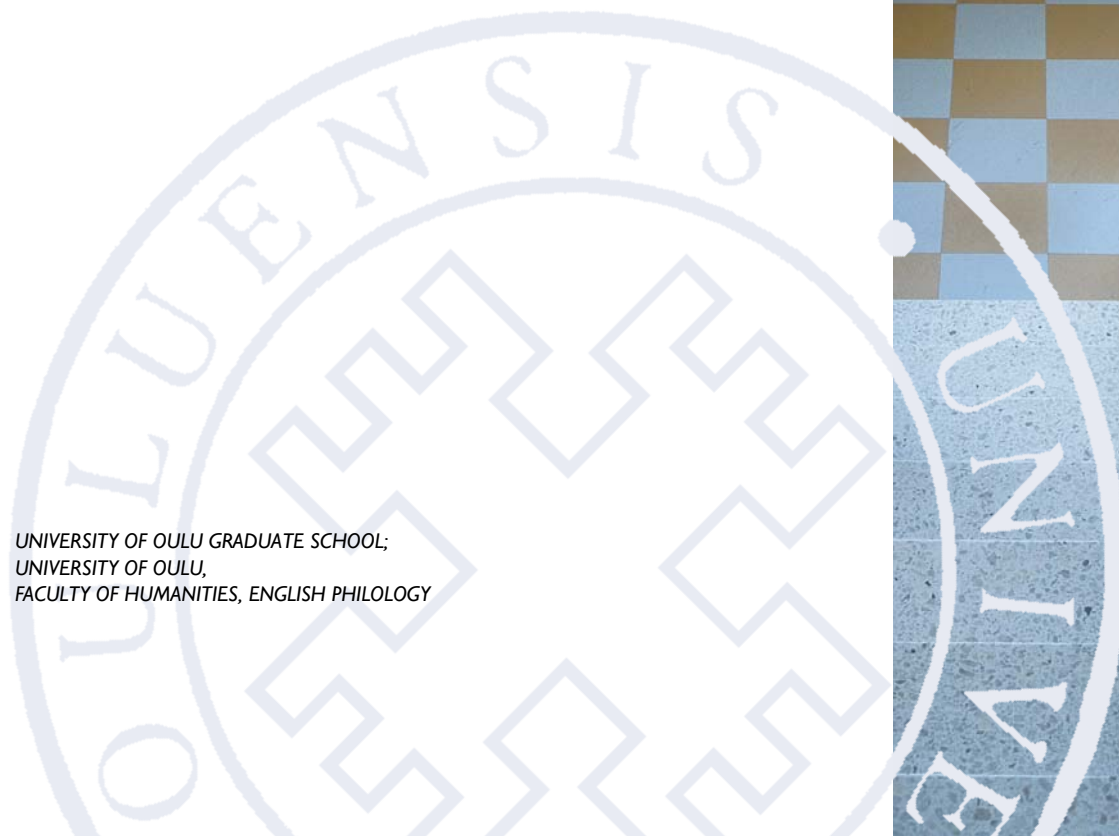


*Antti Kamunen*

# BUSY EMBODIMENTS

THE HIERARCHISATION OF ACTIVITIES  
IN MULTIACTIVITY SITUATIONS

UNIVERSITY OF OULU GRADUATE SCHOOL;  
UNIVERSITY OF OULU,  
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES, ENGLISH PHILOLOGY





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**ANTTI KAMUNEN**

**BUSY EMBODIMENTS**

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situations

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***Abstract***

This thesis examines multimodal practices used for managing multiple parallel activities, and studies how participants in social interaction make visible their local prioritisation of one activity over another. It consists of a summary and three original articles, which present different practices with which participants manage their involvement in multiactivity by making publicly visible their prioritisation of one activity over another. The thesis uses the conversation analytic method to study naturally occurring conversations, and the data for the study consists of video recordings of everyday interactions in both domestic and work settings. The languages used in the data are English, Finnish, and French.

The thesis shows how participants in face-to-face interaction use *priority displays* to visibly give priority to one activity over another by (re-)allocating some of their embodied *resources* – the body, gaze, and hands – away from the lower hierarchised activity and to the prioritised one. What activity is prioritised can be either due to a participant's trouble in conducting the activities simultaneously, or, as argued in this thesis, done for interactional purposes, such as prompting action from a co-participant. The embodied practices for making the hierarchisation of activities visible are recognised and oriented to by co-participants, who adjust their own activities to enable a successive coordination of the simultaneous activities, leading to the minimisation of parallel involvements. The findings also suggest that, in addition to a participant's direct involvement in two or more parallel activities, publicly visible and socially relevant *orientation* to two or more parallel activities could be considered as involvement in said activities. This thesis contributes to research on social interaction and the organisation of multiactivity by providing new knowledge on how participants manage and orient to the different temporal and sequential demands related to multiactivity.

**Keywords:** conversation analysis, embodiment, hierarchisation, multiactivity, multimodality, social interaction



## **Kamunen, Antti, Kiireen kehollisuus. Toimintojen hierarkkisuus monitoimintatilanteissa**

Oulun yliopiston tutkijakoulu; Oulun yliopisto, Humanistinen tiedekunta, Englantilainen filologia

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### ***Tiivistelmä***

Tutkimukseni käsittelee samanaikaisten toimintojen jäsentämiseen käytettäviä multimodaalisia käytänteitä sekä sitä, kuinka osallistujat tekevät vuorovaikutustilanteissa näkyväksi eri toimintojen välisen hierarkkisuuden. Tutkimus koostuu yhteenveto-osuudesta ja kolmesta osajulkaisusta, jotka käsittelevät eri käytänteitä, joiden avulla osallistujat tekevät näkyväksi jonkin toimintalinjan priorisoinnin ja täten jäsentävät monitoimintaan osallistumistaan. Tutkimuksessa käytetään keskusteluanalyysin menetelmää, jonka avulla tutkitaan luonnollisia vuorovaikutustilanteita. Käytetty aineisto koostuu sekä työpaikoilla että kotona tapahtuvien arkikeskustelujen videonauhotteista. Aineistoissa käytetään suomen, englannin ja ranskan kieltä.

Tutkimuksessani tuon esiin, kuinka osallistujat kasvokkaisvuorovaikutuksessa käyttävät *priorisoinnin osoittimia* tehdäkseen näkyväksi tietyn toimintalinjan priorisoinnin toisen asemesta. Priorisointia osoitetaan kohdentamalla kehollisia *vuorovaikutuksen resursseja* – kuten katsetta, kehoa ja käsiä – yhdestä toiminnosta toiseen. Tietyn toimintalinjan priorisoiminen voi kytkeytyä joko kahden toimintalinjan samanaikaisen edistämisen ongelmallisuuteen, tai, kuten tutkimuksessani esitän, näkyväksi tehty priorisointi voi olla myös vuorovaikutuksellista ja johdatella toista henkilöä kohti jotain tiettyä toimintaa. Muut osallistujat tunnistavat edellä kuvatun tietyn toimintalinjan priorisoinnin ja orientoituvat siihen muuttamalla omaa toimintaansa siten, että keskustelukumppani pystyy järjestämään omat, yhtäaikaisesti etenevät toimintalinjansa peräkkäin tapahtuviksi. Tämä johtaa myös yhtäaikaisten toimintojen ja siten monitoiminnan minimoimiseen. Tutkimustulokset viittaavat myös siihen, että osallistuja voi olla paitsi suoraan osallisena kahdessa samanaikaisessa toiminnassa, hän voi myös orientoitua kahteen tai useampaan samanaikaiseen toimintalinjaan siten, että tämä orientaatio tehdään näkyvän toiminnan kautta sosiaalisesti merkitykselliseksi. Väitöskirjani löydökset edistävät sosiaalisen toiminnan ja monitoiminnan jäsentämisen tutkimusta luomalla uutta tietoa siitä, kuinka osallistujat orientoituvat monitoiminnan kautta ilmeneviin ajallisiin ja toimintojen sekventiaaliseen jäsentymiseen liittyviin haasteisiin ja käsittelevät niitä.

**Asiasanat:** hierarkkisuus, kehollisuus, keskusteluanalyysi, monitoiminta, multimodaalisuus, sosiaalinen vuorovaikutus





*For my parents and, most of all, for Vuokko*



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Well, this sure has been a wild ride. Like so many students before me, after getting my Master's degree, I solemnly swore I would never do research again. Yet, here we are. In late 2013, a few months out of the university – and recently unemployed – I was approached by my Master's thesis supervisor, the late Professor Emerita Elise Kärkkäinen, who offered me an eight-month job contract in her research project. This offer was on the condition that I start writing a doctoral thesis on the basis of my Master's thesis, which was about the use of hand gestures in regulating other people's turn-taking in conversations. I was very sceptical about my competence for such an undertaking, but apparently Elise saw something in me that I did not know was there, and she encouraged me to take up the challenge. For that, among many other things, I am forever grateful to her.

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## List of original publications

This thesis is based on the following publications, which are referred to throughout the text by their Roman numerals:

- I Kamunen, A. (2018). Open Hand Prone as a resource in multimodal claims to interruption: Stopping a coparticipant's turn-at-talk. *Gesture*, 17(2), 293-323. <https://doi.org/10.1075/gest.17002.kam>
- II Kamunen, A. (2019). How to disengage: suspension, body torque and repair. *Research on Language and Social Interaction*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08351813.2019.1657287>
- III Kamunen, A. & Haddington, P. (manuscript). Activity transitions as multiactivity: Practices for achieving dual orientation to an imminent next activity.



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# 1 Introduction

“Busy” is a commonly used word in describing people’s lives nowadays. We are busy at work, busy at home, and often, when asked to do something, we might be “too busy.” Busy-ness, in this context, may refer to not being able to do something due to already being involved in something else. Yet, often in our daily lives, we find ourselves doing more than one thing at the same time. Or if not literally doing two things at the same time, at least doing one thing while another one is on hold in the background, switching back and forth between them. This phenomenon is commonly referred to as multitasking, whereas in the field of studying social interaction it is labelled *multiactivity* (LeBaron & Jones, 2002; Mondada 2012, 2011, 2014c; Haddington, Keisanen, Mondada, & Nevile, 2014a). In multiactivity situations, separate activities sometimes inevitably end up competing with each other, for example by requiring the same verbal, bodily, sensory or spatial resources. Such situations lead to the impossibility of progressing the activities in parallel and require coordination (see e.g. Keisanen, Rauniomaa, & Haddington, 2014; Licoppe & Tuncer 2014; Ticca 2014). This thesis investigates the embodied conduct of participants in face-to-face interaction in situations where multiple simultaneous lines of action demand their attention but cannot be managed at the same time. Using the method of multimodal conversation analysis (CA), the thesis examines the multimodal practices used for managing multiple parallel activities, and studies how participants in social interaction make visible their local prioritisation of one activity over another.

This thesis builds on and complements the growing field of research on interactional multiactivity. Previous conversation analytic work has approached multiactivity from three points of view: First, it has examined *the organisation of multiactivity*, that is, the ways in which unfolding activities can become co-relevant, interconnect and influence each other’s sequential and temporal trajectories (Haddington, Keisanen, Mondada & Nevile 2014b: pp. 19–20). Second, a number of studies have focused on the *practices* – suspending, resuming, stopping, alternating and abandoning – through which participants coordinate the emergent trajectories of separate activities (see e.g. Keisanen et al. 2014; Sutinen 2014; Helisten 2018). Finally, conversation analytic research on multiactivity has also looked into the different *resources* – gaze, talk, the body, and so on – for managing multiactivity and the ways in which participants utilise them, also to make visible their involvement in multiple activities (e.g. Raymond & Lerner 2014; Sutinen 2014; Harrison & Williams 2017).

This thesis contributes to research on *the organisation of multiactivity* by looking into how participants manage and orient to the different temporal and sequential demands related to multiactivity, and how participants visibly give one activity priority over another by using different kinds of *priority displays*. These priority displays are produced by the participants through (re-)allocation of their embodied *resources*: the body, gaze, and hands. These themes are addressed through the following research questions:

- (1) When and why do participants, who are simultaneously involved in face-to-face interaction and some other, physical activity, prioritise one activity over another?
- (2) What interactional devices do participants use to prioritise one simultaneous activity over another?
- (3) What do co-participants do in response to such prioritisation of one activity over another?

These questions will be answered by compiling the findings of the three original research articles upon which this dissertation is based, which examine multiactivity through a “zoom lens”, moving from focusing on a single embodied practice onto studying a wider array of bodily conduct in specific multiactivity settings. Article I focuses on the combination of a holding-away gesture and a verbal action, as a practice used in claiming interruption in conversation and, in specific interactional contexts, to manage involvement in multiactivity. Article II looks into other-initiated repair in multiactivity situations and shows how participants disengage from a manual activity in favour of the repair activity, thus displaying their local prioritisation of the latter. Finally, Article III studies anticipations of and preparations for activity transitions as a form of multiactivity, where one or more participants actively monitor an observably emerging event that has its own sequential or temporal trajectory with a projectable end-point, at which point a next activity is relevant, possible or due.

The multiactivity episodes analysed in this thesis are predominantly such where only one participant is responsible for managing and advancing the multiple activities (i.e., intrapersonally coordinated multiactivity<sup>1</sup>, Deppermann, 2014).

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<sup>1</sup>In addition to intrapersonal coordination of multiactivity, Deppermann (2014) also talks about *interpersonal* coordination of multiactivity, which refers to the way “multiple participants coordinate their participation in multiactivity in terms of their response to, projection of and collaborative execution of activities by self and partners” (Deppermann, 2014, p. 252).

Specifically, I study situations where intrapersonal multiactivity is made publicly visible. The focus in the analysis thus lies on *individuals*' hierarchisation of parallel activities, especially in episodes where the activities are progressed in an embedded order, that is, managed together by switching from one activity to another, or by switching between priorities and temporalities (Mondada, 2014c). In such moments, multiactivity is made not only visible but also interactionally relevant. This can be either due to a participant's trouble in conducting the activities simultaneously, or as argued in this thesis, done for interactional purposes, such as prompting action from a co-participant. This thesis does not attempt to make any generalisations on the *reasons* for prioritising certain activities over others but rather describes how the local prioritisation of activities is made visible in the individual contexts depicted in the analysed examples. The thesis aims to show how participants' visible prioritisation of activities makes relevant for co-participants that they adjust their own activities, leading to the minimisation of parallel involvements. Furthermore, the findings of the thesis suggest that, in addition to a participant's direct involvement in two or more parallel activities, socially relevant *orientation* to two or more parallel activities – through, for example, visible monitoring of emerging next activities – can be enough to be considered involvement in said activities. This, in turn, might suggest a need to extend the definition of what counts as multiactivity.

This thesis is organised as follows: In chapter 2, I will present the research materials used in this thesis – namely, video recordings of naturally occurring interactions – and describe the conventions and process through which the recordings have been transcribed into representations of both speech and embodied conduct. Chapter 3 describes the theoretical background informing the thesis, as well as the conversation analytic method used in conducting the analysis. Chapter 4 provides summaries of the original research articles and, finally, in chapter 5, I will draw together the findings of the original articles to answer the research questions, and will discuss this dissertation's contribution to CA and to the research of multiactivity.



## 2 Research materials

This chapter describes the data used in the thesis, as well as the conventions for transcribing talk and embodied conduct.

### 2.1 The video data

The data used in this thesis consists of video-recordings of approximately 80 hours of naturally occurring conversations and 17 hours of British and American broadcast television news interviews. The non-broadcast data was collected in Finland and in the UK, and includes interactions in various settings, such as workplaces (laboratories, offices), domestic environments (student apartments, family home with children) and educational environments (university group work sessions and a seminar). The participants represent different nationalities, conversing in either their mother tongue (English, Finnish, or French) or in English as a *lingua franca*.

The data have been collected, transcribed, and presented following the ethical guidelines of the University of Oulu and Loughborough University, as well as those of the Finnish Advisory Board on Research Integrity.<sup>2</sup> All the participants have given their informed consent prior to the recording and have been made aware of their right to withdraw their participation at any time. The participants were anonymised in the representations of data by giving them pseudonyms and by obscuring their faces in still images captured from the videos.

For the purposes of the analysis process, and for representation in research articles, transcriptions were prepared of selected clips from the videos. The conventions for transcribing the participants' talk and embodied conduct will be described below.

### 2.2 Transcription conventions

The transcriptions of the participants' talk have been prepared using the conventions developed by Gail Jefferson. The transcripts do not only aim to represent what was said but also how it was said (ten Have, 2007, p. 94), as well as when it was said, in relation to other action or events. In CA, transcribing in itself is an integral part of conducting the analysis. In preparing a Jeffersonian transcript,

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<sup>2</sup> TENK guidelines available here: <https://www.tenk.fi/sites/tenk.fi/files/ethicalprinciples.pdf>

the analyst needs to identify turn-constructive units (TCUs), their boundaries and possible points of completion, as well as intonation and stress patterns, overlapping talk, and so on (for a detailed description, see Jefferson, 2004). In doing so, the analyst can gain access to the “lived reality” of the interaction (ten Have, 2007, p. 95), not available in other means of examining the data, and has to pay attention to the smallest of details in the participants’ talk, which may convey other meaning than the words alone would.

The Jeffersonian transcripts have been complemented with Lorenza Mondada’s (2016c, 2018) conventions for transcribing the embodied conduct of the participants, such as gaze direction, body orientation, and manual activities. In the original articles, Mondada’s system has been adapted to fill the specific requirements for representing different aspects of multimodal conduct by different participants. For example, separate multimodality lines have been given for gaze and bodily conduct, each depicting the preparation, apex, and retraction of the movement in relation to the local concept of the surroundings. The textual descriptions of embodied action are selective and limited, focusing on the conduct that is relevant for the participants in the scope of the analysed phenomenon. The multimodal features are mostly tied to the timeline of simultaneously progressing talk, but in the moments where participants progress their physical activities during silences, the embodied conduct is segmented in temporal fragments that correspond with the progression of the conduct (see e.g. Mondada, 2018, 2019b). Embodied conduct is further illustrated with still images from the video recordings, with each screen capture marked in its exact point of occurrence in relation to the transcribed talk and embodied action. These conventions, as well as their challenges and limitations, will be further discussed in section 3.1.3.

### 3 Theoretical and methodological framework

The method utilised in this thesis is conversation analysis (henceforth CA). There are different ways of using CA, and in order to capture the complexity of the interactional episodes studied in this thesis, a multimodal approach (Deppermann, 2013a; Mondada, 2014b, 2016b, 2016c, 2019b) is used for studying the participants' embodied conduct. Furthermore, ethnographic observations were used to take into consideration the different contextual resources and affordances available for the participants, such as the overall layout of the surroundings, the different objects the participants interact with and refer to, and so on.

The chapter is organised as follows: section 3.1 introduces the basic principles of CA, its development over time as a research method, its main concepts relevant for this thesis, and its research process. Section 3.2 describes the growing field of studies focusing on the multimodal and embodied features of interaction within CA as a backdrop for the practices presented in Articles I–III, and, finally, section 3.3 discusses the relevant prior research on the principal interactional phenomenon of the thesis: multiactivity.

#### 3.1 Conversation analysis

Conversation analysis is a qualitative, data-driven research method (e.g., Heritage, 1984a, p. 243) that is tightly based on empirical observations made in audio and/or video recordings of naturally occurring interactions. The research approach is inductive, meaning that small initial observations from unmotivated viewings of data lead to identifications of larger phenomena, specific research questions and, ultimately, to descriptions of (potentially) generalisable interactional practices. At its core, CA is the study of naturally occurring human interaction in everyday situations (for overviews and introductions, see e.g. Heritage, 1984a; Hutchby & Wooffitt, 1998; Drew, 2005; Schegloff, 2007; Sidnell & Stivers, 2013). The main assumption informing CA is that talk is a highly organised, ordered phenomenon, and the aim of CA is to study the interactional organisation of *social actions* through the participants' displayed understanding of the situation, the focus being not on what is said, but on what is *done* by what is said.

In this section, I will first briefly describe how CA emerged as a radical new method from mid-20th-century sociology circles that focused primarily on talk, and how it has developed over time into a multimodally informed field of study focused on uncovering complex, collaborative spoken and embodied practices for

constructing shared understanding in everyday interaction. I will then present some basic principles of the organisation of social interaction revealed by CA and will then discuss the normative research process in CA, as well as the research process of this thesis.

### **3.1.1 Origins and development of multimodal CA**

Conversation analysis has its roots in the sociology of the 1950s and 1960s, and in the work of two social scientists, Harold Garfinkel and Erving Goffman. Goffman had introduced his theory of the “interaction order” (e.g. Goffman, 1955, 1963, 1983), which he considered a substantive social institution that should be studied systematically, through the preferred method of microanalysis. Garfinkel, on the other hand, had his own theory of social order – ethnomethodology – based on his notion of not treating members’ practical reasoning and common-sense knowledge as *resources* for studying how societies work, but rather as something to study and describe in their own right (Garfinkel, 1967). It was out of the legacy of these works that conversation analysis emerged in the 1960s and 1970s. Intrigued by Goffman’s and Garfinkel’s shared notion of *talk* as the key to studying social interaction, Harvey Sacks, together with Emanuel Schegloff and Gail Jefferson, developed conversation analysis as a disciplined, empirical method for investigating the levels of social order in the everyday practice of talking. Their hypothesis at the beginning was that there is organisation and an ordered machinery behind the accomplishment of everyday conversations, independent of individual speakers, and that talk is a methodical means of accomplishing *actions* (Sacks, 1992). To study this notion, repeated listenings of *recorded* data of naturally occurring talk would be required for identifying recurring interactional practices. The novel aspect of the method compared to other approaches of the time was that it sought to study the organisation of talk from the perspective of the participants and how they themselves display for one another their understanding of “what is going on”, rather than relying on the researcher’s description and interpretation.

Whereas CA started out as a research method in sociology, it has since found applications in numerous different fields, such as linguistics (Fox et al., 2013; for interactional linguistics, see Hakulinen & Selting, 2005; Selting & Couper-Kuhlen, 2001), psychology (Potter & Edwards, 2013), and communication studies (Beach, 2013), to name a few. Furthermore, research in CA has been applied in studying mundane and institutional interactions. With mundane interaction, the focus in conversation analytic research lies in the interaction itself and its mechanisms as



an “entity in its own right” (ten Have, 2007, p. 8), whereas applied CA focusing on interaction in institutional settings (e.g., Heritage, 1997, 2005; Arminen, 2017) is interested in how different social institutions, such as education, health care, and government, are “talked into being” (Heritage, 1984a, p. 290). This thesis examines interactional mechanisms in both mundane and institutional settings, focusing on the participants’ embodied conduct through multimodal CA, which will be discussed next.

The early CA relied primarily on audio data, comprising recordings of therapy sessions and, later on, phone conversations. CA’s focus on talk has made possible its development into a rigorous, methodical tool for investigating the systematic ways in which turns, actions, and sequences are organised in talk-in-interaction (Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson, 1974; Schegloff, 2007). In the context of phone conversations, the researcher has access to all the same resources as the participants do, but for analysing face-to-face conversations, it is crucial for a researcher to also have access to the participants’ embodied conduct, such as gestures, gaze behaviour, facial expressions, body postures, object manipulations, and movement in space (Deppermann, 2013a; Goodwin, 2017; Nevile, 2015; Streeck, Goodwin & LeBaron, 2011). Focusing on the multimodal aspects of interaction is by no means a new approach in CA: according to Schegloff (Sacks & Schegloff, 2002), conversation analytic research has all along been interested in bodily behaviour in interaction and how it is sequentially organised (Sacks & Schegloff, 2002, p. 136). In the early 1980s, the possibilities for collecting and playing video recordings started to develop rapidly, and researchers such as Christian Heath (e.g., 1982, 1984, 1986), Charles Goodwin (e.g., 1980, 1981) and Marjorie Goodwin (1980) were among the first to study bodily conduct as an equally important resource in face-to-face encounters and popularised the use of video recordings as data in CA research. After all, CA’s main objective has from the beginning been to study not language *per se*, but social action (Sacks, 1984). This development – especially in the 21<sup>st</sup> century – has led to a wave of video-based studies focusing on the multimodal accomplishment of social interaction in mundane and institutional settings, to which the present thesis also aims to contribute. This ‘video turn’ (Mondada, 2019a)<sup>3</sup> in CA, as well as the concept of multimodality, will be discussed in more detail in chapter 3.2.

Along with the continuing development of new technologies, new types of data and new research topics have become available in CA. Cameras and other recording

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<sup>3</sup> See also Nevile (2015), on the *embodied turn* in CA.

devices now produce better quality recordings and they have become more compact and easier to use and to carry around (Heath, Hindmarsh, & Luff, 2010). Consequently, CA research is no longer restricted to recordings of static settings, and data can be collected in mobile environments, such as inside cars, walking in streets, and engaged in various activities in the wilderness (e.g., Broth & Mondada, 2013, 2019; Mondada, 2009, 2012; Haddington, Mondada, & Nevile, 2013; Keisanen, Rauniomaa, & Siitonen, 2017). In the data collection for this thesis, especially in Articles II and III, the use of several compact action-cameras (GoPro) helped to record multiple views of the same situations, thus providing access to more details in the complex data. Similarly, with the introduction of 360-degree cameras (e.g., Vatanen, 2019; Haddington, Kamunen & Siipo, forthcoming), researchers can now obtain more camera angles with fewer cameras and are thus able to, for example, follow the participants' gaze directions better and get a better grasp of the environment and the way it affects the interaction.

These developments inevitably also bring with them new requirements and solutions for analysing and transcribing complex video data (see McIlvenny, 2018; McIlvenny & Davidsen, 2017). Different recordings of the same situation can be stitched together and embedded into one interactive file, which also allows the researcher to conduct analysis from inside the video recordings through virtual reality (VR) technology (McIlvenny, 2018). New technologies and their possibilities also bring with them new methodological challenges. The more material analysts have at their disposal, the more complex the process of analysing and – especially – transcribing relevant actions and conduct becomes. The challenges in analysing complex, multimodal data – such as those encountered in the process of this thesis project as well as those discussed in previous research – will be described in section 3.1.3.

### **3.1.2 Organisation of social interaction**

In this section, I will briefly summarise the basic principles of how social interaction is organised – the concepts of action, turn design, sequence organisation, turn-taking, and repair – and how they have been described in CA.

The aim of CA is to describe how shared understanding and meaning are co-created in interaction, giving primacy to *action*. The way CA approaches social action is by focusing on how participants understand each other's conduct. This is achieved through inspecting how a speaker displays how they treat a previous turn-at-talk through the design of their own contribution (the 'next turn proof procedure',

Sacks et al., 1974, p. 729), and what implications the formulation of their action presents for the next turn. Participants select which action to accomplish in the next turn they will take and design the contents and form of their turns to perform a specific action (Drew, 2005: pp. 85–86). In CA, this is referred to as *turn design*. Actions are constructed through talk, and the design of the turn affects how it is interpreted by the recipient. Similarly, actions are attributed, or understood, not only by how they are formatted linguistically and verbally, and what their contents are, but also by when and where in the conversation they occur (see Levinson, 2013, on action formation and ascription). The production and interpretation of actions are also affected by *preference organisation* (see, e.g., Pomerantz & Heritage, 2013; Schegloff, 2007), which concerns how participants in interaction orient to the different characteristics and constraints of specific interactional situations and design their second actions to comply with the expectation of the first action.

The underlying notion informing CA is that turns-at-talk, social actions, and social activities are sequentially organised and negotiated cooperatively. Participants structure their turns, unit by unit, and in a way such that their co-participants can follow and anticipate when it is their turn to talk and, most crucially, what type of a turn they should produce next. Turns-at-talk and the actions they perform do not achieve anything unless they are linked to what came before and what comes next, and actions are always interpreted within their specific contexts and in relation to the surrounding talk. The way in which social actions follow one another is referred to in CA as *sequence organisation* (Schegloff, 2007). Schegloff and Sacks (1973) first described how talk-in-interaction is constructed by producing a turn, followed by another turn corresponding with the action of the previous turn, and so on. A certain type of a first pair part – for example, a question or a request – makes relevant a certain type of second pair part, in this case, an answer to that specific question or an assent or declination to the request, respectively. In CA, such paired actions are called adjacency pairs (Sacks et al., 1974, p. 710; Schegloff, 1968, 1972, 2007). Such sequential positioning of actions is part of the mechanism by which participants make visible to their co-participants – and to us researchers – how they understand each other’s turns and the actions produced through them. This thesis will consider sequentiality not only in the sense of how individual lines of action are formed in a sequential manner, but also in the context of multiactivity and transitions between parallel lines of action, especially in connection with Article III.

In order to be able to make sense of each other’s actions in a way that ensures intersubjectivity, there must be some order in how talk is produced. The participants

work not only to make sense of what was said to them and how to respond, but also to anticipate when it is their turn to say something. The *turn-taking* organisation is one of the most central and studied aspects of conversation in CA. The basics of the mechanism were laid out by Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson in their seminal 1974 paper, in which they present a set of norms of turn allocation and turn-taking. When a current speaker reaches a point in their turn where the turn can be considered complete, there are three possibilities for how to continue. (1) The current speaker can select who speaks next and allocate the turn to them. (2) If the turn has not been allocated to anyone, one of the non-speakers can self-select, and the first one to do so gets the turn, or, (3) if no one self-selects, the current speaker may continue. (Sacks et al., 1974, p. 704.) This set of norms is a part of a mechanism that is based on the finding that overwhelmingly only one participant in a conversation talks at a time, a norm which orients to the minimization of gaps and overlap in talk. Nevertheless, participants still tend to speak in overlap, but mostly at points of turn transition. This is a result of the projectability of turns and turn completion, which again has to do with the way turns-at-talk are constructed.

Turns consist of one or more utterances, or building blocks, which in the field of CA are referred to as turn constructional units, or TCUs (Sacks et al., 1974; Ford, Fox & Thompson, 1996). TCUs are syntactic, prosodic, or pragmatic entities, and at the end of every TCU there is a projectable possible point for speaker change (transition relevance place, henceforth TRP). The projectability of TRPs enables participants to time their self-selection in a way that orients to the above-mentioned norm of minimizing gaps and overlap: for instance, participants have been shown to start planning their next turn already during the co-participant's ongoing turn, and the average length of a gap between turns was measured – in laboratory settings – to be around 200 ms (see, e.g., de Ruiter, et al., 2006; Stivers, et al., 2009). Despite all these mechanisms and systems for achieving intersubjectivity, a shared understanding is not always achieved on the first try. In talk-in-interaction, participants sometimes encounter interactional problems, such as trouble in hearing, understanding, or accepting what is being said by the interlocutor. In such situations, the participants work together to solve the problem in order to progress the conversation. Through the organization of repair (Schegloff, Jefferson, & Sacks, 1977; Svennevig, 2008; Kitzinger, 2013) participants can repair their own or the others' talk in different ways in order to solve such problems. In some cases, a speaker can deal with an 'error' in a co-participant's talk by correcting it for them (other-correction, see Schegloff et al, 1977; Haakana & Kurhila, 2009), but the preferred way of doing this is for the speaker of the problematic bit of talk to correct

themselves (Schegloff et al., 1977). In CA, this is referred to as self-repair, and it can be initiated by the speaker themselves, or by a co-participant. In self-initiated self-repair (see, e.g., Schegloff, 2013; Kitzinger, 2013), the current speaker stops their ongoing turn to deal with something problematic in that turn through, for instance, cutting off and replacing a part of the turn, reformulating a part of the turn, or adding something to the turn. Self-initiated self-repair can occur in the same TCU as the trouble-source, or in the very next one.

In other-initiated self-repair (e.g., Schegloff et al., 1977; Dingemanse, Blythe & Dirksmeyer, 2014; Kendrick, 2015), a participant who identifies some trouble in a co-participant's earlier turn initiates a repair procedure. This is done by, firstly, locating the trouble source and, secondly, potentially indicating what the repair initiator's problem with the trouble source is. Whereas self-initiated self-repair only halts the progression of a turn, other-initiated repair (OIR) suspends the progression of the whole ongoing sequence. Article II of this thesis studies participants' embodied conduct in other-initiated self-repair in the context of multiactivity (Haddington et al., 2014a) and focuses on two aspects of the OIR-speaker's embodied conduct that are directly in connection with their involvement in multiactivity: body torque and suspension of the ongoing manual activity.

While the above features were originally discovered and studied primarily in the context of *talk-in-interaction*, the inclusion of video recordings as data in CA research has opened the door for treating many of these phenomena as *multimodal* accomplishments, comprising both verbal and embodied practices. For example, turn-taking and turn-allocation in face-to-face interaction rely greatly on gaze (Rossano, 2012, 2013) and deployment of gestures (e.g., Mondada, 2007, 2013; Article I), and other-initiated repair can also be achieved through embodied conduct, either with or without accompanying verbal repair initiators (e.g., Rasmussen, 2014; Floyd et al., 2016; Article II). The production of various actions and action streams (Levinson, 2013) that are facilitated by speech can also be completely based on embodied action, and transitions between physical activities can rely on a similar kind of projection as in the context of verbal turns (Article III). This thesis aims to add to the traditional CA 'tool box' by studying how some of the basic building blocks of interaction of interaction, such as those listed above, co-occur with – and are achieved through – embodied practices, and how they convey meaning especially in the context of multiactivity.

### **3.1.3 The research process: data collection, ethnography, and transcription**

In this section, I will describe the research process in conversation analytic studies, its application in the data collection and analysis for this thesis, as well as some of the challenges posed by researching complex, multimodal phenomena.

As mentioned at the beginning of section 3.1., CA as a research method is qualitative, data-driven, and grounded in the observable behaviour of participants. The research approach is inductive, meaning that small initial observations from unmotivated viewings of data lead to identifications of larger phenomena, specific research questions and, finally, to descriptions of (potentially) generalisable interactional practices. Conversation analytic research focuses on interactional practices in the data that are observable through the participants' own conduct, rather than on what the researcher assumes is going on in their heads. One resource for the researcher is the next turn proof procedure (Sacks et al., 1974, p. 729), where the interactional meaning of a previous turn is only discernible through the action produced in the very next turn, making visible how the recipient understood the action produced in the previous turn. To maintain the disciplined and empirical nature of the analysis, it is important that the researcher does not try to speculate about what the participants are thinking or what their intentions are but focuses on what actually takes place and what the participants' conduct tells about their own reading of the situations.

The data for CA studies is preferably collected in natural settings, meaning that the recorded interactions are such that they would have taken place anyway, even without the research. CA (normally) avoids using as data pre-arranged or simulated situations to test a hypothesis, although there has been more discussion recently on the roles of experimentation and quantification in CA (see, e.g., Kendrick, 2017; Stevanovic, 2016; Voutilainen, 2016), and there are a number of studies that have relied on experimental settings to look into specific phenomena or to also collect biometric data (e.g., Peräkylä et al., 2015; Voutilainen et al., 2014).

Choosing which interactional environments to study is closely connected to the research questions and aims. For example, for this thesis, the preferred situations to record were those which could potentially involve multiactivity by one or more participants, such as conversations in the kitchen or at a workplace where some sort of bodily-manual activities are conducted. For the actual collecting of the naturally occurring research material, it is important to try to minimise the researcher's presence in the situation and to make sure that the interactions would take place as

they would without the cameras. CA is often criticised for its claim of using “natural” conversations in data, due to the presence of the cameras and/or the researcher affecting the participants’ conduct (“the Observer’s Paradox”, Labov, 1972). The interaction is, nevertheless, as natural as one can get when the participants have been informed of the recording. The cameras are not completely forgotten by the participants, but their notion of being recorded “either remains in the background as a virtually relevant feature of the situation, or, at times, is brought to the foreground and thus becomes an actual feature of the situation” (Tuncer, 2016).

In order for the researcher to better understand the ways in which the context of the interaction is referenced in and affects the interaction (limitations, affordances, requirements, specific types of activities, etc.), it is also helpful to get to know the setting and how the participants operate in it. Video data, while providing the researcher with access to the same bodily action as the participants, necessarily omits at least some of the contextual properties – details on the surroundings, routine procedures, the participants’ shared histories, etc. – available for the participants. Thus, some ethnographic observations (see Lindholm, 2016; Maynard, 2006) prior to, during, and after the recording can provide valuable information for the researcher on issues that, at some point in the data, might become relevant for the situated (inter)action. This is also one of the challenges in using data collected by someone else; the researcher does not have a similar grasp of the environment/context which is largely invisible on the recording. Also, especially when using broadcast TV data, as in Article I, or other data that has not been collected originally for research purposes, challenges may arise from possible editing, camera angles, discarded elements of the interaction, etc.

Once the data has been collected, the next challenge lies in its transcription. Whereas producing transcripts of talk-in-interaction are simultaneously a part of, and a precondition for, its detailed analysis, producing a multimodal transcript requires that extensive analysis has already been conducted in order to determine what embodied conduct is relevant for the participants and, thus, what is to be included in the transcripts. There are also moments in the data where participants progress their physical activities during silences. Silent embodied actions pose a challenge to the analysis process, especially considering sequences. Sequence organization has been largely systematised on the basis of turns-at-talk (Schegloff, 2007), but silent actions have been less considered in this respect. As noted by Mondada (2019b), silent embodied actions constitute a challenge to our understanding of sequentiality as linear: embodied actions rely on sequential orders and projections, yet they are formatted by multiple simultaneous movements.

(Mondada, 2019b) When transcribing such moments, the embodied conduct is segmented in temporal fragments that correspond with the progression of the conduct (see e.g. Mondada, 2018, 2019b). This becomes more challenging when the embodied actions of more than one participant are represented while talking in parallel; the result is a long line of time fragments and movement phase indicators, which can be difficult for the reader to interpret. The challenge of analysing embodied conduct through the micro-detailed approach of conversation analysis has been discussed further by, for example, Deppermann (2013), Nevile (2015) and Mondada (2014a, 2016a, 2016c, 2018).

In this thesis, with its focus on complex multimodal practices in the specific context of multiactivity, the researcher also needs to take into consideration affordances for certain things to happen. This poses some challenges for the researcher: first, one has to *identify* the types of settings that provide the affordances for a specific multimodal practice and, second, one has to *find* these settings from a wide array of different datasets. This, though, already requires initial analysis to work out what the defining characteristics of the phenomenon are, and this work in turn enables creating collections of complex multimodal phenomena.

For Articles I and II, the starting point for viewing the data was to find occurrences of specific phenomena, an Open Hand Prone and body torque, respectively. Collections for Articles I and II were formed by going through various datasets and singling out cases that contained the focus phenomenon. These cases were then timestamped and given short, uniform descriptions (e.g. of their sequential placement, connected social action, etc.). During the subsequent viewings of the cases, the collections were revised by adding notes and by removing cases that no longer fit the specified research focus. For Article III, on the other hand, the only starting point was a specific type of setting in which participants would move between activity relevant spaces. The collection was then formed by going through two datasets that were collected specifically with this interest in mind and making notes of anything that seemed interesting from the point of view of multiactivity, eventually leading to studying transitions and monitoring. The examples for all Articles I-III were chosen by their clarity and representativeness of the described phenomena.

In addition to – or instead of – the linear and moment-by-moment nature of analysing talk with audio data, the analysis of participants' distribution of their embodied resources makes visible forms of sequentiality that “integrate and intertwine multiple simultaneous sequentialities and temporalities, within which complex forms of projective and responsive actions are organized” (Mondada



2016b, p. 341). These simultaneous sequentialities also enable, and make observable, involvement in multiple simultaneous activities through the allocation of the various resources. Embodied resources, as well as the concept of multimodality in CA, will be further discussed in section 3.2, along with previous research on the multimodal resources central in the analyses of the original articles.

### **3.2 Multimodal resources in social action**

In this section, I will briefly discuss the emergence of multimodality in conversation analytic research and then move on to describe previous research on the *embodied* resources that are the most focal in the analyses of Articles I–III: gaze, the body, and hands. I will also address the concept of complex multimodal gestalts, and the situated action participants accomplish by using various combinations of different resources to organise their involvement in multiactivity and display their local prioritisation of one activity over another.

Multimodality as a term refers to the various resources that participants use in social interaction to achieve and make visible social actions. Since the turn of the millennium, the rapid development and increased use of video recording technology in conversation analytic research (see, e.g., Broth, Laurier, & Mondada, 2014; Heath et al., 2010; Mondada, 2006a; Nevile, Haddington, Heinemann, & Rauniomaa, 2015) has led to a rise in the number of studies focusing on the embodied aspects of face-to-face interaction. This “video turn” in CA (Mondada, 2019b) has brought in new notions and questions concerning the basic principles of social interaction. As Mondada (2016b) notes, looking into the multimodal aspects of interaction has also transformed how researchers in CA now perceive temporality and sequentiality (Heath 2013; Mondada, 2016c; Streeck et al., 2011) in terms of how action is organised. The embodied and spatial resources function as context for the spoken interaction and are also resources that the participants can use to shape and define the content and structuring of their turns-at-talk. Charles Goodwin talks about *semiotic fields* and *contextual configuration* when describing the array of multimodal features that are central to the interaction (Goodwin 2000, 2003), and he has also shown how various other features or modalities of interaction, such as objects and their location and shape, are built in as part of interaction and action (Goodwin, 2000, 2007). The analyses in this thesis acknowledge and take into account space and objects as resources in/for the interaction, although the main focus of this thesis lies in the participants’ bodies

and their use in the interaction. Space and objects are, nevertheless, referred and oriented to by the participants, and thus are a central part of their situated action.

Next, I will discuss three embodied interactional resources – gaze, the body, and hands, respectively – that participants mobilise in interaction and, especially, in the multiactivity situations analysed in this thesis, to achieve actions with which they coordinate their involvement in multiactivity. I will discuss each of these resources separately, although in practice they almost always function together in some relation to each other, as well as to talk and hearing, sometimes constituting complex multimodal gestalts.

### **3.2.1 Gaze in social interaction**

In the data for this thesis, one of the participants' resources for displaying involvement in and orientation to interaction and other parallel activities is gaze. Kendon's (1967) early notion of gaze in interaction was that mutual gaze between interlocutors is a means for expressing attention and for making sure that the other person is paying attention. This has also been shown by Heath (1984) and Goodwin (1981), who showed that speakers display their attention towards and (dis)engagement in/from the conversation through their gaze behaviour. There is also some distinction between the gaze conduct of speakers and hearers: Kendon (1967) noted that hearers tend to keep their gaze on the speaker longer, only occasionally glancing elsewhere, whereas speakers alternate their gaze direction between towards the recipient and away from the recipient more or less evenly (Kendon, 1967). Rossano et al. (2009), on the other hand, show that questioners are more likely to look at their recipients than the recipients are to the questioners.

This division between the participation roles is not always as clear-cut; rather, it is dependent on the ongoing course of action and the gaze expectations associated with it. Rossano (2012) argues that in certain activities (e.g., tellings) more sustained gaze by the recipient towards the speaker is required, and in others (e.g., questions) the speaker should gaze towards the recipient. He also showed that participants involved in conversation and other parallel activity tend to direct their gaze to the other activity in moments when the gaze shift does not interfere with the progressivity of the talk, for example by resulting in a silence where talk would be otherwise expected. (Rossano, 2012). Equally relevant to turning one's gaze towards something is the withdrawal of one's gaze. Gaze withdrawal can function as a bid for closure, and as a means for a speaker to display their understanding of how an ongoing course of action is developing. Rossano also notes that by bidding

for closure through gaze withdrawal, participants display diminished participation in the activity (Rossano 2012, p. 41). This is a recurrent phenomenon in the multiactivity situations studied in this thesis, in moments when participants mark the closure of a repair sequence and return to their suspended manual task (Article II) and when a participant is moving to close a conversation and prompting joint orientation to transitioning into an imminent next task (Article III). Whereas gazing at a co-participant displays engagement in and availability for conversation (Ekström, 2012; Goodwin, 1981; Heath, 1984, 1986; Robinson 1998), *withholding* one's gaze while being addressed can similarly display unavailability (Article I).

In addition to marking participation, gaze has been shown to have regulatory functions and to play a role in turn-taking. It can take the function of allocating turns-at-talk to co-participants (Lerner, 2003) and, when directed at a recipient, of soliciting a response by that recipient (Bavelas, Coates, & Johnson, 2002; Stivers & Rossano, 2010). Similarly, speaker gaze has been shown to correlate with faster responses to questions (Stivers et al., 2009). Gaze also has a role in action formation and as a social act. Gaze, and its withdrawal, are used in displaying stance in relation to assessments (Haddington, 2006), identifying and distinguishing re-enactments from addressing in tellings (Sidnell, 2006), and in producing collaborative turn completions and co-constructions of syntactic units of talk (Bolden, 2003). Gaze shift as an action can also project a trajectory of an imminent action to co-participants (Byrne, 2006; Kidwell, 2005; Lerner, 1991; Schegloff, 1984, 1987; Streeck, 1995); shifting one's gaze to a person or an object in the environment projects the gazer's next activity as well as what the gazed-at co-participant may – or, as examined in Article III, is expected to – do next. Shifting one's own gaze can also work to direct a co-participant's gaze to a specific target, establishing the target's relevance for the unfolding course of action (e.g., Goodwin, 2000; Heath, 1986; Psathas, 1990; Robinson, 1998; Streeck, 1993) and functioning as an explicit embodied prompt for action (Article III).

Gaze is also one way of making visible, and achieving, involvement in multiple parallel activities (e.g., Goffman, 1963; Goodwin, 1984; Schegloff, 1998). In recent CA studies focused specifically on multiactivity, gaze has mostly been studied as one resource available for participants in displaying their involvement in an activity, often as a part of different combinations of allocated resources (see Deppermann, 2014). Nishizaka (2014) and Harrison and Williams (2017) have studied how gaze-shifts – together with body orientation – achieve and display a sustained orientation to one activity while simultaneously carrying out another one. Sutinen (2014) and Licoppe and Tuncer (2014) have studied activity suspensions in face-to-face and

technology-mediated conversations, showing how gaze can display re-orientation to the suspended task (see also Article II), and can achieve noticings as relevant next actions, respectively. Ticca (2014) has also shown how gaze is used for sequentially organising talk in multiactivity situations in order to maintain or re-establish a certain degree of involvement with the co-participant(s), as well as displaying engagement in an incoming activity. Gaze and orientation to imminent activities are also discussed by Raymond & Lerner (2014), who describe gaze's role in preparing and beginning next courses of action, which is also the context for the analysis of Article III.

Whereas there is a bulk of existing research describing the interactional relevance of gaze in displaying engagement in and transitions between activities, there are few studies addressing the participants' local hierarchisation of parallel activities. Relevant to the topic of this thesis, in the context of parallel involvement in conversation and competing activities, Rossano (2012) states that gaze behaviour in interaction displays priorities and recognition of relevance to specific sequential types of talk (p. 82), during which participants' involvement in the competing activity is discriminated against. In Article II, the activity of other-initiated repair is shown to take priority in certain situations of multiactivity: If the participant initiating the repair is involved in a parallel physical/manual activity, without a direct line of sight to the speaker of the trouble-source turn, they disengage from the physical activity by freezing their hands and turning their upper body – and gaze – away from the activity and towards the co-participant. In such cases, the gaze shift not only makes visible the speaker's temporarily prioritised engagement in the interaction but also – together with the verbal repair initiator – works to prompt a repair solution from the co-participant (Stivers & Rossano, 2010). Article III, which focuses on workplace settings, shows how work-related tasks are prioritised over non-work-related conversation, and that participants display through their gaze behaviour a sustained orientation to the observable progression of an imminent moment in time when some next (physical) action will become relevant.

In summary, through their gaze, participants involved in multiactivity display their engagement in and disengagement from activities. Gaze is also used in shifts between different activities to make visible one's current orientation to an ongoing or imminent activity, and sometimes also to draw the attention of their co-participant to this activity. This thesis contributes to the study of gaze in interaction by further investigating gaze shifts as a resource in organising and communicating

involvement in multiactivity situations, and how gaze shifts also make visible the participants' (momentary shifts in) hierarchisation of activities.

### **3.2.2 *The body and its movement and orientation in space***

Another embodied practice in organising multiactivity situations is the orientation of one's body relative to the surroundings and co-participants, namely changes in body posture (e.g., body torque) and the movement of the whole body (e.g., standing up; taking a few steps). The role of the environment and its relevance in interaction has been discussed elsewhere (Goodwin, 2000, 2003, 2007), and this thesis focuses primarily on how participants use their body as an interactional resource in forming practices to coordinate their involvement in multiple parallel activities.

Previous research has addressed how body posture – and, often consequently, gaze – is used in displaying (dis)engagement in a course of action in the contexts of doctor-patient interactions (e.g., Heath, 1986; Robinson, 1998) and broadcast interviews (Ekström, 2011). Schegloff (1998) describes body torque – that is, “divergent orientations of the body sectors above and below the neck and waist, respectively” (p. 536) – as a participant's means for making visible their involvement in two different activities. Furthermore, body torque also makes visible the participant's hierarchisation of the activities: the orientation of the lower body implies the so-called ‘main’ activity, that is, the one that has been temporarily departed from and will (soon) be returned to. Similarly, a participant can display a temporary orientation to an activity that is inserted into the current line of action by twisting the upper segments of their body relative to the lower segments, while at the same time display a continued orientation to the intervened-upon activity with the stable orientation of the lower body parts. (Schegloff, 1998, pp. 543–544.)

In the multiactivity episodes analysed in Articles I–III, body torque is also one practice for achieving mutual gaze while maintaining the relevance of the other activity (Article II). Heath (1984) showed how a postural shift (and gaze) directed towards a co-participant can be used to display reciprocity. As such, it “is sequentially implicative for an action by a co-participant; it breaks the environment of continuous opportunity and declares an interest in having some particular action occur in immediate juxtaposition with the display” (Heath, 1984, p. 253). Similarly, as shown in Article III, body torque can also make visible a participant's orientation to an emerging next activity and project their imminent transition to said activity,

implying relevance also for a co-participant's next action (e.g., disengagement from the conversation, preparation to a work task).

The body is a significant resource in establishing and achieving participation and involvement; through the placement of their bodies in a space in relation to others, participants enable social encounter and create implications on who is a part of a specific group and who is not (Goffman, 1963; Kendon, 1990). Lorenza Mondada (2009) has studied encounters in more detail and adopted the term *interactional space*. Mondada (2009) complements Goffman's idea of encounters by describing how interactional spaces are co-created by the participants and how they change, moment-by-moment, as the interaction progresses (Mondada, 2009). Interaction space is constantly adjusted as the interaction progresses, for example when new participants join the situation or when the point of the participants' focus changes. Face-to-face interactions are also closed in an embodied manner: the participants disengage from the interaction space and return back to being independent actors, that is, not members in any participation framework (e.g., LeBaron & Jones, 2002). Such displays of (dis)engagement also occur between co-participants (in a conversation) and other activities. In Article III, participants are shown to communicate and/or prompt a transition to an emerging next activity through movement, such as starting to walk away from the co-participant towards the next activity-relevant space (Broth & Mondada, 2013, 2019) and adjusting their body position and distance relative to the activity-relevant space.

All in all, in the episodes analysed in Articles I–III, body posture and orientation play a significant role not only in establishing participation frameworks but also in making visible the participants' simultaneous involvement in two parallel activities. The orientation of the different body parts also displays which activities are kept relevant in a sustained manner, and which ones are treated as intersecting and temporary. This thesis adds to the existing literature by showing that adjustments in body orientation – especially body torque – also make visible the adjustments in the participants' involvement; temporary bodily disengagements from a parallel activity can communicate increased levels of participation in a conversation. Such treatment of different activities also communicates the participants' own hierarchisation of the activities, and sometimes bears sequential implicativeness for co-participants' next actions.

### **3.2.3 Hands in (inter)action: gestures and manual activity**

Hands have a central role in people's production of actions, both interactional and non-interactional. Gestures, as an interactional resource, convey meaning both with and independent from talk. Previous conversation analytic research on the use of gestures has focused, for example, on turn-taking: participants in a conversation can deploy gestures to display imminent self-selections (Schegloff, 1984; Streeck & Hartge, 1992; Mondada, 2007), and gestures can be held across turns in order to project turn-resumption and incremental talk (Schegloff, 1984; Laursen, 2005; Mondada & Oloff, 2011) and to communicate the continued relevance of the previous turn for the achievement of intersubjectivity (Sikveland & Ogden, 2012). Mondada (2012, 2013) has studied the role of gestures in managing the organization of turn-taking in public political meetings. In the context of multiactivity, gestures can be used both in achieving involvement in multiple activities (e.g., Deppermann, 2014; De Stefani & Horlacher, 2018) and in managing one's involvement in simultaneous activities through suspensions (e.g., Licoppe & Tuncer, 2014, p. 187; Mondada, 2014c; Article I) and resumptions (e.g., Sutinen, 2014).

Manual activity is at the very core of observable multiactivity. In the data for this thesis, the majority of multiactivity episodes are such where one of the activities in which a participant is involved is conversation and the other is some sort of mundane, manual task, such as dishwashing or cooking. The approach towards manual activity (i.e., involvement in a physical task that requires manual handling of objects) in previous research has been as part of the context for interaction, but not necessarily as an interactional resource in itself. Mondada and Svinhufvud (2016) have studied the interactional aspects of (hand)writing, and Mondada (2011, 2014c) has described how surgeons organise their surgery and parallel talk with the observing audience and the surgeon's assistant. Other studies of interactional contexts with manual activity include beauty salons (e.g., Toerien & Kitzinger, 2007), flying a plane (Nevile, 2004a, 2004b), driving a car (Haddington, 2010, 2019; Mondada, 2012; Nevile, 2012), conducting prenatal ultrasound examinations (Nishizaka, 2014), and massaging (Nishizaka & Sunaga, 2015). In the context of multiactivity, Raymond and Lerner (2014) discuss retardations and suspensions of manual activity as adjustments of dual involvement, as well as hands achieving one project while gaze and speech simultaneously progress another. Nishizaka (2014) describes how manual handling of an

ultrasound probe – together with body posture and gaze – display sustained orientation to the ultrasound examination during other parallel activities.

This thesis studies hands as a participants' resource for doing interactional work in the form of gestures, as well as in for doing non-interactional work in the context of manual activity. In Article II, manual activity and its suspension and resumption are treated as one part of a multimodal practice of displaying temporary disengagement from said activity during other-initiations of repair. These suspensions were not done because the participant's hands were needed for some other, more urgent activity, but in situations where the activity could have been progressed without looking at one's hands. Thus, it can be said that the involvement in manual activity was utilised as a resource in achieving a situated action, which also explicitly communicated the speaker's prioritisation of the repair action over the manual activity. In Article III, on the other hand, preparatory hand movements and object manipulations function as embodied prompts for a co-participant to engage in a relevant next action. This thesis contributes to research on gestures in multiactivity situations by showing that gestures can be used in putting a co-participant's activity on hold as well as in prompting a co-participant's engagement in an activity transition. Furthermore, the thesis addresses the role of manual activity from an interactional point of view, showing that suspensions of non-interactional manual actions can also do interactional work in making visible a participant's hierarchisation between an ongoing conversation and a manual task.

### **3.2.4 Complex multimodal gestalts**

As mentioned at the beginning of section 3.2, the above multimodal resources (gaze, the body, and hands) rarely occur on their own. The actions they achieve depend on the array of other resources (bodily resources and body movement, talk, objects, etc.) they co-occur with, as well as on the moment in time and the environment in which they are used to produce a specific, situated action. Depending on the activity, its ecology, and its material constraints, these resources can be combined in different ways as *complex multimodal gestalts* (Mondada, 2014b, 2018). In this section, I will provide a brief description of the concept of multimodal gestalts and discuss them in the context of the original articles.

One of the challenges Mondada (2018) raises in studying multimodality is the multiplicity of possible resources. She states that “any detail or modality available in the context can be utilized as a resource of social interaction” (Mondada, 2018, p. 86). Whereas for the researcher the multiplicity of available resources and their



multiple possible configurations can be a challenge, for the participants they constitute affordances for building a specific action at a specific moment in time. Hoey (2018) states that participants exhibit sensitivity to the modalities they use in constructing their actions, and by doing so participants show a practical understanding of the affordances created by different modalities. As Mondada (2014a) puts it:

What is designed moment by moment in an emergent way by the participants is not just turns at talk but complex multimodal actions, which are progressively shaped through time and which mobilize multimodal resources in a way that is finely distributed. The emergent construction of a complex multimodal gestalt is done in response to the contingencies of the context and the interaction, adjusting to them and reflexively integrating them in building the progressivity of the action; thus, it is done by encountering and solving in real time practical problems encountered by the speaker and the co-participants. (Mondada, 2014b, p. 142)

The use of multimodal resources is also characterised by a specific temporality of actions (Mondada, 2014b): through the allocation of different, independent resources, it is possible to combine multiple successive and simultaneous lines of conduct, making multiactivity possible for the participants and observable for researchers. Even though the term *complex multimodal gestalt* is not always used in reference to the participants' situated action in Articles I–III (Article II, for example, refers to “complex multimodal phenomena”), the term is a very useful and accurate for describing the ways the participants construct their actions: The actions are produced through multimodal practices which are shaped by multiactivity as a context for the action. Moving from Article I to Article III, these actions become more complex and gestalt-like. For example, as shown in Article I, the same combination of a verbal suspension turn and a vertical open palm gesture can convey different meanings depending on where and when it is used. When used in a news interview, the gesture-speech combination can function as a claim to interruption, but in a multiactivity episode, it can suspend a co-participant's ongoing or emergent action to enable the speaker's own re-allocation of resources to enter the conversation. Similarly, in Article II, the participants' understanding of the multimodal gestalt is dependent on the multiactivity situation, the specific verbal action of other-initiated repair, and the affordances produced by the setting and the participants' embodied configuration. Finally, Article III shows how action is constructed through the participants' own conduct, in relation with that of their

co-participants, and also in reference to and through the monitoring of events that observably progress along their own separate timeline. By studying how these resources are (re-)allocated between parallel, separate activities, it is possible to observe the participants' local prioritisation of said activities.

In section 3.3, I will consider the multiple temporalities of multimodal resources through the phenomenon of multiactivity.

### **3.3 Multiactivity**

Today it is commonplace to be doing more than one thing at the same time, switching back and forth between activities, and keeping one activity going on in the background while directly engaging in another. In the common vernacular, this phenomenon is often referred to as multitasking, whereas in the field of studying social interaction, it is labelled *multiactivity* (Haddington et al., 2014a; LeBaron & Jones, 2002; Mondada 2011, 2012, 2014c;). In this section, I will briefly describe different approaches to studying multitasking/multiactivity, focusing on the interactional approach adopted in this thesis. I will also discuss multiactivity from three aspects relevant in the analyses of the original articles: participants' *observable involvement in multiple activities*, the *timing and ordering of activities* in multiactivity episodes and, finally, participants' *hierarchisation of their parallel involvements*.

When referring to research on multitasking, a common association is to think of psychology and the way people allocate their cognitive resources to more than one task at the same time. To mention some of the more recent studies, Paridon and Kaufmann (2010) study multitasking from a psychological point of view in work-related situations, focusing on its effects on performance and subjective strain, and Rothbart and Posner (2015) study switching between tasks from a neurological point of view, investigating what enables multitasking and how multitasking affects the brain, especially in children. Reissland and Manzey (2016) have examined the different strategies participants in controlled settings used for multitasking and measured how long it takes for the participants to complete a task, whereas Rosen, Carrier and Cheever (2013) observed how people study (in a nearly natural setting, as they see it) and what they are distracted by and how often, focusing on media-induced task-switching. Is there a difference, then, between multitasking and *multiactivity*, or, more specifically, between task and activity? Künzell et al. (2018) define "task" as being abstract and depersonalized, something that can be allocated to others and is not necessarily associated with observable behaviour (p. 9). In

contrast, they describe “action” as “intrinsically tied to a specific actor, the person that is performing the task by achieving his or her goal, and always includes a motor behaviour that can be observed.” (Künzell et al., 2018, p. 9). Conversation analytical research also differentiates between tasks and activities: Tasks are seen as goal-directed and clearly circumscribed parts of some larger course of action, whereas activities “encompass broad sets and forms of human praxeological engagements, which can be formulated in so many words but are often implemented rather than verbalised.” (Haddington et al., 2014b, p.11). Furthermore, conversation analytical research on multiactivity operates on a different level of granularity than many other fields, focusing on micro-level details of action. The studies on multitasking which adopt a broader, individual and cognitive perspective on the phenomenon have seldom addressed the detailed practices for managing multiple activities together, in real time and natural settings, and in social interaction (Haddington et al. 2014b, p. 5). Thus, in interaction research, the term multiactivity (e.g., Mondada, 2011, 2012, 2014c; Haddington et al., 2014a, 2014b) has been adopted instead of multitasking in order to emphasise “the social, interactional and temporal features of situations and conduct in which people organise multiple activities together, concurrently or serially” (Haddington et al., 2014b, p.5).

Multiactivity is a “pervasive feature of contemporary life” (Mondada 2014c, p. 33), and as such, involvement in multiple activities is by no means a new phenomenon in studies on social interaction. Already before the focus of research had moved on to multiactivity as a phenomenon in its own right, previous conversation analytic studies had addressed multiple participation frameworks, that is, interactional settings involving multiple conversations (Egbert, 1997), multiple recipients or multiple orientations to specific sub-sets of participants (e.g., Goffman, 1963; LeBaron & Jones, 2002; Schegloff, 1998; Toerien & Kitzinger, 2007). A number of studies have also focused on interaction in complex technological contexts (e.g., Broth, 2009; Haddington & Rauniomaa, 2011; Heath & Luff, 1992; Laurier, 2002; Mondada, 2003, 2006, 2008; Nevile, 2004, 2009, 2012; Suchman, 1997) and in families with children (e.g., Cekaite, 2010; M.H. Goodwin & Cekaite, 2006), both of which are environments where multiple things happen simultaneously, often requiring immediate attention. A body of research also exists on the different ways in which participants organise and adjust their embodied conduct in settings where there are multiple interactional and material demands. Participants have been shown to engage in multiple activities (e.g. C. Goodwin, 1984; M. H. Goodwin, 1996; LeBaron & Jones, 2002; Pasquandrea, 2011) and to

use their body orientation, gaze and gestures to make visible their orientation to multiple activities (Goffman, 1963; Schegloff, 1998). Furthermore, previous studies have examined how participants manage and orient to the temporal and sequential complexities of multiple concurrent activities (C. Goodwin, 1996; M. H. Goodwin, 1995; Heath & Luff, 1996, 2000; Levy & Gardner, 2012; Mondada, 2006, 2011, 2012; Nevile, 2009).

Previous conversation analytic research focusing on multiactivity has approached multiactivity from three perspectives: (1) how are the different ways in which multiple unfolding activities organised together and influence each other's sequential and temporal trajectories (Haddington et al., 2014b: 19–20), (2) what are the practices by which interactants coordinate multiactivity (see, e.g., Keisanen et al., 2014; Sutinen, 2014; Helisten, 2018), and (3) what different resources do participants deploy to manage and display their involvement in multiactivity (e.g., Raymond & Lerner, 2014; Sutinen, 2014; Harrison & Williams, 2017). Through looking into how participants manage and orient to the different temporal demands related to multiactivity and how one activity is visibly given priority over another, this thesis contributes especially on research on how multiactivity is organised by the participants (1). This thesis also contributes to (3) by showing how participants (re-)allocate their embodied interactional resources for making the hierarchisation of activities publicly visible to co-participants.

Context-wise, the bulk of previous CA research on multiactivity has focused on professional and workplace settings, which are often laden with affordances for multiple involvements and parallel activities. Ticca (2014) describes multiactivity situations in a travel agency; Mondada (2011, 2014) has written about surgeons' work in surgical theatres; Deppermann (2014) studies paramedic emergency drills; Harrison and Williams (2017) look at multiactivity among beach lifeguards; and De Stefani and Horlacher (2018) study professionals' interactions in driving lessons and hair salons. Recently, the focus has started to shift more towards mundane interactions and on the busy everyday moments that take place in people's free time and homes: Hoey (2018) describes the multiactivity of drinking and talking; Helisten (in press) studies noticing-occasioned interventions in multiactivity situations in both domestic and institutional settings; Eilittä (2018) looks into parents' responses to summonses by children in domestic multiactivity situations; and Eilittä, Haddington and Vatanen (submitted) study the same phenomenon in cars. Vatanen and Haddington (submitted) also study accounts of being involved in multiactivity in family settings. Furthermore, Articles I and II include domestic data from family and student homes.

In this thesis, I have chosen to define multiactivity as involvement in interactional episodes where two or more independent activities are simultaneously kept relevant and progressed in parallel through verbal and embodied resources. Thus, multiactivity is not necessarily just *doing* more than one thing at a time, but also actively, visibly, and interactionally *orienting* to more than one activity at the same time. Furthermore, it needs to be defined what is considered an independent activity in this definition. By referring to independent activities, I mean activities that are not sub-activities of a common, broader line of action, such as different phases in a physical task, like for example cleaning or preparing a meal, nor are they instances of task-related talk occurring in connection with a jointly coordinated activity. I wish to clarify that this definition does not rule out, nor does it criticise, other definitions of multiactivity but is adapted here in order to help clearly define and describe the kind of multiactivity that is taking place in the instances analysed in this thesis. In the following section, I will discuss in more detail how participants' involvement in multiactivity becomes visible and observable and, thus, also analysable.

### **3.3.1 Observing and recognising involvement in multiple activities**

One of the starting points in the analyses of this thesis was, firstly, to define and then identify what in the participant's conduct communicates their involvement in multiactivity, and, secondly, in which ways does involvement in multiactivity manifest in their managing of the interaction. To define "involvement", we first look to Erving Goffman. Goffman's (1963) definition of involvement refers to "the capacity of an individual to give, or withhold from giving, his concerted attention to some activity at hand – a solitary task, a conversation, a collaborative work effort" (p. 43). He also acknowledges dual involvements and divides involvement into main and side involvements and further into dominating and subordinate involvements (pp. 43–44). Rather than discussing any individual's *capacity* to divide their attention to multiple activities, this thesis focuses on *how* this division is organised and communicated within the unfolding interaction.

At the core of Goffman's ideas, as well as of the analysis of the present thesis, is the visible, observable conduct of the participants: when we can *see* a person doing two things at a time, such as talking while washing the dishes or cooking while watching television, it is safe to make the claim that multiactivity is taking place. This thesis focuses on these types of episodes, where one of the parallel activities is a social one, and thus where one person's involvement in and

management of the activities creates social implication for both parties. Conversation analytic research on multiactivity divides multiactivity into *interpersonal* multiactivity and *intrapersonal* multiactivity (Deppermann, 2014). Interpersonal coordination of multiactivity is an intersubjective achievement of participants who collaboratively coordinate multiple activities, and it is made visible and socially relevant through the different verbal and embodied practices used for its coordination. Intrapersonal multiactivity, on the other hand, refers to how an individual participant organises their own conduct through coordination of their own multimodal resources and orientation to other people's activities and temporalities, "spatial restrictions and affordances, and the opportunities and constraints of the individual modalities and their combination" (Deppermann, 2014, p. 249).

The multiactivity episodes analysed in this thesis are predominantly of the intrapersonal kind, and the focus of the analysis thus lies on when and how an individual's prioritisation of one activity over another becomes visible and relevant for the unfolding events. As noted by Haddington et al. (2014b), even in episodes where multiactivity is mainly orchestrated by one key participant, the other co-participants can "orient and adjust to the multiple constraints of his/her action, thereby collaboratively contributing to it" (Haddington et al., 2014b, p. 20). A prerequisite for such orientation and adjustment by others is for them to be able to recognize one's involvement in multiactivity. One way for a participant to display their involvement in multiactivity is to explicitly verbalise it. Vatanen and Haddington (submitted) study account turns in multiactivity situations. These accounts occur at moments when the participants involved in multiactivity display their orientation to not being able or willing to progress two or more activities simultaneously, or when the recipient does not have full access to the situation. Through, for example, verbalising an ongoing or imminent activity to the recipient, a speaker makes visible the organisation (and incompatibility) of the ongoing activities, and at the same time accounts for not doing something but doing something else instead. This way, the speaker enables the recipient to adjust their own action in a way that helps the speaker to manage the two activities successively rather than in parallel. Embodied practices, such as body torque (Schegloff, 1998; Article II) or adjustments of one's bodily-manual activities (Article II and Article III), explicitly display a participant's divided orientation to two things, and at the same time create implications on the possible limitations of the progression of the interaction.

A participant's involvement in multiactivity mostly becomes relevant in the interaction in situations where the simultaneous activities somehow impact each other's temporal and sequential trajectories. This is often the case when the simultaneous activities are in an embedded temporal order (Mondada 2014c; see also section 3.3.2). In the data used in this thesis, multiactivity is made relevant in the interaction when the two activities are somehow incompatible and cannot be progressed in parallel smoothly. Usually, this incompatibility is result of the separate activities' competing over the same resources, which requires coordination and ordering of the activities from one or more of the participants. This ordering and coordination will be discussed in the next section.

### **3.3.2 Timing and ordering of multiple parallel activities**

In analysing talk, we study it as sequences that progress in time in a linear, moment-by-moment order, with minimal gap and minimal overlap (Sacks et al., 1974). When analysing episodes with multiple simultaneous activities, we also need to take into consideration the linearities of all the activities, and, when studying multiactivity, it is especially important to look at the moments where those lines intersect. This linearity is also nicely represented in Levinson's (2013) description of "action streams", which can be both verbal and nonverbal. According to Levinson, there are two ways in which nonverbal action streams can interact with verbal action streams:

First, when the activity has a nonverbal base (e.g. shopping) but is facilitated by language, where actions in single chain may be realized verbally or nonverbally; second, where two (or more) action chains are superimposed (e.g., talking over dinner) and they need to 'time share', where one (e.g., eating, serving a meal) may be given priority. Foreseeing the other's project (e.g., wanting the water) may allow the two streams to run concurrently without overt interruption. (Levinson, 2013, p. 128)

For this thesis, special interest lies on instances where such "time sharing" occurs, focusing on when and how one "action chain" is given priority over another. Such timing and ordering of two or more parallel actions has been discussed further by Mondada (2014c), who identifies and describes three temporal orders of multiactivity: Two or more activities can be progressed simultaneously in a *parallel order*, without any hitches or perturbations. These are usually activities that do not rely on the same resources, such as talk and some routine-like physical activity.

When two or more activities are progressed in an *embedded order*, mutual adjustments of the activities are required, such as suspending one course of action over the other or slowing down or accelerating one or more of the activities. Finally, in the *exclusive order*, the simultaneous activities share crucial resources and one or more of the activities are abandoned in favour of a single course of action. Such temporal ordering of simultaneously relevant activities displays and makes observable the respective relations, hierarchies and priorities of the activities (Haddington et al., 2014b, p. 25)

This thesis focuses especially on episodes where parallel activities are progressed in the embedded order. These are situations where multiactivity is made not only visible but also interactionally relevant, either due to a participant's trouble in conducting the activities simultaneously, or, as argued in this thesis, for an interactional reason, such as the participant involved in multiactivity making visible to their co-participant(s) a temporary prioritisation of the interaction. In section 3.3.3, I will discuss some of the previous research addressing the hierarchisation of activities, as well as argue that a participant's non-explicated local prioritisation can be observed through their (re-)allocation of resources from one activity to another.

### **3.3.3 Hierarchisation of activities**

As mentioned in the previous section, situations may emerge in which separate activities compete with each other by requiring the same resources – verbal, bodily, sensory or spatial. Such situations lead to the impossibility of progressing the activities in parallel and require coordination (see e.g., Keisanen et al., 2014; Licoppe & Tuncer, 2014; Ticca, 2014). Due to the locally organised nature of all (inter)action, it cannot be stated in a generalised manner that certain types of activities are always prioritised over others. As Mondada (2014c) points out, “it is not possible to assign a priori and once for all a main status to a particular type of activity”, nor is it possible to associate a priori a type of activity with a specific modality, since the same activity can be formatted in different multimodal ways (Mondada, 2014c, p. 46). What are the situations, then, where one activity has been shown to take priority over another? And how is this made visible in the interaction?

In some contexts, the hierarchisation of activities is dictated by the circumstances. A more urgent or severe activity which requires constant orientation (medical settings, e.g., Deppermann 2014; Mondada 2011, 2014c) would automatically take priority over less urgent and less vital activities. For example,



Deppermann (2014) shows how, in paramedic emergency action, the paramedics' prioritisation of the activities is observable in the ordering of the activities, especially through suspending some ongoing project in favour of another, more urgent one. Similarly, in Mondada's (2014c) examples from surgical theatres, urgent or delicate moments in the actual operation are given priority over the demonstration activity, which results in the suspension of the demonstration. Furthermore, participants at work prioritise work tasks and task-related talk over chatting, for example by suspending the mundane talk by producing task-directed first pair parts (De Stefani & Horlacher, 2018). In mundane settings, such as people's homes or other free non-institutional environments, a similar time-criticalness does not necessarily affect the prioritisation of the bodily-manual activities as in workplace interaction. For example, the physical/manual activities studied in Article II are quite mundane and routine-like by their nature, and their progressivity can temporarily be put on hold without any serious consequences. As argued by Eilittä (2019), publicly visible or verbalised hierarchisation of activities is also part of socialising children in their upbringing: through suspending some activities over others, parents can do indexing of moral stances towards certain activities; Similarly, parents can verbalise the urgency of some activities and/or the social norms concerning interaction, such as turn-taking.

Suspending as a practice is recurrently mentioned in connection with hierarchisation of activities. When problems of coordinating multiple activities emerge, for example due to overlapping demands for interactional resources, participants involved in multiactivity have been shown to adjust their activities (through acceleration, retardation, retraction, suspension, etc.) in order to carry out another activity (Raymond & Lerner, 2014). In other words, different interactional resources – such as gaze, speaking and hearing, bodily-manual resources – can be freed from one activity for the production of the next action (e.g., Nishizaka, 2014; Hoey, 2018). Hoey (2018) shows how drinking action is adjusted to free up bodily resources for the production of talk, and how in such moments the participants treat the drinking activity as an impediment for their recognizable participation in the conversation (Hoey, 2018). Such re-allocation of resources, in itself, creates implications of the local prioritisation of the activities: the one to which resources are re-allocated to is prioritised over the one from which those resources are taken. For example, if talk is adjusted to achieve a physical task, the physical task can be considered as temporarily prioritised (Article I). Similarly, a physical task can be adjusted to produce a relevant next turn, or action, on time (e.g., repair initiation, Article II), in which case talk is temporarily prioritised over the physical task. The

participants' problem in such situations is how to adjust the ongoing activity to produce the next activity on time. These issues will be discussed in more detail in section 4.

Previous research on multiactivity settings has shown that work tasks and task-related talk appear to be prioritised over chatting (De Stefani & Horlacher, 2018; Keevallik, 2018). Keevallik (2018, p. 111) notes that task-related talk is frequently inserted in a non-problematic manner into unrelated conversational sequences, suggesting its priority status. This, according to Keevallik (2018) is an aspect of the moral orders that are reflected in the participants' conduct, together with conversational contributions being "accomplished with leisurely composure, or with the body participating in (displays of) the work order" (p. 113), which is also visible in the laboratory work examples in Article III. This, too, is subject to contextual variation. De Stefani and Horlacher (2018) observe that in certain settings, especially medical ones (Benwell & McCreddie, 2016), participants strive to keep episodes of mundane talk short. On the other hand, in other contexts mundane talk can constitute the main activity (e.g., massage sessions, Nishizaka & Sunaga, 2015), or temporarily become the main activity, for example in customer service encounters (Mondada & Sorjonen, 2016).

Indeed, the analyses of Articles I–III show that visible hierarchisation of activities does not occur only in situations where two parallel activities *cannot* be progressed simultaneously. A participant can also progress two activities in parallel *and* display a certain level of prioritisation of one of the activities. For example, in the two workplace settings studied in Article III, participants make visible through their embodied conduct a constant, underlining prioritisation of work-related activities, even during moments when they were not immediately relevant. This is achieved mostly through embodied conduct, namely body orientation and visible monitoring of temporally unfolding events that project a prioritisable work-task emerging in the near future. This also poses a question regarding the definition of involvement in multiactivity: Does an activity have to be an ongoing one to be oriented to in a way that would constitute dual orientation between two activities? Can something that is yet to happen, but which will definitely soon happen, be treated as a parallel activity with an ongoing one? I will return to these questions in section 4.3.

In the following section, I will discuss in more detail some of the ways in which participants involved in multiactivity make visible their local hierarchisation of two parallel activities, as presented in Articles I–III.

## **4 Embodied displays of hierarchisation of activities in multiactivity situations**

This chapter summarises the findings of Articles I–III. The articles are ordered chronologically, in the order in which they were written, “zooming out” from studying one detailed embodied practice into focusing on a wider array of bodily conduct in specific multiactivity settings. Article I shows how the Open Hand Prone ‘vertical palm’ gesture can be used as part of a multimodal claim to interruption to block intervening talk and to manage turn-taking in multiactivity situations, displaying the gesturer’s prioritisation of the ongoing activity over the intersecting one. Article II discusses participants’ suspensions of their manual activities when they produce other-initiations repair, and how these suspensions make visible the participants’ local prioritisation of the repair action over the manual task. Article III focuses on workplace interaction and describes different ways for participants to achieve a coordinated transition from chatting to a work task through joint monitoring of and orientation to a visibly progressing imminent, prioritisable next activity. Finally, in section 4.4, I will draw together the findings of Articles I–III to formulate answers to the research questions presented in the Introduction.

### **4.1 Article I: Open Hand Prone as a resource in multimodal claims to interruption: Stopping a co-participant’s turn-at-talk**

Article I studies the interactional use of the Open Hand Prone ‘vertical palm’ gesture (Kendon, 2004) – that is, an open palm held vertically, facing away from the gesturer – as a part of a speaker’s practice for both implicitly and explicitly claiming a co-participant’s (or their own) turn as interruptive (Bilmes, 1997; Weatherall & Edmonds, 2018). The article studies interactions taking place in broadcast news interviews, mundane conversations among groups of friends, and also multiactivity situations occurring in workplace and family settings. The findings show that, in the context of overlapping talk or other intersecting lines of action, the gesture makes it relevant for the recipient to suspend their ongoing action. The treatment of a turn-at-talk, or an embodied action, as “interruptive” also creates implications on the hierarchisation of activities: the ongoing turn or activity is prioritised over the intersecting one, which is thus suspended. This prioritisation can be due to the gesturer’s orientation to (and enforcing of) the “one speaker at a time” norm, as well as to the incompatibility of parallel activities, as is the case in the multiactivity episodes. The data are in English and in Finnish.

The Open Hand Prone ‘vertical palm’ (hence OHP-VP) is a recurrent gesture, which means it shows a stable pairing of form and meaning and can fulfil pragmatic functions (Ladewig, 2014; Müller, 2017). Gesture studies have shown that OHP-VP is used pragmatically for serving as a refusal or as an indication to stop, as well as qualifying the refused or stopped objects as unwanted ones (Bressem & Müller, 2014b, p. 1597); Kendon (2004) describes the OHP-VP as indicating “the actor’s intent to stop a line of action, whether this be the actor’s own, the line jointly engaged with others, or that of the interlocutor” (p. 262). Based on the analysis of 45 cases, Article I shows, through six examples, how OHP-VP is recurrently used as a resource in displaying the gesturer’s treatment of a turn as ‘interruptive’<sup>4</sup> and in regulating a co-participant’s turn-taking by either stopping a turn under way from continuation or pre-emptively blocking an imminent self-selection when a co-participant’s turn does or is about to collide with another, incompatible parallel activity. In such situations, the OHP-VP functions as part of a multimodal display of the current speaker’s claim to the floor and intent to keep talking by stopping the co-participant’s turn. In the data, more than two thirds of the OHP-VPs with the above functions co-occurred with a verbal directive (see, e.g., Ervin-Tripp, 1976; Craven & Potter, 2010), most of which were suspension turns, such as “wait” or “hold on a second” (Keisanen et al., 2014). The gesture was also often accompanied by either implicit or explicit claims to interruption (Bilmes, 1997; Weatherall & Edmonds, 2018), where a speaker marks either their own turn (“I’m afraid I have to intervene”) or a co-participant’s turn (“let me finish”) as interruptive. The gesture, together with talk, can also be used as a proactive resolution to a *possible*, imminent interruption, when a co-participant’s projected turn-entry is blocked beforehand.

Although Article I does not focus solely on multiactivity situations, it contributes to research on multiactivity by showing – through the analysis of two multiactivity episodes – how the OHP-VP can also function as a part of stopping a co-participant’s ongoing or imminent line of action. First, it can make visible the gesturer’s involvement in and hierarchisation of two parallel activities. Second, it can also minimize the gesturer’s involvement in one of the activities and thereby visibly prioritise one activity over the other. The first of these episodes, excerpt (5) in Article I, takes place in a shared office, where three colleagues are talking about their work. A turn has been allocated to a participant (Tarmo), who is at that moment

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<sup>4</sup> The term ‘interruption’ (see, e.g., Bilmes, 1997; Schegloff, 2002; Drew, 2009) is used here for a specific type of overlapping self-selection, taking place clearly between TRPs and with no turn completion projectable (interjacent overlap; Jefferson, 1986).

involved in another activity (pouring hot water into a tea mug). Through Tarmo's body orientation and gaze direction, it is clearly observable that his primary involvement is the pouring of the water. Either due to the parallel activity, or just planning his response, a lapse (Hoey, 2015) occurs in the conversation, though Tarmo has acknowledged the turn allocation with a minimal response. The co-participant (Santeri), who allocated the turn treats the pauses in Tarmo's talk as hindering the progressivity of the conversation, and he keeps adding to and reformulating his original utterance, which was designed to elicit a response from Tarmo. Tarmo, now involved in the parallel activities of handling hot water and being an active participant in a conversation, attempts to provide a response to Santeri, but keeps getting interrupted by Santeri's apparent attempts to help him get ahead with the topic. After Santeri's second self-selection, Tarmo, having finished pouring the water, sets the kettle back on the table with his right hand and deploys an OHP-VP towards Santeri with his left hand, his gaze still on the tea mug. He simultaneously starts to speak, in interjacent overlap (Jefferson, 1986, 2004b) with Santeri's turn, and implicitly claims Santeri's self-selection(s) interruptive by saying "I was just going to say that a-". Santeri yields the floor mid-utterance, and Tarmo, now finished with pouring the water, turns in his chair to face the others and gives his response to the original question without further interruptions.

At a point where Tarmo is not yet available to display his involvement in the conversation through his gaze and body orientation, his gesture (together with the verbal claim to interruption: "I was just going to say that a-") achieves two actions: it communicates to Santeri to stop talking, and simultaneously displays Tarmo's orientation to the trajectory of the talk and to being an active participant in the conversation, but only *after* he has finished pouring the hot water. The pouring of the water and talking are not mutually exclusive activities, as they do not rely on the same resources; Tarmo does not need his hands or gaze to talk. Nevertheless, when handling boiling hot water, one should be careful not to miss the mug while pouring the water, which could lead to burn injuries or, at the least, a mess. Thus, in this episode, bringing the physical activity to a conclusion is prioritised over the smooth progression of the conversation, and Tarmo's lack of mutual gaze with the others affects his involvement in the participation framework. When the co-participant does not share the same orientation to or understanding of the ordering of the parallel activities but orients instead to the preference of advancing the progression of the talk (Stivers & Robinson, 2006), the participant involved in multiactivity can display their prioritisation of one activity over the other by

explicitly putting the other on hold – in this case by using the OHP-VP gesture – until the prioritised activity has been properly finished.

The second multiactivity episode in Article I (excerpt 6) takes place at a family dinner, where the family members are playing the telephone game while eating lunch. The premise of the game is that the person who starts the game whispers a sentence to the person next to them, who then passes the message to the next person, and so on, and the last person to receive the message will say out loud what they heard. The analysed excerpt depicts a moment where the message is about to be transferred, but the receiving participant (Tanja) is still chewing her food. As the person (Mom) who is about to whisper the message to Tanja leans forward, Tanja deploys an OHP-VP while also placing a finger on her mouth, accounting for the hold-up. Here, the gesture functions as an embodied suspension turn, putting Mom's imminent message transfer on hold. Mom leans back and suspends the transfer of the message until Tanja has swallowed her food and displays availability to receive the message by brushing her hair off her left ear and leaning towards Mom. Here, Tanja's simultaneous involvement in one activity (eating) leads to a temporary hitch in the progressivity of the other (the game). The OHP-VP functions as a practice for putting Mom's imminent message transfer on hold until Tanja is available to receive the message, after the other activity is brought to a conclusion. Using the hand gesture enables Tanja to manage the two incompatible simultaneous activities when her mouth is occupied with chewing.

These examples in Article I show that, if a participant's simultaneous involvement in an embodied activity (such as preparing tea or eating) leads to a temporary hitch in the progressivity of the ongoing interaction, the speaker can deploy an OHP-VP – with or without accompanying talk – to put the co-participant's imminent action on hold until they are once again able to continue, or in order to stop or pre-empt a co-participant from self-selecting during an episode including multiactivity. This way the practice functions in making visible and minimizing the participant's involvement in several parallel activities. As mentioned in the beginning of this section, the treatment of an intersecting activity as "interruptive" also implies that the already ongoing activity is prioritised over the intersecting one, which gets put on hold due to the incompatibility of parallel activities. The article also shows how the same multimodal resources – a specific gesture or a gesture-speech combination – can be used as (part of) a practice for actions that, despite all achieving "stopping", orient to and get their meaning from the unique, local context in which they are produced, in this case the participant's involvement in multiactivity.

## 4.2 Article II: How to disengage: Suspension, body torque and repair

Article II studies participants' embodied conduct in other-initiated repair (OIR) in the context of multiactivity. The paper focuses on two aspects of the repair initiator's embodied conduct directly connected to the initiator's involvement in multiactivity: body torque (Schegloff, 1998) and the suspension of a parallel manual activity. The analysis shows how the body torque and suspension of manual activity, when co-occurring with other-initiations of repair, display the OIR-speaker's (the person initiating the repair) temporary disengagement from the manual activity, and how this embodied conduct communicates downward prioritisation of the manual activity and increased involvement in the interaction. The data for this study include naturally occurring conversations in English, Finnish, and French.

The article examines interactional episodes where one participant in a conversation is visibly involved in a parallel manual activity – such as cooking, dishwashing or pipetting liquid into a test tube – and does not have a direct line of mutual gaze with their co-participant(s). In these situations, the participant involved in multiactivity sometimes twists their upper body to face the co-participant(s) and suspends the manual activity by freezing their hands over the activity-relevant space, creating an embodied hold. In the article, such embodied holds are studied in the context of OIR<sup>5</sup> (e.g., Dingemanse, Blythe & Dirksmeyer, 2014; Kendrick, 2015; Schegloff et al., 1977). The focus is on the moments when repair – and the holds – are initiated, and on the implications that embodied disengagements from a manual task may have for the wider sequential context of the OIRs. Whereas in Article I the participants involved in multiactivity were shown to prioritise a physical activity over progressing the interaction, Article II analyses episodes where temporary disengagements from a manual task display the OIR-speaker's prioritisation of solving interactional trouble over progressing a parallel physical activity.

What connects body torque and suspensions of manual activity is that they are both practices capable of displaying levels of a participant's *involvement* in – and hierarchisation of – two parallel but separate activities: the physical task and the conversation. The physical activities in the data are, using Goffman's (1963) definition, displayed as main involvements through the OIR-speakers' body

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<sup>5</sup> See Floyd et al. (2016), who study a wider range of embodied holds by OIR-speakers.

orientations and their visual-manual focus on the tasks. As mentioned in both Article II and in section 3.3.1, the participants' levels of involvement cannot be treated a priori as "main and side", nor "dominant and subordinate" (Goffman, 1963, p. 44), but they are actually much more complex and dependent on the changes in the situation. As Mondada (2014a) points out, "the relation between main and side is not decided once and for all but is a dynamic and constantly renegotiated one" (p. 46), meaning that sometimes a participant might prioritise talk, and at other moments they might prioritise the physical activity instead. In the data used in Article II, the participants involved in multiactivity, for the most part, carry out routine manual tasks in parallel temporal order (Mondada, 2014c) with the conversation. Rather than being side involvements, the OIR sequences interjected into the ongoing physical activities result in moments of observable dual involvements (Raymond & Lerner, 2014), as both lines of action are kept simultaneously relevant through bodily adjustments, such as suspensions. This clearly does not mean that the OIR-speaker was earlier involved *only* in the manual task and not in the conversation, nor can it really be said which one is prioritised, as they rely on different, non-exclusive resources. Rather, the bodily adjustments make the dual involvement – and the local hierarchisation of the activities – publicly visible.

The findings of the article illustrate how people manage and hierarchise parallel activities in complex and dynamic ways, and how a participant's adjustments of their manual activity communicate the participant's levels of involvement between the conversation and the parallel physical task. The analysis shows that the visible shifts in involvement that the participants display through body torque can be *upgraded* by adjusting their manual activity: whereas "just" turning towards a co-participant makes visible a temporary prioritisation of the conversation over the other activity (Schegloff, 1998), a suspension of the parallel manual activity during a body torque displays a further disengagement from said activity, while still keeping it visibly relevant. Furthermore, when the suspended activity is kept 'frozen', it can display a lack of progressivity in the conversation (Floyd et al, 2016) and prompt a responsive action from the recipient (Cibulka, 2015). Thus, such embodied conduct during OIRs not only makes visible the OIR-speakers' increased involvement in solving interactional trouble but in some cases the disengagements and holds also display a high relevance for a recipient response (Stivers & Rossano, 2010).



Article II shows how repair is one of the contexts<sup>6</sup> in which conversation is recurrently prioritised over a parallel physical activity, also in situations where the physical activity could be progressed in parallel temporal order. The preference to achieve and maintain intersubjectivity (Schegloff, 1992) can thus be seen in the OIR-speakers' displays of hierarchisation between manual tasks and the conversation in moments of interactional trouble. In the data, OIR-speakers disengage from their manual activity either *directly after* or *during* the turn in which the trouble-source (hence, TS) is located, and the verbal repair initiation always occurs after the initiation of the embodied disengagement and right after the TS-turn. This timing implies both the urgency of the repair action and the OIR-speaker's treatment of the manual task as "suspendable" (Keisanen et al., 2014, p. 113). On the other hand, there are also cases where no sustained hold and suspension nor any kind of embodied disengagement from the manual activity may necessarily occur: sometimes the trouble is solved before the TS-speaker even gets to do the repair, for example when the TS is a referent that the OIR-speaker identifies by turning to look, and sometimes the solving of the trouble is not treated as requiring much work, for example in cases of simple understanding checks. Furthermore, in cases where the manual activity requires both manual and visual orientation from the OIR-speaker, the manual activity is continued in parallel temporal order (Mondada, 2014c) with the conversation, and the (possible) adjustments in body orientation are timed to take place at moments where a temporary disengagement is possible.

Finally, it should be noted that the physical/manual activities studied in Article II are quite mundane and routine-like by their nature. These activities are not time-critical, and they can temporarily be put on hold, as they do not compete over the same resources or risk any social or physical consequences (e.g., accountability or injury). Problems in intersubjectivity, on the other hand, are treated as urgent by the participants, and there is a preferred time window for initiating repair: in the same turn which contains the trouble-source, in the next turn following the trouble-source turn, or in the next turn after that. (Schegloff, 1992, 2000b; Schegloff et al., 1977) The difference between the time-criticalness of the manual tasks in the data

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<sup>6</sup> The analysis of the wider dataset showed that manual activity in multiactivity situations is often temporarily suspended or halted and body torque initiated more generally in moments of increased relevance for recipient response (see, for example, Stivers & Rossano, 2010 for pursuing response through grammar and gaze). Such moments in the collection include question-answer sequences, as well as humorous turns-at-talk and introductions of central characters or concepts in stories.

versus that of other-initiations of repair creates the context for the type of hierarchisation of activities as illustrated in the article.

### **4.3 Article III: Activity transitions as multiactivity: Practices for achieving dual orientation to an imminent next activity**

Article III studies interaction at workplaces, focusing on moments where participants treat their conversations as *conversation at work* (Drew & Heritage, 1992), acknowledging that when at certain moments, some action is required, that action will be prioritised over mundane talk, which in these situations gets put on hold. The work activities discussed in the article are projectable, which in this context means the participants can monitor an observably emerging event that has its own sequential or temporal trajectory with a projectable endpoint, which in turn makes a next activity relevant, possible or due the participants. The data are in English and in Finnish.

The article depicts interactions in two workplace settings: a café, where the staff coordinate different work tasks behind the counter, the focus here being on customer service; and a research laboratory, where two researchers conduct analyses with a spectrometer. In both settings, the focus is on transitions between activities, mainly from mundane talk to a work-related task or activity (see also De Stefani & Horlacher, 2018). The article analyses episodes in which transitions are achieved in an aligned manner, through jointly monitoring the unfolding events in the environment, and episodes in which one participant prompts the other to orient to the imminent activity transition through verbal or bodily actions. The article also analyses one instance where the participants do not share a joint orientation to the next activity and where the conversation is abruptly interrupted and brought to a closing in order to achieve the transition on time.

Article III shows that when participants notice, through active monitoring, that a transition to a next activity is imminent, they sometimes talk and act in ways that make visible their orientation to the emerging activity (e.g., a customer approaching the till or a computer displaying the progress of an analysis), and that they are preparing to engage with the imminent activity when it eventually “crosses paths” with the current one. At such moments participants coordinate, through verbal and embodied actions, their momentary dual involvement (Raymond & Lerner, 2014) in two simultaneously progressing activities and manage a transition from the current activity to the imminent one. The article focuses especially on episodes in which one participant monitors an observably emerging event that has its own

sequential or temporal trajectory with a projectable end-point, which in turn makes a next activity relevant, possible or due.

In the analysed activity transitions, the monitoring can project the upcoming transition to a next activity, making the emergent next activity simultaneously relevant with the ongoing conversation. In this way, such monitoring constitutes intrapersonal multiactivity (Deppermann, 2014). The visible monitoring by one participant can direct a co-participant's attention to the same emerging event, creating affordances for bringing the ongoing activity (e.g., a conversation) to an end, which allows an aligned transition to the next activity. Additionally, when the monitoring of a parallel event is achieved as an *embodied action*, it enables the participants to jointly bring the ongoing activity to a point where it can be (temporarily) closed without interrupting it.

In the episodes where one participant prompts the other one to orient to the transition, there appears to be a preference towards implicit, embodied practices over explicit verbalisations. When a co-participant does not display orientation to – or initiate – the transition at the same time as the participant actively involved in the monitoring, the latter usually first begins to adjust their own bodily conduct as visibly orienting to the transition.<sup>7</sup> If there is no uptake by the co-participant, the participant coordinating the transition can explicitly communicate the relevance of the transition through embodied actions such as deictic gestures or nods, which enables the ongoing talk to be progressed in parallel without any hitches or perturbations. Another way to prompt the transition is to verbalise either the possibility for the transition (“I think we can start”) or the initiation of the next action (“Okay we will switch the sample”). Compared to the embodied prompts, the verbalisations do not in the same way allow for the conversation to flow freely; due to the requirement of talk as a resource, the verbalisation of the transition unavoidably halts the mundane conversation and, at least momentarily, steers it into task-related talk.

The analyses of the examples show how the participants' allocation of their interactional resources both affects and makes visible their local prioritisation of an imminent (work-related) task over the (non-work-related) conversation. In the café data, the prioritised activity is the serving of a customer, which requires the same interactional resource as conversation with the colleague, talk (and hearing). Thus, these two activities cannot be achieved in parallel order and the non-work-related

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<sup>7</sup> Cf. Broth and Mondada's (2013, 2019) studies on the implications of sequence closure through starting to walk away.

conversation is put on hold. In the laboratory data, on the other hand, the prioritised work activity – switching the sample in the spectrometer – only requires the participants’ bodily-visual orientation and hands. Thus, the activities can be, and are, achieved in parallel temporal order, but, as also shown in Article II, the hierarchy of the activities is made visible and socially relevant through embodied disengagements from the conversation.

The findings of Article III add to previous research on multimodality in social interaction that has shown that multimodal resources are characterized by a specific temporality (e.g., Mondada, 2014c, 2016a, 2016c, 2018). This temporality combines multiple successive and simultaneous lines of conduct in a way that enables participants to allocate their different resources to different simultaneous activities (Mondada, 2018). Article III contributes to the discussion of temporality and sequentiality of action by arguing that *emergent* activities are also relevant to social action when they are visibly oriented to in the here and now. Through observable *monitoring* of an emerging activity, participants make publicly visible their anticipation of a future activity – before its initiation – by visibly re-allocating (some of) their multimodal interactional resources from the current activity to the emerging one. This way, the current activity and the emergent future activity become, for a moment, *imbricated* (i.e., simultaneously relevant even though not simultaneously ongoing). This shows that emergent activities that participants are not yet actively progressing can nevertheless be consequential for their action, which in turn displays the participants’ orientation to the fact that the progressing activity will impact their actions.

Consequently, the findings contribute to research on multiactivity by raising new questions about what can be considered multiactivity: in addition to a participant’s direct involvement in two or more parallel activities, the article suggests that socially relevant *orientation* to two or more parallel activities can be enough to be considered as multiactivity. In situations where a participant in a conversation simultaneously monitors an imminent next activity, in preparation of engaging in it in the near future, they are already involved in said activity through visibly directing their attention towards it.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> This connects to De Stefani and Horlacher’s (2018) article, in which they state that “the notion of ‘transition’, which is frequently used in talk-only approaches, appears to be problematic, since it suggests that participants shift from just one activity to another. The analysis of video data has shown, instead, that participants engage in complex adjustments of multiple activities with unequal temporalities and pace, which are carried out using a diversity of resources, among which is talk.” (p. 22)

## 4.4 Summary

In this section, I will draw together the findings of Articles I-III to formulate answers to the three research questions presented in the Introduction:

- (1) When and why do participants, who are simultaneously involved in face-to-face interaction and some other, physical activity, prioritise one activity over another?
- (2) What interactional devices do participants use to prioritise one simultaneous activity over another?
- (3) What do co-participants do in response to such prioritisation of one activity over another?

Considering the first research question, the hierarchisation of activities was made publicly visible in a number of different situations and interactional contexts. Article I studied two multiactivity episodes in which the progressivity of the interaction was put on hold for the benefit of bringing a physical activity to a conclusion first. In both of the cases, the prioritised physical activities had been initiated before an intersecting next action by a co-participant made it relevant for the participants to engage in another, incompatible activity. Furthermore, the physical activities were such that they could not be put on hold as easily as talk: in the case of pouring hot water into a tea mug, the participant's manual-visual resources were temporarily allocated to making sure the hot water would end up in the mug rather than on the participant's lap or on the table; similarly, in the family lunch, the participant's ability to speak (and, arguably, also to hear) were temporarily hindered by her chewing, which had to be finished first before continuing to take part in the game. In Article II, on the other hand, the physical task was put on hold in favour of the conversation and, specifically, for the duration of a repair action initiated by the participant involved in multiactivity. As shown in the article, repair is one of the contexts where conversation is recurrently prioritised over a parallel physical activity due to participants' preference to achieve and maintain intersubjectivity, also in situations where the physical activity could be progressed in a parallel temporal order. The suspended physical/manual activities studied in Article II also differ from those in Article I from the point of view of urgency: washing dishes, for example, can temporarily be put on hold, as it does not risk any social or physical consequences (e.g., accountability or injury), whereas solving problems in intersubjectivity is treated as urgent by the participants.

Finally, in Article III, work-related tasks were prioritised over non-work-related talk, and this hierarchisation was made explicitly visible in moments of upcoming transition from “chatting” to working. During the emergence of imminent next activities, participants were shown to visibly orient to the transition by observably monitoring the trajectory of the imminent next activity while progressing the non-work-related talk. The prioritisation was made more explicitly relevant in episodes where a co-participant did not display sufficient orientation to the imminent transition, and interactional work was done in order to achieve the transition on time.

Based on the findings of Articles I–III, it could be stated that participants involved in multiactivity make their hierarchisation of parallel activities visible to co-participants when the parallel activities are incompatible, and when the one that was started first should be finished before taking up the next one, requiring a co-participant to wait. Additionally, hierarchisations create implications for how the interaction should be progressed when a new, prioritised activity emerges and requires action from a co-participant, as in cases of problems in intersubjectivity and transitions from non-work-related activities to work-activities or tasks. In sum, *participants in face-to-face interaction make visible their own prioritisation of one simultaneous activity over another in situations where the participants’ management of their own multiactivity requires some (adjustment of) action from a co-participant.*

Section 3.2 discussed embodied interactional resources and how they can be mobilised to form multimodal practices that are used to manage involvement in parallel activities. To answer the second research question, Articles I–III presented three types of priority displays with which participants can make visible their local prioritisation of one activity over the other. In Article I, a specific gesture-speech combination was used in connection with a specific action: interruption. The whole notion of interrupting something implies an intersection of two activities, one of which has to yield to the other one. In the article, the participants’ local hierarchisations of activities was made visible through their allocation of embodied resources. In the cases (of monoactivity) in Article I, where a stopping hand gesture was deployed in connection with a claim to interruption and orienting to the turn-taking organisation, the gesturer’s gaze was usually directed towards the person to whom the action was directed. This was not the case in the two multiactivity situations depicted in the article; instead, in both cases, the person involved in multiactivity directed only the gesture towards the recipient but kept their gaze turned away from the recipient up until the point when they had finished the

competing activity and were ready to engage in the interaction. Thus, their gaze direction further communicated their involvement – or the momentary lack thereof – in the conversation. Furthermore, the embodied action of stopping or suspending the recipient's ongoing action displays that the gesturer treats the two parallel involvements as incompatible, and that the activity that gets suspended is hierarchised lower, in that moment, than the one that is brought to conclusion first.

In Article II, the momentary prioritisation of solving interactional trouble was made publicly visible through shifts in the OIR-speakers' (the participant initiating the repair) level of involvement in their physical tasks, with the priority display being produced through embodied disengagement. By twisting their upper body away from the activity-relevant space and towards the co-participant, the OIR-speakers visibly turned their attention from the manual task to the conversation. In addition, the OIR-speakers' suspending – or freezing – of their manual activity, even in moments where it could have been continued in parallel, communicated a further disengagement and lower hierarchisation of the manual activity for the duration of the repair. In the workplace settings of Article III, the participants responsible for the timely transition could display their prioritisation of the next activity through observable monitoring of the visibly progressing imminent next activity, for instance through gaze shifts and checking up on the progression of the imminent next task. They could also do this through preparatory movements towards the activity relevant space, such as body re-positioning or walking away and, finally, they could explicitly prompt the co-participant to orient to the transition, verbally or with gestures or nods. These transition practices make visible how one (work-related) activity can be prioritised over non-task-related conversation while still attending to the social preferences of not interrupting the conversation.

The priority displays in Articles I–III were all formed through the allocation of various interactional resources that together derive their meaning in and from the situated activity, the ecology of the activity, as well as its material constraints. All in all, *participants use complex multimodal gestalts – involving gaze, body orientation, gesture, and talk – to manage their involvement in multiactivity. These gestalts both accomplish and make visible their prioritisation of one activity to another.* When, for example, a physical activity is prioritised over interaction, a participant re-allocates some of their interactional resources (e.g., gaze or the body) *from the interaction to the physical activity, and vice versa.* The way in which the resources are re-allocated can also communicate to the co-participants the level of

the participant's involvement in either activity, as well as make different next actions relevant for the co-participants.

Considering the third research question, the co-participants' uptake of the priority displays varied depending on the different settings and interactional episodes. Nevertheless, in all the analysed cases, the actions that followed had something to do with the progressivity and organisation of (one of) the parallel lines of action. In Article I, once the participants involved in multiactivity had produced the stopping hand gesture, the co-participants let them finish what they were doing before shifting their full attention back to the conversation. The co-participants' understanding of the situations, made visible through their subsequent actions, were afforded by both the local context and the interactional practice used by the gesturer; the gesturers' involvement in the simultaneous physical activity was clearly observable, and the OHP-VP gesture explicitly communicates that one should stop what they are doing. In Article II, in turn, the verbal repair initiation calls for the recipient to produce a repair solution, and the OIR-speaker's co-occurring disengagement from the physical activity underlines the urgency and importance of the repair. In some cases, by making their prioritisation of the repair action visible through the disengagements and holds, the OIR-speakers display a high relevance for recipient response and prompt the production of the repair solution, orienting to the progressivity of the talk. Finally, in Article III, a participant's visible monitoring of and bodily re-alignments towards the imminent next activity direct the co-participant's attention towards the upcoming transition. This makes it possible for the co-participants to orient to the closing of the conversation in due time to enable a timely transition to the next activity. Furthermore, by producing explicit verbal or embodied prompts, one participant can directly communicate a transition to a next action to be possible or due.

As has been shown to be the case with all situated action (e.g., Goodwin, 2000, 2007), the actions achieved through making visible one's hierarchisation of parallel activities are context-dependent, being "related both to the sequential organisation of social interaction and to the situated occasion of its use" (Mondada, 2016c, p. 333). In all the analysed cases, however, the co-participants' conduct (e.g., accelerating or suspending their own action) in some way contributes to the embedded order in which the participant involved in multiactivity organises their activities. Thus, drawing together the findings of Articles I–III, it can be stated that *a participant's publicly witnessable hierarchisation of parallel activities can recruit a co-participant to adjust their conduct so that it enables the successive organisation of the activities*. In most of the analysed cases, such jointly



coordinated management of one participant's multiactivity lead to a smooth carrying out of the episode. Nevertheless, in some cases there were hitches and delays in the co-participants' conduct following the priority displays. In these cases, the participants involved in multiactivity acted in a way that imply that there is certain conditional relevance connected with the priority displays: For example, in Article II, when the co-participant's production of a repair solution was delayed, the focus participant's suspended activity was always kept frozen until the co-participant provided the repair solution and was resumed only after intersubjectivity had been restored. Furthermore, in Article III, the 'unsuccessful' transition cues were followed by upgrades or modality shifts until mutual orientation to the transition was reached or, as in Excerpt 7 of Article III, the co-participant was interrupted in order to achieve the transition to the prioritised next activity. These few cases suggest that the studied priority displays are within the scope of conditional relevance. This relevance is present and implied in all the analysed cases, but due to the smooth carrying out of the episodes, it only becomes visible in those where some hitches or delays occur.



## 5 Conclusion

This thesis has set out to examine the different ways in which participants involved in multiactivity communicate their hierarchisation of parallel activities, focusing on their embodied conduct. It has studied naturally occurring conversations in various settings and identified interactional episodes in which one or more of the participants, for any reason, organises their involvement in simultaneous activities to take place successively rather than in parallel.

The thesis has analysed different ways in which participants manage their involvement in parallel activities, and how they can orient to the different temporal and sequential demands related to multiactivity. The analyses presented in Articles I–III show that observable hierarchisations of simultaneous activities occur in episodes where co-participants adjust their own actions to enable two activities to occur successively, rather than in parallel (Articles I & III). Furthermore, making visible one’s hierarchisation of activities through a priority display can prompt a co-participant to produce a certain next action within a specific time frame (Articles II & III). The priority displays are formed through context-sensitive allocation and re-allocation of embodied interactional resources – in this thesis, gaze, hands, and the body. The activity that gets more resources (re-)allocated to it is the one that is in that moment displayed as the prioritised activity.

The findings of the thesis add to previous conversation analytic research on multiactivity by, first, describing how multiactivity is organised in different interactional situations when, for the participant involved in multiactivity, the simultaneous progression of two activities is not possible. Sometimes the management of the activities also requires orientation from the co-participants who are not involved in multiple activities. They are, nevertheless, a party in the interaction which constitutes one of the simultaneous activities for the participant involved in multiactivity. In situations where the participant involved in multiactivity, for any reason, cannot in that moment suspend or abandon their current physical activity, it is the interaction that gets put on hold, requiring cooperation from the co-participant. Second, this thesis also contributes to research on different practices through which multiactivity is managed and organised: participants involved in multiactivity can mobilise their embodied resources – with and without talk – to produce priority displays which make visible their local

hierarchisation of simultaneous activities.<sup>9</sup> This in turn can recruit co-participants to adjust their conduct in order to enable timely progression of different simultaneous lines of action.

The various multimodal resources – such as those described in section 3.2 – are used to accomplish practices whose meaning is created locally for the particular moment in which they are deployed. Whereas the data for the study consists mostly of English language conversations, the examples from both Finnish and French data did not show any notable differences between languages or nationalities<sup>10</sup> in the ways multiactivity is managed, nor in the practices with which activity hierarchisations were made publicly observable. The same goes when comparing multiactivity situations taking place at home or at the workplace, although in workplace settings, work-related tasks are often prioritised over mundane talk. Nevertheless, participants still display strong orientation to bringing the interactional sequences to a proper close when conversation is put on hold over another activity. Consequently, in multiactivity episodes, the same practices that are used in other interactional contexts for producing other actions have their communicative meaning specified by the multiactivity context. These observations also show that multiactivity is “nothing special”, in the sense that participants manage their multiactivity through the same practices that they use in interaction in general. It is just the context in which they are used, and the way resources are formed into complex multimodal gestalts, that make those practices relevant for the accomplishment of multiactivity.

The findings of the thesis have shown different ways in which participants make their temporary prioritisation of one of the activities publicly visible to others through their embodied conduct. The thesis also contributes to research on the temporal ordering of multiple activities by showing how participants organise their involvements in situations when the simultaneous activities are progressed in an embedded order (Mondada, 2014c). Furthermore, the findings show that embedded ordering of activities is an issue not only for participants involved in multiactivity, but that co-participants also can orient to and enable the successive ordering of activities and, thus, help minimising involvement in more than one activity at a time. This both supports and adds to the findings of other recent studies on

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<sup>9</sup> Priority displays do not necessarily have to be embodied; actions are also projected through verbal and prosodic practices, which is certainly also present in the management of multiactivity (e.g., Vatanen & Haddington, submitted). The entry point for this study, however, has been the participants’ embodied actions, and talk has been studied in connection with bodily conduct.

<sup>10</sup> The participants in the data mostly represent Western, middle-class culture.

multiactivity (e.g. Eilittä, 2019; Vatanen & Haddington, submitted; Eilittä, Haddington & Vatanen, submitted) which show that people work to adjust their conduct so that they would *not* be involved in multiactivity, for example by accounting for their involvement in another activity and either implying or telling their co-participants that they have to wait until an ongoing activity is finished.

The thesis also contributes to the recent conversation on the interplay between multimodality and sequentiality. The fact that sequentiality in interaction has previously been mostly studied on the basis of talk has resulted in the notion of actions following each other one by one and turn by turn. Still, as Mondada (2019a) notes, a multimodal approach to interaction raises some challenges to the concept of sequentiality. These challenges concern the “multiple temporalities that go beyond the relative linearity of talk,” which is also the basis for the entire concept of multiactivity (Mondada, 2019a, p. 49). In Article III, for example, we could observe how participants display their orientation to two temporally unfolding events that progress in parallel, one of which they are not yet involved in. This conduct is recognised by the co-participants, who display their understanding of one’s publicly visible orientation to an emerging activity by adjusting their own action to accommodate a timely transition from the ongoing activity to the next one. In this sense, the concept of the sequentiality of interaction does not seem so clear-cut, and events progressing in parallel can be oriented to simultaneously, regardless of whether or not one’s involvement in them has (yet) manifested as concrete action. Instead, especially when looking into multiple parallel action streams, the way in which activities follow each other appears more *imbricated* (see Article III), i.e. separate but partially overlapping and connected to the surrounding lines of action, like roof tiles or the scales of a fish.

The above discussion on sequentiality also connects to the questions of the distinction between *involvement in* and *orientation to* an activity. In section 3.3, I defined multiactivity as a participant not just *doing* two things, but also actively, visibly, and interactionally *orienting* to more than one activity at the same time. Where, then, is the line between involvement and orientation, or is there one? With CA, certain things are out of the method’s reach, such as what people are thinking and what events in their environments they register and orient to in their minds. Nevertheless, this thesis has shown that we can observe how a participant’s publicly visible orientation to, and anticipation of, an *imminent* activity can be treated by a co-participant as a type of (preliminary) involvement in said activity, which then creates implications for the co-participant’s own conduct for enabling the ongoing joint activity to be brought to a timely closure. There is something in the analysed

priority displays that works as a cue for the recipient to infer the communicative meaning connected with the priority display. My claim is that that “something” is, in these cases, the context of multiactivity. Moreover, since the other activity is an interactional one, these shifts are oriented to by the co-participants as part of multiactivity and are interpreted as such as relevant to the interaction. This brings us back to the nature of complex multimodal gestalts, discussed in section 3.2.4: any detail or modality available in the context can be utilised as a resource of social (inter)action, or at least affect the recipient’s interpretation of the action. This raises the question whether publicly observable orientation to a not-yet-started activity during, for instance, a conversation, could or should be counted as a dual orientation. If this is shown to be a recurrent phenomenon by future studies, it would introduce exciting new possibilities for approaching multiactivity in interactional research, and what other methods could be used to support, or be supported by, conversation analytic studies on multiactivity.

This thesis has approached multiactivity – and social action in general – from a multimodal perspective and brought forward new insights into how people display and manage involvement in multiple parallel activities in interaction. By continuing to study (inter)action and its formation from a multimodal viewpoint, we can discover more new levels of how meaning is created on multiple simultaneous timelines through the allocation of multiple modalities. As the whole concept of multiactivity is based on people perceiving and operating on multiple temporal levels, research on multiactivity should also focus on temporality from the same point of view as the participants. The challenge here is that for participants, there are more dimensions to these levels than those that CA has traditionally focused on; rather than just managing lines of action that are parallel in the here and now, the imbricatedness of action that is made evident through the participants’ conduct necessarily affects the ways in which we understand parallel orientation to activities and, thus, multiactivity. By taking the first steps into analysing the interplay between current and emergent activities from a conversation analytical point of view, this thesis points to new directions for future interactional studies. More research is needed to discover the different ways multiple temporalities and sequentialities affect each other and, potentially, bring about new knowledge to change how we understand the concepts of involvement and social action.

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## List of original publications

- I Kamunen, A. (2018). Open Hand Prone as a resource in multimodal claims to interruption: Stopping a coparticipant's turn-at-talk. *Gesture*, 17(2), 293-323. <https://doi.org/10.1075/gest.17002.kam>
- II Kamunen, A. (2019). How to disengage: suspension, body torque and repair. *Research on Language and Social Interaction*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08351813.2019.1657287>
- III Kamunen, A. & Haddington, P. (manuscript). Activity transitions as multiactivity: Practices for achieving dual orientation to an imminent next activity.

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