deleted in which the father says to the mother that how more busy he is on weekends than on weekdays (as a response to the mother’s directives to him in this sequence such as bring a brush, or turn off the light) he makes a joke of it and then they all laugh))

Aidan: Intori.  
In this way

Mom: ((turns to the father)) va:y Yaser bebin mige muhamo mixam chi kar konam (0.2) aslan halet xub nist Aidan  
Oh: Yaser look what she wanna do to her hair (0.2) you’re out of your mind!

Aidan: hihihi

In this excerpt the negotiation also occurs around issuing and responding to directives. In lines 2-3, the mother explains the style in which she wants to tie Aidan’s hair but she receives a direct No from him. In line 5, by saying, like mine, the mother tries to place Aidan in her category (as the dispute is around hairstyle it can be interpreted as a gender category) and proposes her the same category bound predicate. The counter (line 6-7) to the proposal (line 5) does not directly reject the prior action (unlike what happens in the previous turn), rather it
contains criticism and talks about the consequence of the suggested action, *in that way, you really tie it tightly, later if I wanna unite*. Here Aidan moves from unwillingness (line 4) to inability (lines 7-8) and after getting a solution to her inability by her mother, *I’ll myself untie it for you* (line 9), she rejects her mother’s proposed action in line 10 with a ‘no’ reply, that can be interpreted as a negative resistance used by Aidan. In this line her resistance, *No*, to the mother proposal is accompanied by another resistance, *this brush dad my own brush*, to her father’s action who brings the mother a brush to fix Aidan’s hair.

In line 26 the mother keeps insisting to fix Aidan’s hair, *come to mom*, but Aidan refuses her mother’s request by saying, *I don’t want* (line 27). She departs from inability and overtly orients to her own unwillingness and thus to the accountability of her actions, *you know what, I wanna cut my hair in this way* (line 29) in which she points to a boy’s photo on her laptop. In line 36, Aidan who produced the talk being opposed is characterized as “out of her mind” for having said what she said; an argument by the mother to intensify the inappropriateness of the suggested action, *you know what! I wanna cut my hair in this way*) by Aidan in line 29 in which she points to a boy’s photo on laptop and also in line 34, *in this way*, in which she emphasizes her suggestion. In this line, without addressing the specific content of the directive, Aidan explicitly deals with the issue of resistance.

By implicitly talking about imitation and the hairstyle she wants to adopt, Aidan counters the suggested actions produced by her mother. Lines 26-29 consist of two turns which are remarkably similar in structure. Opposition is immediately displayed in line 27, *I don’t want*, which shows disobedience; no accounts or explanations accompany the opposition. But in line 29 Aidan does not directly respond the mother’s directive in line 28, *come on sweetie*, rather extends her opposition by covertly showing her resistance towards her mother’s requested action –to fix her hair in a way she wants. Here “each of two opposing parties repeats a prior position with the effect that an extended series of disagreements is produced” what Marjorie Goodwin (1990: 158) called it “recycling”. She (159-60) argues that such extended series of recycling constitutes a “primitive argument” (Piaget 1926:66) that can then be shifted to an extended disagreement and “quarrel”.

(10) 0:4:49 Video 4

*The mother is working with her cellphone and Aidan with her laptop. The father is watching TV. After he says them to get ready soon, because he is hungry, the mother asks Aidan come to her to fix her hair. She sits on the sofa and Aidan goes and sits on the floor*
in front of her mother while nagging. She again resists the way the mother is tying her hair and finally shows a man on TV and says that she wants to have a short haircut like him.

1 Dad:  
*bokonid Karatuno dige haminjuri dar hale-*
get ready soon- finish it up as the way it is (I) am being-

2 Mom:  
*are Aidan bia [haminjuri=*
yeah Aidan come here (let’s finish it) as it is

3 Dad  
=[chon man vagean goshname
=‘cause I’m really hungry

4 Mom  
*bia jelo bia jelo baba goshnashe (1.9) Bia inja beshin*
come forward, come forward, dad is hungry (1.9) come and sit down here!

5 Aidan:  
°to bad mibandi° () Ay ((going to mom and sitting on the floor))
°you tie it badly° () ouch

6 Mom:  
*bashe bashe*
ok ok

7 Aidan:  
*untori naband maman ((the mother wanna gather her hair half up and half down))
Don’t tie it in that way mom

8 Mom:  
*Aqalan muhasho shu:ne nemikone!*
She doesn’t even comb her hair!

9 Aidan:  
*Dastam mirese mage un posht=*  
how would I reach the back of my head=

10 Dad:  
*=axarin bar sal 1920 muhasho bores karde ((the makes a joke))*
=the last time was the year 1920 when she brushed her hair!

11 Aidan  
*Hhh ((giggles))*

12 Mom:  
*mige dastam mage mirese Yaser (.) bexatere hamune mige mixam beram*
kutah konam (0.2) alaki migi dust nadaram.
she says if her hands reach the back Yaser (.) that’s why she tells that she wanna make it short (0.2) she is making up a story that she doesn’t like it ((long hair))

15  Aidan:  aslan man mixam mesle in MARDE konam in in ((points to TV))

You know what! I wanna make it like she this MAN, this! this!

Like the examples 8 and 9, this sequence is also constructed of talk about hair tie. To oppose the mother’s directive, come forward, dad is hungry come and sit down here (line 4), Aidan uses a statement of criticism; you tie badly (line 5). The counter to the directive is intensified by Aidan in line 7 in which she designs her answer in an imperative form, don’t tie in that way mom. In turns 2 and 3, Aidan does not directly respond to the prior actions in lines 4 and 6, rather resists the activity (tying her hair) that is being done by her mother. Line 10, how would I reach the back of my head, contains the account of justification where a covert resistance occurs by Aidan in response to the mother’s complaint (line 9).

The mother in lines 13 and 14 as a reason she claims why Aidan does not like long hair recycles this justification, she says if her hands reach the back? Yaser, that’s why she tells that she wanna make it short. She is making up a story that she doesn’t like it. By relying on Aidan’s words in line 10, the mother is just suggesting that because Aidan’s hands do not reach the back of her head, her inability to comb her hair is the real reason that Aidan wants to cut her hair short and not because she doesn’t like it long. And also that Aidan is insinuating because keeping her hair long, brushed and tied is difficult for her. But this recycling makes Aidan able to extend her disagreement in an overt way (line 15); a departure takes place by her from her inability to comb long hair to her unwillingness to have long hair. Using the idiomatic phrase of you know what, as a preface, Aidan first tries to gather her mother’s attention, then explicitly announces her decision by pointing to a man on TV, I wanna make it like this man.

(11) 0:1:30  Video 2

They are talking while watching TV. The father claims that all Aidan’s problem is that she is too lazy to comb and style her hair. The mother rejects it and also Aidan resists his claim by showing a man on TV and telling that she likes to make her hairstyle like him, what extends their dispute.

1  Dad:  in hame dadesh ine ke man sedash mikonam Aidan bores ro biar!

all her problem is that I tell her Aidan bring the brush!
Aidan: Hhhhh

Mom: ((to Aidan)) Are?
Yeah?

Dad: az hamum dar umad bere tu jash
once she comes out of the shower, she wanna straight go to the bed!

Mom: na injuri ham nist ((they all are watching TV))
no she is not like that

Aidan: Na
No

Mom: dust dare
she likes it ((brushing))

Aidan: MUHAYE ino nigah (.) na dg chize ((points to a man on TV))
Look at his HAIR (.) no it’s what

Mom: muhash kutahe
his hair is short

Aidan: injurie muhash! ((shows a hedgehog style on her hair))
his hair is in this style!

Mom: unjuri bokoni (1.5) ((watching TV)) BAD UNJURI BOKONI! bad katun-
bad in in tipi ham ke alan zade budi [bezani!]
you wanna do that style (1.5) THEN YOU WANNA DO THAT STYLE,
then (wear) sneaker- then have the style you just [showed

Aidan: [Hhh. kolah ham bezaram saram.
[Hhh. (if only) I also wear a cap.

Mom: kolah ham bezari saret, dige nure ala nur mishe (.) man bayad dige
bioftam tu chiz (1.2) timarestan az daste to.
(If) you also wear a cap, this’ll come to a pretty pass (.) I should be
hospitalized in what (1.2) a booby hatch because of you

Aidan: Hhh. xoda shafat bede.hhh (2.8) ((looking at her mother while laughing
in-breath)) <man dust daram tipe pesarune bezanam>
Hhh. God heals you (2.8) <I like to wear in boyish style>

18 Dad: *tipe peSARune*
   boYISh style

19 Aidan: °ahan°
   °yeah°

20 Mom: *Adam ye moqehai Aidan tipe pesarune mizane* [na Hamishe=
   One sometimes Aidan wears in boyish style [not always= 

21 Aidan: =*[MIZANE to hamash*

22 migi na:: (. ) man alan dus daram un shalvaro beposham alan

23 mixam beram xune xale [na migi=
   =[((one)) DOES ((always wear in boyish style but)) you always say
   no:: (. ) now I like to wear those pants now that I’m going to aunt's home.

24 Mom: *[Aha::n Asla:n*
   [Yea::h Neve:r

25 Aidan: [.hhh

26 Mom: *hamishe Aidan dust dari to- (. ) hamishe to dust dari tipe*

27 *[pesarune bezani=*
   always Aidan ((you)) like to- (. ) always you like to have a [boyish style=

28 Aidan: =*[xob dust daram uno beposham xob nemizari chi kar ((konam)) [dust*

29 daram shalvar=
   =[well I like to wear those well you don’t let ((me)) what should I ((do))
   [I like pants=

30 Mom: *=Aidan*

31 *behet goftam vaqti ke miri madrese vaqti ke mixay beri*

32 *tamrin tipe sport mizani tipe pesarune mizani vali vaqti mixaim*

33 *berim mehmuni ya Ijai-*
   =*[Aidan I’ve told you whenever you wanna go to school when you
   wanna go for training you can have a sport style a boyish style, but when
   we wanna go to the party or [somewhere else-
Aidan: [Xob mehmuni diruz ham rafte budim xune]

xale pushide budam

[Well party yesterday ((when)) we went to aunt's home, I wore ((pants))]

Mom: Un ye dafe sar zade shod vali alan vaqtì az qabl davatemun karde

bayad tipe dorost hesabi bezani=

That time was spontaneous but now she has invited us a day before ((therefore)) we should dress appropriately

Aidan: =xob tip- (. ) nemixam

=well style- (. ) I don’t want

In this sequence the father justifies that Aidan dislikes long hair because she is too lazy to comb and style her hair. Her first claim, all her problem is that I tell her Aidan bring the brush, (line 1) is supported by the mother when she asks Aidan for an affirmative response (line 2). In line 4 the father supports her prior directive that is refused by the mother in line 5, no she is not like that, and line 7, she likes, which is markedly said quite. Aidan’s answer in line 6 is positioned not directly after the mother’s question (line 3), but after her comment in line 5. It could be actually interpreted as aligning with the mother, which in itself could be answering her question as well, something like 'I am not in this way that dad is describing’. The argument extends which Aidan first shifts from non-answer to a direct refusal, no, (line 6), and then orientes to a dispreferred refusal using account, look at her hair (line 8). In line 13, Hhh, I also wear a cap, Aidan intensifies the irritating aspect of her response. In lines 14 and 15, Aidan is characterized as accountable for what may happen to the mother. In line 16, face-threatening is intensified by Aidan’s overtly resistance, I like to wear in boyish style, and using the idiom “God heals you”.

Lines 20-38 consist of several directive-resistance turns produced by the mother-Aidan dispute around Aidan’s willingness to wear in boyish style. Indeed Aidan’s responses in previous turns (e.g., lines 13, 16, and 19) extend the argument and conflict between her and her mother.

According to the mother’s talk in this sequence it can be interpreted that she accomplishes the predicates of wearing sneakers, cap, and pants as boys’ category ties that again reveals her sexist identity. In response, Aidan does not overtly resist such an accomplishment (i.e., associating these predicates with category of boys), rather her resistance is towards the doing of resistance that the mother constitutes to disagree with Aidan and her willingness to adopt
these predicates. In addition, the words like; _I like to wear in boyish style_ (line 17) show Aidan’s agreement with the predicates accomplishment reformulated by the mother. But two interpretations can be resulted from this agreement; first, as Aidan reported, she is involved in gender confusion. But since Aidan knows her more belonged to boys’ category than girls’ and the predicates formulated by the mother as boys’ category ties are similar to her own predicates, she does not resist it. Second is that by relying on the conventional gender norms and obligations that the parents have tried to establish in the family, she wants to show that, ok, I know these predicates are related to boys; nevertheless, I like to wear in a boyish style, because they are my preferred predicates.

In line 20, the words, _One sometimes Aidan wears in boyish style not always_, on one hand question the mother’s sexist identity; on the other hand, her orientation towards generalization by saying, _not always_. But later in lines 30-33, _Aidan I’ve told you whenever you wanna go to school when you wanna go for training you can have a sport style a boyish style, but when we wanna go to the party or somewhere else_, by specifying sport style as a boyish style, she again reveals her sexist identity. Therefore, her words in line 20 can be interpreted as her strategy of mitigating her directives and her attempt to show herself as aligning with Aidan. Although the word, _one_, in line 20 is interpreted as a girl, but she does not explicitly determine the specific gender category that she is talking about. Here it can be interpreted that she hesitates to agree that a _girl_ can adopt boys’ category- tied predicates. In this regard, lines 36 and 37, _that time was spontaneous but now she has invited us a day before (therefore) we should dress appropriately_, further reveals her sexist identity according to which she knows it is inappropriate for a girl to wear in boyish style for a party. Aidan refuses this directive, _well style- I don’t want_ (line 38), using the disclaimer of _well_ and the modal auxiliary verb, _I don’t want_, to construct her unwillingness.

During lines 30-33, by formulating the predicate of _wearing in boyish style_ according to one’s daily activities such as going to school and training, the mother orients to occupational categories (like students and trainers), rather than gender categories (girls and boys). In different turns, Aidan bases her resistance upon her willingness; _I like to wear in boyish style_ (line 17), _I like to wear those pants_ (line 22), and _I like pants_ (line 28). But she knows her mother accountable for her own failure to wear in boyish style; _one_ does (always wear in boyish style but) _you always say no_ (lines 21-22), _well I like to wear those (pants) well you don’t let (me)_. (line 28).
5.2. Resisting the relevance of linguistic gender membership categorization

This section attempts to show how the participants use gender categories to constitute Aidan and the mother as members of the same gender group (i.e., female) and organize the same category-bound activities associated with it. In the examples 12, 13, and 15 it will be considered how Aidan tries to manage accountability during the conversation relying on resistance to establish her norms.

The specific categories that become relevant through talk in the three sequences under analysis in this section are the categories: ‘Mother’ vs. ‘Daughter’. To exemplify these two sorts of categorization, I will refer to those instances of talk where direct linguistic gender references are made by the parents (examples 12 and 14).

The sub-episodes below illustrate how the relevance of ascribed linguistic gender membership characterization of ‘daughter’ is explicitly or implicitly resisted by Aidan. The term of linguistic gender membership categorization is applied here to refer to the linguistic categorization of a person as a member of a gender group (cf. Day 1998: 155).

This part focuses the analysis on the personal account told by the parents, and then by the way in which it is responded to by Aidan. In all cases Aidan is explicitly categorized as a female gender.

(12) 0:02 Video 3

Aidan is working with laptop and the parents ask her to put it away (verbally and non-verbally) and wear the dress they have chosen for her. During this sub-episode Aidan resists their directives. The conversation is terminated by father’s action- put the dress away, sits on the sofa, and turn her back on Aidan and the mother.

1 Dad: Aidan xamushesh kon ((referring to laptop)) begu be ma chera to ino nemipushi ((the dress))

Aidan turn it off ((referring to laptop)) and tell us why you don’t wear it

2 Mom: Aidan (0.7) Aidan ((touching the dress))

3 Aidan: °bale° °yeah°

4 Mom: chera nemipushi ino ((the dress))?

Why you don’t put it on?
Dad: Qashange (.) ye daqe jamesh [mikoni Aidan
((it’s)) beatifull (.) may put it ((laptop)) away [for a while Aidan

7 Mom: [hamin alan bepush (.) bia maman (0.5)

8 pasho (0.3) pasho ta- (.) tanet kon (0.9) [madaro doxtar
right now put it on (.) come on mom (0.5) get up (0.3) get up pu- (.) put it on (0.9) [mom and daughter-

9 Aidan: [chie maman!! bezar fil-

10 ((pointing to her laptop))
[what mom! Let me watc-

11 Mom: madaro doxtar
mom and daughter

12 Aidan: hala °mipush-°
not now, I’ll °wea-° ((wear))

13 Mom: madaro doxtar (0.3) are (0.9) madaro doxtar mixaim tipe girhan
mom and daughter (0.3) yeah (0.9) mom and daughter wanna wear dresses.

14 Aidan: °hala° bashe.
°not now° ok.

16 Mom: pasho
get up

17 Aidan: CHIKAR KONAM?
WHAT SHOULD I DO?

18 Mom: chera dust nadari?
Why don’t you like it?

19 Dad: pasho jamesh kon
get up and put it away ((laptop))

20 Aidan: Ma:n (.) dust nadaram. nemixam lebas °bepusham°.
I: (. ) don’t like it. I don’t like wearing °dresses°

21  Mom:  inja inja ((tells Aidan to puther laptop on the sofa)) (0.2) Han?

22  Here Here (0.2) What?

22  Aidan:  dust daram shalvar bepushamī.

I like wearing pants

23  Mom:  Shalvar miri madrese bepush (. ) miri tamrin Aidan shalvareto bepush,

You can wear pants whenever you go to school (. ) going training you may wear pants

24  Dad:  are chera na (. )

yeah why not (. )

25  Aidan:  °nemixa:m° ((points to the dress))

°I don’t want°

26  Dad:  alan pasho bepush- (. ) ((take a look at the dress)) albate sardeha alan

27  ((look at the mother))

now put it on- (. ) but it is cold

28  Mom:  xob jurab shalvari mipushe

well she’ll wear tights

29  Aidan:  na::

no::

30  Mom:  KOT mipushi maman ja:n

you’ll put COAT on sweetie

31  Aidan:  kot na mage darim mirim (. )arusi hihihi

coat no are we going to wedding party hihihi

32  Mom:  Manzuram ine kapshan mipushi, pas alan daram miam mixam

kapshan bepusham.

I mean you’ll put a jacket on, well now I’m also wearing a jacket.

33  Aidan:  mixam shalvar bepusham

I wanna wear pants!
Dad: kash doxtar budam mamanam hamchin chizi mixarid ((takes the dress and holds in front of him (.)) diruz vase zandai yekisho gerefte budam (.))

che keifi mikard (.)) babrisho gerefte budam ((Aidan laughs in-breathe))

I wish I were a girl and my mom would buy me something like this (.)
yesterday I bought the aunt one of this ((dress)) (. how happy she has got (.)) I bought a tiger print ((dress)) ((Aidan laughs in-breathe))

Aidan: nemixam angulak konam ((takes the laptopo)) (. xob MAN dust

nadaram lebas bepusham.

I don’t want to play with him (.). Well, I don’t like wearing dresses

((the father gets silent, puts the dress away and sit on the soffa, and watches TV while touching his hair))

In this sub-episode Aidan is categorized directly, being referred to with a lexically obvious gender group label (daughter in lines 8, 11, 13 and girl in line 34). Two categories of ‘mother’ and ‘daughter’ are used next to each other and both belong to the standard collection of family. Different categories in a MCD (e.g. family) are expected to have different category bound activities/predicates related to them (cf. Stokoe 2001; 231). The words, mom and daughter, mom and daughter wanna wear dresses, carry a similar set of category-bound predicates for two different categories of daughter and mother. Using the category of daughter and girl for Aidan, the parents categorize her as a female member of the family and impute predicates, rights and obligations that are expectable for a member of that category to perform or possess. The mother’s words, Mom and daughter, are repeated and recycled during lines 8-13 that each time using the prefaces of “what” and “not now” Aidan tries to refuse the predicate (putting on a dress) suggested by her parents. The directive in lines 7-8 is overlapped by a counter with a self-interruption before it has been completed; what mom, let me- (line 9), in which Aidan refuses the mother’s directive. “What” which seems to be used here as a question to show that she does not know what the mother is talking about is accompanied by the words; let me, without waiting for any response from her. Although the phrase of “not now” she uses in lines 12 and 15 is accompanied by acceptance words, I’ll wear and, Ok, like let me watc- (watch movie) (line 9), she also challenges the importance and preference of the prior action. In response to the mother’s questions, why don’t you like? (line 18) and, what, (line 21), Aidan uses the direct refusals, I don’t like. I don’t like to wear dress,
and I like to wear pants. By refusing the actions suggested by her parents, Aidan extends her disagreement on the basis of her willingness.

Like example 11, in line 23, the mother again formulates the predicate of wearing pants according to occupational categories (student and trainer) in which she emphasizes the inappropriateness of Aidan’s prior action, I like wearing pants (line 22) for going to a party. In line 25 Aidan again answers the father’s question, yeah why not? (line 24) using the refusal, I don’t want. Father counters Aidan’s response first with a directive, now put it on (line 27), then after a short pause shifts to the mother, but it is cold, to inform that the weather is too cold for her dress. After getting a solution to it by her mother, well she’ll wear tights (line 28), she rejects her mother’s proposed action with a ‘no’ reply that can be interpreted as a negative resistance used by Aidan. A response of no, to her mother another proposal, you’ll put coat on sweetie (line 30), is repeated in line 31 which is accompanied by a counter, are we going to wedding party, by which Aidan shows the inappropriateness of her mother’s proposal. She reformulates her proposal in line 32 as, I mean you’ll put on a jacket, accompanied by the disclaimer of well to acknowledge that, I’m also wearing a jacket. Here the mother treats the predicate of wearing dress as going together with Aidan, an action that is resisted by Aidan by orienting to her willingness; I wanna wear dress (line 33).

In line 34, by taking the dress, holding in front of him and saying, I wish I were a girl and my mom would buy me something like this, the father explicitly relates the predicate of wearing dress to the category of girl through which it can be interpreted that he constitutes the doing of resistance to Aidan’s prior action in line 33. By talking about aunt, in line 35 he further accomplishes the predicate of wearing dress as a female’s category tie; yesterday I bought the aunt one of this how happy she has got I bought a tiger print. Aidan giggles and using the disclaimer of well and refusal, I don’t like wearing dress (lines 37-38), resists the father’s prior action.

(13) 0:2:57 Video 3

Aidan keeps resisting wearing dress. The Parents ask her to show them whatever she likes to wear. She brings pants and says that she wants to put on them for the party what leads to the following dispute.

1 Aidan: °ino mixam mipusham°

°I wanna wear these°
Mom: Alan Aidan ma darim mirim [mehmuni= ((takes a look at the pants and plays with her hair))]

Now Aidan we’re going to [the party=]

Aidan: =][XOB ALAN DARIM MIRIM MEHMUNI SHALVAR SHALVARE DIGE (. ) CHIKAR MIKONAN BA MA

=WELL NOW WE ARE GOING TO THE PARTY ((these)) ARE PANTS PANTS (. ) WHAT ((an special thing)) IS GONNA HAPPEN THERE ((in the party))

((6 lines deleted in which the mother talks about variety of clothing to choose))

Aidan: Pirhan! man nemipusham pirhan (0.8) ((leans on sofa)) °nemiam°

Dress I don’t wear the dress (0.8) ((leans on sofa)) I don’t come

Dad: inaro un dustemun Ava miuamad hamaro midam mipushid (0.6)

if our friend, Ava come we’ll give her all to wear (0.6) they fit her ((all smiles))

Aidan: man pirhan nemipusham. °nemiam aslan°

I don’t wear dress, I don’t come at all

Mom: nemiay (0.5) to gofti saat 3 man mixam [beram= you don’t come (0.5) you’ve told at 3 you wanna [go=

Aidan: =][nemiam pirhan nemipusham xob

=I don’t go, well I don’t wear dress

Dad: age ta 12 shab ham ashe duq bexori hast (0.2) beshin [haminjuri

ashe duq boxor hihihi=

There is enough soup you eat till 12 midnight (0.2) stay and [just eat up soup hihihi=

Aidan: =][XOB MAN NEMIAM (. )

pirhan dust nadaram bepusham

=SO I DON’T COME (. ) I wouldn’t like to wear dress
Dad: *ki goft ki zuret mikone*

Who says who forces you

Aidan: *MAMAN DARE ZURAM mikone,*

MOM is FORCING ME.

Mom: *bia bahamidige (.) xoshkel konim=

Let’s get (. ) beautiful together!

Aidan: *=NE:MIX:AM?=

=I don’t want to?= 

Mom: *=[set ¿ beshim. ((to have the same style))=

=[Let’s look exactly like each other¿

Aidan: *[ba un shekamet mixay xoshkel Hhh °beshi° ((the mother is pregnant))

[with that belly ((the mother is pregnant)) you wanna Hhh °get° beautiful

Mom: *xob man shekam daram to shekam nadari

well I have a big belly but you don’t

Aidan: *xob °nemixam pirhan bepusham> (. ) °ame Feria nist, rafte-°

well <I don’t want to wear a dress> (. ) °aunte Feria is not [she went to-°=

Mom: *[hava sarde vagarna hame loxt [miraftim ((smiles))=

It’s cold, even if we all go naked

Aidan: *[Hhh

Mom: *=chera ame Feria xodesh pirhan mipushe

miad tu majles.

=aunti Feria herself wears dress

she goes to a party.

Aidan: *OH:: TU MAJESE man dust nadaram aslan pirhan badam miad

OH:: IN THE PARTY I don’t like dress at all I hate

In line 1, Aidan brings the pants she wants to wear for the party to show her parents, an action (wearing pants) that is resisted by the mother, *Now Aidan we’re going to the party,* in which she implicitly questions the appropriateness of the pants for the party. In response, Aidan
adopts the same strategy through which questions the importance of the party, well we are going to the party (these) are pants pants, what (an special thing) is gonna happen there (lines 4-5). Also it can be interpreted that she refuses the inappropriateness of pants by emphasizing and repeating it in line 4. In different part of this sequence, Aidan uses the strategy of warning, I don’t come (lines 12, 15, 17, and 21) to show her resistance towards the parents’ directive, that can be something like this, if you don’t let me to wear pants, I don’t come. In lines 13-14 and 18-19, the father adopts the strategy of warning Aidan that ‘if you do not come to the party you have to eat just soup for the dinner’; There is enough soup you eat till 12 midnight, stay and just eat up (soup) (lines 18-19). Also in lines 13-14, if our friend, Ava come we’ll give her all to wear, they fit her, in which he warns Aidan ‘if you do not put on the dress, we will give all of your dresses to someone else’. It can be interpreted as the doing of resisting by the father in which he mitigates his warnings by smiling. Aidan’s responses to both actions done by the father are almost the same, I don’t wear dress, I don’t come at all (lines 15) and so I don’t come, I wouldn’t like to wear dress (line 21). The instance of resistance constituted here is that one speaker (the father)’s warning is immediately followed by another warning from his interlocutor (Aidan). Like the example 12, in lines 13-14 and 32-33, by talking about a girl called Ava and the aunt, and associating the predicate of wearing a dress with them, the father emphasizes the accomplishment of the predicate of wearing dress as a female’s category tie. Aidan’s response to such an accomplishment constituted by his consists of the doing of resistance; I don’t wear dress, I don’t come at all (line 15), I don’t like dress at all I hate (line 34).

In line 22, rather than being a question, the father’s words, who says, who forces you, are interpreted as mitigation he uses to show that she is not forced to wear a dress. Aidan counters the father’s action by complaining about the mother, mom is forcing me (line 23) through which she accuses the mother of forcing her and treats her mother as accountable for her failure to put on pants. In line 24, in response to Aidan’s complaint, the mother reformulates and mitigates her directives into requests; let’s get beautiful together (line 24) and let’s look exactly like each other (line 26) in which the mother recycles her directives which are not similar in structure but rather in content. In these two turns the mother invites Aidan to participate in a going together through which they accomplish the same predicates. In this regard, Goodwin and Goodwin suggest that such directive forms construct mitigated directives, such as “Let’s do X” used mostly by girls “to minimize differences between party being requested to do something and the party making the request” (1987: 229).
In lines 24, 25, and 26 the turns are latched by another, which mostly happen in this sequence. Aidan’s response to the directive in line 27 shows that the mother’s offer is not attractive to her but she mentions it in the form of a joke, *with that belly you wanna get beautiful*. In this sequence, using the modal auxiliary verb, *I don’t want* (lines 25 and 29), Aidan constructs the account in terms of unwillingness; she positions herself in relation to the non-preferable action and displays that she is unwilling to ‘get beautiful’.

(14) 0:8:18 Video 4

*The mother is helping Aidan to put his socks on and the father is looking at them. He makes a joke of Aidan’s shorts brand that is H&M. In this sequence he means that she and the mother buy all their shorts from H&M.*

1 Dad: *madaro doxtar faqat [bayad ba H&M]=*  
The mother and daughter [should only with H&M]=

2 Aidan: *[chi?=]*  
[what? ((asks her father what are you talking about?))]

3 Dad: *=ba H&M qarardad bebandan! qesmate short=*

=make a contract with H&M! shorts section=

4 Aidan =*hihihi*

In this short excerpt, the father uses two categories of *mother* and *daughter* next to each other, and associates the same predicate of buying shorts from H&M with both Aidan and the mother.

Overall, the examples related to this part shows that the *standardized relational pair* of mother-daughter is constructed in the family by the parents, through which they try to accomplish a set of social norms and moral obligations and use the conventional activities and predicates related to that pair of categories as a “resource for action” (cf. Stokoe and Smithson 2001: 231). The analysis shows that the gender identity categories used in talk are resources by which the parents organize activities/predicates, and at the same time activities built by those resources constitute the mother and Aidan as members of the same gender membership category.
The following shows how the parents categorize Aidan into a certain linguistic gender group (girl) in an indirect way, by describing some other girl (Anna) that might share some attributes with the members of the “girl” category.

(15) 0:1:17 Video 4

The mother is putting nail polish on Aidan while she doesn’t want. The parents try to encourage Aidan to get a long nail.

1 Mom: *bebin che qashang shod*

look how beautiful they got

2 Aidan: °zesht shod°
°they’re ugly°

3 Mom: *bezar naxonat boland she (..) naxonaye Anna mibini che xoshkele*

let your nails grow (..) have you seen Anna’s nails? how beautiful they are

4 Aidan: °maman nemixam°=
°mommy, I don’t want it°=

5 Mom: =yihh xeili qasha:nge angoshtash
=wow her fingers are very beautiful!

6 Dad: *Kiana ham mesle mamanesh tu xune ye sare (0.2) jeloye aynast (.)*

7 malume qashang mishe

like her mom, Anna is always spending time (0.2) in front of the mirror at home (..) no wonder she becomes pretty

8 Mom: *bashe doxtare dige*

well she is a girl

In this excerpt, getting long nails and standing in front of the mirror in order to do make-up are defined by the parents as the predicates associated with the membership category of girls, *she is a girl* (line 8). The words, *like her mom* (line 7), shows that again the standardized relational pair of mother-daughter and going together of predicates and categories occur as we have in the above-mentioned examples. In the first turn, the counter, *they’re ugly* (line 2) not only disagrees with the prior action (line 1), *look, how beautiful they got*, but also challenges the validity and correctness of the suggested action. In line 4 Aidan refuses the
directive using an auxiliary verb, *I don’t want*, to emphasize her unwillingness, but she does not reject the validity of the suggested action, that is, *have you seen Anna’s nails? How beautiful they are.*

(16) **0:6:13** **Video 3**

*Aidan said that she does not like dress because she cannot move easily whenever she put a dress on and she likes to wear pants. The parents are talking about that Aidan dislikes whatever is above her knees.*

1 **Mom:** °Aidan fekr mikone hame vaistadan be pahaye un [negah mikonan°

°Aidan thinks nobody has anything else to do but [staring at her legs°

2 **Aidan:** [ASAN BADAM MIAD MAN

3 **pirha:n (0.2) dust nadaram (0.2) Negah mikone chap chap.hhh

4 **BABA bad migam? (. ) baba saket unja neshaste (0.2) man dust daram

5 **shalvar bepusham?**

[You KNOW WHAT I HATE IT I don’t like (0.2) wearing dresses (0.2) he is looking annoyedly hhh am I telling wrong? (. ) dad just sits and is silent (0.2) I like to wear pants!]

6 **Dad:** *CHi begam*

WHAT can I say

7 **Aidan:** *barax be donya umadam*

I was born wrong!

8 **Mom:** *bayad chi be donya miumadi pas?*

so what were you supposed to be born as?

9 **Aidan:** *pesar Hhh=

boy Hhh=

10 **Mom:** =to xodet injuri dari be zehne xodet feskar miari=

=in this way you are pressuring on your mind to think so=

11 **Aidan:** *xob nemixa:m lebas*

=well, I don’t want to wear a dress!
In this example, by applying the modal auxiliary verb, *I don’t like* (line 3) and also *I don’t want* (line 11), Aidan refuses the prior actions and constitutes the accounts in terms of her unwillingness. In line 5, *am I telling wrong*, by designing a question-answer adjacency pair, Aidan positions herself as someone requiring a confirmation about her disagreement with the predicate of wearing dress and who wants to accomplish the predicate of wearing pants related to her.

The parents categorize Aidan’s actions in relation to her presumed membership in girl category. Therefore, in line 7, Aidan is exposed to the accountability of her suggested action, *I was born wrong*. The lines 7 and 9 can be considered as the climax of the whole episode and the participants’ dispute around the haircut and clothing style. In line 9, using the category of *boy*, it can be interpreted that Aidan states her gender preference- to be a boy rather than a girl. In line 10, the mother displays some sensitivity to this resistance in the next turn: *in this way you are pressuring on your mind to think so*. Aidan offers a category-bound reason for her not to be a girl: *well I don’t want to wear dress*, from which it is interpreted that she is doing sexism.

By identifying boys’ activity as persons who like to wear pants and do not want to wear a dress, Aidan provides for what her gender identity should be and shows ‘what to behave as’ as a socially constructed phenomenon. During the previous sub-episodes, Aidan’s resistance is just towards the category-tied activities and predicates, rather than the category. But in this sequence, by saying, *I was born wrong*, Aidan questions and challenges not only the gender she assigned by her parents to do but also the gender category and gender labels such as ‘girl’ and ‘daughter’ the parents use to accomplish her identity. Therefore, it can be seen how Aidan’s gender category and identity is accomplished and recycled through the doing of resistance towards the category-tied activities/predicates.

### 6. Concluding remarks

A key contribution made by this study is in showing how a sex-reassigned child resists the gender category she is being assigned to be by resisting the predicates and activities related to the category. In this regard, the data analyzed emphasizes the correlation between gender category construction as a social phenomenon and resistance. In so doing, the discussion about the relationship between these two lines of study has been done within gender and identity from ethnomethodological and conversation analytic approaches. The study
contributes to the notion that identity emerges and is accomplished in interactional contexts, rather than being inherited and pre-determined (Bucholtz and Hall 2005, Keevallik 2010).

More specifically, it shows how participants are oriented to gender in interaction, on what basis the gendered categorization turn and on the activities and predicates accomplished by them as they classify themselves and others as members of a gender category. The study tracks the practical accomplishment of the way activities and predicates are gendered and resisted by participants in order to establish a specific gender category.

The study illustrates resistance as a concrete and observable feature of talk by which the notions of category-bound activities, category-tied predicates, and standardized relational pairs are invoked and resisted. It demonstrates how the parents treat category and predicate as ‘going together’ and emphasize gender stereotypes and generalizations by accomplishing category-bound activities/predicates in relation to a sexist identity. Moreover, it explores how the child tries to accomplish predicates such as having short hair and wearing pants without specifying explicitly the gender category she wants to be.

Across the different analytic sections, the analyses show how the child produces and resists a category’s situated meanings in order to accomplish her own predicates. The dispreferred format was an “institutionalized method” (Heritage 1984: 268) of talk which was used for accomplishing responses to directives, proposals, and questions. The study analyzes the behavioral patterns in the settings and the processes through which the child used resistance as a transgression of regulatory and hegemonic norms she is asked by her parents to do in the form of category-predicate combination. The requested actions were mostly rejected by the child due to her unwillingness rather than inability.

Through their talk participants resist or invoke aspects of their gender norms and identities which are mostly based on gender dichotomies. A number of episodes analyzed in this study were meant to illustrate how particular features of the ascribed linguistic gender group categorization are resisted or, alternatively, emerged through talk and made relevant to the ongoing activity or requested predicate. The study also demonstrates how the participants possess and perform different sets of values and norms of gender behavior. In so doing, they use gender categories, such as “girls”, “boys”, “daughter”, which are resisted through dispute around predicates such as haircut and clothing style.
References


Appendix: Transcription conventions

[ left square bracket: simultaneous speech and voices, the beginning of overlapping talk

= equal signs: immediately continuous talk, one turn is latched by another

(0.5) pause and represented in tenths of a seconds

( .) micro-pause, less than 0.2 seconds

.hhh in-breath

Hhh out-breath

_ underlining: emphasis

::: colons: stretch or prolongation

YES capital letters: loud

. period: falling intonation

, comma: continuing intonation

? question mark: rising inflection, not necessarily a question

?, weak rise in intonation

↑ up arrow: marked rise in pitch

↓ down arrow: marked fall in pitch

da- hyphen: production of cut-off or self-interruption

word< abruptly finished, but not cut off

> < more than, less than: pronounced faster than the surrounding speech

< > less than, more than: pronounced slower than the surrounding speech

° degree signs: diminishing voice, the word in markedly quite or soft

Hah laughter

(word) utterance in parentheses: unclearly heard

(( ))) double parentheses: researcher’s comments