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## Applying findings and creating impact from conversation analytic studies of gender and communication

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*Abstract:* Studies of workplaces frequently focus on gender, investigating and challenging inequality. In that many studies start with ‘gender’ as a taken-for-granted category, measuring gender *differences* in organizational life, or interviewing participants to elicit *accounts* of their employment experiences, they exaggerate and even create stereotypical ‘common knowledge’ about gender. In contrast, this paper illustrates a conversation analytic approach which can show if, when, and how, gender becomes consequentially relevant within any given communicative encounter. Drawing on a large corpus of institutional interaction, the paper demonstrates two things: that (1) robust claims about the gendering of social life can be made once those claims are grounded in what people actually do; and (2) systematic patterns in people’s endogenous orientations to gender can be found in communication. Finally, the paper showcases a real-world application of conversation analytic work, demonstrating the impact and relevance of such research programmes for understanding everyday gendered social life.

*Keywords:* Gender, interaction, institutions, conversation analysis, applied research, impact

## INTRODUCTION

Studies of workplaces and organizations focus frequently on gender. Typically, researchers attempt to establish, explore, challenge and eradicate inequalities between men and women. Topics for investigation include pay inequality between women and men (e.g., Arulampalam, Booth & Bryan, 2007); women and men's different experiences of work, workplaces and careers (e.g., Pettersson, Persson & Berggren, 2008); inequalities in workforce constitution and the segregation of labour markets (e.g. Gornick, 1999); work-life balance, parenting and family issues (e.g., Smithson & Stokoe, 2005); policy debates about eradicating inequalities (e.g., Pedersen et al, 2009), and the construction of gender identities in relation to workplace and career issues (e.g., Carlson, 2011; Holmes, 2006).

Much of this work, whether qualitative or quantitative, starts with 'gender' as a taken-for-granted category. That is, it is used by researchers as a dependent variable of some kind; as an *a priori* method for dividing the world up. Studies then measure gender *differences* in some feature of occupational or organizational life, or interview participants to elicit *accounts* of their work and employment experience. Studying gender in this way has been the subject of debate across the social sciences for twenty years or more. For many feminists, the very process of carrying out gender difference research, starting with 'gender' as an analysts' category, creates dualisms (e.g., Crawford, 1995; Hollway, 1994), presumes a shared psychology for all women and all men (e.g., Bohan, 1993), and perpetuates and exaggerates differences (e.g., Hare-Mustin & Maracek, 1994). In such studies, the relevance of 'gender' is presumed as an explanatory category. From this perspective, researchers ends up reproducing, rather than studying, gendered 'facts' about the world, reifying supposed asymmetries and differences.

In contrast, research in the ethnomethodological tradition starts from the basis that an analysis of social categories like 'gender' should be based in what people do and say; in the categories they deploy, rather than what analysts take to be relevant as a function of their hypotheses, research questions, politics, or theory (e.g., Schegloff, 1991; 1997). This is because any person may be categorized in an indefinitely extendable number of ways. To presume that gender, rather than any other category (e.g., age, sexuality, class, religion, occupation, nationality, marital status, etc.), is the thing that explains behaviour, is to rush to explanation ahead of empirical evidence, and to close down other potential relevancies. Instead, using conversation analysts (CA), ethnomethodologists start with what is demonstrably relevant to participants "at the moment that whatever we are trying to produce an account for occurs" (Schegloff, 1991: 50). CA has provided empirical warrants for discounting classic findings about, for example, differences in gender and communicative practices (e.g., Hepburn & Potter, 2011; Kitzinger, 2008). Such studies overturn gendered explanations for patterns in particular interactional phenomena, revealing the methodological and ideological flaws in work that starts with assumptions about gender difference (for collections of work on gender using CA, see Speer & Stokoe, 2011; Stokoe & Weatherall, 2002).

In contrast to the majority of gender-based studies of workplaces, then, the current paper will present examples of conversation analytic research and the systematic ways that gender becomes relevant in particular institutional and organizational settings. There are three aims. First, I will demonstrate that robust empirical claims can be made about the gendering of social life, and that such claims may be grounded in what people do and say, rather than in what analysts presume. That is, rather than pre-selecting criteria against which to analyse an episode of social life and making claims about gender, I show how gender becomes relevant to that episode on the basis of the endogenous orientations of interacting parties. The second aim is to show that systematic patterns in these endogenous orientations can be identified.

The final aim is to describe a real-world application of findings from conversation analytic studies of gender, to demonstrate the impact and relevance of ethnomethodological research programmes for understanding the everyday gendering of social and organizational life.

## DATA

The data for this paper are audio and video recordings of interaction from a variety of British settings. Some were collected as part of an Economic and Social Research Council-funded research project<sup>1</sup> investigating neighbour disputes across different contexts (including mediation, antisocial behaviour council services, and the police: see Stokoe, 2006; Stokoe & Edwards, 2007, 2009). Other data come from recordings of university tutorials collected for a study of classroom interaction in educational settings (e.g., Attenborough & Stokoe, 2012), a collection of speed-dating encounters (Stokoe, 2010a), and broadcast radio programmes. Where appropriate, all participants consented to having their talk recorded and anonymized for research purposes. The data were transcribed according to Jefferson's (2004) system for conversation analysis which incorporates information about pacing, overlapping talk, intonation and, more generally, the vocal delivery of talk. For video data, still images of key turns in an extract are presented.

As Drew (2005: 75) explains, “when we study conversation, we are investigating the actions and activities through which social life is conducted”. And, of course, social life includes work and organizational life. Conversation analysts therefore examine the organization of interaction, in terms of its constituent actions (e.g., greeting, questioning, requesting, offering, complaining, summarizing, assessing, and so on), as well as the specifics of, and patterns in, turn design, turn-taking, action formation, and sequence organization. In the analysis that follows, we will examine the way conversation unfolds turn-by-turn, as actions are initiated, responded to, progressed, or resisted. At the same time, we will focus on the way gender categories are made relevant to the courses of action underway.

ANALYSIS

The analysis is divided into three sections. In the first section, I summarize findings from a study of university classroom interaction between students, to illustrate the first aim of the paper: how to ground claims about the relevance of gender based in what people do and say. In section two, I report a second study of the systematic patterning of people's endogenous orientations to gender. Finally, I describe how findings from conversation analytic studies may be applied to intervene in institutional practices.

*Making gender relevant*

In Extract 1, four first-year psychology students are carrying out a collaborative writing activity. They have to produce descriptions of people in a series of photographs in a session on social cognition (see Stokoe, 1998, 2008). The extract has been edited in order to focus on the trajectory of the gender category which appears at line 11.

### Extract 1: UT-23

- 1 N: D'you reckon she's an instructor then.  
2 (0.2)  
3 N: Of some sort,  
4 B: Is somebody scribing. who's writin' it.=  
5 N: =Oh yhe:ah.  
6 (0.8)

7 M: Well you can't [read my writin']=  
 8 N: [She wants to do it.]  
 9 M: =once I've [written it.]  
 10 K: [.hehhhh ]  
 11 N: We:ll secretary an' female.  
 12 (0.3)  
 13 K: .Hh heh heh heh  
 14 (0.4)  
 15 M: It's uh::,  
 16 K: Yeah: I'm wearing glasses I must be the  
 17 secretary.=  
 18 B: =I think- (.) we're all agreed she's physical.  
 ((15 seconds))  
 19 M: Make a good start.  
 20 K: Heh heh heh .hhh (.) .hhh okay what's her  
 21 name.  
 ((60 seconds))  
 22 M: <Are you getting all this down.=Come on.  
 23 (1.6)  
 24 N: You've gotta learn this short hand before  
 25 you get into the- (0.4) the job market.

Figure 1: Extract 1



At line 1, N suggests a possible occupation for one of the photographs the group is discussing. His question is the ‘first pair part’ of an ‘adjacency pair’ of turns, the preferred response to which is an agreement with his suggestion. However, no second pair part is forthcoming. Instead, at line 4, B initiates a different sequence; a different course of action. B returns to N’s suggestion at line 18 (“I think- (.) we’re all agreed she’s physical.”) and the group continue to discuss the photograph. A first observation about Extract 1, then, is that, inserted between two parts of one action is another sequence about the practicalities of the task.

Returning to line 4, then, in order to fulfill the obligations of the task, one student must write down the group’s ideas. B’s question “is somebody scribing.” is taken up after a reformulation: “who’s writin’ it.”. Note that, through a variety of strategies, members of the group manage their responses such that they do not have to take on the role of scribe. At line 5, N’s “Oh yeah:” treats B’s turn as news; as a proposal to be agreed with, rather than a request for action, and his subsequent nomination of Kay directs the role away from himself. M offers an account of why he cannot act as scribe: “you can’t read my writin”” (lines 6-8). By taking the opening turn and issuing the first pair part of an adjacency pair, B positions himself as someone requiring an answer or offer about who will ‘scribe’ rather than as someone who will take up the role.

At line 8, N nominates K, his pointing gesture works in aggregate with the talk (“She wants to do it.”) to accomplish the action, whilst also attributing agency to K for taking up the role. Her response at line 10, which overlaps with Mick’s account, is to laugh rather than align with his suggestion. At line 11, N nominates K a second time, suggesting “We:ll secretary an’ female.”, offering the category ‘secretary’ as a replacement for ‘scribe’, and juxtaposing ‘female’ with ‘secretary’. N’s second nomination accounts for the prior one, and its formulation displays his reasoning that coupling ‘occupational’ and ‘gender’ categories is commonsensically recognizable. A gloss might be, “secretaries *in general* are female, you’re female, so *you in particular* are our secretary”. N’s turn achieves two things: it provides for a categorical identity for the person who will write for the group, and renders him (and the other group members) excluded from possible incumbency in that position.

K responds to N’s second nomination by picking up her paper and pen, aligning herself with the role and carrying out its preliminary activities. However, she does not join in with his formulation of ‘secretary’ as ‘female’. Instead, she produces a different characterological imputation for ‘secretary’: “Yeah: I’m wearing glasses I must be the secretary” (lines 16-17). This may demonstrate resistance to N’s categorical references. Alternatively, it may offer further category-bound reasons for K to occupy the role. Between lines 18-19, the group continue to discuss the photograph. A few seconds later, and following a prompt from M to “Make a good start.” (line 19), K begins to write. The students return to the issue of her role on several occasions. At lines 22-25, M and N further remind K of her role *as secretary* (rather than as ‘student’), “Are you getting all this down. =Come on.”, “gotta learn this short hand before you get into the- (0.4) the job market.”. By issuing imperatives to K, albeit teasingly, M and N further position K as someone in a particular, subordinate role.

What is clear from Extract 1 is not just *that* gender categories crop up in interaction, and that we can point to instances of this happening, but that people *do things* with them. However, one challenge for conversation analysts is to show that such instances are not one-off cases, but, rather, are the kinds of things that may comprise particular kinds of interaction (see Stokoe, 2012a). This challenge is met in the next section.

### *Patterns of gender relevance*

In the first section, we saw that, and how, gender can become consequentially relevant to an interactional encounter. In this section, we examine patterns in the way gender categories crop up in types of conversational action that recur across contexts. We focus on an interactional phenomenon which has been researched extensively by conversation analysts across numerous domestic and institutional contexts: the question-answer adjacency pair (for a recent review and collection of studies, see Freed & Ehrlich, 2010). While early language and gender researchers claimed that women and men differ in their use of ‘tag questions’ (e.g., “it’s a nice day, isn’t it”), and that findings attest to women and men’s relative power and status in society (e.g., Lakoff, 1975), such claims have been challenged on the basis of their lack of attention to context, interactional organization, and epistemic function served (e.g., Cameron, 1997; Hepburn & Potter, 2011).

However, in subsequent CA studies of question-answer sequences, little attention has been paid to the relevance of things like gender within such conversational structures. In the analysis that follows, we will see that one thing people can do in response to a question about a *specific* thing, to generalize or *go categorial* in response (Stokoe, 2012b). Extract 2 comes from a radio broadcast in which a presenter (I) is interviewing a pharmacist (Ph) about a new scheme to sell the impotency drug Viagra directly to customers in high street chemists.

Extract 2: BBC Radio 4 'Case Notes' 09-07

1 I: What sort've people (.) have been co:ming  
2 t'you.  
3 (0.2)  
4 Ph: .hh we've had a: wi:de variety of ↓gentlemen  
5 coming to see us:. to access the Viagra  
6 thro:ugh our programme

The interviewer's question makes relevant a categorial answer, asking about the "sort've people" that have visited the pharmacist. Thus the 'first pair part' of this question-answer 'adjacency pair' generates a category-relevant environment and, indeed, the pharmacist responds in categorial terms: "a: wi:de variety of ↓gentlemen" have visited her pharmacy. Thus, the pharmacist's response is fitted to the 'wh-' question that initiates the sequence.

However, in the following extract, from a conversation between two people on a speed-date, a categorial answer is produced in response to a 'wh-' question that makes relevant an account, but not necessarily a category-based account. F is asking M why he moved to Leicester, a city in England.

Extract 3: SD-7

1 F: Why Leicester then.  
2 M: Why ↑Leicester::: I followed a wo:man.

In response to a 'wh-' question about why M moved to Leicester, M produces an answer which contains a categorial account for his actions: "I followed a wo:man.". This account generalizes his actions and embeds them in a culturally familiar (heteronormative) plot. This 'cultural familiarity' is built into the grammar of the turn, in that M talks about following 'a' woman, rather than specifying a particular woman; a category-based reason for doing something. Similarly, in Extract 4 below, which comes from police investigative interview, a suspect who has been arrested for assault supplies a category-based answer to a 'wh-' question.

Extract 4: PN-48

1 P: Why didn't you: walk off: after 'e'd 'it yuh.  
2 (1.3)  
3 S: .pfffff uh heh i- it's a ma:le thing I s' (h)po(h) se  
4 innit.

Like Extract 3, the question that initiates the sequence prefers a descriptive, but not necessarily categorial, account. However, S supplies a category-based response: that he did not 'walk off' when his neighbour hit him because "it's a ma:le thing". S's answer treats the activity of 'walking off' from a fight as problematic for a member of the category 'male'. In so doing, S implies that his actions were justified by virtue of 'male' category incumbency. Note how, in both Extracts 3-4, category-based responses appear to foreshorten longer granular narratives made relevant by the wh-questions.

In Extracts 5-7, a particular pattern can be observed in the way suspects in police interrogations supply category-based accounts after type-conforming answers to questions. In each case, the suspect has been arrested on an assault charge (see Stokoe, 2010b).

Extract 5: PN-63

1 P: You threaten 'er at all.  
2 (0.4)  
3 S: No I didn't threaten 'er.  
4 (1.1)  
5 S: .hh I've got no reason to threaten 'e:r, I've never 'it a  
6 woman in my life.=an' I never will 'it a woman in my life.  
7 (0.8)  
8 P: ( ) heard the front door. ((reading from statement))

Extract 6: PN-111b

1 P: D'you think [your husband hit her;]  
2 S: [ N- my husband ] would n:ever hit  
3 a woman,

Extract 7: PN-61

1 P1: D'y'member 'er falling down to the gro:und,  
2 S: .hhhhhhh  
3 (0.3)  
4 S: ↑M:y\_e:ah. >See I wer-< I was pullin' 'er u- (0.2)  
5 ar- ar pullin' 'er arm t'kee- keep 'er awa:y from  
6 me like.<an' I swung 'er a:rm like that.=An' don't  
7 forget I'm still this ra:ge, an- (0.4) an: uh she fell  
8 t- fell t- fell to the la:wn.  
9 (1.1)  
10 S: But the way's not to kick a two↓man as you  
11 might say.  
12 (.)  
13 S: I wouldn't do that. .shih  
14 (0.8)  
15 S: Wouldn't be ri:ght (0.2) tuh- f'me to do ↓that.  
16 ((papers rustl[ing]))  
17 P2: [But you'd kick a bloke in the 'ead three  
18 ti:mes.

In each instance, suspects are *denying* the actions they are accused of, or, in the case of Extract 6, that their partner is accused of. The questions are formatted grammatically as 'yes/no interrogatives' about a specific person or incident. Suspects respond with a type-conforming response ('yes' or 'no') but then follow up with an account in which they supply a category-based denial (Stokoe, 2009). That is, the suspects *expand* the basic first and second pair part adjacency pair of turns to 'go categorial'.

In Extract 5, P asks S whether or not he 'threatened' the alleged assault victim. S first answers the question with a denial (line 3) and then provides an account (lines 5-6). While P's question is about a *particular* person, S's response moves from the particular to the *general* via categorization S's account is built as three items in a list, the first of which attends to the police-relevant issue of 'motive' and addresses the woman in question ("I've got *no reason* to threaten 'e:r,"). The second item, "I've never 'it a woman in my life.", addresses a generalized category ("a woman"). The third item ("I never will 'it a woman") includes the modal term 'will' (of which 'would' is a past tense form). Edwards (2006: 475) has shown how, when denying a charge put to them, suspects may use such modalized declaratives to "claim a disposition to act in ways inconsistent with whatever offence they are accused of". Here, because S *would not in general* do the action he is charged with, he *did not do it this time*. Taken together, items two and three categorize S as the *kind* of man who,

as a part of his *disposition* or *character*, does not ‘hit women’ *in general*. This is because the ‘I’ is an instance of what Jackson (2011) calls a ‘gendered I’, a self-referential pronoun which “can be rendered hearably gendered in the context of its production”.

Note that P does not respond to S’s self-categorization as the type of man who does not hit women (line 7); that is, he neither accepts nor rejects it as a piece of evidence but instead launches a new sequence about further witness testimony. But neither does P display any trouble in recognizing the account by, say, initiating repair. The recognizability of his account rests on shared knowledge of S’s pairing of a *category* with an *activity*: that ‘men’ may ‘hit women’. So S simultaneously recruits the culturally familiar notion that men perpetrate violence towards women (that is, there are gender-specific slots that map onto the categories ‘perpetrator’ and ‘victim’, see Lee, 1984), and uses it to deny that he is such a man, taking up a moral stance against ‘men who hit women’.

The same pattern can be observed in Extracts 6 and 7. Having denied that she hit the alleged assault victim, in Extract 6 P asks about the possible involvement of S’s husband. S’s account constructs a recognizable category-activity combination (that of ‘men’ + ‘hitting’ + ‘women’), but uses it to deny that her husband hit their neighbour because he is the kind of man who “would n:ever hit a woman”. Similarly, in Extract 7, the suspect produces an account for his type-confirming denial: “But the way’s not to kick a ↑wo↓man as you might say. (.) I wouldn’t ↑do th:at.”. S moves away from a general, scripted claim (“the way’s ...”, cf. Edwards, 1994) to a specific one (“I wouldn’t...”), pairing “wouldn’t” with a generalized formulation of the gender category “a ↑wo↓man”, rather than the particular woman he is accused of kicking. S then reiterates his denial: “Wouldn’t be ri:g ht. (0.2) to: f’m e to do ↓that.” In his follow-up question, P2 invokes S’s denial: “But you’d kick a bloke in the ’ead three ti:mes”, which S does not challenge. Note that P also uses a generalized gender category “a bloke” here, that orients to “a woman” as a member of a contrastive relational pair: both S and P are therefore oriented to the same membership categorization device.

Here, then, whilst admitting earlier that he assaulted ‘man’, he denies assaulting a ‘woman’, making his own gender identity relevant. Such a denial works on the basis that assaulting members of *equivalent* categories – with regards to power, physical strength, and vulnerability – is a more morally acceptable action than assaulting members of relatively ‘weaker’ categories (see Stokoe, 2009). In other words, S constructs ‘man’ and ‘woman’ as asymmetrically positioned categories. Note the way S’s denial is built: it starts with “But the way’s” and ends with “as you might say”. These parts of the turn work to formulate the middle bit, “not to kick a↑wo↓man” as common-sense and idiomatic, and, as such, reality-constructing with regards to the asymmetrical organization of a culture’s categories: there are *hittable men and unhittable women; men who do and do not hit women*. In this sense, then, conversation analysis offers not just a commentary on the sequential structures of, here, police interrogation, but an insight into cultural meaning-making.

We have seen in this section that, if one builds a large corpus of data, one can establish patterns in the way categories like ‘gender’ may occur in the same kinds of conversational turns, doing the same kinds of actions (Stokoe, 2012a). Because such systematic patterns can be found in interaction, conversation analytic research has the potential for real-world application, working with organizations to understand their communicative practices. We consider such an application in the final section.

### *Applying conversation analytic research findings about gender*

Conversation analysts work with recordings of interaction in the same way that any scientist works with their data, aiming to understand and describe it. Within CA, researchers work with ‘ordinary’ data (comprising talk among friends and family members) as well as ‘applied’

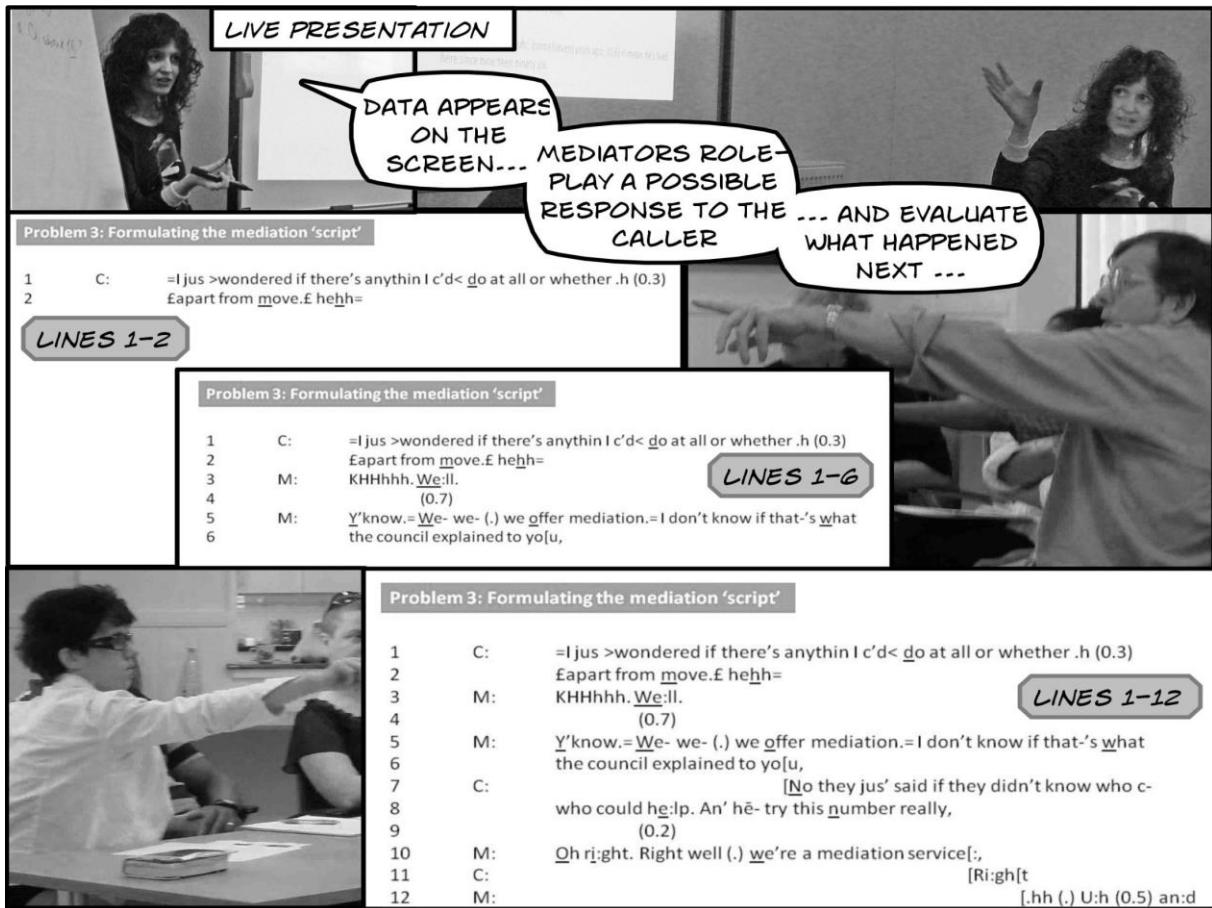
or ‘institutional’ data (comprising talk between colleagues, or between professionals and laypersons, students and teachers, and so on). While there is some debate in CA about the nature of this demarcation, there is a substantial literature on institutional interaction, from studies of medical interaction, education, helplines, police and legal settings, and other business and workplace encounters such as job interviews and meetings (e.g., Asmuß, 2008; Boden, 1994; Drew & Heritage, 1992; Housley, 2003; Llewellyn & Hindmarsh, 2010).

In one of my own projects, I conducted a large-scale qualitative study of community mediation practices, via a prior study of neighbour disputes. When conflict between neighbours becomes unmanageable, outside organizations may become involved, either at the request of one or both parties or at the instigation of organizations themselves. For example, in the UK, police become involved if disputants engage in criminal activities (e.g., assault, criminal damage, public order offences). Alternately, a neighbour may call community mediation services who will then contact the other neighbour. Some data from this project was discussed earlier, from police interviews with suspects. In this section, we turn to mediation service encounters between mediators and clients, focusing on cases in which clients say something potentially sexist about the neighbour they are complaining about. That is, clients make gender relevant to their complaint, leaving mediators in the position of having to respond. Mediators respond to sexism (and other ‘-isms’ like racism, or ageism) in particular, patterned ways.

Before we examine the data, however, I want to describe how analytic observations may be turned into practical outcomes for project ‘users’; that is, the mediators whose institutional practices are under analytic scrutiny. Over the past two years, I have developed a method called the ‘Conversation Analytic Role-play Method’ (CARM), and delivered over eighty communication skills workshops to mediators in the UK, Ireland and USA, funded by the UK Economic and Social Research Council’s grants for knowledge exchange and creating ‘impact’ (Stokoe, 2011). Conversation analysts already have a strong track record in delivering practical and policy intervention in institutional settings ranging from education and medical communication, to therapy and helpline interaction (see chapters in Antaki, 2011). In the context of applied CA, however, CARM has recently been described as “the most significant … development” (Emmison, 2012). In contrast to traditional role-play, which is steeped in problems of inauthenticity (see Stokoe, 2013a), CARM uses research about actual interaction, and the identification of practices that comprise the setting under investigation, as a basis for training. Workshops focus on, for example, how to convert callers to services to clients of services, as well as other issues such as ‘opening a mediation’, ‘solution-focused questions’, and ‘dealing with -isms’.

After research about a setting has been conducted, the next step is to transcribe and anonymize extracts from recordings that demonstrate the different ways that mediators formulate and organize particular actions (e.g., offering mediation). The audio/video files and transcript are presented synchronously, such that participants ‘live through’ encounters without knowing what will happen next. Next, workshop participants ‘role-play’ what they might do next to handle the situation. For example, if party A makes a particular sort of comment, how might party B respond most appropriately? Participants either discuss their likely response in small groups, or respond individually by taking the next turn without time for discussion (as would happen in a real interaction). Finally, party B’s actual response is revealed and discussed, and the workshop moves on. After presenting extracts with different interactional outcomes, participants can glean ‘best practice’ on the basis of what mediators actually do and say. Figure 2 below shows a CARM workshop in action.

Figure 2: CARM workshops



Extract 8 comes from an initial meeting between a mediator (M) and four clients who, together, are describing a complaint about one of their neighbours and are 'Party 1' to the dispute. C1, C2 and C3 allege that their neighbour, a single mother with several children, goes out at night leaving her children unattended. M has not met the woman, 'Party 2', and may not, if Party 2 does not agree to participate in mediation. Here, the clients are talking together about the problematic character of their neighbour, as someone who does not talk to them or other neighbours.

Extract 8a: DM-C02

1 C1: D'y-↑I don't think she ca:res actually she's not spoken to any  
2 of all of us has she in [all the time she['s been here[.  
3 C2: [No:, [No, ] [never  
4 spoke.  
5 (0.8)

6 C3: Never spoke.  
7 (.)

8 C3: She jus' dresses up, (1.4) [(What's it,)]  
9 C1: [Like a tart.]  
10 (0.4)

11 C2: °Ye:[h.°  
12 C3: [Heh hah heh.  
13 (0.2)

14 C3: Yeh.  
15 (2.4)

16 C3: .hhh ↑but it's::

Across the data, clients took every opportunity to characterize their neighbour in negative ways, in pursuit of affiliation from mediators, and to attribute blame for the dispute to their neighbour rather than themselves. Extract 8 completes a long discussion (see Stokoe & Edwards, 2013), and introduces a category ("tart") that characterizes how the neighbour in question dresses, in ways that fit with, and perhaps formulate as a conclusion, much of what C1, C2 and C3 have been saying about her. Rather than being a person like they imply themselves to be (considerate, civil, responsible, interested in their children's welfare, neighbourly), her interests lie elsewhere, in some kind of wanton and irresponsible self-indulgence. The way she dresses, and the category that it invokes, are tied to the same range of behaviours in which she goes out at nights, goes on holiday leaving her children at home, and fails to discipline them properly. Her inadequacies are not only behavioural but moral, psychological, and generalized: it is her nature.

In CARM workshops, the extract is played to workshop participants, who discuss what sort of response they might make at line 17. Following their discussion, the rest of the extract is played, including what the mediator actually did next.

Extract 8b: DM-C02

17 (0.9)  
18 M: So i- is- is that the same response that everybody- y'know.  
19 =I'mean y-y'say that other people (0.2) [in the street, I'mean  
20 C2: [Yeh.  
21 C3: [( ) talk t'you  
22 though.  
23 M: Ri::ght.=an' o(c)- do they say anything he:r.

After a delay, M does not orient or respond to C3 and C1's collaborative categorization of their neighbour as a 'tart'; nor does she join in with their laughter. M does not, therefore, affiliate with their stance towards the woman. Rather, she asks a question about the woman's interactions with other neighbours. As mediation is a process which involves bringing together disputing parties to talk about possible solutions, it is of interest that M asks a mediation-relevant question about the woman's likeliness to participate in mediation.

Consider a final example. Extract 9 comes from an intake call between a mediator and potential client. It is in such calls that problems are first formulated and offers of or requests for mediation are made. The mediator's job is to elicit a summary of the problem from the potential client; explain what mediation is, and offer it to them. C's problem is to do with his female neighbour's noise, and he has claimed that the problem is exacerbated by her visiting boyfriend. We join the call as it comes towards its closing. C has agreed to mediate.

Extract 9a: EC-13

1 M: [°Yeh°  
2 C: [.hhh I wouldn't mi:nd the bloke's most probably got a  
3 family of his own somewhere else. .hhh  
4 (0.8)  
5 C: You kno:w?  
6 M: Mm  
7 (0.4)  
8 C: An' 'e's comin' down 'ere for a little bit of fa:nny bit.  
9 (1.0)  
10 C: Heh heh .hhh d'you know what I me:an.

C suggests that his neighbour's "bloke" is already married, thereby implying that she is his 'mistress', or "fa:nny bit." (line 8). After a gap develops in which M says nothing (line 4), C pursues an affiliative, 'co-member' response from M, as if they are 'friends' talking, or as two 'men', perhaps, rather than as 'mediator-client' (line 5). M responds with a continuer ("mm"), which aligns minimally with C's general project of characterizing his neighbour but does not *affiliate* or take a stance on it (for example, "oh yes, I know!": see Stivers, 2008). At line 10, however, C pursues M's affiliation once more, asking him to display shared knowledge of, and a shared stance towards, what 'adulterous' people are like. Again, in the CARM workshop, participants formulate, discuss and evaluate possible responses. Here is what M actually said in response.

Extract 9b: EC-13

```

11                               (0.5)
12      M:     Ye:s I [understand] what you're saying yeah:
13      C:           [Y'know?    ]
14                               (0.2)
15      M:     °Yeh°
16                               (0.6)
17      C:     Because [that's what she's li:ke.
18      M:           [(Is it cos-)
19                               (2.2)
20      M:     Ye:::ah. hh okay.=so .hh w'lll- w- [I'm going to contact]=
21      C:           [((coughs))          ]
22      =um: contact her [...]

```

Like the mediator in Extract 8, M does not display affiliation with C. At line 12, he states that he understands what C is "saying", but not that he agrees with what C 'means'. Neither does he reciprocate C's laughter. And, following further pursuit from C (line 17), M returns to procedural issues.

Because mediators are expected to display themselves as impartial, they avoid taking a stance towards the problems described by clients. One issue that arises is that, as we see particularly in Extract 9, is that clients will often pursue affiliation, or displays of stance, and often resist offers of mediation when such affiliation is not forthcoming (see Stokoe, 2013b). In CARM workshops about '-isms', participants see mediators doing one of three things in response: (1) reformulating problems by deleting the prejudicial element, (2) moving the discussion towards mediation or procedural issues, and, occasionally, (3) confronting clients. They therefore get to see actual mediators dealing with actual interactional problems. CARM provides participants with a unique opportunity to scrutinize real recordings of mediation, rather than train with role-play, and discuss (and argue about) best practice. The implications of CARM for other workplaces might include recording day-to-day activities, such as meetings. Staff could then identify, and scrutinize, practices that may be problematically gendered, as a basis for discussion and as a source of training materials.

## CONCLUSION

This paper has described and demonstrated a conversation analytic approach to the topic of gender and its application in different workplace settings, including the police and mediation, as well in educational interaction about occupational categories. Rather than start with gender as an analysts' topic, or theory, the studies presented focused on the way gender crops up in the actions people initiate and accomplish in conversation. Such studies provide for a robust, empirical warrant for making strong claims about the relevance, and salience, of gender in everyday social and institutional life. And, on the basis of such warrants, conversation

analytic research findings provide the basis for intervening in and shaping institutional practice in the workplace.

## NOTE

1. Some of the data were collected as part of ESRC grant number RES-148-25-0010 “Identities in neighbour discourse: Community, conflict and exclusion” held by Elizabeth Stokoe and Derek Edwards

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