Embodying the institution—Object manipulation in developing interaction in study counselling meetings

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Abstract

This paper discusses the emergent progression of courses of action proposed and negotiated between co-participants in interaction. Each of these actions makes a subsequent range of next actions relevant, but which of these is produced by the co-participant is not pre-determined. The trajectory of an activity is not scripted, but is contingent on the choices made at each step by the participants involved, and the understanding displayed by them of the prior action(s). Body visual displays such as gaze, gesture and postural orientation, as well as vocal, material and linguistic resources, together afford participants a rich reserve of raw materials from which to fashion public displays of understanding regarding the particular juncture in the interaction.

Participants in interaction are faced with the practical issues of delineating one situated practice from another, transitioning into and out of bounded activities and across successive juncture points within an activity. These may need to be furnished with some form of individual demarcation in order to avoid disorientation between co-interactants with regard to the particular frame in which they are currently engaged. We explore here how co-participants utilize aggregates of interactional components to construct such sequentially relevant action. Particularly, we focus here on how objects in the material surround are used in conjunction with talk, gaze and postural orientation to construct local social order in study guidance counselling meetings at a university.

The analysis demonstrates how physical objects and bodily conduct are drawn on to project social actions that are used ''symbolically'' (cf. Streeck, 1996) to institutionalize interaction. Following Streeck (1996), it is the arranging of the body and objects into recognizable configurations for undertaking particular types of task that is utilized as a gestural displays of institutional orientation. © 2013 Elsevier B.V. All rights reserved.

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1. Introduction

In Jorge Luis Borges' story ''The Garden of Forking Paths'', life's journey resembles a ''cascade of possible directions'' (Mitchell, 2010) to be negotiated by the wayfaring traveller. The resulting route constitutes the sum of decisions made along the way. At a more micro level, the analogy also aptly applies to the trajectories of action sequences in interaction. These too are organized along a similar emergent 'cascade' of alternative courses of action proposed and negotiated between co-participants. Each action makes a subsequent range of next actions relevant, but which of these is produced by the co-participants is not pre-determined (Schegloff, 1996). As such, the eventual trajectory of an activity cannot be considered pre-scripted, but is contingent on the choices made at each step by the participants involved, and the understanding displayed by them of the prior action(s).

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Action sequences are made up of strings of such events. Each sequential position represents a choice of possible next actions, the negotiation of which is consequential to the unfolding trajectory of the interaction. With reference to Beach's work on discourse markers, these interactional components, both of the visual and vocal kind, can be ''employed *pivotally*, in the midst of yet at precise moments of *transition*, by recipients and current speakers alike, across a variety of speech exchange systems (both casual and institutional), not just in any sequential environment but where what is 'at stake' involves movements from prior to next-positioned matter(s)'' (1993: 326, italics in original).

In the dynamic arena of a moment-by-moment unfolding social encounter, participants draw on a range of resources that are 'found' (Streeck, 1996) in the local environment to negotiate the challenges involved in coordinating a situated 'contact improvisation' of co-present interaction. Body visual displays such as gaze, gesture and postural orientation, as well as vocal, material and linguistic resources, afford participants a rich reserve of raw materials from which to fashion public displays of understanding regarding the particular juncture in the interaction (e.g., Robinson, 1998; Laurier, 2008; Robinson and Stivers, 2001; Deppermann et al., 2010). A finely wrought coordination of such resources allows for participants to display and monitor one another's reading of the state of play and so effectively manage the unfolding activity without recourse to repeated confirmation checks (e.g., Mondada, 2007; Glenn and LeBaron, 2011). As such, the practices discussed here operate at the level of being ''seen but unnoticed'' (Garfinkel, 1967, p. 36) elements featured in institutional work. The particular setting investigated here, a university counselling office, is characterized by participants being primarily engaged in institutional activities, and the data used for the current analysis involves members transitioning between different stages of an institutionally goal-oriented encounter. In this study, we hone in more specifically on how particular material objects are drawn on as a representational resource, brought to bear on the interactions at particular sequential positions, and used to signpost (proposed) directions for next actions.

This article considers the resources drawn on by participants in an interaction to coordinate sequentially ordered series of intersections, and in particular the material resources brought to bear on the unfolding trajectories. In this study, we are concerned specifically with social encounters organized around some or other institutionally pre-ordained goal. Here, participants must coordinate together a step-wise progression of stages of sometimes complex activities, which includes the transitioning into institutionally relevant activities and between different tasks within the overall activity framework, and the enacting of social identities pertinent to the interactional setting. What we are interested in exploring is how co-participants employ aggregates of interactional components to construct sequentially relevant action in co-present institutional interaction. This draws on Charles Goodwin's insights on the ways through which members are able to coordinate their interactions by relying on combinations of different types of interactional resources in situ: ''[w]ithin the rich matrix of diverse semiotic resources that create relevant contextual configurations, action, setting, and the meaningful body reflexively constitute each other through temporally unfolding processes of situated human interaction'' (Goodwin, 2000, pp. 1519 and 1520). Particularly, we will focus here on how objects in the material surround are used in conjunction with talk, gaze and postural orientation to construct local social order of institutional interaction.

1.1. Institutional interaction

Researchers working in Ethnomethodology (EM) (Garfinkel, 1967) and Conversation Analysis (CA) (Sacks et al., 1974) have argued convincingly that institutions, rather than existing simply as macro-social contexts within which institutional interaction occurs, are 'talked-into-being' (Heritage, 1984) by participants. For example, members in interaction demonstrate an orientation to the institutionality of an encounter by co-producing markedly different sequential patterns of turn-taking from those found in informal everyday conversation (Drew and Heritage, 1992; Heritage, 1997). They orient to more asymmetrical speakership rights and obligations, and modify the range of linguistic resources their talk is constructed from.

One practical problem for members in institutional interaction is that participants are faced with delineating one situated practice from another, transitioning into and out of bounded activities and across successive juncture points within an activity. Each activity or activity phase may imply a particular participation framework (Goffman, 1979), and may need to be furnished with some form of individual demarcation in order to avoid disorientation between co-interactants with regard to the particular frame in which they are currently engaged (Kendon, 1992). To successfully negotiate such dynamic interactional variation, participants must draw on interactional competencies developed through experience in such and similar settings, including knowledge of the normative 'seen-but-unnoticed' (Garfinkel, 1967) practices.

At the same time as this line of inquiry has been pursued, a growing body of research has elaborated on CA's findings on verbal production in talk-in-interaction, to include other embodied features of interaction, including gaze, prosody, gesture, and the spatial environment (Goodwin, 1996, 2000; Hayashi, 2005; Schegloff, 1984, 1998; Sidnell, 2006; Stivers and Sidnell, 2005). Such moves towards more holistic descriptions of situated practices are commensurate with the

ethnomethodological principle that there is 'order at all points' in an interaction (Sacks, 1992), and that no feature should be disregarded a priori as irrelevant to the analysis. More recently, researchers within this field have argued that the institutionality of an encounter is not only oriented to in and through speech, but also occasioned in bodily-visual conduct. Heath and Luff (2011), for example, show how gestures are used in institutionally specific ways in auction house activities. In this paper, we argue that an orientation to the institutionality of a social encounter includes the manipulation of and orientation to material artefacts as situated resources for participants' shaping and conducting coherent courses of action.

1.2. Objects in interaction

Few would dispute the all-pervasive presence of the material surround in our lived experience. A great deal of our personal, our communities' and our societies' time and efforts are organized around networks of activity specifically engaged in the development and manufacture of artefacts to incorporate into, augment and shape the habitats we fashion around us. For all intents and purposes, it would be well-nigh impossible not to be part of a human community without somehow participating in artefact acquisition, distribution, and trade. Artefacts are used to customize the natural world around us. They are invoked to woo partners, to display social status, position or community membership. They are employed to reward or celebrate, to attract and excite, to offend or upset, for medical practices and for murder, to offer up abstract representations of our lived experience or to distract us from that very existence. Yet, however central material objects are to the core organizational practices of our social world, traditionally relatively little research (although see Robinson and Stivers, 2001; Streeck and Kallmeyer, 2001; Streeck et al., 2011; Nevile et al., forthcoming) has delved in any depth into the ways objects are utilized as one of the interactional resources in the physically co-present composite constitution of the most ''primordial site of sociality: direct interaction between persons'' (Schegloff, 1987, p. 208).

The current article seeks to contribute to such work done on institutional interaction, by continuing the tradition of extending the research focus towards a fuller inclusion of embodied resources utilized by participants in conjunction with their verbal organization of talk. The particular phenomenon addressed here is the manner in which embodied practices, including the use of material artefacts from the setting, are brought to bear on the institutional interaction, and are indeed drawn on as resources in the actual institutionalizing of the encounter. This particular investigation follows a noticing of how participants in interaction would occasionally utilize artefacts in seemingly non-normative ways, for example in occasioning an orientation to macro-structures of the community through recurrent embodied orientations to particular objects in the surround (Hazel, forthcoming), or in displaying being engaged in some form of cognitive activity (see also Glenn and LeBaron, 2007). This suggests that there may be alternative registers of objects' affordances (Gibson, 1979; Streeck, 1996; Streeck and Kallmeyer, 2001; Hutchby, 2001; Heath et al., 2002) that are being mobilized in the service of the encounters. Hutchby (2001) has discussed the reflexive relationship between objects and the social and interactional settings in which they are situated. In his reading, an object's affordances are both functional and relational, framing the possibilities for how they may be made relevant, all the while constituting and constituted by the human practices in which they are brought to bear.

2. Data and method

The data extracts used in the following analysis are related to a larger research project that examines institutional practices between physically co-present participants in their administrative positions and students at an internationalizing university in Denmark. The video-recorded data set consists of some 120 helpdesk and study-counselling encounters, which range in length between 20 s and 85 min, and involving 6 help desk staff members and 5 study guidance counsellors. The data were recorded from multiple angles with fixed cameras. Both first language and second/additional language use are present in the data, with a number of languages represented. This wider study considers the resources student and staff participants draw on to accomplish their interactions in the dynamically multilingual setting of the international university.[1]

In the current paper, we draw on Conversation Analysis to analyse participants' online displays of understanding of their ongoing activity. To this end, we focus on the shared set of verbal and embodied resources that participants orient to as relevant in their meaning construction. A number of illustrative examples of the phenomenon will be followed by a more extended analysis of a single complex case, which will be developed so as to allow for a fuller explication of the practices in their moment-by-moment instantiation within the organization of the unfolding interaction.

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[1] To protect participant anonymity, the video-clips relating to the sequences are not openly available. The audio files, however, are being made available through the CALPIU Research Centre online database, see calpiu.dk for information regarding access.

3. Analysis

3.1. Illustrative examples

The following sequence is taken from the opening stage of a counselling meeting, which involves one counsellor (Adam,[2] centre) and two clients (Simeon, left & Frederick, right). Adam is a non-Danish student at the university. Simeon and Frederick are both Danish nationals.

Following some comments relating to the recording activity, Adam confirms the names with the participants (lines 32–37), and the counselling meeting commences, with Simeon initiating an account for the reason for arranging the meeting.

Example 1 [LTSH-meeting16]

```
32   ADA:   øhm (0.5) men Simeon
             erm (0.5) but Simeon
33          (0.3)
34   SIM:   Simeon
35          (0.4)
36   FRE:   og #Frederick≈
             and Frederick
Fig          #1
37   ADA:   ≈Frederick
38          #(0.9)
Fig          #2
39   ADA:   #yes:
Fig.         #3
```


Fig. 1   Fig. 2   Fig. 3   Fig. 4

```
40          (1.1)
41   ADA:   hvad er det
             what is it
42          (0.3)
43   SIM:   det er #fordi at at vi jo æh
             it's because we er
Fig.              #4
44          vi vil lave bachelor til sommer
             we want to do the bachelor's by the summer
45          (.)
46   ADA:   ja
             yes
```

In this sequence, we note how the three participants coordinate their gaze orientation with the verbal and other visual actions. In line 32, Adam takes hold of his pen, which had been placed on the notepad in front of him, orients his gaze to Simeon, and produces a hesitation marker followed by a confirmation check, 'but Simeon'. Simeon, redirects his gaze from Adam's hands to establish mutual gaze and confirms his name, with Adam punctuating it with a deictic beat gesture in Simeon's direction using the pen. Adam then redirects the pen and his gaze in the direction of Frederick (Fig. 1), who establishes mutual gaze, and builds on Simeon's confirmation with the turn extension 'and Frederick' (line 36). Adam

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[2] Participant names have been changed.

repeats the name in a latched turn, and brings his gaze down again to his hands, thereby marking the work done by the hands as relevant to the interaction at this point (Streeck, 1993). The other participants follow this re-orientation, and watch as Adam rotates the pen in his hand until it is in a 'writing hold', and is positioned above the notepad (Fig. 2).

What could be noted is that although Adam takes up a writing position, he holds the pen towards the bottom of the notepad, with his hand on the right side of the paper. When participants in this data actually produce writing on such notepads, they consistently do so working from the top left hand corner, as is conventional in Western writing systems. This may point to Adam not intending to write at all at this point, all the while making the act of writing a relevant activity to be engaged in during the ensuing interaction. Holding this position, Adam subsequently re-orients his gaze back to Simeon, tilts his head slightly and produces a stretched 'yes:' (Fig. 3). Simeon responds with a head toss, raising and lowing his head, and Adam pursues a response with a more constrained elicitation, asking 'what is it' (line 41). Simeon at this point embarks on formulating the reason for his and Frederick's visit. The moment he does so, Adam relinquishes the pen from his grip (Fig. 4) and places it on the notepad (Fig. 4), dropping his hands to his sides.

We see then that although a pen and notepad are manipulated by the counsellor, and brought into a shared orientation between the participants, there appears to be no inclination to use the artefacts for the purpose of *writing* at this stage (cf. Robinson and Stivers, 2001). A similar pattern can be seen in the following example, this time between Adam and another client, Helena. The sequence again concerns the transition into opening task of the client formulating for the counsellor the reason for the meeting.

Example 2 [LTSH-meeting8]

```
26   HEL:   så tænker jeg jeg må lige gøre en god gerning
            so I think I might just do a good deed
27          (1.6)
28   ADA:   læser du kommunikation så
            you study communications
29          (0.4)
30   HEL:   ja
            yes
31          (2.5) # (2.0)
Fig.            #1
32   ADA:   #yes≈
Fig.        #2
            yes
33   HEL:   ≈hh[hh huh huh huh]
34   ADA:      [der    øh    ]  stod noget med studietvivl eller fagskifte
                it er said something about study doubts or change of subject
35   HEL:   ja
            yeah
36          (0.7)
37   HEL:   det kunne man godt sige (0.4) øh:: (0.9)
            you could say that (0.4) er (0.9)
38          jeg læser (.) #kommunikation nu
            I'm studying (.) communications now
Fig.                      #3
39   ADA:   [ja]
            yes
40   HEL:   [og] sidste semester læste jeg virksomhedsstudier
            and last semester I studied business studies
41          (0.3)
42   ADA:   ja
            yes
```


As Adam sits down at the table, Helena is still in the process of removing her coat, and here gives an account of why she chose to allow for the meeting to be recorded, speaking about having recently attended a workshop where she had

learned how difficult it was to gain consent from potential research participants (not included). Adam uses her account to inquire after her line of studies (line 28), offering a candidate understanding, which is confirmed by Helena in line 30. There then follows a 4.5 second pause. At this point, Helena pulls her chair forward, and adjusts her clothing, with her gaze oriented to Adam. Adam then says 'yes', which is followed by laughter from Helena. Adam, in overlap, offers a candidate understanding for the reason for her requesting the meeting, which she in turn ratifies in lines 35 and 37. She then starts formulating the particular study-related issues she would like to talk about.

Closer inspection of the video data gives a more textured reading of how this sequence comes to pass the way it does. Specifically, it shows again how the material objects are drawn on as resources to demarcate between different stages of the overall activity.

Example 2, excerpt A [LTSH-meeting8]

```
22  HEL:   så jeg v- jeg ved hvor svært det er
           so I kn- I  know how difficult  it  is
23         at få folk til at sige ⌈ja til⌉ at blive filmet
           to get people to say yes to being  filmed
24  ADA:                         ⌊#yes⌋
Fig.                              #a
25         #(1.0)
Fig.       #b
26  HEL:   så tænker jeg jeg må lige gøre en god gerning
           so I think I might just do a good deed
27         (1.6)#
Fig.            #c
28  ADA:   læser du kommunikation så
           you study communications
29         (0.4)
30  HEL:   ja
           yes
31         (0.7) #
Fig.            #d
```
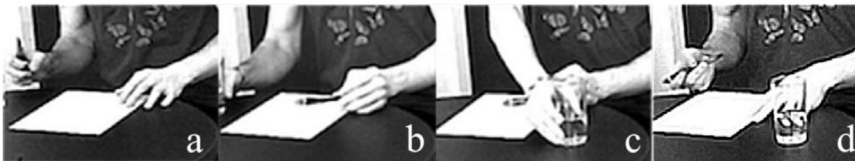
As Adam sits down, he pulls the notepad towards him, placing it square in front of him. He is also holding a pen in his right hand (he is right-handed), but at this point the tip of the pen is facing up, away from the paper (Fig. a[3]). As Helena moves to sit down, Adam passes the pen to his other hand, and moves a glass of water from the right of where he is sitting to the left (b and c) as he asks her to confirm the course she is attending.[4] He then passes the pen back to his right hand, but still with the tip of the pen facing towards him (d). Helena settles herself into the chair, and pulls it forward towards the table.

Example 2, excerpt B. [LTSH-meeting8]

```
30  HEL:   ja
           yes
31         *(0.7) *#(1.8) # (0.8) *# (0.4) *#  (0.5) *#
Fig.               #d     #e      #f       #g      #h
           [*Helen pulls chair forward
               [*Helen adjusts top of sweater
                             [*Helen adjusts sweater arms
                             [ Adam looks down at paper
                                   [*Helen adjusts belt
                                        [*Adam looks up
```

---

[3] Subsequent lettering refers to the sequence of screenshots included with the transcript.

[4] It appears as if Adam here is clearing the space for the writing hand to be unhindered by the glass of water on the right. This is projecting the cleared space as relevant to the projected activity.

```
32   ADA:   yes≈
            yes
33   HEL:   ≈hh⌈hh huh huh huh⌉
34   ADA:       ⌊der    øh    ⌋ stod noget med studietvivl eller fagskifte
                it er said something about study doubts or change of subject
35   HEL:   ja
            yeah
36          (0.7)
37   HEL:    *det kunne man godt sige (0.4) *øh:: (0.9) #
             *you could say that (0.4) er (0.9)
            [*Helen pulls chair forward and
                                           [*leans forward against table
Fig.                                         #i
38          jeg læser (.) #kommunikation nu
            I'm studying (.) communications now
Fig.                      #j
39   ADA:   ⌈ja⌉
            yes
40   HEL:   ⌊og⌋ sidste semester læste jeg virksomhedsstudier
            and last semester I studied business studies
41          (0.3)
42   ADA:   ja
            yes
```


Throughout the data, we observe how participants physically move into a more proximal position at the point when an account is about to be given by the client for the reason of the visit, often accompanied by some hesitation marker by the client as the move is occasioned (see Mortensen and Hazel, in press). Here, Helena's moving the chair closer to the table is followed by Adam nodding and orienting his gaze to the notepad. He coordinates this with an audible clicking of the pen, subsequently rotating the pen in his hand to now face a direction compatible with writing (e). He momentarily lays this hand on an upper central place on the paper (f), then lifts it again and places it further to the side (g and h), which allows for greater visual access to the page. At this point he orients his gaze to Helena, lifts his right hand off the page and brings it down again as he says 'yes' (g and h). This is coordinated with a slight head tilt and a raising of the eyebrows.

As in the previous example, and elsewhere in the data, at this incipient stage of the activity, similar tokens are treated as a particular elicitation device that prompts the counsellee to initiate the formulation of a proposed topic for the counselling meeting. Here, however, Helena continues adjusting her clothing, and rather than formulating her reasons for attending, produces laughter instead. Adam immediately extends his elicitation with an account of already having received information regarding the reasons for requesting the meeting. This is produced with a smile, which could orient to his not having accepted her invitation to participate in laughter (Jefferson, 1979). Once Helena has finished adjusting her clothing, she again pulls her chair forward, while confirming Adam's understanding in line 37. This time, Helena brings her hands up to the tabletop, straightens her back, and produces an extended hesitation marker (øh::). At the same time, Adam brings the pen to the top left hand of the notepad (i and j), and Helena starts producing the reasons for the meeting.

It appears that the way Adam manipulates the objects is sequentially organized in relation to Helena's talk, posture, gaze, and object manipulation and finely coordinated with his own talk and bodily-visual actions to provide the sequential context for the client to provide an initial account for requesting a meeting. This business disclosure turn (Kidwell, 2000) marks the opening of the particular institutional activity of the counselling meeting. As the move into the new activity needs to be clearly negotiated between the participants, they appear to draw on a coordinated amalgam of visual, aural and vocal cues.

The preceding two examples offer somewhat rough sketches of the phenomenon of interest here: the embodied displays drawn on as resources to index the initiation of a particular sequential position in progress within an activity framework. Specifically here we are interested in the turn in which the client–participant formulates his or her reason for attending. In the more complex case analysis that follows, we will provide a more detailed example of the range of resources oriented to by participants in the co-constructing of an interactional architecture for these sequential positions. Furthermore, we will demonstrate how particular embodied configurations can be utilized to suspend an initiated activity in cases where the requisite conditions have not yet been secured.

3.2. Extended case analysis

The following segments relate primarily to the early stages of a meeting between two participants at a university in Denmark. One of the participants, Tod, is himself a student but present in his role as student–counsellor, the other, Mari, has come to an office designated for counselling meetings to discuss a number of issues pertaining to the organizing of her studies. Mari is an international student from an East-Asian country. Although both students are at least reasonably proficient in Danish, the meeting is conducted in English, of which Tod is a first language (L1) speaker and Mari a highly proficient second language (L2) user.

Consent to the recording of the meeting for research purposes was obtained by the counsellor prior to the meeting commencing. On Mari agreeing to the meeting being recorded, Tod activates the two video cameras, and then the external audio recorder. Lines 23 and 24 refer to the recording activity.

3.2.1. Suspending a sequentially relevant next turn

The following section of transcript details the sequence directly following the switching on of the recording equipment.

Example 3, excerpt A [LTSH-meeting1]

```
23   MAR:   oh (0.3) aw[right  just    like    mission    impossib]le
24   TOD:              [right now we just pretend they're not here]
25          (0.2)
26   TOD:   ☺huh☺≈
27   MAR:   ≈☺hehehe☺ •hhhh ↑yeah
28   %com:  Mari shifts chair after in-breath
29   TOD:   yeah ok[ay  ]  (.) i did have a writing pad here somewhere
30   MAR:          [now-]
31   TOD:   one second≈
32   MAR:   ≈kay
33          (3.0)
```

Following Mari's laughter tokens in line 27, she takes a protracted in-breath as she shifts her weight and moves the chair back slightly. She then leans forward and produces what can be heard as an audibly stressed *presegmental* discourse marker 'yeah' (see Lindström, 2006 for discussion). This summons signal (Lindström, 2006, p. 88) is further characterized by a marked change in facial expression, from a smiling to neutral position, which appears to initiate a change of footing (Goffman, 1979, but see also Goodwin, 2007) in the interaction. Furthermore, it is formatted with a shift to higher pitch. Couper-Kuhlen (2001) has shown how in anchor positions (Schegloff, 1986) such as these, where, in the case of her and Schegloff's data of telephone interaction, a turn is produced which formulates the reason for the call, participants format the turn with high pitch onset. This acts as one resource for co-participants to recognize the type of turn now in progress, and withhold further talk until this turn is recognizably brought to completion. Here, Mari appears to project the production of the anchor position by producing this *sequential marker* (Schegloff, 1987) in a higher pitch. We see that this is oriented to by Tod in lines 29 and 31, as he seeks to suspend Mari's initiated turn.

In line 27, as Mari produces the laughter tokens and in-breath, Tod has turned himself away from her and reaches over to a desk drawer, which he opens and closes again.

Example 3, excerpt A with visuals [LTSH-meeting1]


```
26   TOD:           ☺huh☺≈            27   MAR:   ≈☺hehehe☺ •hhhh
```

```
27   MAR:  ↑yeah                    29  TOD:  yeah ok[ay] (.) i did have
                                    30  MAR:        [now-]
```

```
     a writing pad here somewhere  31  TOD:            one second≈
```

```
32   MAR:  ≈kay
```

Fig. 4 (Lines 26–32)

When Mari self-selects with the presegmental marker, 'yeah' (line 27), Tod maintains his focal orientation away from her, scanning the space in the vicinity of the office-desk, while producing 'yeah okay' (line 29). The maintained postural orientation away from her here acts as a resource to display his unavailability to enter into the projected next step in the incipient engagement framework at this stage. The 'yeah okay' seems, furthermore, to occasion a discontinuation of Mari's initiated move into the new activity, which at this sequential position would normatively involve the turn in which the a formulates the reason for requesting a meeting. Although Mari follows up her 'yeah' with the *appositional* or *pre-start* (Sacks et al., 1974, p. 719) 'now', it is produced in overlap with Tod's appositional 'yeah okay' and is hearably cut-off, with the position of her mouth, slightly open at a point of being about to produce further utterances, subsequently sustained in silence for the duration of Tod's turn.

Tod indexes the side-activity he has shifted to with an account of a mislaid writing pad, turning his body completely away from Mari to the other end of the room. At this point he pushes himself up to a standing position on 'somewhere' (line 29), matched by Mari shifting her weight back in her seat and straightening her back, and then produces a verbal request for a brief adjournment, 'one second' (line 31), thereby both explicitly suspending the activity projected by Mari's earlier initiation, and contextualizing the insertion as precursory to the subsequent activity. Tod's request for a postponement of the initiated proceedings does display an understanding of that activity in its incipiency, as well as this being an appropriate slot for inserting alternative business. There is no indication that there may be procedural misalignment between the two participants' orientations to the activities at hand, and in the postponing side sequence, Tod treats the incipient activity as sequentially appropriate, but with the required conditions being temporarily inadequate.

We observe then that a conjointly managed transition into a new interactional activity is briefly suspended as Tod designates a 'writing pad' as a prerequisite for the activity to progress (cf. Svinhufvud and Vehvilainen, 2013). Tod downgrades the proposed postponement to 'one second', thus minimizing the perturbation on the business-at-hand. The prompt suspension of the new activity on the basis of the absence of this artefact is readily accepted by Mari, who thereby displays an understanding of Tod's proposed requirement as something that may be a normatively appropriate feature of the projected activity, while sanctioning the adjournment.

To recap, we observe in this sequence that postural orientation and its rearrangement within an established spatial and orientational configuration, what Kendon (1990) has called an F-formation, is drawn on as an interactional resource in displaying the initiation of a particular sequential position. Here, as in the earlier examples, the beginning of the turn, in which the reason for the visit is articulated, is finely coordinated within a package of embodied actions, involving gaze and the configuring of postural orientation. However, in this case we also observe how postural re-orientation by a co-participant is also drawn on as a resource to manage a suspension of the initiated turn. By orienting his body away from the client, at this sequential position in which the particular type of turn is normatively expected, the counsellor occasions the client to break off from the initiated turn. Citing Streeck (2009), the ''extract thus shows the inexorable dialectic of action projectors; namely, that they can solicit others to attend and enable the action that they propose, but that these others can

alternatively use the action projector to prevent that very action from being attended and successfully done'' (p. 171). Furthermore, we also note that the absence of the notepad is readily accepted as a legitimate reason for suspending the activity in this position.

3.2.2. Interlude – seeking out the materials

During the ensuing search for the writing pad (lines 34–43), Tod pre-empts Mari with a candidate formulation of the type of issues she may be intending to discuss in the meeting.

Example 3, excerpt B [LTSH-meeting1]

```
33        (3.0)
34  TOD:  okay so (.) what you're wanting to do is erm
35        (0.9)
36        is to organize a little bit (0.6) [more] structured
37  MAR:                                    [yeah]
38        (1.0)
39  %ges: MARI shakes head
40  MAR:  no er[m:       ]
41  TOD:       [for the] courses
42        (0.5)
43  TOD:  [er for the] (.) your (.) masters o:r
44  MAR:  [yeah okay ]
45  MAR:  mhm:
46  TOD:  yeah
47        (0.4)
48  TOD:  so just tell me wha- what er:
49        (0.5)
50  MAR:  we- (.) [the first    ] thing i wanted to know was (.)
51  TOD:          [what you want]
```

It is interesting that this talk, which pertains to the projected guidance counselling meeting, is produced prior to Tod having brought the inserted activity to completion. Talk is suspended during a 3.0 second pause, as Tod walks over to one of the corners in the office, bends down and reaches into his bag. As he is rummaging through the bag, with his postural orientation still away from Mari, he produces the first part of the extended turn (lines 34–36), coming back up to standing with the notepad in his hand (line 36), then turning and returning to his chair. It could be argued that Tod producing this turn at this particular point, when he has only moments earlier requested some time to attend to the search for the misplaced item, is evidence of his having identified that the finding of the notepad is imminent and the inserted activity about to be brought to a close. An alternative reading may be that it demonstrates what has been described as a *preference for progressivity* (Schegloff, 1992; Heritage, 2007). Stivers and Robinson (2006) have suggested that there is a preference not only for sequences, but also for activities to progress. It would seem plausible that Tod uses this formulation as a place-holder action, offering an explicit orientation to the institutional business-at-hand, without actually commencing the activity.

What is noteworthy is that, at this point, Tod neither asks Mari to tell him why she has requested the meeting, nor does he check for confirmation that his candidate understanding is correct. Although this may provide some indication that some prior talk may have informed the expressed assumptions, there is nothing in the way of acknowledgement on Mari's part that this is the case. Indeed, Mari indicates at various points during his extended turn that his formulation is in fact mistaken.[5] Mari, for her part, withholds any talk relating to the actual reason for her attendance. Indeed, she holds off from articulating her account for requesting the meeting until line 50, when she formulates the first of her topics of inquiry.

An initial observation, based solely on the transcribed utterances, may point to this topic initiation (line 50) being in response to the first part of his request (line 46), thereby displaying her projection of the remainder of his directive 'what you want' (line 51). Closer inspection of the bodily conduct, however, reveals that the transition into the subsequent phase of the meeting, where Mari engages in the actual exposition of the issues she would like to discuss, is actually occasioned through the deployment of a number of visual and aural resources, both corporeal as well as drawn from the environment. We will turn to this now.

---

[5] Tod's understanding as expressed here then may instead be an intimation of his orientation to the institutional goal-relatedness of the setting, and the specific institutional goals of the counselling meetings, indexing a selection of issues pertinent to such meetings.

3.2.3. Returning to the sequentially relevant next turn

Following the intervening activity in which Tod retrieves the misplaced notepad and returns to his seat, Mari is prompted to re-initiate the institutional activity of formulating the reason for her visit.

Example 3, excerpt C [LTSH-meeting1]

```
34  TOD:    okay so (.) what you're wanting to do is erm
35          (0.9)
36          is to organize a little bit (0.6) [more] structured
37  MAR:                                      [yeah]
38          (1.0)
39  %ges:   MAR shakes head
40  MAR:    no er[m:    ]
41  TOD:         [for the] courses
42          (0.5)
43  TOD:    [er for the] (.) your (.) masters o:r
44  MAR:    [yeah okay ]
45  MAR:    mhm:
46  TOD:    yeah
47          (0.4)
48  TOD:    so just tell me wha- what er:
49          (0.5)
50  MAR:    we- (.) [the first    ] thing i wanted to know was (.)
51  TOD:            [what you want]
```

Lines 43-51 with visuals


```
43  TOD:    [er for the] (.) your (.)                    masters
44  MAR:    [yeah okay ]
```



```
                        o:r
45  MAR:    mhm:
46  TOD:                    yeah
47          (0.4)
```



```
48  TOD:       so just tell me wha- what              er:
49  (0.5)
```



```
50      MAR: we- (.)[the first    ] thing
51      TOD:        [what you want]
```



```
    i wanted to know                    was (.)
```

Fig. 5 (Lines 43-51)

Tod returns to the table and sits in his chair during lines 36–43. The lengthy spaces in lines 38 and 42 are occupied with non-conversational activity, rather than being sequentially salient. As he lowers himself into the chair during the second of the pauses, he momentarily occupies himself with a flipping over of the notepad so it is face up. He then briefly orients his gaze towards Mari as he produces the syntactically incomplete turn-elicitation 'your (.) masters o:r' (line 43). At this point they both redirect their gaze to the writing pad placed on his lap. Tod then takes hold of the top page, which has already been written on, tears it off and with a fluid, and markedly ostentatious, movement, lays the page face-down on the table, before tapping it emphatically with his hand. On the sound of the tap, the participants, whose visual orientation has tracked the path of the page, promptly raise their eyes and establish mutual gaze. Mari immediately follows this with a postural re-orientation, straightening her torso in an upward direction, and Tod brings the pen he has been holding to the space directly above the notepad. Once this configuration has been achieved, and the participants are, what Maynard and Hudak have described as "a kind of canonical posture in which each displays recipiency towards the other and thereby a readiness for the interview at hand" (2008, p. 666), Mari re-launches the turn in which she sets out the first of her inquiries (line 50).

We observe here that the aggregate configuration involving gaze, postural orientation and writing utensils is employed by the participants to conjointly manage the transition into the next sequential position in the larger activity framework. It is only when the artefact has been made active in the interaction, that the requisite conditions are established for the institutional activity to progress. At this point, the sequential embodied displays involving gaze and postural arrangement fall into place, and the participants move into the normatively appropriate sequential step where a client produces for a counsellor the turn formulating her reasons for requesting the meeting.

It could be argued that the writing utensils, pen and notepad, are used in this instance to indicate that a certain engagement framework is underway, one where one participant produces talk that the co-participant may need to make notes about. It follows that this implies a certain local social order where the institutional roles are organized according to specific institutional goals, and are further displayed on an intersubjective level in the joint orientation to artefacts in the environment that are operationalized in the interaction. Staying with this section of data, we turn to consider how this particular contextual configuration acts to organize the subsequent activity.

3.2.4. Configuring the talk with pen and paper

At the commencement of the new activity, Mari announces in general terms the direction the first inquiry will take: the possibilities for studying abroad (lines 50–52).

Example 3, excerpt C [LTSH-meeting1]

```
50  MAR:  we- (.) [the first    ] thing i wanted to know was (.)
51  TOD:          [what you want]
52  MAR:  whether there was a way to: study (.) abroad (.)
53        cos i was interested in≈
54  TOD:  ≈yeah↘≈
55  MAR:  ≈in the (0.6) exchange with a university in singapore↗
56        (0.3)
57  TOD:  yeah↘
58  MAR:  and the ↑reason that i want to do this is
59        is that it is part of this (0.3) creative project that i'm working
60        o:n
```

Lines 50-55 with visuals


```
50 MAR: we- (.)                      [the first    ] thing
51 TOD:                              [what you want]
```



```
 i wanted   to know was (.)         52  whether there was a way to:
```

Fig. 6 (Lines 50-55)

This extended, multi-unit turn at talk is characterized by a shift into markedly more dynamic embodied activity on Mari's part, as she brings at first her right hand into the immediate visual field at shoulder-height, and produces a series of co-verbal iconic and metaphoric gestures, adding her left hand to produce the gesture emblem depicting a 'sarcastrophe' or 'quotation marks' as she says 'study abroad'.[6] Tod, in conjunction with his subsequent 'yeah' (line 54), at this point withdraws his gaze and looks down to the notepad. At the same time he lifts the pen and rotates it into a writing position at the top of the page. The action appears to imply that something in Mari's talk has been deemed relevant to note down.

By displaying an orientation to the writing utensil and pad at this point, Tod, as recipient of Mari's extended account, triggers a change in orientation in the participation framework, which is promptly aligned with by Mari. At the point that Tod raises the pen into her visual field, Mari switches her gaze away from his face, following the pen's trajectory to the notepad, and ratifying its status as a publicly displayed object (Brassac et al., 2008). Simultaneously, she drops her hands back into her lap, and continues her account unaided by gestural displays, and with less animated facial expression. The act of mobilizing the writing materials can be seen as accomplishing a 'contextual re-configuration' (Mondada, 2002), reordering the field of action between the co-participants, and rendering the talk produced by Mari as explicitly relevant for inscription by Tod. It displays a particular way in which Tod aligns himself to Mari's unfolding talk, and how he is to participate in the field of action engendered by it (Goodwin, 1986).

Mari's 0.6 second intra-turn pause in line 55 allows Tod time to position the pen at the paper, upon which he mouths what can be seen as another 'yeah',[7] and Mari continues with her account for the reasons for her inquiry. As she does this, she orients her gaze back to Tod's face and keeps it there until the end of her turn ('singapore ↗'). At this, she returns her gaze momentarily to his hand, which by now has been engaged in writing on the notepad.

We see then that Mari monitors that Tod is both attentive to her talk, and that he is also taking notes as she speaks. This contextual configuration, with recipient gaze oriented to the writing activity, appears not only to be entirely unproblematic, but indeed a constituent feature of the institutional business being enacted. Recipient gaze acts then as a means to indicate to a speaker not only that they are attending to the talk, but also what type of activity the attending-to-the-talk is part of. In turn, the configuring of this exchange structure by the recipient may be used as a resource for speakers in the further production of their talk, and the ongoing coordination of their actions.

Example 3, excerpt C [LTSH-meeting1]

```
50  MAR:  we- (.) [the first    ] thing i wanted to know was (.)
51  TOD:          |what you want|
52  MAR:  whether there was a way to: study (.) abroad (.)
53        cos i was interested in≈
54  TOD:  ≈*yeah↘≈
             *Tod directs gaze to notepad
              *Mari drop hands to lap; facial shift to neutral expression
55  MAR:  ≈in the (0.6) exchange with a university in singapore↗
56        (0.3)
57  TOD:  yeah↘
58  MAR:  and the ↑reason that i want to do this is
59        is that it is *part of this (0.3)
                        *momentarily brings hand up to chest height
```

[6] Is may be noted that as a foreign student to a Danish University, the idea of studying abroad may, as is marked in this case, seem ironic.
[7] Although this is silent, the movement of Tod's mouth resembles that when one produces a 'yeah'.

```
60        *creative project that i'm working o:n
           *makes a number of beat gestures close to the table with right hand
61        (0.6)
62        so: *as *a- huhuh bu- but is *this *career thing that i am doing
              *Tod jabs at the notepad with the pen
                   *mutual gaze established
                              *start of Mari's smiling gesture
                              *Mari's left hand added to gesticulations
                                 *Tod's hands to rest position
```

Line 59 with visuals


```
59   MAR: is that it is part of this (0.3)
```

```
     creative (0.3)    project that i'm working o:n
```

Fig. 7 (Line 59)

The participation framework occasioned here allows for speaker and recipient to co-participate in the 'transactional segment' (Kendon, 1990) established by Tod. Although Mari does not do anything to intrude upon Tod's ongoing writing activity, she does reconfigure the relevant resources at her disposal to optimize her work at informing the substance of the inscription. These downplay facial expressive resources, and draw more heavily on lower placed right hand gestures within the margins of his peripheral vision. When at the end of his writing sequence, Tod orients his gaze back to Mari (line 62), the levels of Mari's embodied activity and facial animation return to the register witnessed prior to the writing activity, with both hands again engaged in the production of various types of supporting gesture (see Fig. 8).

Line 62 with visuals


```
62 this         career thing that i am doing
```
Fig. 8 (Line 62)

Similar gestural flourishes as the one described earlier in connection with Tod's tearing off of the top page from the notepad, occur either side of the writing activity described above, when Tod appears to note down a point of salience from Mari's unfolding account. The manner in which he engages in this activity is of interest here, as the writing is preceded by a relatively pronounced display of readying the pen and paper for the ensuing activity, and is concluded with a visible and audible jab at the paper,[8] thereby boosting the focalization on the writing actions' relevance to the unfolding talk (see Fig. 9).

Example 3, excerpt D [LTSH-meeting1]

```
59 MAR: #is that it is part of this (0.3) creative project that i'm working
Fig.    #a
60       o:n
61       (0.6)
62        so: *as *a- huhuh bu- but is *this *career thing that i am doing
```

```
Fig.      #b>#c>#d
                 *Tod jabs at the notepad with the pen
                    *mutual gaze established
                               *start of Mari's smiling gesture
                               *Mari's left hand added to gesticulations
                                  *Tod's hands to rest position
```


Fig. a   Fig. b   Fig. c   Fig. d

Fig. 9

It is once this very dynamic 'full stop' punctuation mark has been added to the paper, that Tod turns his gaze back to meet Mari's. However useful the notation of relevant information may be, the fact that is ultimately undertaken in such a dramatic, non-economical manner, as a visual and audible presentation for the co-participant, suggests that there is an alternative function to the use of the writing activity: a demonstration, on behalf of the conversational partner, of an engaging in some activity consequential to this particular type of 'speech exchange system' (Sacks et al., 1974), as well as making explicit the specific juncture at which the activity has arrived. In the case at hand, through his conjoint employment of the pen and paper, Tod is able to exhibit a type of attentiveness to Mari's talk, and to ratify that talk as relevant to the business-at-hand. He is also able to display, in relation to her talk, the point the activity is initiated, how it progresses, and at what point it is brought to a close.

In CA terms, the operationalizing of the writing artefacts aids the participants in 'doing-being-institutional-people', Tod in 'doing-being-a-counsellor', and likewise, through her orientation to Tod's use of the writing pad, Mari 'doing-being-a-''counsellee'''.

3.2.5. Re-embodying a turn

Up to this point we have focussed only on data from one type of counselling encounter, and how certain artefacts, notably writing utensils, are brought to bear on the sequential organization of social action in interaction. In order to show that this is not limited to this particular institutional activity and setting, we will briefly leave the counselling office to give one example from a parallel data set of recordings at an international office help desk. Here too, staff members are called upon to provide advice to students regarding administrative procedures.

In the following example, a non-local staff member on duty at a help desk initiates repair of the linguistic medium for the encounter (Gafaranga, 2000), from Danish to English. In line with the earlier examples, the sequence in question concerns the task of the client formulating the reason for the encounter.

Example 4 [LTSH–day4-1201]

```
17   KAJ:   hi↗
18          (1.1)
19   TOM:   hi
20          (0.3)
21   KAJ:   eh #jeg kan godt tænk mig at eh: (.)
            eh I've been thinking about eh
Fig.         #a
22          tage til Island
            going to Iceland
23          (0.3)
24          femte semester≈
            the fifth semester
25   TOM:   ≈eh sorry i huhuh i ⌈don't⌉ #speak much
26   KAJ:                      ⌊ oh ⌋
Fig.                                     #b
27   KAJ:   #eh:: i ⌈would like⌉ to go to Iceland (0.2)
28   TOM:           ⌊danish⌋
Fig.         #c
29   TOM:   #yeah≈
Fig.         #d
30   KAJ:   ≈for the fifth semester
```


Fig. a

Fig. b   Fig. c   Fig. d

Fig 10

Here, the client Kaj is waiting at the counter for an attendant member of staff. As the staff member Tom returns to the help desk area, a number of interactional moves are observed, with the establishing of mutual gaze being followed by a greeting sequence (lines 17–19) (for further discussion of such opening sequences in this setting, see Mortensen and Hazel, in press). As Kaj subsequently produces a hesitation marker at the turn-initial position in line 21 (see also, Schegloff, 2010), he places his hands on the counter and looks down to the counter, while both co-participants negotiate postural alignment either side of it. As this is occasioned, the client moves into the turn that contextualizes the reason for his visit (line 21). The turn unfolds as the co-participants move into a stabilized F-formation, with Tom also resting his right hand on the counter opposite Kaj's, and subsequently picking up a pen that was lying there in the vicinity (Fig. a). The turn is produced in Danish, and as Kaj produces the initial part (line 21), Tom redirects his gaze to the counter. Tom re-orients his gaze up to Kaj's face when Kaj produces the hesitation marker and pause at the end of line 21 and they both establish mutual gaze. Kaj then proceeds again in Danish, and Tom again redirects his gaze to the counter. This time he also removes his hand from the surface (in conjunction with 'sorry' in line 25), he produces an apology for his lack of Danish. Here he performs a number of object grooming actions (Mortensen and Lundsgaard, 2011) (clicking the pen and slightly moving a sheet of paper on the counter-top).

The apology is produced in English, and at the point that this is recognizable, on 'sorry', Kaj produces an ostensive display of removing his hands from the counter (Fig. b). He utters a change of state token in overlap with Tom's account line 26, bringing his hands now all the way up to shoulder height. Following this, the participants disengage from the established postural alignment, rotating their torsos away from one another (Fig. c). They then *re-initiate* the move into the earlier F-formation as the turn is re-started in line 27, this time in English. Hands are brought back into contact with the counter surface, with the staff member now also manipulating a post-it note pack with his right hand (Fig. d).

In summary, although the turn has already been initiated, verbally, posturally and manually, the restarting of the turn involves not only a language alternation to English, it also enacts anew the body visual engagement with which the verbal component of the turn is constituted. In this way, the sequence parallels neatly the one discussed earlier, with the participants moving into the particular sequential step in question once the requisite conditions for doing so have been secured. In both cases, this is done not only verbally, but in a bodily-visual fashion also, including the manipulation of objects in the surround.

3.3. Coda: the 'written' of the writing

Finally, we return again to Example 3. We focussed earlier on *how* the writing activity is performed. It could be argued that the activity can not, however, be divorced from the *what* of the writing. Even if the written text is not available to the writer's conversational partner, there is a process of selecting content from the interlocutor's talk and deciding both what is relevant to include in the notes taken, and which form they should take (for example a summary, keywords or a verbatim account). The notes are not random thoughts of the listener, but may serve one or more purposes, for example schematizing the meeting, keeping a record of topics covered, acting as minutes, or in order to later be used as reminders of previous points introduced or of projected responses to the points. Although the current research is primarily concerned here with the manner in which artefacts are made interactionally relevant in institutional interaction, it would be unwise not to consider the written text produced during sequences where inscribing on the artefacts is being occasioned, and how this inscription relates to the interaction.

Example 3, excerpt E [LTSH-meeting1]

```
52  MAR:  we- (.) [the first] thing i wanted to know was (.)
53  TOD:          [what you want]
54  MAR:  whether there was a way to: study (.) abroad (.)
55        cos i was interested in≈
56  TOD:  ≈yeah↘ ≈
57  MAR:  ≈in the (0.6) exchange with a university in singapore↗
58        (0.3)
```

```
59   TOD:   yeah↘
60   MAR:   and the ↑reason that i want to do this is
61          is that it is part of this (0.3) creative project that i'm working
62          o:n
63          (0.6)
64          so: er huhuh what is this career thing that i am doing
```

Returning to the section of data at hand (lines 52–62), we observe Tod displaying understanding of Mari's extended formulation concerning her first inquiry, offering a vocalized acknowledgement 'yeah' in both lines 56 and 59, and a non-vocalized – mouthed – equivalent in line 55. All are produced as what can be taken as displays of 'doing understanding', with the speech components displaying final intonation, and all are produced in conjunction with the writing activity.

Sacks (1992) introduced the distinction between the 'claiming' and 'demonstrating' understanding by recipients (see Mondada, 2011, for more recent discussions on the subject). The difference between the two types of display rests on what the recipient provides as evidence for understanding, with some form of reformulation being offered in the case of demonstrating understanding. In the current sequence this is somewhat ambiguous, as Tod does not actually provide any such evidence for the speaker to verify, but displays an activity which can only be undertaken if some form of understanding has been achieved. Secondly, the sequential positioning of the initial 'yeah' (line 56) is notable, as the way it is formatted implies that some understanding has been achieved at the outset of Mari's upcoming formulation of her choice of study exchange programme. As we described earlier, Tod, in conjunction with the 'yeah', redirects his gaze to the notepad, lifting the pen and rotating it into a writing position above the page. This action implies that something in Mari's talk is relevant to note down. Mari's gaze follows this action during the 0.6 second pause (line 57), before continuing her account as she re-orients her gaze up to his face again. As she does, Tod mouths what looks like a second 'yeah' in silence and starts his writing.

This may work to enact the identity of expert-counsellor, someone who has enough experience to be able to predict that he will understand the subsequent talk. Tod appears to produce the subsequent markers as confirmations of this initial understanding. As such, Tod is able to draw on the writing activity to signify that a particular form of institutional task is being engaged in, one which requires of him the institutional expertise to process Mari's talk. It implies "a specific form of listening, interpreting, inferring, diagnosing, etc." (Mondada, 2011, p. 545), thereby enabling Tod to set out his identity as institutionally competent through an embodied engagement with the objects at hand. These actions may in turn be taken into account by the speaker, who can then cater her talk appropriate to the practice (Goodwin, 1980).

What concerns us here is, as mentioned earlier, the *what* of the note-taking, the actual notes produced during the talk where Tod accompanies his displays of understanding with the note-taking, as Mari described her initial topic. The topic in question relates to the setting up a placement at a specific overseas university, for reasons of undertaking a particular creative activity which relates to her non-university career, but which may be combined with her academic work. As visual access to the actual inscription is restricted, Mari has to trust that what Tod is noting down is a synthesis of her expressed concerns, and is operating with certain 'constitutive expectancies' (Garfinkel, 1963) as regards the activity they are engaged in. Sometime later in the video data, however, we are afforded a brief glimpse of the notes produced during the sequence described here.
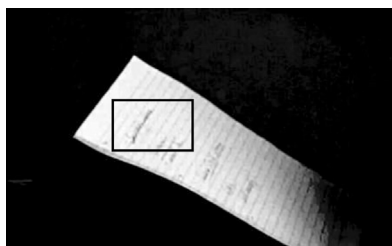

Fig. 10

The item recorded during the sequence is the first note on the page, and features the words '*Study abroad.*' (see Fig. 10). Although we can merely speculate what this single annotation represents for the writer, or how it is used by him in the subsequent business-at-hand, we may at the very least suggest that is does not encapsulate the full understanding that Tod seems to display during the composition of this note, during which he acknowledges the extended turn and topic-extensions of Mari on the three separate occasions. Indeed, in subsequent talk, Tod is able to respond to the whole composite formulation as presented in Mari's topic development.

We can then speculate that the main function of the elaborate writing activity observed here is not contingent on the produced inscription, which shows a simple general topic descriptor mentioned by Mari earlier at the outset. Contrary to what we might expect, it is then not the *writing* that appears to be of foremost importance here, but the interactional affordances that the activity of 'doing-writing' provides. The function appears to be first and foremost of an interactional

orientation, performed as a display of a certain institutional participation framework, 'doing-being-in-a-counselling-meeting'. What the analysis suggests here is that socially situated artefacts can be brought into play in an interaction as one resource in the enactment of a specific type of institutionality appropriate to the activity at hand. The more 'conventional' affordances offered by such objects, a writing pad for note taking, may indeed take a secondary role in comparison with the interactional uses of the artefact.

4. Discussion

The current paper has demonstrated one area where artefacts are invoked to serve purposes that are not immediately associated with the utilitarian affordances conventionally attributed to these items, namely in the sequential management of institutionally oriented action sequences. Here, we have described how the objects at hand are utilized in conjunction with other sign systems to manage the sequential organization of the unfolding interaction. Such visual conduct, we have shown, then performs co-constitutive meaningful social action in interaction.

In the data discussed, participants engaged in university counselling meetings utilize a number of socially situated artefacts in piloting the developing trajectories of participation frameworks commensurate with the institutional activities they are coordinating in situ. Objects are gazed at and shared, touched and withdrawn from, handled and manipulated in ways that act as one component resource in the composite construction of the social actions that make up an unfolding interactional sequence.

By skilfully and reflexively making these materials in the immediate environment relevant in the contextual configuration of the encounter, the participants demonstrate a level of interactional competence that operates beyond the single modality of the linguistic channel. This includes the ability to place the situated environment at the disposal of the interlocutors, to mobilize features in the surround as ratified resources for marking situated action, and to operationalize these resources-in-interaction to occasion orientations to activities appropriate to the institutional goals of the interactants. As such, the data support the perspective offered earlier, that institutions are indeed not only talked-into-being (Heritage, 1984), but that the resources deployed to constitute the institutional orientation of an encounter are drawn from a wider field of embodied, situated resources, including, as explicated here, material artefacts from the surround.

We have described how the activity of writing is made relevant to the ongoing and projected institutional business. At times, however, 'writing' is not being accomplished – nor does that seem to be the 'actual' projected activity – but the participants may make certain features of 'writing' relevant to serve local interactional functions. This builds on recognizable patterns of writing as a social activity, here displaying relevant recipient behaviour during opening phases of the counselling meeting. Where objects may be used in ways that are not building on their preordained design-features (e.g., Streeck, 1996), so too may the social action of writing serve interactional purposes beyond its primary function (see also Streeck and Kallmeyer, 2001). Heath and Luff (2011) show how the ways in which gestures and other forms of bodily conduct are mobilized are constituent features of the institutional activity. Hands and bodies are mobilized to perform highly specific social actions that define the institutionality of the activity. In the case described by Heath and Luff, participants draw on gestures to demarcate bidders at an auction and accomplish seemingly contradictory demands – that of ascribing bids and securing bidders' anonymity. In the present study, we have shown how participants draw on bodily conduct and physical objects to project social actions that are used "symbolically" (cf. Streeck, 1996) to institutionalize the ongoing interaction. Following Streeck (1996), it is the arranging of the body and objects into a recognizable configuration for undertaking a particular type of task, that is utilized as gestural display of institutional orientation. Here too, as in Heath and Luff's example of the auction, these actions provide a "unique fingerprint" (Heritage and Greatbatch, 1991) of a specialized type of institutional interaction, with an orientation to participants' professional roles within the counselling activity at hand.[9]

Such an account follows recent (video-based) approaches to institutional interaction that foreground social activity in all its 'complexity' – rather than speech – as what defines institutionality (e.g., Koschmann et al., 2011; Mondada, 2011). This is most specifically characterized by workplace studies (e.g., Luff et al., 2000), which analytically combines CA approaches with context analysis (e.g., Scheflen, 1973; Kendon, 1990). This emerges from a fundamentally emic perspective to how people occasion their social lives without a priori attributing speech a predominant role. Here, indeed, speech together with bodily reconfigurations and the orientation to and use of objects index the social situation in which participants find themselves.

In focussing on resources that have remained relatively unexplored in Conversation Analytic approaches to talk-in-interaction, this investigation adds to the body of applied research that seeks to provide for fuller, more holistic descriptions of how sociality is coordinated in interaction. We have specifically analyzed how participants draw on a range of verbal, bodily and material resources in order to enact the institutional business at hand.

---

[9] Counselling as a social activity is not, of course, limited to institutional interaction, but can be carried out between, for instance, friends or family. Our understanding of such settings is that note taking during these sequences is not a relevant activity.

This understanding of situated institutional interaction can be optimized through paying close, detailed attention to ways in which those who inhabit the settings manage, on a moment-by-moment basis, the unfolding organization of an encounter, and do so through dynamically shifting framing devices reflexively drawn from a range of resources in order to navigate successful courses of action.

Appendix: Transcription conventions

The transcription conventions are based on those developed by Gail Jefferson. Some are used in modified form for the benefit of the CLAN software tool.

Identifier	TOD
Pause	(0.2)
Overlap markers top	⌈ ⌉
Overlap markers bottom	⌊ ⌋
Intonation:	
rising	↗
falling	↘
Pitch shift	↑
Latched turns	≈
Smiley voice	☺
Inbreath	•hhhh
Stress	n<u>ow</u>
Descriptions of gesture	%ges:
Transcription comment lines	%com:

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