Coordinating talk and practical action: The case of hair salon service assessments

Abstract:
This paper investigates how talk and practical action are coordinated during one type of activity involving professional communication: the service-assessment sequence in hair salons. During this activity, a practical inspection of the haircut must be coupled with sequentially produced verbal acts. Our analysis of four examples reveals that there is no fixed relationship between the organization of talk and practical action. Instead, people manipulate this relationship on a moment-by-moment basis, often coordinating the two into a single, integral package, or relying on one stream of action to achieve progress in the other. These findings imply that some multimodal activities that are brought into alignment may have their own, separate and independent procedural logic and sequencing patterns and that these can be brought into play to create or deal with constraints in each other.

1. Introduction

Since the mid 1980s, an ever-increasing number of naturalistic, micro-analytic studies of human communication have gone beyond the exclusive examination of the verbal track of interaction and investigated settings of multimodal communication (for an overview see Streeck, Goodwin and LeBaron 2011). Some of these studies investigate how the different bodily modalities or "channels", including gaze, facial action, gesture, and head nods, are coordinated in real time with one another and the unit-by-unit production of speech (e.g. Goodwin 1981, Heath 1982, Streeck and Knapp 1992, Aoki 2011), as well as, occasionally, with symbolic uses of artifacts (e.g. Streeck 1996). Many studies have focused on the sequential coordination of vocal and bodily practices in organizing specific courses of action, such as the "collaborative imagining" of a future building by a group of architects (Murphy 2005), the assessment sequence while trying on of clothes in a fashion atelier (Fasulo and Monzani 2009), proposal sequences during strategy meetings (Asmuß and Oshima 2012), and directive/response sequences in the family activity of parents getting children ready for bed (Goodwin and Cekaite 2013). Professional competences in any given field may thus include the professionals' ability to strategically use multimodal resources for communicative and instructional purposes. Examples include archeological students learning to understand digging activities through talk, gesture, and work-related objects (Goodwin 1994); plastic surgeons performing persuasive physical examinations by manipulating and labeling patients' bodies (Mirivel 2008); and interviewers during employment interviews managing the display of epistemic authority by manipulating talk and orientation to applicant files (Glenn and LeBaron 2011). As Goodwin and Goodwin (1996) have shown, even perceptual activities – e.g. "looking at airplanes" – may require the coordination of a plethora of semiotic resources. This research has shown that non-linguistic acts are frequently and methodically

recruited as components of turns and sequences of talk and courses of social action, and these have been reconceptualized as multimodal "packages" without dislodging the well-understood conversational organizations of turn-taking and turn-design (e.g. Jarmon 1996, Bolden 2003, Olsher 2004, Hayashi 2005, Mondada 2007, Oloff 2013).

Other studies also inquire how communicative action is embedded in, or coordinated with, practical and instrumental acts[1]. In her study of a high school science laboratory activity, Ford (1999) demonstrates that the students' private tasks of working with assignment sheets, such as reading and writing on them, are coordinated with spoken interaction among a group of students. Greatbatch (2006) focuses on how talk and computer-based activity of writing a prescription are organized in patient-doctor interaction. His analysis reveals that while doctors synchronize their talk and typing action so that prescription-related information is delivered smoothly, patients also organize their responding actions with respect to the doctors' text-based activities. Toerien and Kitzinger (2007) look at a situation where talk and practical action may conflict, namely a hair removal session at a beauty salon. Here, the beautician engages in multiple tasks of chatting with the client and threading the client's eyebrow. To navigate these two separate tasks, the beautician occasionally delays the physical task in favor of the ongoing conversation. These studies of multimodal interaction indicate that what used to be considered as individual and mere practical tasks are often in fact social interaction events, leaving little room for distinguishing the individual from the collaborative (Heath and Luff 1992). Therefore, the integrity of talk and practical action becomes essential for intensive teamwork that demands efficiently coordinated activity among a group of people. Thus, Kleifgen (2001) observes two Vietnamese immigrants in the U.S. choosing alternative addressing forms of each other and timing their talk with machine-related bodily actions, in order to effectively fix a mechanical problem. Nevile (2004) also makes claims to the inseparability of talk and practical action by exploring how airplane pilots organize speech and embodied actions such as writing and touching displays when they prepare a flight for landing. In their study of how anesthesia is induced in a clinic, Hindmarsh and Pilnick (2002) show that the talk that addresses and informs a patient of an anesthesia procedure is timed and designed so that it becomes a resource for other team members to conduct a suitable physical performance. Correspondingly, Mondada's (2011) analysis of surgical demonstrations shows how the practical action of operating and communicative acts of demonstrating are intertwined. To coordinate these two streams of actions, talk can be synchronized with, abandoned in favor of, or take over the process of demonstrating how the surgery should be done.

What underlines the research in the latter vein is the precise and delicate coordination of talk and practical action as a key to the achievements of various professional tasks. The current study expands this area of research by showing how talk and practical action are intertwined in a professional setting of hair salon interactions. However, compared to much of the past studies that have contributed to an understanding of interactional achievements in sociotechnical and complex task-oriented settings, the focus of the current study is more fundamental in that our specific interest lies in a conundrum that this area of research faces: instrumental activities such

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[1]We use the terms "practical", "instrumental" and, occasionally, "physical action" interchangeably to refer to activities such as cutting hair, raking leaves, and replacing a flat tire or the component acts that make up such activities. We use the terms to distinguish these actions from communicative activities such as talking or re-enacting events for the benefit of an audience. We do not, however, claim that practical acts can not also be communicative, as they are, for example, in the case of demonstrations, nor that talk does not also serve instrumental purposes. Such occasions, however, are not within the scope of this paper.

as assembling furniture or cutting someone's hair are governed by their own specific "logic of practice" (Bourdieu 1990) which prima facie is distinct from the turn-by-turn organization of talk and presumably unique to each activity-type, even though talk and its organizations may be indispensable for the successful completion of the overall activity. How, then, are these two organizations, the turn-by-turn organization of talk and the practical organization of the specific instrumental activity, related to one another? Does one supersede the other, are they operative at different stages of the project at hand, or are they coordinated in ways that we do not yet understand and will have to work out case by case for each activity type? These are the questions that we address in this paper.

We take up these issues by investigating a course of action that routinely occurs towards the end of a professional haircut. We call it the *service-assessment sequence*. In this sequence, the beautician invites the customer to visually inspect the cut with the help of a hand-held mirror, as well as by feeling and ruffling it with his or her hands; the sequence ends with a display of satisfaction by the customer unless s/he requires further work by the hairdresser. Among other physical acts, this sequence includes handing the mirror back and forth between participants. As simple and mundane as this sequence is, it allows us to address a basic issue in the organization of multimodal interaction, namely how talk and instrumental action are intertwined.

2. Data and method

The examples shown in this paper have been drawn from a larger set of video data consisting of thirty sessions at ten beauty salons in the United States (as well as an equal number of sessions in Japan, which are not included in this paper) collected between 2005 and 2007. The video recordings were made as part of a research project on various practices used in client-professional interaction for achieving consensus during service encounters (Oshima 2009). For the adequate observation and analysis of interactions, recorded data is crucial. It makes it possible to capture subtle vocal utterances and visible actions employed by, and available to, participants, and "[t]he availability of a taped record enables repeated and detailed examination of particular events in interaction and hence greatly enhances the range and precision of the observations that can be made" (Heritage and Atkinson 1984:4). We exploit such benefits of recorded data by capturing the exact timing of, and describing, the verbal and bodily actions that participants make and orient to.

As the first author watched the recorded interactions, she identified the service-assessment sequence as the unit of analysis. The sequence, which usually takes place towards the end of a cosmetological session, could be as short as a few seconds, or as long as five minutes. According to Schegloff (2007:2), sequence is "the vehicle for getting some activity accomplished", and it is "the organization of courses of action enacted through turns-at-talk – coherent, orderly, meaningful succession or 'sequences' of actions or 'moves'". Correspondingly, what we identify as the service-assessment sequence is an organization in which the activity of service-assessment is performed through the taking of turns and a number of successive actions. Generally speaking, the activity is initiated by some form of action from the stylist that invites/solicits a customer's service-assessment, such as offering a hand-held mirror, turning the chair, and providing an explanation and/or asking a question about the cut. The customer then provides a response, and the activity is brought to its closure.

One frequently raised concern regarding video-recorded data is that participants may alter their behavior owing to the presence of the video camera. A few participants made comments about the presence of a camera or appeared to orient in some way to the camera's presence toward the beginning of their session. However, it was also witnessed that such individuals ultimately demonstrated no public orientation of any kind to the camera by the time they reached the service-assessment sequence. In addition, the videographer/first author had worked to establish good relationships with a majority of the participants, which helped to create a more relaxed, natural, and typical behavior once recording began. Thus, most of the participants showed little or no obvious orientation to the presence of the video camera during the recording of haircutting sessions. Any additional background information the researcher gained regarding the participants and their own perspectives from conversations with them will be clearly stated as it becomes relevant in, and/or has a direct impact on, the analysis.

Our approach to the analysis of interaction data is micro-ethnographic (Streeck and Mehus 2005). By this we mean that we investigate social interaction in the context of its moment-by-moment, incremental production. Paying tribute to a principle which Garfinkel (1996) called *haecceity* – social organization is always organization of *this* moment in *this* interaction among *these* parties – micro-ethnographic research seeks to make room for locally particular and "generic" organizations and practices. In the present context, the micro-ethnographic lens involved in our research makes us look at local, idiosyncratic practices such as hand mirror exchanges, and generic practices such as head nodding. Overall, the aim of communication research, conceived as the *science of intersubjectivity*, is to understand the enactive and symbolic methods by which interaction participants make moments of concerted action, in response to the distinct task and situation at hand.

Our transcripts are based on the notation system for talk developed by Gail Jefferson (see Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson 1974), as well as transcription conventions provided by Goodwin (2000) to mark gaze and gesture in conversation. We include selected descriptions of other visible actions in smaller typeface, set within double parentheses on the line below the corresponding line of talk.

3. Analysis

In what follows, we present four examples to illustrate various ways in which the relationship of talk and physical inspection is organized. First, we look at an example in which the participants adjust their verbal actions to organize the activity of service-assessment. Here, we see that talk and physical inspection are sufficiently brought together in completing the activity. The second section introduces two episodes in which the stylist relies on the mechanism of verbal sequence to terminate the customer's self-inspection, thus closing the overall activity. Finally, we present an example that is quite unlike the previous three, with the stylist expanding an almost-completed activity. This expansion is made possible by the customer's verbal and bodily alignment with the stylist's initiation of the expansion, and they renegotiate when to close the activity appropriately by coordinating their multimodal actions.

3.1 Organizing a service-assessment activity

Our first case demonstrates a rather typical service-assessment sequence, where verbal and physical actions are brought together toward the completion of the activity without any problem. This interaction was recorded in a hair salon that operates on a first-come, first-served basis. The customer, Amy, has just been given a trim by the stylist, Hanh. Having finished styling the new haircut, Hanh now asks Amy to stand up.

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[1]  "Amy & Hanh" 00:00-00:21

1     Hanh: You wanna stand up and I'll give you the mirror to see=
          └─────────────────────┘                   |
              ((Hanh continues to style       ((Hanh finishes styling and moves
                the back of Amy's cut))          to the side))

2     Hanh: =the ba[ck.

3     Amy:        [>Okay.< ((Amy nods))

4     Hanh: ˚Okay?˚

5     (6.0) ((Hanh takes off Amy's cover. Amy stands up, turns to her side,
              and looks at the cut through the large mirror.))

6     Hanh: Here you go: (0.4) Turn around.
                         |                    |
          ((Hanh hands a hand-held      ((Hanh makes a rotating, circular motion with
            mirror to Amy))               her right index finger, pointing downwards))

7     (0.9) ((Amy turns around and combs through her hair with her hand,
              looking at the haircut using the two mirrors reflected in each other))

8     Hanh: ˚Uhmn.˚
              |
          ((Hanh shifts gaze from Amy to the large mirror))

9     (1.3) ((Hanh looks directly at the back of Amy's hair, steps towards it, and
              reaches for the back of Amy's hair with her right hand. She grabs a
              handful of her hair and lets the strands fall after lifting them))

10    Hanh: You like it?=
              |
          ((Hanh looks back at the large mirror and begins to step backwards))

11    Amy:  =Um-hmm,
              └──┬──┘
          ((Amy continues to comb and look at the back of her hair. Hanh steps back))

12    (1.0) ((Amy continues to feel through her hair, smiling, while Hanh stands
              back))

13    Amy:  Huu huu
              └─┬─┘
          ((Amy continues to comb and look at the back of her hair, and gives a
            chuckle))
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14      (2.8) ((Amy continues to comb and look at the back of her hair,
              slightly shifting posture to the right))

15      Amy:  Yeah!=
                |
              ((Amy shifts her posture towards Hanh, combing her hair))

16      Hanh: =Yeah?
                |
              ((Amy fully turns to and looks at Hanh))
```

Hanh initiates the service-assessment sequence by providing Amy with instructions for physical inspection (lines 1-2). As the material environment for upcoming inspection is arranged (line 5), Hanh hands Amy a hand-held mirror and tells her to turn around (line 6). As made relevant by Hanh's actions, Amy immediately begins her self-inspection by looking at and feeling through the cut (line 7). What might come next is Amy's continued self-inspection and assessment based on her physical and visual check, but before Amy completes the inspection (i.e., before she becomes accountable for making her assessment), Hanh mobilizes a preference organization. As Amy starts inspecting the cut, Hanh reaches up towards the back of Amy's head, takes a handful of hair in her fingers, and briefly lifts the strands (line 9). Hanh's actions here provide Amy with additional information of how the back of her hair looks, e.g. how the layers have been created, which may contribute to a positive evaluation of the new cut from Amy. Hanh then asks whether Amy likes the cut (line 10). Such embodied action and the design of the question (with the preferred next action being an affirmative reply) both orient to the relevance of Amy's upcoming positive assessment. Thus, Hanh's action has now incorporated a preference[2] for positive service-assessment. At the same time, Hanh also orients to Amy's continued self-inspection: as Hanh asks the question, she shifts her gaze from directly facing the back of Amy's head to Amy's hair reflected in the large mirror and steps back (Figure 1). Therefore, Hanh's verbal and embodied actions simultaneously solicit Amy's agreement on the quality of the new cut, as well as her continued self-inspection.

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[2] Heritage (2003) discusses how questions are designed in the news interview, including the observations of incorporated preferences in the interviewer's questions.

Figure 1

Amy then organizes her responsive turn to cater to the different actions made relevant by Hanh's previous actions. In line 11, she produces an agreement in the preferred-action turn shape (Pomerantz 1984), latching onto Hanh's utterance. By doing so, she avoids producing a delayed response, which would likely be taken as a harbinger of disapproval: an expression of something short of satisfaction. Note however, that her response is designed as being "preliminary". Her utterance is fast-paced and minimal, possibly projecting a forthcoming, full response. Furthermore, her bodily orientation marks the ongoing status of her self-inspection: during her utterance, she continues to comb through her hair with her fingers, fixing her gaze on the hand-held mirror. Thus, Amy makes her turn in line 11 recognizable as an initial part of her responsive course of action, and Hanh also treats Amy's utterance as such. Following Amy's response, there is a significant amount of silence, as seen in lines 12-14 (Amy gives a small chuckle but Hanh does not attend to it, and it is not significant for the analysis at hand). Even though Amy displays her continued engagement in the physical inspection through her embodied actions (i.e. combing her hair and intensely looking into the hand-held mirror), these moments still create possible completion points, allowing Hanh to take a turn. Regardless, Hanh suspends her talk. This may be an example of professional competence displayed by employing silence in talk, as reported by Nevile (2004): not interrupting a relatively long silence can display the recipient's "competence

as a participant" (459)[3]. Similarly, the stylist's employment of silence demonstrates her orientation to the customer's continued responsive action. As Amy completes the physical inspection, she produces an informed response (line 15), which Hanh treats as the end of Amy's responsive turn, and closes the sequence (line 16).

In this example, the logic of practical action and the progression of talk were harmonized, resulting in a unique course of responsive action provided by the customer, i.e. multiple answers. The stylist also kept the completion of the talk in reserve until the customer had spent adequate time on self-inspection. The coordination of talk and physical inspection was aligned between the parties, through which they secured a satisfactory completion to the activity of service-assessing. While this pattern of smooth, unified completion of talk and practical action was often found among the collected service-assessment sequences[4], this does not always occur, as seen in the following section.

3.2 Terminating the service-assessing activity

Stylists are routinely required to complete a session within a certain time frame because they may have subsequent appointments or waiting customers. Thus, when the physical action stalls – in other words, when the customer spends an inordinate amount of time inspecting the newly-cut hair – the stylist can invoke the sequential organization of talk (the *conditional relevance* of some specific second act upon performance of a particular first act) to "unblock" the progress. This section documents two examples of such a case.

In our first segment, stylist Tia and customer Chie have been discussing how a layered cut would help make Chie's hair feel longer and look lighter and more stylish. With the cutting portion of the haircutting activity completed, Tia removes the drape around Chie and tells her to examine the cut. Tia aids Chie's inspection by explaining the differences between before and after, and they jointly evaluate the new haircut. Segment 2A begins with Tia going on to proffer an assessment of the volume of Chie's hair.

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[2-A] "Chie & Tia" 02:10-02:40

1     Tia:  Like, do you like wearing your hair more like st- more=
               |                              |
            ((Tia moves in the front of Chie))      ((Chie looks at Tia))

2             =flat, straight, or you like the volume.
                          |
             ((Chie lowers the mirror a little, shifting her gaze from Tia to the mirror))

3     (1.5) ((Chie continues to look in the hand-held mirror))
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[3] Nevile's study focuses on an approach briefing, which is a report that a flying pilot (the pilot in control) makes for another pilot (the captain) before beginning the landing process. In producing his talk, the reporting pilot delays presenting "the plan" for 3.4 seconds, which is remarkable and often problematic in ordinary conversation. In this sequence, however, the captain does not treat the silence as an opportunity for him to take a turn, but treats it as part of the reporting pilot's extended turn, therefore jointly constructing the reporting pilot's turn.

[4] Out of the thirty recorded sessions, about ten had a similar, non-problematic service-assessment sequence, but this does not mean that all of the remaining sessions had problematic elements. Some were, for example, disturbed by events like a phone call or a walk-in customer.

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4      Chie: I guess I don't really (do vo[lume).
                                      |
                           ((Chie looks at Tia))

5      Tia:                                [((Laughs)) Uh-huh.

6      Chie: But you know, I can't do it, basically.

7      Tia:  Oh. So do you want more volume though, do it closer to the=

8            =roo[ts, and then, you know how I was doing your hair.=

9      Chie:    [Oh, okay.

10     Chie: =Uh-huh, (  just      studying your- how you did)=
                                    |             |
              ((Tia smiles and overtly nods, and    ((Chie shifts her gaze from Tia
           shifts her posture to turn the chair))    to the hand-held mirror))

11     Tia:  =Yeah::. That's if you want the volume [(.) on the roots.
             └─────────────────────────────────────┴───────────────────┘
              ((Tia turns the chair for 180 degrees in relation to its original position))

12     Chie:                                         [Okay.
                                                      |
                           ((Chie shifts her gaze from the hand-held mirror
                             to the large mirror in front of her))

13     Tia:  Cause you know it'll go down throughout the day.
                  |                                    |
              ((Chie shifts her gaze back        ((Chie momentarily looks up and nods,
               but to the portable mirror))       soon looks back at the portable mirror))

14     Chie: Okay.=

15     Tia:  =You know.

16     (0.7) ((Chie continues to hold up the hand-held mirror))

17     Tia:  And you want it more edged out on the (.) bottom of the=
                                                        |
                                           ((Chie repetitively nods and
                                            looks at the hand-held mirror))
18     Tia:  =hair.

19     (1.0)((Tia continues to look at Chie in the large mirror, and Chie continues to
              look into the hand-held mirror, lifting it up slightly))
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In the transcript above, we see Tia asking Chie whether she liked the volume and demonstrating how to style the new cut. Having discussed how to add volume to the cut, Tia then turns the chair back to its original position (lines 10-11). Although Tia's actions hint at the imminent completion of the physical inspection, Chie continues to look back and forth at the large and small (hand-held) mirrors. As Tia completes her talk in line 15, it is followed by 0.7 seconds of silence. During this time Chie continues her self-inspection, holding up the hand-held mirror (line 16). Tia then recompletes her turn (lines 17-18), adding another bit of advice about the new cut, which again marks the relevance of some responsive action from Chie, and possibly a

sequence-completion. Regardless, Chie does not progress with either physical or verbal action: she keeps silent and continues to look into the hand-held mirror (line 19). Finally, Tia solicits Chie's confirmation regarding the cut, which in turn ends the sequence, as seen below.

```
[2-B] "Chie & Tia" 02:40-02:50

19    (1.0) ((Tia continues to look at Chie in the large mirror, and Chie continues
                 to look into the hand-held mirror, lifting it up slightly))

20    Tia:  °Yeah, so:. (0.3) >Does that look oka[y?<
                            |
                        ((Chie looks back at
                          the large mirror))
                         |                  |
                   ((Tia steps toward and     ((Chie lowers the
                    looks directly at Chie))   hand-held mirror))

21    Chie:                                       [Oka:y, >Yea<.
                                                         |
                                             ((Chie looks directly at Tia, nodding))

22    Tia:  Alri↑gh↓t. Awesome.
                   |        |
             ((Tia looks away)) ((Tia takes the hand-held mirror from Chie))
                             |
                       ((Chie looks front))

23    Chie: Thank you.

24    Tia:  You're welcome.
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As Tia asks the question (line 20), she also produces an embodied action that indicates her engagement in the conversation with the customer: she steps toward the customer and shifts her gaze from the large mirror to her (Figure 2). In Example 1, the stylist's embodied action was completely different: she stepped back as she uttered the question, away from her customer, making the self-inspection conditionally relevant next. But here Tia forces the customer to meet her gaze by stepping toward Chie and shifting her gaze toward Chie. In other words, Tia makes Chie's gaze shift to herself, away from the hand-held mirror, conditionally relevant. She structures the context for Chie's next action so that she will terminate the inspection and provide confirmation.

Figure 2

To repeat, the next actions that have been made conditionally relevant are Chie's agreement (or disagreement) as well as her gaze shift from the mirror to Tia, thus ending (or at least suspending) the physical inspection. Chie immediately attends to these relevances by providing a verbal response, lowering the hand-held mirror, and shifting her gaze to Tia (lines 20-21). Subsequently, Tia acknowledges the response and takes the hand-held mirror back from Chie (line 22). As a result, talk and physical action are brought to closure in unison, followed by an expression of gratitude on the part of Chie and its acceptance by Tia (lines 23-24). In sum, this example offers a case in which the conditional relevances of talk and concomitant physical behavior by Tia (which constrains the physical actions that Chie can subsequently take) drive the progress of the overall activity towards closure. The activity was rather forcefully moved forward through Tia's actions, but it still contained all the necessary elements for its satisfactory completion: Chie's positive confirmation of the service outcome based on the physical inspection.

      At times, the customer may continue the physical inspection after the positive service-assessment has been provided. In this case, stylists may use alternative verbal actions to effect the customer's disengagement from the physical inspection and thus the overall service-assessment activity. In the following example, we see that the stylist introduces a new sequence, an elaboration of the assessment sequence, to end the physical inspection.

This example was recorded in a small beauty salon that operates on the basis of appointments. The customer, Shey, has scheduled an appointment with her stylist, Cara, for an hour during her lunch break from work. In the events prior to the segment below, Shey asks Cara to cut her shoulder-length hair so that it will be slightly above her chin, and Cara spends about half an hour cutting Shey's hair. Cara then demonstrates to Shey how to style her new cut with a particular hair product. The segment begins where Cara finishes styling the cut and picks up a hand-held mirror to hand it to Shey.

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[3-A] "Shey & Cara" 04:30-04:47

1     Cara: Okay. ((Picks up a hand-held mirror))

2        (5.0) ((Shey receives the hand-held mirror and looks at her reflection,
              holding the mirror directly in front of her face, and Cara lightly
               fixes Shey's hair))

3     Cara: Mamaci:ta::
               |
           ((Cara starts turning the chair))

4     Shey: °Woo:::° ((Cara stops the chair at 45 degrees))

5        (2.2) ((Shey adjusts the mirror, intensely looking at the haircut. Cara
               clears something off the camera with her left hand, while
               holding the chair with her right hand.))

6     Shey: O:h cute.
            └───┬──┘
            ((Shey is looking at the portable mirror,
             and Cara is looking at Shey in the large mirror))

7        (2.0)((Cara turns the chair 45 degrees))

8     Shey: O::h I lo:ve it.=

9     Cara: =Is that good?
            └──┬──┘
            ((Cara continues to turn the chair an additional 40 degrees))

10    Shey: Yes.

11       (1.4) ((Cara continues to turn the chair))

12    Shey: °Very cute.°
               |
          ((Cara stops the chair))

13       (1.0) ((Shey continues to look at the hand-held mirror,
                and Cara continues to look at the large mirror.))
```

Cara starts turning the chair that Shey is sitting on as soon as Shey places the portable mirror in front of her (line 3). Shey provides strongly positive comments every time she gathers new visual information on the cut, i.e. when Cara stops the chair at a certain angle (lines 6-8). Immediately following Shey's second assessment, Cara asks whether the service provided has met Shey's expectation (line 9). Shey provides an immediate, preferred response (line 10), at which point

Cara has yet to complete the turning of the chair. When Cara stops the chair, Shey makes another comment (line 12), which is based on the information gathered through examining the new cut from all possible angles, thus suggesting imminent sequence closure. As seen in line 13, however, Shey carries on with the physical inspection. Cara then launches a celebration sequence to indicate that self-inspection is no longer needed.

```
[3-B] "Shey & Cara" 04:46-04:55

13     (1.0) ((Shey continues to look at the hand-held mirror,
              and Cara continues to look at the large mirror.))

14     Cara: Ya:::y
               |
          ((Cara shifts gaze from the large mirror and directly looks at Shey))
15     Shey: Hoo::ra:[:h
               |
           ((Shey lowers the mirror and looks up))

16     Cara:          [YA::y LOOKS PRECIOUS (I love it)!
                          |
                      ((Cara starts drying around Shey's neck))
```

Cara proposes a joint celebration of the successful haircut by uttering "Yay" (line 14). With this utterance she also indicates the already-completed status of physical inspection, which in turn marks Shey's ongoing inspection as *prolonged*. Celebration of success elaborates the assessment sequence, in effect upgrading a positive assessment. It also presupposes, however, that the overall activity is complete so that any further inspection is contextually inappropriate.

　　As in Example 2, the stylist also shifts her gaze from the large mirror to the customer, offering the customer an opportunity to return her gaze and thus perform the gaze-work implicated in sequence closure. Shey discontinues the physical inspection and produces an appropriate second-pair part to the celebration sequence, "Hoorah", puts the hand-held mirror in her lap, and shifts her gaze up to Cara (line 15, Figure 3). Cara then provides a sequence closing third and starts clearing the loose hair from around Shey's neck (line 16).

Figure 3

By engaging in a relevant action, i.e. celebrating the success of the new haircut, the stylist effectively terminated the physical inspection, thereby ending the overall haircutting activity in a positive manner. Similarly, the other stylist who appeared in this section relied on the organization of verbal sequence, which accompanied the associated physical behavior that urged the customer to engage in talk, for an unproblematic termination of the physical inspection.

3.3 Expanding the service-assessment activity and re-negotiating its completion point

With the examples shown so far we have demonstrated how talk and physical action constrain and complement each other in organizing the service-assessment sequence. Example 1 showed the interactants' verbal and nonvocal collaboration in completing an assessing activity. In examples 2 and 3, the stylist relied on the integrated nature of physical inspection and talk to progress the activity toward its closure. The participants in all the examples coordinated their verbal and physical actions so that they could complete the overall activity with an informed agreement.

Achieving a satisfactory completion of the activity may at times mean an expansion of the activity. In our last case, the stylist initiates the expansion of the overall activity despite the fact that she has already received the customer's positive assessments a few times. We can only speculate why the stylist has decided to expand the sequence, but our aim is to show how the

expansion is brought about by the stylist, and how the customer aligns with the prolonged status of the activity.

This customer, Kira, sees her stylist, Britney, every other week to have her hair washed and styled, and the following segment was recorded at one of these regular sessions. The whole session took approximately an hour and a half, during which Kira and Britney talked about their personal lives, occasionally inviting the videographer to join their conversation, as well as progressing through their familiar steps of shampooing, drying, and styling Kira's hair. Having finished the styling, Britney hands the hand-held mirror to Kira so she can inspect the cut. Kira looks at her hair and voices her satisfaction by saying "It's really nice." The transcript begins after this, where Britney suggests that she should remove the haircutting drape so that Kira will be able to get a better look at her haircut.

```
[4-A] "Kira & Britney" 00:40-00:50

1      Brit: (See it with its re[al clothes)

2      Kira:                        [Yea:y
                                      |
                                 ((Brit takes off the cutting drape))

3      Kira: hhhhhhhhhhhh
                 |
             ((Brit puts the cutting drape away))

4      (0.7) ((Kira shifts her posture 90 degrees to look at
                 the back of her head through the two mirrors))

5      Kira: (Let')s see.
                    |
               ((Brit looks at the back of Kira's head in the large mirror))

6      (2.1) ((Brit picks up a hair spray))

7      Kira: Beautiful as usual, [ (.) thank you.=
                      |                  |
              ((Kira moves her head to    ((Kira smiles))
                see the top of her head))
8      Brit:                      [Mh-huh ((Brit puts back the spray))

9      Brit: =Uh-huh.

10     (0.4)((Kira lowers the mirror and shifts her posture toward
                the large mirror))
```

Having examined the hairstyle, Kira provides an assessment, followed by an initiation of a session closure (line 7). Her assessment here is felicitous because it is withheld until the physical action is completed (lines 5-6). In addition, Kira had already shown her satisfaction before this segment took place, when she inspected it through a hand-held mirror and said "That's very nice, thank you." Having provided that assessment and this one in line 7, it is now relevant and foreseeable for both Britney and Kira that the activity is about to be closed.

Accordingly, Britney acknowledges Kira's assessment (line 8) and accepts Kira's expression of gratitude (line 9), which indicates her acceptance of Kira's proposal of a session

closure. Likewise, Kira lowers the hand-held mirror and shifts her posture, preparing for departure (line 10). The event that is conditionally relevant next here is indeed the formal session closure. However, that is not what takes place. Britney initiates a post-expansion of the sequence by commenting on how Kira's hairstyle has progressed over time.

```
[4-B] "Kira & Britney" 00:50-01:07

10     (0.4)((Kira lowers the mirror and shifts her posture toward
              the large mirror))

               ((Kira moves the mirror to  (Kira pulls the mirror back in front
                  return it to the table))  of her face and again looks into it))
                       ┌────┴────┐            |
11     Brit: What, you know it's interesting how the layers has come,=
             |                    └───────────────────────┬──────┘
((Kira looks at Brit in the large mirror))   ((Brit makes a downward
                                              pulling/stroking gesture with her
                                              fingers together at the end of her
                                              own hair))

12     Kira: =Yeah=
              └─┬─┘
           ((Kira touches the ends of the back of her head))

                ((Kira retracts her hand from the back of her head))
                     |
13     Brit: =Grown (.) a:[ll in.
             └──┬──┘
             ((Brit touches and softly strokes the back of Kira's head))

14     Kira:              [Uh-huh.

15     (1.4)((Kira looks at herself in the large mirror and touches the hair on
              the left side of her face; Brit leans forward and keeps stroking
              the ends of Kira's hair, using both hands))

16     Brit: To one another.
             └────┬────┘
           ((Kira continues the same actions as seen in line 15))

17     (1.0) ((Brit stops stroking Kira's hair and stands straight))

                    ((Brit steps back and moves to the side,
                       looking at Kira's gestures on her hair))
                     ┌─────────┴─────────┐
18     Kira: Yup. (.) Cuz it was like,(.)=
             └┬┘              └────┬────┘
        ((Kira lowers her head and   ((Kira points to the back of her haircut,
         touches the ends on the       towards the middle))
         back of her head again))

19     Brit: =It wa[s slanted.=
                    |    └──┬──┘
             ((Brit nods)) ((Brit makes a gesture, motioning in a 45-degree slant
                              downwards, with two hands in front of her face))
20     Kira:        [Here.
                    └─┬─┘
              ((Kira makes a line in the middle of the back of her hair))
```

```
21     Kira: =Yeah.=
                   |
            ((Brit nods; Kira puts down her hand))



             ((Brit slightly looks at the videographer))
                          |
22     Brit: =Hhhhhhhh [hhhhhh
                 |
            ((Kira holds out the hand-held mirror toward the counter))

23     Kira:             [hhhhhhhh ˚hhh Thank yo:[:u.
                            |                    |
                  ((Brit takes the hand-held   ((Kira looks down and then
                    mirror from Kira))           stands up from the chair))

24     Brit:                                    [You're welcome.
```

Britney's assessment in line 11 invites the customer's agreement or disagreement, expanding the service-assessment sequence. Additionally, Britney touches her own hair and makes a slanting, sweeping gesture in the middle of her utterance (line 11), which is followed by Kira's action of retracting the hand-held mirror that was about to be put on the counter (line 11, Figure 4). The physical inspection has now been prolonged not only by talk, but also by Kira's bodily reengagement in it (lines 11-12). The reasons for her bodily behavior may include: 1) the physical inspection is relevant in making an authentic agreement with the new perspective about the cut introduced by Britney, i.e. achieving an affiliative action by demonstrating her independent viewpoint in the matter, by avoiding "mere agreement" (Heritage 2002, also see Stivers, Mondada and Steensig 2011); and 2) Britney's bodily actions in relation to her own hair (line 11) have the function of instructing Kira as to how to further inspect the cut. In fact, as soon as Kira positions the hand-held mirror in front of her face again, she touches her hair in a similar manner along with her verbal response (line 12).

Figure 4

Another point to be made with this example is that the stylist and the customer successfully negotiate the closure of this expanded activity by simultaneously bringing talk and the physical inspection toward its closure. Upon Britney's assessment in line 11, Kira immediately shows her agreement (lines 12 and 14). The expanded sequence can be brought to its closure if Britney acknowledges Kira's response, but Britney does not provide any verbal action or other bodily practices to initiate sequence closure. In fact, she continues to stroke Kira's haircut, which eliminates the relevance of activity closure. What becomes relevant now is some kind of action from Kira, such as elaborating on her responsive action. What follows, however, is 1.4 seconds of silence, during which both participants engage in physical inspection (line 15).

Having seen no forthcoming talk from Kira, Britney adds a few words to re-complete the previous sentence (line 16). Her utterance again marks turn completion, making Kira's forthcoming talk conditionally relevant. Kira does not immediately take a turn, thus creating a second of silence, during which Britney finally retracts her hands from Kira's haircut and stands upright (line 17). While Britney's embodied actions may indicate an imminent sequence closure, she does not produce a verbal action that would move the sequence forward, which again shows her anticipation of some actions from Kira. What Britney was anxious about becomes visible when Kira finally takes the turn and refers to the previous look (line 18). Britney immediately and overtly attends to both Kira's verbal and embodied actions: she shifts her posture to elaborate on Kira's gesture (lines 18-19) and jointly completes Kira's utterance by articulating

the previous look (line 19). This previous look is identified as something funny or embarrassing, when Britney invites laughter from Kira and the videographer (line 22), thereby enhancing the positive character of the present look. It is during this joint laughter that Kira marks the end of the physical inspection by holding the mirror out toward the counter (line 22). Britney aligns to this move by taking the hand-held mirror (line 23). In this way, Britney and Kira coordinate their talk and bodily orientations in expanding and completing the service-assessing activity.

While the activity of service-assessing might have ended appropriately without the expansion, the expansion does help to upgrade their evaluation on the quality of the service outcome. Britney initiated the post-expansion by explaining how Kira's hairstyle had evolved (line 11). The success of a service is frequently determined through the improved quality of a haircut: for example, just how much *better* is the customer's haircut, in order to make the customer look and feel better than when s/he came into the salon. Recalling Kira's assessment in line 7, while her satisfaction with the quality of the service was expressed ("beautiful"), she did not touch on its newness or surprising impact, as seen in her words, "beautiful *as usual*." This may have been enough for Kira, but it might not have met Britney's expectations and might have led her to state the progress seen in the layers. In other words, Britney post-expanded the almost-closed sequence to bring Kira's attention to the layers that have come together as a result of continuous service sessions. She in effect provided Kira with an instruction, both verbal and practical, for how to see the cut so that she could fully appreciate the service with which she had been provided. Britney expanded both talk and physical inspection: she began by pointing to a certain part of Kira's hair, making it relevant for Kira to resume physical inspection. In addition, Britney provided Kira with several opportunities to join the expanded talk. Consequently, Kira re-engaged in talk and physical inspection for this before-after evaluation, and the activity closed with their agreement on how the customer's hairstyle had improved over time.

4. Discussion

As seen in our examples, the activity of service-assessment is organized through the integration of talk and physical action, specifically the manual and visual inspection of the new haircut. Example 1 showed the commonest case in our corpus: stylist and customer collaboratively create a space for the customer's examination so that the overall activity can end with the customer's *informed* response to the stylist's question as to whether the cut is satisfactory or not. In examples 2 and 3, in contrast, the stylist relied on the sequence-organization of *talk* to end the *physical* inspection – but without requesting that it be terminated. Our last example showed that this coordination and integration of talk and physical inspection can be extended when the haircut itself is deemed to need further attention for a fuller evaluation and appreciation.

Why do these phenomena and the questions we have raised in this paper matter? Much work on multimodal interaction has concentrated on demonstrating *that* talk and the uses of the various bodily and artefactual media of communication that we commonly employ in face-to-face encounters are precisely coordinated (e.g. Goodwin and Goodwin 1986, Heath 1986, Streeck 1993, Bolden 2003, Phillip and LeBaron 2011, Asmuß and Oshima 2012), implying that the production of integral multimodal "packages" is the characteristic form and organizational achievement of multimodal interaction. This is in line with the contention by many conversation analysts, notably Schegloff (e.g. 1987, 2006), that turn-taking-, sequence-, and repair-organizations of talk constitute the primary organization of interaction. Giddens (1984:77), too,

has argued that turn-taking "expresses fundamental aspects of the nature of interaction … [and] is one major feature of the serial character of social life, hence connecting with the overall character of social reproduction… Contributions to encounters are inevitably serial".

Schmitt and Deppermann (2007), on the other hand, argue that the study of coordination of the modalities should be treated as a research field in its own right, requiring a focus on *simultaneity* in addition to sequentiality or seriality. The success of the total activity may require either concurrent or successive productions of certain actions. Drawing on Goffman's concept of *interaction order* (1983), they propose that "'interaction order' describes the totality of all simultaneously realized, sequentially structured and mutually related forms of interactional participation" (Schmitt and Deppermann 2007:17). While talk is organized turn by turn and the participants exchange the participation roles of speaker and listener, it cannot be assumed that instrumental activities that are carried out at the same time have the same participation structure; it is possible that some instrumental acts require the simultaneous participation of several partners at the same time. To deal with such issues, Mondada (2011:207) has introduced the concept of *multiactivity*, by which she refers to activities in which multiple courses of action unfold in parallel:

> In multiactivity, we do not have just two successive independent actions, but one multiactivity constituted by two (or more) parallel streams of action, which on certain occasions intersect and consequently suspend one another. At some moments of the activity, these two streams are compatible and can be carried out simultaneously, whereas at others, they are mutually exclusive. Thus, various modes of coordination govern multi-activity: Participants can design these streams of action as being parallel, or as being embedded.

Our analysis of the service-assessing activity is in line with Mondada's views. Specifically, we believe to have demonstrated the following:
(1.) there is no fixed relationship between the organizations of talk and physical action;
(2.) rather, people manipulate this relationship on a moment-by-moment basis;
(3.) the relationship can consist of two streams of action going on in parallel, without interfering with one another;
(4.) alternatively, it can involve the merging of the two into a single, integral package; or
(5.) participants can foreground and invoke the procedural logic of one stream of action to deal with problems and securing progress in another; not only can talk be used to deal with procedural problems in the conduct of instrumental action, but the procedural logic of an instrumental stream of action can also be deployed to deal with problems in the sequential progression of talk.

The last point is especially important to us: we believe that our findings indicate that some of the activities that are brought into alignment may have their own, *separate* and *independent* procedural logic and sequencing patterns, and that these can be brought into play to secure the progress of another stream of action if it stalls temporarily for any reason. To express this in an image: rather than portraying multimodal interaction as a *single* human body washing *its* hands, we have portrayed one form that the washing can take with each of the *two* hands taking turns at washing the other. While both formulations may correctly represent the same overall activity, they also contrastively highlight subtle differences in the ways a single activity can be carried out

from moment to moment, the hands at some point taking turns at being agent and patient, while at other times (and most commonly) no such differentiation of roles can be detected and the outcome is achieved by a merging of the acts of each hand into one.

By investigating case by case how participants align talk and practical action into a single, integral, yet contextually variable "multiactivity", we can also observe how they foreground differential identities and reveal their attention to multiple levels of context (e.g. for the case at hand: an initial/single haircutting visit, a long-term relationship between a customer and a stylist, and even a history of hairstyle as a representation of individual identity). In our examples, the participants' management of the relationship between the two streams of actions not only secured the progression and completion of the service session, but also foregrounded their own perceptions, understanding, and knowledge of the situation that they find themselves in and whose relevances they display to one another. Thus, as seen in the last example (where coordination was calibrated in a fashion that reasserted the long-term relationship between *this* customer and *this* stylist), the coordination of talk and practical action may be adapted to the specific circumstances of each beauty salon, so it may vary across different types of services. It is through micro-actions that the multiple levels of context are sustained; "[t]he dynamics of the overall interaction … is simultaneously 'about' all of the scales of embodied context the participants bring to bear during the interaction" (Streeck and Jordan 2009: 454).

Thus, investigating a coordination of the two streams of actions may be a resourceful way of understanding how people dramatize their everyday work, professionalize communication, and invoke relevant identities in social interaction. Correspondingly, studies of multimodal interaction call for ethnographic context. While the procedural order of haircuts is simple and plainly familiar to almost every member in our society, the order of other instrumental actions and activities that are intertwined with talk, for example flying an airplane (Hutchins and Klausen 1996, Hutchins and Palen 1997) or performing surgery (Mondada 2011), may be transparent only to insiders. For the conduct of research on multimodal interaction in the broad sense – investigations of the interrelationships between communicative and instrumental action – this implies that such investigations can only succeed if the investigation of the sequential progression of talk is combined with careful ethnographic or praxeological inquiry into the material contextual orders of practical, instrumental action.

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