PRELIMINARY NOTES ON 'GROOMING THE OBJECT': THE EXAMPLE OF AN ARCHITECTURAL PRESENTATION

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ABSTRACT

In this paper we analyse the use of a particular gesture during the presentation of an architectural drawing – a gesture, which we refer to as 'grooming the drawing'. On the one hand, it is related to a practical concern of the activity at hand; during the presentation the architect works with the drawing itself and a transparent manifold paper on top of the original drawing, which enables him, and the co-participations in the presentation, to comment and draw graphics "on" the drawing in and through the manifold paper. As the manifold paper is not glued to the drawing, the architect needs to make sure that the manifold paper doesn't move relative to the drawing underneath. He therefore often 'grooms' the manifold paper to straighten it out. On the other hand, the analysis reveals that although this (also) is of a practical purpose it occurs in specific positions and to serve an interactional function. The paper argues that the manipulation of objects in interaction is not just of a practical concern within an institutional practice, but is embedded within the socio-interactional organization that constitutes the ongoing activity.

INTRODUCTION

An intrinsic part of the architect's work consists of overlaying visual images, floor plans and other sketches with manifold paper in order to adjust, correct or make new sketches. The paper's transparency allows previous features to be traced and used as a resource for the new drawing. When architects present their work to various business partners it is often through a Power Point presentation. This is a very closed and definite way of showing ideas and solutions without encouraging partners to bring in their point of views or ideas. In order to do so the manifold paper may come in hand as it enables participants to see the architects drawings underneath and to write on the manifold paper without 'destroying' the original drawing.

However, when using manifold paper as overlaying it is not always tight to the drawing underneath and may bend and curl during manipulation. The user therefore has to make sure that the manifold paper is properly adjusted to the drawing so as to make sure that comments etc. are placed properly on the right spot on the drawing. A common practice in doing so is to move the (back) hand in a sweeping movement over the manifold paper, which then 'pushes' the bends away from the current point of attention. In this paper, we look at this practice of sweeping, or as we will refer to it as 'grooming the architectural drawing'. We will focus especially on the sequential placement of the gesture and the interactional function it plays and is being oriented to by the co-participants.

PRESENTATION OF DATA

The data used for this (preliminary) study comes from a workshop organized by the research project Workspace Design II. The project aims to develop and test methods and practices for architects and consulting engineers to involve employees and their working environment early in new constructions and major renovations. As part of studying an architecture company's current design practice, this workshop seeks an insight into the architect's intentions with a completed building project. Prior to the workshop the project team prepared the

framework for the session and the materials to be used in the process. Based on a floor plan with an overlaying piece of manifold paper, the architect was asked to draw and tell about the building from a city- and homemetaphor; if the building were a city, where would the shopping mall, the playground, the homes be and so on. To complete this task he was asked to choose 3 important places on the drawing, which he felt needed more attention in a following evaluation of the building. The goal of this workshop was to get another form of presentation of the construction project than the traditional Power Point presentation, and a way to get the architect to reflect on the construction project during his presentation.

The present study does not attempt to present an exhaustive analysis of touching objects, but to provide some initial observation from the data made available for the present purpose. At this point, we want to mention a few limitations. First of all, the study relies on approximately 10 min of video recording. Although the analyzed phenomenon occurs regularly (18 times within 7 min 30 sec) a more thorough analysis would require a larger corpus with more occurrences. alternatively involving different architects (or other institutional presentations using sketches, drawings, grids etc.). However, although the present paper is based on a relatively small collection of the studied phenomenon it nonetheless presents a preliminary analysis of a specific social practice, which is oriented to by the (co-)participants as a specific social practice. That means that the participants 'recognize' the interactional function of the phenomenon in situ, as a specific social "action-in-interaction". Secondly, the architectural presentation was not (video) recorded with the intended aim to study the inclusion of the drawing in interaction, nor the overall participation framework and the participants' physical positioning vis à vis each other. Rather, the aim was to make an overall documentation of what happened doing the whole session, and how the participants managed the metaphorically framed interaction. As a consequence, the recording was done with one camera only that changes the perspective during the recording from including all participants and the architectural drawing to zooming in on the drawing. At times, therefore, the camera's focus on details (e.g., on the drawing) impedes an adequate view of the participants. This is not a critique of the recording since any recording inevitable will be done under the influence of theoretical and methodological assumptions. But it does mean that we cannot satisfactory account for all facets of the interactional use of the grooming gesture.

USING OBJECTS IN INTERACTION

The use and manipulation of objects plays an important part in a range of everyday interactions in institutional settings as well as in ordinary conversation. From bedtime reading (Goodwin 2007) to high-tech control

rooms (Heath and Luff 1992) our social interactions with other people often occur around and with the inclusion of physical artefacts such as books, maps, computers, pens, hammers, screwdrivers and so forth that are used to structure the surrounding interaction. These tools are socio-cultural artefacts that have been shaped and reshaped by man, often over generations, to serve often quite specific purposes. As such they have been part of a reflexive relationship with human beings and have constantly been re-modified to fit the changing demands of their users, and have at the same time been part of changing human practices. Think for instance of the telephone, via mobile phones to iPhones (well, and other smart-phones as well!). Going wireless made physical size and weight important aspects as a practical issue for the user. With internet access and access to remove servers we are now able to show or send our atthe-moment holiday pictures to family and friends – just by clicking, and the various apps for every possible purpose change the very way we think of and use the (former) telephone. Indeed, changing our needs.

Recently, research in interaction has shown how tools have an impact on the organization of the interaction itself. For instance, C. Goodwin (e.g.2000a, b) shows how archaeologists use an institutional specific grid, the so-called Munsell chart, in order to determine colour and texture in the dirt. He shows how the classification is not only done interactively around the chart, but also how the chart structures the interaction of the participants using it. A slightly different line of research within interactional approaches to language has described how tools themselves are embedded within the accomplishment of social practices (e.g., Mondada 2006, 2007; Schegloff 1998). These approaches depart in the sociological tradition ethnomethodological conversation analysis, which also serves as the main methodological framework in this paper (see e.g., C. Goodwin and Heritage 1990; Gülich and Mondada 2008 for an introduction).

ANALYSIS

In this paper we focus on a specific gestural touch of an acthitectual drawing. In the sections to follow, we will describe the grooming gesture in terms of its sequential position, "semantics" and interactional function.

An initial observation is that the groom appears to be intimately related to the monologue phase of the presentation; during the approximately 10 min clip all 18 instances occur during the first 7 min 30 sec, during which the architect, "Martin", presents the drawing. Example 1 shows a typical instance of this.ⁱⁱ

1 Ma: I det her tilfælde er det så (0.2) femhundrede

In this case there are (0.2) five hundred

2 Ma: mennesker så det er s:ådan lidt

people so that's a bit

3 Ma: anderledes {men (0.3) men eh der er i hvert fald en different but (0.3) but eh there is in any case a

Ma: { Gaze to drawing -->

4 Ma: ad- en adskillelse her **bo- a boundary here**

5 Ps: {(1.1)}

Ma:{Grooms the drawing with RBH}

6 Ma: Det vil sige man (0.3) man ved også hvor er det That is to say you (0.3) you also know where it is

7 Ma: henne man taler fortroligt you can talk confidentially

Example 1: Groom in non-transition relevant positions

Note the (1.1) second pause in line 5 during which the groom is done. ⁱⁱⁱ None of the co-participants take this as an opportunity to initiate a turn-at-talk at this point, and thereby redefine Martin as the current speaker and display their understanding of the current activity – 'monolog presentation'. Similarly, Martin withdraws the gaze from his main recipient, Julie during line 3, and turns the gaze towards the drawing on the table between them. In this way, he projects a continuation of his presentation and projects that the drawing holds a prominent position in it.

Following the (monologue) presentation, the remaining 3 min are more dialogic in nature and can roughly be described as a series of more specific questions from the main recipient of the presentation, Julie, and Martin's answers to them. During this phase no instances are found. This seems to suggest that the grooming gesture is linked to a certain rhetorical function – a type of body movement that are performed for the presenter himself. Although the groom indeed may serve a 'personal' rhetorical function, the following analysis suggests that it (additionally) is oriented to by the co-participants, and therefore can be described a serving an *interactional*, or interpersonal function.

A "SEMANTIC" DESCRIPTION

Before we continue it might be useful to provide a description of the 'semantics' of the groom to facilitate the recognisability of the reader. A rough description divides the grooms into two categories: an explicit groom and an embedded one. Let's start with the explicit groom, which constitutes the largest portion of the analysed instances (16 out of 18). In these cases, Martin moves his backhand, normally the right one, over the drawing in a sweeping movement from left to right (when he uses the left backhand this movement is from right to left). His hand is straight and palm up. Figure 1a and 1b show the beginning and end of the groom.



Figure 1a: The beginning of the grooming gesture

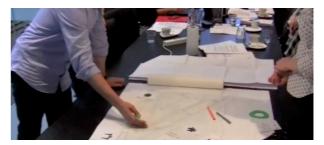


Figure 1b: The end of the grooming gesture

The embedded groom is done with the fingers only and seems to be more sensitive to the immediate sequential context (see the description of the sequential position below). Indeed, it may be more accurately described as indexical 'pointing', but with the inclusion of physical touch of the drawing. This is made visible in example two and the accompanying frame grabs in figure 2a and 2b.

1 Ma: Eh: (0.9) {og hvis} man lissom ta'r (0.6) Eh (0.9) and if you like take (0.6)

Ma: {*Removes the top of the pen*}

2 Ma: {basisenheden her}inde som- som hjemmezonen the basic unit in here as as the home zone

Ma: {Moves fingers over drawing}

3 Ma: .Hhh >så ka man sige man< har et (1.4) primært
.Hhh then you can say you have a (1.4) primary

4 Ma: opholdsområde living area

Example 2: Embedded grooming

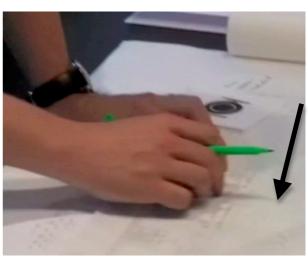


Figure 2a: Beginning of embedded groom

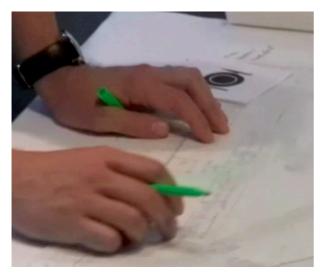


Figure 2b: End of embedded groom

In this example, Martin moves the fingers on the right hand over the drawing. The movement is done cooccurring with the word "basisenheden (the basic unit)" and extends into the indexical "herinde (in here)". Indeed, the fingers point to the 'basic unit' on the drawing, whose boundaries only seconds later are highlighted with the pen. The gesture is indexical as it co-occurs with the referent ("the basic unit") and the indexical ("herinde"). However, at the same time he straightens the manifold paper so that the section corresponding with the "basic unit" on the drawing is sharpened (i.e. the manifold paper is 'flattened'). As opposed to the explicit groom, the embedded groom is performed as a secondary action or at least co-occurring with an interactionally based action, in this case indexical pointing.

SEQUENTIAL POSITION

As we noted earlier, the grooming gesture is exclusively found in the monologue part of the presentation. This part of the presentation is constructed as a series of multi-unit turns, and the co-participants' actions consist of receipt tokens such as mm and yeah (e.g., Gardner 2001; Jefferson 1985; Schegloff 1982) and nodding (M.H. Goodwin 1980b). Indeed, its function seems to be an internal part of the particular turn-taking organization during this section. Any type of interaction is organized around an exchange of speakership, but this organization varies according to the type of interaction at play. Fundamental to all exchange systems is the organization of turns-at-talk, and a turn is constructed of smaller units, which Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson in their classical (1974) articles referred to as turnconstructional units (TCUs). In ordinary conversation, they argued, speaker change may be relevant at the end of each TCU, and the projection and recognisability of possible completions of TCUs are crucial to the organization of interaction since these are positions in which a current non-speaker may self-select as nextspeaker. In order to project possible completions of TCUs co-participants rely primarily on the emergent

grammatical construction, on intonation and on the pragmatic action being performed.

Returning to our data, we observe that the grooming gesture overwhelmingly occurs in three different positions: in *gaps* between TCUs as in example 1, and in *turn-beginnings*, which may be in pre-speech activities such as in-breaths or hesitations as in example 3, or in TCU-beginnings as in example 4.

- 1 Ma: Og det ka jo altså skifte (0.3) fra dag til dag men det And that can change (0.3) from day to day but it
- 2 Ma: ka også skifte fra time til time can also change from hour to hour
- 3 Ps: (1.1)
- 4 Ma: .H/hhh {ehrm} så derfor e:r det rum man tilbyder i: .Hhhh ehrm so that is why the room you offer in

Ma: /Moves both hands towards drawing
Ma: {Grooms the drawing with LBH}

- 5 Ma: i hjemmezonen supervigtig for den (0.3) eh: in the home zone is super important for the (0.3)
- 6 Ma: <u>arbejdsdag (.)</u> ma:n (.) tilbyder den enkelte eh working day (.) you (.) offer the individual

Example 3: Grooming gesture in pre-speech position

- 1 Ma: De:t selvfølgelig sår'n noet som at (0.5) ta e:n (.) en Of course its something like (0.5) taking a (.) a
- 2 Ma: eh privat samtale med lægen men det er osse eh private conversation with the doctor but its also
- 3 Ma: simpelthen sætte sig ned og læse en tekst eller .hh simply sit down and read a text or .hh
- 4 Ma: ska skr<u>i</u>ve en svær tekst eller .hhh (0.3) et møde på have to write a difficult text or .hhh (0.3) a meeting
- 5 Ma: tomandshånd ehrm: de:t ka jo være eh det kan together ehrm: it can also be eh it can
- 6 Ma: sagtens være en en ledermedarbejderforhold man also be an employer employee relation you
- 7 Ma: osse: ta'r i- i sår'n et stillerum discuss in such a quiet room
- 8 Ps: /(0.4)
 - Ma: /Moves right hand towards drawing
- 9 Ma: {Så den ha:r} utrolig mange funktioner

So it has really many functions

Ma:{Grooms the drawing with RBH}

10 Ps: (0.2

Example 4: Grooming gesture in TCU-beginning

These positions suggest that the grooming gesture is intimately tied to turn-taking organization and that it particular occurs just prior to or in the beginning of a new TCU. In the cases where the gesture occurs in gaps between turns it fills the silence by an interactionally meaningful activity. As such, these instances are not gaps of activities, but gaps of *verbal* contributions to the ongoing activity (see e.g., Schmitt 2004). Additionally,

we find a few instances of the gesture in mid-turn as in example 5, but in these cases it co-occurs simultaneously to a re-start, i.e. that the emergent TCU is abandoned mid-turn in favour of another TCU-beginning that projects a different trajectory of the turn-in-progress (Fox et al. 1996; Schegloff et al. 1977).

1 Ma: .Mthh ehrm: (1.2) nu vi næsten herover i sår'n
.Mthh ehrm: (1.2) now we're almost into
2 Ma: noen ehrm: {(0.6) vi ska til} bage til halvfjerserne
these ehrm (0.6) we have to go back to the
Ma: {Grooms the drawing with the RBH}
3 Ma: og leve i kollektiv

Example 5: Grooming gesture in re-starts

seventies and the collectives

As such, the gesture in example 5 can still be said to occur in the beginning of a TCU as the previously initiated TCU is abandoned and the turn is re-started with "vi skal tilbage (we have to go back)" following a hesitation and a (0.6) second pause in line 2.

Our collection presents only two examples that do not occur in the pre-turn positions presented in the above. And both of these cases follows closely after another instance of the grooming gesture. The grooming gesture in example 6 follows only a few seconds after the one we described in example 3 above (line numbers correspond to example 3).

Example 6: (Repeated) grooming gesture in mid-turn position

Here, Martin grooms the drawing in line 4 and thus prepares the physical space and projects that the groomed space holds a prominent position in the incipient activity. Indeed, he does so by circulating with the pen on the section of the drawing that corresponds with the home zone, and the gestural circulation is initiated exactly with the co-occurrence of its lexical affiliate (Schegloff 1984). However, touching the paper with the pen results in a renewed curl of the manifold paper. Martin is now not only faced with a non-groomed drawing that is central to the ongoing business, but this happens in a mid-turn position. This is reflected in a section of rather disfluent talk with pauses, sound perturbations and hesitation markers. He then projects another grooming gesture by moving his left hand back towards the curled part of the manifold paper, grooms

the drawing, and brings the current TCU to a completion. In this way, the grooming gesture in line 6 seems to have a more "practical" character since the curled manifold paper limits the clear vision to an object that is the current focus of attention of the participants.

INTERACTIONAL FUNCTION: PROJECTING A(NOTHER) TURN-AT-TALK

In the previous paragraph, we described that by and large the grooming gesture in focus in the present paper overwhelmingly is found in turn-initial positions, either in TCU-beginnings or just prior to TCU-beginning. In this position, Schegloff (1996: 92-93) notes that various elements including "the onset of a gesture deployment and often its full realization" are used to "project the onset of talk, or the beginning of a (next) [TCU], but are not yet proper recognizable beginnings". A range of studies has analyzed how hearable in-breaths (Jefferson 1984), reorienting the gaze towards a potential recipient (C. Goodwin 1980a) and gestures (Mondada 2007; Streeck and Hartge 1992) are interactional ways of projecting or contextualizing the incipient turn-at-talk, and claiming recipiency even before the (projected) turn has been properly initiated. The grooming gesture is yet another way, by means of visual resources, through which a speaker can project a TCU, or as our cases come from a monologue presentation, another TCU.

1 Ma: Hvis vi så ska bevæge os op ja (0.4) >s:å ka man If we then move upstairs yeah (0.4) then you can 2 Ma: si'e så< kommer man jo op ti:1 (0.4) til sine then you come up to (0.4) to your 3 Ma: hjemmelige vandte omgivelser homely familiar surroundings 4 Ma: />Man ka si'e< det er jo {allerede e:+n} s:om som You can say there is already a like like Ma: /Moves RBH towards drawing Ma: {Grooming drawing with RBHJu: +Removes pen from drawing 5 Ma: det er når man kommer til sit hjem (ikk) en .hh there is when you come to your home (right) a 6 Ma: e:n en adskillelse me:d lås og slå a a boundary with a lock

Example 7: Grooming gesture as projecting talk

In example 7, Martin initiates the gesture in a pre-TCU position, i.e. during the discourse marker "man ka si'e (you can say)", and the stroke of the gesture (McNeill 1992) occurs only later. However, during the grooming gesture, the main recipient, Julie, removes a pen that lies on the drawing. Indeed, it lies close to the place that Martin grooms. She thus orients to the gesture as preparing a physical space (on the drawing) that is being projected as *relevant* to the projected activity, and she

participates in preparing the "domain of scrutiny" (Goodwin 2003).

Throughout the (main part of the) presentation Julie takes up the role of primary recipient to Martin's presentation. However, the camera man is not only present as a recipient who manages the camera, but through the ways in which he manipulates the camera through changing foci, zooms etc. he displays his understanding of the ongoing activity and in particular the current focus of attention. And, indeed, through his use of the camera he too orients to the grooming gesture.

1 Ma: +I det her tilfælde er det så (0.2) femhundrede In this case there are (0.2) five hundred

Cam: ->+ "Zoom out" focus on Martin and Julie

2 Ma: mennesker så det er s:ådan lidt

people so that's a bit

3 Ma: <u>a</u>nderledes {men (0.3) {men eh der er i hvert fald en different but (0.3) but eh there is in any case a

Ma: {Gaze to drawing --> Ma: {Bends over table}

4 Ma: ad- en ad+skillelse her

bo- a boundary here

+Moves focus to table

5 Ps: {(0.8)+(0.3)} ((1.1))

Ma:{Grooms the drawing with RBH}

Cam: +Zooms in on drawing

6 Ma: Det vil sige man (0.3) man ved også hvor er det That is to say you (0.3) you also know where it is

7 Ma: henne man taler fortroligt

you can talk confidentially

Example 8: Co-participants' orientation to projected focus of attention

In example 8^{iv}, which is the last example we present here and an extension of the already presented example 1, we see that the camera closely follows Martin's postural alignment; as he leans over the table, the camera follows his spatial movement (lines 3-4). And as Martin grooms the drawing the camera zooms in on the drawing and more precisely on the groomed section. In this way, the camera (man) orients to the grooming gesture as projecting the groomed section as a relevant focus of attention in the upcoming turn-at-talk, and through his vision and lens provides a crucial perspective (or in more analytic terms 'understanding') of the action being performed in and through the grooming gesture.

CONCLUSION

In this paper we have discussed a social practice that we have called 'grooming the drawing'. The term was chosen with reference to *self-grooming* (e.g., C. Goodwin 1986) in the sense of its (i) relation to physical appearance and (ii) preparatory aspects. On the one hand, we have described the grooming gesture as a recognizable institutional practice with the practical

purpose of flattening the manifold paper relatively to the underlying drawing. As such, the analysis has presented what might be termed a professional groom; although the analysis was based on a single case analysis of a 10minute video recording involving just one architect this appears to be a more or less common way of manipulating paper (cf. Luff et al. 2010). On the other hand, we find the bigger part of our examples in specific sequential positions, i.e. in TCU-beginnings or just prior to TCU-beginnings, which suggests that it embeds an interactional function of projecting the drawing as a relevant focus of attention in the upcoming talk additional to the practical purpose. Again we paraphrase the term *self-grooming* as Martin's groom of the drawing serves a practically based aspect of appearance, which interactionally is used to project the upcoming or incipient activity; an activity, which includes the sketch as a primary actor in the projected participation framework.

As a final issue we want to touch upon a few perspectives of the analysis presented in this paper. The results have a number of consequences to interactional studies. The first implication adds to studies of the inclusion of physical artefacts (including schemas, grids and other graphical objects) in and for social interaction, and in particular to how (the use of) artefacts are used to perform specific social action (e.g., C. Goodwin 2003; Greiffenhagen and Watson 2009; Mondada 2006, 2007). It emphasizes how the gesture projects the inclusion of the drawing, and indeed a specific section hereof, in the upcoming talk, which then re-organizes the participation framework. Secondly, it adds to studies on workplace interaction (e.g., Heath and Hindmarsh 2002; Heath and Luff 1992; Luff et al. 2000) by analyzing the interactional function of an institutionally relevant gesture towards a complex semiotic drawing. The grooming gesture is institutionally specific in the sense that it is recognizable for the participants present as serving both a practical purpose and an interactional function. Although we can only speculate here, it appears to be the kind of practice that is an inherent practice of architects during this type of presentations, but which is not explicitly taught. As such, it seems to be the type of practice that is an inherent aspect of what it means to be an architect in an ethnomethodogical sense, i.e. as something that is done in and through social practices.

This brings us to the final point – the implication for the *architect*. The use of manifold paper in presentations like the one presented here, although this is not a common procedure, provides participants with certain affordances, to use Gibson's (1977) term. In particular with comparing it to a virtual presentation with e.g. Power Point the manifold paper affords a high(er) degree of participation from co-participants, and is flexible in terms of adding information due to its tangible character (see also Luff et al. 2010). On the other hand, the recurrent curling of the manifold paper relatively to the drawing underneath could appear to be

a constraint; as an 'annoying' consequence that has to be dealt with for practical purposes as smoothly as possibly. However, the present analysis has revealed that although this may be seen as an unavoidable consequence its use is both highly systematic and serves an interactional function. As the completion of a TCU may mark a position in which it is relevant for a coparticipant to initiate a turn-at-talk the current speaker can fill the gab between TCUs with relevant actions. In this case, the relevant action, grooming the drawing, maintains the speaker-hearer relation by re-orientating the participation framework through a projection of a next-action that includes the architectural drawing. The use of manifold paper entails a practical issue, and the management of this practical issue performs interactionally relevant jobs. It is indeed the successful interplay of these two aspects that results in a smooth presentation with and around the drawing.

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ⁱ The description of 'grooming' follows descriptions of 'self-grooms' in social encounters as in e.g., Goffman (1963) and C. Goodwin (1986).

ii Transcription conventions follow Jefferson (e.g., 2004). The grooming gestures and other information about Martin's visual conduct are surrounded with curled brackets { }. The beginning of the grooming gesture in focus is indicated with /. Visual information from a co-participant is indicated with +. All names are pseudonyms.

iii In the transcripts, we use the abbreviations RBH to refer to right backhand, and LBH to refer to left backhand.

iv The transcript in this example includes an additional symbol (adopted from Mondada 2007) to capture the movements of the camera. ->+ refers to an action that is maintained until the + is repeated in the transcript.