Hand Gestures as a Tool for Holding on to a Turn

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1. Introduction

As all of us have probably noticed, sometimes in conversations it can be difficult for one to finish what s/he is saying without someone else beginning to talk before it is even their turn. But how can we even define when someone's turn ends and another one's begins, as there is usually no previously scheduled order for each participant determining when they get to speak and when not? And is there no way of preventing other people from interrupting us without having to scold them for inconsiderate behaviour? These are only some of the questions conversation analysts are attempting to answer.

Turn construction and turn-taking have established a significant role in the field of modern conversation analysis from early on. Much research has been written on the above-mentioned subjects, and along with the development of technology and adopting the use of video image as a tool in the research of conversation analysis (CA), also the use of embodied actions has gained more ground as a theme for research.

I was first introduced to the subject of turn-taking in conversation analysis during a university course concerning the use of body-language in talk-in-interaction. One of the possible topics for the final course paper was turn-taking and how a speaker can anticipate turn ends and choose the next speaker – him/herself or someone else in the group – by the use of body language and objects in interaction. While analysing the video material – recorded at a University International Section meeting – I noticed that the pointing gestures that occurred in the data were used for neither of the purposes mentioned above, but instead in situations where the current speaker wanted to prevent the other participants from taking over his/her turn. This discovery drove me to write my analysis for the course on the subject and at the same time to look more closely into the phenomenon.
The use of hand gestures is one of the many fields of study in the research of embodied actions, and pointing as a sub-genre has been studied by e.g. Mondada, whose research article ‘Multimodal resources for turn-taking: pointing and the emergence of possible next speakers’ (2007) deals with pointing as a tool for self-selection in group conversations. In this thesis I will concentrate on presenting how certain *turn-entry-preventing gestures* (TEPGs) are used as tools for holding on to one’s turn. I see this subject worth looking into, because in the growing field of research on embodied actions in conversation analysis the use of hand gestures in turn-taking has not yet been studied much from the point of view of holding on to a turn. Thus, in the course of this pro gradu thesis I intend to show that the phenomenon exists and is collectively responded to in conversation situations.

In the following section I will provide a concise introduction to conversation analysis as a field of research and also discuss the study of embodied actions in talk-in-interaction. In section 3 I will present some conversation analytical methods used and also provide a description of my data. In section 4 I will introduce certain terms from the field of turn-taking necessary for the following analysis. The beginning of section 5 will be dealing with the definition of competitive turn-taking environments, along with the significance of projection in the analysis of turn constructions and how it can be applied and interpreted when monitoring places of possible turn completion. At the end of section 5 I will be looking into the phenomenon of holding on to a turn by using TEPGs while taking into consideration the principles of projection and turn-taking and using some transcribed excerpts of video data as examples.
2 Conversation Analysis

Conversation analysis is an approach focused on the study of everyday social interaction. It has its roots in the 1960s, when Harvey Sacks first introduced his findings about the structure of human conversation in a series of lectures – considered to be the starting point for the whole field of analysis – in which he developed an approach to the study of social action which aimed to "investigate social order as it was produced through the practices of everyday talk" (Liddicoat 2009: 4). The most central assumption informing CA is that ordinary talk is a highly organised, ordered phenomenon. Sacks later on conducted studies on the matter with his colleagues Emanuel Schegloff and Gail Jefferson, and through their work CA started to grow into the form and extent it exists today.

The focus in CA is not so much to describe language or social interaction per se, but to illustrate the underlying social organisation which makes it possible for us to be capable of orderly and intelligible social interaction (Goodwin and Heritage 1990: 238). In other words, it is all about how we use language – both the verbal and the embodied manifestations of it – in order to carry out and interpret certain interactional objectives. Furthermore, CA studies the orderliness of everyday social interaction. According to Liddicoat (2009: 5), the orderliness of talk is internally accomplished by the participants in the interaction. This means that even though the structure in every conversation is different, a structure always exists, but it can only be considered in the context of one specific conversation. Thus, it is not possible to determine any particular sets of rules or one universal pattern for conversation.

Another crucial assumption in CA is that all interaction is sequentially organised (Stivers 2013). When two or more people engage in a conversation, in general only one of them talks at a time. People are constantly monitoring the progression of conversations they are taking part in and designing their utterances based on the overall situation and on the previous turns. The fact that people are instinctively oriented
towards taking turns in conversations is a major point of interest for conversation analysts, and the question how and why this is achieved can be considered a general research question of CA. The concepts of turn-construction and turn-taking will be presented in more detail in section 4 of this thesis.

The way speakers design what to say and how and when to say it always originates from an intention to achieve something interactionally. As Hutchby and Wooffitt state, in conversation analysis "words used in talk are not studied as semantic units, but as products or objects which are designed and used in terms of the activities being negotiated in the talk: as requests, proposals, accusations, complaints and so on" (2001: 14). In other words, CA does not focus so much on what is being said, but how the utterances are produced in order to serve a specific purpose and on how they are understood and reacted to by the participants in a specific context.

*Embodied Actions*

The orderliness of social action and interaction mentioned above is, according to Heath and Luff (2013: 286), an orderliness that "for face-to-face or co-present gatherings will inevitably encompass action(s) that is/are accomplished though the interplay of the body, talk and use of material resources". Whereas originally the bulk of research data for CA consisted of pieces of audio recordings, the appearance and increased availability of more compact video cameras aided to develop collecting data to reach new, more comprehensive levels. After the inclusion of visual image to the recordings, the focus also turned towards the role of gaze and body language in social interaction. Although the first film recordings to be used in CA and early attempts to systematically describe bodily actions were made already in the 1970s, it was not until the 1980s when researchers – e.g. Goodwin (1981) and Heath (1984, 1986) – started to focus specifically on the multimodal features which could be recorded with film (Mondada 2013: 35). Still, it is not until quite recently that the research of embodied actions has started to grow into a significant field of interest in CA.
The term *embodied* itself directs attention toward how we use our bodies and our surroundings, such as tools and objects, in order to produce and make intelligible certain actions or goals in face-to-face interaction. Embodied resources such as posture, gaze, gestures and facial expressions all bear meanings in conversation when used with and in addition to verbal means of communication and, as Streeck (1993: 276) states, research has to incorporate both the spoken and the non-verbal interaction in order to fully explain how interaction happens. Thus, the focus on embodied action and interaction has proven to bear a crucial role in developing the conversation analytic studies, as well as to be a seemingly never-ending source for finding new aspects and phenomena in talk-in-interaction.
3 Methods and Data

In this section I will introduce and discuss some of the principal methods in CA for acquiring and analysing data. I will also introduce the videos used in the research of this thesis and provide a brief report on the process of arranging and recording two of the conversations used in my analysis.

One of the defining characteristics of CA is, as Sidnell (2009: 20) mentions, that it is about discovering things we do not already know. This is one reason why it is difficult to define a set of specific and established methods for conversation analytical research, as different subjects and discoveries all require slightly different approaches. In order to be able to discover new phenomena from one's data and to obtain credible results from the research, a conversation analyst should follow the inductive method, as depicted below by Peräkylä:

- Explore your data in an ‘unmotivated’ way (without any initial hypotheses).
- Identify some phenomenon worth further study.
- Establish how this phenomenon occurs in varying ways in your data.
- Try to account for this variation.

Peräkylä (2004: 170–1)

By adopting this method the researcher can ensure that the results s/he derives from the data are not loaded with any presuppositions, which would probably lead to inaccurate if not incorrect interpretation and findings.

When it comes to the material used in this kind of research, availability of video data is vital. As was already mentioned in the previous section, the interest within CA has recently been shifting strongly towards embodied actions and the surroundings of the conversations, the research of which would be impossible with mere audio recordings. Regardless of the format of the recorded talk, conversation analysts do not make a
distinction between informal and formal talk, but, according to Pomerantz and Fehr (1997: 64), view the interaction in colloquial dinner table talks and in the more ceremonial conversations taking place in seminar rooms and business meetings as equally interesting and relevant for their research, as long the interaction recorded is *naturally occurring*. Hutchby and Wooffit (2001: 14) define 'naturally occurring' interaction as activities that are "situated as far as possible in the ordinary unfolding of people's lives, as opposed to being pre-arranged or set up in laboratories". When considering the demand of the data being naturally occurring, one needs to take into account the *observer's paradox* (Labov 1972), according to which there is no such thing as 'naturally occurring data' because simply the recording of an activity makes the participants act differently, thus disrupting and transforming the data. Mondada acknowledges this but also reminds us that the ways in which the recordings are done can be refined and that although the camera is permanently present, it "is not omni-relevant for participants, and the moments in which they do orient to it can be identified and studied" (Mondada 2013: 34). The data used in this thesis, too, contains moments where the participants either refer to the recording equipment in their conversations or sometimes even interact with it e.g. by adjusting the camera or waving or 'apologizing' their language to it, all features which could possibly be seen as subjects for future research.

In addition to tape-recordings, researchers use transcripts of the recordings as tools of reference in their analysis. Hutchby and Wooffit wish to stress that, for CA, transcripts are not considered to be 'the data' but only a 'representation' of the data, while the tape itself is "viewed as a 'reproduction' of a determined social event" (Hutchby & Wooffitt 2001: 73–4). The transcripts not only work as means for repeatedly going back to the material but also help to illustrate the points of interest the researcher wishes to present in the analysis, and the excerpts of transcripts usually serve this purpose best when combined with illustrations or image captures of the video data.
The process of transcribing a data tape for CA is quite different from simply writing down the words that the participants exchanged. Instead, it requires systematically writing down several features of the recorded interaction such as the precise beginning and end points of turns, audible sounds which are not words (e.g. breathiness and laughter) or which are ‘ambiguous’ vocalisations, the duration of pauses, and marking the stresses, extension and truncations found in individual words and syllables (Hutchby & Wooffitt 2001: 75). In other words, transcription is an attempt to capture all the details of talk as they actually occur in as much detail as possible. For illustrating these features, CA has developed a special style of transcription which involves an extensive array of standardized conventions. A list of conventions (by Du Bois et al 1993) used in the transcripts presented in the following sections can be found from the appendix section of this thesis.

Introduction of the Data

The first five tapes mentioned below are from the Oulu corpus of spoken English and have been recorded between years 2009-2011. The last two tapes, Creative Deviation and A Strange Combination, were recorded in December 2012.

Always in Oulu is approximately 50 minutes long and was recorded in a student flat near the Oulu university campus. The three main participants, Edith, Jenny and Viola, are foreign exchange students in Oulu, and are enjoying some tea and cookies around a kitchen table in a student flat and talking about a wide variety of different subjects varying from reminiscing past party experiences to school work and the peculiarities of different variations of the English language. There is also a fourth participant, Cassandra, who enters the room and joins the others in the middle of the recording. Edith (from Canada) and Jenny (from the US) are both native English speakers, whereas Viola is French and Cassandra apparently Spanish.
Never in Canada is approximately one hour long. The three participants, Jason and Mary from the US and Sophie from Canada, are also exchange students in Oulu and native speakers of English. They are sitting around a table in a student flat near the university campus, having some tea and discussing their studies and also matters concerning Northern American politics and living in Finland.

Oh my God also takes place in a student apartment in Oulu and shows us a conversation between three exchange students. Guy is from Australia, Robert is from the US and Rukmini is Indian. The topics of the conversation vary from living and studying in Oulu to travelling abroad and what it is to be a teacher. Guy and Robert share the apartment, whereas Rukmini and Guy are meeting for the first time. The discussion is quite lively, Rukmini and Guy taking the more active roles as speakers. Robert takes a significant part in the conversation as well, but is clearly a bit overshadowed by the other two. The recording contains quite a lot of embodied interaction, especially hand gestures.

International Section Meeting is an hour long recording of a student board meeting of the Oulu University International Section, taking place at a university café. Among the nine participants there are both Finnish students and foreign exchange students, all non-native English speakers. The discussion is quite relaxed, although it still follows the basic conventions of a board meeting. The topics of the meeting range from recent and future events to association strategy, nominating a vice-president for the section and introducing the International Section newsletter.

Happy Pigs is a two-part recording filmed in a townhouse in Australia, and there are three participants: Rebecca, Lynne and Gwyneth. Rebecca and Gwyneth know each other through work and Lynne is Rebecca’s niece. The first part of the tape shows two of the participants working on a laptop while the third participant is out of the frame preparing dinner and thus did not provide any useful material for this research. The second part, on the other hand, where all three participants are having dinner together, contains some very lively conversation, overlap and a great deal of hand gestures.
During my student exchange in England in autumn 2012, I wanted to be able to record at least two conversations taking place in different environmental and social settings, as well as with both native and non-native speakers of English, which in this case ended up being a university seminar meeting and a relaxed evening at a student apartment. For the seminar meeting I had to ask permissions from several lecturers to record their teaching sessions. All the lecturers agreed to let me come in and film, but in all but one cases the students were uncomfortable with the idea of being recorded. Thankfully, I was eventually granted the possibility to come in and record one seminar session of a small group of post-graduate students of English. The second recording session was easier to organise, as I had already asked a group of exchange students from next door a few weeks earlier for their permission to set up a camera in their kitchen. I handed out the necessary speaker description- and consent forms to be filled out by all the participants before the recordings and told them that the videos would be used in my pro gradu thesis. I did not, however, reveal to them the exact subject I would be writing it about in order to prevent that knowledge from affecting their behaviour. After setting up the equipment I excluded myself from both of the recordings in order to not to have an influence on the data and also to allow the interaction to be as natural as possible.

*Creative Deviation* is the first of the two tapes I recorded during my stay at the University of Kent in Canterbury. The tape is 71 minutes long and features a post-graduate level university seminar. There are four participants, the students Jessica, Hannah and Norah, and the course teacher Jonathan, all of whom are from England. They are sitting around a table, the students facing Jonathan. A great deal of the tape shows Jonathan lecturing, but the students also answer Jonathan’s questions and bring out their own opinions. The tape shows a lot of embodied actions, mainly talking with one’s hands but also changes in posture.

*A Strange Combination* is the second tape I recorded in Canterbury and its events take place in the kitchen of a student apartment. There are six participants on the tape: Anna
from the Netherlands, Antoine from Belgium, Kyu-Whang from South Korea, Viviane from Switzerland and Ichiro and Reijiro from Japan. The majority of the 56-minute tape consists of the four first mentioned students discussing over some tea and cookies, whereas Ichiro and Reijiro leave the room at an early point in the recording. They are all foreign exchange students in England and housemates sharing the apartment, except for Reijiro who is their neighbour and a friend of Ichiro. All the participants are non-native speakers of English and also very comfortable with each other, which results in large amounts of overlapping speech and interrupting one another.
4 Turn-taking in Talk-in-interaction

Turn-taking is one of the central organisations and most widely studied features in conversation analysis. It consists of two components: turn constructional component – depicting “what turns at talk actually look like” (Liddicoat 2007: 54) – and turn allocation, which illustrates the “ways in which a next speaker can come to have a turn at talk” (Liddicoat 2007: 63). In this section I will establish the set of tools used in the analysis by introducing some key concepts significant to the subject at hand, such as the organisation of turn construction, the definition of what kinds of linguistic units are qualified for turn units and also at turn completions and points of possible speaker change. Furthermore, some information on the concept and means of self-selection of the next speaker are required.

4.1 Turn Constructional Units

All conversations are founded on the idea of turns and turn-taking. Turns at talk can be seen as constructed out of stretches of language, structurally variant units that conventionally assimilate to linguistic categories such as sentences, clauses, single words or phrases (Hutchby and Wooffitt 2001: 48). In conversation analysis these units are generally referred to as turn constructional units, or TCUs. Even though TCUs are composed of structural elements, they themselves are not structurally outlined units, and this makes it possible for basically any linguistic unit to potentially function as a TCU (Ford, Fox and Thompson 1996; Liddicoat 2007).

Sacks et al. (1974: 726) have presented some pragmatic characteristics that can be used in defining TCUs: a TCU “(a) employs a specification of minimal sizes, but (b) provides for expansion within a unit.” In other words, linguistic forms that are usually seen as too small to stand alone can function as TCUs as long as their meaning and possible omitted units can be interpreted and comprehended within the context. TCUs are also stoppable
– although not at any point – and have “transition places discretely recurring with them, which can themselves be expanded or contracted.” (Sacks et al. 1974: 726–7) Nevertheless, it is essential to keep in mind that TCUs are context-sensitive, which means that it is possible to determine whether some linguistic unit constitutes as a TCU only in context (Liddicoat 2007: 55; Clayman 2013: 151).

Another key feature about TCUs is that they are projectable in a sense that it is possible for a recipient to perceive what is needed for the unit of talk currently under way to be completed (Clayman 2013: 151). This also enables the speaker to project where a TCU under way will be possibly complete (Liddicoat 2007: 56), which helps the speaker and non-current speakers to continuously monitor and design the progression of turn-taking in the conversation.

4.1.1 Turn completions

Once a speaker has gained a turn and begun to produce his/her speech, s/he has been given the right to produce one “potentially complete bit of talk”, and usually only one such bit of talk (Liddicoat 2007: 61). As mentioned in the previous paragraph, speakers need to actively keep monitoring the turns under way in order to project the possible completion of that turn and predetermine the point where they are able to begin their own turn.

According to Ford and Thompson (1996), there are three levels of completion: syntactic, where the turn is grammatically complete; intonational, where the intonation of the words would suggest that the sentence is complete; and pragmatic, meaning that the turn can be seen as having completed the task for which it was designed. When all three of these features co-occur, the turn can be seen as complete, and a speaker change is possible (Ford and Thompson 1996: 148). A possible completion of a turn is not a concrete completion, but rather “a projected point at which the talk could relevantly be
ended” (Liddicoat 2007: 61). This can sometimes lead to misinterpretations, which again can lead to overlapping turns or interruptions. Thus, close attention needs to be paid on the turn under way in order to avoid unnecessary gaps and overlap.

4.1.2 *Transition-relevance points*

What is common to a majority of conversational situations is that the participants naturally tend to eliminate the gaps between turns. According to Liddicoat (2007) and Clayman (2013), generally, in the end of each TCU – a place of possible completion – the current speaker’s speakership is vulnerable and a non-current speaker is enabled to claim the speakership to him-/herself. Thus, constant monitoring of the ongoing stretch of talk for possible completion is needed from the current non-speakers, as “possible completion can allow or require talk.” (Liddicoat 2007: 69) These points in conversation analysis are referred to as *transition-relevance points*, or TRPs. This phenomenon requires a universal acknowledgment among the speakers of when it is possible and acceptable to obtain a turn by self-selection.

Sacks et al. (1974) have characterised the following rule concerning turn-taking in transition-relevance points:

> At any transition relevance place of an initial turn constructional unit:

a) If the current speaker has identified, or selected, a particular next speaker, then that speaker should take a turn at that place.

b) If no such selection has been made, then any next speaker may (but need not) self-select at that point. If self-selection occurs, then first speaker has the right to the turn.

c) If no next speaker has been selected, then alternatively the current speaker may, but need not, continue talking with another turn-constructional unit, unless another speaker has self-selected, in which case that speaker gains the right to the turn.

(Sacks et al. 1974: 704)
The most easily recognisable transition-relevance points are the ones where the current speaker clearly and intentionally hands the turn over to a specific non-current speaker, in which cases no further interpretation of possible turn completions is needed (Hayashi 2013). The selection needs to be made visible by the current speaker early on, though, for that no other non-current speakers will have time to project a possible turn completion and self-select.

In cases where there is a clear transition-relevance point but no next speaker has been selected and no incipient speakers seem to be emerging, the speaker can choose to either keep on talking or not, which then might lead to a *lengthened transition space* (Liddicoat 2007: 79), which results in a silence in the conversation. Longer silences in conversation are often seen as uncomfortable or undesired, and usually the next turn is eventually obtained by one of the participants via self-selection.

### 4.2 Self-Selection of the Next Speaker

Self-selection is one of the two basic ways a current non-speaker can obtain a turn in conversation. In this section, I will illustrate two aspects of self-selection – when it occurs and how it can be accomplished – via examples from the corpus material.

#### 4.2.1 When does self-selection occur?

As mentioned in point b) of the quotation above by Sacks et al. (1974), a current non-speaker can select him-/herself for the next speaker in situations where the turn unit of the current speaker has reached its TRP, and the current speaker has not identified any particular next speakers. In that situation, it is not compulsory or necessary for any next speaker to self-select, but if one does, the first one to do so has the right to the turn (Sacks et al. 1974: 704). Usually a self-selection does occur.
Self-selection does not always require a clear point of turn completion. In conversational situations, especially in competitive turn-taking environments (See section 4.1.), self-selection can also be utilised in midstream of an on-going TCU, which can lead to an interruption.

(1) *Always in Oulu* <00:14:42–00:14:49>

01 JENNY: (0.7) <HI> I don’t think I have a problem </HI> with anyone seeing my pictures.

02 I’m all (.) um=,

03 CASSANDR: (0.3) [Come [2on2]].

04 JENNY: [no one] can see anything,

05 unless they’re my friends though

06 EDITH: Mm.

07 JENNY: Um=,

In example 1, Jenny has already provided one full TCU, and is now beginning a new one. A short gap emerges in the middle of her turn on line 03, and Cassandra, who was possibly already waiting for a TRP to appear to get the next turn, now tries to self-select herself for the next speaker by both a hand gesture and a TCU that after all ends up overlapping with Jenny’s continuation of her interrupted turn.

Even though Cassandra tries to manifest her opinion in midstream of Jenny’s turn, her self-selection attempt – although quite visible and her managing to provide a beginning of a TCU – fails and she pulls her extended arm back, thus letting Jenny finish her turn. In some cases, though, self-selection by a non-current speaker in the middle of a TCU
under way can also lead to a turn to be seized, where the incipient speaker obtains the turn without waiting for a TRP to emerge.

4.2.2 Turn-entry-devices

Self-selection can be carried out through different kinds of methods, referred to in conversation analysis as *turn-entry-devices* (Mondada 2007: 201), consisting of both verbal and non-verbal actions used in order to reserve and begin a new turn at talk. Verbal turn-entry-devices, i.e. claiming a turn by beginning to provide an utterance, is an explicit and effective way for obtaining the floor as the next speaker but can, and often does, lead to overlapping turns. The non-verbal turn-entry devices, on the other hand, can be used for achieving an early start without causing any unwanted overlap in speech. A non-speaker waiting for his/her turn can claim incipient speakership with various vocal and nonvocal practices, such as an audible inbreath (Hayashi 2013: 174) indicating incipient speech, intentionally conspicuous embodies actions, such as leaning forward and hand gestures (Markkanen 2013), and sometimes also the orientation of one’s gaze.

(2) *Always in Oulu* <00:54:06–00:54:16>

01 JENNY: As a foreigner, I was quite offened.
02 EDITH: [Did] you get student discount on your entry?
(([*VIOLA RAISES HER HAND,
POINTER BEGINS]*) *Img1
03 JENNY: [2<WH> Yes </WH>2].
04 EDITH: [2@2]@
05 VIOLA: ..(0.5) (H) And [it [2was2]]
In example (2), two turn-entry-devices are presented: while Edith is still providing her TCU, Viola begins entering the conversation by raising her hand (line 02), as can be seen in Image 1, in order to ‘reserve’ the next turn for herself. On line 05, a short gap emerges, and Viola begins her TCU with an inhale. After she has obtained the turn, her pointing turns into self-grooming, and she continues her stretch of talk normally.

Why does Viola use two turn-entry-devices then? The hand gesture is used first to manifest self-selection before the possible completion of the on-going turn, but it does not yet lead to Viola taking over the turn. The actual point of possible turn completion emerges only on line 05 after Edith’s last pulses of laughter in the form of a gap in the
conversation. Then Viola perhaps projects a possibility for also either Edith or Jenny to obtain the turn, and she ensures her claim to the turn by an audible inhale before starting to produce her turn unit.

Turn-entry-devices are also something for the non-current speakers to observe. Both their use and interpretation rely strongly on projectability (see section 5.1.1) and interaction between the participants and whether or not they decide to be responsive to these actions. In most cases they prove effective and lead to a speaker change in situations of self-selection, but there are still ways for the already-speaking party to interdict an incipient self-selection. As Hayashi (2013: 179) mentions, a current speaker may be oriented to the possibility of impending start-up by a non-speaker if s/he notices any of the abovementioned turn-entry-devices, and can then utilise similar disruptions in order to register and possibly prevent the co-participants competitive incoming. Similarly, Streeck (2009: 177) also notes that by holding a hand up with the palm facing the other participants, a current speaker can mark an unfinished turn and thus prevent others from self-selecting before the hand is retracted. In the following section I will further focus on the concepts of projectability and how the current speaker can circumvent possible speaker change.
5 Holding On to a Turn

As could be seen from the examples above, turns in conversation can be quite easily obtained through various ways of self-selection, sometimes even while the current speaker is still producing his/her TCU. This section will illustrate some features of projecting possible TRPs, as well as show how hand-gestures can be utilised by a current speaker for holding on to his/her turn. In subsection 5.1 I will introduce the concept of *competitive turn-taking environments*, which are often fertile ground for overlap and turn transitions. I will also briefly discuss the concepts of projectability in conversations and some previous research on how one can circumvent turn transition.

In subsection 5.2 I will come to the analysis part of this thesis and present the concept of *turn-entry-preventing gestures* (TEPGs), i.e. gestures used in conversations by the current speaker in order to block an imminent self-selection from a non-speaker. They can be used either in transition-relevant points in order to obtain the right to a new consecutive turn or during an ongoing turn in order to prevent a possible interruption. In my analysis I will provide examples and illustrations on when, how and where in the conversation they are used and how they are responded to by other participants. The goal of this analysis is to prove that the phenomenon exists and is universally recognised and adapted to, and also to establish a basis for future research of the phenomenon.

5.1 Competitive Turn-taking Environments

Interactional situations that feature many turn transitions and self-selections often take place in what can be called *competitive turn-taking environments* (Mondada 2007). They can be broadly defined as conversations in a) groups of more than two people and/or b) between people who have known each other for a long time or are otherwise in a close personal relationship. In situation a), conversations in larger groups generally feature fewer possibilities for one speaker to obtain a turn than in conversations between only
two participants, in which turn-taking usually happens more effortlessly and naturally by the basic rule of ‘one TCU per turn’. The presence of more than one possible next speaker requires more attention – and thus, also effort – for a non-current speaker to find opportunities to gain a turn, which naturally leads to a certain situation of competition.

In situation b), the same kind of competition can also take place between just two (but also more) people, in cases where they are familiar with each other and have already reached a level of natural, informal interaction. Usually people who have known each other for a long time do not pay as much attention to the same so-called ‘rules of politeness’ as, for example, two people who have just met or have otherwise a more formal relationship. The common nominator and the key feature in both situations a) and b) is that the interaction takes place in a somewhat relaxed and not-too-formal environment. It needs to be noted, though, that situations that are very relaxed tend to include quite a lot of overlap in turns.

5.1.1 Projectability and circumventing turn transition

Predicting future actions in general is an important feature in turn-taking in conversation analysis. Mondada (2007: 195) describes projectability to provide for the next speakers “the possibility of not only identifying turn completion but also predicting it before it occurs, to anticipate transition-relevance points and to locate the upcoming place where to begin to speak”. As can be observed from the given examples, participants do not utilize projection only for anticipating a right moment to take the turn for themselves, but also for recognizing situations that other participants might interpret as possible turn completions and thus try to obtain the next turn to themselves.

In addition to observing only the construction of the turns of other participants, a speaker can also actively monitor the construction of his/her own turn in connection with the overall predominant situation and incipient potential next speakers. Therefore, much
attention should be especially directed to embodied actions, because when inserted in pre-initial turn positions and at transition-relevance places, they “make visible, witnessable and documentable the emergent trajectory of the progressive change of category of a ‘non-current speaker’ becoming a ‘would-be speaker’, a ‘(possible) next speaker’, and then an ‘incipient speaker’” (Mondada 2007: 214). It is to be noted, though, that projections made by both current and non-current speakers are not always correct, and reacting to misinterpreted turn completions can – and often do – lead to interruption and overlap.

In cases where the current speaker is able to detect a possibility of an imminent start-up by a non-speaker, such as those mentioned above, it is possible for the current speaker to utilise certain tools in order to circumvent an upcoming collision of turns or a turn transition, and thus enhance his/her chances of retaining the floor. One way of achieving this is to abort an ongoing TCU in a way that conveys an intention to maintain the status of the current speaker (Local & Kelly: 1986; Ogden: 2001 as cited in Clayman: 2013). Clayman presents two features that by conveying this intention have a “turn-holding import above and beyond what would be embodied in the aborted grammatical unit itself”:

(i) A glottal stop or cut-off of talk. This projects continuation on the basis that it is not a ‘normal’ way of ending, while also suggesting that the speaker retains inhaled breath as a source of acoustic energy for further talk.

(ii) The interjection uh, sometimes termed a filled pause. This projects continuation on the basis that the speaker, while not adding anything of substance to the TCU, nonetheless continues to vocalize.

(Clayman 2013: 153)

Although both of these two features are admittedly quite distinguishable from so-called ‘normal turn-unit completions’, and in many cases probably do convey the intention of
maintaining one’s speakership, it seems possible that in more competitive turn-taking environments an aborted TCU would not have the desired effect, but could possibly even create an early possibility for an incipient next speaker to start his/her own turn.

Another way of obtaining a second turn-constructional unit is a feature which Schegloff (1987b: 78) refers to as a rush-through: as a current speaker is approaching a turn-completion and thus also a TRP, s/he speeds up the talk and literally rushes through the sentence across the completion point and into a new TCU before slowing down or taking a breath. In this way the speaker can try to get past an otherwise imminent TRP and thus ‘steal’ the chance of self-selection from the other participants. Local and Walker (2004) have presented a somewhat similar concept, an abrupt-join. Both theories include the function of pre-empting the transition relevance of an ongoing turn by a ‘head start’ on a second TCU, but, according to Local and Walker, abrupt-joins incorporate “very localized tempo effects and ‘disjunctive’ prosodic characteristics rather than the ‘integrative’ patterns Schegloff describes” (Local & Walker 2004: 1376). They have also listed certain notable phonetic features of the practice:

- The abrupt-join typically exhibits ‘turn-final’ pitch characteristics at its beginning (i.e., the talk leading up to the point of possible syntactic and pragmatic completion exhibits features typical of other designed-to-be complete talk);
- there is an audible step-up in pitch and loudness from the last syllable of the first unit to the first stressed syllable of the following unit;
- there is a noticeable localised ‘speeding-up’ on the last syllable immediately prior to the point of possible syntactic and pragmatic completion;
- the speech rate of the temporally compressed final syllable is not continued through the beginning of the following unit; there is often a marked slowing down of pace post the abrupt-join relative to the prior compressed syllable itself;
- final compressed syllables are never terminated with glottal closure or other features of ‘cut-offs’;
- the beginning of the second unit occurs in close temporal proximity to the end of the first unit.

(Local & Walker 2004: 1388)
By utilizing such features, speakers are able to build multi-unit turns and to obtain more talk for themselves beyond a TRP without giving any prior implication that they were constructing a long multi-turn unit. The advantages this method has over e.g. an aborted TCU are that an abrupt-join is more easily identifiable for a deliberate act and not just a sign of hesitation on the current speaker’s behalf, and this kind of a rushed transition is also much more difficult for an incipient next speaker to interject.

What sets the research related to the above-mentioned ways of turn-circumventing apart from the subject of this thesis is that it seems to have concentrated merely on the prosodic features – intonation, stress and rhythm – of the speech as well as the structuring of the TCUs, so far completely dismissing the use of embodied actions carried out in order to achieve a similar objective. One can probably also find some of these prosodic features from the examples I will present in my analysis, but in the following sections I will only be looking into the embodied side of the matter, the primary focus being on the use of hand gestures.

5.2 Turn-entry-preventing Gestures

Although verbal interaction is naturally the key form of communication when looking at conversations from the point of view of analysing them, the non-verbal resources, such as embodied actions, can be regarded as equally effective and valuable in the sense of getting a message through. Mondada (2007) emphasises gestures, in the form of fragments of incipient turns or in-breaths, for their role as multimodal resources whose function is to make turn constructional pre-beginnings both visible and audible. In her article she describes pre-beginnings as “a technique for securing precise coordination of prior turn ending with next turn beginning, and also for securing self-selection for would-be next speakers” (Mondada 2007: 207). She also provides a concise description on the usefulness of hand gestures in transition-relevance points:
Whereas verbal and other acoustic resources are vulnerable to overlaps in these early starts, pointing gestures are not and can be produced simultaneously with the terminal segment of the ongoing turn. This allows at the same time the opportunity to achieve an early self-selection and to display an orientation to the minimization of gap and overlap, that is, to the preservation of the ‘one party at a time’ normative principle.

(Mondada 2007: 208)

Even though Mondada focuses in her article on pointing gestures applied by non-current speakers for early self-selection, hand gestures are also a valuable resource for current speakers, as they can be inserted mid-speech – if considered necessary – in cases of imminent interruption, without the need to stop the TCU under way. This, in addition, prevents the emergence of pauses during the speaker’s turn, and thus provides fewer possibilities for the current non-speakers to self-select.

Through projection, a speaker is also provided with an opportunity to utilise embodied actions – the focus here lying on hand gestures – that can be used to ‘block’ any possible interruptions or attempted self-selections. Blocking these kinds of actions leading to potential speaker change allows the current speaker to keep the floor to him/herself. In this section I will concentrate on the use of these kinds of hand gestures through examples found in the video data. I will also illustrate the phenomenon by pulling out certain excerpts from the conversations and pinpointing examples where hand gestures are utilised for the purpose of maintaining one’s turn. The use of these turn-entry-preventing gestures can be roughly divided into two categories: ones used for obtaining second turns at talk and ones used for protecting a turn under way from projected possible interruptions.
5.2.1 TEPGs used for obtaining a new consecutive turn

As has already been mentioned, projection has a significant role in talk-in-interaction and especially in forming turn constructions. It is also a vital part of identifying potential turn-completions and possible opportunities for the non-current speakers to take action and self-select. As Ford, Fox and Thompson (1996: 428) note, TCUs are interactionally achieved, which makes TCUs and turns impossible to precisely define and precisely predict. Thus, when I refer to a 'turn' in the following analysis, I refer to a series of TCUs which can be considered potentially complete (subsection 4.1.1; Ford and Thompson: 1996). The cases of TEPGs being used by a current speaker in order to block an incipient self-selection and to obtain a new consecutive turn at talk take place in connection with transition relevance points, both projected and materialised, and the gestures result and are triggered by the speaker’s monitoring of the others and/or herself. The following examples will illustrate the use of TEPGs in such situations.

In the following example Sophie, Mary and Jason are having some tea together in a student flat and have been discussing various topics about the Finnish and Northern American cultures and also about student life in Finland. The discussion has now moved on to accents as a result of Sophie asking the other two – both from the United States – earlier whether they can notice she is Canadian from the way she speaks, to which Mary answered “Yes” without any hesitation. Jason disagrees, which leads to a conversation about the differences between French Canadian and English Canadian accents, and eventually they start discussing the differences between Canadian accents and accents in the northern states in the US. A three-second-long gap in the conversation emerges after Mary mentions the difference in vowel sounds between these areas, and it is Sophie who eventually breaks the silence.
(3) Never in Canada <00:35:12–00:35:22>

01 SOPHIE: (3.0) (H) So you think that, Northern [Americans],

(((MARY MOVES HER HAND TO HER MOUTH)))

→ 02 MARY: (0.8) (**QUICKLY BRINGS HER HAND FORTH)) *Img2

Image 2

03 Only, (0.2)
04 in the states, ((EXTENDS INDEX FINGER, MOVES HAND BACK AND FORTH WHILE LISTING STATES))
05 (0.6) Northern Michigan.
06 Northern Wisconsin.
07 Northern (0.3) Minnesota,
08 SOPHIE: How about,

In example 3, while Sophie is still in mid-speech, Mary is already moving her hand towards her mouth, apparently in order to self-groom (e.g. Goodwin 1986: 41), but then a comparatively long gap in the conversation emerges. Even though Sophie has not yet
reached a pragmatic completion with her TCU (Ford & Thompson 1996), Mary probably assumes that the turn has been passed over to her and suddenly moves her arm forward (Image 2), holding it up in front of her face, likely to keep anyone else from taking the turn.

Although Sophie’s first turn unit fails to achieve any of the three levels of completion (Ford & Thompson 1996), it appears that she is in fact handing the turn over to Mary, and silence after her seemingly unfinished TCU could actually be a leading invitation for Mary to step in. It is not clear whether or not Sophie was going to keep talking after Mary first fails to notice the ambiguous TRP, but as soon as Mary comes to the conclusion that the turn has in fact been given to her, she projects the long silence also as a possibility for the others to self-select, and pre-emptively ‘blocks’ all such attempts by providing a TEPG.

In the next example, the members of the board of Oulu University’s International Section are discussing the International Section’s newsletter in their meeting. Hilla (the fourth person on the left side of the table) is answering a question by Isabella (in the middle on the right) who wants to know what the name of the newsletter, “Uuno”, means by pointing at a picture of the Uuno cartoon character on the newsletter. Sini, sitting next to Hilla, has just provided her own interpretation of the name – “University Uutiset in Oulu” – engendering some chuckles and nodding but then also a notable gap in the conversation. On line 01 of example (4), Hilla first fills the silence by an “Aaerm” sound, thus obtaining the position of the next speaker.

(4) International Section meeting <00:27:24–00:27:29>

01 HILLA: (1.5) Aaerm,  
→ 02 (/*[EXTENDS ARM, POINTS AT THE PICTURE OF UUNO ON A NEWSLETTER ON THE TABLE]*) *Img3
30

[there’s um,]
04 Uuno,
05 is that guy,
06 SINI: (1.3) ((SINI TAPS THE PICTURE OF UUNO ON THE PAPER IN FRONT OF HER WITH HER FINGER))
07 HILLA: there.
08 ((HILLA WITHDRAWS HER ARM))
09 (1.5) He’s umm,

On lines 02–08, during which Hilla extends her arm (Image 3) and points at the newsletter, the turn has already been taken by her, so the pointing here is used for visually filling the gap in her speech and also answering a question Isabella asked earlier in the recording (“What does UUNO mean?”) by pointing at a picture of Uuno. What is noticeable is that Hilla keeps her arm extended throughout the whole time between lines 02 and 08, perhaps also to make sure that it has been made clear who Uuno is, but primarily to keep the turn to herself, as there are long pauses in her speech (lines 01, 06 and 09) that could leave room for self-selection for some of the non-current speakers. Keeping the arm extended sends out a message that even though there is a gap in the
speech – and, thus, also a possibility for a turn transition – Hilla is still holding the floor and is probably going to continue talking soon.

A turn-entry-preventing gesture can also be applied after a preceding verbal turn-entry-device, in the following case after interrupting an on-going TCU of another speaker. The following example is direct continuation from example 4.

(5) International Section meeting <00:27:29–00:27:33>

09 HILLA: (1.5) He’s umm,
10 he’s just like a mythical—
11 VELI-MATTI: [The first one]
12 [you suggested],
13 ([(you lift arm, points at Hilla with a marker, then puts it down)])
On line 11, Veli-Matti suddenly interrupts Hilla after she has already begun producing a new turn. There had been a relatively long pause of 1.5 seconds (line 09) after the previous TCU, also by Hilla, so it is possible that Hilla starting to talk again came as a surprise for Veli-Matti, who had already anticipated a possible turn completion and prepared to self-select and begin a new turn as the next speaker. Even though Veli-Matti has already obtained the turn by having begun to speak, he raises his forearm in the middle of his turn unit (line 12) and, for a short time, holds his marker pen up, slightly pointing it towards Hilla. By doing this, he signals that he is going to hold on to the turn and also emphasizes that his words are addressed to Hilla. The short pause between him putting his arm back down and completing his sentence underlines his final statement, “I didn’t like it at all” (line 14).

In this case, too, the others recognise Veli-Matti’s TEPG and respond to it by letting him go on with his turn, even after he clearly interrupted Hilla mid-sentence. Even Hilla, who has been a very dominant character and one of the most active participants throughout the whole conversation, keeps quiet and adapts to the situation of Veli-Matti suddenly holding the floor.

The following situation takes place in a university seminar room, where a group of three post-graduate English students and their professor are having a seminar meeting of a certain course module. The majority of the 90-minute tape shows the professor, Jonathan, lecturing and leading the conversation, but there is also some discussion from the students. This particular example is from the first half of the meeting, and the group is having a conversation about creativity. Jessica is telling the others about her musical and baking hobbies, and in the example she is comparing following someone else’s recipes in baking to playing music that someone else has composed. All through the
conversation Jonathan has been actively commenting and reacting during the students’ turns.

(6) Creative Deviation <00:23:11–00:23:24>

01 JESSICA: If I’m mixing,
02 following a pattern.
03 if I’m playing a piece of music I’m reading somebody else’s score.

→ 04 (1.8) [((QUICKLY EXTENDS ARM AND POINTS AT JONATHAN))]  

05 JESSICA: [yes] I’m [2sure2] there are some people that-
06 [2((DRAWS ARM BACK))2]
07 you know.
08 there are,
you know.
composers or whatever that come up with,
(0.6) other music.

On line 04, a long gap of almost two seconds emerges in Jessica’s speech, and all the conditions for a turn completion seem to have been fulfilled. During the gap Jonathan starts slightly nodding his head, and having noticed this Jessica very quickly draws her arm up and forward (image 5) and points at Jonathan while rapidly uttering the first couple of words of her new turn unit. She withdraws her arm almost immediately on line 06 after noticing she has managed to secure her right to keep the floor and continue her narrative.

In this example, once again the triggering factor for the TEPG is the speaker’s monitoring of herself and also of the others. Again, this example could be interpreted as a case of the previous speaker’s re-self-selection after an untapped TRP, but the manner and timing of Jessica’s hand gesture and the way in which she begins her second TCU suggest that it was meant for turn-holding and not for new turn-entry: her hand shoots up immediately after she notices the slight movement of Jonathan’s head and she produces the first few words of the TCU in an apparent haste – somewhat resembling Schegloff’s definition of rush-throughs – as if she just came up with more things to say in connection to her previous TCU, which probably in fact was the case. None of the other members of the conversation really even have time to react to Jessica’s gesture, but it was still clearly utilised for blocking an upcoming response from Jonathan.

The series of examples from the second tape of *Happy pigs* takes place in an Australian town house, where three women, Lynne (from the left), Rebecca and Gwyneth are having dinner together after preparing it earlier on. Rebecca and Gwyneth know each other from work, and Rebecca is Lynne’s aunt. On this recording there are large amounts of embodied actions, especially talking with one’s hands, present. Especially Gwyneth communicates a lot with her hands, which, in many occasions, made it difficult
to tell for sure which gestures were utilised in order to carry out a blocking function. I noticed many gestures which by their timing and manner looked very much like TEPGs, but after closer inspection proved to be mere beat gestures, i.e., rapid movements of the hands used for “temporal highlighting” of the accompanying speech (McNeill 1992). The examples from Happy pig presented below, though, are ones that can be categorized with sufficient certainty as turn-entry-preventing gestures.

Before the dialogue presented below, the women have been discussing television’s cooking competitions, in this case Master Chef. The discussion is quite lively all through the recording and there is quite a lot of overlap taking place, together with lots of illustrating their speech with descriptive hand gestures. Here, Lynne has just self-selected herself after helping Rebecca to finish her sentence and to describe the “viewing platform” on the show, and now she is telling the others about her own viewing experiences concerning Master Chef.

(7) Happy pigs Tape 2 <00:07:05–00:07:16>

01 LYNNE:     I saw it.
02            Yeah.
03            Because it was on–
04            Off and on the #TVs at Jim,
05            When I was at Jim,
06            So I never really knew what was going on,
07            but I kind of watched.
08            (0.6) {((REBECCA TURNS HER GAZE TO LYNNE AND STARTS 
             LEANING BACK))}
09 LYNNE:     [((*RAISES FOREARM AND STARTS WAVING HER HAND))]*Img6
10 REBECCA:   [Hm.]
LYNNE: (0.4) <P> Semi </P>.

But [yeah].

[(USES HAND GESTURE TO ILLUSTRATE “A BUNCH OF PEOPLE”)]

REBECCA: [BEGINS TO RAISE HER ARM, SELF-GROOMS]

LYNNE: There was always like a bunch of people watching
these like cook-offs.

(0.4)

GWYNETH: Mhm.

After obtaining the turn, Lynne provides a stretch of speech that ends in a comparatively clear TRP on line 07: the turn seems complete from both syntactic and intonational points of view and it has also completed its pragmatic task. The turn completion is followed by a pause of 0.6 seconds (line 08) as Lynne has not selected the next speaker and no-one seems to be willing to self-select either, and it is possible that the pause here is a result of Gwyneth and Rebecca waiting for Lynne to continue. During the gap on line 08, Rebecca turns her gaze towards Lynne and leans back. Lynne very likely sees Rebecca shifting her posture with the corner of her eye and fills the gap herself by
raising her hand and waving it in the air. This waving does not seem to be serving any similar purpose unlike the gestures used to illustrate the things they are describing in more detail, which would support the idea of the gesture being utilised in order to reserve the right to keep the turn to herself. On line 10, still in the middle of shifting her posture, Rebecca also fills the gap simultaneously with Lynne’s hand gesture by saying “Hm” with her mouth still full of food, and she also begins to raise her arm (line 14). It is uncertain whether the “Hm” was originally meant to be an encouragement for Lynne to continue or an intended turn entry device, but it looks like Rebecca is reacting to Lynne’s TEPG and hesitating whether or not the speakership is ‘up for grabs’, but eventually seems to give the turn up after Lynne’s second hand gesture (line 13) and quickly turns her possible incipient turn-entry gesture into self-grooming.

As the dinner goes on, the mood is getting more relaxed and there is a lot of talking and laughing. Here Gwyneth has been telling the others a story about a funny incident from the time she was still doing her BA in media studies.

*(8) Happy pigs Tape 2 <00:10:12–00:10:24>*

01 Gwyneth:    [and] then we’ll do this,
02    and then we’ll do that </VOX>,
03    (H) and of course we got in there,
04    and I #switched the micro@phones @on,
05    and everybody was sort of, (makes a vocal sound and a body pose)
06    (1.4) [@@ @#With @#no @i@dea].
07 Rebecca:    [@@@]
08 Lynne:    [(Hx)] ((smiling))
09 Rebecca:    (Hx)
10 Gwyneth:    [((*raises hand, holds it palm facing the others))] *Img7
[Couldn’t say a] word, except for Bruce,

LYNNE: #You [#can’t]--

GWYNETH: [((*RAISES AND LOWERS HAND QUICKLY))]

*Img8

[the] professional actor,

LYNNE: [@@]

REBECCA: #Oh.
When Gwyneth reaches the punch line of her story on line 05, a small pause appears when the others seem to wait for a moment before beginning to laugh and smile, which they do after Gwyneth first breaks the silence herself. Once again, all the three types of completion apply and a TRP has emerged, so the short period of all three women laughing is a possibility for anyone them to self-select. The first hand gesture presented in this example (line 10, Image 7) is Gwyneth signalling she is not yet done with her story. Instead, she continues with “Couldn’t say a word, except for Bruce” (lines 11-12), when suddenly, after a pause in the speech, Lynne begins to say something on line 13, her gaze still turned to her food. Gwyneth then immediately raises her hand off the table (line 15, Image 8), slightly turned towards Lynne, and simultaneously goes on defining Bruce “the professional actor”. Lynne does not raise her gaze up towards Gwyneth until a couple of seconds later, so she probably does not even see the hand gesture, but gives up her turn entry as Gwyneth keeps on talking.

The piece of conversation in example 9 takes place quite soon after the previous one, and Gwyneth is still reminiscing about her student times. She and Rebecca have both been trying to remember the correct year of a certain café fire, which leads to Gwyneth returning to the subject of her working in the radio during her media studies.
01 GWYNETH: Well ^I think actually--
02 I have a theory,
03 that--
04 (0.5) cause in ^my media studies course,
05 (1.7) the people who did TV and film?
06 LYNNE: Mm?
07 GWYNETH: Were quite different to the people who do radio.
08 (0.6)
09 LYNNE: O[kay].
10 Gwyneth: [( *(QUICKLY RAISES HANDS SLIGHTLY OFF THE TABLE) ) ]
   *Img9

11 [And] we actually had a study group one night,
12 when we noted that,
13 (0.4) It was virtually all women?
14 Doing radio?
As Gwyneth begins her story by first telling about her theory, she is still swallowing the food in her mouth, but also emphasising her words, thus leaving gaps between her sentences, never really bringing her turn-units to an intonational or pragmatic completion. On line 07, when she finally ends her utterance – “Were quite different to the people who do radio” – with a falling intonation, all requirements of a turn-completion are seemingly realised and an apparent TRP emerges. The utterance is also followed by another rhetoric pause (line 08), which Lynne naturally interprets as a sign that Gwyneth has in fact completed her turn. This also becomes evident from the fact that throughout lines 01-07 Lynne’s gaze is steadily fixed on Gwyneth, but at the end of Gwyneth’s utterance on line 07, Lynne’s gaze falls down on to her food. She then decides to show that she has understood Gwyneth by saying “Okay” (line 09), and at the same time by doing so maybe also encouraging Gwyneth to continue. The moment when Lynne opens her mouth and begins to produce her utterance, Gwyneth immediately lifts her hands off the table and hastily begins her next TCU, as she was not in fact yet done with her story. At first she seems to assume that the others are still following her narrative and waiting for her to continue, but Lynne’s sudden “Okay” forces her to produce a TEPG, as she probably took the utterance as a turn-entry and felt the need to protect her speakership. After securing her right to talk again, Lynne finally gets to the actual story, to which the ‘theory’ part was merely a prologue, and moves on with her narrative.

Common to all the cases of using hand gestures presented above is that none of them is actually used by the speaker him/herself to self-select, but to maintain the right to keep talking after having already produced one TCU, in other words, to obtain a second turn at talk. The speaker either forecasts an upcoming TRP in the course of his/her ongoing TCU, or has already reached one, and anticipates a possible self-selection by another participant emerging, thus seeing it necessary to signal that s/he has not yet finished. Furthermore, in all the examples the turn-entry-preventing gesture proves effective,
which suggests that the concept is on some level collectively understood and adapted to despite different contexts.

5.2.2 TEPGs used for protecting an on-going turn

In addition to their use for obtaining second turns at talk, my research shows that turn-entry-preventing gestures also used for protecting turns under way from projected interruptions. In these cases, too, the triggering factor for the gestures lies in the speaker’s constant monitoring of his/her interlocutors, but not as much in self-monitoring anymore, as they appear in situations outside transition relevance points, in which the speaker's turn is being more actively monitored by non-speakers waiting for a possibility to self-select. Common to the cases under this category is that they seem to take place in somewhat more rapid narrative where the turns get transferred a lot between the speakers and also in situations where the current speaker has been holding the floor for a comparatively long time, in both cases there being an increased possibility of an ongoing TCU to be interrupted.

Edith, Jenny and Viola are enjoying some tea and cookies together and talking about their mobile phone contracts. Jenny is telling the others about a contract she used to have, when Edit suddenly cuts in with a turn-entry (lines 06–07) after probably assuming Jenny was already done with her turn. At the same time Jenny continues talking, and their TCUs end up overlapping.

(10) Always in Oulu <00:20:20–00:20:33>

01 JENNY: Unlimited text.
02 Yeah.
03 I I actually I used to have unlimited minutes to
04 talk on $ the phone,
and I traded that $i = n$, 

EDITH: [Are you a loser].

JENNY: [So that I could] have,

EDITH: (0.5) [2<RASP> %% </RASP>2]((EATING A COOKIE))

→

JENNY: Huh?

EDITH: (1.3) (((SWALLOWS COOKIE, LOWERS HAND))

Unlimited free talking minutes.

(0.3) or text message.

JENNY: (0.8) Unlimited text message.

On line 08 of the excerpt, after Jenny’s and Edith’s turns overlap, a gap emerges. Edith sees this as a TRP and tries to begin a new turn, but her mouth is still full of cookie, so she coughs loudly and at the same time raises her right forearm (line 09) as a sign that she is going to continue talking after she has swallowed the cookie (Image 10). This creates a relatively long pause of 1.3 seconds (line 11) in the conversation – apart from
Jenny’s instinctive ‘Huh?’ on line 10 – which suggests that the other two participants have understood Edith’s hand gesture and adapt to it, waiting for her to finish the cookie and provide her turn unit. The conversation continues normally after Edith lowers her hand and starts talking again. This example is somewhat similar to the case in example 8 in the way that a TEPG is provided but there is no time for the others to actually react to it as the current speaker begins to speak while still doing the gesture. In both cases the TEPG is triggered by a slight movement from a non-speaker, which is construed by the current speaker as a possible incipient turn entry.

One might argue here that Edith’s hand gesture was actually rather a turn-entry-device than a TEPG, but a close inspection of the video reveals that she had already taken the turn before raising her hand by beginning to talk, although failing at it at first. When she tries to talk but ends up coughing with her mouth still full of cookie, both Jenny and Viola have turned their gazes in her direction, thus acknowledging that Edith is now the current speaker, which also makes it possible for Edith to use a visual tool of reserving the right to continue talking. So, in this case, although the TEPG is not used for obtaining a second TCU but for maintaining an already started but then interrupted turn unit, the method and the results remain the same.

Guy, Robert and Rukmini are all foreign exchange students in Oulu. Guy and Robert are roommates, and Rukmini and Robert know each other from before. This is the first time Guy and Rukmini meet. For the past few minutes the three have been discussing different aspects of what it is like being a teacher and how teaching is seen as a profession in different countries. Guy is telling the others about teaching in Australia and comparing it with the Finnish system and the freedom and restrictions teachers have in the two countries. Guy has been holding the turn for a relatively long time and has maintained the same forward-leaning posture (as seen in Image 11) for several minutes.
(11) Oh my god <00:54:54–00:55:08>

01 GUY: And so,
02 it’s a-
02 Everything’s controlled by #NME
03 and,
04 whereas *here, *Img11

05 the teachers have autonomy.
06 In the classroom
07 th- (*RUKMINI GESTURES WITH HER HANDS) *Img12
08 GUY: (**GUY LEANS BACK AND SPREADS HIS HANDS**) the classroom is their,

*Img13

08 Their practice.
And the kids are the=ir,
Sort of,
ROBERT: To be filled with know[ledge]
GUY: [Yeah,]
[2Well,2]
RUKNMI: [2<F>Wwhoaaaah<F>2]
[2#no#no not filled not filled,2]
his tablet computer, which has started to annoy Anna a bit. After listening to La Marseillaise, the housemates start a discussion about the French revolution.

(12) A Strange Combination <00:40:37–00:40:50>

01 ANTOINE: Seven-
02 Uh,
03 It was nineteen ((PUTS HIS HANDS ON HIS HEAD)) ninety-seven when it- it started,
04 And the king was beheaded in ninety-one (0.3) No!
\(\rightarrow\)07 It was in ((*EXTENDS LEFT ARM, POINTING BEGINS*))
*Img14

08 ANTOINE: (1.6)((WITHDRAWS ARM, PLACES HAND BACK ON HIS HEAD))
09 Yeh.
ANTOINE: [eighty-nine!]

10 ANNA: [eighty-nine!]

11 ANTOINE: [eighty-nine!]

12 ANNA: [2eighty-nine eighty-nine!]

13 ANTOINE: [2eighty-nine!]

14 KYU: [2#eventy eighty-nine.

15 ANNA: Eighty-nine.

yes.

17 ANTOINE: And the king was beheaded in ninety-one

Antoine is telling the others about the history of the revolution and about the execution of the king, but he makes a mistake with the date and quickly shouts “No!” (line 06) when he notices it and then begins to correct himself. Kyu and Anna also spot the mistake and quickly raise their gazes towards Antoine after his exclamation (line 06). Antoine notices their reaction, and as he begins his new turn on line 07, he immediately extends his right arm and starts pointing in Anna’s direction (Image 14). The others seem to respond to this gesture and a gap of 1.6 seconds emerges while Antoine is trying to remember the correct year. Only after Antoine releases the turn on line 09 by saying “Yeh” does Anna shout out the correct year, and right at the same time Antoine also remembers the correct year and the two end up shouting it out together, with Kyu also stating his agreement. It is worth pointing out that Antoine (from Belgium) and Anna (from the Netherlands) sometimes get into friendly quarrels with each other and are not the least bit reserved about speaking their minds or pointing out when one makes a mistake or says something the other one considers “stupid”. Still, even though Anna notices Antoine’s mistake she keeps quiet after Antoine applies the pointing gesture.

The following example follows up the conversation in example 8, where the women are discussing TV’s reality cooking shows. The conversation has been very lively and there has been lots of natural and active turn-taking and turn-overlapping going on. Rebecca has just managed to produce a fairly long TCU of about 15 seconds without any interruptions, after which Gwyneth self-selects.
(13) Happy pigs Tape 2  <00:04:24–00:04:38>

01 GWYNETH:  # ye=ah,
02 I mean I think there’s a lot—
03 there ^are lots of good things that come out of that
04 for people.
05 [I mean even though there’s ones that ^I] never watch,
06 [((*QUICKLY RAISES HAND AND POINTS TOWARDS THE OTHERS*))]
   *Img15

07 like,
08 GWYNETH: (1.1) ((PAUSES TO SWALLOW, RAISES HAND AND EXTENDS FINGERS,
   PALM TOWARDS THE OTHERS))* Australian Idol # stuff.  
   *Img16
(0.6) I mean you think,
(1.3) for s- --
you know,
who is it,
one of those guys?
Shannon Noll,
or something.=
=He’s off being a,
LYNNE: Ye=ah.

On line 06 (Image 15) Gwyneth performs one of the many pointing gestures she produces during the conversation while she is still in the middle of her turn unit. In this case she does not seem to be paying much attention to whether or not the other two are going to self-select, as her gaze is turned towards the table and not towards the other speakers. On line 08, on the other hand, Gwyneth produces another hand gesture (Image 16) while she is swallowing her food. This time the swallowing creates a pause in her talk, and it is possible that she sees the pause as a possible place for either Lynne or Rebecca to take over the turn, as earlier on in the conversation gaps in the speech have
been quite quickly utilised for self-selection by current non-speakers. Also, during the pause in Gwyneth’s speech, whereas Lynne seems to be concentrating on her food, Rebecca is looking directly at Gwyneth, which may make Gwyneth feel it necessary to apply a TEPG in order to secure her right to continue the turn after she has swallowed.
6 Conclusion

Projection in turn-taking situations provides both the current and non-current speakers with the possibility of identifying and predicting turn completions before they even occur, as well as anticipating transition-relevance points and plan ahead a suitable place for speaker change. For the non-current speakers this projection is relevant from the point of view of gaining speakership, whereas by actively monitoring not only the gestures of the other participants, but also the construction and the progress of his/her own turn, the current speaker can predict situations where his/her own speakership becomes vulnerable and react to them. Furthermore, this active use of projection also provides the current speaker with a possibility to apply embodied actions such as hand gestures to ‘block’ any possible interruptions or attempted self-selections that would lead to potential speaker change.

As presented above, turn-entry-preventing gestures are hand gestures or other embodied actions that are used in order to either obtain a new consecutive turn at talk or to protect a turn unit under way from possible interruptions or self-selections by incipient next speakers. The examples showed that when utilised at the right time and place in the conversation, these gestures usually prove effective; none of the non-current speakers in any of the examples tried to go on with exploiting the possible TRP or interrupting an ongoing TCU after the turn-entry-preventing gesture had been applied, and the current speaker was able to finish his/her TCU without disruptions. It was also shown that the TEPGs worked to the same degree in different kinds of interactional situations and settings – both formal and informal – and also in different contexts, taking into account the topics of the conversations and the nationalities of the participants, thus implicating that the phenomenon exists and is adhered to somewhat universally.

In conclusion it can be stated that the same features used in conversation analysis for predicting and spotting turn completions in order to a non-current speaker to self-select can also be used by the current speaker for maintaining the right to the on-going turn
unit. By visually filling a gap in speech with an embodied action – such as pointing or raising one’s hand – or alternatively also applying a similar gesture when his/her TCU is already under way, the current speaker can signal the other participants not to obtain a seemingly free turn or to interrupt the speaker before s/he has finished.

Now that the basic principles of the phenomenon have been presented, there are many possibilities to continue doing research on the subject from the point of view of a wider variety of different kinds of situations and also with a more comprehensive collection of videoed examples. The examples used in this thesis presented to a certain extent similar situations with quite a narrow age group and small groups of participants, and it would be interesting to look into whether or not the shown patterns present themselves similarly in other forms of spoken interaction and with different age groups, too. Also, although the examples included speakers of many different nationalities, the language of interaction in all cases was English and all the conversations took place in dominantly western cultural settings. Thus, it would also be worth looking into whether or not TEPGs are similarly present in other cultures as well. In future research it could also be possible to see if monitoring the use of TEPGs could be utilised for studying group dynamics, e.g. from the point of view of whether or not different individuals' tendencies of using and abiding by TEPGs in conversations could be used for determining their role and social standing in the group from a psychological perspective.
References

Primary References

001 Always in Oulu (2009) Digital video file. Oulu Video Corpus English. 51 min.


017 International Section Meeting (2010) Digital video file. Oulu Video Corpus English. 60 min.


Secondary References


Appendix: Transcription symbols and some conventions

Symbols used in transcription from Du Bois et al. 1993
Modified to include some of the revisions by Du Bois 2003
(Version 9 October 2009)

UNITs

Intonation unit (one line is one IU) {carriage return}
Truncated intonation unit --
Truncated word -

TRANSITIONAL CONTINUITY

Final (clear falling intonation) .
Continuing (level, slight rise or fall) ,
Appeal (high rise, seeking a validating response) ?

SPEAKERS

Speech overlap [ ]
(numbers inside brackets index overlaps) [2word2]

ACCENT AND LENGTHENING

Primary accent (prominent pitch movement carrying intonational meaning) ^
Secondary accent`
Unaccented
Lengthening (of a sound, syllable) =

PAUSE

Long pauses > 0.7 seconds ...(0.8)
Time not measured, longer than a short pause ...
Short pause < 0.250 seconds (brief break in speech rhythm) ..
VOCAL NOISES

e.g., (TSK), (SNIFF), (YAWN), (DRINK), (CREAK), (GLOTTAL)

Glottal stop %
Exhalation (Hx)
Inhalation (H)
Laughter (one pulse) @
Laughter during speech (e.g. 1–5 words) @ (e.g. @two @words)
Laughter during speech (e.g. +6 words) @ (e.g. <@> many words </@>)

QUALITY

Special voice quality (e.g. voice of another) <VOX> words </VOX>
Forte: loud <F> words </F>
Piano: soft <P> words </P>
Higher pitch level <HI> words </HI>
Lowered pitch level <LO> words </LO>
Parenthetical prosody <PAR> words </PAR>
Allegro: rapid speech <A> words </A>
Lento: slow speech <L> words </L>
Marcato: each word distinct and emphasized <MRC> words </MRC>
Whispered <WH> words </WH>
Breathy <BR> words </BR>
Creaky <CREAK> words </CREAK>
Crying <CRY> words </CRY>
Yawning <YWN> words </YWN>
Singing <SING> words </SING>
e tc.

TRANSCRIBER’S PERSPECTIVE

Uncertain hearing #two #words
Uncertain #word
Indecipherable syllable #
Researcher’s comment ((comment))
Code-switching <L2> word or several words </L2>