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## **Intersubjectivity in Action: An introduction**

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Intersubjectivity is a complex concept, and some central approaches to it have been discussed in areas of, for example, philosophy (based on e.g. early work by Schuetz 1953), developmental psychology (Trevarthen & Aitken 2001), neuroscience (Iacoboni 2008) and primatology (Tomasello 2008; Tomasello, Carpenter & Hobson 2005). In the realm of the interactional approach that the chapters in this volume represent we can initially note the following. Intersubjectivity is a precondition for all human life: for social organization as well as for individual development and well-being. A primordial site for its creation and maintenance is human interaction.

By focusing on the creation and maintenance of intersubjectivity, the authors of this book approach the topic from the perspectives of turn and action design, action attribution, challenges in achieving shared understanding, embodied practices in meaning-making and synchronized participant conduct, as well as developmental aspects of intersubjectivity. The core theoretical and methodological framework is Conversation Analysis, combined with methods of interactional linguistics and multimodal interaction analysis as well as the study of gesture and psychophysiology. This research promotes an understanding that

intersubjectivity involves joint understanding and sharing of experience between humans (see e.g. Linell 2017). Intersubjectivity in interaction requires referential common ground, shared understanding of the meaning of linguistic forms, shared understanding of actions and sequences of action and shared understanding of the expression of emotion in sequences of action.

In linguistics, intersubjectivity in the sense of orientation to the other's mental state was already central for early information flow theorists in the 1970s (e.g. Chafe 1976, 1992), and more recently it has emerged as a topic for inquiry in cognitive and construction grammar or in combinations of these (Verhagen 2005; Diessel 2006; Brems, Ghesquière & van de Velde 2014). What has been neglected in these studies, however, are those aspects of linguistic forms and structure that serve to organize and sustain intersubjective understanding in the ongoing interaction. Interaction exists before language (Schegloff 1996; Levinson 2006; Tomasello, Carpenter & Hobson 2008), and language use cannot thus be seen solely as a means of coordinating different cognitive perspectives (see e.g. Zlatev et al. 2008; Linell 2014; Etelämäki 2016). In addition, linguistic structures are used for organizing and creating sequences of action and the relations of the participants to one other. As opposed to much earlier theorizing, which basically describes the process of “inter-thinking”, the position of the research presented in this volume stresses the importance of “inter-action”,

and intersubjectivity as an achievement in particular interactions (see Deppermann 2015; Raymond 2019).

The organization of verbal and embodied actions in interaction is seen in conversation analytic research as built so that each 'next' action is produced and understood in relation to the previous one (Schegloff 2007). Thus, each *next* action brings forward its producer's understanding of the *previous* action. The producer of this previous action has, as the *third* action, an opportunity to confirm or revise the understandings displayed by the producer of the second action. Through this mechanism, the sequential relatedness of human actions provides for the possibility of shared, intersubjective understanding. Actions in interaction, then, are produced step-by-step in time, and recipients monitor the unfolding talk, constructed through verbal and non-verbal resources, from the point of view of the action that is unfolding and its possible completion in order to know when and how to act next. This can be viewed as the publicly implemented procedure of intersubjectivity. There are also other kinds of understandings of the character of the constitutive elements of social interaction, such as the one by Levinson and Enfield (2006) who propose that the basic practices of social interaction involve a process of mutual 'reading' of the mental states of the co-interactants.

The authors in this volume explore the achievement and maintenance of intersubjectivity in social interaction in a range of different situations and in a variety of languages. The studies thus set out to further our understanding

of intersubjectivity in the formation of actions and sequences of action, in the on-line deployment of verbal and nonverbal resources for action projection and attribution, and in the expression and recognition of emotion as embedded in social interaction. While the core methodology of the studies is Conversation Analysis, the volume highlights the advantages of using several methods to tackle specific phenomena. Several chapters demonstrate the relevance of CA methods, methods of multimodal analyses and methods of detailing the verbal resources with concepts and methods of linguistics. Furthermore, qualitative methods of CA are combined with quantitative movement synchrony research and with methods of psychophysiology. The languages covered in the chapters include Arabic, Brazilian Portuguese, English, Finnish, French, German, and Swedish, some of these in multilingual discourse. Through short overviews of the parts and chapters of the volume, we will in the following highlight and bring together its main conceptual, empirical and methodological contributions.

## **1 How language codes and creates intersubjectivity**

This first part of the present volume consists of six chapters that deal with verbal resources in the construction of intersubjectivity. While it is clear that participants enter interaction with some assumptions of shared understandings regarding the meaning and situational use of linguistic forms

and how they are used to implement social actions, it is important to note that such understandings are not stable, are always disputed, contingent, and emergent in and in fact created and continuously reshaped by interaction (e.g. Hopper 1987; Pekarek Doehler, Wagner & Gonzáles-Martínez 2015). Consider, for example, requests and suggestions formatted as *om* and *jos* ‘if’ clauses in Finnish and Swedish (J. Lindström, Lindholm & Laury 2016; J. Lindström, Laury & Lindholm 2019). Like conditional ‘if’ clauses in other languages, *om* and *jos* clauses are usually considered subordinate, and thus should be followed by a main clause expressing a consequent, formatted as a ‘so’ clause. However, in their ‘insubordinate’ use as requests (cf. Evans 2007), they are often followed only by a verbal or embodied compliance. If the compliance is delayed or missing, the consequent or an account will follow, or it may follow only after the compliance has been expressed, as in Excerpt 1 from a conversation between a home care helper (H) and her elderly client (C).

Excerpt 1: Red mat in front of the bathtub (adapted from A. Lindström 1999: 20)

- 01 H: vänta ska vi få handduken [(för den-)  
wait let's get the towel (cause it-)
- 02 C: [snä- å sen  
plea- and then
- 03 → om du ville dra: den där röda mattan (0.2) [hit.  
if you would put that red mat (0.2) here.
- 04 H: [ja:  
yes
- 05 [(ska ja gör-)

- (will do-)
- 06 C: [så går (.) lättare för me:j å=  
(then) it's (.) easier for me to=
- 07 H: =å kliva u:r,  
=to climb out,
- 08 C: å stiga opp,  
to step up,

In line 3, the client asks the home care helper to move a mat in front of the bathtub using an *om*-clause (a conditional protasis, as it were). The clause has a falling intonation contour, indicating a potential turn closure. The home care helper responds in the affirmative in lines 4–5, showing that she treats the conditional clause as a request, and is not waiting for a main clause to follow. In overlap, the client then initiates an account in line 6. This account is not semantically necessary, and it could also be interpreted as a main clause to the client's *om* clause in lines 3. In any case, it serves as an expression and motivation for the client's need for help. This shows that the use of conditional *om* clauses as freestanding requests without any main clauses is contingent, emergent, and negotiated as interaction proceeds.

Expressions such as in subordinate 'if' clauses also show that there are frequently mismatches between particular lexico-grammatical formats and the way they are used to accomplish actions in conversation. Consider Thompson and Couper-Kuhlen (2020) which shows that the English expression *why don't you* is used in conversation to give suggestions and advice in problem or complaint contexts, and not to ask for reasons why the addressee is not doing something. This is shown in Excerpt 2 from a phone conversation between two sisters. Emma lives in Los Angeles and Lottie has

a vacation rental by the beach south of there in Newport Beach. Both sisters are in Newport Beach at the time of the call.

Excerpt 2: Stay down (adapted from Thompson & Couper-Kuhlen 2020: 103)

- 5 LOT: it's beautiful: day I [ bet ] you've had a lot of smo::g=  
 6 EMM: [yah-]  
 7 LOT: =up there haven't you.  
 8 EMM: oh::: Lo:ttie,hh (.) You don't kno::w,  
 9 LOT: I kno[:w.  
 10 EMM: [go:::d it['s been ]  
 11 → LOT: [-why don't] you stay dow::n.  
 12 EMM: .hh (0.2) Oh::: ↓\*I d\*oh it. I: should st\*ay ↓d\*o:wn. hhhhhhh  
 13 (.)  
 14 LOT: Je:sus I: wu< ↓with a:ll that s:mo:g u[p there]  
 15 EMM: [ mye:a:]:h,  
 16 EMM: \*I ↓r\*eally should ↓st\*ay d\*own.↓ let's see this is the end of  
 17 the (0.8) .t (0.4) w\*e:ll maybe,h I'd say ne:xt week= <I: haven't  
 18 got too many clothes

At Lottie's prompting, in line 8, Emma starts to complain about the smog in Los Angeles. In line 11, Lottie makes a suggestion, using the *why don't you* formula, that Emma stay at the beach. In line 12 and again in 16, Emma appears to accept the suggestion. Note that she does not respond by giving reasons why she would not "stay down" at Newport Beach. Uses such as these show that utterances are not cobbled together from a pre-existing, stable grammar and lexicon, but rather consist largely of formulas conventionalized through usage in particular contexts and used to



accomplish particular kinds of social actions that are recognizable to the speakers.

The six chapters in this part consider a range of aspects of how grammatical resources are used to construct social actions relying on assumptions of what is mutually shared in the here and now. Such assumptions of intersubjectivity may be fundamentally asymmetric, as shown by Etelämäki in her chapter, or they may be only partial (Couper-Kuhlen, Etelämäki and Sorjonen). The resources used may even seem to reflect internally contradictory assumptions (Laury; Piippo), while doing indispensable work in the social and interactional positioning of the participants. The use of the resources is fundamentally sequence sensitive, especially shown in the contribution of Auer and Lindström. A further kind of complexity in building intersubjectivity arises in multilingual encounters (Harjunpää) where it is especially obvious that linguistic resources are always only partially shared. We give brief summaries of these chapters in the following.

**Marja Etelämäki** (*Organizing the “we” in interaction*) devotes her attention to the personal forms used in interaction, by analyzing cases where an initial action by a speaker implies some knowledge of the recipient and a particular type of “we”-relationship but the recipient rejects that. By tracking the subsequent development of the sequence, Etelämäki finds that the relationship between the participants is re-organized for example by changing the personal forms used, so that construing the “self” and the

“other” is as prominent as construing the “we”. Etelämäki relates this to the fundamentally asymmetric character of intersubjectivity, to the experiencing and experienced subjects. The role of language in human intersubjectivity will be discussed with respect to the possibility that the grammar of a language provides for certain types of “we”-relations. The data for the paper come from Finnish informal interaction.

**Ritva Laury**’s (*Definitely indefinite: negotiating intersubjective common ground in everyday interaction in Finnish*) contribution concerns Finnish expressions which seem internally contradictory because they consist of both a recognitional and a non-recognitional referential form, containing both the definite demonstrative *se* ‘it, that, the’ (e.g. *se ihminen* ‘that/the person’), and one of the indefinite determiners (*yksi* ‘one’, *semmonen* ‘such’ and *joku* ‘some’), resulting in expressions such as *se joku ihminen* ‘the/that some person’. Laury shows that each of these expressions has its home environment, and that they are tools in the process of building intersubjective common ground in interaction and serve as a fine-grained resource for the management of epistemic stance and the negotiation of relative epistemic status.

**Elizabeth Couper-Kuhlen, Marja Etelämäki, and Marja-Leena Sorjonen** (*Directive turn design and intersubjectivity*) investigate two turn designs used to implement a directive action in Finnish, the 2nd person imperative and turns formatted with the so-called ‘zero person’ construction. They show that the choice between the two turn designs is

based on different assumptions about shared understandings of the activity and the sequential context. The imperative format reflects or constructs a situation in which certain assumptions about the nominated action are either intersubjectively shared or explicitly expressed in the turn design. In contrast, a directive turn which employs the zero person makes fewer assumptions about what is shared. This can be seen in the ordering of the turn designs if both are used in the same context and same activity: the imperative used first, and, if met by resistance, a zero construction then to restore shared understanding.

With data from German and Swedish talk-in-interaction, **Peter Auer and Jan Lindström** (*On agency and affiliation in second assessments: German and Swedish opinion verbs in talk-in-interaction*) focus on the use of “opinion verbs” in a subjective framing of assessments (*ich finde* and *jag tycker* ‘I think’). They show that speakers can influence agency constellations with certain constructional variations of the clausal formats associated with the opinion verbs. They demonstrate that it is consequential for the sequential development of talk (its closure vs. expansion relevance) whether the speaker of the second assessment claims lower vs. higher agency, and whether the second assessment is downgraded vs. on the same level as the first assessment. The chapter offers new perspectives to the workings of intersubjective positioning in social interaction and its links to the grammatical formatting of speaker turns.

**Irina Piippo** (*Mirror-like address practice in Arabic-medium classroom interaction: managing social relations and intersubjectivity*) discusses address inversion in Palestinian Arabic-medium classroom interaction. This mirror-like address practice is one where the speaker uses an address form which the addressee would normally use for the speaker, so that teachers, for example, can use the form *usta:z* ‘professor, teacher’ to address a student. Piippo shows how address inversion is deployed in the school context to position participants both socially and interactionally while foregrounding the social position claimed by the speaker. This practice is thus a semiotic resource that explicitly manifests intersubjectivity by taking the addressee’s perspective on the social relationship between the participants.

**Katariina Harjunpää** (*Brokering co-participant’s volition in request and offer sequences*) investigates intersubjectivity through examining ascriptions of volition in multilingual settings where both Finnish and Brazilian Portuguese are used. She focuses on situations where one participant facilitates interaction between participants with asymmetric linguistic repertoires in sequences of requests and offers of an immediate action or of a co-present object. In the sequences examined, the language broker facilitating the interaction verbalizes the volition of one of the parties. The paper shows how the expression of volition in this context emerges from, and responds to, local interactional needs. The analysis of

modal verbal constructions as resources for formulating the “meaning” of interactional conduct also touches on issues in interactional semantics.

## **2 Moving towards shared understanding**

This second part of the volume is devoted to further investigations of various situations in which reaching a detailed enough intersubjective understanding is at stake. Sensemaking in dialogical interaction demands shared attention and understanding among the participants about what is going on, what kind of action is produced and what kind of state the action is aimed to bring about. As pointed out by Schütz, we can never be totally sure that a co-participant understands us and our actions. Instead, “until further notice” (Schutz & Luckmann 1979), we have to anticipate that this is the case: “In projecting my question I anticipate that the other will understand my action (for instance my uttering an interrogative sentence) as a question and that this understanding will induce him to act in such a way that I may understand his behavior as an adequate response” (Schuetz 1953: 17). But even in such successful cases, given our individual backgrounds, personalities and situational perspectives, we cannot expect that the interlocutors’ understandings in a situation are exclusively shared, but rather that their understandings are shared to a degree that is “sufficient for all

practical purposes” (Schuetz 1953: 8; Garfinkel 1967), i.e. what is practical for communication and human connection in that situation.

“Rational action”, according to Schütz, is produced within a situational and behavioral frame that the co-participants can identify as “typical”. Such typified behavior, then, is to be seen as a realization (and repetition) of a regular action pattern. Such patterns can rely on what we know about our family members and close friends, all that “common ground” that we have gathered. Intersubjectivity of this kind is, however, highly dependent on personal relations, the character of which may change over time. But intersubjectivity can also build on “standardized” and protracted action patterns that are “anonymous” in the sense that anyone acting according to such a pattern in a situational frame associated with that pattern is recognized as performing a certain kind of action, and thus capable of inducing certain relevant next actions by another person (Schuetz 1953: 26; Goffman 1974: 8–11; Gumperz 1982: 101). Structures of language, social rituals (like greeting) and institutional encounters (like a commercial transaction) can be taken as examples and records of sedimented action patterns that are likely to foster intersubjective behavior and understanding (see Section 1 above).

When we recognize an action, we are able to respond accordingly and get involved in an encounter with another. Gumperz (1982) argues that understanding presupposes conversational involvement, i.e. if no involvement, then no understanding. However, to be involved in a

conversation requires linguistic and sociocultural knowledge of appropriate discourse strategies, i.e. of the construction of those regular action patterns Schütz discussed. There is language variation that is stratified in different ways within a speech community – with regard to region, age, education, subcultures – that can hamper successful participation in conversation. Therefore, involvement and understanding are not a given but dependent on the participants' abilities to deal with some degree of variation in communicative strategies and “alterity” between the participants (see Linell 2017). In other words, involvement and shared understanding (for all practical purposes) are always *achieved* by the participants, relative to their differential perspectives, socio-cultural knowledge, familiarity with a situational frame (or script) and the ways of constructing relevant actions (such as a request).

At the micro level of social interaction, meaning-making is intimately related to the situated, sequential context of speaking. In a sense, every new utterance by a speaker involves a possible breach in the weave of intersubjectivity between the participants. There are different methods of indicating that no such breach has occurred in an ongoing interaction, the most common probably being different kinds of feedback tokens (e.g. *right*, *okay*, *uh huh*) that implicitly convey that the listener has understood the preceding talk. In the absence of such tokens the speaker may soon become worried about the connection and level of shared understanding and whether it is meaningful to continue to talk or not.

Mutual understanding is easily at risk in the flow of conversation as speakers often swiftly shift focus and glide from one topic to another.

Excerpt 3, borrowed from Robinson (2013), gives us an example of this kind of trouble. The two participants Moe and Bob have been talking on the telephone, and just before the excerpt starts, Moe has said that he has been gathering wood to be burned in a heater (stove) in his home. At the beginning of the excerpt below the topic however has shifted to Volkswagen buses, which both Moe and Bob own, and at line 1 Moe asks how Bob's bus is running.

Excerpt 3: Bus (adapted from Robinson 2013: 261)

- 01 Moe: How's your bus running otherwise.  
 02 (0.5)  
 03 Bob: Pretty good I need a tune up real ba:d, but (.)  
 04 [duh : ]  
 05 Moe: [Mm hm,]  
 06 (0.4)  
 07 Bob: It's runnin' real goo:d.  
 08 (.)  
 09 Moe: (>Mm=hm,</>Mm:,<)  
 10 (1.2)  
 11 → Bob: How's your heater been working these last few w:EEKS.  
 12 → Moe: My heater?  
 13 Bob: Yeah=in your car.  
 14 Moe: Thuh bu:s?  
 15 Bob: Yeah=or do you use it that (m[uch.])  
 16 Moe: [ Oh ]: yeah I been using it,  
 17 well it's s:low to heat u- you know you >got a lot a<  
 18 (. ) cubic feet a a:ir in the:re,  
 19 Bob: Yeah.



At line 11 Bob asks a question about Moe's "heater". Moe responds with a partial questioning repeat (*My heater?*) because he obviously does not understand what heater Bob is referring to. Bob treats this as an initiation of repair, attributing Moe's repetition a problem of understanding by confirming the repetition and specifying the reference (*Yeah in your car*). Yet in line 14 Moe needs to make sure it is the bus, and not another car, that Bob referred to, and only after Bob's confirmation in line 15 mutual understanding is restored. The excerpt then shows a breach in local epistemic relations: Moe has not access to where Bob is topically shifting, but Bob becomes aware of what Moe reasonably can and cannot understand at the crucial points of interaction at lines 12 and 14.

Asymmetries in the participants' epistemic constellations, i.e. what the interactants know about the matter at hand and one another's knowledge, constitute a common source of problems of understanding. Epistemic asymmetries may also surface as overt displays of divided understandings and negotiations about the local meaning of an item in the talk. Meaning negotiations recur in social interaction to the degree that languages have developed conventional resources for dealing with such situations. One example is the Swedish utterance-initial coordinating pattern to be found at line 3 in Excerpt 4, originally discussed by Linell and Lindström (2016). The excerpt is from a TV talk-show in which a journalist (R) interviews a veteran politician (S). The journalist has referred to S's several interests and activities; his ability to speak many languages is yet

another example of these interests and is brought up in line 1 (*å så kan du tala massa språk* ‘And then you can speak a host of languages’).

Excerpt 4: A host of languages (adapted from Linell & Lindström 2016: 119)

- 01 → R:     **å så kan du tala massa språk,**  
                   *and then you can speak a host of languages,*
- 02           **va e de? åtta?**  
                   *how many is it? eight?*
- 03 → S:     **tala å tala (.) ja kan nj- an:vända en ett så där**  
                   *speak and speak (.) I can use about*
- 04           **åtta tiotal språk ja.**  
                   *eight or ten languages yeah.*
- 05     R:     **vikket håller du på å lära dej nu?**  
                   *which one are you learning now?*
- 06     S:     **ja håller faktist på me kinesika (...)**  
                   *actually I am busy with Chinese (...)*

S picks up the verb *tala* ‘speak’ and duplicates it in the coordinating pattern *tala å tala* ‘speak and speak’, the meaning of which perhaps could be translated as ‘It depends on what you mean by speaking’. This is a way of displaying that the repeated item can be understood in more than one sense and that the participants do not necessarily share the same understanding. It seems that S with this meta-semantic practice works to cancel out certain aspects of the meaning ‘to speak a language’, that is, completely mastering a language. He then relativizes the sequentially situated meaning to encompass merely the ability to use a language to some (undefined) degree, an aspect S develops in the continuation of his turn in lines 3 and 4. Clearly, S has first-hand access to what level his skills in different languages are and

is thus in a position to convey the adequate facet of the meaning potential of ‘to speak a language’ to form the basis for further interaction. Such negotiations of situated meanings show that sense-making is a reflexive process that involves co-action and calibration of different, possibly competing understandings that, nonetheless, can be made available and thus intersubjective in a conversational sequence (see Linell 2017: 117).

The five chapters in this part of the volume explore the constitution of shared understanding in a range of settings, detailing different dimensions of the character of such understanding. These perspectives include intersubjectivity as a dimension of business sales interaction (Niemi, Pullins & Kaski), negotiations between different perspectives or goals in therapeutic interactions (Weiste), of socialization (Rauniomaa, Keisanen & Siitonen), extended other-initiated repair sequences (Haakana, Kurhila, Lilja & Savijärvi), and the management of lapses in conversation (Vatanen). The chapters are summarized below.

**Jarkko Niemi, Ellen Pullins, and Timo Kaski** (*Decision making in salesperson–customer interaction: establishing a common ground for obtaining commitment*) devote their attention to the concept ‘shared understanding’ from the point of view of business sales interaction. The authors focus on sequences where sufficiently shared understanding is claimed by one of the participants in order to account for decision-making. Claims of shared understanding are especially done to account for the buyers’ no-sale decisions. Thus, the buyer appeals to an intersubjective

understanding of the overall situation with the salesperson while the two negotiating parties have contrasting goals in the interaction (i.e. selling/not buying). The data consist of 24 video recorded sales encounters in Finland.

**Elina Weiste** (*Building an intersubjective understanding of the patient's mental suffering*) poses the question how subjective suffering becomes understood by the clinician in psychiatric consultations. Sufferers are reported to feel isolation and fundamental loneliness that can be conceptualized as a breakdown of intersubjectivity. The analysis of audio-recorded diagnostic interviews in a Finnish psychiatric outpatient clinic demonstrates that the patients' expressions of suffering involve a particular kind of passive activity: tolerance of agonising pain and endurance of what is unbearable. It is shown that the mental health professionals attempt to verbalize and explain the patient's experience in order to build a shared world of meaning. By locating suffering in symptoms of particular illnesses, they work to structure suffering into a more specific medical problem.

Human action and interaction in nature-related activities outdoors forms the setting for the chapter by **Mirka Rauniomaa, Tiina Keisanen, and Paula Siitonen** (*Shared understandings of the human–nature relationship in encounters with small wildlife*). They focus on moments when insects and small wildlife become the shared focus of the participants' ongoing, anticipated or contemplated actions, involving both adults and children. The analysis considers especially how participants pursue and achieve shared understanding about appropriate ways of conducting oneself

in nature and contributes thus to the discussion of intersubjectivity as a dimension of socialization. An interplay of language, bodily orientation and movement are the resources the participants use when dealing with the issues of shared understanding in these outdoors settings.

**Markku Haakana, Salla Kurhila, Niina Lilja, and Marjo**

**Savijärvi** (*Extended sequences of other-initiated repair in Finnish conversation*) examine repair sequences in which an unsuccessful repair turn leads to a new repair initiation. Their data consist of 458 other-initiated repairs in Finnish everyday interaction, of which 42 lead to an extended sequence. They show that extended sequences are least likely to occur when the other-initiation is the most specific (candidate understanding), or the least specific (open class repair initiator). Instead, they occur when the problem is the acceptability of the co-participant's turn or a mistaken assumption of shared knowledge. The study shows that other initiations are a routine way to deal with the targeted trouble, and thus a demonstration of existing intersubjectivity rather than lack of intersubjectivity. This is reflected in the rareness of extended repair sequences.

In the last chapter of this part, **Anna Vatanen** (*Co-presence during lapses: on "comfortable silences" in Finnish everyday interaction*) examines how participants in Finnish dyadic everyday interactions between friends and family members seemingly organized for sustained talk inhabit lapses, silent moments which typically occur at the ends of sequences where participants forgo the option to speak. Through a close examination of the

participants' observable behavior Vatanen shows that they share an intersubjective understanding of a momentary mutual disengagement, and hence the level of sociality of the situation is reduced. The participants momentarily re-form an encounter into a two-person gathering. She suggests that the social order of co-presence is intersubjectively negotiated, created, maintained and transformed among the participants.

### **3 Bodies and intersubjectivity**

The third part *Bodies and intersubjectivity* with its three chapters moves the attention to the embodied conduct in the construction and display of intersubjectivity. Goffman (1983: 2) characterized social interaction as having a “body-to-body starting point”: interaction happens where people are physically in “one another’s response presence”. We explore what this means in terms of intersubjectivity.

Physical touch between humans is immensely important through the life course; the pacifying effect of touch is there from the very beginning of human life (Field 2001). In human development, intersubjectivity emerges before language. What Treverathen (1979) famously called *primary intersubjectivity*, the human infant (from the age of about two months) interacts with its caregiver through mutual gaze, facial expressions, body movements and vocalisations. Infants and caretakers are looking at and

listening to each other, attending to, and regulating each other's vocal, facial and gestural expressions, and the feelings and interests that these convey.

The bodily interactions remain central in intersubjectivity also when we have language. Merleau-Ponty (1962) spoke about *intercorporeality*: processes where bodies act together, producing an experience of a we; processes where interacting bodies become organs of one entity. As Meyer, Streeck and Jordan (2017) point out, intersubjectivity is always “embedded and experienced in concrete, intercorporeal action” (p. xviii).

Touching is a primary form of intercorporeal interaction, but it is only rather recently that interaction researchers have started to explore touching. M.H. Goodwin (2017) describes touching as an affective-relational activity in family interaction. Excerpt (5) below shows touching as comforting. Six-year old Becky has just hurt herself a little; mother comforts her by holding, hugging and kissing.

Excerpt 5: Comforting by touch (from M.H. Goodwin 2017:80)

- 1           *((Becky and Mom collide as Becky walks backwards))*
- 2 Mom:    You okay?
- 3 Becky:   *[(displays pained look on face)]*
- 4 Becky:   °No.
- 5 Mom:    No?
- 6 Becky    *((shakes head))*
- 7 Mom:    You want Booboo Bunny?
- 8 Becky:   Err *((softly moaning, lifts hands to Mom's arms))*
- 9 Mom:    You want **Booboo** Bunny? *((lifts Becky in arms))*
- 10 Becky:   Mm hmph! *((moaning))*
- 11 Mom:    Hm?
- 12 Becky:   Emph!
- 13 Mom:    *((kisses face))* Yes? *((kisses face))* **Lemme** see.
- 14 Mom:    *((puts Becky on bed.))*
- 15 Becky:   *((moaning))* Mmmmm Mph! *((holds up foot))*
- 16 Mom:    Can you sho(hh)w me where? *((holds foot))*
- 17 Becky:   *((points to place on foot))*
- 18 Mom:    You want **Booboo** Bunny?
- 19           *((kisses foot))*
- .....
- 20 Mom:    *((goes to get Booboo Bunny))*



In comforting her daughter, the mother lifts her on her arms (line 9), kisses her face (line 13), and kisses her hurt foot (line 19). As Goodwin puts it, “emotional as well as physical forms of hurts are attended to through extending embraces that show care” (2017: 80). Intercorporeality – the bodies touching each other and moving together, forming one single entity – gives the ground to intersubjectivity.

Like touch, also facial expression is a primary means in conveying and regulating emotion (Darwin 1872; Ekman 2007). Facial expressions can also invoke and sustain intersubjectively shared emotional states. In many interactions between adults, facial expressions are finely coordinated with



the spoken utterances. While the spoken utterances are sequentially organised – they convey consecutive actions by different participants – the temporal organisation of facial expressions has a strong synchronic dimension in it: a facial expression invites the co-participant for concurrent, rather than consequent reciprocation. Consider Excerpt 6 (taken from Stevanovic & Peräkylä 2015; originally in Peräkylä & Ruusuvuori 2006). A and B are students having lunch at the university refectory. At the beginning of the excerpt, B comes to the end of a story about a mutual acquaintance called Sami. The point of the story is that at Sami's summer job, he had been obliged to wear proper trousers (instead of jeans).

During the storytelling, the teller and the recipient have “straight”, affectively neutral faces (frame 1). At the very completion of the story, during mutual gaze, B (the teller) starts to smile (frame 2). After a gap (line 7), A reciprocates the smile, simultaneously producing an animated verbal response of “ritualized disbelief” (Heritage 1984: 339). The participants then maintain their smiles and mutual gaze over a number of turns that convey different actions (assessment, line 10; joking advice, line 11; Frame 4). While the spoken turns and the actions they convey are sequentially organised, the smiles are synchronous. These synchronous smiles embody a shared emotional experience – something that Selting (1994) has called heightened emotive involvement. After this moment of shared emotion, the participants break their mutual gaze (Frame 5), which is followed by their

smiles becoming less intense. First A, and then B, adopt a straight face (see frame 6).

Excerpt 6: Facial expressions (from Stevanovic & Peräkylä 2015:3)

<p>01 B: t Savon Sanomissa oli (0.7) ei Savon tch in <u>Savon</u> Sanomat they had (0.7) <u>not</u> in Savon</p> <p>02 Sanomissa ku (1.6) Sata#kunnan Kansassa#. Sanomat but in (1.1)Sata#kunnan Kansa#.</p> <p>03 (0.4)</p> <p>04 A: Mm//m, <b>Fr1</b></p> <p>05 (0.4)</p> <p>06 B: Oli kehotettu Samia laittaa #suorat hou°sut°&lt;#. // They <u>had</u> asked <u>Sami</u> to wear #proper trou°sers&lt;°.#// <b>Fr2</b></p> <p>07 (0.4)</p> <p>08 A: M:i(h)tä//:. W:(h)ha:t//:. <b>Fr3</b></p> <p>09 (0.7)</p> <p>10 A: Ei kauh//[eet(h)a(h).] No that's horr//[ibl(h)e(h).] <b>Fr4</b></p> <p>11 B: [Et älä sijnne ainakaan hae //t(h)olla. [So don't applly there in any case // with th(h)at one. <b>Fr 5</b></p> <p>12 A: .hhh Ohoh. .hhh oh no.</p> <p>13 A: .hhh Minkä paikan lehti siis Satakunnan .hhh at <u>whic</u>h town is that paper so Satakunnan</p> <p>14 Sa[nomat. Sa[nomat</p> <p>15 B: [Pori.// [At Pori.// <b>Fr6</b></p>	<p><b>Fr. 1:</b> Straight faces</p> <p><b>Fr. 2:</b> Speaker smile at utterance completion</p> <p><b>Frs. 3-5:</b> Smile reciprocation and mutual smile maintenance across turns at talk</p> <p><b>Fr 6:</b> Return to straight faces / affective neutrality</p>
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The chapters in this part of the volume explore intercorporeality from three perspectives: sensorial experiences, physiological arousal, and synchrony of

body movements. **Lorenza Mondada** (*Achieving the intersubjectivity of sensorial practices: body, language and the senses in tasting activities*) demonstrates in her chapter the intersubjective character of multisensorial experiences, considered as primarily individual, and their link to both language and the body. On the basis of a large video corpus of shop encounters in gourmet food shops in a dozen European cities, the chapter focuses on instances in which customers and salespersons engage in sensorial activities with cheese products, such as touching, smelling and tasting. Forms of intersubjectivity in two environments are analyzed: i) asymmetric sensing practices (e.g. the seller touching and smelling, and the customer monitoring), and ii) symmetric practices in which sellers and customers engage together. Intersubjectivity is shown to be being central for the organization of practices often considered as being merely individual. The chapter shows how multimodal conversation analysis can be expanded into a new field of study.

The chapter by **Anssi Peräkylä, Liisa Voutilainen, Melisa Stevanovic, Pentti Henttonen, Mikko Kahri, Maari Kivioja, Emmi Koskinen, Mikko Sams and Niklas Ravaja** (*Emotion, psychophysiology and intersubjectivity*) discusses the interconnection between interactional conduct and physiological responses in the bodies of the participants of interaction, focusing on expressing affiliation. The physiological responses include sweating, heart rate and breathing. They present results from studies on storytelling in informal interaction, interactions with participants with

Asperger's syndrome, and interaction in psychotherapy. Their studies show that across different settings and participants, interactional display of affiliation entails a process that can be called "sharing the emotional load": the person showing affiliation becomes physiologically aroused, whereas the person who is affiliated with, becomes less aroused. In the light of these results, the authors discuss the place of the coordination of non-conscious corporeal processes in creation and maintenance of intersubjectivity.

**Melisa Stevanovic and Tommi Himberg** (*Movement synchrony as a topic of empirical social interaction research*) bring together quantitative movement synchrony research and insight arising from qualitative conversation analytical research on decision making. The chapter addresses movement synchrony through conceptual lenses arising from conversation analysis and psychological theory of perception. The authors discuss the differences between these approaches in their treatment of several issues that are all pertinent to the analysis of movement synchrony. Such issues include the accountability of action, differences in the physical and psychological capacities of individuals, and the status of the interactional outcome as a cultural production.

#### **4 Evolving intersubjectivity**

The final, fourth part of this volume consists of three chapters dealing with developmental perspectives on intersubjectivity. Until recently, conversation analytical and other interactional research has predominantly examined structures and practices of interaction as they emerge in one point in time, without considering the ways in which the patterns of interaction have possibly changed over time. In recent years, however, developmental perspectives have started to emerge. While language acquisition is a classical theme in linguistics and developmental psychology, the ontogeny of actual interactional practices has been addressed in only few landmark studies, such as Wootton's (1997) study on the development of a child's orientations to the plans and agreements in family interactions, and Stivers, Sidnell and Bergen's (2018) study on children's responses on question in peer interaction. While the viability of the study of historical change in language use is the topic of the field of historical pragmatics (Jucker 1995), historical change in interaction patterns has only recently been addressed in conversation analysis, e.g. by Heritage and Clayman's studies on the evolution of questioning practices in US presidential press conferences (e.g. Heritage & Clayman 2013). A recent collection by Pekarek-Doehler, Wagner and Gonzáles-Martínes (2018) lays out the methodology of study of change processes in interaction.

Psychotherapy is a social setting that has change in interaction "inscribed" in it, as the very goal of psychotherapy is to promote change. Excerpts (7) and (8) show traces of one change process in psychotherapy.

The Italian patient, Leo (L), has come to cognitive psychotherapy because of compulsive symptoms (Bercelli, Rossano & Viaro 2013). During the course of the therapy, he starts to report aggressive thoughts and fantasies towards his wife and son. The therapist responds to these announcements by inquiries that eventually lead to interpretations. Bercelli, Rossano and Viaro (2013) followed the evolvement of an interpretation through two consecutive therapy sessions. The “content” of the interpretation remains more or less the same, but during the course of the therapy, the patient’s response changes: the first responses were minimal acknowledgements that did not display cognitive or affective change in the patient, whereas in a latter session, the patient produces an extended response that demonstrates such change. Consider Excerpts (7) and (8). In Excerpt (7), the therapist suggests that the patient possibly wanted to be free from the burdens of the domestic duties (lines 6–7). The patient responds by qualified but minimal claim or agreement (line 13).

Excerpt 7. (Adapted from Bercelli, Rossano & Viaro 2013: 128-129)

- 01 T: [...] **ma giovedì sera, (.) effettivamente, (0.5)**  
           [...] *but Thursday evening, (.) actually, (0.5)*
- 02       **essere lì, dover far da mangiare, dover star lì=**  
           *being there, having to prepare the meal, having to be*  
           *there=*
- 03 L: **=poteva essere=**  
           *=it might be=*
- 04 T: **=mi- mi::=**  
           *=it- it::=*
- 05 L: **=mi pesava**

*=it was a burden*

06 T: **mi pesava? (0.3) magari avrebbe voluto essere (1.1) hm**  
*it was a burden? (0.3) perhaps you wanted to be (1.1)*  
*hm*

07 **non so (.) hh libero**  
*I don't know (.) hh free*

08 (.)

09 T: ((cough))

10 (1.1)

11 T: ((cough))

12 (2.5)

13 →L: **può essere.**  
*it may be so.*

14 (1.6)

15 T: **tsc allora lì l'importante è**  
*tch so the upshot is ((continues))*

The patient's qualified claim of agreement is a minimal response: he does not take up the interpretation or elaborate on it. The therapist remains silent for a while – thus allowing for the patient a possibility to extend his response – and then continues elaborating his interpretation (line 15).

In Excerpt (8), which is taken from the session subsequent to the session that the previous Excerpt (7) was, the therapist returns to his interpretation. Meanwhile, the participants have adopted the metaphor 'cage' to depict Leo's experience of his situation (Bercelli, Rossano & Viaro 2013). Using this shared metaphor, the interpretation (see lines 1–3, 5, 7) involves the same basic idea as the one in Excerpt (7): the patient wants to be free from the domestic ties. Here, unlike the earlier session, the patient responds with an extended agreement, documenting a change in his understanding of his situation.

Excerpt 8. (Adapted from Bercelli, Rossano & Viaro 2013:131)

- 01 T: **è venuto fuori anche (0.5) questa- cosa qui (.)  
interessante.**  
*what's come up as well (0.5) is this- (.) interesting  
thing.*
- 02 **quindi allora (0.3) il fatto di essere a ta:vola,**  
*so then (0.3) the fact you're at ta:ble,*
- 03 **(1.0) e di essere un po' (.) ingabbiato (.) a tavola::**  
*(1.0) and being a bit (.) caged (.) at table::*
- 04 L: **a questo punto, ripensandoci potrebbe essere.**  
*at this point, thinking back it might be.*
- 05 T: **potrebbe essere che lei si senta- poi lei lo risolve**  
*it might be that you feel- then you resolve it*
- 06 L: **alzandomi=**  
*by getting up=*
- 07 T: **=alzandosi e togliendosi (.)**  
*=by getting up and getting out (.)*
- 08 L: **da[l**  
*o[f the*
- 09 T: **[dalla gabbietta.**  
*[of the little cage.*
- 10 (3.0)
- 11 L: **°sì.°**  
*°yes.°*
- 12 (5.0)
- 13→L: **.h °a questo punto no? (0.5) penso che la nascita° del**  
*.h °at this point right? (0.5) I think the birth° of  
my*
- 14→ **secondo figlio no? perché poi (.) comun[que ( )**  
*second child right? because then (.) any[way ( )*
- 15 T: **[heh heh**  
*[heh heh*
- 16→L: **mi: mi faccia:: provare questa aggressività perché::**  
*it: it: makes me:: feel this aggressiveness because::*
- 17→ **mi ingabbia °secondo me, ancora di più.°**  
*it cages me °in my opinion, even more.°*
- 18 (1.5)
- 19→L: **°non so.°**



- °I don't know.°
- 20 (1.0)
- 21 T: **la mettiamo come un punto di domanda, <il secondo**  
*let's put a question mark on it, <does my second*
- 22 **figlio, (0.8) mi ingabbia?>**  
*child (0.8) cage me in?> ((articulating the words as  
he was writing them down))*
- 23 (1.0)
- 24 T: **è venuta a fleif eh?**  
*it came to fyouf eh?*

In lines 13–15, Leo takes up the interpretation and elaborates it further. He suggests that the expected birth of his second child might intensify his aggressiveness, as the new child will “cage” him even more.

To summarise, Excerpts (7) and (8) show a process of evolving intersubjectivity. The therapist and the patient were searching for new understandings regarding the patient’s problematic experiences. The therapist suggested such understandings through his interpretations. At first (Excerpt 7), the patient remained passive and reserved towards the therapist’s suggestions, but eventually (Excerpt 8) he showed that he shared these ideas and started to develop them further.

The contributions in this part of the volume consider the evolvement of interaction in three quite different temporal frames, having to do with (a) the development of interaction competencies in infants and children, (b) the development of professional skills in young actors, and (c) an experimental set-up during which human–dog interaction is examined. These studies show intersubjectivity “on the move” or “under construction”, rather than a stabilized reality in humans.

**Minna Laakso** (*Learning to request in interaction: intersubjective development of children's requesting between one and five years*)

investigates longitudinally the development of the skills of requesting. The development of requesting skills was examined in home interactions of 35 Finnish speaking 1–5-year old children and their co-participants. Through a careful analysis of the development and interplay between embodied and verbal resources, as well the caregiver's feedback, it is shown that children's requests develop from embodied action to combinations of embodied and verbal action towards independent, socially adaptive linguistic formulation. In the process, the caregiver's feedback is central. In the development process, the more elaborate linguistic forms emerge through challenging peer interactions where the children's intersubjective understanding of the other's interests is developing further.

**Marjo Savijärvi and Laura Ihalainen** (*How an improvised scene emerges in theatre rehearsal – constructing coherence by recycling*)

investigate how young adults manage intersubjectivity and develop their professional skills in Devising Theatre rehearsals. The study is based on videotaped rehearsals with groups of young adults who did not know each other before the project and had no previous experience in acting. The focus is on sequences that emerge between the rehearsing exercises when the director tells the participants to move to a new constellation. The analysis shows the fine-tuned multimodal and sequential details in these joint organizing practices. The chapter brings new light on phenomena like

framing (in the Goffmanian sense), embodied interaction and CA's contribution to the research on performing arts.

**Mika Simonen and Hannes Lohi** (*Interactional reciprocity in human-dog interaction*) investigate human-dog interaction and open a question of whether interactional reciprocity exists in interspecific interactions. As a variant of the “still face paradigm” used in infant research, the dog's caretaker was asked in an experimental setting not to look at her dog for two minutes. The results show the dogs becoming interested about the caretaker's passive condition. They do that by doing initiating actions, bearing a resemblance to first pair-parts (e.g., touch to get attention). After realizing the lack of reciprocity, the dogs typically sit near the caretaker and begin to whine. The dog's subsequent vocalizations can be interpreted as expressing sorrow or confusion. Eventually, as the two minutes of “still face” expire and the caretaker turns active, the dog and human share mutual gaze and joyful affect becomes dominant. This moment restores their ways of being together.

As the outline above suggests, it is hard to single out intersubjectivity as something concrete that can be pointed at; instead, intersubjectivity often turns out to be an elusive thing. Its significance for human interaction may become most manifest in breakdowns in communication, while successful connection and understanding is not usually explicitly claimed but displayed in a conversation's smooth progressivity turn by turn. When going about

interacting the participants may thus seem to take intersubjectivity “for granted” (Rommetveit 1974: 56). However, intersubjectivity is not something that only somehow “exists” between the participants: it needs to be achieved, monitored and maintained in the sequential course of interaction. The following seventeen chapters present studies that capture different aspects of the workings of this complex, dynamic and omni-relevant phenomenon “in action”.

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