Multi-functional Gestures in Interruptions

A Look at News Interview Situations

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Master’s Thesis
University of Oulu
English Philology
Autumn 2013
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1. Introduction

What have been extensively explored within the respective fields of conversation analysis, psychology, linguistics and gesture studies, are the ways in which a speaker uses both their speech and embodied actions together in their daily human interaction. In addition to the understanding of the symbiosis of embodied actions and talk, it has also been recognized in prior research on conversations that self-selection in turn-taking is not limited to the appropriate transition-relevance-points. This means that often people engaging in conversation do not wait until the other person has properly finished their talking before starting to produce their own talk. In this study, the focus is on this kind of turn-taking that happens during the current speaker's turn and can therefore be regarded as interruption. The goal of this thesis is to explain how certain gestures unfold in instances of interruption in news interview situations. I intend to discuss how these gestures unfold before, during and after the interruption or prevented interruption. I call these gestures multi-functional gestures because of the multiple roles they obtain throughout their existence. I will explore how these gestures function in relation to turn-taking and how they are used to serve other purposes during their developmental phases.

Pentti Haddington (2005) notes that most of the earlier studies on interaction focusing on news interviews start from the question-answer-structure of the situation, and they aim to look into, for example, how the sequential turn-taking system is managed among the interviewers and the interviewees. This question is to a large extent the starting point of this particular research as well, but it is approached here from a specific angle, as the aim is to explore instances where the participants abandon the pre-allocated turn taking machinery.

What needs to be taken into consideration as a crucial premise for the assumptions made and conclusions reached in this study is, that in debate situations, the debate is not only a battle of the ideas presented, but it is unavoidably a battle between the participants as well. This notion, of the two-dimensional nature of human interaction as transaction of content and as interactants communicating with each other, allows
us to regard the gestures accompanying the verbal utterances as embodied actions connected to the ideas as well as actions targeted at the fellow participant.

To support this notion I observed, whilst staring at video data, that some gestures appear to be closely connected to the other participants’ physical presence. Gestures, particularly during interruptions, seem to be more frequently used when the other participant is in the same physical space. Similar gestures do occur in interviews conducted via video connection – which becomes evident in section 4.3., where such an instance is analysed – but, presumably, not as frequently as in face-to-face interviews. This, however, is merely an additional suggestion and will require more research in order to be regarded as a robust academic claim.

Nevertheless, taking into account this idea of interaction happening on the level of ideas and participants, it is appropriate to state that a single gesture can serve multiple functions during its occurrence and even simultaneously. For example, the gesture can be used a) during the current speaker's turn to cut him off in the middle of their turn, b) as a rhythmic gesture to emphasize the speaker's speech, and c) as an accusative tool during the interruption for pointing at both the idea presented and the speaker responsible for that idea. These kinds of gestures that operate on several levels, and that I call multi-functional gestures, are the focal points of this study.

Gestures are like thoughts themselves. They belong, not to the outside world, but to the inside one of memory, thought and mental images. Gesture images are complex, intricately interconnected and not at all like photographs (McNeill 1992: 12).

This attempt at explaining the multi-functionality of gestures in interruptions will be made by analysing carefully selected examples of different kinds of interruptions, some more hostile in nature than others, and some successfully carried out, while others are prevented from happening. All the news interviews investigated to achieve these goals are taken from news programmes televised by two major broadcasting companies, CNN and BBC, the former American and the latter British. Fortunately, and contrary to what one might think, many news programmes proved to be cornucopias of disruptive interaction, including plenty of interruptions. I have analysed five examples of those interruptions in order to attain credible conclusions
regarding the role and the multi-functionality of gestures in such situations. Three of these examples are taken from the *Oulu Corpus of US British Television Interviews*, which consists of news programmes dating back some ten years, and two examples are taken from recently aired interviews available for watching on YouTube.
2. Interaction

In this chapter the focus will be on some important aspects of human interaction. I will explain, with respect to the aims of this thesis, what interaction is and how it works. Particularly, the focus here will be on turns at talk in conversations. I will explain how turns are constructed and of what kinds of units. I will also provide information on turn taking as a phenomenon. These matters will be delved into in section 2.1.

I will then proceed to explain the concept of interruption which is a key term in this study. We all roughly know what interruption is, but I will provide a more in-depth look into what kinds of interruptions exist and what qualifies as interruption in this particular research – all this in section 2.2.

In addition to turn taking and interruptions, another key term I will discuss in detail is gesture. In section 2.3., I offer descriptions of different kinds of gestures, both regarding their physical appearances and movements and their differing roles as tools of interaction. First, I consider gestures in general, and then a few of the most relevant types of gestures are dealt with in their separate sections.

2.1. Conversation Analysis

This study on the role of some specific embodied actions used in the institutionalized interactional setting of news interviews is located in the field of conversation analysis (henceforth, CA). To understand the analysis conducted and the observations made later on, we must first consider CA as a field of study.

Social interaction is the primordial means through which the business of the social world is transacted, the identities of its participants are affirmed or denied, and its cultures are transmitted, renewed and modified. (Goodwin & Heritage 1990: 283)

According to Stivers & Sidnell (2013), it can be claimed that the origins of CA well from three people; Harvey Sacks, Gail Jefferson and Emanuel Schegloff. The focus of the field of study lies in the investigation on how people conduct their everyday interaction, their conversations. Stivers & Sidnell (2013) continue to argue that for a
long period of time conversations were treated, and written about, in order to
discover and explain what constitutes a ‘good conversationalist’. But, this approach
makes a presumption of a specific set of features that render someone a good
conversationalist in a ‘society of politeness.’ Thus, this approach was arguably not
the best way of exploring human interaction – a colossal concept that encompasses
social situations of magnificently varying natures.

Sidnell (2013) claims that CA means looking at how talk-in interaction functions as
an orderly means of communication and how, by doing so, it is a crucial tool used to
construct the very core of our societies. Important conversation analytical focal
points are, for example, turn taking in conversations, embodied actions in relation to
talk, the conventions of interaction in different institutionalized settings and the
social orderliness of talk-in interaction.

The set of methods employed in CA are rather specific and distinct in respect to other
fields of study and especially to other fields studying interaction and language. These
methods, which are discussed in more detail in section 3.1., are applied in explicit
qualitative case-studies where a set of examples are scrutinized, leading to careful
inductions of the structures of human interaction.

In this brief section, I provided a look at conversation analysis as a field of study.
Next, I will discuss some major concepts of conversation analysis in more detail
starting with what is one of the most fascinating parts of social transaction, the turn-
taking machinery.

2.2. Turn Taking

Most people are able to converse with each other rather effortlessly and with seeming
ease. Talk-in-interaction usually proceeds in a smooth manner, and the people
participating in a conversation have what appears to be a built-in knowledge of when
to speak and when to listen. This research aims to show how multi-functional
gestures work in interruptions and, thereby, in relation to turn-taking. Therefore, for
the purposes of this study, it is essential to take an in-depth look at how the turn
taking machinery operates and facilitates an environment for peoples' successful
interaction. Firstly, an explanation on the most fundamental elements of sequential turn taking is in order.

Drew (2012) explains that turns, or turns-at-talk, are sequentially organized elements of interaction during which each of us provides our own contributions to the ongoing conversation. Turns-at-talk are always taken, designed and carried out in order to do something, i.e., there is always interaction (emphasize here on the latter word) under way when we communicate. These action-carrying turns are also in close-knit interplay between each other. Each turn is somehow related to the prior turn, and each turn affects the subsequent turn, both in terms of the content and the manner in which turns are performed.

Clayman (2012) claims that turns are traditionally thought to be incrementally constructed of turn-constructional units (TCUs) preceding and succeeding one another. TCUs are conversational building bricks, such as phrases, words, clauses and sentences. Each TCU is an independent and self-sufficient utterance that can be interpreted as possibly complete. When a TCU is brought to its completion, it creates a transition-relevance place (TRP) where a change of turn can happen fluently, as the floor opens for other speakers’ to select a turn. It is important to note that change of speakership does not necessarily happen at every particular TRP. Furthermore, sometimes TCUs are not even successfully brought to completion.

When a TCU is aborted before it is brought to completion, this is not usually treated as a locus for turn transition. Aborted TCUs tend to be initially followed, not by talk from a different speaker, but by further talk from the same speaker (Clayman 2012: 152).

Here Clayman (2012) suggests that the right to speak after an aborted TCU remains with the same speaker but continues to claim that problems may occur regarding the rights to speak:

Thus, in the environment of an aborted TCU the current speaker is still ordinarily treated as having primary rights to the floor. There are, however, some complexities surrounding this general principle regarding the distribution of speaker rights. The orientation to current speaker still retaining the floor depends in part on precisely how that speaker aborts the turn in progress. (Clayman 2012: 153)
However, it can be argued that this notion of the current speaker holding primary rights to the floor at an aborted TCU presupposes that the idea, presented by Schegloff (2007), of agreement and acceptance being promoted over disagreement and rejection, is in effect during that particular interaction. It is perhaps safe to claim that when the participants in the conversation represent opposing views on a matter, strongly disagreeing on a topic, they are more than likely to launch at their opponent’s aborted TCU and self-select a turn – interrupting the other participant.

How, then, do people know when the TCU is coming to an end? The TRP, fortunately, does not appear to speakers unannounced. The end of the current speaker’s TCU is projected in the speech and through the actions of the speaker. The projection consists of different aspects of speech and other actions, none of which are separately sufficient as projectors of a TCU, but combined they fore-shadow the emergence of a TRP. Clayman (2012) proposes that these aspects include a) syntactic, b) prosodic and c) pragmatic elements.

The syntactic forms of projecting an arriving TRP occur most frequently of the three aforementioned clues, and they may include, for example, the listener recognizing the subject + verb + object structure of a sentence and pouncing on the opportunity to take a turn at the end of such a TCU. The prosodic features of talk include intonation among others. When a speaker is, say, listing objects, the intonation tends to rise towards the end of all the words preceding the final word, and the following speaker will notice the falling intonation on the final word, which serves as a sign of an impending TRP. The pragmatics of talk and interaction also factor into projecting a complete TCU. This means that by understanding the content of what is said, the next speaker can begin to see when the desired words and actions are close to being delivered and hence, the TCU close to its ending (Clayman 2012). What is important to further highlight and understand here is that none of the above-described cues are sufficient in indicating a transition relevance place separately, but combined they form a robust basis for the projection of the emerging TRP at the end of a TCU.

However, TCUs are a tricky concept. Ford et al. (1996: 428) claim that due to the fact that TCUs are interactionally achieved, they (and turns, by extension) are impossible to define and predict precisely. Ford et al. (1996: 428-429) continue to
suggest that “rather than a static set of resources to be deployed, TCUs are best understood as epiphenomena resulting from practices.”

This approach to turns, that TCUs that Ford et al. (1996) talk about, reflects the way turns are primarily looked at in this paper. It is not my intention to neglect the features of grammar, syntax or prosody when they are relevant in projecting an impending TRP, but, first and foremost, I am concerned with whether the speaker has brought their designed action and content to completion. Ford et al. (1996) explain that when examining turns in their database they were not able to “convince themselves” that syntax was playing the most important role in projecting trajectories and endings of turns. Rather, they found that factors such as pragmatic, prosodic and gestural cues were most relevant for the task. They claim to have found it problematic and difficult to describe completions of turns without looking at “the sequential location and the interactional import of an utterance” (Ford et al. 1996: 429). They employ the term “pragmatics” as an umbrella term for such dimensions of talk.

In this section I discussed turns and turn-taking, as they are of crucial importance in this paper where the relation of gestures and turn-taking are studied. I described the units, of which turns consist and established relevant terminology, providing necessary information on the TCU, the TRP and the concept of projection. Next, it is time to consider the phenomenon and act of interruption in detail.

2.3. Interruption

This thesis shows how gestures are used in interruptions to regulate the turn-taking and to serve other purposes. Therefore, it is necessary to take a look at what interruption is. While this study is being conducted, researchers have been studying interruption for over forty years according to my calculation based on Drummond’s (1989) claim. However, a clear, universal definition for interruption does not exist. This is partly due to the fact that the definition for interruption as a phenomenon and/or action depends on the objectives and perspectives of each particular study undertaken. Because of, what Schegloff (2000) describes as the prevailing, slight
ambiguity as to what interruption really means, it is now crucial to provide clarification with regard to this study.

First of all, several types of interruption exist. For the purposes of this particular paper it is not necessary to introduce all possible types but merely say a few words to underline what kinds of interruption we are concerned with. Fairley et al. (2010) provide a categorization into two classes, “positive” and “intrusive”:

1. Research has demonstrated that positive interruptions (which are sometimes anticipatory, an attempt to finish another’s thoughts) and supportive interruptions (“I totally agree with that’) are evaluated positively by targets of interruptions… (Farley et al. 2010: 195).

2. However, deep interruptions which involve a topic change (LaFrance 1992) and intrusive interruptions, which intrude into the crux of another person’s point (James and Clarke 1993), are consistently associated with perceived and actual verticality. Participants rated themselves as less influential, dominant, and competent when they were interrupted than when they were not, showing the status-organizing effects of interruption (Farley et al. 2010: 195).

Within the confines of this investigation, mainly the latter – the intrusive interruption – will be dealt with. It often emerges from differences in opinion and, hence, from disagreement which is another term worthy of a brief description. Clayman (2002: 1385) claims that disagreement is essentially a situation of language use, where two primary participants engage in transaction of oppositional nature.

Earlier in this paper the basis for the general turn-organizational setting of conversation was laid relying on prior research. The concept of projectability was explained, but it is perhaps useful to describe it briefly again here, for it is highly relevant when dealing with interruption. The flow of turn taking in everyday conversation is facilitated by the projectability of TRPs.

Projectability: allows participants to anticipate the probable course, extent and nature of the talk in progress (Sidnell 2007: 235).
Because participants are able to anticipate these features of talk, it should be quite clear when the current speaker is going to complete their turn and the floor will be unoccupied and ready for the next speaker to select turn.

According to Drummond (1989), if we hold on to the assumption that such projectability exists, we can say that interruptions not only violate the turn taking organization of conversations but also represent the breakdown of it. Drummond (1989) continues to argue that interruptions are, “points at which a recipient attempts to obtain control of the floor, specifically at non-projectable transition relevance places.” This is the essence of interruptions in terms of this paper – a recipient/possible next speaker intentionally cuts off the current speaker during their clearly incomplete turn. An important notion is that for the purposes of this thesis, it is not of much interest whether the current speaker has reached a TRP in a grammatical sense at the point of interruption, but whether they have reached the end of their turn regarding the content of the talk. Discussing what qualifies as interruption, Lamoreux & Berg (1992), leaning towards a description provided by Nofsinger (1991), state it clearly:

If the next speaker selects too early at a TRP, he or she is overlapping rather than interrupting (Lamoreux & Berg 1992: 44).

However, as far as this research is concerned, interruption can be detected in situations where the current speaker does manage to complete their current turn at talk. As we see in this example taken from Section 4.2., overlap occurs, as the participant performing the interruption (Begala) starts talking during the current speaker’s (Gaffney) turn.

```
1 BEGALA: [3The question is3],
2 GAFFNEY: [3We sure don't3] want him out running
3 [4around doing [5moredamage4]5].
4 BEGALA: [4The question [5is,though4 ]5],
5 WILSON: [5Aah5] --
6 BEGALA: which him.
```
The current speaker resorts to means of rush-through, as he accelerates his speed of talk and is able to finish his turn in terms of all three features; syntax, prosody and pragmatics. In such a case the interactional act will be considered that of interruption regardless of the fact that the current speaker does complete their turn, as the interruptor manages to change the topic after a great deal of disruptive overlap.

In this section I talked about interruption as a phenomenon and a conversational tool. Relying on previous studies and theories on interruption, I provided a description of what is deemed interruption in this particular research and, to further clarify my explanation, I briefly introduced a segment from one of the five examples studied in greater detail in chapter 4.

2.4. Gestures

In this section the focus lies on gestures. I will explain how such embodied actions have been regarded in the past in contrast to how they are perceived in some contemporary conversation analytical theories. Furthermore, my goal is to describe and categorize a few important gesture types to benefit the study at hand, and to aid the reader in understanding the role of gestures in interaction. The descriptions of gestures rely on prior research, not least on the works of Adam Kendon (2004).

Within literate cultures, spoken language has traditionally been regarded as an independent form of communication, separate from bodily movements. According to Linell (2005), gestures and other embodied actions are usually considered paralinguistic or non-linguistic phenomena and are therefore not relevant or interesting to be explored in linguistic study. However, this view has been criticized by several researchers for the misconception it adopts that spoken language works as an autonomous system of sending and receiving messages purely via verbal utterances. Linell (2005) continues with the following:
This view, dominant in linguistics and more widely in literate cultures and their educational systems, amounts to portraying languages in terms of sets of abstract objects, for example sounds and words, rather than in terms of meaningful actions and cultural practices. (Linell 2005: 156)

This classic understanding of language as a set of abstract objects separate from, for example, pointing gestures seems quite unrealistic when we look at our everyday human interaction. It would appear that in our daily conversations we constantly employ our body parts to accompany our speech, or we might even use gestures to deliver messages without talk. For example, one might adequately respond to an inquiry regarding the location of their home by pointing at a house with one’s finger, or one could respectfully turn down an offer to eat a cupcake by shaking one's head from side to side. Examples like this should not be treated as universally accurate, for meanings of some embodied actions differ significantly between cultures. What we can confidently deduce from these mundane examples is that human communication is a system in which spoken language and bodily actions are intertwined in constituting our interaction.

Fortunately, in recent years, the understanding of the integrational (Harris 1998) nature of spoken language and embodied actions has grown significantly and become the subject of extensive study within the field of conversation analysis (CA). Juan C. Morero-Gabrera (2011) describes the core idea of this integrational approach in the following way:

Linguistic communication cannot be described as a simple interaction of different autonomous and self-contained systems, but as a complex integration of several communicative activities complementing each other (Morero-Gabrera 2011: 615).

Morero-Gabrera (2011) supports the description, provided earlier by Harris, which also strongly suggests that our interactive behaviour consists of more than just the separate system of verbal language:
The term integrational alludes to the recognition that the linguistic sign alone cannot function as the basis of an independent, self-sufficient form of communication, but depends for effectiveness on its integration with non-verbal activities of many different kinds (Harris 2010).

The premise of discussing talk and gestures is that of the integrational approach in this paper. The thesis will show how gestures can work in news interview situations – in collaboration with verbal utterances – to interrupt the current speaker's turn or to counter any such attempt. The greatest interest regarding gestures is on the multi-functionality of gestures (introduced in section 2.3.1), and on how these gestures emerge and develop with talk. First, it is necessary to take a closer look at different kinds of gestures to establish a basis for locating these gestures from the corpus of video data. This is also done in order to explain how these gesture types emerge and develop within multi-functional gestures. Introducing these gestures will enable us to perform the analysis on how the interruptions unfold in the interviews and how the gestures are applied in those situations.

First, it is relevant to take a brief look at the history of classifying gestures, for this will provide us with the useful understanding of how different gestures have been regarded in relation to human communication in the course of history. After the introduction to different classifications of gestures, I will proceed to consider some particular gestures of interest in greater detail and in respect to this research. Adam Kendon (2004) talks about the way gestures have been classified.

As we shall see, gestures have been classified according to many different criteria, such as whether they are voluntary or involuntary; natural or conventional; whether their meanings are established indexically, iconically, or symbolically; whether they have literal or metaphorical significance; how they are linked to speech; their semantic domain etc. (Kendon 2004: 84).

Kendon's work, among some others’, will serve as the primary guideline of classifying gestures in this section. Gestures have been classified using different criteria and terminology, and it is important to understand that a single, clear, universal categorization of gestures is impossible to establish. Gestures serve different purposes in different contexts and, in fact, they can work on several different levels in a single instance, depending on the perspective, approach and
objectives of the examination being performed. In this study the idea is to identify
the levels on which the located gestures function and the ways in which they
contribute to the interruption or the preventing of interruption.

Much of the earliest efforts to classify and define gestures and their meanings were
focused on emotions; not an entirely untouched aspect of studying embodied actions
in modern day CA either. The distinction, however, is that in the 17th and 18th
century the study of gesture was mostly focused on art, especially that of theatre.
Nonetheless, it is useful to look at these early classifications, for it will enhance our
understanding of gestures and, hence, benefit this conversation analytical study. For
example, Kendon (2004) talks about how Bary made his early classification in 1679,
describing twenty different fundamental emotions and their embodied counterparts in
the form of bodily posture and actions performed by hand and arm. These included,
for example, frankness, tenderness, confusion and complaining. This sort of
classification of gestures and body positioning into "vocabularies" of emotional
actions was carried on in the 18th century, but it appears to be inadequate in
describing gestures for the purposes of CA.

However, regarding this research, Gilbert Austin (1753-1837) did make some
interesting observations in his classifications. Austin divided gestures into significant
and not significant gestures. Significant gestures are those that “serve in the
expression of substantive meaning, or which have content” (Kendon 2004: 88). The
not significant gestures are gestures with no specific content. These gestures are used
on a general level, and obtain their meaning from the time and manner in which they
are performed. The not significant gestures can serve, for example, “in extending or
limiting...[or] enforcing ... the predominant idea” (Kendon 2004: 89). This notion of
using a gesture in enforcing one's idea – a gesture Austin further specifies as
emphatical – is one to be entertained again in chapter 4 of this paper.

One quite interesting gesture considering this paper, which Kendon (2004) talks
about, is the regulator. The regulator is a term coined by Paul Ekman, and it appears
in his classification of gestures. The regulator belongs in the wider category of
illustrators which includes six different types of gestures. Regulators are gestures that
are used to control the floor and the back-and-forth nature of speaking and
interaction between the participants. Kendon (2004) continues to describe Ekman’s regulators as gestures that do not fit into other categories and have the sole function of regulating the interaction. In their research, Ekman and Friesen have noted that several gestures can have regulating effects, but the class of regulators is reserved for those gestures that only serve this purpose. However, in this research we are dealing with multi-function gestures that will be considered regulators when their primary function is to regulate the interaction. This will be the case even if the gesture serves other purposes during its regulative phase or at some other phase of its progression.

Gestures play an important part in the projection of turns. Gestures often precede the component of speech with which they carry the same meaning or content. This can be attributed to the fact that gestures do not require grammatical processing before they are produced (McNeill 1985), but it seems that often the gesture is used prior to one’s turn, during ongoing speech of the current speaker, in order to project that it is one’s intention to select a turn (Streeck & Hartge 1992: 137). This kind of pre-positioning of a gesture to signal an incipient turn can be seen in the examples analysed in chapter 4.

In this section the concept of gestures as an embodied action was discussed in detail. I described some earlier, and some more contemporary classifications of gestures, and I also provided some information on gestures’ relation to turn taking and projection. The Categorizations provided by Kendon (2004) are perhaps the most influential part of prior studies on gestures in terms of this thesis.

2.4.1. Pointing gestures

Despite long being considered the simplest, most primitive form of communicative action, the humble pointing gesture has much to reveal about the nature of human social intelligence and mind. (Enfield, Kita & Ruiter 2007: 1723)

In addition to being humble and primitive, the pointing gesture is one of the most frequently used hand gestures. If we consider the high volume of pointing, particularly in situations of disagreement and conflict in interaction, we may find it useful to dedicate a short section for discussing such gestures alone.
Enfield *et al.* (2007) define the pointing gesture quite adequately as a communicative bodily movement that forms a vector with a direction that is defined in the context, and is spatially in relation to a place or a thing relevant to the utterance it is performed with. They continue to execute a division of pointing gestures into two basic categories; those that are big in form (henceforth B-points), and those that are small in form (henceforth S-points). The first category consists of gestures that usually carry the primary meaning independently, without any crucial contribution from possible additional talk. A B-point is, for example, a gesture pointing at a building to answer the question, “Which of these houses is yours?” In a nutshell,

The form/function properties of B-points are relatively straightforward. They focally serve to establish joint attention, and to inform, with respect to some perceptually available, and spatially locatable object (Enfield *et al.* 2007: 1724).

S-points, on the other hand, are performed alongside verbal utterances as secondary interactional tools, with the talk encompassing the focal point of that particular transaction. There is also a difference in the physical features of S-points and B-points. The latter are performed with a fully extended limb to serve the purpose of pointing where something is, whereas the former are performed with much less physical grandeur and decisiveness. One form of S-points is that of abstract deictic gestures, which are directed at something abstract or empty – an idea, for example – that is not physically present. (Enfield *et al.* 2007: 1736). In this thesis I suggest that gestures, particularly those of multi-functional and progressive nature, can adopt the roles of both S-points and B-points successively.

Kendon (2004: 200) provides us with further worthwhile portrayal of pointing gestures. When performed with the index finger, constituting a line, a pointing gesture is used to either command or accuse, or sometimes both at the same time. But, when the gesture is performed with an open hand, which constitutes a surface, it is used to offer or present. In such a case, the gesture’s implications are polite instead of imperative in manner.

In this section I talked about the pointing gesture, which is one of the most commonly used gestures in human interaction, and one of the most frequently
occurring gestures within the progressive phases of multi-functional gestures under investigation in this research. Interestingly enough, pointing gestures are also often used to affect turn-taking in conversations.

2.4.2. Multi-functional gestures

Perhaps the most significant concept in this paper – in terms of the embodied aspects of interaction – is the multi-functionality of gestures. In this section I will provide a detailed explanation on this idea that has not, to my knowledge, been studied previously within the respective fields of conversation analysis and gesture studies, or any in other field concerned with human interaction.

Multi-functional gesture (henceforth, MfG) is a term coined during, and for the purposes of, this research. It is not so much an attempt to establish a new class of gestures, to accompany such categories as, for example, deictic, iconic or pointing gestures, as it is an alternative way of approaching certain gestures. In this research I will regard the whole progression of the hand movement as a single gesture and divide it into a number of developmental stages. Schegloff’s (1984: 286) suggestion that “the acme or the thrust is the core of the gesture, and is what we mainly refer to by ‘the gesture’” does not conflict with the way gestures are treated in this research. Here, it is merely suggested that a single gesture can have several acmes or thrusts, and, therefore, it can encompass several gestural functions whilst still remaining a single gesture.

Another characteristic of the MfG is that during its progression and appearance, the hand(s) performing it never retreat to their home position. This characteristic is also one of the important features of the MfG, rendering it a single gestural continuum and a concept worth studying, and separating it from simply being a succession of independent gestures.

As will be demonstrated in chapter 4, some gestures serve several different purposes throughout their existence and even transform from one kind of gesture to another to function on a different level. These are the gestures that will be referred to as MfGs in this paper.
Another way to think about the MfG is to approach it as a cluster of gestures. For example in, section 4.1., what will be looked at is a gesture that initially begins as an iconic gesture representing the number of verbal utterances, but which eventually develops into a regulator for controlling the floor and preventing interruption. Therefore, MfGs are a sort of progressive continuum of gestures dividable into a number of phases. In this study they are analysed in relation to interruptions in news interview situations. The analysis will show, for example, how a particular MfG is first utilized to disrupt another participant’s turn, with the form and function of the gesture then changing to serve another purpose, usually regarding the content of the talk following the interruption.

In this section I laid the foundation for the concept of multi-functional gestures for this thesis and – hopefully – for potential further discussion on gestures and their roles in interaction in similar contexts. It is crucial for the reader to comprehend the multi-functionality of certain gestures to fully fathom the discussion in the chapters reserved for the analysis and the conclusion of this study.
3. Data and Methods

This chapter is dedicated to discussing the data studied and the method applied to conduct this research. First, in section 3.1., I will consider the tools used in this research in order to part some crucial knowledge on the reader, to legitimate the following analysis, and to render this report a coherent and meaningful conversation analytic study. While introducing CA as a field in section 2.1., I already offered some basic information on the methods it encompasses, but here I will consider the manner in which this study is conducted more explicitly.

Having dealt with the methods, I will move on to describe the data analysed; the news interview as a concept and the particular programmes the examples are extracted from. This discussion on news interviews in section 3.2. begins with a glance at the history of news interviews. My hope is that placing the news interview on a historical context will help establish the news interview as a prominent subject of this research, and as an important part of the necessary flow of information required to maintain a modern society.

3.1. Method of Study

In prior sections I have discussed the aims and focal points of study in CA, and now it is time to look at the methods used in order to conduct these investigations on the structures of conversation. I will also explain how the methods were applied in this study.

Conversation analysis is analysis of real-world, situated, contextualized talk. (Stivers & Sidnell 2013: 8)

The basic methods of CA can be divided into a number stages of research, first of which is often the gathering of data. In this study the phenomenon to be investigated was roughly determined prior to the acquiring of data, which is probably the most common order of business. My interest was initially to look at news interviews and the employment of embodied actions in situations characterized by conflict. Fortunately, my department in the University of Oulu has a video corpus consisting of American and British news interviews dating back some ten years. And, as
Liddicoat (2007) argues, video recordings are quite possibly the best way of examining conversations, because they enable the researcher to look at the occurring phenomenon over and over again, even in slow motion, making it possible for one to observe even the smallest details in interaction. So, I started by examining those videos and extracting cases of interruption out of the corpus. As is often the case with qualitative CA research, the phenomenon to be investigated really only presented itself to the researcher after the exploration of the data. This is when the patterns and similarities of certain gestures in certain situations emerged from the video material. Only at this point, after having determined the phenomenon, could the research question(s) be polished into their final form. After scrutinizing the data and finding suitable examples, the next step in this study was to do some transcribing.

Transcribing, in its most basic form, is plainly writing (or typing) down what is said in a certain situation of interest. But, in addition to what is said, conversation analytic transcriptions often include the details of how something is said or done. Hence, transcriptions include symbols to indicate, for example, the tone, intonation and stress of talk. Even embodied actions, gaze and other interactional factors are often displayed in transcriptions via varying conventions; in written word in this report.

Images of interactional situations are often provided along with transcriptions in order to solidify the research and to make the analysis more concrete. It is not always possible for the readers of a particular study to gain access to the videos analysed, nor can they be expected to do so in order to understand a written report. Images are especially important when dealing with gestures, and thus, I provide multiple screenshot images of all the video extracts in chapter 4 of this thesis. Additionally, to understand the specific set of symbols used to signify certain features of talk in the transcriptions, a list of transcription conventions is added as an appendix to the very end of the paper.

By looking at video recordings of similar instances of a particular phenomenon, and by transcribing the situations, I managed to perform a detailed qualitative analysis on the use multi-functional gestures in news interview interruptions. Having done this, cautious conclusions could afterwards confidently be drawn of said phenomenon on
a larger scale. However, considering that the study on the multi-functionality of gestures in interruptions is limited to this paper, the concept would benefit of further investigations shedding more light on it. Sidnell (2013) further strengthens this notion:

The conversation analyst must collect multiple instances of a phenomenon in order to discern the generic, context-independent properties of a practice…(Sidnell 2013: 78).

In this section I have introduced the basic methodology of CA. I also explained how those methods have been applied for the benefit of this research. Now, having discussed the tools of study, it is appropriate to delve into the data to which those tools were then applied.

3.2. News Interviews

News interviews, a specific set of programmes in particular, comprise the corpus for this research. In this section the history, the developments and the nature of news interviews will be considered in some detail. This is done in order to emphasize the eminence of the concept in our society constructed by human communications, and by doing that, to render this kind of research legitimate and important. Most importantly, by introducing the history and practices of broadcast news and interviews, I will establish why and how news interviews have developed into their modern day form, enabling this conversation analytic study to be performed on them.

The news interview is a landmark genre of broadcast journalism, occupying a prominent position in political communication from the early days of its institutionalization in the 1930s (Schudson 1994) up to the present (Patrona 2012: 145).

The above statement by Patrona is certainly true, but the roots of the modern news interview reach further back in time. The term interview derives from the French term, *entre voir*, which refers to a face-to-face meeting, particularly to a meeting arranged for formal interaction. Initially the interview was an event of ceremonial stature and nature. Later it developed into a journalistic practice and was stripped of
all its ceremonial features, and in the hands of American journalists it built up to its modern-day prominence, says Schudson (1994). What was for a long time a way of eliciting information for newspapers and other printed publications, naturally transferred into a broadcasting practice after the inventing and establishing of radio as a medium. After being adopted by radio broadcasters, the news interview developed towards its current form as a practice, integrating the techniques of the interviewer addressing the interviewee to create the structure of a modern interview. A lion’s share of these early radio interview techniques were later directly absorbed into the television news interview.

Television news broadcast is an interesting, yet almost integrated a part of our modern western world lives. Most of us are quite familiar with televised news as an everyday phenomenon and understand the general idea of its practices. From a layman perspective, the context is quite simple and requires no further investigation to understand – just turn on the television at certain, nationally established times of the day, and a person of convincing appearance and decent posture will tell you what is currently happening in the world. However, for academic purposes, I will now provide some information on news broadcasting and a closer look at one-on-one news interviews and multi-party panel discussions.

The traditional design of any news broadcast, either television or radio, is that of a series of narratives provided by either an anchor or a correspondent. Greatbatch (1988) argues that since approximately the mid-1950s, news interviews have grown to represent a substantial part of broadcast journalism. Although it is quite clear that along with the emergence of the internet in the 1990s – as what we have later witnessed to turn into a network of endless possibilities and an unlimited amount of free information – the role and conditions of television news have changed, it has still remained a vital source of news for Anglophone people.

Even now in the era of the Internet and the possibilities its scarce regulations and endless space – and perhaps partly due to these features – televised news interviews still maintain a status of credibility as a portal for political discussions, where established journalists have dialogues with, e.g., high-ranked government officials.
These kinds of dialogues between a high-ranked government official and a news correspondent are a crucial part of the data scrutinized in this study.

The fact that throughout the past decades long-standing commercial networks have had to compete with an array of competition, ranging from cable channels and VCRs to DVDs and online journalism, has resulted in significant alterations regarding the atmosphere and components of news broadcast. With all the competition and the financial pitfalls encountered by broadcast television networks, particularly in the US, the producers have grown more wary of production costs and had to come up with different, cost-effective formats for television news programmes. Formats that rely solely on human interaction require relatively scant pecuniary efforts, and these formats were thereby extremely well-suited for such a need. One should not undermine the importance of these developments in the history of news programmes regarding CA studies such as this, for they played a prominent part in forming modern day news formats, and thereby provide researchers with fascinating data.

These formats include traditional interviews, panel discussions, debates and a range of audience-participatory bits. Regarding this research, the most intriguing feature of such formats is that they embody qualities of “spontaneity” and “liveliness” that audience members are believed to like (Clayman & Heritage 2002: 2).

These very qualities – liveliness and spontaneity – such human interaction-based formats of news reporting have are the triggers for this research that endeavours to explore and explain the role and use of multi-functional gestures in news interview interruptions.

What is usually called plainly a news interview is a setting of no more than two participants, an interviewer and an interviewee. When relevant, I will refer to this kind of setting as the traditional news interview, in order to make a distinction between the other format constituting the corpus for this study – the panel discussion interview – which is a multi-party situation with more than two participants. A common panel setting in news interview programmes includes an interviewer and two interviewees. First, however, it is time to take a closer look at the traditional
news interview as a standardized journalistic phenomenon from the conversation analytic perspective.

The news interview is, first and foremost, *a course of interaction* to which the participants contribute on a turn-by-turn basis, for the most part by asking and answering questions (Clayman & Heritage 2002: 13).

This short definition of news interview by Clayman & Heritage (2002) is quite accurate, and it includes the interviews’ most distinctive and, perhaps when approached from a conversation analytical perspective, its most extensively scoped feature – the turn-by-turn basis of news interviews. The news interview differs from everyday conversation situations in that it has a pre-allocated turn-taking system. This means that the structure of the progression of interaction is predetermined with the question-answer framework. The interviewer’s (henceforth the IR) role is that of presenting the interviewee (henceforth the IE) with relevant questions, whereas the IE’s role is to provide the IR, and perhaps more importantly the audience, with adequate answers to these questions. In all its simplicity, this is the news interview’s structure in terms of the interaction between the participants.

What further distinguishes news interviews from other institutionalized interactive settings, such as courtroom proceedings, is a special kind of *footing*. Marianna Patrona (2012) describes this notion of footing (coined by Goffman in 1973) as a feature of news interviews where

...both the interviewer and the interviewee produce talk – not so much for each other but for an absent, overhearing audience. This is visible in the design and sequential properties of contributions by the parties involved (Patrona 2012: 146).

However, in later sections of this paper it becomes obvious that a considerable amount of interplay takes place strictly between the IRs and the IEs, even though the material is by design produced for the audience. This is especially the case when the participants engage in a disagreement or argument. After all, the participants are human beings, and sometimes the conventions of everyday conversations – such as
interrupting – are introduced to institutionalized settings as well. The pre-allocated turn-taking system, however, is not the only convention that can be abandoned when the interaction does not go as planned.

The news interviewers are usually expected to a) maintain as neutral as possible during the interview and b) to stick to asking relevant questions from the interviewees. Their job, in a nutshell, is to extract information from the IEs and present it to the audience. Sometimes the IR neutrality can be compromised, and this is demonstrated in Example 5 in chapter 4.

Previous studies also show that while adhering to the norm of neutral reporting, interviewers can locally depart from the position of neutrality (Piirainen-Marsh & Jauni 2012: 638).

In this section I have discussed news interview as a phenomenon and a significant part of news reporting in our society, as well as the interactional structure and roles played by the participants in an interview. This was done to explain how and why the modern formats of news programmes have been developed into fascinating subjects of conversation analytic studies. Next, in section 3.2.1, I will briefly talk about interview situations of more than two participants.

3.2.1 Multi-party Interviews

Maintaining a rather similar setting of question-answer-interaction as in traditional news interviews, the panel discussion or debate is characterized by a larger number of participants including more than one IE and/or IR. In this section I will introduce multi-party interviews as a concept and compare and contrast it to a traditional news interview, in order to benefit the analysis of this research that includes examples of both settings.

Another distinctive difference between a traditional interview and a panel interview is that politicians and other public figures of highest rank (e.g., presidents and prime ministers) rarely participate in the latter. Pre-election rallies, and other events of national and international magnitude, are of course exceptions to this general rule. It is customary for panel interview participants to consist of analysts, journalists,
researchers and other experts specializing on the particular political or societal issue under consideration. Clayman & Heritage (2002) argue that the reason for the selectivity of higher ranking public figures, regarding interviews, is that because they draw great national and international attention to themselves solo, there is little sense in them lowering themselves to the level of their political opponents by sharing the spotlight with them. In the examples of this thesis as well, it can be seen that the highest ranking political figures usually only take part in traditional interviews, whereas the debate and panel discussion programmes attract analysts and specialists.

The manner in which panel interviews are put together in the first place and the motives for choosing the participants are of particular interest regarding this study. The core idea often is to select two or more IEs representing opposing views, opinions and ideologies to debate on a controversial topic. The aim is to generate lively conversation, and in many news programmes the atmosphere is not unwelcoming to disagreement either. It is reasonably easy to understand that such a concept is intriguing to plenty of viewers, for it is likely that their own opinions are – at least to some extent – in line with one of the participants and collide with those of the other(s). Clayman & Heritage (2002) state that panel interviews have gained more foot hold amidst the world of news broadcast coverage steadily throughout the past decades. Rare in the 1950s, occasional in the 70s and standardized since the 80s, panel interviews have been a very popular form of television news broadcasts since Ted Koppel’s Nightline program, which was initially promoted under the auspices of the slogan, “Bringing people together who are worlds apart” (Clayman & Heritage 2002: 299).

In this section I portrayed multi-party news interviews as a concept and an institutionalized interactional setting. This was done to distinguish the multi-party interview as an interactional context separate from, but very similar to a traditional news interview with just two participants. In chapter 4 of this paper there are five examples analysed, and three of these examples are extracted from a multi-party interview and two from a traditional news interview.
3.2.2. CNN’s Crossfire

The long-running political debate program first debuted in 1982 with hosts Pat Buchanan and Tom Braden and over the years made cable news names out of Tucker Carlson and James Carville before being canceled in 2005 in the face of declining ratings and an on-air attack by Jon Stewart… (Morabito 2013: 20)

Now I will talk about an American news program, from which two examples analysed in chapter 4 are extracted. CNN’s Crossfire is a debate program where the hosts and the guest(s) discuss topical issues. It is an excellent source of data for this research focused on interruptions in interview situations, as the aim of the program is to facilitate and create heated debates between the participants. The introductions of participants in the beginning of each show support this claim; there are two interviewers or hosts, if you will, of whom one is introduced as being “on the left” and the other “on the right”. These phrases explain the seating arrangement of the hosts and roughly indicate their whereabouts on the political spectrum – one on the left (liberals), and the other on the right (conservatives).

The number of interviewees varies between different episodes of the programme. The most common number of participants in Crossfire is four; two hosts and two guests in “the middle”. There have, however, been Crossfire shows where the hosts are interviewing only a single guest. Amongst the data selected for this research, there are examples of both instances. The analyses on the examples chosen from Crossfire can be found in sections 4.1. and 4.2.

3.2.3. BBC2’s Newsnight

Comprehensive coverage of the day's important national and international news stories (BBC 2013)

BBC2’s Newsnight is another long-running daily news broadcast show that has been on air since 1980. The main host of the show from Mondays to Wednesdays is Jeremy Paxman, who has been a part of the Newsnight editions ever since 1989, and who is arguably the most well-known presenter and interviewer in the programme.
Jeremy Paxman, who one of my university lecturers aptly called “the master of interruptions” in the spirit of this research, is featured in two examples (2 & 5) in chapter 4 of this report.

One of the examples including Paxman dates back to December of 2003, whereas the other is quite a current interview that gained a lot of hype in the social media throughout the autumn of 2013. The interesting difference between these two examples, that occurred 10 years apart from each other, is that in the older extract Paxman is the one performing the interruption, and in the freshly aired interview it is Paxman who is interrupted. Also, there are major differences in the settings of the interviews; the former is a multi-party interview conducted via video connection, and the latter is a face-to-face interview with a single IE. The Newsnight extracts analysed in this thesis can be found in sections 4.3. and 4.5.

3.2.4. CNN’s Piers Morgan Live

Known to United States viewers primarily for his role as a former judge on NBC’s America’s Got Talent and as the winner of Celebrity Apprentice, Morgan has had a long career in journalism in the United Kingdom (CNN 2013)

CNN’s Piers Morgan Live is one of the news interview programs out of which a segment is extracted, transcribed and analysed in this research. In this study the data includes both American and British news interviews, and this selection is done purposefully in order to make inductive statements regarding both of these Anglophone countries. And, including Piers Morgan Live in the mix is a great way to connect the two countries, as the show is American, but the host himself is British.

CNN’s Piers Morgan Live (formerly known as Piers Morgan Tonight) is a show that begun to air in 2010, filling the slot of the long-running, prominent news show Larry King Live. As an interviewer and a celebrity, Piers Morgan is extremely controversial in the United States. He has, for example, taken a strong stand against the gun laws currently in effect in the U.S., which has prompted fierce conflicts between many guests on the show and resulted in highly controversial public opinions on Morgan – some have even demanded he be deported from the country.
However, the Piers Morgan interview used in this paper is far less dramatic and flagrant in manner. Morgan interviews a former president of the United States of America, and no shouting competition takes place during the conversation.

In the three previous sections, I introduced the news programmes examined in this paper. The programmes were discussed separately in order to explain the nature and characteristics of each show. Understanding the reputation, goals and customs of these programmes will provide the reader with some beneficial perspective for the following chapter where examples from these shows are considered in detail.
4. Analysis

The fourth chapter of this paper is undoubtedly the most important part of the research, as it is dedicated to presenting the analysis and findings of this study. The chapter is divided into five sections, each dealing with a single, thoroughly examined example of interruption and the phenomenon of the multi-functional gesture. By discussing these five examples, I will demonstrate how the multi-functionality of gestures is closely connected to and affects the unravelling of the interaction and the occurring turn-taking.

I have utilized the theoretical framework, and the analytical tools present in the previous chapters, to perform an explicit and micro-detailed study on the interactional phenomenon of interruptions in news interviews. Example 1, analysed in the following section, deals with a case of a prevented attempt at interruption.

4.1 The IE prevents the IR’s attempt to interrupt

The first instance (Example 1) I will discuss is from a CNN Crossfire interview with the setting of two IRs and a single IE. The participants are discussing an incident where a CIA special agent of Arabian descent has had trouble getting onto an airplane presumably due to his ethnic appearance. The two participants, IR1 and IE, who are engaging in an intense debate regarding the facts of the special agent case in this transcribed extract, are constantly overlapping with each other’s talk. A multi-functional hand gesture is used here to regulate the turn-taking.

1) Interruption prevented: Racial Profiling (CNN Crossfire: Dec 27, 2001)

1 IE: # number ^one. ((#IE lifts hand, extends index finger))  
2 And # 'number ^tw[o], ((#IE extends middle finger))  
4 IE: [2^He says2] -- # [3^Wait3]. ((#IE turns his hand around))
6  (0.5) # 'Wait. ( (IE thrusts hand slightly again for emphasis))
7  (0.4) And # 'he 'said, ( (strong thrust to stress the word))
8  (0.3) 'he 'said,
9  (H) just 'call the 'Secret 'Service office

In this extract we can see that there is overlap in the conversation. This kind of disrupted flow of talk has also preceded the transcribed part of conversation visible above. During the verbal interaction, there is an interesting gesture used by IE to counter the attempt at interruption by IR1. What is fascinating about this particular gesture is that it begins on line 1 and continues in action until line 6. The gesture, being a MfG, works on several levels and transforms throughout its occurrence. However, the hand performing the gesture never retreats to its rest position in between the transformations, and, therefore, it will be treated as a single gesture. I will analyse the progression of the gesture, attempting to unfold the way it works throughout its developmental stages and in relation to turn-taking. But first, it is necessary to explain why the suggested interruption in this example truly is an obvious case of interruption.

Prior to line 1, the IE has uttered a statement, "The guy's forms did work out", referring to the special agent they are talking about. On line 1 the utterance, "Number one", refers to this statement. After this the IE proceeds to continuing his list of statements by saying, "And number two". Now, at this point the signs of a TRP are not there – neither those of prosody nor pragmatics (see section 2.2.). For example, there is no falling intonation on line 2, nor has the statement to follow the "number two" been uttered. Thus, the turn of the IE has clearly not come to its conclusion, and the floor has not been opened for self-selecting of other speakers. Nonetheless, on line 3, IR1 self-selects a turn and starts talking resulting in overlap that prevents the IE from continuing his turn with the follow up fact to succeed the utterance, "And number two", on line 2. Considering these facts, it is safe to deduct that this self-selected turn at talk resulting in overlap is a clear example of attempted interruption by IR1. However, the IE is able to counter the interruption using a decisive
combination of embodied action and talk. Let us start examining the gesture from the point it first emerges.

The gesture of interest first emerges as an illustrator when the IE’s index finger is extended to signal the abstract object of "one" on line 1. At this point of the gesture the palm, though closed, is facing the IE himself. It can be argued that the secondary role of the gesture is that of a baton, for its movement follows and strengthens the rhythm of the verbal utterances on lines 1 and 2. So far the gesture has not directly affected the turn-taking of the interview, but it is still only developing towards that function.

On line two, the gesture continues with the extension of the middle finger. At this point, the constantly evolving gesture continues to accompany the verbally uttered listing of statements. What we now have, on line 2, is a hand positioned palm-to-speaker with the index finger and middle finger extended. This is the place in which the gesture obtains the role of an iconic gesture, as the two raised fingers symbolise the number two. This argument regarding the iconic role of the gesture could be made at the very start of the gesture, but an extended index finger is likely to be the most common basis for a gesture, rendering it a bit ambiguous in this case, and that is why it is necessary to be quite wary of rushing to classify it as iconic. Thus, it is safer to make the argument for the iconic role of the gesture on line two. At this point, the gesture has not yet been used for controlling the turn-taking of the interview.
On Image 1.1., the course of the gesture is represented throughout its existence, from complementing the content of the arguments, to regulating the turns. After the four phases represented on Image 1.1., one more development happens to the gesture, but for the purpose of portraying the first transformations clearly, this phase is not introduced on Image 1.1., but as a separate image later on. So far we have looked at the first two stages of this MfG’s development. The gesture first emerged as an illustrator (line 1), and baton (lines 1, 2). It then developed into an iconic gesture to resemble the number two uttered on line 2. On line 5 the gesture transforms to a different kind of gesture and adopts a new primary function, which is of great interest in this report – that of a regulator.

As we can see on Image 1.1., on line 5 the palm of the IE’s hand turns around to face IR1, whose attempt at interruption it aims to suppress. It is appropriate to claim that this is an example of an Open Hand Prone (OHP). It might seem that in an OHP the hand should be opened and the fingers extended, but we are not primarily concerned with the physical features of the gesture being rigorously faithful to the original model, but with the way it functions. Also, in this case it must be taken into
consideration that the gesture is a constantly developing one. As explained earlier in this section, on line 2 the IE is uttering a list of facts, first of which is already stated prior to line 1. The second fact to complement the utterance, “And number two”, is never stated, as IR1 jumps in with his interruption. Therefore, the number two, iconically represented by the extended index and middle fingers on the second phase of the gesture (line 2), is left lingering on the third, regulating phase of the gesture on line 5. So, despite the fact that all the physical characteristics of an OHP – all fingers extended – cannot be found in the gesture, it is utilized in the exact same way as a traditional OHP.

This multi-functional gesture does not work as a separate embodied utterance but in intertwined connection with the occurring talk. In all the four stages of the gesture, it follows the usual design of the collaboration of gesture and speech in that the beginnings of the gesture’s thrusts precede the beginnings of their verbal counterparts. And, as Schegloff (1984) states:

> The critical property of iconic gestures … is that they are pre-positioned relative to their lexical affiliates, achieving their affiliation by means other than co-occurrence with them (Schegloff 1984: 276).

Even though Schegloff attributes this characteristic of pre-positioning to iconic gestures, similar pre-positioning occurs with other gestures as well. As stated in the previous paragraph, the pre-positioning in our example is clear in all four stages of the gesture. However, it is perhaps most evident in the transformation phase on line 5 where the hand turns around, and the gesture ceases to serve the primary functions of representing the numbers one and two and supporting the rhythm of speech, adopting the role of a regulator. Here, the verbal utterance, “wait”, comes significantly later than its embodied equivalent. It can be seen that even before the “wait” is uttered, the halting regulator gesture affects IR1’s talk when he notices the gesture. Once the verbal command “wait” is added to the mix, this verbal and embodied imperative is heeded without resistance by IR1.

At this phase of its progressive arc, the regulating gesture is a pointing gesture, in addition to being an OHP by its function. This, I believe, is why the gesture works so effectively in controlling the occurring turn-taking.
There are, of course, other factors at work here, including gaze and the use of eyebrows (not to mention the overall authoritative presence of the IE) to which I will come back later. But, it is obvious that the hand gesture plays a major role in this successful countering of the attempted interruption.

Whereas, according to Kendon (2004), the OHP works in a halting, calming and stopping manner, the pointing gesture carries accusative and commanding indications. Also, the pointing gesture has the effect of singling out the participant it is targeted at. In a way, the pointing gesture – when targeted at a co-participant in an instance of successive disruption of interaction, like in our example – strengthens the idea of addressing the listener in a dominant manner. Even though it is quite clear, judging by the general structure of this conversation, that the IR1 and the IE are talking to one another, the pointing gesture isolates the other speaker as the opposing party in a very definitive manner. Here the pointing gesture is performed with two fingers which are the relics from lines 1 and 2. Nonetheless, the gesture is clearly aimed at IR1, even though the fingers are extended somewhat upwards, as can be seen below on Image 1.2.

On line 6 of the transcription, at the penultimate phase of the gesture, the IE says, “wait”, repeating what he has already uttered on line 5. This repetition happens both verbally and via the hand gesture. The biggest difference in the verbal expressions between the two “waits”, on lines 5 and 6, is that with the first one the intonation is somewhat rising, whereas the repetition has a falling intonation, and it is thus more
definitive. What comes to the hand gesture, there are no significant changes to it from line 5 to line 6. However, another embodied action emerges on line 6 to strengthen the halting effect of the talk and the hand gesture, as the IE rises his eyebrows to accompany the hand gesture and speech.

After the successful prevention of the IR1’s interruption, the hand and the two extended fingers remain in the same position, and yet another thrust occurs (Image 1.3.). This time the gesture, with its emphasized thrust, is performed as a baton to strongly stress the word “he” on line 7, within the utterance “and he said”. At this point the MfG has returned to work towards enhancing the effects of the content of talk, having been briefly transformed to serve the purpose of regulating the turn taking process; to stop the interruption from happening, that is.

The case of this particular countering of interruption is also interesting in terms of the setting it occurs in. The person attempting to interrupt is IR1, who, by regular news interview standards, has got the role of regulating the conversation and its turn taking. Here the pre-allocated turn taking system is clearly abandoned, as the IE asserts his dominance regarding the interaction by countering the interruption and telling IR1 to wait. This is evidence of the fact that even in institutionalized environments of interaction, such as news interviews, the roles of the participants as interviewers and interviewees, and the responsibilities attached to those roles, may be bulldozed aside by the conventions of everyday interaction, particularly when disagreement or conflicts occur.
In this section, it was demonstrated how a hand gesture worked on multiple levels, evolved in relation to the talk-in-interaction and affected the turn-taking process. Example 1, which was studied in this section, is a situation where the interviewer and the interviewee are immersed in a heated debate over relevant facts. IR1 attempts to interrupt the IE by self-selecting a turn, whilst the IE is in the middle of his incomplete turn, listing factual statements. This leads to overlap and the interruption that the IE manages to suppress, as he succeeds in regaining his turn by using verbal commands and a decisive hand gesture. The gesture utilized is a multi-functional gesture, which serves several purposes throughout its existence, having greatest effects on the interaction in stopping IR1’s interruptive turn. The progression of the MfG is quite interesting, as the gesture first works as an illustrative tool of highlighting the talk and then rapidly transforms to prevent the interruption. The regulative phase of the gesture aids in providing the IE with the possibility for further talk and gesturing. So, the MfG progresses to functioning as a baton to emphasize the rhythm and the content of the IE’s talk – all this without being withdrawn to home position, rendering it a single, progressive gesture.

4.2. The IR interrupts the IE in disagreement

Many gestures are performed with just a single hand. However, a significant number use two hands, and among the two-handed gestures there are two kinds. In some gestures the hands move in the same pattern but in mirror images. Such gestures do not seem to differ semantically or functionally from their one-handed counterparts. In other two-handed gestures, however, the two hands perform different movements (McNeill 1992: 117).

The way David McNeill (1992) describes two-handed gestures in the above quotation is, though indubitably true in general, somewhat conflicted with what I suggest in this section. The gesture explored here in example 2 is precisely the kind first described by McNeill (1992); the two hands move in the same pattern but in mirror images. However, in this particular case I propose that the gesture differs both semantically and functionally from any one-handed counterparts. In this section I will analyse another gesture and its progressive development into a multi-functional
gesture, from serving one purpose to another, with the main focus fixed on its utilization in interruption. First, it is necessary to offer the transcription of the segment and briefly explain what is going on in terms of the interaction.

2) The IR interrupts the IE: Racial profiling (CNN Crossfire Dec 27, 2001)

1 IE1: if--
2    if the choice is between having him on the
3    loo-se,
4    ... and having him as a prisoner,
5    I think we would all agree,
6    we would rather have him as a prisoner.
7    (H) It's not an enviable proposition,
8 IE2: [Yeah but] --
9 IE1: [and I think you]’re right to be # concerned ((#IR1 extends index finger in home position))
10    about it
11    we'd prefer to have him de[ad].# ((#IR1’s hand lifted and index finger flicked downwards))
12 IR1: [But] [2but 2]--
13 IE2: [2Yeah but2]
14 IE1:
15 IR1: [3The #question is3], ((#IR1’s index finger fully extended and aimed at IE1))
16 IE1: [3We sure don’t3] want him out running
17    [4around doing [5more damage4]5].
18 IR1: #[4The question [5is, though4]5], (#IR1’s both hands up, index fingers extended, waving side to side throughout the utterance))
19 IR1: # which him. ((#IR1’s hands and index fingers still extended, waving stopped and hands brought forwards))
Right?

There are two entities. We're conflating two very different entities. ((IR1’s both palms opened and pushed together))

In this extract from yet another CNN Crossfire interview, the participants are debating over a few different matters; what should be the U.S. government's goals regarding Osama bin Laden, whether the U.S. government should be focusing their military resources on pursuing the Taliban or Al-Qaeda leaders, and whether the two organizations are inseparable or not. Once again, there is a relatively heated argument going on between the four people participating in the interaction. In this very brief moment of the interaction under scrutiny, the two participants mainly involved are Gaffney (henceforth IE1) and Begala (henceforth IR1).

Here the dynamics of the interview situation are rather interesting, as IE1 seems to be addressing IR1 when talking about the options of having bin Laden "on the loose", as a prisoner or dead, but he is actually responding to Wilson's (henceforth IE2) comments on how he would prefer having bin Laden dead and not as a prisoner. IE1 only directs his gaze and turns his head clearly towards IE2 on line 2 when he says, "on the loose", arguably projecting his disdain on IE2's comments and ideas. Even on line 8 when IE1 verbally addresses IE2 by saying, "you're", his face and gaze are directed towards IR1. It could be suggested that the reason IE1 is facing the interviewer, instead of the other interviewee, is the general question-answer-assessment framework (Clayman & Heritage 2002; Haddington 2005; Greatbatch 1998), according to which, the interviewers' main task is to ask questions, and the interviewees' job is to answer these questions. Here IE1 is, in fact, verbally assessing the content of the previous turn taken by IE2 but inclined to physically address IR1. It is after – and partially during – this assessment presented by IE1 when IR1’s gesture first begins to emerge.
Image 2.1.

On Image 2.1, we can see two phases of the gesture at play. Actually, only one real phase of the gesture is visible here, as it initially comes forth on line 9. But, it is perhaps useful to offer a glimpse at the hand position prior to the beginning of the gesture (lines 1-8). This position IR1’s hands are on prior to the gesture is called the “home position” or “the rest position” (McNeill 1992; 25). Here IR1 has his hands folded and resting against the table, although he does keep fidgeting with the folded hands throughout IE1’s turn, which can be interpreted as a projection of his willingness to self-select a turn as soon as the floor is open. However, the floor in this situation remains occupied, and he has to resort to interruption in order to gain a turn.

The actual gesture first begins to emerge on line 9 (see Image 2.1.), as both of IR1’s index fingers unravel from the folded position to point at the current speaker – IE1 – and the centre of the space between the speakers, which could be suggested to be the physical counterpart of the abstract, conversation analytic term, “the floor”. This is the preparation phase of the gesture, which McNeill (1992) describes as the first phase of the gesture. The preparation face, on a more pragmatic level, is the pre-positioning of the gesture used to create a “projection space” (Schegloff 1984) while the current speaker’s utterance is still unfinished. This pre-positioning of the gesture is used here to project that IR1’s intention is to take a turn. Hence, the preparation phase is already linked to the turn-taking of the interview, even though it alone does not produce desired results for IR1. Here, on line 9, the gesture shows first signs of its two-handed form, as both of the index fingers are briefly extended to point at the current speaker. At this point the gesture does not seem to differ from a single-
handed counterpart. However, later on the gesture carries both functional and semantic meanings that are heavily dependent on the very fact that it is performed with two hands. First, I claim that after the preparation on line 9, the gesture transforms into a one-handed “metaphoric gesture” (McNeill 1992).

Metaphoric gestures are described by McNeill (1992) as similar to iconic gestures in that they depict something, but instead of depicting something concrete, like iconic gestures do, their pictorial content presents a more abstract idea. Metaphoric gestures work in close connection with talk as in this example. IR1 lifts his left hand up from the preparation position, and he flicks his wrist downward with the index finger extended as can be seen on Image 2.2., on line 11. This part of the gesture begins on line 11, preceding its verbal counterpart which appears to be “The question” on line 15. The reason the gesture begins so significantly in advance becomes apparent in the transcription; IR1 attempts to gain his turn already on lines 11 and 12 by gesturing with his hand and saying “But”, which will eventually be followed with “The question is” on line 15, and repeated on line 18. The pointing gesture with the downward flicking motion can be interpreted as IR1 pointing at the abstract object of “The question”, and he is sort of offering the other participants an object for discussion. McNeill’s (1992) description fits our example rather nicely:

…the concept of a genre of a certain kind (the Topic) is presented as a bounded, supportable, spatially localizable physical object (the Vehicle) (McNeill 1992: 14-15).
After the flicking motion, the extended index finger lingers in anticipation of IR1’s turn, pointing at the current speaker and holding on to the abstract object, “The question”. The gesture could partly be interpreted as a deictic (Kendon 2004), for the index finger is pointing at something, but in this case it is pointing at the abstract object, “The question”, so it is perhaps more reasonable to emphasize the metaphoric feature of the gesture. Having been classified here as a metaphoric gesture during its first thrust, the gesture proceeds to develop to serve IR1’s other purposes – firstly, that of interrupting IE1 by rejecting his idea and changing the subject.

Image 2.3.

The next phase of the gesture is very interesting, for it carries significant content of its own, delivering to the participants a specific message, quite different from the verbal utterance it is performed alongside with. On line 18 IR1 performs a verbal utterance, overlapping with IE1’s ongoing turn, and says that “The question is, though”. While uttering this, he incorporates the right hand into the gesture and waves both of his extended index fingers and his head from side to side. The gesture, performed with both hands and emphasized with the head movement, is essentially a rejection. It is metaphoric in the sense that it depicts something abstract; unacceptance regarding IE1’s ideas. Here the gesture carries its separate meaning. Though closely connected to the verbal utterance, “The question is, though”, the gesture provides its own message of denial and rejection. Noteworthy is also that while performing this gestural rejection and verbal utterance on line 18, the whole upper body of IR1 moves backwards, away from the other participants and IE1 in particular.
After the rejection performed with the two-handed metaphoric gesture, IR1 performs the act of interruption which initially started on lines 11 and 12 with the preparation of the gesture and some verbal overlap. The interruption is successfully completed, as there is no more overlapping in talk, and IR1 gains total control of the floor. This is a pivotal point for the turn-taking and the gesture, as IR1 finally gains his turn, and the gesture’s main task is successfully carried out, proving that the multi-functional gesture emerged and progressed with a crucial role in relation to the turn-taking of the situation. On line 19 he utters the question he has referred to on lines 15 and 18; “Which him.” Simultaneously with this verbal statement, he leans his upper body forward again, having leaned back during the rejection, and he performs gestural stress on the first syllables of both uttered words with his extended index fingers. However, at this point, the two-handed gesture is not performed only to function as a baton but to offer metaphoric symbols – objects – to complement the question. The two extended fingers represent the two absent entities the participants are discussing. Kendon (2004) calls these kinds of gestures “narrow gloss gestures”, where the body parts performing the gesture (in this case fingers) portray the spatial, or abstract, relation between two objects discussed.

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On Image 2.4., we see the final phase of the gesture, which is performed on line 22, simultaneously with the uttered verb “conflating”. Here the gesture functions as an iconic gesture, merging two abstract and metaphoric entities together and providing embodied portrayal for the content of its verbal counterpart. The final phase of this
MfG is iconic in depicting the act of conflating, but metaphoric in the sense that it is used to symbolically conflate two abstract and absent objects purely on a figurative level.

In this section I have performed a detailed analysis on the developments and functions of a MfG in a multi-party interview situation. There were four participants in the interview, three of whom engaged in the interaction, and two of whom were mainly involved in the interruption. The person doing the interrupting here in example 2 was IR1, who at first attempted to gain a turn via verbal utterances, but quickly incorporated a multi-functional gesture to successfully interrupt the IE1 and self-select a turn. What was demonstrated is how the gesture first emerged to affect the turn-taking, providing IR1 with the control of the floor and enabling him to continue presenting his own idea. After the interruption, the gesture continued to develop and transform in relation to the talk.

4.3. The IR self-selects to regulate the interaction

Now I will proceed to consider an interruption that is result of no disagreement or conflict, but strictly a matter of preventing a fellow interactant from selecting a turn due to time constraints. Once again, there is a multi-functional gesture at play, this time performed by the IR performing up to his responsibilities of controlling the turn taking and the overall conducting of this multi-party interview. First, let us start with a brief explanation of the plot afoot in Example 3.

Example 3 scrutinized here is an extract from an episode of BBC's *Newsnight* program that aired on December 17th 2003. The host of the show, Jeremy Paxman, (IR) is interviewing the Egyptian writer Mona Eltehawi (IE1) and Dr. Ghada Karmi (IE2) via video connection (as mentioned in the introductory chapter of this paper; though less frequent than in face-to-face situations, gestures are also used when participants are not in the same concrete space). The topic of discussion is the capturing of Saddam Hussein, the widely published images of the seizure and their
effects on the Arab world in particular. The discussion is quite calm in manner, and the interruption only occurs at the very end of the interview, as the time reserved for this particular segment runs out, and the discussion must be concluded. This interruption, which is the starting point of the IR's final turn to conclude the conversation, is provided in the transcription below. In the analysis of Example 3, I will show that the IR’s gesture is multi-functional, performed to interrupt and, thereby, it affects the turn-taking of the interview. The gesture also continues to accompany the talk that follows the interruption.

3) The IR interrupts to conclude interview: Discussing Saddam Hussein (BBC2 Newsnight: Dec 17, 2003)

1 IE1 Untill it does those things there’s no way out
2 IR o[kay ]
3 [We've] been at this for over fif[2ty ] years
4 IE2 >[2look]<
5 >[3look]<
6 IR # >[3Than ]k you very much ivv- sorry< ((IR extends left hand towards IEs with index finger extended))
7 i # really wish ((extends rest of fingers, hand turned around palm upwards))
8 we had more time
9 im # sorry we dont ((hand turned around again, palm downwards))
10 but # thank you very much ((whole upper body moves to face viewers, away from IEs, hand waves along with body movement))

Prior to line 1, IE1 has performed a rather long turn at talk, explaining her opinions and listing "things". The IR clearly detects, particularly on line 1, a projection of an impending completion of IE1’s turn on a pragmatic level. IE1 performs a conclusive TCU, referring to certain actions that should be taken, all of which she has listed prior to claiming that "Until it does those things there’s no way out.” On line 2 the IR makes an attempt at self-selecting in the form of the uttered word, "okay", but he
ends up overlapping with IE1 who is persistent to continue her turn with an additional TCU on line 3. The utterance on line 3, signalling IE1’s frustration over the topic, can be regarded as an additional TCU, as IE1 has already concluded her turn regarding the main content of talk designed to be delivered.

On line 4 IE2 makes an attempt at gaining a turn, and she arguably does this in order to react to IE1’s monologue and to present her own view on the matter. IE2’s rushed utterance “look” is produced while the current speaker’s turn is still in progress, resulting in overlap with IE1’s final TCU on line 3. This effort, made by IE2 to gain the floor, is the projection perceived by the IR of IE2’s willingness and intention to start talking. This particular realization on the IR’s part is what initiates the interruption studied in this section. This interruption is accompanied and affected by a developing multi-functional gesture, first two phases of which are captured in Image 3.1.

![Image 3.1.](image)

On the left-side screenshot on Image 3.1., the gesture can be seen on its first stage of development. It begins as a pointing gesture, aimed at IE2 who is the woman visible on the screen on the right. The function of the gesture during this first phase is that of interruption and, by extension, controlling the floor. Therefore, we can in great
confidently call it a regulator. The unfortunate issue with this recording is that it is only on line 6, simultaneously with the word “much”, when the camera is switched from a close-up shot of IE1 to the angle showing all the participants. This is why it is impossible to determine the specific point in time, and transcription, where the gesture begins. However, taking into account prior research on the relation of gestures and talk (McNeill 1985; Streeck & Hartge 1992; Kendon 2004), we can confidently make an educated guess that the beginning of the gesture precedes its verbal counterpart in this case as well. Considering this idea that the pointing gesture begins prior to the talk it is related to, we can deduce that in its earliest phase, the gesture is a B-point (Enfield et al. 2007), carrying the focal point of the interaction contributed by its performer, as no talk yet occurs from the IR. In other words, the gesture simply exists to point at IE2 before any talk is added to the mix by the IR. So, in its earliest phase, this MfG already affects the turn-taking of the interview.

5 IE2 [look-]

6 IR >[3Than ]k you very much ivv- sorry< ((IR extends left hand towards IEs with index finger extended))

In this extract from the transcription, it shows how, on line 5, IE2 made a second attempt at gaining a turn after the first utterance, by saying “look”. Having observed IE2’s first utterance and having realized her intention to start talking, the IR raises his hand to point at IE2 and performs an abrupt join of his own on line 6, “Thank you very much ivv- sorry”. This is where the gesture abandons its initial role of a B-point and embraces the role of an S-point, complementing the talk that carries the focal content of the IR’s turn. The IR bulldozes IE2’s utterance in order to obtain control of the floor, using a combination of the accusative pointing gesture and the decisive, high-volume, high-speed utterance. After this first rather dominating phase of the gesture, it transforms to serve a more lenient purpose, accompanied by a significant change in the tone of talk.
On the second phase of the gesture, visible on Image 3.2, the meanings of both the talk and the embodied actions change dramatically. The IR shifts his posture slightly to the left, tilts his head to the left and turns his hand around; palm upwards with all the fingers extended. All these embodied features of his turn at talk he performs while uttering, “I really wish we had more time” on lines 7 and 8. This shift, from the index finger pointing gesture to the open hand pointing gesture, is a remarkably indubitable example of the different meanings pointing gestures may carry according to Kendon (2004); index finger extended = imperative & open hand = polite offering. Taking into account the sympathizing wish presented simultaneously with the gesture by the IR, the second phase of the gesture can even be regarded as a metaphorical gesture illustrating his condolences for the need to bring the interview to a closure. After this, however, the hand performing the gesture is flipped around again so that the palm turns to face downwards, the tone of the embodied action and talk shifting from the sympathetic wish to a repetition of the apology.
On Image 3.3., we can see the two final phases of the gesture, the first of which occurs on line 9 of the transcription. The IR turns his palm around, not completely to face the floor, but away from the previous position of palm facing upwards in offering. He performs another apology, and he repeats his regret that they have run out of time. However, this time the gesture works as a baton, with the wrist performing very subtle but clearly visible flicks to emphasize the first syllables of the uttered words “sorry” and “don’t.” At this point, it seems that the only purpose of the gesture is to provide rhythm for the verbal utterance, and it does not appear to carry any other content or meaning.

The final phase of the MfG, visible above on Image 3.3., is an interesting one, as it is used by the IR as a gesture for transferring the focus from the interaction with the IEs, to facing the absent audience, the viewers watching the show. This is a concrete example of the notion of footing (see section 3.2.) at play. On line 10 the IR addresses the IEs for the last time by saying, “but thank you very much”, as he turns around to face the cameras. While turning his whole body around, the IR waves to the IEs and moves his hand from left to right horizontally with all of the fingers extended, forming an OHP (Open Hand Prone). Kendon (2004: 250) claims that such a horizontal wave with an OHP is often used to symbolize something being finished or through. This notion of completion and/or finish certainly pertains in this example, as the whole point of the IR’s self-selected turn is to regulate the floor and bring the interview to an end.
In this section I discussed a multi-party news interview situation with a single IR and two IEs, both of whom were in contact with the IR via video connection. Despite the lack of physical presence on the IEs’ part, the IR still used a multi-functional gesture to regulate the turn-taking of the interview and to complement the content of his talk. However, as an additional suggestion, I will mention that there seems to be a significant difference in the number of gestures that participants use in interviews conducted via video connection, compared to situations where all the participants are in the same concrete space.

4.4. No conflict – the IR performs a helpful interruption

This section is reserved for exploring a segment from an interview where Pierce Morgan interviews Bill Clinton, a former president of the United States. The atmosphere of the situation is characterized by serenity, and the interview is conducted in a calm and orderly fashion. Here, in example 4, the institutionalized turn-taking framework functions wonderfully throughout the interview as do the pre-assigned roles of the participants. For example, the IR does not show signs of provocative behaviour, such as purposely inviting the IE to disagreement or conflict. The IR maintains his neutral role of asking questions and shows reverence towards the IE with his interactional demeanour, which is often the case with IEs of such high-profile political status, as Clayman & Heritage (2002) claim. Nonetheless, despite the lack of blatant contention, interruptions occur in this interview as well. A multi-functional gesture emerges with – and to perform – the interruption and continues to develop with the interaction that follows. Thereby, Example 4 is further proof of the phenomenon under investigation, the phenomenon being multi-functionality of gestures that work in relation to turn-taking, and in varying roles alongside the talk possibly preceding and following the interruption or prevented interruption.
This particular interruption happens when the IR and the IE are discussing another high-profile political leader, Vladimir Putin. The transcribed extract here begins with the IE describing Putin as a political figure. While he is doing so, he is stuttering a bit and having problems finding words and structuring his utterances. The IR can quite clearly observe these difficulties the IE is experiencing on lines 1-3, and, perhaps as a result of this, he jumps in with an interruptive, self-selected turn at the first TRP after the IE's TCU on line 4. On syntactic and pragmatic grounds, the TRP is there after the IE's TCU that ends with the word "smart" on line 3. But, judging by the facts that a) the utterance, "he's very smart", has a rising intonation towards the end, b) he opens his mouth right after finishing the sentence, and c) he emits a glottal creak that overlaps with the IR's self-selected turn, we can deduce two things: 1) the
prosodic projection of a completed turn is not there, and 2) the IE did have the intention of continuing his turn. Thus, we can safely claim that the IE was not finished with his turn, and the IR interrupted him on line 4, even though the interruption is not intrusive or performed to assert any kind of dominance in the conversation.

Image 4.1.

The gesture begins on line 4 with its initial function being that of taking the floor. The gesture emerges from the home position as a pointing gesture performed with the arm fully extended. Here, the arc and the motion of the gesture are quite large and point to a specific object, the IE – All characteristics of a B-point. Nevertheless, the gesture is not particularly used for pointing at a location, but rather to further emphasize the verbal utterance, "well you know him better than most people", which renders it an S-point. In other words, the gesture alone does not provide us with any information, but it only works with the speech to isolate the IE as the topic of that particular utterance. In addition to pointing at the IE, the pointing gesture is used to obtain control of the floor. The IR moves his hand in a piercing motion to accentuate the words, "well you know him", which at the same time furthers his successful attempt at gaining the floor. The word "you" is also highlighted in speech by a stress
and a slight rise in both volume and intonation. So now, the gesture has worked here alongside the talk to affect the turn-taking system, and the IR has self-selected a turn.

Having gained control of the floor by stating the fact on line 4, and emphasizing it with the aid of the gesture, the IR switches the topic back to the primary subject of conversation – Vladimir Putin – and dissolves the pointing gesture aimed at the IE, as can be seen below on Image 4.2. An interesting issue occurs at this point regarding turn-taking, when the IE decides to provide an adjacency pair to IR's statement in the form of a confirmation on line 5; "ye:a i do". This quick turn taken by the IE comes in a non-relevant place for transition as well. The IR appears to perceive this as a possible loss of turn and performs a rapid abrupt-join – “wh-what was he like” – in order to maintain his turn and ask a question. This abrupt-join results in another overlap on lines 4 and 5.

Image 4.2.

During this overlap, when the IR initiates his question, he successfully holds on to his turn and does this with the combination of the abrupt-join and the hand gesture, of which the latter transforms from a pointing gesture to an OHP with the palm facing the IE. While this OHP initially seems to operate on the pragmatic level of signalling “halt” to the IE, because of the transient overlap, this function only exists
for a remarkably brief moment during the abrupt-join, which is the words “wh-what was he like”. This OHP, which worked effectively with the abrupt-join, was already the second instance in Example 4, where the MfG clearly affected the conversation and its turn-taking. As the overlap is resolved and the question on lines 6-8 advances, the IR’s right hand – having so far been idle and in home position – is incorporated into the gesture, and the function of this MfG changes from serving regulative purposes to working towards another end.

Image 4.3.

It is unfortunate that the angle, from which Image 4.3. is captured, does not fully show the positioning of the IR’s hands during this phase of the gesture. The movement is far easier to observe and understand when looking at the video clip. Nonetheless, the right hand is brought into the mix to form an iconic gesture together with the left hand. The IR is holding an object – his notes – in his right hand, but that does not negatively affect the interpretation of the gesture in this analysis. If anything, the obstacle further strengthens the idea of the iconic gesture which depicts a closed door.
On lines 6-8 the IR inquires the IE on Vladimir Putin as a character:

6 IR [2wh- # what2] was he like
7 behind # closed doors

Simultaneously with the words “closed doors”, both of the IR’s hands are placed side by side – left hand with an OHP and right hand with the paper notes – to form an iconic flat surface to resemble a door. In addition to this, both hands perform a thrust, a pushing motion that can be interpreted to symbolize pushing against a door that is closed. Here the object in the IR’s right hand does not have a negative impact on the gesture, even though it prevents him from extending his right hand to form a flat surface, for the paper works nicely in this role and with a larger surface area than a palm of a human hand.

It is noteworthy that this iconic phase of the gesture does not seem to be registered or even noticed by the IE, as he is gazing downwards with his head slightly bowed. The IE assumes this head position after the overlap on lines 5-6, when the IR regulates the turn-taking machinery to his advantage with the question he asks. This might suggest that the head position is taken as a result of a kind of defeat in the overlap situation, but looking at the video, it seems that he tilts his head forward rather in contemplation, than in failure. However, the gesture does not go unseen by the audience both in the studio and glued to television or computer screens.

The final phase of this multi-functional gesture is a kind of metaphoric deictic gesture, a single-handed waving motion used to vaguely point at some abstract location or space. This fourth role played by the gesture is introduced after a pause in the IR’s talk, during which he processes and structures the verbal utterance to follow and to accompany the gesture.

8 IR away from (0.7) eeah # that sort of
9 the public utterances

The 0.7-second-pause, the muttering sound and the words “that sort of”, on line 8, precede the primary content the IR intends to utter, which are the words “the public
utterances”. During the words “that sort of” on line 8 the thrust of the metaphoric deictic gesture is performed.

There are two options of interpreting the verbal counterpart for this gesture. The waving gesture could be thought of as referring to the utterance “away from”, but the gesture does not precede or overlap with those particular words. The gesture, however, does precede the line, “the public utterances”, which is the pair of words that requires some processing from the IR to produce. This would suggest, taking into account the claims of McNeill (1985), that there is a direct correlation between the embodied action and the words. Furthermore, there is an implication of disdain present in the gesture, which can be perceived as a sort of disregarding, or rejection, of the public utterances and opinions probably formed with a lack of first-hand experience on Putin’s true character.

After the metaphoric deictic phase of the gesture, during the words “the public utterances”, the hand is withdrawn and returned to its home position on the IR’s lap, concluding this multi-functional gesture divided into four developmental phases. Initially, the MfG emerged as a pointing gesture executed to interrupt the IE during his on-going turn. This was the first phase of the gesture having an impact on the
The second function was to hold on to the obtained turn by extending all the fingers to halting OHP gesture to work in collaboration with a verbal means of abrupt-join. Ergo, the second phase of the gesture was also utilized to control the floor. The third purpose, to which the gesture was used, was that of an iconic gesture, as the other hand holding notes was brought in to create a flat surface to help symbolize a closed door, upon which the hands then pushed to indicate that the door is locked. The final role the MfG proceeds to play is that of a metaphoric deictic gesture. The IR waves his left hand to dismissively point at some abstract entity and direction, arguably referring to the verbal expression, “the public utterances”, following the gesture.

In this section I analysed Example 4, where the interruption is performed by the IR. The interruption was in no way hostile in nature, but rather one of assistance, as the IE appeared to be struggling with his turn. With the evidence consisting of images and a detailed transcription, I discussed how the multi-functional gesture was utilized to regulate the floor, to interrupt and gain a turn. The progression of the MfG was divided into developmental phases, each of which was carefully scrutinized and explained in relation to the turn-taking process and the interactional dynamics between the IR the IE in this particular extract of the situation. After having secured the turn for the IR, the gesture transformed to serve other purposes, and this demonstrates the main proposal of this research – the multi-functionality of gestures.

4.5. The IE interrupts the IR and reclaims his turn

In the final section dedicated to analysis in this paper, I will investigate yet another interview involving Jeremy Paxman. In this recently aired BBC Newsnight show, Paxman interviews the actor/comedian Russell Brand to inquire him about the political and societal statements he has made of late. The overall atmosphere of the interview situation is quite blatantly coloured by Paxman – who has built a career interviewing politicians – not taking Brand seriously regarding his revolutionary ideas on societal issues and the reorganizing of power. It is evident that Brand does not help his case by introducing jokes and comedy into the discussion. Furthermore, one could argue that in this interview, the interviewer departs from IR neutrality, as
he clearly approaches the interviewee with disparagement, even resorting in calling the IE “a trivial man”.

In this particular extract, the focus of the conversation is rapidly shifted from serious issues to Brand’s facetious, yet good-spirited remarks on Paxman’s facial hair. Needless to say, a multi-functional gesture is utilized to work towards several ends in this encounter as well – for taking control of the floor, among others.

5) The IE interrupts the IR: Paxman interviews Brand (BBC Newsnight: Oct 23, 2013) $TRANSCRIPTION T

1 IR i wouldn’t argue with you about many of th[em ]
2 IE [well]
3 ow come I feel so cross with you (0.4)
4 IR [2(     )2]
5 it can’t just [2be becau2]se of that beard (0.3)
6 it’s gorgeous
7 IR it’s possibly becau[3se3]-
8 IE [3AN3]D IF THE # DAILY MAIL DON’T
((IE emphatically waves his hand with an extended index finger))
9 WANT IT
10 # I # DO (0.5) ((IE points at IR with index finger, two thrusts))
11 IE @i’m@ against them
12 # grow it longer ((IE makes a grooming gesture with two hands))
13 IR you a[4re a4]-
14 IE #[4tag4]le it into your armpit hair ((IE moves both hands towards their respective sides))
15 IR you are a very trivial man
In terms of talk, the interruption I am primarily concerned with occurs on line 7 of the transcription. The interruption is performed by the IE soon after his talk has taken a turn towards facetiousness, and it occurs immediately after there are signs of direct conflict between the two participants. On line 1 the IR claims that he would not argue with the IE about several of the issues they are discussing. On line 3 the IE, uncharacteristically to the role of an interviewee, asks the IR a direct question, inquiring him about the reasons for feeling so cross with him. It appears that, by beginning to respond to his own question on lines 5 and 6, the IE is looking to avoid the possibility of candidly facing the conflict he might have initiated.

After the IE has introduced the notion of humour in the form of a compliment (lines 5 and 6), the IR clearly intents to offer a robust reason for their mutual feeling of disagreement, and therefore, he self-selects a turn to state this reason.

5 it can’t just [2be becau2]se of that beard
6 it’s gorgeous
7 IR it’s possibly becau[3se3]-
8 IE [3AN3]D IF THE # DAILY MAIL DON’T WANT IT
9

In this case an extremely evident TRP presents itself after the IE’s utterance on line 6, as all the evidence of a completed TCU can be found. Firstly, fore-shadowing of an impending TRP can be observed, for the interactional content of the IE’s turn comes to completion after the word “gorgeous”. Secondly, there is no rising intonation to be found towards the end of the IE’s utterance, but rather a falling intonation on the latter syllable of the word “gorgeous”, so the prosodic features of a soon-to-be-vacant floor are there. Thirdly, considering the syntax and grammar of the turn on lines 5 and 6, no room is left for interpretation on whether the turn at talk ends on line 6 – At least this is the case considering the talk. One might, however, argue that the body language of the IE is not in accordance with a definite ending of a turn. Notice on Image 5.1. that the IE’s upper body is moved away from the back of the chair, which might indicate a possibility of continuing a turn, as the upper body is not withdrawn to its rest position until after line 14 of the transcription.
Nevertheless, I suggest that at the end of line 6 there is a TRP, for all the most relevant features of projection (see section 2.2.) are fulfilled.

On Image 5.1., the thrust of the first phase of the gesture is shown very clearly. This particular phase of the gesture is quite interesting in that it is very noticeably used to achieve more than one goal at once. Firstly, and most importantly, this is where the gesture, along with the talk, is used to interrupt the IR. During its interruptive phase the gesture, more specifically the index finger pointing gesture (S-point), does not – uncharacteristically to deictic gestures – precede its verbal counterpart. In fact, the interruption is initiated with an abrupt-join which is strengthened by a significant rise in the volume of talk. Secondly, it is used as a deictic gesture, an accusative tool for pointing at the abstract addressee of the verbal utterance. This first phase of the gesture clearly demonstrates the main claim of this thesis: gestures are sometimes multi-functional, and they are used in interruptions to regulate the turn-taking and to otherwise develop with the talk and close relation to it. The interruptive phase of the gesture really is, in collaboration with talk, the factor that enables the following utterances and embodied actions to be performed in the first place.
The first phase of the gesture and the talk accompanying it are also convenient pieces of evidence of the news interview not solely being a dialogue between the IE and the IR. The IE, whilst interrupting the IR’s freshly initiated turn, turns his whole body and his gaze towards a camera on the left, clearly addressing the Daily Mail of which he speaks. Thus, the gesture, although aimed at an absent party regarding the content of talk on its first phase, is effectively used to interrupt the IE who made an attempt to self-select a turn. After the interruption, the gesture transforms slightly and is moved towards another target.

The second phase in the progression of this MfG consists of three thrusts, all of which are used to emphasize the stressed points of talk as batons, strengthening the rhythm of the utterances. The position of the IE, on Image 5.2., represents all the three thrusts, as they are identical in form and in the manner they are performed.

Throughout the second phase, the gesture is no longer a fully formed index finger pointing gesture, but has transformed into what Kendon (2004) calls a grappolo (‘bunch’). In this kind of gesture, the fingers are extended but connected to form a shape that resembles an arrowhead. Here, the gesture only appears to be a grappolo by its physical attributes, as it really functions as a pointing gesture. In the
transcription, which is also provided within the screenshot, the rhythmic thrusts of the gesture occur simultaneously with the underlined points of stress in talk.

As we can see, at the second phase the gesture is in turn aimed at the IR, and the talk is also addressed to the IR – who shifts his gaze downwards on line 10 when becoming the addressee – instead of the Daily Mail or any other abstract recipient. Here, the gesture can also be called an emphatical gesture, which is a gesture that does not really carry any significant meaning other than that of further enforcing the message delivered in talk. After the first two phases of this MfG, it takes a turn towards something completely different from functioning as an interruptive deictic gesture or a baton.

During the shift from the second to the third phase, the most noticeable physical development is the incorporation of the left hand into the gesture. Until line 12 in the transcription, the left hand stays firmly on its rest position on the left thigh of the IE. On Image 5.3. below, the gesture’s freshly formed shape is captured.

*Image 5.3.*

The third phase of the gesture is one where it is impossible to put a finger on any definite thrust, for we are dealing with an iconic grooming gesture, in which all the extended fingers are moving constantly and no clear accents in movement can be found. In a nutshell, the IE uses his hands to mimic a long beard, while verbally
encouraging the IR to grow his beard out. But, within lines 12-14 of the transcription, there is once more some controversy regarding turns at talk.

During this phase of the gesture, on line 13, the IR makes an unsuccessful attempt to self-select a turn. The motivation behind such an effort can possibly be credited to the fact that there is a syntactical projection of an impending TRP on line 12. Some fore-shadowing of a completion of turn can also be observed in terms of pragmatics, as the TCU on line 12 carries a suggestion, possibly one that invites the IR to respond immediately. However, the intonation rises towards the end of the utterance, “grow it longer”, and the embodied actions certainly do not project completion of a turn – the iconic gesture resembling the act of grooming an outsized beard does not stop after the first proposal regarding the beard.

The IR’s attempt at selecting a turn on line 13 results in overlap between the two participants’ talk. There are a few factors, both embodied and verbal, that play a role in the IE’s success in maintaining his turn, which I will deal with next. Image 5.4. shows the final movements of the MfG, even though the hands themselves are not visible in the frame.

Firstly, when the IE observes the IR’s intention of claiming a turn, he leans forward substantially towards the IR to emphasize his own utterance, competing for the
domination of the floor. Secondly, there is a rise in volume in the beginning of the IE’s TCU on line 14, and this rise furthers the steamrolling effect of the IE’s utterance over the IR’s respective one. The gesture itself continues to work on an iconic level, now portraying the humorous idea of a long beard connected into one’s armpit hair. The IE moves his hands away from the front of his face, closer to his armpits, to depict the path the IR’s beard would imaginatively follow towards his armpits. After this moment coloured by facetiousness, and the four phases of the MfG, the IE’s hands retreat to their rest position and the whole upper body, so far actively used to lean forward, is withdrawn back to the chair.

In this section I analysed Example 5, which is moment of interaction between Jeremy Paxman (IR) and the actor/comedian Russell Brand (IE). The topic of conversation in this interview is Brand’s revolutionary ideas regarding world politics and other societal matters. An interruption takes place in the extract, as the IR makes an attempt to self-select a turn at a rather obvious TRP, but he fails to do so. The credit for IR’s failure goes to the IE for interrupting the IR by means of both verbal and embodied actions. A multi-functional gesture plays an important role throughout this seven-second-segment from the interview. The gesture begins as a pointing gesture, used to advance the intention of interruption and to point at an absent addressee. After this the gesture moves on to point at the other present participant, the IR. The two final phases, which consist of iconic gestures resembling the verbally uttered ideas of a beard, also include a minor conflict regarding turn-taking, which is resolved to the benefit of the IE.

So, Example 5 is further evidence of the principal argument of this paper, which is that gestures can be multi-functional – instead of being separate one-thrust-movements – and develop and transform throughout their existence. These MfGs, I suggest, can be used to interrupt a speaker’s turn in a conversation, and then transform to serve different purposes in relation to the following talk that was rendered possible by the interruption and the gaining of turn.
5. Conclusion

In this paper, I have described the way in which gestures are used as tools for interrupting and preventing interruption in news interview situations. By carefully conducting a micro-detailed analysis on five examples extracted from Anglophone news interview programmes, it was demonstrated how gestures can obtain several different functions throughout their existence. These embodied actions, that I call multi-functional gestures, are used for several purposes. They are used for regulating the floor and the turn-taking machinery in the institutionalized interactional setting of news interviews, and they are used for enhancing and modifying the verbal utterances they are produced alongside with. The multi-functionality of the gestures, which is the primary finding in this paper, was shown by explaining how the gestures emerge and develop alongside the unfolding interaction and affect the turn-taking of conversation at some point during their progression.

The data analysed were taken from BBC’s Newsnight, and CNN’s Crossfire and Piers Morgan Live programmes. Three of the news interviews date back some 10 years and were found in the Oulu Corpus of US British Television Interviews (OCUBT). Two of the examples were more current and, in fact, aired during this research process, and were found on Youtube. The examples included different kinds of interruption; some were triggered by a conflict of ideas, some in perfect agreement to assist the flow of conversation, and one was even performed purely in order to conclude the interview due to time constraints. Whatever motive behind the interruption, in all of the instances multi-functional gestures were employed to perform a successful interrupting, or to hinder an attempt at interruption, and also used to function alongside with the talk following – or preceding – the interruption.

The analysis was performed applying traditional and robust tools of conversation analysis. The first step was watching through hours of video footage on news interview and panel discussion programmes and identifying similar cases of the act of interruption that still vary in manner and style. The second step was to discover patterns in the embodied actions utilized in these interruptions. This is when the gestures started to emerge from the data, not just as separate thrusts, but as progressive and developmental movements used for different purposes, while
essentially remaining the same gesture. As stated earlier, this is the first study where
the multi-functionality of gestures is considered, and only five examples of news
interview interruptions were analysed in order to draw conclusions. Ergo, the MfG is
a phenomenon that still requires plenty of further research in order to be understood
properly, and for anyone to be able to make any absolute claims regarding the
subject. Nevertheless, this report can be considered a successfully laid basis for
possible further research on the multi-functionality of gestures.
6. References

Primary References

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Secondary References

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<http://piersmorgan.blogs.cnn.com/about/>


7. Appendix: Some Transcription Conventions

Based on DuBois et al.: Outline of Discourse Transcription (Edited by author)

UNITS

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

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 ^
Secondary accent '
Unaccented
Lengthening (of a sound, syllable) =

PAUSES

Measured pause (time within brackets) (0.8)

VOCAL NOISES

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

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

TRANSCRIBER’S PERSPECTIVE (Added by the author)

The place, movement and time of gesture  #
Transcriber’s comments  ((words))