

**TOPIC MANAGEMENT:  
THE 'ABOUT WHAT-NESS' OF INTERACTION  
IN STUDENT UNIVERSITY MEETINGS**

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## Abstract

This study adopts a multimodal conversation analytic approach to the study of educational talk-in-interaction. Specifically, it investigates the management of topical talk in student university meetings within the context of problem-based learning. The analyses draw on a close micro-analytic account of topic initiation, topic development, topic termination and topic transition. It also examines various multi-semiotic resources that the participants utilise during the ongoing sequences of interaction, including gaze, gesture and body posture, as well as orientations to meeting artefacts such as meeting agendas as transition-relevant objects. This approach is consistent with the position that interaction is holistic and multifaceted (Nguyen, 2012). In this respect, and to the best of the researcher's knowledge, this is the first study to investigate topic management in student university meetings from a multimodal perspective. It looks at how participants utilise verbal and non-verbal resources to perform an organised sequence of actions according to a certain context to secure a particular outcome.

The data is taken from the Newcastle University Corpus of Academic Spoken English (NUCASE) (Walsh, 2014), a one-million-word corpus of academic spoken English, recorded in various sites across the university and incorporating small group sessions from the three faculties of the university: Humanities and Social Sciences, Medical Sciences, and Science, Agriculture and Engineering. The NUCASE data comprise spoken interactions recorded in seminars, student group meetings, tutorials, PhD supervisions, staff-student consultations, English language classes and sessions involving informal learner talk. The aim of this corpus is to provide a 'snapshot' of spoken academic discourse across a range of higher education contexts where there is interactivity. In this study, five transcribed hours of video and audio recordings were analysed, comprising a series of group meetings involving a single group of six undergraduate students working on their final year project for a BSc in Naval Architecture

Some of the analyses illustrate that topic management and multimodal resources are intertwined. This is evident in the chairperson's organised sequential moves through the utilisation of multi-semiotic resources and orientations to meeting artefacts. These sequential moves are employed to signal and make the disjunctive topic transition to the next topic of their meeting. It also illustrates how topic transitions are accepted and oriented to by the co-participants. Moreover, the analysis demonstrates the extent to which multiple bodily movements co-occur, which is still not well explored in topic management. It suggests that certain interactional and multimodal resources are utilised by the primary speaker to include a certain participant in topic development. It also reveals the utilisation and interplay of bodily resources to display different forms of topic resistance. Finally, the analyses show how the

timing, placement and the design of a turn are very crucial to manage the topics of the meetings.

The analyses in this thesis have implications for the study of topic management by clarifying the relationship between topic management and multimodality which can deepen our understanding of how topics are managed not only in meeting interactions, but also from a broader perspective. Finally, the analyses have direct implications for higher education research by examining student university meetings as a truly multimodal enterprise and considering how students manage their meeting interaction with no tutor presence.

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ابي وامي الغاليان: إن شكرتكم فشكري لن يوفيكم حقكم. فشكراً لمنحي  
فرصة السفر و الدراسة خارج الوطن، و تحدي تقاليد المجتمع لأحقق  
طموحي وأكون ما أنا عليه اليوم.

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# Chapter 1. Introduction

*“I know nothing in the world that has as much power as a word. Sometimes I write one, and I look at it, until it begins to shine.”*

(Emily Dickinson)

This introductory chapter will provide a concise overview of some of the key areas of previous research that are relevant to the present study. It will begin by introducing the area of institutional interaction. The following section will present the context of the study and topic management as the focus of the study. It will then give a brief introduction to the micro-analytic methodology employed within this study. This is followed by the objectives and relevance of the study. Finally, an outline of the thesis will be provided.

## 1.1 Research Overview

The study employs multimodal conversation analysis (CA) (Sacks, 1992; ten Have 2007; Schegloff 2007; Sidnell 2010; Goodwin 1986, 2000, 2003) as its methodology to give a fuller inclusion of non-verbal resources employed by participants in combination with their verbal organisation of talk (Hazel and Mortensen, 2014). The incorporation of CA and multimodal approach is a powerful tool for the investigation of the fine details of how topics, in this study, are managed. This section will give a brief introduction to the central aspects of the study.

### 1.1.1 Institutional Interaction

The research area of institutional interaction has grown noticeably in recent years. Early studies on institutional interaction were first conducted by Sacks (1992), who applied conversation analysis to the study of telephone calls to suicide help-lines. Since then, there has been a great number of studies focusing on workplace discourse in a diverse number of areas: police interviews and hostage negotiation (e.g. Antaki and Stokoe, 2017; Antaki et al., 2015; Stokoe et al., 2015), political interaction (e.g. Hofstetter and Stokoe, 2015), mediation (e.g. Sikveland and Stokoe 2016; Stokoe and Sikveland, 2016; Stokoe, 2013, 2014), health and social care settings (e.g. Sikveland and Stokoe 2017, Stivers and Barnes, 2017; Heritage and Sefi, 1992; Nikanders, 2003; Hughes and Griffiths, 1997; Graham, 2009; Hall et al., 2006), doctor-patient interaction (e.g. Heritage et al., 2007; Pino et al., 2016; Parry et al., 2014; Barnes 2017), education (e.g. Hjørne, 2005; Bartu, 2003), business meetings (e.g. Sanders, 2007; Kwon et al., 2009; Huisman, 2001; Henderson and Jurma, 1981; Wasson,

2000; Menz, 1999; Barnes, 2007; Svennevig, 2012, Schwartzman, 1989; Boden, 1994; Asmuß, 2002; Mondada et al., 2010), job interviews (e.g. Button and Lee, 1987), service encounters (e.g. Jefferson and Lee, 1981; Merritt, 1984), public service meetings (e.g. Asmuß, 2007), academic supervision (e.g. Svinhufvud and Vehviläinen, 2013), seminar talk (e.g., Stokoe, 2000), and legal language such as courtroom discourse (e.g. Atkinson and Drew, 1979). This area of research has extended in the last thirty years or so, and it now involves different types and aspects of workplace interaction, institutional and non-institutional contexts. For example, different professional identities, the organisation of talk in negotiation, decision-making, and the use of small talk and humour at work.

Recently, a growing amount of research in higher education has begun to focus on spoken academic discourse, mainly student-centred. However, scant attention has been given in CA research to university student meetings. By examining student meetings as a truly multimodal enterprise and considering how students manage their meeting interaction with no tutor presence, this study will have implications for research in higher education. Additionally, it addresses Svennevig's (2012) call to study meeting interaction from a multimodal approach.

### ***1.1.2 Problem-based Learning in Higher Education***

Problem-based learning (PBL) is a pedagogical approach (also known as the didactic approach) that was founded in 1966 in the Medical School at McMaster University, Canada (Barrows and Tamblyn, 1980). Its introduction within medical education evolved from evidence of students' lack of ability to apply knowledge, obtained through their academic year, when working with patients in clinical practice (Johnson and Finucane, 2000; Savin-Baden and Howell Major, 2004). Shortly thereafter, three other medical schools - the University of Newcastle (Australia), the University of Limburg at Maastricht (the Netherlands), and the University of New Mexico (United States) - developed this pedagogical approach (Savin-Baden and Howell Major, 2004). Subsequently, several adaptations were made and it soon found its way to other disciplines such as business, dentistry, health sciences, law, engineering, education, and so on. The principle of PBL is to divide students into small groups to work on a given problem/task. The problem is similar to a situation that they will encounter in professional practice as a stimulus for learning (Walton and Mathews, 1989). The goal of PBL is not just to solve the problem, but to help the students take responsibility for their own learning and make it relevant to their own educational needs (Dolmans and Schmidt, 2000). In this approach, a small group of students meets to discuss and define different aspects of the problem. This is accomplished by obtaining the key

information about the problem, generating possible theories and hypotheses, identifying gaps in knowledge and formulating relevant learning goals (Connolly, 2006). Each member of the group then works on an agreed task and engages in independent study related to their learning goals. In the follow-up stage, students meet again to share what they have learnt, reassessing their hypotheses as they co-construct the problem through the lens of their newly acquired information (Connolly, 2006). In these student group meetings, each member has a clear role and responsibilities in relation to the different tasks/activities with the given problem. This PBL process helps students to become self-directed learners and learn how to deal with similar issues in their future professional context (Poikela and Poikela, 2005; Evensen and Hmelo, 2000).

PBL has been extensively investigated in different arenas (Wood, 2003; Norman and Schmidt, 1992; Walton and Mathews, 1989; Albanese and Mitchell, 1993; Vernon and Blake, 1993; Berkson, 1993; Colliver, 2000; Dochy 2003; Newman, 2003; Connolly and Donovan, 2002; Carey and Whitaker, 2002; Cooke and Moyle, 2002; Morales-Mann and Kaitell, 2001; McCourt 1994; Sadlo and Richardson, 2003; Allen et al, 2011). However, less attention has been paid to the management of topical talk in student group meetings within the context of PBL. Therefore, the study takes this didactic approach, from a multimodal conversation analytic perspective, as the research context to examine topic management in university student meetings. This research area of institutional interaction is also under-researched, as can be seen in the following subsection.

### ***1.1.3 Topic Management***

The investigation of topic management as part of the organisation of talk in CA started with the work of Sacks (1992) and was developed by Jefferson (1984) and Button and Casey (1984). The organisation of talk into a series of topics may seem to be a pervasive feature (Holt and Drew, 2005: 39), but it is problematic to define what constitutes a topic (Brown and Yule, 1983; Levinson 1983; Schegloff, 1990; Drew and Holt, 1998; Stokoe 2000). According to Atkinson and Heritage (1984: 165), “topic may well prove to be among the most complex conversational phenomena to be investigated.” Consequently, more recent research on topicality has put a premium on ‘how’ topics are produced and the ways in which they are initiated and maintained as well as placements of topic shift (Maynard, 1980). Conversation analysts are careful to analyse topic in association with the structure of interaction, particularly sequential organisation (Jefferson, 1984; Button and Casey, 1984 and 1985; Maynard, 1980; Holt and Drew, 2005). They focus on the mechanism of topicality

production, including initiations, maintenance, terminations and shifts (Gan et al. 2008; Boden, 1994; Button and Casey, 1984; 1985; 1988; 1989; Howe, 1991; Jefferson, 1993; Maynard and Zimmerman, 1984). According to Sidnell (2010: 226), “in accordance ... with the basic CA principle of focusing on what a given bit of talk is doing rather than what it is about ... we will consider the various practices of speaking which conversationalists use to generate, to locate, to pursue and to resist talk on a topic. These can be thought of as practices of talk.” Similarly, Maynard (1980: 263) suggested that topicality refers not only to the content of a conversation but also to the procedures adopted to produce a turn that is appropriate to a prior turn. Svennevig (1999: 163) also maintained that topic is managed “based on the fundamental assumption that topic structure is not an incidental (by-) product of talk, but an orderly interactional achievement.” Moreover, Schegloff (1990: 53; see also Riou, 2015) presented a major point in noting that topic structure and sequences are analytically distinct and can be empirically at least partially independent.

Research on topic management from a conversation analytic perspective is still scant in comparison to the number of studies on other interactional recourses such as turn-taking system, adjacency pairs, etc. Seedhouse and Harris (2011) argued that analytic attention to topic in CA research is noticeable by its absence. In line with Seedhouse and Harris, Wong and Waring (2012), argued that the studies of topic from a CA perspective have been generally lacking. By examining how students manage the topics of their meetings from a multimodal conversation analytic perspective, this study will contribute to the study of topic management by clarifying the relationship between topic management and multimodality, which can deepen our understanding of how topics are managed not only in meeting interactions, but also from a broader perspective.

#### ***1.1.4 Multimodal Conversation Analysis***

Conversation analysis has its roots in Garfinkel’s (1967) ethnomethodology. It was developed to investigate the social organisation of action as it considers the methods that people utilise to structure orderly interaction (Clouston, 2007; Sacks, 1984; Psathas, 1995; Silverman, 2001). CA is concerned with the sequential organisation of talk in relation to its context or its preceding sequence (Silverman, 200; Heritage, 1984; Clouston, 2007) and considers repair, turn-taking, what is achieved in interaction and the preferred patterns or preference in organisation of talk (Clouston, 2007). Repair mechanisms are employed when these patterns are violated. Since CA is contextualised within the ethnomethodological framework, the situated structure of talk is examined inductively (Titscher et al., 2000) or through a process

of ‘unmotivated looking’ (Psathas, 1995) which patterns in the talk can emerge (Clouston, 2007; see chapter 3). Although CA is originally focused on the study of spoken interaction, a growing number of work in CA video is used to analyse embodied actions such as gaze, gesture, posture and other medium of communication combined with talk. Recently, conversation analysts who investigate interaction beyond talk have started to define their work in terms of multimodality. Multimodal CA work is grounded on detailed observations of people who are engaged in an activity. For example, Heath et al (2010) analyse fragments of interaction in consultation rooms, auction houses and control rooms. Mondada (2011) discusses the interplay of embodied and sequential features in the production and monitoring of understanding during the interaction between a car salesman and a customer. Goodwin (2000) analyses video recordings of young girls (while playing hopscotch) and archaeologists. He argues that the construction of action through talk within situated interaction is accomplished through the temporally unfolding juxtaposition of quite different kinds of semiotic resources. Hazel and Mortensen (2014) discuss how objects in the material surroundings are used in conjunction with talk, gaze and postural orientation to construct local social order in study guidance counselling meetings at a university. Therefore, scholars in this area use fine-grained transcription and analysis of short excerpts of video footages to investigate how multimodal interaction unfolds moment-by-moment.

## **1.2 Objectives and Relevance of the Study**

As has been outlined, this study investigates the management of topical talk in student group meetings within the context of problem-based learning. It adopts a multimodal conversation analytic approach to examine how a single group of students utilise verbal and non-verbal resources in an ongoing sequence of interaction to manage the topics of their meetings. The study is guided by the following research question:

1) How do participants jointly manage topics within and across the three phases in student group meetings?

In order to answer this question, the analysis will focus on:

- How is topic initiated?
- How do participants develop a topic?
- How do participants bring the topic to a close?
- When does topic transition occur?
- Who makes the topic transition?

- How do participants orient to topic transition?
- What is the role of the chair in topic management?
- What is the role of non-chair?
- Does the chairperson always change the topic? If not how is it jointly managed by the participants?

In answering the above questions, the study makes a number of original contributions to the research literature (see Chapter 7 for further contributions). It suggests that multimodality, manipulation of meeting artefacts and topic management are intertwined. It illustrates that multi-semiotic resources are important parts of interaction which augment our understanding of topic management. The study illustrates how participants' verbal and embodied actions are intertwined, yet deployed in an orderly interactional manner. This contribution is in line with the analyses of embodied interaction which have shown that even within a turn, co-participants use a combination of vocal and non-vocal actions to coordinate their actions (e.g. Goodwin, 1984; Streeck et al., 2011). Additionally, it presents different interactional techniques in which topics are initiated and developed. Furthermore, it suggests that topic management is both a collaborative and an individual achievement. It is a collaborative achievement as the participants build action in concert with one another to sustain mutual understanding. It is an individual achievement since each participant has to closely monitor the ongoing verbal and non-verbal courses of action to accurately place and time his/her action into the flux of ongoing talk. Finally, the study suggests that the analytical observations can be trainable in relation to the Conversation Analytic Role-play Method (CARM)<sup>1</sup> developed primarily by Professor Elizabeth Stokoe. It is an approach to communication skills training based on “conversation analytic evidence about the sorts of problems and roadblocks that can occur in interaction, as well as the techniques and strategies that best resolve and overcome them” (Stokoe, 2014: 255, 256). The analytical observations could be applied to train and prepare students for employment by developing communication skills that are transferable to contexts outside of their academic field of study.

### **1.3 Structure of the Thesis**

This chapter has introduced the context of the study, positioned it within the previous research literature, and outlined its objectives. This final section of the chapter will outline the organisation of the rest of this thesis. Chapter 2 provides a thorough review of the research

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<sup>1</sup> See <http://www.carmtraining.org/>

literature relevant to the study and its context. This review will help to identify the gaps in the research to date and which this study attempts to fill. Chapter 3 is concerned with the research methodology employed by the study. It presents the research design and how the data is analysed. It also presents the data analysis of the overall structural organisation in the five meetings. Chapter 4 presents a line-by-line analysis of the how topics are managed by the participants in the opening phase of the meeting. This is then followed in Chapter 6 by an examination of how topics are managed in the discussion and closing phases. Chapter 7 presents an analysis of the multimodal resources employed to resist a topic during the different stages of topic management. Chapter 8 revisits the analytic chapters and discusses them in more detail. Additionally, the overall analytical observations will be further discussed in relation to the aim of the study and it will close with recommendations for further research.

## Chapter 2. Literature Review

*“You progress not through what has been done, but reaching towards what has yet to be done”*

(Khalil Gibran)

### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter will discuss the previous literature pertinent to this study. Firstly, it will illustrate how the term ‘meeting’ has been defined by different scholars in the field of CA (Section 2.2). It will also discuss previous and current studies on meetings, as well as the general characteristics of meeting interaction within the domain of CA. Section 2.2.1 will discuss PBL in higher education as the context of the current study. This section will show how, although meeting interaction and research in higher education have been investigated, less attention has been given to university student meeting interaction as one form of small group work. Secondly, Section 2.3 will provide an overview of the interactional organisation of topic management as the focus of this study. It will illustrate how the concept ‘topic’ has been defined by different scholars from various perspectives: psychological and cognitive perspectives, discourse analytic perspectives, and conversation analytic perspectives, the latter of which is the focus and analytical tool of this study. It also will discuss the relevant literature on topic management, namely: topic initiation, topic development, topic termination and topic transition. This section shows how the field of conversation and multimodal analysis is lacking the study of topic management.

### 2.2 Meeting Interaction

Meeting interaction is an important area of research due to its prevalence in the workplace. According to Tracy and Dimock (2004), meetings are the primary communicative practice that institutional groups utilise to accomplish certain goals. Therefore, they establish the main arena for organisational communication and they consume an enormous amount of work time for many employees, particularly in white-collar workforces (Svennevig, 2012). In line with Svennevig, Barnes (2007) states that white-collar professionals spend most of their time in meetings. Hence, a meeting is undoubtedly a momentous communicative event in the workplace. But what is a ‘meeting’? Schwartzman (1989), defines a ‘meeting’ as a communicative event that involves at least three people who gather to address topics related to the functioning of a group and an organisation. For example:

To exchange ideas or opinions, to solve a problem, to make a decision or negotiate an agreement, to develop policy and procedures, to formulate recommendations, and so forth. A meeting is characterized by multiparty talk that is episodic in nature, and participants either develop or use specific conventions [ . . . ] for regulating this talk.

(Schwartzman, 1989: 7)

Not all researchers agree that a meeting requires a minimum of three people; Boden (1995), Volkema and Niderman (1995), for example, see two individuals as sufficient. Moreover, Schwartzman's functionalistic view characterises a meeting by associating it with specific conventions for regulating talk. From a conversation analytic perspective, it is the intra-interactional practices that define a speech genre (Svennevig, 2012: 4). As a response to this view, there has been an increased focus on meeting interaction in recent years. Cooren (2007: xii) indicates a move from the 'interpretive turn' in the 1980s and the 'discursive turn' in the 1990s toward the 'interactional turn.' This 'interactional turn' is characterised by the growing attention to understanding the complexities of how actions are interactionally accomplished through meeting talk and studying the details of workplace interactions (Drew and Heritage, 1992; Willing, 1992; Firth, 1995; Sarangi and Roberts 1999; Tracy, 2007; Geyer, 2008).

From an ethnomethodological perspective, meetings are classified as specific speech exchange systems (Sacks et al., 1974), and this form of talk is used mainly within institutions as a means of achieving institutional goals (Barens, 2007). Other researchers, such as Deppermann et al. (2009: 1702), define meetings as multiparty conversations that are characterised by an organisational fingerprint such as agendas, a chairperson and planned order of presenters. To Angouri and Marra (2011: 85), a meeting is seen as an 'interactional site' where many aspects of workplace communications are performed. According to Boden (1994; see also Cooren, 2007; Taylor, 2006), meetings are where organisations are 'talked into being' and where roles and responsibilities are negotiated. More specifically, a meeting is:

a planned gathering, whether internal or external to an organisation, in which the participants have some perceived (if not guaranteed) role, have some forewarning (either longstanding or quite improvisational) of the event, which has itself some purpose or 'reason,' a time, place, and, in some general sense, an organisational function...which involve similar structured turn-taking due to the multiparty setting.

(Boden, 1994: 84)

Depending on the level of formality, meetings are encounters that are characterised by means of their pre-planned nature regarding content, outcome and participants (Asmuß and Svennevig, 2009). According to Asmuß and Oshima (2012: 67), this pre-plannedness of

meetings is often observed in relation to the different institutional roles of the participants that are externally allocated; for example, superior and subordinate interactants. In spite of this pre-plannedness, research has shown that meetings are complex institutional events. They are goal oriented with complex embedded activities, routines and procedures aimed at furthering goal achievement and leading to certain outcomes (Nielsen, 2013:35). Similarly, Bargiela-Chiappini and Harris (1997: 208) define meetings as “task oriented and decision-making encounters” involving “the cooperative effort of two parties, the chair and the group.” Tracy and Dimock (2003: 127) state that in meeting interaction, “groups solve and create problems, give information and misinformation, develop and rework policies, make retooled decisions, and while doing these focal activities build or fracture sense of community among participants.” In line with Tracy and Dimock, Leach et al. (2009: 2) state that meetings are used “to accomplish goals such as information sharing, decision making, and problem solving.” Meetings are therefore characterised by asymmetry in the distribution of participant rights, knowledge, experience and obligations as well as understanding of organisational routines (Nielsen, 2013; Drew and Heritage, 1992).

Early researchers avoided defining what qualifies or what can be categorised as a meeting, arguing that people can ‘commonsensically’ recognise and identify a meeting when they see it (Cuff and Sharrock, 1985: 158; Atkinson, Cuff and Lee, 1978: 134). Against this backdrop, Henkel (2007:15) argues that there are certain common features that are easily recognisable and that employees in any business environment could tell when they are in a meeting, and its overall purpose. Moreover, Angouri and Marra (2011), in claiming that all meetings are immediately recognisable to the participants, followed earlier work by Bargiela-Chiappini and Harris (1997) and Orlikowski and Yates (1994), who suggested that a meeting constructs a genre, and its form makes it recognisable from any other multiparty conversations in a workplace context.

Although it could be argued that this approach is too broad, it reasonably highlights that there is mutual understanding among the participants of what counts as a meeting, and how the organisation of it generally works. Analysts using the conversation analytic approach have identified patterns that shape and are shaped within the meeting interaction. They have demonstrated features of talk that make the meeting a recognisable and identifiable event, such as the three-phase meeting structure (which is further discussed in ‘characteristics of meeting interaction’): an opening phase, a discussion of the agenda phase, and a closing phase, with a number of transitional moves between them (Bargiela-Chiappini and Harris,

1997: 209; Boden, 1994; Mirivel and Tracy, 2005; Chan, 2008; Fisher, 1982; Sollitt-Morris, 1996; Holmes and Stubbe, 2003). For example, Boden (1994: 87) illustrates the structure of openings and closings of meetings and that even the most informal workplace meetings have “noticeable and analysable openings and closings.” Along similar lines to Boden, Bargiela-Chiappini and Harris (1996; see also Koester, 2006, 2010) state that meetings tend to have relatively clear beginnings and endings. Mirivel and Tracy (2005) focus on the structure of pre-meeting talk sequences, arguing that participants use this phase for essential social bonding and building group identity before switching to work talk. More recently, Barnes (2007; see also Larrue and Trognan, 1993) argues that it is the distribution of turns that makes a meeting an identifiable event. Other researchers have discussed discursive ways in which topics are delineated in meetings (Bargiela-Chiappini and Harris 1996; Bublitz 1988; Holmes, 2009). These studies validate the claim that there are recognisable and generalisable features of meetings. They also support the idea of a shared identification and conceptualisation of a meeting.

The next section provides an overview of previous and current research on meeting interaction. All the research in this section is within the context of business meeting since no work has been found appertaining to university student meetings as one form of small group work. In this study, student meeting interaction follows the same organisational structure of business meetings, and it builds on and contributes to the existing literature on meeting interaction as well as to studies on topic management.

#### *A. Studies on Meeting Interaction*

The organisation of meeting talk has attracted substantial and growing interest within research in the social sciences and linguistics (Markaki and Mondada, 2012; Asmuß and Svennevig, 2009; Ford, 2008; Streeck, 1996; Clifton, 2008; Cooren, 2007; Holmes and Stubbe, 2003). It is not surprising, then, that a detailed examination of meeting talk has been afforded explicit attention by many researchers (Barbato 1994; Bargiela-Chiappini and Harris 1996; Schnurr et al., 2008; Morand, 1996a, b; Holmes and Stubbe, 2003a, b; Koester, 2006; Mullany, 2006). Current research demonstrates a variety of approaches to analysing meeting interaction, starting from the ethnographic approach, through sociolinguistic/discourse analytic approach (DA), conversation analytic approach (CA), to the politically motivated framework adopted by critical discourse analysis (CDA) (Holmes, 2009) and corpus linguistics (CL) as a quantitative approach. From the discourse and conversation analytic approaches, researchers have been investigating the organisation of talk since the 1990s (Zimmermann and Boden,

1991; Drew and Heritage, 1992; Boden, 1994; Kangasharju and Nikko 2009; Markaki and Mondada, 2012). They present valuable insights into and understandings of the social organisation and the sequential structures reflected in and produced by meeting interaction. As mentioned earlier, meetings have been the central focus of a great number of ethnomethodological oriented studies. This area of research is considered the core literature in institutional interaction. The conversation analytic studies that have been conducted on business meetings have dealt with different topics, such as interaction order and sequential structures (Housley 1999, 2000a, b; Poncini 2004; Arminen 2005; Clifton 2006), meeting management and leadership (Pomerantz & Denvir, 2007; Clifton, 2009; Nielsen, 2009), and asymmetry and hierarchy in meetings (Huisman, 2001). Other studies have focused on turn-taking systems (Grosjean, 2004; Larrue and Trognon, 1993; Ford, 2008; see also Morgenthaler, 1990; Dingwall, 1980 with regard to the moderator's role), alignment and agreement (Asmuß, 2008, 2007; Kangasharju, 2002), laughter (Clifton, 2008; Holmes, 2000; Kangasharju and Nikko, 2009), decision making and exchange of information (Clifton, 2008; Huisman, 2001; Svennevig, 2008), request strategies (Bargiela, 1994), the transition between on-going and subsequent actions as an interactional accomplishment that is made visible as a co-oriented-to phenomenon (Atkinson et al., 1978; Deppermann et al., 2010), topic management (Linde, 1991), arguing (Saft, 2004), negotiation (Boden, 1995), 'role' as an interactional device (Housley, 1999), the manipulation of objects such as whiteboards (Schmitt, 2001), studies of disagreement and disalignment (Asmuß, 2002; Kangasharju, 1996, 2002), the management of agenda (Svennevig, 2012; Linde, 1991; Boden, 1995; Mondada et al., 2010) assessment (Osvaldsson, 2004), and, finally, proposals (Maynard, 1984). Some of the most influential monographs on meeting interaction from a conversation analytic perspective are: Boden (1994) 'the business of meeting talk'; Muller (1997) 'talking is a management matter'; Dannerer (1999) 'meetings in the company'; Meier (1997) 'meetings'; Domke (2006) 'discussions as organizational decision-making'; and Asmuß and Svennevig (2009) 'meeting talk'. Boden (1994) illustrates how organisations are 'talked into being' through interaction and how the participants orient and shape the organisational setting. Meier's wider-ranging study (see Schmitt, 2006) closely investigates the dynamics of meetings and analyses a number of aspects: topical development and control, establishment of a common focus, the constitution of forms of participation and interactive identities, forms of proposals and their placement in the course of interaction, activity types, and the production of decisions.

While recognising the quantity of valuable work that has been undertaken in workplace contexts, this study focuses on meeting interaction, particularly meetings among a group of university students (as one form of small group work with no teacher presence) as there has been little, if any, substantive research in this area. The analysis in this study builds on these and other classic studies on interactional data, which will be referred to throughout the study: (e.g., Button, 1987; Zimmerman, 1998; Schegloff, 1968,; Schegloff and Sacks, 1973; Boden, 1994; Beach, 1993; Drew and Holt 1998; Linde, 1991; Schmitt, 2001; Svennevig, 2000, 2012; Mondada et al., 2010; Asmuß, and Svennevig, 2009; Nielsen, 2009, 2013; Atkinson et al., 1978; Deppermann et al., 2010; Barnes, 2007; Huisman, 2001; Richards, 2006; Streeck, 1996; Ford, 2008; Housley, 1999; Mirivel and Tracy, 2005).

Following this overview of definitions of a ‘meeting’ and discussion of previous and current research on meeting interaction, the next section presents the general characteristics of meetings within the domain of conversation analysis.

### ***B. Characteristics of Meeting Interaction***

One of the most identifiable characteristics of meetings is the three phase structure of meetings (Boden, 1994; Bargiela-Chiappini and Harris, 1997; Holmes and Stubbe, 2003). The first phase is the opening, the second phase involves the discussion of the agenda, and the final phase is the closing of the meeting. These three phases are obligatory elements of meetings but they are classified within an inclusive framework which accounts for the dynamic nature of meeting interaction (Hanford, 2010). In terms of stages of a meeting, these – and other – studies draw on the ground-breaking work in the study of openings and closings by Schegloff’s (1968; see also Schegloff and Sacks, 1973) study on telephone calls, which set the foundation for studying sequencing. His analysis of telephone call openings, used as a basic template for describing openings in a number of studies, proposed four core sequences: summons/answer sequence (Schegloff, 1968, 1970), identification/recognition sequence (Schegloff, 1979), greetings, and "how-are-you" sequence (Sacks, 1975; Jefferson, 1980).

According to Boden (1994: 90), opening phases are structured sequences embodying a variety of critical organisational issues, bracketing out the busy workday while bracketing in the local meeting membership. Generally, before meeting talk is commenced and the scene is changed into a focused gathering, i.e., with a single point of attention (Goffman, 1981) in which participants in a meeting room engage in an informal talk with various foci. This is referred to as ‘pre-meeting talk’. Mirivel and Tracy (2005: 1) argue that ‘pre-meeting talk’ can include

‘small talk, work talk, meeting preparatory talk and shop talk’. ‘Small talk’ involves personal matters, such as health, leisure activities; ‘work talk’ involves topics related to the job; ‘meeting preparatory talk’ is specifically about some aspect of the meeting (such as a point on the agenda or the refreshments); and ‘shop talk’ would be akin to work-related gossip. Boden’s (1994) study illustrates how the shift from pre-meeting talk to a joint focus occurs. According to Schwartzman (1989: 125ff), a meeting can be said to begin when the participants move from one interaction format (multiparty talk) to another (meeting talk). The discussion phase is task-focused and is centred on topics from the meeting agenda. According to Svennevig (2012: 54), the agenda provides the participants with a template for the topics to be addressed and the type of activities that the participants engage in during their meeting, such as argumentation, negotiation, and problem solving. In this phase, the participants enact their institutional roles. For example, it is the chairperson who invokes and attends to the agenda (Pomerantz and Denvir, 2009; Svennevig, 2012), but at the same time the participants have the responsibility to display an orientation to the agenda. A number of studies have explored different aspects of the discussion phase. For example, Mondada et al. (2009) investigate how participants in a meeting manage transition between bounded activities which are prescheduled by an agenda. Asmuß and Oshima’s (2012) study analyses the act of proposing future action in a two-party strategy meeting. Stevanovic (2012) identifies three components in arriving at joint decisions (access, agreement and commitment) and discusses two possible outcomes of the decision making process (non-decisions and unilateral decisions). Huisman (2001: 69) identifies the interactions and linguistic features which characterise decision-making and also finds that the formulation of decisions is linked to the situations in which they are shaped and what is categorised as a decision depends on the ‘communicative norms’ of the meeting group. Boden (1994: 102) describes closings as “‘coordinated exits from the enclosed boundary of the meeting’” as well as the suspension of activity and talk. Closing a meeting is a local achievement; it is the movement from a single focus to informal talk with various foci. This is referred to as ‘post-meeting talk’. However, in order to close a meeting, the meeting activities should be terminated by the chairperson. In formal meetings, there are clear pre-closing sequences, usually initiated by the chairperson. The pre-closing sequence is seen as a chance to reintroduce a previous discussion or topic. If this opportunity is not taken, then the closing can be initiated (Asmuß and Svennevig, 2009). It is clear, then, that the openings and closings mirror each other (Nielsen, 2013). It has been noted that meeting openings, discussions and closings are interactional achievements that require a deeper understanding of the interaction and the passing of informal (pre-meeting talk) into formal (meeting talk/discussion) and formal (meeting talk/pre-closing) into informal

(post-meeting talk). As mentioned earlier, a number of studies have analysed the transitions into and out of meeting talk.

The second characteristic of meeting interaction is the role of the chairperson. According to Marra (2003: 46), ‘‘the most commonly perceived measure for identifying a meeting is the role played by the chair.’’ In line with Marra, other scholars have shown that the role and function of the chair makes a clear distinction between a meeting and other work-related communicative events (Holmes and Stubbe, 2003; Bargiela-Chiappini and Harris, 1997; Boden, 1994). The appointed chair has the responsibility to manage the interaction. The chairs normally have an institutional authority to moderate the talk and they function as the ‘switchboard’ of the interaction (Boden, 1994). The role of the chair can be recognised in several ways. For example, the group facilitator can take a more authoritative role in controlling talk and the actions of the participants (Asmuß, and Svennevig, 2009). A study by Pomerantz and Denvir (2007) illustrates how the explicitly appointed chair in a meeting enacted being the facilitator of the group and allows the participants to guide the way the meeting is chaired. In line with Pomerantz and Denvir, Holmes et al. (2007) show how two chairs enact different roles in chairing the meeting. One of the chairs enacted the role of the facilitator and encouraged the participants to participate in the discussions. However, the other chair had an authoritative leadership style which controlled the meeting by following the agenda more closely and had a more active role in moderating the talk and pre-allocating turns to the participants.

Generally, the chair addresses the meeting group as a whole and this is mostly found when s/he summarises the result of a discussion or an agreement among the group. This shows the chair’s understanding of what the discussion has resulted in and it is done through gist formulation (Barnes, 2007; Sandlund and Denk, 2007) or an open question of whether all members agree.

The third and main characteristic of meeting interaction is turn-taking organisation (Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson, 1974). It is an essential aspect of the organisation of meeting talk since the participants organise their turn-taking system in a different way from ordinary talk. Participants’ organisation of turn-taking shows their orientation to the institutional characteristics of the meeting. In most meetings, the chair allocates the turns and the rest of the participants can self-select to take a turn. However, they need to signal their wish to the chair (Boden, 1994; Asmuß, and Svennevig, 2009). By allocating turns, the chair is also

responsible for monitoring the turn-taking system and sanctioning departures from norms of turn length and topical relevance (Asmuß, and Svennevig, 2009:14). As mentioned earlier, there are a number of detailed studies on the management of turn taking in meetings. Ford (2008) studied different types of meeting in an academic setting. She illustrates that the participants tend to take a turn by employing nonverbal means such as leaning forward and gazing at the chair. But she also notices that some turns can be taken without addressing the chair and this is done by producing an extension of the previous speaker's turn. By doing so, the speaker then becomes the co-author of the previous contribution, which will indicate alignment with the previous speaker.

The fourth characteristic of a meeting is topical organisation. The main purpose of a meeting is to address some issues or points that are specified in advance in a written agenda. The participants orient to the items on the agenda as 'business-at-hand' (Button and Casey, 1988, 1989) and the chair has to make sure that these items are addressed during the meeting interaction. Therefore, the chair has the interactional responsibility to manage topical progression by initiating the items on the agenda, managing the interactional transition between them and keeping track of the discussion by bringing the group back to the agenda topic in the event of topic digression (Svennevig, 2012; Holmes and Stubbe, 2003). Barnes's (2007) study investigates the candidate pre-closing formulations for closing topics 'business-at-hand' and how these formulations facilitate progression to the next topic. The topics on the agenda orient to practical ends such as arriving at a joint decision or finding a solution to an issue, and the chair's pre-closing formulation works to re-establish the collaborative interactional achievement of that end (Heritage and Watson, 1979). According to Svennevig (2012), it provides the relevance of closing the topic and moving on to adjacent matters. Unlike ordinary conversation, the preferred response to these kind of pre-closing formulations in meeting interaction is not confirmation, but silence. Barnes (2007) shows that participants' silence in a meeting is treated as acceptance by the chair and this provides the chance to initiate a new topic on the agenda. Ford (2008) also focuses on the meeting agenda, showing that topic transition after a closing sequence is normally marked by pauses, a range of discourse markers or vocalisation. The most used and predominant discourse marker in making the transition to a new point in the agenda is 'okay' (Barske, 2009). This technique is, then, one of the interactional practices that the chair employs to manage topic transitions and enact the role of facilitator during the interaction.

In terms of topic progression, the participants employ certain kind of prefaces. For example comments that explicitly address the topical relevance of their turn and contribution, such as “I wanted to bring up the issue of” (Ford, 2008: 75; Svennevig, 2012). They also employ ‘transitional beginnings’ in which the participants tie their turn to comments made by the other participants, such as a “one idea building on ... comment” (Ford, 2008: 80). The employment of these types of prefaces displays the orientation to the statement that topic organisation during meeting talk is not merely a local phenomenon (Svennevig, 2012). On the contrary, it is tightly linked to the agenda.

Finally, meetings are complex types of interaction that require a multimodal approach in order to describe the different modes of action (Asmuß and Svennevig 2009). First, there are physical correlates and structures associated with meetings. Meetings are normally held in a ‘meeting room’ which involves a table and technological equipment for displaying information, such as projectors, slide presentations, whiteboards, figures in documents and the participants’ tools for taking notes. This equipment or these tools are specifically adapted to the activities associated with the meeting (Asmuß and Svennevig 2009; Asmuß and Oshima, 2012). The table allows for different seating arrangements and it has been described by Sommer (1974) for its semiotic potential in terms of hierarchical differences in placement. Therefore, in order to describe this form of interaction and activities, one should include into the analysis the material objects and the conversational use of the agenda (see chapters 5 and 6). According to Moore et al. (2010), the study of institutional interaction involves exploring the interrelations between text and talk. Generally, meetings involve multiparty interaction where embodied actions such as gesture, gaze and posture are highly relevant. They are crucial in managing interaction between the participants. This is important in the study of the turn-taking system (Ford and Stickle, 2012; Mondada, 2007, 2012; Markaki and Mondada, 2012), the establishment of alliances among participants and expressing affiliation (Djordjilovic, 2012; Asmuß and Oshima, 2012) and the manipulation of meeting associated artefacts such as written documents (Asmuß and Oshima, 2012; Mondada, 2006; Hazel and Mortensen, 2014; Svennevig, 2012; Nielsen, 2012). This study is directly related and builds on this valuable research to contribute to developing the study of meeting interaction as a truly multimodal enterprise.

Having outlined the characteristics of meeting interaction, the next section presents the educational context of the current study.

### ***2.2.1 Small Group Work in Higher Education***

Peer interaction is described as “any communicative activity carried out between learners, where there is minimal or no participation from the teacher” (Philip et al. 2014: 3). In line with Philip et al., Blum-Kulka and Snow (2004: 291) describe peer interaction as having “a collaborative, multiparty, symmetrical participation structure.” It is collaborative since the participants work together towards a common goal and it is symmetrical in the sense that they are relatively equal in status, in contrast to the tutor-student relationship. Moreover, they share a common purpose and identity as students (Blum-Kulka and Snow, 2009; Philip et al, 2014).

In higher education, peer interaction includes different kinds of classes, some of the most common being tutorials, seminars and workshops. The main feature of this kind of teaching is that the tutor works with a small group of students to discuss a given problem or a topic. However, tutor-less tutorials, self-help groups and learning sets place less emphasis on the presence of the tutor to provide the students with a formalised opportunity for collaborative learning (Exley and Dennick, 2004: 1). Lately, there has been a growth in student numbers without a corresponding increase in the numbers of lecturers. This development has intensified the pressure on other aspects of teaching, especially on marking papers (Exley and Dennick, 2004; see also Nordberg, 2008). It is not surprising, then, that the universities have increased the use of group work. The increased use of group work has led to an enhanced need to justify its pedagogical value. However, it continues to constitute a large and growing role in many educational settings and it remains a valued and important part of all university courses (Exley and Dennick, 2004).

Therefore, a growing number of studies in higher education has taken the study of spoken interaction, particularly seminar talk, as its main focus. Such aspects of spoken interaction as the turn-taking system (DeKlerk, 1995a, b; Markee, 1995), comparisons of educational and everyday discourse (Fisher, 1996), studies of postgraduate student-tutor seminar interaction (Jungwirth, 1993; Viechnichi, 1997), the issue of ‘topicality’ in small group discussion (Stokoe 2000; Gibson, Hall and Callery 2006), sequential organisation and negotiation of meaning (Basturkmen 2002) and the ways in which tutors and students manage the complex relationship between pedagogic goals and the talk used to realise them (Walsh and O’Keeffe, 2010). Other research has investigated the task-setting sequences and the resistance towards academic and intellectual identities (Benwell and Stokoe 2002).

In terms of analysing topicality within the context of university seminars, Stokoe's (2000) and Benwell and Stokoe's (2002) studies use Button and Casey's ideas to examine the organisation of topic talk<sup>2</sup> (Schegloff 1990:52). Stokoe (2000) analyses the opening sequences of seminars to investigate the kinds of subjects that the students treat as educationally legitimate. One of Stokoe's influential arguments in this study involves the suggestion that the concept of 'on' and 'off' topic talk is simplistic. She argues that such a classification is very basic for gaining a detailed understanding of the nature of seminar talk. Instead of judging and valuing effective and non-effective talk, Stokoe argues for a more appropriate and detailed analysis to explore the methods employed for addressing and initiating topics. Therefore, she employs the concept of Sacks' 'false firsts' (Sacks, 1992) to describe how topicality in seminar openings is constructed. For example, students' talk about absentees is one of the common false first topic areas in discussion openings. She demonstrates that this sort of talk is organisationally relevant.

Benwell and Stokoe's (2002) study examines the patterns of task-setting sequences in university seminars. They argue that there are three-part sequences that the tutor employs to control seminar talk: defining the discussion task, justifying the limits of the seminar talk and orienting to the immediate context of the talk. They illustrate that this structure describes how topicality is achieved by revealing how talk on certain material is negotiated between the participants.

This study views all the above-noted research as highly valuable contributions to the study of seminar talk in higher education, especially the work of Stokoe (2000) and Benwell and Stokoe (2002). These studies are consistent, to a certain extent, with the aim of this study: to examine topic management in student group meetings within the context of PBL in higher education from a multimodal conversation analytic approach.

### *Problem-based Learning*

The present study focuses on PBL as its context, which is different from seminar talk. PBL aims to develop students' abilities to think and synthesise in the pursuit of solutions, applying personal, interpersonal, professional and academic learning and experiences to a real-world issue (McDonald and Barnes, 2013:281).

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<sup>2</sup> Topic talk is a routine activity in casual conversation, and is an important place for interactants to share their worldly concerns with one another, such as to deliver news, tell stories and discuss future plans (Barnes, 2013: 103).

It is a student-centred form of learning which is characterised by students' autonomy, goal-setting, collaboration and communication (Kokotsaki et al, 2016). PBL is based within a constructivist paradigm, whereby understanding is an active, individual construction and the *way* in which we learn something is as important as *what* we learn (Wiggins and Burns, 2015: 29; Savery and Duffy, 2001; Savin-Baden, 2004). In this pedagogical approach, students are involved in the learning process and they achieve their goals through social interactions and the sharing of understanding and knowledge (Cocco, 2006). In students' engagement with a task or a project, they can encounter problems which need to be addressed in order to achieve their shared goal through collaboration (Kokotsaki et al, 2016). According to Kokotsaki et al (2016), the primary focus of PBL is on the process of learning which enables an active, critical, explorative and self-directed style of learning (Clouston, 2004). In addition, students learn to be self-reliant through goal-setting, planning and organisation; they develop collaboration skills through social learning (Bell, 2010).

A number of researchers have identified fundamental features which characterise PBL, including a focus on real world challenges, team working, an acknowledgement and application of past experience and current understanding, accommodation and integration of multiple perspectives and the development, evaluation and presentation of solutions and reflection (McDonald and Barnes, 2013; McKendree, 2010; Chiriac, 2008; Servan et al, 2009; Vardi and Ciccarelli, 2008; Mykytyn et al, 2008). According to Clouston (2007:184), PBL is implemented in small groups in which students must work cooperatively to achieve collective learning outcomes and hence their level of independence is countered by their ability to work cooperatively with others (Clouston, 2004). Accordingly, communication and self-evaluation skills are essential to effectiveness but primarily require individual readiness to accept responsibility for personal learning and for that of others (Clouston, 2004; Clouston and Whitcombe, 2005).

A problem in PBL could take the form of a puzzle, a scenario or a case study (Barrett et al, 2011; Wiggins and Burns, 2015). Since there are no fixed solutions and various ways to solve these kinds of open-ended problems, learners can study the same problem but learn different things through their engagement with the problem. Students are required to collaboratively work in small groups on a given problem, which they have to unpack, working through what they need to know in order to solve it (Wiggins and Burns, 2015:29). Each student in the group carries out a mutually agreed task and then conducts an individual research to attain the required information and findings, before returning to the group in their next meeting. The

group then use these findings and information to jointly solve the problem and reflect on any remaining issues (Wiggins and Burns, 2015; Wiggins et al, 2016). Since each student in the group is responsible for what and how they learn, PBL is not merely another method of teaching and relies on a very different philosophical approach to more tutor-centred pedagogies (Wiggins et al, 2016:138; see also Dolmans et al, 2001; Savin-Baden, 2003). The main aim of PBL is to assist students to become self-directed learners who can search for, apply and reflect critically on knowledge, mainly as this applies to professional settings (Wiggins et al, 2016:138; see also Hmelo-Silver & Barrows, 2006; Hung et al., 2008). The strength of this approach is not just in the transfer of knowledge but also in the development of social and process skills and in advancing work-readiness by bridging the reality gap (McDonald and Barnes, 2013: 282; see also Nielsen et al, 2010; Cojanu et al, 2010).

During the student group meetings in PBL, students agree to take a range of individual roles and responsibilities in relation to different activities that occur within their PBL meetings (Engel, 1997; Connolly, 2006; Evensen and Hmelo, 2000; Barrows, 1988; Savin-Baden and Howell Major, 2004; Estrada Duek, 2000). One of the main roles is that of a chairperson, whose responsibilities include reading the problem to the group when it is first presented by the tutor, seeking clarification from the group, ensuring that each member has an equal opportunity to participate in the group discussion and ensuring that the group meeting attains its objectives within the allotted time (Connolly, 2006; Barrows, 1988). Another role that the students adopt is that of secretary, i.e. recorder or scribe. The responsibilities of this role are to record the points of the groups' discussion about the given problem, including mutually agreed future tasks, students' hypotheses and ideas about the problem, knowledge gaps and negotiated learning goals (Connolly, 2006). The written records aid the students to keep track of the problem-solving process and provide resources of moving forward in the process as well as a focus for self-evaluation (Connolly, 2006). During the group discussions, students refer to the written records to reconstruct hypotheses, facilitate further discussion and suggest possible solutions (Connolly, 2006; Savin-Baden and Howell Major, 2004). Additionally, students are not only responsible for their own learning but are also involved in the learning of their group members. Therefore, students in the PBL process are members of a learning community designed to encourage meaningful learning through the co-construction of newly acquired understandings (Connolly, 2006: 30; see also Savin-Baden and Howell Major, 2004). This PBL process is also known as the Maastricht seven-step method (Schmidt and Moust, 2000; Wood, 2003).

This brief overview illustrates that very few studies explicitly focus on topic management within the domain of higher education. More specifically, there has been little, if any, substantive research in student group meetings that focuses on the management of topical talk within the context of PBL (see chapter 1). Moreover, most conversation-analytic research on institutional talk has been of occupational settings. Therefore, this study contributes to the existing CA literature on meeting interaction by investigating how students manage the topics of their group meetings within the context of PBL. It argues that adopting a multimodal conversation analytic approach is essential to garner deeper understandings of topic management and of how students practice ‘doing meetings’ (given that they are doing a task during PBL).

This chapter has so far defined the term ‘meeting’ and presented an overview of previous and current studies on meeting interaction, the characteristics of meeting and the educational context of this study. The next section discusses the interactional organisation of topic management. A range of definitions of the concept ‘topic’ by different scholars is provided. This is followed by a review of the existing literature on topic organisation: topic initiation, topic development, topic termination and topic transition.

### **2.3 Conversational Analysis Studies of Topic Management**

The concept of ‘topic’ has been identified in different theoretical frameworks (Berthoud, 1996; Goutsos, 1997; Grobet, 2002) and a number of different definitions of the term has been put forward by researchers in various fields (e.g., Brown and Yule, 1983; Levinson, 1983; Button and Casey, 1984; Jefferson, 1984a; Schegloff, 1990; Drew and Holt, 1998; Stokoe, 2000; Gan et al., 2009). In reviewing the existing literature on topic, it is clear that it is a problematic and difficult concept to define. Therefore, this section looks at the different approaches to and definitions of ‘topic’.

According to de Beaugrande (1992: 244) topic is not merely a linguistic, but also a social and psychological concern. He argues that topics are psychologically organised in cognition and memory in terms of ‘frames’ or ‘schemas’ that promote discourse processing by indicating what typically belongs to a topic (van Dijk and Kintsch 1983). From a psychological and cognitive focus, topic is defined by Chafe (1994: 128-121) as “the totality of information that is semiactive at one time” and this information is thought of as an aggregate of “coherently related events, states, and referents”. Chafe’s definition is closely linked to Gundel et al.’s (1993) work on cognitive status, which introduced the Givenness Hierarchy associated with

different types of referents to different cognitive statuses. Gundel et al. (1993: 279) argue that the cognitive status of being ‘in focus’ to referents is not only in short-term memory but is also at the current state of attention: “the entities in focus at a given point in the discourse will be that partially-ordered subset of activated entities which are likely to be continued as topics of subsequent utterances”. Chafe (1994: 54; see also Riou, 2015) draws a parallel between vision (either focal or peripheral) and consciousness. He states that objects are connected to different attentional states depending on whether they are in a focal or peripheral zone of attention. He further argues that participants are aware that their co-participants have these two attention zones, and their knowledge of it influences their own production:

As they speak, they not only take account of the changing activation states of information in their own minds, but also attempt to appreciate parallel changes that are taking place in the minds of their listeners. Language is very much dependent on a speaker’s beliefs about activation states in other minds.

(Chafe, 1994: 54)

It is clear, then, that topic is seen as the “center of shared attention” (Riou, 2015), a characterisation that can emphasise our understanding that ‘doing topic’ is an interactional activity and achievement done jointly (this will be further discussed below).

From a discourse analytic perspective (DA), some studies have focused on the ‘what’ of topic, i.e. what constitutes a topic. This is referred to as the ‘product’ view (Svennevig, 1999). According Brown and Yule (1983: 70), the concept of topic is an intuitively satisfactory way of describing the unifying principle which makes one stretch of discourse ‘about’ something and the next stretch ‘about’ something else. They argue that:

If there is an entity identifiable as ‘the topic of conversation’, the analyst should consider what evidence from each individual speaker’s contribution he is using to make that identification. He should also remain aware of the fact that conversation is a process and that each contribution should be treated as part of the negotiation of ‘what is being talked about’. Above all, he should remember that it is speakers, and not conversations or discourses that have ‘topics’.

(Brown and Yule, 1983:94)

Brown and Yule (1983; see also Smith and Leinonen, 1992), present the most well-known definition that topic is simply ‘what is being talked about’, i.e. there is no conversation without something to talk about and it is not exterior to the participants or setting. In line with Brown and Yule, Goutsos (1997:1, 28) defines topic as what a piece of discourse is about. He argues that a topic “constitutes the main idea, the subject of a conversation, or the item of

discussion” and “at the discourse level, topic as content refers to the agenda or the subject matter of the specific text.” In de Beaugrande’s (1992: 243) words, topic in respect to the agenda of discourse is the “ongoing docket of actions, needs, motives, and goals.” Similar to Brown and Yule (1983) and Goutsos (1997), Stenström (1994: 150) suggests that topic is “what the speakers talk about.” However, it is problematic to agree on what constitutes the ‘aboutness’. According to Cook (1990: 25), topic is “the information carried in the message.” In the same vein, Keenan and Schieffelin (1976: 338, 344) propose the concept of ‘discourse topic’ to refer to the “proposition or set of propositions (expressed as a phrase or a sentence) about which the speaker is either providing or requesting information,” and this set of propositions is presupposed by the “question of immediate concern.” Even though identifying topic with presupposition emphasises the pragmatic nature of topic, this definition is formulated as a parallel to “theories of topic-comment structure” (Svennevig, 1999: 166). As a result, it focuses more on single utterances than on longer stretches of discourse (Svennevig, 1999; Tryggvason, 2004). Furthermore, topic is defined topic in relation to the speaker only. According to Svennevig (1999: 166), this definition does not capture the interactional nature of topic negotiation, and hence “it treats topic as a result of the speaker’s prior utterance, and thus as a textual product.” Moreover, Keenan and Schieffelin (1976: 345) admit that in some cases “the linguist may have no clue whatsoever as to what the discourse topic is. If A says to B, ‘Tom called today’, the question of immediate concern may be ‘what happened today?’ or ‘what’s the good news?’ ... or some other question relevant to the speaker and/or hearer.” Against this backdrop, Brown & Yule (1983: 73) present the issue of sharing a topic in conversation “what is being talked about’ will be judged differently at different points and the participants themselves may not have identical views of what each is talking about.” This quotation represent the dynamics of topic negotiation by indicating that the speaker’s topic becomes the shared topic of discourse if they are interactionally ratified. In a similar way to Keenan and Schieffelin, Van Dijk (1977; see also Svennevig, 1999) provides a different operationalisation of ‘discourse topic’. According to Van Dijk (1977: 132, 136), the discourse topic of a sequence is “a proposition entailed by the joint set of propositions expressed by the sequence” and the role of the discourse topic is to “reduce, organize and categorize semantic information of the sequences as wholes.” However, this definition sees topic as a product without any consideration to the dynamic aspects of topic progression, According to Svennevig (1999: 165), it only relates topics to discourse after producing the entire stretch of discourse, and this is because Van Dijk focuses on “how the speakers organise the discourse in memory and not on the on-line negotiation of topic.” Additionally, Svennevig (1999: 165) argues that this account represent topic as a “static

structure” that is attached to a stretch of discourse independently from the surrounding discourse. Research on interaction demonstrates that frames of interpretation are dynamic and can change during the conversation (Tannen 1993; Svennevig, 1999). As a result, it is not permissible to categorise one stretch of discourse independently of its placement relative to prior and subsequent sequences (Svennevig, 1999).

This view of topic identification is highlighted as problematic by Stokoe (2000: 195), who argues that “treating topics as discrete, identifiable units is problematic because defining topics is highly subjective and may be different for all the participants, as well as for the analyst.” Therefore, more recent research on topicality has put a premium on ‘how’ topics are produced and the ways in which they are initiated, maintained and shifted (Maynard, 1980). According to Crows (1983: 137), “defining ‘topic’ with any greater specificity than ‘what a conversation is about’ at any particular moment usually entails focusing on topic boundaries and shifts.”

From a conversation analytic perspective, researchers focus on the ‘how’ of topic, i.e. how speakers manage, perceive and ‘do topic’. This is referred to as the ‘process view’ by Svennevig (1999: 167), who suggests viewing topic not as a product of discourse but as a “set of techniques for organizing discourse in real time.” In line with Svennevig, Mondada (2001; 2003; see also Riou, 2015) argues that ‘doing on-topic talk’ is not making reference to a discourse object that is independent or exterior to language practices. However, topics are created by the speakers in real time during the interaction.

In early CA work, topic was seen as an artefact of the tying structure of interaction (Sacks, 1992; Riou, 2015). Sacks (1992) argues that topic is a worthwhile object of study:

I suppose I had that leeriness about ‘topic’, not by virtue of the phenomenon itself, but by virtue of that ‘topic’ would be that thing about conversation which, say, lay persons, beginning researchers, psychiatrists, etc., would feel most at home in talking about and, looking at a piece of conversation, could feel that that’s something they could start right off talking about, i.e., the ‘topics’ in it – their logic, their stupidity, the ways they were discussed, and things like that. That is to say, it would be prominently in terms of ‘topic’ that, say, ‘content analysis’ would be done.

(Sacks, 1992: 752)

Content analysis clashes with the ethnomethodological principles of conversation analysis, the objective of which is to “uncover the tacit reasoning procedures and sociolinguistic competencies underlying the production and interpretation of talk in organized sequences of

interaction’’ (Hutchby and Wooffitt, 1998: 14). In this perspective, it is easier to trace how topics are produced and placements of topic shift than to define what constitutes a topic (Brown and Yule 1983; Levinson 1983; Schegloff 1990; Drew and Holt 1998; Stokoe 2000; Schegloff and Sacks 1973; Jefferson 1984; Myers 1998; Gan et al. 2008). In order to analyse how topicality is accomplished, conversation analysts treat topic as ‘‘constituted in the procedures conversationalists utilize to display understanding and to achieve one turn’s proper fit with a prior’’ (Maynard 1980: 263). In this framework, topic is considered as something that is achieved by the speakers, through turn-taking systems, repetitions, ellipsis, pronominalisation and deixis, instead of conceiving it as something defined externally by the analysts (Gan et al. 2008; see also Stokoe, 2000: 187). Topical talk is analysed as the participants initiate, maintain, close and shift between ‘potential mentionables’ (West and Garcia, 1988). This CA approach is in line with Sacks’ (1992a: 535-543) argument that topics are artefact in terms of the way each turn is designed to show an understanding and ‘fit’ with the prior turn. The basis of this approach is that the analysis is in the interlocutors’ own orientation to what they perceive to be relevant and related to the main task as interaction proceeds (Gan et al. 2008). In line with Gan et al., Stokoe (2000: see also Seedhouse and Harris, 2010) demonstrates that the analytical focus is on the participants’ rather than analysts’ category. She argues that it is easier to make claims about talk that is topic-relevant in institutional talk than in mundane conversation (Stokoe, 2000: 187). For example, in this study, topics of the meetings are predefined by the chairperson in accordance with the agenda. Fisher (1996; see also Stokoe, 2000) argues that an educational discussion is considered ‘effective’ or ‘successful’ when students show acceptance of the given topic by the tutor.

A rational conclusion from these observations is that the ‘how’ can leads us to a ‘what’ by carefully examining how participants manage and handle topics. A related point to consider is that the amount of CA work on topic management is still scant in comparison to the number of studies on other interactional recourses such as turn-taking system, adjacency pairs, etc. According to Seedhouse and Harris (2011: 8), the early work within the CA tradition on topical management has fallen away almost completely. This is because topics are not interactionally organised and they do not follow CA norms, such as being context-free (Seedhouse, 2004: 38). Seedhouse further elaborates that ‘‘unlike the organizations of adjacency pairs and turn-taking, topic is not oriented to normatively’’, and that ‘‘topic is not treated at all in recent introductions to CA such as ten Have (1999) or Hutchby and Wooffitt (2008). However, it is extensively discussed by Sacks (1992).’’ In a similar vein, Atkinson and Heritage (1984: 165) argue that ‘‘topic’ may well prove to be among the most complex

conversational phenomena to be investigated and, correspondingly, the most recalcitrant to systematic analysis.’’ In line with Seedhouse, Atkinson and Heritage, Wong and Waring (2012: 104), argue that the studies of topic from a CA perspective have been generally lacking and that the use of terms such as topic initiation, maintenance, shift or change has not been consistent in CA literature. Therefore, this study employs the process view (i.e. CA) in the examination of topic management in student meeting talk in higher education. This study contributes to the existing CA literature on topic management by adding the multimodal approach and manipulation of objects to the analysis of the four aspects of topic management: topic initiation, topic development, topic termination and topic transition.

### *A. Topic initiation*

Various studies on topic initiation have been conducted within the conversation analytic framework (e.g. Button and Casey, 1985; Maynard, 2003; Schegloff, 2007; Svennevig, 1999). Topic initiation is seen as a critical opportunity for interactionists to shape the agenda of topic talk (Barnes et al., 2013: 104). It is employed by the interactionists to promote the selection of new mentionables (Schegloff and Sacks, 1973: 301). The selected mentionables provide insight into the interactionists’ understanding of the interaction and help construct and maintain the social relationship with their recipients (Maynard, 2003: 123). The sequential placements of topic initiation - where a speaker initiates a topic that is disconnected from the previous topics, i.e. ‘bounded topical movement’ (Sacks, 1992) – are: after the opening sequence, during/after a prior topic, following a series of pauses, and after the closing of a conversation.

One kind of topic initiation is ‘first topic initiation,’ which takes place after an opening sequence such as greetings. According to Schegloff (1986), first topic initiation is placed in the ‘anchor position’<sup>3</sup>. He further explains that there are ways in which ‘‘first topic can ‘come up’ or be designedly raised before anchor position, and varying amounts before that position’’ (Schegloff, 1986: 117). Similarly, Gardner (1987: 138) demonstrates that first topic initiation ‘topic introduction’ is found in a talk once the initial stages of greeting, identification, etc have passed. Against this backdrop, Button and Casey (1988) claim that placement of first topic is interactionally negotiated. In a series of three articles, Button and Casey (1984, 1985, 1988/89), carried out a detailed analysis of the structural features of topic negotiation through turn-taking to investigate how topics are initiated and how new topics are responded to. In

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<sup>3</sup> ‘Anchor position’ comes after the completion of the second howareyou sequence (Schegloff, 1986: 116).

addition, Sacks (1992b: 159) emphasises the importance of the first topic by claiming that “‘first topic’ is not merely a way of talking about some topic that happens to be first, but is in fact a thing that we can give an analytic name to”. Schegloff and Sacks further explain that:

Topics that are minor developments by the receiver of the conversational opening of “how are you” inquiries are not heard or treated as ‘first topics’. Rather, we want to note that to make of a topic a ‘first topic’ is to accord it a certain special status in the conversation. Thus, for example, to make a topic ‘first topic’ may provide for its analysability (by coparticipants) as ‘the reason for’ the conversation, that being, furthermore, a preservable and reportable feature of the conversation. In addition, making a topic ‘first topic’ may accord it a special importance on the part of its initiator (a feature which may, but need not, combine with its being a ‘reason for the conversation’).

(Schegloff and Sacks, 1973: 300)

According to Button and Casey (1984, 1985), Maynard and Zimmerman (1984), Maynard, (1980) and Schegloff (2007), there are a number of interactional techniques for a topic to be initiated. These are discussed below.

A number of studies on topic organisation have identified different ways to initiate a topic. Maynard and Zimmerman (1984: 303-304), argue that topic initiation can be classified into two categories. The first is topic initiated by acquainted speakers, which includes ‘displaying prior experience’ (acquainted speakers rely upon mutually assumed knowledge of one another’s biography, relationships, interests and activities in which each one is involved). Some of the features of this kind of topic initiation are that they can be deliveries of news, i.e. “‘what is known-in-common is subject to continuous revision.’” However, it can also demonstrate possible closure if the response to this kind of topic initiation displays disinterest. In connection with ‘displaying prior experience’, the analysis and findings of the current study show that displaying prior experience is employed by the participants to develop the topic further (see Chapter 5, Extract 5.08). Topic initiated by the acquainted speaker also includes ‘setting talk’ (the topical beginnings in a conversation which provides the occasion for the conversation). According to Wong and Waring (2012: 111), setting talk “‘is a topic initiation method that points to the immediate environment of the interaction.’” The second topic initiation is that by unacquainted speakers and includes ‘pre-topical sequences’ and ‘setting talk’. A pre-topical sequence is another kind of topic initiation that is used to get speakers acquainted. It involves personal questions about the addressee’s identity in a form of informational statements or enquiries. Notably, not all sequences result in topical talk since

pre-topical questions ‘‘do not require topical talk related to the categorization devices, but merely allow that to happen in a systematic way’’ (Maynard and Zimmerman, 1984: 306).

Button and Casey’s (1984, 1985) studies demonstrate how a topic is initiated by proposing three ways to generate a new topic that is not related to the prior one: (1) a topic initial elicitor consists of a three-turn sequence (e.g. what is new?), a newsworthy event (e.g. I got engaged), and topicaliser (e.g. really?); (2) an itemised news enquiry, and; (3) a news announcement. According to Button and Casey (1984: 170), topic initial elicitors have three features that are relevant to their operation in establishing a new topic for talk: (1) topic initial elicitors segment talk; (2) though making news inquiries they do not, themselves, present a newsworthy event, and; (3) they provide an open, though bounded, domain from which events may be selected and offered as possible topic initials. A topic initial elicitor does not contain a topical item for the recipient to take up; it initiates a topic by asking the interlocutor to launch a possible topic. This feature differentiates it from Maynard and Zimmerman’s (1984) displaying prior experience and pre-topical questions since the enquiries/questions are in pre-topical sequence for instance, initiate a topic with a topical item that engages the recipient. Button and Casey (1984: 170) illustrate the three sequential environments that topic initial elicitors are found after: closing components such as *okay* or *alright* (see Extract 1), opening components such as the initial greeting and/or how-are-you sequences (see Extract 2), topic-bounding turns after another topic has been clearly terminated (see Extract 3).

***Extract 1 (Button and Casey, 1984: 170)***

M: . . . I ' l l ring you back. Okay?  
N: H'ri ((brusque))  
M: Okay?  
N: Bye ((brusquely))  
→ M: Okay. Iz there anything else yo:u-happen  
today of any interest?

***Extract 2 (Button and Casey, 1984: 172)***

J: Hello Redcuh five o'six one?  
M: Mum?  
(0.2)  
J: Ye:s?  
M: Me Mahthew,  
→ J: Oh hello thehr whatche ↑doing.

***Extract 3 (Button and Casey, 1984: 175)***

A: (Ih) was too depre[ssing  
B: [oh::::: it' is \*te::rruhble--=  
→ B: =What's new.

Topic initial elicitors and turn designs vary according to the sequential environments in which they occur. They are usually marked by *else* (what else?) in the closing environment, *doing* (what're you doing?) in the opening, and *new* (what's new) after topic bounding turns (Button and Casey, 1984; Wong and Waring, 2012).

The preferred second response to the topical initial elicitor is a report of a newsworthy event that involves two techniques: presenting the newsworthy event as being searched for, such as 'U:::m ... getting my haircut tomorrow', and prefacing the event with markers such as 'Oh' as in 'Oh I wen tuh the dentist 'nd' (Button & Casey, 1984: 178; Wong and Waring, 2012). The third turn in the topical initial sequence is a topicaliser (e.g. Oh, really?, Yeah?, Really?) which comes after the newsworthy event. According to Wong and Waring (2012: 108), "it upgrades the newsworthiness of the report and transforms a possible topic into an actual topic." Similarly, Svennevig (1999: 108) argues that topicalisers express an active and supportive attitude towards the candidate topic, which reflects the feelings of the speaker such as surprise, interest or approval of the topic. According to Radford and Tarplee (2000: 26), "topicalisation is to provide the sequential opportunity for further talk on that topic." Considering the views on topicalisers and their sequential placement, one could argue that they could be analysed not only as part of a topic initiation sequence but also as one of the interactional ways that maintain and develop the topical talk further since they give the speaker the right to elaborate further on the topic. In other words, it has a dual function of being the third turn of the topic initial sequence and it is also one of the interactional ways of maintaining a new 'proffered' topic.

Another way of generating a new topic is by employing 'itemised news enquiry' (Button and Casey, 1985). Unlike a topic initial elicitor that contains a general enquiry to initiate a new topic, an itemised new enquiry contains a topical item (specific newsworthy item) that is related to the recipient which s/he already knows something about. In view of this, one could highlight that an itemised news enquiry is mainly used by acquainted speakers. Button and Casey (1985: 5–11) illustrate that there are three different types of itemised news enquiry. The first one includes not only filling in a gap in knowledge, but it also contains a request to be brought up to date on developments concerning an ongoing recipient-related activity. In Extract 4, for instance, Jenny displays her knowledge that Ida is expecting some furniture and she is enquiring (to be brought up to date) on the delivery date.

*Extract 4 (Button and Casey, 1985: 6-11)*

Ida : ..... h it's a:ll the money  
 eez had in iz back pocket thass made  
 im (like thah:t,  
 Jenny : [ehh HEH HE:h'he [h h  
 Ida : [HA HA=  
 Ida : = [ha ha :::  
 Jenny : = [[ (thet's makin' the-) ·hh That'll teach  
 i:m hheh he [h-he.  
 Ida : [That will teach him [ ↓ yes,  
 Jenny : [hhh  
 he-eh hh ay [you gn'-'hh  
 Ida : [Yeh.  
 → Jenny : When ih you gettin yer: ↑ dining room suite.  
 Ida : Well not ye:t, i-eh we ca:lled. lahst wee:k.h.

The second type of itemised news enquiry contains solicitous enquiries into troubles that recipients are known to have. It works to update the speaker with information on a certain matter and is different from enquiries into personal states such as ‘How are you?’ since it does not perform a trouble and it may receive a minimal value state descriptor (Sacks, 1973). For instance, in Extract 5, Clara’s ‘how’s yer foot?’ is an example of a solicitous enquiry which shows her concerns and knowledge about the trouble that Agnes has. By doing so, she requests an update on this trouble.

*Extract 5 (Button and Casey, 1985: 8-11)*

Clara: I w's washin the dishes.  
 Agnes: Yeah,  
 Agnes: Wir jis - cleanin up here too.  
 (0.4)  
 Clara: How'r you -  
 → Clara: How's yer foot.?  
 Agnes: Oh it's healing beautif'llly!

The third type of itemised news enquiry includes inquiries into a recipient-related activity which is oriented to as news generational. This type is more concerned with the knowledge of a recipient-related activity than the knowledge of the newsworthy, as is the case with the two previous types. For instance in the extract below, Agnes’s enquiry does not show any knowledge of a certain newsworthy event but rather offers a recipient-related activity (that is, Portia’s work at the restaurant) as the context from which she can initiate something to report.

**Extract 6 (Button and Casey, 1985: 12-10)**

Portia : How come yih didn't stay?  
Portia : OH ih w'zis too hot huh,  
Agnes : Oh::there -  
Agnes : Jus' too hot Portia, an'it was uh -  
Agnes : Oh I don' know,  
Agnes : Yih git kinda tahrd of - big kloojie buncha  
          people,  
Portia : Yea:h.  
Portia : Uh. Huh  
Agnes : ·hhhhhmhhh  
→ Agnes : How's ev'rything et the rest'rantee?  
Portia : -hh uh- Gee we were really busy las' night ih  
          was like summer.

According to Button and Casey (1985: 14-20), the responses to the itemised news inquiry in the previous extracts show a valid second turn to initiate a new topic. The responses orient to further sequential development of the initiated newsworthy news by presenting the news as a recognisable incomplete. For instance, in Extract 4, the interlocutor Ida does not inform her conversational partner of what happened when she called. In Extract 5, Agnes can elaborate more on her recovery, and in Extract 6 Porita does not give any further explanation of why the restaurant was busy. For the topic to develop further, the next speaker in the third turn can continue to talk by either addressing this incompleteness or by using continuation markers 'yeah, uh huh, and Mm hm', which provide the sequential opportunity for continuation by the recipient. However, a recipient of the itemised news inquiry may not construct their second turn in collaboration to start a topic, but s/he may produce a move that could curtail the development of the talk on the particular initiated news. This could be done by producing a minimal response that orients to only filling in the gap of the speaker's prior knowledge but does not orient to any further things to report. This type of topic initiation can also be used to develop the topical talk further, as will be seen in the next section.

The final way to initiate a new topic is through a 'news announcement' (Button and Casey, 1985: 21-25). Unlike an itemised news enquiry, which enquires into a recipient-related activity, a news announcements reports on speaker-related activities. This type of topic initiation is observed to be employed as an informative statement and it has three features. Firstly, activities reported in news announcements are not necessarily about the speaker; they are related to the speaker, i.e. the speaker has first-hand knowledge. Secondly, a news announcement replies to shared knowledge, i.e. the current speaker orients to the recipient as having some knowledge of the components of the report. This feature is related to the 'displaying prior knowledge' proposed by Maynard and Zimmerman (1984) (discussed here

above). Finally, news announcements are structured as partial reports since they only ‘headline’ the news for the next speaker to prompt further telling. The recipient of a news announcement can provide a sequential opportunity for the speaker to develop the talk by producing a topicaliser (e.g. yes) as an item that has relevance for the talk on the reported activity, as seen in Extract 7. Edgerton is the news announcer and the topicaliser that was offered by Joan created a sequential opportunity for Edgerton to elaborate on the news. The news announcer can either elaborate further on the reported news or s/he can produce a turn which only confirms the previous reported news, which could result in a possible curtailment of topic development.

***Extract 7 (Button and Casey, 1985: 23-24)***

Joan : Oh, well ( )  
→ Edgerton: Now look (.) im-uh Ilene has just pushed a note  
in front' v my fa:ce,  
→ Joan : Yes?  
→ Edgerton: Ten pounds

With regard to the sequential placement of a news announcement, unlike a topic initial elicitor, which can be featured in conversation closing where the general tendency is to avoid raising new topics (see Chapter 5 on closings), a news announcement has a ‘strong’ move to introduce a topic, and hence is not used in conversation closing (Button and Casey, 1985: 45; Wong and Waring, 2012). Lastly, itemised news inquiries and news announcements are considered part of the topic nomination practices (Button and Casey, 1985; cf. topic proffering sequences, Schegloff, 2007).

Once a topic has been initiated, the interactional journey through which it is developed begins once the co-participants ratify the initiated topic. According to Schegloff (2007: 171), “the key issue is whether the recipient displays a stance which encourages or discourages the proffered topic... and does so in a type-conforming way or not” and the key facet of that stance is that of ‘access’. He goes on to add:

[A key feature] is whether the response turn is constructed to be minimal (or minimized- i. e., analyzably kept short, even if not as short as possible) or expanded. Here turn organization plays a strategic role; response turns composed of a single TCU [Turn Construction Unit] (especially if they are redundant or repetitive) are ways of embodying minimal response.

(Schlegloff, 2007: 171)

On that account, the next section presents the interactional aspects of topic development.

## ***B. Topic Development***

Topic development refers to the interactional process of developing a topic through the cooperation of the co-participants, which can be understood through an examination of the turn-taking system (Sacks et al. 1974: 728; Maynard, 1980: 263; West and Garcia, 1988: 553). Accordingly, participants' understandings of the prior turn can produce certain interactional sequences to develop the initiated topic. According to Goffman (1983b: 11), "a topic can be volunteered or proposed in a single utterance; but it can hardly be confirmed into existence until it is taken up in a series of subsequent utterances." In line with Goffman, Svennevig (1999: 173) argues that participants display their acceptance of the maintenance and development of the current topic by "establishing local links and producing informative, coherent contributions."

One way of sustaining and developing an initiated topic is preferred responses. When a new topic is initiated by means of a question that contains a topical item or informative statement, the co-participants may structure a response that displays an interest in the topical item. According to Sukrutit (2010), the responses can take many forms such as positive answers to the speaker's prior turn or minimal responses that show a positive attitude. Schegloff (2007: 169) argues there are post-expansions that develop in a sequential environment where preferred responses function as sequence-closure-relevant and dispreferred responses are sequence-expansion-relevant. However, in topic-proffering sequences preferred responses prompt expansion and dispreferred responses prompt sequence closure. When a speaker proposes a topic (after the prior talk has been brought to possible sequence closure) and the recipient produces a preferred response as the second turn, it results in the expansion of the sequence for the initiated topic since the preferred response displays the recipient's interest in the talk (see Extract 8).

### ***Extract 8 (Schegloff, 2007: 171, 172)***

- 1 Ava: °That's goo[d,  
2 Bee: [Dihyuh have any-cl- You have a class with  
3 Billy this te:rm?  
→ 4 Ava: Yeh he's in my abnormal class.  
5 Bee: mnYeh [ how-]  
→ 6 Ava: [Abnor]mal psy[ch.

Minimal responses work to maintain and develop a proffered topic by demonstrating the recipient's minimal understanding of the prior turn, even if the minimal response does not include an explicit meaning such as 'uh-huh, Mm hm'. According to Maynard (1980: 267),

minimal responses allow the speaker of the initiated topic to develop it further since they can be understood as go-ahead responses and expresses the recipient's understanding or interest in the initiated topic. Maynard points out that if there is solicitation of the topic after these minimal responses, topic change will occur (this will be discussed in the next section). In line with Maynard, Abu-Akel (2002: 1795) argues that "the listener is providing positive feedback which conveys that the listener is attentive to the speakers' talk."

Another way to develop a topic is by repeating some parts of the prior turn that involve the potential topical talk. This is recognised as 'reformulation.' This repetition is constructed to display the recipient's interest in some of the prior turn. According to Radford and Tarplee (2000: 399), "repeating part of the prior speaker's turn or with appropriate deictic rearrangement" illustrates the recipient's willingness to develop the topic. This appropriate deictic rearrangement contains substitute utterances such as this, it, that, etc. (Goffman, 1983b; West and Garcia, 1988; Sacks, 1992a).

Finally, asking a question can be deployed by the recipient to develop the initiated topic. According to Maynard (1980: 266-270), "topical talk is a collaborative phenomenon in that while one person does topic developmental utterances, the other may produce questions, invitations, continuers, and so forth, to keep the line of talk going." He shows that the development of a topical sequence can be broken if the questions on topical talk are absent and this is also one of the sequential placements which leads to topic change (this will be discussed in the next section). In line with Maynard, Barraja-Rohan and Pritchard (1997) suggest that tag response questions and clarification questions function to develop the topic. Similarly, Sukrutrit (2010) suggests that using a series of questions also works as another interactional technique for developing topics.

On the other hand, an attempt to initiate a topic can receive curtailed responses which do not encourage the further development of the topic (Button and Casey, 1985). Participants may insist upon developing the topic by deploying a number of interactional techniques, which is referred to as 'topic pursuit' (Button and Casey, 1984, 1985; Maynard and Zimmermann, 1984; Wong and Waring, 2012).

Button and Casey (1985; see also Wong and Waring, 2012) illustrate that itemised news enquiries can be used to do topic pursuit if the topic initial elicitor or news announcements receive curtailed responses, as can be seen in Extract 9. They further explain that news

announcements that display the speaker knows something that the recipient is not telling can be deployed by the speaker to pursue the topic when itemised news inquiries receive curtailed responses (see Extract 10).

***Extract 9 (modified from Button and Casey, 1985: 27)***

01 Maggie: .h What have you been up to.  
02 (0.5)  
03 Lawrence: We:ll about the same thing. One thing  
04 anoth [er. I should  
→ 05 Maggie: [You're still in the real estate business  
06 Lawrence?

***Extract 10 (modified from Button and Casey, 1985: 41)***

01 A: How's Tina doing.  
02 (.)  
03 J: Oh she's doing good.  
→ 04 A: Is she I heard she got divorced.=

Secondly, a speaker can recycle a no-news report to pursue a topic, as seen below. However, pursuing the topic does not mean the topic is necessarily ratified.

***Extract 11 (modified from Button and Casey, 1985: 185)***

01 M: How are things going?  
02 P: Oh-h-h-h nothing doing.  
→ 03 M: Nothing doing huh?  
04 P: No, how's it with you?

Thirdly, a return of topic initial elicitor can be deployed to pursue a topic, as illustrated below.

***Extract 12 (modified from Button and Casey, 1985: 28)***

01 F: What's going on.  
→ 02 J: Not mu:ch. What do you know.

Finally, according to Maynard and Zimmerman (1984: 308), after a curtailed response the topic initiator can pursue the topic by the deployment of a reclaimer, which functions to bring the focus back on themselves.

In summary, the interactional achievement of topic development is accomplished through the participants' collaboration. The sequential placements of the interactional practices to develop the topic are of crucial importance since repetition of prior turn and minimal responses can function to terminate an ongoing topic. Therefore, the next section presents how topics can be terminated.

### *C. Topic Termination*

Topic termination refers to the techniques of closing down a topic. It can also (but not necessarily) close off a conversation (Wong and Waring, 2012: 126). CA analysts have identified various techniques that may be deployed to terminate a topic-in-progress in order to make the transition to the next topic. The sequential placement of topic termination is crucially important since closing the topic-in-progress can result in topic transition. According to Schegloff and Sacks (1973: 305), when the participants focus on topic boundaries, they collaborate to develop ‘analysable ends’ where they use different mechanisms to construct and produce topic boundaries. Myers (1998: 93) shows that “topic closure is usually collaborative; participants can signal their willingness for a topic to come to a close.” Sacks (1992b: 566) argues that “at the end of a conversation some topics come to an end and then people will exchange ‘so’s or ‘okay’s and go into closing” although these techniques may not always have the same result. In line with Sacks, West and Garcia (1988: 554) argue that the exchange of such utterances guarantees the termination of a topic-in-progress and an opportunity for topic transition. However, Schegloff and Sacks (1973) illustrate that, for example, ‘well’, ‘okay’, etc., are techniques of ‘possible pre-closings’ in monotopical conversation. They argue that if these utterances are deployed at the sequential placement of topic termination, this sequential placement can become the initial point for a new topic. They also show that topic-in-progress that includes a ‘moral’ or a ‘lesson’ can lead to topic closure and a topic transition can take place when the prior turn is summarised by aphoristic formulation or proverbial through the collaboration of the participants.

Maynard (1980: 265) argues that a series of silences is one of the ways of closing a topic-in-progress as it indicates “the failure of a prior topic to yield successful transfer of speakership” and it is in these sequential placements that “topic changes regularly appear, as a solution to the problem of producing continuous talk.” Maynard provides six placements where the series of silences can prompt topic change: restoring topical talk after a story; detailed topical items and absent solicits; topic shifts and absent solicits; refocusing; absent solicits and refocusing in combination, and; disagreement. When a topic-in-progress in one of these placements is not followed by a coherent topical talk, the initiation of a new topic is then possible to sustain the interaction. Maynard highlights that minimal response tokens (previously discussed as a way to develop a topic) work to terminate a topic in the case of a detailed topical item and absent solicit (i.e. a speaker introduces topical items in detail, which the listener has not asked for, in order to initiate a topic). With regard to the sequential

placement, analysing the turn-taking system makes it possible to determine the function of these silences.

Jefferson (1983) identifies three techniques deployed to close a topic-in-progress; recipient commentary, minimal responses and recipient assessment. In a similar vein to Maynard, Jefferson clarifies that recipient's minimal acknowledgement tokens, assessment utterances ('lovely', 'oh, good', 'that's good'), and the recipient's brief responses on a topic-in-progress may trigger a topic change. Furthermore, Jefferson (1984b; Jefferson et al., 1987) highlights that laughter can function to initiate a new topic and can be also deployed as a way of avoiding the indecency of particular jokes by closing the topic-in-progress that contains the indecency.

West and Garcia (1988: 559) present two categories for closing a topic-in-progress: (1) a topic-in-progress can be brought to a closure by 'making contributions' which involves 'exchange of objects such as 'well', 'okay' and 'alright' as a general way to close a topic, summary of a topic-in-progress, formulating part of prior talk in summary fashion, summary of some prior talk through an assessment and making arrangements'', and; (2) the second category to close a topic is by avoiding contributions which also involves "a series of silences occurring and acknowledgment tokens (um-hmm and mm) with delays." Similarly, Button (1991: 252) identifies five activities that close a topic-in-progress: (1) holding over prior activities - he uses an example of minimal responses to show how participants "orient to talk on that topic as being possibly exhausted"; (2) formulating summaries; (3) projecting future activities; (4) announcement of closure, and; (5) arrangement reintroduction.

Svennevig (1999) argues that there are three general principles to close a topic-in-progress: (1) closing an ongoing topic can be done by displaying that the participant realises that the proffered topic is completed; (2) establishing the newsworthiness of the topic, and; (3) producing responses that are suitable to the prior turn. Moreover, he provides a detailed list of the interactional techniques which includes, for example, repetition, minimal responses, silence, reformulation, generalisation, summaries, assessment and missing speaker transfer.

Finally, Howe (1991: 9) identifies a sequence of turns that closes the ongoing topics: summary assessments (Antaki, 2002; Heritage, 1984b; Waring, 2008; Wong and Waring, 2009), acknowledgment tokens (produced with a falling/even intonation and minimal stress at topic boundary), repetition, laughter, and pauses. Unlike previous research, Howe identifies

repetition of prior turn before the topic boundary as another technique of closing topic-in-progress. Furthermore, Howe states that pauses and summary assessments are “the most powerful indicators of potential change.”

After reviewing the literature on topic termination, it is clear that possible topic termination may result in topic transition. Therefore, the next section presents the last aspect of topic management, namely, topic transition.

#### ***D. Topic transition***

Topic transition refers to the interactional procedures by focusing more on one aspect within a topic or moving towards a new topic, either with a disjunctive marker or in a stepwise fashion (Wong and Waring, 2012: 115). Notably, it is worth mentioning here that topic transition (the act of moving towards a new topic) is different from topic initiation. With reference to the sequential placement of topic initiation, it is done in the openings, closings, after a topic boundary and after a series of silences. However, topic transition is done within a current topic and is accomplished in two ways. The first way is stepwise topic transition (Atkinson and Heritage, 1984; Sacks, 1992b; Svennevig, 1999; Holt and Drew, 2005; cf. topic shading in Schegloff and Sacks, 1973). It is a process where one topic flows into another in a natural, unnoticed way, and “in this process, elements of the current topic which are incidental, are foregrounded and become topicalized in their own right, whilst the foregoing topicality is, by default, backgrounded by not being attended to in ongoing talk. The process repeats in a cyclical manner” (Campbell-Larsen, 2014: 173). The second way of changing a topic is through disjunctive topic transition (Jefferson, 1984; Atkinson and Heritage, 1984). According to Maynard (1980, 264), “topic changes are not random happenings; they occur in specific environments and in characterisable ways”. Disjunctive topic transition refers to the process and the techniques of moving into a new topic that is unrelated to the previous one, resulting in the construction of a noticeable boundary between the topic-in-progress and a new topic.

##### *Stepwise Topic Transition*

In stepwise topic transition, a speaker can flow from one topic (or aspect of a topic) to another one in a gradual way (Wong and Waring, 2012). This kind of topic transition is considered “the best way to move from topic to topic” (Sacks, 1992b: 556). According to Sacks:

It is a general feature for topical organization in conversation that the best way to move from topic to topic is not by a topic close followed by a topic beginning, but by

what we call a step-wise move. Such a move involved connecting what we've just been talking about to what we are now talking about, though they are different. I link up whatever I'm now introducing as a new topic to what we've just been talking about [in such a way that] so far as anybody knows we've never had to start a new topic, though we are far from wherever we began and haven't talked on just a single topic. It flowed.

(Sacks, 1995: 566)

Notably, it is worth mentioning that Maynard's (1980) topic shift has features in common with 'sub-topical talk' (Sacks, 1992a: 762) and topic shading (Schegloff and Sacks, 1973). These techniques focus on the development of another coherent talk that is related to the topic-in-progression. Sacks (1992a: 762) elaborates on sub-topical talk by providing an example of a movement from talking about a house to rent to talking about the yard of the house. In other words, the topic of the yard is related to the topic of the house to rent. A speaker is said to move into a new topic through the deployment of three interactional devices (Wong and Waring, 2012). Firstly, a speaker can deploy a pivot utterance (+ new topic/focus) instead of making a noticeable topic boundary since the pivot functions to connect the talk, i.e. "if you have some topic which you can see is not connected to what is now being talked about, then you can find something that is connected to both, and use that first" (Sacks, 1992: 300). According to Jefferson (1993), the pivot utterance can take different forms of shift-implicative (i.e. shifting the topic to matters of the speaker's own interest), which are: minimal acknowledgement tokens, assessments and commentary. In a similar vein, Holt and Drew (2005) add figurative expressions to the forms of pivotal utterances. Secondly, invoking a semantic relationship between two items is another interactional device to do stepwise transition. According to Sacks (1992: 757, 761-763; 1995), this relationship includes three class analyses to terms: co-class membership, touched-off utterances and sub-topical talk (for further information see Sacks, 1992, 1995).

The final interactional devices to make the stepwise topic transition involve multiple stages (Wong and Waring, 2012: 124, 125). Jefferson (1984a: 202-204) presents a series of five moves as the process of stepwise topic transition deployed by the trouble-teller. These moves are used as a way of getting out of trouble-telling, and they are as follows: (1) The trouble-teller sums up the heart of the trouble; (2) the trouble-teller turns to matters that are ancillary; (3) the trouble-recipient produces talk that topically stabilises the ancillary matters; (4) the trouble-recipient produces a pivotal utterance that has independent topical potential, and; (5) the target matter is established as a new topic by the participants (see Jefferson, 1984, for further discussion).

### *Disjunctive Topic Transition*

In this type of topic transition, the participants terminate a topic-in-progress and initiate a new topic that is not related to the prior one through noticeable boundary markers. This bounded or segmental topic organisation (Button and Casey, 1985; Jefferson, 1984) is referred to differently by various CA analysts: marked transitions (Sacks, 1992b); disjunctive shift (Jefferson, 1984); disjunctive topic shift (Atkinson and Heritage, 1984; Svennevig, 1999); disjunctive topic transition (Holt and Drew, 2005), and; disjunctive topic change (Holt and Drew, 2005). According to Sacks (1992b: 352), ‘marked topic introduction’ occurs when the participants involved in an interaction find the talk boring or unpleasant, and hence do the interactional work to initiate a new topic as a gateway from the situation. In line with Sacks, Jefferson (1984) argues that disjunctive transition can also occur as one of the ways to get out of trouble-telling, and it can also occur in non-problematic talk.

There are two forms of disjunctive topic transition. The first one is where a topic-in-progress is terminated by a possible closing sequence, after which a new – unrelated - topic is generated. The second form of disjunctive topic transition works to insert a new topic before a topic-in-progress is exhausted. This latter form is referred to as ‘topic leap’ (Svennevig: 1999: 38). Then again, the participants may not maintain the inserted topic and they may return to the prior topic, a case which is referred to as ‘side sequence’ (Jefferson, 1972).

According to Wong and Waring (2012: 116), disjunctive topic transition involves boundary or disjunctive markers, which are utterances deployed by the interlocutors to mark the generation of a new focus or topic as abrupt or unexpected. Crow (1983: 141-141; see also Wong and Waring, 2012: 115-116) provides a list of boundary topic markers: “‘Anyway, Alright, Oh, Speaking of X, That reminds me of, Oh say, I tell you what, One more thing, Listen, There’s something I’ve gotta tell you, You know what?, Before I forget, By the way and Incidentally.’”

Drew and Holt (1988, 1995, 1998) argue that figurative expressions can be deployed by the participants to make the disjunctive topic transition. They further elaborate that figurative expression has the dual function of acting as a summary assessment (positively and negatively) and closing the preceding matter. One should highlight that the figurative expressions in disjunctive transition disengage the new topic from the current one, while the pivotal figurative expressions in the stepwise transition connect the new but related matter and

turn to the prior topic. Drew and Holt (2005: 506) provide the most common sequential placement of figurative speech that is before a disjunctive topic transition following a standard sequence:

Speaker A: Figurative summary assessment

Speaker B: Agreement

Speaker A: Agreement/confirmation

Speaker A/B: Introduction of next topic

Finally, West and Garcia (1988; see also Okamoto and Smith-Lovin, 2001) were the first to present a clear framework for analysing topic transition. They introduce two types of topic transition, namely, ‘collaborative topic transition’ and ‘unilateral topic transition’. This categorisation is based on the existence of interactional collaboration among participants to close a topic-in-progress. Collaborative topic transition occurs when participants jointly contribute to a possible closing sequence of the current topic (e.g. through an agreement on the termination of a topic). However, unilateral topic transition results from a non-collaborative topic transition on the part of one speaker (Okamoto and Smith-Lovin, 2001: 854). In other words, a new topic is solely initiated by a participant without bringing the topic-in-progress to a closure and without the co-participants’ joint agreement. According to Okamoto and Smith-Lovin (2001: 854), unilateral topic transitions violate turn-taking norms by failing to acknowledge the conversational rights of the prior speaker: “one participant exercises control over the topic, causing the other to experience topic loss.”

A rational conclusion from reviewing previous research on topic management is that the majority of CA research into topic management has mainly focused on mundane conversation where topics flow implicitly rather than explicitly stated. Moreover, topic management is extremely valuable when working on interactional data because it uncovers interactional structures, techniques and strategies. To the best of the researcher’s knowledge, topic management has not been investigated in student university meetings, and nor has it been investigated as a truly multimodal enterprise.

## **2.4 Concluding Remarks**

This chapter has introduced and provided an outline of the existent literature relevant to this study. The second section presented an overview of previous literature on meeting interaction and it discussed the studies and characteristics of meeting interaction with a particular focus on research which has adopted the CA mindset and methodology. It also discussed the context

of PBL and highlighted the gap in the literature with regard to higher education research. The third section discussed the concept of 'topic' from different perspectives and why this study adopts the conversation analytic perspective. It also discussed the relevant CA literature on the four aspects of topic management. As a result, it showed how the field of CA is still lacking the study of topic management.

## Chapter 3. Methodology

*“Descriptions are the gifts observers give:  
Refraining patterns message bearers live.”*

(Robert Hopper, 1991)

### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the multimodal conversation analytical method adopted by this study and the research design. Section 3.2 presents a number of definitions, the origins and the core assumptions of conversation analysis (CA). The following section, 3.3, presents a brief outline of two key interactional organisations of CA, namely: turn-taking system (3.3.1) and sequence organisation (3.3.2). Section 3.4 discusses the application of CA within an institutional setting. Following that, Section, 3.5 introduces the multimodality approach. Section 3.6 presents the research context of the study. Finally, section 3.7 addresses the issues of the validity and reliability of CA.

### 3.2 An Overview of Conversation Analysis

CA is an approach to the study of talk-in-interaction. According to Psathas:

The study of the talk-in-interaction represents a methodological approach to the study of mundane social action ...[and employs] rigorous [and] systematic procedures for studying social actions that also provide reproducible results.

(Psathas, 1995: 1)

However, researchers have specifically described CA in diverse terms: as “a form of analysis of conversational data that accounts for the sequential structure of talk-in-interaction” (Markee 2000: 25); “a set of methods for working with audio and video recordings of talk and social interaction” (Sidnell 2010: 20); “the study of recorded, naturally occurring talk-in-interaction” (Hutchby and Wooffitt 1998: 14); “the study of the orders of talk-in-interaction, whatever its character or setting” (ten Have 2007: 4), and; “the close examination of language in interaction” (Antaki 2011: 1). Generally, then, CA aims to “describe, analyse, and understand talk as a basic and constitutive feature of human social life” (Sidnell, 2010: 1). Similarly, Atkinson and Heritage (1984: 1) argue that the main purpose of CA research is to describe and clarify the competences that ordinary people use to take part in socially organised interaction. These aims of CA were formulated in an early programmatic statement by Harvey Sacks:

It is possible that detailed study of small phenomena may give an enormous understanding of the way humans do things and the kinds of objects they use to construct and order their affairs. It may well be that things are very finely ordered; that there are collections of social objects [...] that persons assemble to do their activities; that the way they assemble them is describable with respect to any one of the activities they happen to do, and has to be seen by attempting to analyse particular objects.

(Sacks 1984: 24)

CA was first introduced by the sociologist Harvey Sacks, in association with Emanuel Schegloff and Gail Jefferson (Heritage, 1984b; Sacks, 1992; Silverman, 1998; Antaki, 2011). It grew out of the ethnomethodological tradition in sociology developed by Harold Garfinkel (1964, 1967, 1988), which studies “the common sense resources, practices and procedures through which members of a society produce and recognise mutually intelligible objects, events and courses of action” (Liddicoat 2007: 2). The development of ethnomethodology by Garfinkel was in turn influenced by the work of the sociologist Erving Goffman (1963, 1967, 1983), who investigated ‘the interaction order’ by noting face-to-face encounters among social members. It should be noted that Goffman’s interest ultimately oriented to “the construction of a system of conceptual distinctions” (ten Have 2007: 5).

In the ethnomethodological approach, it is perceived that individuals have rational reasons for the actions they produce and these actions are available to other members of common-sense. According to Garfinkel (1968: 16):

‘Ethno’ seemed to refer, somehow or other, to the availability to a member of common-sense knowledge of his society as common-sense knowledge of the ‘whatever’. If it were ‘ethnobotany’, then it had to do somehow or other with his knowledge of and his grasp of what were for members adequate methods for dealing with botanical matters. Someone from another society, like an anthropologist in this case, would recognize the matters as botanical matters. The member would employ ethnobotany as adequate grounds of inference and action in the conduct of his own affairs in the company of others like him. It was that plain, and the notion of ‘ethnomethodology’ or the term ‘ethnomethodology’ was taken in this sense.

Garfinkel’s ethnomethodology is set out to investigate and understand “how the structures of everyday activities are ordinarily and routinely produced and maintained” (Garfinkel, 1967: 35-36). Therefore, the analysis of a person’s everyday activities can help uncover the reasons behind the same activities when performed by other individuals.

Based on this observation, CA aims to reveal the underlying machinery that allows the participants to organise and order social action in talk-in-interaction (Seedhouse, 2004: 12). In

line with Seedhouse, ten Have (1999, 2007) argued that the essential purpose of CA is to present an analytical description of the organisation of talk-in-interaction by taking the participant's perspective. This is related to the 'emic' perspective, in that the analysis of the interaction should not be grounded in a theoretical framework but instead CA analysts should identify the distinctive features and patterns 'naturally occurring' in the conversation from the participants' standpoint (ten Have, 2007). According to Pike (1967: 37), "the emic viewpoint results from studying behaviour as from inside the system". Another point, made by Hutchby and Wooffitt (1998: 15), is that "CA seeks to uncover the organisation of talk from the perspective of how the participants display for one another their understanding of what is going on." This is to say, CA attempts to thoroughly and finely describe how turn at talk is constructed and oriented to by the co-participants.

Moreover, Heritage (1988) proposed the following three core assumptions of CA:

1. Interaction is structurally organised.
2. The significance of each turn at talk is doubly contextual in that (a) each turn is shaped by the context of prior talk, and (b) each turn establishes a context to which the next turn will be oriented.
3. No order of detail in interaction can be dismissed a priori as irrelevant to the parties' understandings of what is occurring.

(Heritage, 1988: 130)

These three core assumptions have strongly shaped CA's approach to data and its analysis (Heritage, 1988: 130). Building on Heritage's three assumptions, Seedhouse (2004) added two more principles: 'bottom-up and data driven', and 'why that, in that way, right now?' Before conducting research, CA emphasises that the data should be collected from naturally occurring interactions using video or audio recordings because order must be found in naturally occurring materials of interaction rather than materials fabricated through experimental procedures or role-plays (Wetherell et al. 2001: 52). In addition, CA emphasises that data should be analysed case by case because social interaction is orderly on an individual action-by-action, case-by-case level (Wetherell et al., 2001: 52). These principles promote an emic perspective rather than top-down analytic procedures.

### **3.3 Interactional Organisation**

According to Sacks et al. (1974), there is a basic architecture that supports interaction. This section will briefly outline some of the key analytical concepts, in relation to interactional organisation, that were revealed during early CA research. Two different but interrelated

analytical concepts of interactional organisation are focused on: turn-taking system<sup>4</sup> and sequence organisation<sup>5</sup>. This organisation of interaction is employed in the analysis of the present study to examine how participants manage topics during their meetings.

### ***3.3.1 Turn Taking System***

Turn-taking system is considered extremely important in CA (Hutchby and Wooffitt, 2008) because it accounts for that fact that, in any conversation, “one party talks at a time, though speakers change, and though the size and ordering of turns vary; that transitions are finely coordinated; [and] that techniques are used for allocating turns” (Sacks et al. 1974: 699). The key elements of turn-taking are indicated by Sacks et al. (1974) as involving the notions of turn-constructive unit, transition relevance place, local management, recipient design, and speaker selection.

Turns at talk consist of turn-constructive units (TCUs), which are syntactic units of several types, including “sentential, clausal, phrasal, and lexical” (Sacks, 1974: 720). Transition relevance places (TRPs) are moments in interaction when turn transition (or change of speakers) can occur after TCUs. According to Sacks (1974: 725), a turn-taking system is locally managed in mundane interaction. In other words, managing turn allocation and turn-taking is dealt with on a turn-by-turn basis since turn order and turn length are fixed in mundane interaction. Finally, recipient design shows the participants’ orientation to co-participants. It refers to the ways the participants formulate their turns to fit the co-participant in interaction (Sacks et al, 1974). Sacks et al. (1974: 727) noted that recipient design affects “word selection, topic selection, admissibility, and ordering of sequences, options, and obligations for starting and terminating conversations, etc.” This is related to how participants in interaction create and maintain mutual understanding, or ‘intersubjectivity’ (e.g. Heritage, 1984a). In any interaction, participants display understanding of one another in the production of their next turn. Any display of lack of understanding or misunderstanding can be resolved through repair.

### ***3.3.2 Sequence Organisation***

The central idea of CA is that utterances in interactional talk are sequentially organised (ten Have, 2007). According to Seedhouse (2004: 21), “It is through sequence organisation that

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<sup>4</sup> Turn taking practices, in relation to meeting interaction, were reviewed in the previous chapter.

<sup>5</sup> The analytical concept of topic, which is the heart of this thesis, was discussed in great detail in Chapter 2.

the participants of a conversation are able to make their utterances comprehensible and to interpret the utterances of others''. At the same time, it is the mechanism that assists CA analysts to study interaction, as they are ''able to follow the reasoning process of the interactants'' (Seedhouse, 2004: 21). Put simply, ''CA's major contribution to pragmatics is that in CA, utterances derive much of their pragmatic force from their sequential location and through their relationship to the interactional organizations uncovered by CA'' (Seedhouse, 2004: 22).

The concept of 'adjacency pair' is the major instrument for the analysis of sequential organisation (ten Have, 2004). According to Schegloff and Sacks:

A basic rule of adjacency pair operation is: given the recognizable production of a first pair part, on its first possible completion its speaker should stop and a next speaker should start and produce a second pair part from the pair type of which the first is recognisably a member.

(Schegloff and Sacks, 1973: 296)

Adjacency pairs consist of two related utterances produced by different speakers. Adjacency pairs involves two aspects: first pair part (FPP) and second pair part (SPP). Moreover, Schegloff and Sacks (1973: 296; cited in ten Have, 2004) describe five characteristics of adjacency pairs: 1) two utterance length, 2) adjacent positioning of component utterances, 3) different speakers producing each utterance, 4) relevant ordering of parts (i.e. FPP followed by SPP), and 5) discrimination relations (a second pair part is selected within the scope of a first pair part. If a first pair part is a request, the second pair part can be an acceptance or a denial).

After the production of a FPP (e.g. a question) the SPP (e.g. an answer) becomes conditionally relevant (Schegloff 1968:1083). If the SPP is not produced, this absence will be treated as noticeable, accountable and sanctionable (Seedhouse 2004: 20). However, a full sequence quite often includes more than just two pair-parts (ten Have, 2004). For instance, when a sequence is situated before a first pair part, it is 'pre-expansion'; when it is between a FPP and a SPP, it is 'insert expansion', and when it comes after a SPP, it is 'post-expansion' sequence.

### 3.4 Applied Conversation Analysis and Institutional Talk

Chapter 2 provided a detailed discussion of the organisation of meeting interaction (see Section 2.2). This section will outline the major dimensions of institutional talk in relation to meeting interaction.

CA studies on ‘institutional talk’ started to emerge in the late 1970s, beginning with the same assumptions that proved fruitful in studying ordinary conversation (Heritage, 1998). It started with the understanding that ‘context’ is a product of the participants' actions. In other words, “it is through interaction that context is built, invoked and managed, and it is through interaction that institutional imperatives originating from outside the interaction are evidenced and made real and enforceable for the participants” (Heritage, 1998: 4). That is to say, participants build the context of their talk *in and through* their talk (Heritage: 1998). According to Drew and Heritage (1992:22; see also Heritage 2003), institutional interaction has three basic elements: 1) the participants have specific goals, which are connected to their institutional identities (doctor and patient, teacher and pupil etc.); 2) the interaction involves constraints on what is regarded as “allowable contributions to the business at hand”, and; 3) talk in institutional settings is associated with the specific frameworks and procedures of a particular institution. These elements give each type of institutional interaction its own ‘fingerprint’ (Heritage and Greatbatch 1991: 95-96, see also Heritage 2003).

Drew and Heritage (1992) further proposed a number of distinctive dimensions of institutional talk in which it differs from mundane conversation and offers analytical foci into the study of institutional talk. Firstly, institutional interaction employs the same turn-taking organisation as mundane conversation. However, some institutional interaction (e.g. meetings) involves specific and systematic transformations in conversational turn-taking procedures (see Section 2.2, Heritage, 1998). The study of turn-taking in meeting interaction is fundamental because “they have the potential to alter the parties' opportunities for action, and to recalibrate the interpretation of almost every aspect of the activities that they structure” (Heritage, 1998: 5). For instance, in this study the chairperson governs the turn-taking system in that it is through the chairperson that turns are allocated or allowed to be taken. Secondly, sequence organisation is one of the main pillars of any kind of interaction because “it is through sequence organisation that the activities and tasks central to interaction are managed” (Heritage and Clayman, 2011: 43). This study will analyse the series of sequences, including sequence expansions, to examine how participants develop the topics. Thirdly, the two areas of lexical choice and turn design are interrelated in that “turn designs

are implemented with words that have to be selected” (Heritage and Clayman, 2011: 47) and “lexical choice is a significant way through which speakers evoke and orient to the institutional context of their talk” (Drew and Heritage, 1992: 29). The analysis in this study includes a focus on recipient design and the lexical choices during the three different phases of meetings, i.e. opening, discussion and closing. Finally, the overall structure organisation addresses the fact that a series of sequences are part of a larger sequence that shape the interaction (see sections 2.2 and 4.5). This notion is common in institutional encounters. According to Drew and Heritage (1992: 43), “many kinds of institutional encounters are characteristically organised into a standard ‘shape’ or order of phases. Conversations, by contrast, are not” (see Section 4.5 and Chapter 7 for an analysis and scission of overall structural organisation of student meetings). In institutional interaction, the production of overall structure organisation and the move from one phase to a next are managed by the participants in a given interaction (Drew and Heritage, 1992: 44).

### **3.5 Multimodality and CA**

The analysis in this study will incorporate non-verbal cues employed by the participants during the interaction, including facial expressions, gaze, hand gestures and body movements as well as manipulation of objects, adopting Goodwin’s (1986, 2000, 2003) approach to non-verbal actions in interactions.

Non-verbal behaviours were overlooked in early CA studies (e.g., Sacks et al., 1974).

However, a growing number of CA studies have extended the research focus towards a fuller inclusion of embodied resources (Hazel and Mortensen, 2014; Nevile, 2015). Moreover, ever more journals have started to publish special issues on CA and multimodality (Deppermann, 2013; Deppermann et al., 2010; Jewitt & Cowan, 2014; Rasmussen, Hazel, & Mortensen, 2014).

According to Norris (2004: 4), “in multimodal interactional analysis we are *only* concerned with what individuals express and others react to.” The multimodal analysis from a CA perspective attempts to describe “how talk, visual resources (e.g. gesture, gaze and body posture), the use of physical artifacts in the participants’ surroundings, and the surroundings themselves are *jointly* used to perform coherent social action” (Mortenson, 2013: 2).

Mortensen further argues that it is the combination of these semiotic resources, sequentially, and serially, that produces a specific social action. According to Goodwin (2002: 33), “to see a gesture as a meaningful sign . . . a hearer must first use the talk that accompanies it to find a

relevant sense for the speaker's waving arm and then synthesize into a larger whole a succession of different hand movements that appear and disappear through time". Therefore, the utilisation of semiotic resources at any point in interaction is seen as relevant to the ongoing course of action since they are oriented to by the participants (Mortensen, 2013). Overall, multimodality and CA are proven to be effective analytical methods that uncover the moment-by-moment verbal and non-verbal conducts and orientation of participants in institutional interaction. The reasons for employing CA (i.e. process view) instead of DA (i.e. 'product view') to investigate the management of topic were discussed in Chapter 2 (see Section 2.3). In addition to the reasons for choosing CA (data-driven method) provided here, the detailed transcription and close analysis of verbal and non-verbal conducts can deepen our understanding of the phenomenon being investigated.

### **3.6 Research Design**

The aim of this study is to examine topic management in student group meetings within the context of PBL in higher education from a multimodal conversation analytic approach. The originality in this study is based on the research gap discussed in chapters 1 and 2. This study is set to answer the following research questions:

1) How do participants jointly manage topics within and across the three phases in student group meetings?

In order to answer this question, the analysis will focus on:

- How is topic initiated?
- How do participants develop a topic?
- How do participants bring the topic to a close?
- When does topic transition occur?
- Who makes the topic transition?
- How do participants orient to topic transition?
- What is the role of the chair in topic management?
- What is the role of non-chair?
- Does the chair always change the topic? If not, how it is jointly managed by the participants?

This section presents the research context, data collection, the research participants (section 3.6.1) and the ethical considerations of this study (section 3.6.2). The next section explains how the data is transcribed and analysed (section 3.6.3).

### **3.6.1 Data Collection, Research Context and Participants**

As has been noted in chapters 1 and 2, the research context of this study is PBL in higher education i.e. students are doing a task and practicing ‘doing meetings’. The current data has been taken from the Newcastle University Corpus of Academic Spoken English (NUCASE) (Walsh, 2014), a one million word corpus of academic spoken English recorded in various sites across the University and incorporating small group teaching sessions from the University’s three faculties: Humanities and Social Sciences, Medical Sciences, and Science, Agriculture and Engineering (see Table 1). Approximately 25% of the corpus is based on recordings made in pre- and in-session English language classes recorded in INTO, the English Language Centre for the University. The NUCASE data, based on video- and audio-recordings, comprise spoken interactions recorded in seminars, group work, tutorials, PhD supervisions, staff-student consultations, English language classes and sessions involving informal learner talk. As the focus is small group interaction, lectures have not been included. The aim is to provide a ‘snapshot’ of spoken academic discourse across a range of higher education contexts where there is interactivity.

<b>Faculty</b>	<b>Number of words</b>				<b>Total words</b>
SAGE	200,000 words formal talk		50,000 words informal talk		250,000
HASS	200,000 words formal talk		50,000 words informal talk		250,000
MED	200,000 words formal talk		50,000 words informal talk		250,000
INTO	B1 (0)	B2 (125k)	C1 (125k)	C2 (0)	250,000
<b>Total number of words: 1,000,000</b>					

*Table 1. NUCASE: Newcastle University Corpus of Academic Spoken English*

After exploring the NUCASE database, this study focuses on the Faculty of Science, Agriculture and Engineering (SAGE), particularly the undergraduate degree of Naval Architecture since it is the only dataset in the corpus that includes student meetings. As illustrated in Table 2, this study analyses five hours of video and audio recordings of naturally

occurring data, which were collected with one video camera and one audio recording between the beginning of October 2010 and the end of June 2011 at Newcastle University.

INTERIM NAME	NEW NAME	TITLE	DATA TYPE	CONTEXT	FACULTY	DATE	RECORDING LOCATION	NUMBER OF SPEAKERS RECORDED	SPEAKER IDs	Time	YEAR OF STUDY	T-LED OR PEER
NC027	NC044	Naval Architecture Final Year Project	Student Project	Group work	Marine Engineering	21.02.11	Newcastle University	5	TNS41,TNS42,TNS43,TNN44,TNS46	0:30:00	4	Peer
NC001	NC001	Naval Architecture Final Year Project	Student Project	Group work	Marine Engineering	22.11.10	Newcastle University	5	TNS41,TNS42,TNS43,TNN44,TNN45	1:30:00	4	Peer
NC003	NC003	Naval Architecture Final Year Project	Student Project	Group work	Marine Engineering	29.11.10	Newcastle University	5	TNS41,TNS42,TNS43,TNS46,TNSS17	2:20:00	4	Peer
NC053	NC143	Naval Architecture Final Year Project	Student Project	Group work	Marine Engineering	25.03.11	Newcastle University	6	TNS41,TNS42,TNS43,TNN44,TNN45,TNS46	0:55:02	4	Peer
NC014	NC029	Naval Architecture Final Year Project	Student Project	Group work	Marine Engineering	31.01.11	Newcastle University	6	TNS41,TNS42,TNS43,TNN44,TNN45,TNS46	1:03:11	4	Peer

*Table 2. BSc Naval Architecture*

The aim of this study is to investigate topic management in small group meetings between students with no staff member present, including project planning meetings. Therefore, recordings of seminar talk, tutorials, PhD supervisions and staff-student meetings to discuss projects have been excluded. The five hours of recordings comprise five meetings, each lasting for nearly an hour of interaction which provides a time frame for the meeting. These meetings have been documented over the first term of the academic year. This series of meeting interaction involves a single group of participants. This group includes six undergraduate students (five males and one female) on the BSc Naval Architecture working on their final year project. The student group meetings are held once a week in the School of Marine Science and Technology at Newcastle University.

The students were assigned to different groups to build a wind turbine as their final year project. In this study, the students as a group decided on certain parts of the project to be assigned to each student, for example, foundations, prop design, structures, geotechnical analysis and so on. In these small group meetings, the roles of the chairperson and the secretary are explicitly assigned and change in each meeting. Furthermore, they organise their meeting interaction with a clear opening phase, discussion phase and closing phase as well as the chairperson following a written agenda. Hence they follow the interaction of workplace meetings. Once the project is completed, they have to submit one dissertation as a group, and hence each student has to produce a piece of writing for their part of the project. The absence

of participants' background information is not seen as problematic since the analytical approach of this study only considers contextual information as relevant to the analysis if it is oriented to by the participants (Brandt, 2011). A potential limitation of this study could be that the study focuses on a single group of students and only five hours of recordings. Unfortunately, the NUCASE corpus has the recordings of only five hours of one group of students from Naval Architecture with no teacher presence.

### ***3.6.2 Ethical Considerations***

The NUCASE data collection followed the ethical guidelines of the University and an ethical review was undertaken and approved by the University ethics convenor. The data collection was on a voluntary basis and the participants were provided with information that explained details of the research project; a declaration that participation is entirely voluntary and that they can withdraw from the project at any time; details of what will happen to the data collected and the results of the research, including how the data collected will be handled, and; plans for storage, archiving, sharing and re-use of data. In order to ensure confidentiality, the names of the students were referred to in the transcripts as S1, S2 and so on. Pseudonyms were allocated to any participant's name that was mentioned during the interactions in order to preserve their anonymity.

### ***3.6.3 Data Transcription and Analysis***

CA is a data driven methodology and it is only through transcribing the video-and-audio recordings that patterns of interaction are identified and become the focus of the analysis. According to Hutchby and Wooffitt:

Transcription is a necessary initial step in enabling the analysis of recorded interaction in the way that CA requires. Secondly, the practice of transcription and production of transcript represent a distinctive stage in the process of data analysis itself.  
(Hutchby and Wooffitt, 2008: 69)

Therefore, after repeatedly watching the data, the recordings are first transcribed roughly, and then extracts of interest are finely transcribed. The transcriptions follow the CA conventions based on the system developed by Jefferson (e.g., Jefferson, 2004; Atkinson and Heritage, 1984; Hutchby and Wooffitt; see also Appendix A). The data was transcribed and synchronised with the video recordings using Transana software<sup>6</sup>. Notably, ten Have (2007:

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<sup>6</sup> Transana is an open source software designed to facilitate the transcription, management and analysis of digital video, audio, and still image data (Silver and Lewins, 2014).

95) emphasised that “transcripts are not the data of CA, but rather a convenient way to capture and present the phenomena of interest in written form”, and hence transcripts are considered to be a representation of the data (Hutchby and Wooffitt, 1998).

In CA, the analyst is left with the decision to select what details are to be included in the transcription according to what phenomena are being investigated. Therefore, in this study, a fine-grained transcription containing micro-level features such as pauses, gaps, stretches, volume, overlaps, cut-offs, and non-vocal sounds (Psathas, 1995) can help explain in emic terms how topic initiation, development, termination and transitions are accomplished. Overlooking these apparently insignificant interactional features can result in a partial interpretation of how topics are managed<sup>7</sup>. According to Hutchby and Wooffitt:

The process of transcribing a data tape is not simply one of writing down the words that people exchanged. Rather, it is a process of writing down in as close detail as possible such features of the recorded interaction as the precise beginning and end-points of turns, duration of pauses, audible sounds which are not words (such as breathiness and laughter), or which are ‘ambiguous’ vocalizations, and marking the stresses, extensions and truncations that are found in individual words and syllables.  
(Hutchby and Wooffitt, 2008: 71)

In addition, Sacks (1984: 24) argued that “detailed study of small phenomena may give an enormous understanding of the way humans do things and the kinds of objects they use to construct and order their affairs.” For this reason, the embodied actions, in this study, were described with sequence of turns at talk where they are deemed relevant and necessary to understand the interaction, as well as to reflect the interactive nature of the speaker’s embodied actions, such as eye gaze, body orientation and gestures (Goodwin, 1979, 1980; Psathas and Anderson, 1990). Therefore, a fine-grained transcription, including visual aspects, is necessary here to show how verbal and non-verbal conducts are interrelated (see Chapters 4, 5 and 6). According to ten Have:

The basic procedure used in CA studies based on video recordings has been to start with a detailed transcription of the vocal part of the interaction, and add descriptions or symbolic depictions of the visual activities, like gaze, gesture, posture, and others, to the ‘timeline’ provided by the transcript, either above or below each line.  
(ten Have, 2007: 108)

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<sup>7</sup> The NUCASE corpus provides verbatim transcripts to nearly all the recordings. However, during the course of this research a great number of mistakes were noticed in the verbatim transcript such as, for instance, incorrect identification of the current speaker or incorrect utterances.

Different scholars working with video materials, such as Heath (1984, 1986) and Goodwin (1979, 1981, 1984), have developed various ways of visual coding. For example, Goodwin (1981) employed different marks to transcribe participants' gaze. Goodwin (2000a; see also Heath, 1986) employed drawings on the basis of the original video recordings. Such drawings techniques do not only represent the visual information, but also maintain the 'anonymity' of the participants (ten Have, 2007: 109). The most recent method used by scholars to present as much information of visual aspects of interaction as possible is called 'digitised frames', which are screenshots taken from video recordings (see e.g., Goodwin, 2003b; Hindmarsh and Heath, 2003; Carroll, 2004; Olsher, 2004; Goodwin and Goodwin, 2004; Kidwell, 2005; Stokoe, Benwell and Attenborough, 2013; Stevanovic and Peräkylä, 2015). In addition, illuminating signs such as arrows to illustrate gaze direction are also added to gain and present an accurate representation of embodied actions. According to ten Have (2007: 109) "the digitised frame pictures allow for the addition of explicative symbols like arrows (who speaks to whom) and initials."

However, one of the limitations of this study is the difficulty of adding all the digitised frames to the transcripts. In this study, how topics are managed (in each extract) is analysed line by line (i.e. initiation, development, termination and transition) through the participants' verbal and non-verbal actions. Therefore, digitised frames and arrows to illustrate gazes are added to each turn-at-talk. In addition, descriptions of the non-verbal actions are added to the transcripts (marked by double rounded brackets) and attention is given to the reoccurrence, timing and relevance that the non-verbal actions have during topic management.

In terms of data analysis in this study, the data is approached without specific prior idea. Additionally, the analytical foci of the study is only decided after a repeated viewing and thorough examination of the data. This is referred to as 'unmotivated looking' (Psathas, 1995: 45; Sacks, 1984, refers to 'unmotivated examination'). Once the reoccurrence of an interesting phenomenon is noticed, the CA analyst is then able to identify a pattern in a systematic sequential environment and build a collection of the phenomenon being investigated (i.e. repeated instances provide a valid analytical ground).

Once a number of extracts have been collected, the CA analyst can then start the analytical process, which includes a careful examination of the interactional organisation and the distinctive dimensions of institutional talk (see Section 3.4). This analytical process is influenced (but not determined) by the analytic routine of Schegloff (1989):

1. Check the episode carefully in terms of turn-taking: the construction of turns, pauses, overlaps, etc.; make notes of any remarkable phenomena, especially on any ‘disturbances’ in the fluent working of the turn-taking system.
2. Then look for sequences in the episode under review, especially adjacency pairs and their sequels.
3. And, finally, note any phenomena of repair, such as repair initiators, actual repairs, etc.

(Schegloff, 1989, cited in ten Have, 2007: 122)

In addition, this study has adopted Pomerantz and Fehr’s (1997: 71-4, cited in ten Have 2007: 122-124) guideline of analysis: 1) select a sequence; 2) characterise the action in the sequence; 3) consider the packaging<sup>8</sup> of the actions; 4) consider the timing and taking of turns, and; 5) consider the ways in which the actions were accomplished. This way of analysing data helps to answer the question ‘why that, in that way, right now?’ (Seedhouse, 2004). In this study, turn-taking, adjacency pair and turn design play an important role in initiating, developing, terminating and making topic transitions (see chapters 4, 5 and 6).

### *Single case analysis*

This study analyses student meeting talk (see insitutional talk in Section 3.4) within the context of PBL. It is goal oriented with embedded activities, routines and procedures aiming at furthering such goal orientation and leading to particular results, and it is characterised by asymmetry in distribution of participant turn-taking rights, responsibilities, knowledge, and experience with and understanding of organisational routines (Nielsen, 2013:35 Drew and Heritage, 1992). This study aims at a comprehensive multimodal conversation analysis of a single case to track in detail the various interactional techniques that inform and derive the management of topical talk. According to Schegloff, single case analysis approach is an exercise in which “the resources of past work on a *range of phenomena* and organizational domains in talk are brought to bear on a *single fragment* of talk” (Schegloff, 1987:101, emphasis in original). The aim of single case analysis is not to introduce previously unknown findings, but rather to use what is known about the organisation of conversational activities to analyse instances that such knowledge should illuminate (Whalen et al, 1988: 340). In this way, this study uses CA to “to assess the analytic capacity of CA, using its past results” (Schegloff 1987). By using single case analysis, it can be seen how the activities that are undertaken in a fragment of talk are accomplished using interactional techniques that both transcend a particular conversation, yet are specifically designed for use within it (Hutchby

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<sup>8</sup> The notion of ‘packaging’ refers to the *form* chosen to produce the action, from the alternatives that might have been available (Ten Have, 2007: 123).

and Wooffitt 1998: 120-125). In this respect both the generalised (patterns of interaction that exist irrespective of the situation, a sequential pattern or an interactional device) and the local (the particularised or specific features of an individual case) are socially produced (Luck, 2007: 128). By using single case analysis, any extract from the current data could be analysed as the analysis is to illustrate the interaction particular to the case rather than to generalise about a repeated phenomena across the data corpus.

### **3.7 Reliability and Validity in CA**

According to Arminen (2005: 67), reliability and validity should not be seen as mere ‘icing on the cake’ they should inform the whole research process and enable the generation of findings that are trustworthy and newsworthy.

Reliability can be defined as the question of whether the findings of a study are repeatable. It is “particularly at issue in connection to quantitative research” (Bryman 2004: 28). However, Peräkylä (1997; cited in Seedhouse 2004: 254) argued that three main elements affect reliability: the selection of what is recorded, the technical quality of recordings, and the adequacy of transcripts. Additionally, Bryman (2004: 28) suggested that the idea of replicability is close to reliability. According to Seedhouse (2004: 254), CA is capable of making its findings replicable because of the way in which it presents both data and the process of analysis. Moreover, in CA studies it is standard practice to include transcripts of the data employed and increasingly make audio and video files available electronically (Seedhouse, 2004: 255). Hence, the analysis process is made transparent to readers.

The concept of validity is concerned with “the integrity of the conclusions that are generated from a piece of research” (Bryman 2004: 28). There are four kinds of validity in qualitative research:

1) *Measurement validity* is concerned with the question of whether a measure that is devised of a concept really does reflect the concept that it is supposed to be denoting (ibid). Moreover, it is related to reliability, as “if a measure of a concept is unstable in that it fluctuates and hence is unreliable, it simply cannot be providing a valid measure of the concept in question. In other words, the assessment of measurement validity presupposes that a measure is reliable” (ibid). Seedhouse (2005: 257) argued that in an emic perspective the question to be asked is “whose construct is it?” The emic perspective in CA aims at looking for the organisation of interaction to which the interlocutors orient during their interaction, and that makes it different from the etic perspective.

2) *Internal validity* relates to the issue of causality and is concerned with the question of whether a conclusion that incorporates a causal relationship between two or more variables holds water (Bryman 2004: 28). Put simply, if we propose that x causes y, can we be sure that it is x or is there any alternative explanation (ibid). In CA, this is seen as a concern of ensuring that the concepts invoked are oriented to by the participants. From a CA emic perspective, it is the participants' perspective and not the analyst's. Additionally, "CA practitioners cannot make any claims beyond what is demonstrated by interactional detail without destroying the emic perspective and the whole validity of the CA enterprise" (Seedhouse 2004: 255).

3) *External validity* is concerned with the question of whether "the results of a study can be generalized beyond the specific research context" (Bryman 2004: 29). Most qualitative research is criticised for being context-bound and hence lacking in external validity. According to Seedhouse (2004: 256), this critique is not valid for CA because it focuses on analysing the micro-level interactional phenomena in order to discover the macro-level interactional machinery.

4) *Ecological validity* is concerned with the question of whether social scientific findings are applicable to people's every day, natural social settings (Bryman 2004: 29). In other words, the more the social scientist intervenes in natural settings or creates unnatural ones, such as in a laboratory or even a special room to carry out interviews, the more likely it is that the findings will be ecologically invalid (ibid). According to Seedhouse (2004: 256-257), CA studies tend to be exceptionally strong in comparison to other methodologies in terms of ecological validity because they analyse naturally occurring talk and aim to develop an "emic, holistic perspective and to portray how interactants perform their social actions through talk by reference to the same interactional organizations which the interactants are using" (ibid).

### **3.8 Concluding Remarks**

This chapter has presented the origins of CA and how it has been defined by different scholars. The third section presented the key analytical concepts in relation to interactional organisation, namely: 1) turn-taking organisation, which involves the notions of turn-constructional units, transition relevance places and recipient design, and; 2) sequence organisation, which involves the concept of 'adjacency pair' and sequence expansions. The fourth section discussed the application of CA in institutional settings. Section five has presented the multimodal perspective of this study. Section six introduced information about the data and how it was selected from the NUCASE corpus. The analytical process of

transcribing and analysing the data was discussed, along with a number of issues and the limitations of the study. This section also illustrated how the transcription and the analysis of this study was guided by previous CA research. Finally, this chapter has addressed the issues of validity and reliability in CA.

## Chapter 4. Forms of Talk in Opening Phase

*‘Life may not be much of a gamble, but interaction is.’*

(Erving Goffman, 1959)

### 4.1 Introduction

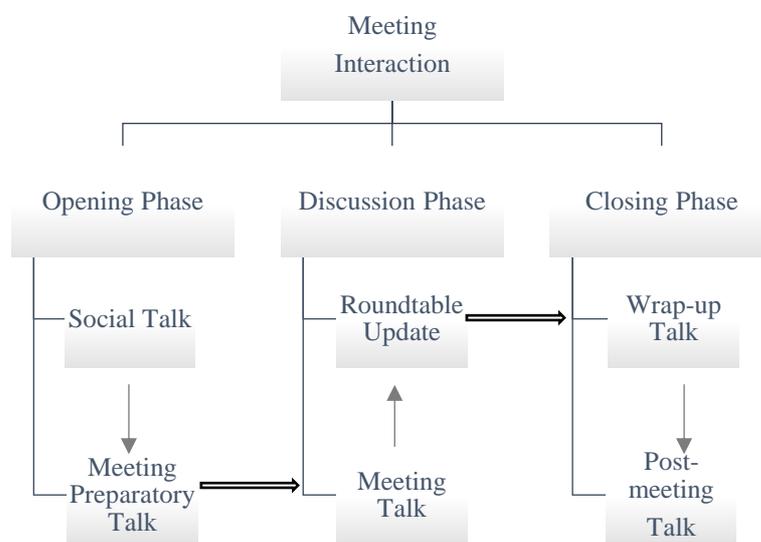
The data analysis chapters in this study will examine how participants jointly manage topics within and across the three phases of their meetings, i.e. opening phase, discussion phase and closing phase. The data analysis will demonstrate how topic management and context are interrelated. The analysis of this chapter will first present a full picture of the meeting interaction and provides an overview of the structural organisation of student meetings in Section 4.2. It will then mainly focus on the opening phase and its forms of talk, i.e. social talk and meeting preparatory talk. During the ‘unmotivated looking’ (Hopper, 1988; Psathas, 1995; see Chapter 3), the extracts in this chapter are considered appropriate as they indicate participants’ verbal and non-verbal orientations during the different stages of topic management, and they present two different cases of unsuccessful disjunctive topic transitions.

In this chapter, the introduction of each section provides a summary of the analytical observations. Section 4.3 presents the analytical observations of a detailed sequential analysis of how topics are managed in social talk. It also presents an interesting case of how the co-participants manage the interaction of a semi-institutional topic. It is a topic that draws on both social and institutional talk without a topic transition. It also illustrates a case of unsuccessful disjunctive topic transition to meeting preparatory talk. Section 4.6 presents the disjunctive topic transition to the meeting preparatory talk and the participants’ verbal and non-verbal orientations to the transition. It also shows how the participants initiate topics to fill in the time while signing the documents and waiting for the chairperson to make the transition to meeting talk (see Chapter 5) and start the meeting. It also presents a case of mistiming of a turn made by the chairperson to make the disjunctive transition to meeting talk.

### 4.2 Overall Structural Organisation of Student Meetings

To give a full picture of student meeting interaction and before going into the micro-detailed analysis of the chosen cases, this section provides an overall structural organisation of how meetings, in this data, are structured in terms of their topical organisation.

The analysis of the five student meetings has shown that the participants organise and adjust their interaction according to the three phases of their meetings, namely: opening phase, discussion phase, closing phase, and transitional moves between them (see Figure 1). This was also found in the work of Holmes and Stubbe (2003; see also Bargiela-Chiappini and Harris, 1997: 209; Boden, 1994; Chan, 2008; Fisher, 1982; Sollitt-Morris, 1996). In this data, student meeting interaction has its own routinised structural organisation that the participants orient to. According to Nguyen (2012: 127), the overall structural organisation involves a ‘‘recognisable set of activities which follow a certain expected sequential order.’’ In this data, each phase of student meeting interaction includes different forms of talk.



**Figure 1. Structural Organisation of Student Meetings**

In the opening phase, topics in *social talk* (ST) (Fisher, 1996) are locally managed by the participants, i.e. they are not predefined by an agenda or allocated by the chairperson. They are unplanned and non-work related, such as weekend plans, health issues and dinner plans that occur while the participants are settling in. This was also found in the work of Bailey (1983) and Schwartzman (1989). Topics in this form of talk are not just chatting but rather serve as social functions that are essential to the flow of the interaction (cf. also Allen et al., 2014). Talk in ST can split into two or more talks between the participants.

Another form of talk in the opening phase is *meeting preparatory talk* (MPT), which attends to the upcoming meeting (this was also found in the work of Mirivel and Tracy, 2010). The transition from ST to MPT is always made by the chairperson once topics in ST are collaboratively terminated by the co-participants. In MPT, the participants orient to the

situated identity, i.e. the role of the chairperson (see Zimmerman, 1998; Drew and Heritage, 1992) by showing readiness to start the meeting, passing their turns (see Nielsen, 2013) and waiting for the next action to be taken by the chairperson. Topics in MPT involve checking attendance, distribution of the agenda, discussing, signing and passing around the updated minutes from the previous meetings before making the transition to the discussion phase.

The discussion phase includes two forms of talk: *meeting talk* and *roundtable update*. Meeting talk (MT) is the transition from multiparty talk to a single focused talk. The transition in MT is exclusive for the chairperson, in that he or she gets an extended turn to provide the future projection of the meeting (Benwell and Stokoe, 2002) or, in Heyman's (1986) term, 'work to come'. In addition, topics and turns at talk are pre-allocated by the chairperson. Roundtable update is when the participants update the group with their work on their part of the project. Topics are therefore work related (they can include reviewing previously agreed actions), pre-defined by the agenda and always initiated by the chairperson.

Finally, the closing phase includes two forms of talk: *wrap-up talk* and *post-meeting talk*. Wrap-up talk is the transition to the official closing of the meeting. This transition is only made by the chairperson to check if there are any other work-related topics that the participants want to discuss. Post-meeting talk can include topics that are either related to the discussion phase, by reintroducing previous topic after the official closing of the meeting and the participants are ready to leave the meeting room, or non-work related topics such as dinner plans or going for drinks. The next section will present the analytical observations of how topics are managed in social talk.

### **4.3 Social Talk**

This section demonstrates how the interaction in social talk is different from other forms of talk, i.e. meeting preparatory talk, meeting talk, roundtable update, wrap-up talk and post-meeting talk. Extracts 4.01 and 4.02 examine the turn-by-turn generation of topic and the resulting organisation of topic across multi-turn segments of talk. It shows how topic formulation and establishment in social talk is an interactional management process which is dependent on the active individual collaboration of the participants (Geluykens, 1993). The co-participants in both extracts utilise several interactional resources such as turn design (humour, alignment), lexical choices, repeating parts of prior turn to show willingness for further topic development and the indirectness in designing a turn to actively collaborate in topic initiation, maintaining and termination. They show how participants deal with

problematic overlaps since the turn-taking system is locally managed by the co-participants. The analysis shows the employment of a ‘thinking out loud’ strategy to indirectly invite a speaker to develop the topic, keeping it from termination.

Extract 4.01 demonstrates how topic in social talk is initiated, accepted and established. It illustrates the establishment of a topic by a turn that is not designed to initiate a topic. Extract 4.02 is a continuation of the previous extract to continue the sequential analysis of the same topic. This extract illustrates how one participant does a stepwise topic transition (Sacks, 1992b) for further topic development and how the topic is terminated. It shows the co-participant’s employment of various interactional resources to prevent the topic from termination and develop it further.

Before a meeting starts, students assembling in a meeting room usually engage in an informal conversation, either as one group or in several separate groups. Extract 4.01 is the start of the group meeting, with S4 being chairperson. The participants’ roles of being the chairperson and secretary change in every meeting. The meetings are held once a week in the School of Marine Science and Technology, located in North Shields (by the beach). In the following extract, the students are talking about the time they went on the beach. Different activities seem to be going on in parallel, all ‘social talk’. They started the social talk while taking off their coats, preparing the notes, agenda and getting ready for the meeting.

**Extract 4.01: Sand (Sequence 1)**  
[0:08.617 - 0:32.005]



1. S6 °i'm rubbish°
2. (3.5)
3. S1 i'm intrigued as well (.)how i got sand in my pockets=
4. S2 =i've got loads of sand in my pocket↓
5. S1 but i don't understand((laughter))
6. S2 no=
7. S1 =cos i didn't r[oll around] on the beach↑
8. S2 [cos well ]
9. S1 yeah↑ i only did it with one finger↓ (.) how did i get it
10. in both pockets↑ ((laughter))
11. S2 yeah↓ (.) i don't know↓
12. S1 damn beach
13. (1.3)

14. S3 yeah sand's like glitter (.) it just gets (.) basically you  
 15. don't know how it got there↓

Extract 4.01 forms the first part of the opening sequence of social talk in which the students are discussing how they got sand in their pockets. In line 1, S6 self-selects to take a turn with negative assessment ('i'm rubbish°). This may initially seem to be a topic-initiation sequence (Button and Casy 1984; Maynard and Zimmerman, 1984; 'topic opener' Heyman, 1986). However, two observations suggest that it is not an attempt to initiate a topic. Firstly, S6 is doing self-directed talk<sup>9</sup> (Kohler and Thorne, 2011). Such a turn has an ambiguous action whether the speaker is directing the talk to be publically available to the other participants as they attend to this talk or it is a private muttering to oneself. The transcript shows that S6's turn is said with lower speech volume than the talk which follows it. Secondly, S6 appears at the start of the ST and does not participate again until the chairperson does the disjunctive topic transition to meeting preparatory talk. Previous research suggests that raising a topic would entail controlling it or at least participate in developing or maintaining the topic (Tannen, 2005).

After a gap of 3.5 seconds (participants are getting ready by taking their notebooks and papers out of their bags and taking their coats off), S1 picks up on S6's negative assessment which, according to the observation mentioned earlier, is not formulated to initiate a topic. Since the participants are acquainted speakers (Maynard and Zimmerman, 1984), S1 relies upon mutually assumed knowledge as well as prior history of shared experience. The assessment 'i'm rubbish° and S1's turn in line 3 (i'm intrigued as well (.)how i got sand in my pockets=) indicate that although line 1 does not contain any topical utterance (this turn is vague as to why S6 produces such an assessment at the beginning of their meeting with no topical reference), S1 provides a topicaliser (Button and Casey, 1985) which permits further topical talk (topic establishment, Gelyukens, 1993) and indicates no trouble in recognising the reason for S6's negative assessment. S1's turn in line 3 contains two TCUs. The first TCU (i'm intrigued as well) aligns with the previous turn and picks it up as a topic. S1's use of reference (as well) is explicitly formulated to connect with the earlier turn. The second TCU establishes the topic further with a topical question after a micro pause ((.)how i got sand in my pockets=) The stress on sand indicates that the topic is about

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<sup>9</sup> The phenomenon of 'Self-Directed Talk' has been investigated by many researchers from different perspectives. For example; Schegloff (1988a) analysed it as 'out aloud mutterings,' an ambiguous turn between being publically available talk and private thinking out loud. Goffman (1964) analysed it as 'self-talk' in his analysis of interaction in public places. Flavell (1966) analysed it as 'private speech'.

sand and the time they went to the beach. S1's topical question is designed to be publically available to the other participants to join in the topic. In line 4, S2's self-selection latches with the previous turn in order to participate in topic development. S2 designs her turn to align with S1's topical question instead of providing SPP to S1's turn (line 3). In line 4, S2's TCU is upgraded with the stressed and lengthened noun (lo:ads), showing S2's interest in participating and maintaining the topic. In line 4, S2 repeats some parts of the prior turn, including the main topic (sand in my pocket). This indicates the recipient's (S2) willingness to maintain the topic (Radford and Tarplee, 2000).

In line 5, S1 starts his turn with the TCU-initial conjunction (*but*). Depending on the nature and the position of the TCU that the conjunction is prefacing, the TCU- initial conjunction may have different interactional purposes. In line 6, (*but*) is used as a sequential conjunction<sup>10</sup> (Mazeland and Huiskes, 2001). The sequential conjunction (*but*)<sup>11</sup> links the TCU it prefaces to the prior turn (line 5), which indicates S1's acceptance of S2's turn to maintain the topic. This link is only possible if the prior line of talk qualifies as a suitable first conjunct (Mazeland, 2013). This can be evident with S2's latching turn of embracing the topic with an alignment but not trying to answer S1's topical question. Second, to develop the topic further (since there was no attempt to provide an SPP to S1's topical question FPP) S1 designs his turn as a resumption of earlier talk (cf. Jefferson, 1972: 319) by recycling the main purpose of his topical question 'he does not understand how he got sand in his pockets'. By doing so, S1 redirects the topic to his main question to get possible SPP from other participants (any attempts to answer the question may result in topic development).

In line 6, S2 self-selects and produces minimal response token (*no=*). Such a response may lead to topic termination. However, S1's turn in line 7 latches with the prior turn to keep the topic from terminating. S1's turns in lines 7 and 9 seem to work as 'thinking out loud or analysis' of how he got sand in his pockets (*=cos i didn't r[oll around] on the beach↑*) and (*yeah i only did it with one finger↓*). This strategy of 'thinking out loud' is humorously designed to maintain his topic by indirectly inviting other participants to participate in the discussion of how the sand got in their pockets (such a strategy, if successful, may lead to topic development or possible stepwise topic transition). Line 8 may

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<sup>10</sup> Mazeland and Huiskes (2001: 142) use the term *sequential conjunction* to refer to the use of connectives (conjunctions, conjunctive adverbs and other types of lexicalised expressions) for specifying relations between turns. The term gives an indication of the current turn's relationship to the preceding talk.

<sup>11</sup> One of the environmental uses of sequential conjunction (*but*) is "after a competing line of topic" (Mazeland and Huiskes, 2001: 148).

have been an attempt from S2 to give a reason (SPP) for the dilemma of sand in the pockets. S2 does this with an overlap before a possible transition relevance place (TRP). This kind of an overlap is problematic and usually fails in getting the floor because S2's overlap occurred at a point in S1's talk which was immediately after a prior speaker (S1) had begun to speak. This problematic overlap shows that both S1 and S2 are in speakership and not listening for or hearing a bit of talk by the other (Liddicoat, 2007). The problematic overlap is resolved when S2's status changes from the speakership to the listenership. This is done with S1 insisting on continuing to finish his turn, which forced S2 to attend to S1's talk. This in itself is a collaborative interactional achievement<sup>12</sup>.

In line 9, the second part of the TCU in S1's turn is humorously designed with a full repetition of S1's topical question with rising intonation and laughter (*how did i get it in both pockets↑ ((laughter))*). This indicates S1's persistence and willingness for the topic to be developed by emphasising and reintroducing the topical question (Radford and Tarplee, 2000). When S2 in line 11 self-selects to produce SPP of insufficient knowledge with a falling intonation (*yeah i don't know↓*). S1 seems to give in to topic termination and he does so in line 12 with a humorous summary assessment (Howe, 1999) and giggling voice (*damn beach*) in a form of cursing with a stressed (*damn*). In this data, S1 shows the greatest use of irony (in which the intent is to elicit a giggle, smile or chuckle) and humour (a joke with a purpose of entertaining) through intonation, pace, voice quality and non-verbal signals (Tannen, 2005: 163). S1's summary assessment and the gap of 1.3 seconds in line 13 proposes sequence and topic termination. The topic here is expected to be terminated as most of the topics in social talk are terminated with summary assessments and a gap (Howe, 1991). Surprisingly, in line 14, S3 reintroduces the topic with sequence expansion with an answer (SPP) that topically and directly builds on lines 9 and 10. Line 14 begins with the acknowledgement token (*yeah*). This acknowledgement token shows that S3 was attending to S1 and S2's talk. (*Yeah*) in this extract brings back the topic to the conversational floor with the subsequent TCU. S3 reintroduces the topic by giving a possible reason (SPP) of why they got sand in their pockets (*yeah sand's like glitter (.) it just gets (.) basically you don't know how it got there*). S3's answer (delayed SPP) in lines 14 and 15 seems to be accepted since the attempts of keeping the topical question of how they got sand in their pockets is suspended.

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<sup>12</sup> Jefferson (1986) argued that such cases illustrate the interactional achievement of not having heard the other speaker rather than reflecting the situation in which one speaker cannot hear what the other is doing. They do this by showing that the speaker is not attending to the parts of talk to which it would be possible to react (Liddicoat, 2007: 89).

The sand in the pockets dilemma may be over but unfortunately the topic of sand continues in the next extract.

Extract 4.02 is a continuation of the previous extract (notice the line numbers). In this extract, S2 insists on developing the topic of sand further with a stepwise topical movement (Atkinson and Heritage, 1984; Sacks, 1992b; Jefferson, 1984).

**Extract 4.02: *Dinosaur Porn (Sequence 2)***

[0:32.705 - 0:57.214]

16. S2 i can't believe you guys didn't go on the sand  
17. S1 you're r:ubbish=  
18. S3 =no i don't do sand  
19. S2 do you not do san[d]  
20. S3 [no]  
21. S2 [oh right (.)i wore my wellies but ]  
22. S1 [i didn't really until ellie and justin ] went(.)  
23. let's go on the beach↑ and i went  
24. alright[(laughter)]  
25. S2 [(laughter)]  
26. S1 it was fun though (.)[did make some]  
27. S2 [we are chi- ] we are big  
28. children=  
29. S1 =yeah did make some dinosaur porn so it's all good  
30. (laughter)=  
31. S3 =i did see that [(laughter)]  
32. S1 [(laughter)]  
33. S3 i thought is that what it's <supposed to  
34. [be↑> [(laughter)]  
35. S1 [(laughter)]  
36. S7 ((throat clearing))  
37. S2 best offers i ever got  
38. (4.2)

S2 develops the topic with non-minimal post-sequence expansion in the form of a stepwise topic transition (Sacks, 1992b). The topic is still about ‘sand’ (the stress on sand indicates it) but it has been developed to ‘playing with the sand,’ which is related to the previous topic of ‘how they got sand inside their pockets’.

In line 16, S2 starts the post-sequence expansion with a first pair part (FPP) in the form of disbelief with an element of surprise (i can't believe you guys didn't go on the sand). S2's turn is designed to bring S3 back to the topic by first directing her FPP to S3, addressing him as a recipient (i.e. topic proffer). Second, S2 designed her turn in line 16 with the prediction of a dispreferred SPP from S3. A dispreferred SPP results in furthering the non-minimal post expansion, which may lead to further topic development.

In line 17, S1 self-selects to take a turn (non-primary speaker) with a 'joke preface' that refers to the previous talk (Stubbs 1983: 183). S1's insert expansion of negative assessment (*you're rubbish=*) is designed to align with S2's turn of disbelief and surprise as well as humorously directed to S3. S1 is being playful with S3 by 'mocking' him in a friendly and social way. The turn design of line 17 can encourage topic development between acquainted speakers.

In line 18, S3's latched SPP (*=no i don't do sand*) is short and does not contain any attempts to develop the topic further (S2's FPP in line 16 is indirectly asking for an extended SPP from S3, which contains reasons for not going on the sand). S2 in line 19 returns with a full repeat of the previous turn in a form of 'asking for confirmation' (*do you not do san[d]*) which is indirectly seeking for further information. This is evident in how S2 positioned her turn after a base SPP that serves to initiate a post-expansion to develop the talk. This action indicates S2's attempt of topicalisation by marking S3's SPP as something worthy which S2 is prepared to continue to talk about (Liddicoat, 2007:165). S3's insistence of terminating the topic is evident in his overlap with a dispreferred minimal response token (*[no]*) (Jefferson 1984b).

The composite sequence closing thirds (SCTs) in line 21 (*[oh right]*) is designed to terminate the sequence and the post-completion musings (*(.)i wore my wellies but]*) is not designed to receive a response but more of an opportunity to have the last word in the topic (Schegloff, 2007). In lines 20 and 21, S1 and S2's turns overlap. S1 does not orient to the dispreferred minimal response token in line 20 as terminating a sequence. However, S1 resists the proposed termination by continuing to develop the sequence. Lines 22 and 23 build on the FPP in line 16 to develop the topical post-expansion.

Other interactional features that mark social talk as being distinctive in the meeting are turn taking and lexical choice. The way the participants take turn-at-talks is through self-selection. Participants in social talk decide themselves when to talk, what to talk about, whom to talk to and how to design their turn. They follow the rules of ordinary conversation (Sacks et al., 1974) as there is a local negotiation of turn-taking (Nielsen 2013:41). This is evident in S2 and S1's collaborative work of passing on a turn and taking another. In line 26, S2 overlaps with S1's turn in line 25 after a possible TRP (*it was fun though (.)[did make some]*). This time, S1 drops out (unlike lines 21 and 22) and passes the turn to S2 as a result of S2's turn

persistence. S1 takes his turn back in line 28 by immediately latching after S2 has finished her turn. It also shows S1 and S2 competing to develop the topic (cf. Sacks 1992b; Sacks et al. 1974).

The participants' lexical choice, such as dinosaur porn, is a significant feature that participants evoke and orient to the social context of their talk (Drew & Heritage 1992:29, 30). This feature is context-sensitive and it shows how the participants select certain words that are fitted to the micro-context and their characters as classmates. In other words, lexical choices can formulate context (Schegloff 1972).

Topic termination in social talk is collaboratively achieved by the ones who have participated in the topic. In this data, four pre-closing sequences were observed to terminate a topic in the social talk (see Table 3). These sequences have been extensively researched (Howe, 1999; Button and Casy 1984; Maynard and Zimmerman, 1984; Heyman, 1986; Maynard 1980; Drew and Holt 1998; Goodenough and Weiner 1978; Crane 2006; Barnes 2007; Galley, McKeown, Lussier and Jing 2003; Mondada, 2009; Holt and Drew 2005; Schegloff and Sacks, 1973; West and Garcia, 1988; Sacks, 1992b; Holt 2010; Bonin et al 2012b; Sacks, 1968; Covelli and Murray 1980; Heritage, 1984; Jefferson 1981).

Shared laughter ↓ Non-verbal activity (e.g cough) ↓ Post-completion musing ↓ Noticeable gap	O.K or Well (a general way of closing a topic (Schegloff and Sacks, 1973; West and Garcia, 1988; Sacks, 1992b) ↓ Noticeable gap	Shared laughter ↓ Gap	Laughter ↓ Non-verbal activity ↓ Gap ↓ Summary assessment (SCTs) ↓ Gap
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*Table 3. Topic Terminations in Social Talk*

In extract 5.02, the topic of 'sand' is finally terminated by a shared laughter between S3 and S1. When the participants laugh at the same time, all the participants become the current speakers and the floor is open to be taken. It marks the end of a topic (Drew and Holt, 1998). This overlapped shared laughter indicates a possible termination of a topic (pre-closing of a topic). This pre-closing is enhanced and accepted by S2's post-completion musing in line 36 (*best offers i ever got*). S2 is the one who initiated the stepwise transition and she is the

one who terminates it by having ‘the last word’. The gap of 4.2 seconds works as the final termination of not only the sequence but a strong indication that the topic is exhausted (Howe, 1991). Gaps or series of silences can indicate that none of the participants are taking the floor for further talk (Maynard, 1980).

The next extract illustrates that the participants do not always initiate social topics (i.e. not work related such as weekend plans) at the start of their meetings but instead they initiate semi-institutional topics (Ilie, 2001). In this data, semi-institutional topics are related to the structure of the meetings. For instance, participants’ role allocations and role switching. Additionally, interaction with semi-institutional topics shares some of the characteristics of social talk. For example; topics are not predefined by an agenda and the interaction in general is not controlled by the chairperson (see Chapter 5 and 6).

The following extract is the start of the meeting, with S2 being the chairperson and S4 the secretary. In this meeting, the participants are discussing the possibility of having a permanent role of the chairperson and secretary since everyone has had a chance to assume both roles.

**Extract 4.03: I don’t want to be a secretary after this**  
[00:00:06 – 00:00:28]

1. S4 i’m sure if somebody:(.) is picked chairman and  
2. then someone says oh i quite fancy being  
3. chairman this [week ] [(.) ] [we ]can work =  
4. S2 [yeah↓]  
5. S1 [↑mm↓]  
6. S2 [yeah]  
7. S4 =[around it(.)]if somebody doesn’t wanna be=  
8. S3 [then we can ] ((nods his head))  
9. = -if someone doesn’t wanna be secretary  
10. and somebody [does ](.)then sure [(.)but like ]  
11. S3 [yeah ]  
12. S2 [°yep that’s fine°]  
13. S4 you know↓  
14. (.)  
15. S4 i::’ll be honest i probably don’t wanna be secretary  
16. after this((laughter))  
17. Ss [(laughter) ]  
18. S2 [no that’s fine↓ °no no°]  
((said with a giggling voice))  
19. S1 it’s a pain=  
20. S4 =[i feel bad on ]-i feel bad on alex↓=  
21. S3 [surprise °surprise°]  
((said with laughter))  
22. S4 =[(.) cos he wanted to ((laughter))]  
23. S3 [(laughter) ]  
24. Ss ((laughter))  
25. S1 >writing minutes at the meeting<

In lines 1-3, the secretary (S4) self-selects to take a turn by an opinion preface (Stubbs, 1983) (i'm sure if somebody:(.) is picked chairman and then someone says oh i quite fancy being chairman this [week] [(.)][we]can work =). S4's opinion preface receives acknowledgement and acceptance from S2 and S1 in lines 4-5. The continuation of S4's opinion preface in line 7 is overlapped with S3's turn of recipients' co-implication to produce a joint solution or agreement (Gill and Maynard 1995: 16). S4 continues to give his opinion in lines 9 and 10, which again receives acknowledgement tokens and acceptance from S3 and S2. Until this point, the topic and interaction is more related to the discussion phase than the opening phase. Giving opinions about a certain matter, participants' alignment and co-participations to reach joint decisions (solutions) are part of the discussion phase interactional features (see chapters 5 and 6).

The interaction changes in line 14. In lines 14 and 15, S4 self-selects to produce a direct statement designed in a humorous way that expresses his unwillingness to take the role of the secretary again (i::'ll be honest i probably don't wanna be secretary after this ((laughter))). This is evident with his laughter at the end of his turn, which successfully elicits group laughter in line 17. In other words, S4 employed a positive face strategy (Brown and Levinson, 1987). According to Benwell and Stokoe (2002), positive face refers to self-image and is concerned with having the speaker, actions and belongings approved of. This is accomplished with S4 receiving approval of his direct statement in lines 14 and 15 from the current chairperson of the meeting in line 18 ([no that's fine↓ °no no°]).

S1 in line 19 builds on S4's turns in lines 14 and 15 by indicating the possible reason for not taking the role of secretary (it's a pain=), which also shows alignment. In lines 20 and 22, S4 designs his turn in a humorous way to put Alex forward for the role of the secretary, although Alex explicitly indicates that the role is a pain in line 19. Moreover, S4's smiling voice and laughter at the end of his turn managed to elicit group laughter in line 24. The sequential placement of semi-institutional topic (i.e. it comes in a sequential place where they typically participate in a non-work related topics) gives greater affordance to being humorous. This extract shows how the participants manage a topic that draws on both social talk and institutional talk<sup>13</sup> during a single sequence of interaction without a topic transition.

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<sup>13</sup> In this data, topics in institutional talk are predefined by the meeting agenda. They involve the discussion points that are related to the project of building a wind turbine (i.e. discussion phase).

The next extract demonstrates an example of an unsuccessful attempt to make the disjunctive topic transition to meeting preparatory talk by a non-chairperson. The disjunctive topic transition from one form of talk to another is usually made by the chairperson, who is the incipient speaker of the transition. When the transition is accomplished, the roles of the participants are defined and oriented to.

The following extract is one of the longest opening phases of the meeting series. It took around seven minutes and twenty-three seconds to make the transition to the discussion phase because of a series of unsuccessful topic transitions (see section 4.4). Four out of six participants who are present in the meeting room voted to start the meeting rather than wait for S7's arrival. The chairperson (S6) walked in the room without previous knowledge of their collective decision. A total of five out of six participants are participating in the topic. Prior to this extract, S1, S2, S3 and S5 were engaged in various topics in the social talk. In this extract, S1 receives a text from S7 saying that he will be late. As a result, S1 suggests they start the meeting without S7 as he is usually late for the meetings.

**Extract 4.04: The vote**

[00:02:43 – 00:03:05]

1. S1 i vote we just start without him and=
2. S2 =yeah↑
3. (0.5)
4. S5 i'm sure it'll be ok=
5. S1 =°go for it i think°
6. (0.6) ((S6 walks into the meeting room))
7. S6 is yousuf coming↑
8. (0.4)
9. S1 eh yeah he's running thirty minutes late though so,
10. (0.6)
11. S6 oh okay =
12. S3 =shall we begin↑
13. (1.1) ((S6 starts getting ready for the meeting))
14. S6 °yea:h↓° how are you feeling alex↑=
15. S2 =i'm good (.) i'm getting better
16. S1 (0.5)
17. S6 °good°
18. (0.8)
19. S2 are you eh↑=
20. S3 =wha- what was wrong with you↑<
21. S2 (0.7)
22. S2 i (.) don't know i just felt (.)seriously ill last week
23. i don't know why
24. (1.3)
25. S2 i manned up (0.5) °i got over it°
26. (0.8)
27. S2 with the help of lemsip=
28. S1 =went to the library and looked at daily mail
29. website=

In line 1, S1 employs one feature of recipient design (Sacks, 1992): ‘perspective display series’ (Maynard, 1989). S1 solicits the recipients’ opinion and then produces his own endorsement or approval in a way that takes the others’ perspectives into account. By formulating agreement, these sequences ‘co-implicate’ the recipients (S2, S5) in the asker’s (S1) final statement (Maynard, 1991b: 168). This technique permits S1 to assess the recipients’ opinions or perspectives before a decision could be made. These “‘inherently cautious manoeuvre[s]’” are found in “‘environments of professional interaction,’” and “‘conversations among acquainted parties’” (Maynard, 1989: 93). In this extract, although they are acquainted speakers, S1 is unsure about the participants’ opinions on starting the meeting without S7. The employment of perspective display series allows footing shifts by S1 in response to the participants’ answer in two ways. S1 can change footing in response to an answer to appear more agreeable (Gill and Maynard, 1995: 18), or, more significantly, it allows for the recipients’ co-implication, which results in the appearance of a jointly authored response and decision (ibid.: 16). S1 utilises perspective display series as a self-presentational technique to establish interactional alignments by attempting to discover the participants’ position, and orients to it. It is not a simple seeking for agreement but a design of a turn informed by knowledge about the recipients (Malone, 1997).

After S2 and S5’s agreement and endorsement of S1’s vote to start the meeting and a joint authored decision has been made, S6 (chairperson) arrives at the meeting room in line 6 and enquires (FPP) about Yousuf in line 7. In line 9, S1 does not only respond to S6’s inquiry (SPP), but designs his turn indirectly as a hint to S6 to start the meeting by adding ‘so’ at the end of his turn (eh yeah he’s running thirty minutes late though so,).

S6’s response in line 11 is a minimal post-expansion that consists of ‘oh’ a change of state token reflecting a new understanding of the talk under way, and ‘okay’, both of which commonly work to propose closure for a sequence (SCTs), and therefore the closure of a topic. S6 does not employ any inferential work to arrive at S1’s proposed interactional meaning with S1’s indirect speech act (Tracy and Robles 2002).

After S1’s indirect attempt to begin the meeting, S3 latches with S6’s turn to produce a direct and explicit suggestion to commence the meeting. In line 13, during the gap of 1.1 seconds, S6 starts to prepare herself for the meeting. S6 responds to S3’s suggestion with an acknowledgement token (°y<sub>e</sub>a:h<sub>l</sub>°) produced with a lower speech volume than the preceding utterance. The use of °y<sub>e</sub>a:h<sub>l</sub>° shows that S6 acknowledges S3’s suggestion. Acknowledgment here is minimally confirming that it has been heard (Stubbs, 1983). This

kind of minimal interactional move does no more than indicate that the utterance has been heard and accepted into the stream of talk (Stubbs, 1983: 190). The lengthening and falling intonation of (<sup>o</sup>yea:h↓<sup>o</sup>) shows a level of reluctance to make the disjunctive topic transition to meeting preparatory talk as she has just arrived at the meeting place and is still not ready to start (as participants enter the room, they typically start placing their bags and materials on the table while engaging in social talk). This is evident in S6's new topic initiation by personal state inquiry addressing Alex (S2) as the recipient (<sup>o</sup>yea:h↓<sup>o</sup> how are you feeling alex↑=).

After S2's positive response in line 15, S6 ends the topic with a summary positive assessment in line 17 (<sup>o</sup>good<sup>o</sup>), produced in a low speech volume without taking an affirmative stance to start the meeting since S6 is the chairperson who makes the disjunctive topic transition to the start the meeting. However, S2, S3 and S1 participate in topic development (lines 20-29), which delays the disjunctive transition to meeting preparatory talk.

#### **4.4 Meeting Preparatory Talk**

This section presents the analytical observations of the disjunctive topic transition to meeting preparatory talk. In this data, meeting preparatory talk consists of four stages. Firstly, after the participants are all present in the room, the recording devices are in place and the topic of the social talk has collaboratively been brought to a close, the chairperson usually proposes a 'pre-closing' statement or a topic transition marker (Stokoe, 2000) such as 'okay' with a raising intonation, marking the end of the social talk. This pre-closing aids in preparing the participants for the disjunctive topic transition. Secondly, once the participants accept this pre-closing (verbally or non-verbally), the secretary is usually the one who asks about today's date and time to fill in the data collection forms. At this stage, the question about the date is usually present in all their meetings and it seems to be the final stage that marks the end of their 'none meeting talk'. Thirdly, the chairperson proceeds to make the disjunctive topic transition to the MPT with topic transition marker, footing and an assessment of attendance as it is a prerequisite for beginning the meeting. If a participant is not present, the chairperson provides the participant's apology with reasons for the absence. The change of co-participants' orientations towards MPT is noticeable in showing readiness (verbally and non-verbally) to start the meeting. Finally, the chairperson suggests signing the updated minutes from the previous meeting in order to make the transition to the discussion phase of the meeting.

The following extract presents an example of how the last topic of the social talk is collaboratively terminated and how participants make the transition to MPT. S4 is the chairperson of this meeting while S1 is the secretary. The participants are engaging in the second topic of their social talk - facebook rape- after the topic of 'sand and dinosaur porn' is terminated. S1, S2 and S3 are interacting with one another through the turn-taking system. As for the rest of the participants, the shared group laughter indicates that they are not just taking the status of listenership, but they are also participating in the topic.

**Extract 4.05: Facebook Rape**

[00:01:22 – 00:02:33]

- 15. S2 °no° cos i thought he <raped me> well (.)okay
- 16. [(laughter)] he did he did he did facebook rape me
- 17. Ss [(laughter)]
- 18. (1.9)
- 19. S4 we'll just wait for the camera to turn on then
- 20. we'll start
- 21. (2.7)
- 22. S3 thirty first today↑
- 23. S6 ye[ah ]
- 24. S1 [it is ]
- 25. (1.6)
- 26. S1 ((non-verbal activity))
- 27. (9.0)
- 28. S4 are we good↑= ((S4 looks at Tan))
- 29. Tan =°see you later° =
- 30. S4 =ok[ay ] see ya=
- 31. Tan [°thanks°]
- 32. S1 =thank↑ [you:]↑
- 33. S2 [°bye°]=
- 34. S6 =bye bye
- 35. S4 r:right (.) (.hhh) nobody absent↑ (.)everybody's



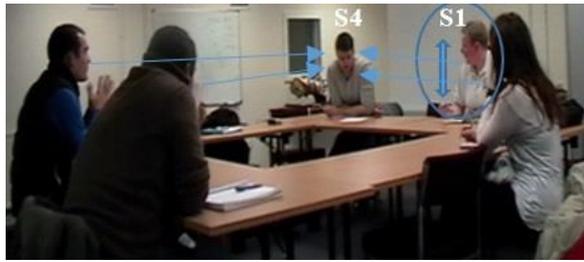
((S7 places his crossed arms on the table, leans forward and turns to gaze at S4))  
 ((S2 leans forward towards the table and gazes at S4))



((S3 leans backwards to clench his hands and then leans forward to the table and gazes at S4))  
 ((S1 stops writing and turns to gaze at S4))

- 36. present↑ (hhh.)

37. S1



((nods his head upwards and downwards))

38. S7

°yes°

39. S4

so: (.) su::re (.) (.hhh)er:: um(1.6)right er: should we

40.

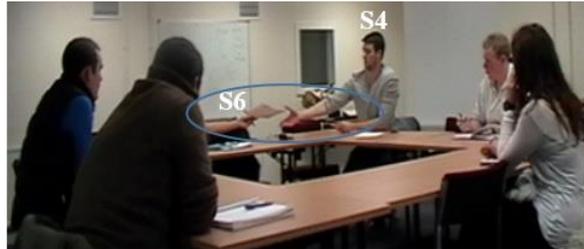
sign off the:: minutes from the previous meeting

41. S6

first and there's the one from (.)the twenty fifth

42.

of oc-tober as well



((hands paper to S4))

S4 does not cut through the conversation to make the transition to the MPT. Instead, he waits until the interlocutors reach the closing sequence of their topic. The topic is terminated with the shared laughter in line 17 (Holt, 2010) and the gap of 1.9 seconds in line 18 (Howe, 1991). After such a termination, a new topic is highly possible in the next turn (Drew and Holt, 1998). To prevent the establishment of a new topic, S4 takes a turn in lines 19 and 20 with a pre-closing statement (we'll just wait for the camera to turn on then we'll start), which draws the end of the social talk. By using this pre-closing, S4 offers to close the social talk but at the same time S4 also provides the participants with an opportunity to reopen topical talk until the camera is turned on (Schegloff and Sacks, 1973). The participants orient to S4's pre-closing statement by passing their turns, resulting in a gap of 2.7 seconds in line 21. The participants are collaboratively showing readiness for meeting talk by not saying anything for nearly 3 whole seconds (2.7). Note how the participants in social talk orient to a pause of approximately 1 second to be a standard maximum before they treat the pause as problematic and begin to do something about it, for instance developing the topic or initiate a new topic (Jefferson, 1983; Nielsen, 2013).

The second pre-stage of the topic transition to MPT is when the secretary asks about the date in line 22 in order to fill the data form. Once the camera is turned on and Tan (the data collector) has left the room, S4 takes a turn in line 35 with the topic transition marker (r::ight) and an assessment of attendance (nobody absent↑(.) everybody's

present<sub>↑</sub>(hhh.)). The production of a lengthened (r::ight) as utterance-initial is not orienting to doing reciprocity but to ‘boundary marking’, marking off one activity from another, demarcating the preceding activity from the next activity (Nielsen 2013: 44). The disjunctive transition to MPT is typically prefaced by a standard topic transition marker such as “so, okay, well or right” and items such as “uhm or ehm” frequently mark the introduction of first topic (Boden, 1994: 96-97).

When S4 self-selects to take a turn, in line 35, with the transition marker (r::ight), the co-participants display the following embodied actions. The timing and placement of each body movement forms an action which shows readiness to start the meeting and that the social talk is terminated.

- S7 is already placing his crossed arms on the table and leaning forward, showing interest and waiting for the meeting to start.
- S2 is leaning forward towards the table and placing her right arm on the table while holding a pencil. S2’s left elbow is also placed on the table with her left hand on her chin as she gazes at S4, showing interest and willingness to start.

Before S4 takes a turn in line 35, S1 is looking down at his paper using his right hand to write and his left hand to support his head, leaning towards his left hand side. Once S4 starts inhaling and produces the second TCU of his turn ((.hhh) nobody absent<sub>↑</sub>), S1 stops writing and turns to gaze at S4. By the time S4 produces the third part of his TCU ((.)everybody's present<sub>↑</sub>(hhh.)), S1 puts his left hand down on the table, straightens his back upwards and clicks his pen on his note book to close it. He shows interest as he nods to S4 with a positive response in line 37 to his FPP that yes, everybody is present.

S3 is leaning on the table and looking down at his paper while focusing on his writing. S3 quickly finishes his writing by the time S4 produces the transition marker (r::ight) and starts inhaling. S3 immediately leans backwards to clench his hands and then leans forward to the table with his hands clenched in front of his face and his elbows resting on the table while gazing at S4, showing readiness by leaving his activity (writing on a paper) and orienting to S4. He then opens his hands and slowly drags his right hand down to his left arm to close his arms together, placing them on the table, and then leaning forward as an indication of readiness for an action to take place. S6 cannot be seen in this video as S7’s body movement of placing his crossed arms on the table and leaning forward was completely covering S6’s movements. However, after the transition point, S6 in lines 41 and 42 marks himself as a

recipient and takes a turn by relating it to the prior speaker's immediate talk of signing off previous minutes and handing a paper (the minutes from the 25<sup>th</sup> of October ) to be signed as well. This shows that even though S6's body movement could not be observed, S6's turn and silence before and while the transition was taking place show his readiness to start the meeting since he was ready with his minutes from a previous month to be circulated and signed.

In line 39, S4 starts the next stage of the MPT with 'footing' (Goffman, 1981) (so: (.)su::re (.)(.hhh) er:: um (1.6) right er:). The footing here is not only shifts in alignment and projected self, it is 'keyings' of talk as serious and bracketing of a higher level phase of interaction (Goffman, 1981: 128). Each utterance in the footing is an independent turn-construction unit, and an activity in its own right. It indicates that something is going to happen for the co-participants, without the utterance itself giving information of what this may be. This way, the utterance can be perceived as an introduction of something to come (Nielsen, 2013: 44 -45). For example, the discourse particle 'so' in this anchor position foreshadows a topical purpose; in other words, the next topic is not just for friendly chitchat. It is worth mentioning here that when S4 produces his turn of 'footing' he gazes at his stack of papers, marking his gaze shift from the other co-participants to the paper stack. By withdrawing his gaze, he marks that any attempt at speakership shift is not relevant (Goodwin, 1979). By doing so, he implicitly signals the start of the MPT (Nielsen, 2013:45). He gazes back again at the participants by the end of his turn to check if they are okay with signing the minutes first. Footing in this extract is an important interactional phenomenon that is also present in meeting talk (see Chapter 5). It is a way to signal interactional role not only through language but also through gaze, gesture and posture (Levinson, 1988: 179). The participants' orientations to the employment of footing and transition marker verbally and non-verbally illustrate how disjunctive topic transitions are managed.

The chairperson's interactional techniques in this extract accomplish more than just changing topic and activity; they change the interaction and the form of talk. This is done by small particles such as 'right', 'so', 'um' and 'sure'. This interactional achievement is accomplished by building on the participants' interactional techniques, i.e. passing turns and showing readiness to move the interaction forward to start the meeting (Nielsen, 2013).

After the disjunctive topic transition is accomplished and while the minutes are passed around for the participants to sign, the participants initiate different topics to fill in the time while signing the documents. The type of topics that the participants initiate in this part of the

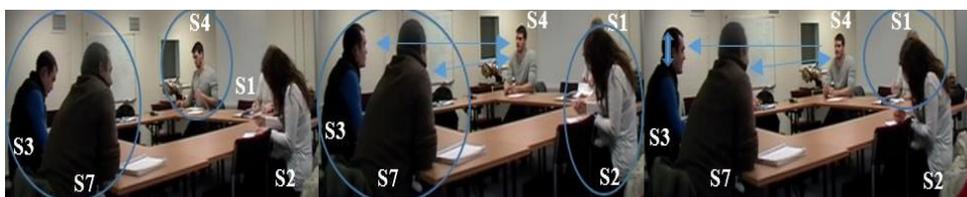
meeting is not like the ones seen in social talk (non-work related) as they still orient to the chairperson's termination of social talk.

In the following extract, all the participants are engaging in the activity of signing off the minutes from two previous meetings (there are two papers being passed around) while participating in different topics. Prior to this extract, the participants start passing around the two minutes (papers) in two different directions to be signed. The first minutes are passed around from S4 to S6, the second ones from S4 to S1 (clock wise). The chairperson of this meeting is S4.

**Extract 4.06: Advanced Hydrodynamics**

[00:02:54 - 00:03:16]

1. S4 well (.)hope everyone enjoyed their brief (.)weekend
2. break (.hhh)



((S4 gazes at S3 and S7))  
 ((S3 lifts his head up to look at S4 then nods his head))  
 ((S7 turns his head and looks at S4))  
 ((S2 is signing the minutes))  
 ((S1 is checking the second minutes after signing them ))

3. S3 °yeah↑ well↓°
4. S4 two days and then (.)straight back into
5. (.)[advanced] hydrodynamics↓ that was fun↓



((S1 and S2 exchanging the minutes to sign))

6. S3 [ °yeah° ]
7. Ss ((laughter))  
 ((S2 laughing while signing))
8. S4 °yeh:h°
9. (4.0)



((S1 passes paper to S4))

10. S7 #i thought (.) arin used to do °would have done that one°



# ((S2 passes paper to S7))



((S7 gazes at S1))  
 ((S3, S1 and S2 gaze at S7))  
 ((S4 gaze at S7 then quickly looks back at the paper in his hand))

11. S3 °no°=

12. S1 =he does part of it



((S1 gazes at S7))  
 ((S7 gazes at S1 and nods his head))  
 ((S2 gazes at S1))  
 ((S6 and S3 look down))

13. S2 °who did it↑°



((mutual gaze between S2 and S1))

14. S1 °huh↑°

In line 1, S4 initiates a new topic with the transition marker (*well*) as a turn initiator, which marks the introduction of a topic that is not linked sequentially to the previous utterance (disjunctive topic transition). S4 succeeds in gaining the participants' attention by employing the transition marker (*well*), considering S4 is the chairperson. Once S4 produces the transition marker, he gazes at the participants in front of him (S3 and S7), who are not engaged in the activity of signing the papers. The co-participants accept and orient to S4's turn by showing interest through embodied actions: S3 lifts his head up and looks at S4 and starts nodding at S4, indicating acknowledgment and that S3 is listening. S7 turns his head

and looks at S4 to show interest. S2 and S1 are busy looking at and signing the minutes and S6 cannot be seen on the video. However, they show their alignments, acceptance of the topic/joke and interest through the shared laughter in line 7. They are engaging in an activity while still listening and interacting through laughter to S4's work-related joke in lines 1, 2, 4 and 5. When the participants hear S4's (well) after a prior gap of 1.4 seconds, they have no reason not to include themselves in the category of possible recipients of the utterance (Nielsen, 2013).

After a gap of 4.0 seconds in line 9 (the participants are still signing the two papers and passing them around), in line 10 S7 self-selects at a TRP while being passed a paper from S2 to be signed. S7 also succeeds in gaining all the participants' attention by formulating his turn as FPP requiring SPP. All of the participants turn their heads towards S7 and look at him, except for S4, who withdraws his gaze to look back at the paper in front of him (the paper that he has received from S1). S7 receives two SPPs from S3 in line 11 (°no°=) latched with S1's SPP (since S7 was directing his gaze at S1) in line 12 (=he does part of it) with no overlaps. S7 accepts and acknowledges S1's SPP with a head nod. In line 13, S2 develops the topic further with an FPP (who did it↑) directed at S1 with no overlaps or long gaps to take her turn.

The participants' adjustment of their interaction in MPT is evident in the lack of overlaps to take turns even though the turn taking system is still not controlled by the chairperson. Moreover, lexical choice (for example, advanced hydrodynamics) is different from social talk. S4's work-related joke (well (.) hope everyone enjoyed their brief (.) weekendbreak (.hhh)), (two days and then (.) straight back into (.) [advanced] hydrodynamics↓ that was fun↓) is very different from the previous jokes in social talk (dinosaur porn and facebook rape). It is work related as it contains some of their work terminologies related to the meetings ([advanced] hydrodynamics↓). The participants also interact and respond differently to the work-related joke. They only show alignments and agreement with shared laughter and smiles; there are no negative assessments from a 'joke preface' perspective or swear words as seen in social talk. Away from the humour, S7's topic initiation with FPP is also 'work-related' (i thought (.) arin used to do °would have done that one°).

The next analysis presents an example of an unsuccessful attempt by the chairperson to make the disjunctive transition to meeting talk as part of the discussion phase.

In the following extract, S6 is the chairperson. The participants are engaging in the activity of passing around and signing the documents from previous meetings. Prior to this extract, the participants were sorting their stack of papers (minutes) to be passed around and signed by the ones that had not signed them.

**Extract 4.07: Wait a minute**

[00:05:16 – 00:05:30]

1. S2 if he's not signed anything just put
2. his signature
3. (0.4)
4. S1 yeah=
5. S3 =wait a minute
6. (0.2)
7. S6 okay↑ s[o ]
8. S3 [oh no ] these are the ones
9. (0.7)
10. S1 and then (.) yours
11. (0.8)
12. S1 has everyone signed yours↑
13. (2.3) ((papers are passed around))
14. S3 i don't think

In this extract, the activity of passing and signing the previous minutes took longer than the previous meetings. In line 7, S6 self-selects with okay↑ after a gap of 0.2 seconds to make the disjunctive topic transition to meeting talk. The okay↑ utterance is a pre-closing offer to close the topic and the activity of signing the minutes. S6 follows her okay↑ immediately with the discourse marker so, marking the unilateral topic transition to meeting talk (West and Gracia, 1988). However, S6's transition marker is overlapped with S3's turn taking in line 8, which results in an unsuccessful disjunctive topic transition.

S6 does not place her transition at the right time, i.e., 'mistiming' of a turn. She did not wait for the collaborative topic termination to occur. In other words, the participants are not showing any readiness to start the meeting. On the contrary, they are still organising, signing and passing around the minutes. S3 is organising and looking for the minutes that should be signed by Yousuf (S7) and Rob (S5). S6's production of okay↑ with a rising intonation marks it as FPP. In other words, S6 checks if everyone is okay to start, but does not give the participants the time to accept this pre-closing offer to make the disjunctive topic transition, and instead immediately follows okay↑ with the transition marker so.

In this data, the closing sequence of the meetings consists of: pre-closing, acceptance sequence (verbally or non-verbally) (Schegloff and Sacks 1973), and then the topic transition occurs. Moreover, utterances such as 'okay' have different uses. It is the sequential placement

(at the end of a topic) that allows the participants to treat it as pre-closing (Schegloff and Sacks 1973: 305). In this extract, ‘okay’ was not placed at the end of their activity and topic, and therefore the participants ignore S6’s pre-closing attempt and continue engaging with their activity. How the disjunctive topic transition to meeting talk is accomplished will be analysed in Chapter 5.

#### **4.5 Concluding Remarks**

This chapter has examined how topics in social talk are in the hands of all the participants. They may be ignored, blocked, or competed with. Therefore, aligning with initiatives of opening is a matter of cooperation. The participants show one another their local understandings and their local negotiations of their mutual understandings “‘next-turn proof procedure’” (Drew, 1992). In this chapter, topics are not only locally managed but party-administered (Sacks, 1992: 726) in that the participants themselves decide turn size and order. The challenge of achieving an opening is taking the initiative to begin something new and having it ratified and accepted as such by the interlocutors. In addition, it has demonstrated how the participants adjust their interaction to orient to the meeting preparatory talk. The participants display their collaborative interactional work to terminate the social talk and show readiness, verbally and non-verbally, as well as passing their turns to start the meeting preparatory talk. It has also shown the chairperson’s interactional work to make the disjunctive topic transition and the participants’ orientation, verbally and non-verbally, to the transition. This chapter has showed how the phenomenon of footing is a vital technique to mark the interactional role through language, gaze, gesture and posture (Levinson, 1988). It has also illustrated the participants’ interactional achievement, as an individual and a group, to make the disjunctive topic transition from the social talk to meeting preparatory talk as well as managing a topic while engaging in the activity of signing the minutes. Finally, the participants’ adjustment of their interaction and choice of topics according to the form of talk shows how topic management and context are interrelated.

## Chapter 5. Forms of Talk in Discussion and Closing Phases

*‘Talk is constructed and is attended by its recipients for the action or actions it may be doing.’*

(Schegloff, 1996a)

### 5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter examined how the participants manage topics in the opening phase. It presented the findings of a detailed sequential analysis of social talk, the transition to meeting preparatory talk and the participants’ interactional orientations to the transition. In this chapter, the focus is on how the participants manage topics in the discussion and closing phases of the meeting with a heavy emphasis on embodied actions. This chapter illustrates how multimodality (gaze and object manipulation being the key aspects of multimodal resources) augment our understanding of topic management. It also demonstrates that the overall organisation of the meeting and the topical organisation are closely interlinked.

In this chapter, Section 5.2 presents a detailed analysis of how the chairperson makes the disjunctive topic transition to meeting talk through five sequentially organised moves that the chairperson deploys to change the footing and secure a particular outcome. It also presents two deviant cases that do not follow the sequential transition to meeting talk in their meetings. Section 5.3 presents the fourth form of talk in the meeting ‘roundtable update’. This section demonstrates how the chairperson takes control of the interaction and how the topic in this form of talk is developed by the chairperson as well as how it is developed by a non-chair and non-primary speaker. Furthermore, it demonstrates the verbal and nonverbal interactional work that the speakers utilise to accomplish a particular action. This section illustrates how changing the discourse identity (Zimmerman, 1998) and at the same time aligning to the situated identity (Zimmerman, 1998) is employed as an interactional tool or means to manage topics and move the interaction forward. Section 5.4 illustrates how the participants bring the meeting to a close by first presenting the detailed analysis of the the five sequentially organised moves deployed by the chairperson to make the transition to wrap-up talk where the meeting is officially closed through archetype closing (Button, 1987). Finally, it illustrates how the participants move the interaction to post-meeting talk that can either be institutional, by referring back to a previous meeting topic, or social.

## 5.2 Topic Transition to Meeting Talk

This section presents the findings of the transition from multiparty talk to a single focus. It demonstrates the participants' acceptance of the meeting agenda over the social agenda (Fisher, 1996). A meeting can be said to begin when the participants move from one interaction format to another (Schwartzman, 1989: 125ff).

Extract 5.01 gives a detailed analysis of how a disjunctive topic transition is made to meeting talk and a stepwise topic transition to roundtable update. It demonstrates that embodied actions and transition markers are two of the practices that the chairperson deploys to manage topic transition, and thereby enact the role of the facilitator as well as the information seeker on the behalf of the participants. Prior to this extract, the participants were involved in two ongoing sequences: S1 and S2 are engaged in developing their topic (see section 6.3) while the rest of the participants are busy signing the minutes from previous meetings. S4 is the chairperson of this meeting.

### *Extract 5.01: Time to get down to business*

[00:1:27 – 00:2:10]

1. S2 =oh it's fine=



((S2 gazes away from S1))

2. S1 =yeah [no ] it's um



((S1 gazes back at S7))

3. S4 [right ] ((tongue click 'tze'))



((S4 gazes down at the paper and pushes his sleeves up))

((S7 moves his body along with gaze direction to home position))

((S3 gazes at S4))



((S2 turns to look at S4))

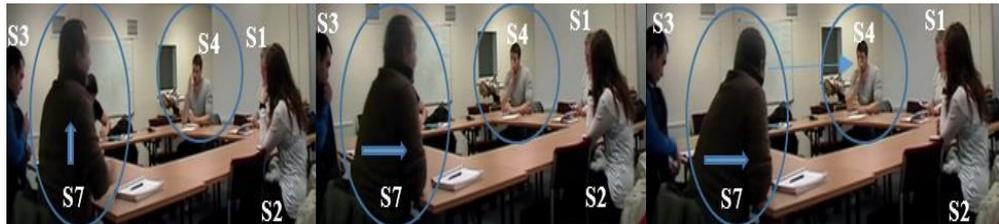
((S6 signs the paper received from S4))

4. S1 °poor norwegians°



((S1 takes his phone out from his pocket))

5. S4 (.hhh) SO (0.2) post-exams (.) time to get down to business



((S4 places his left arm on the table))

((S7 moves his body forward and looks at S4))



((S4 moves his body forward, claps his hands together placing them in front his face and he rubs them together while talking))

((S2 and S3 gaze at S4))



((S1 switches his phone off and puts it in his pockets and starts writing))

6. (.) we need to work out what (.) everyone's doing  
 7. (.) individually(.) u:m (.) so maybe we should have a  
 8. discussion on (.) where we're (.) each gonna go  
 9. (.) with our part of the project (0.8) a:nd u:m (2.0)  
 10. basically how we're gonna start (0.2) so:: (0.2) (.hhh) (hhh.)alex†



((S3 gazes down at the paper to write))  
 ((S4 rubs hands together then clenches them))



((S4 points at S3 with clenched hands and pointing index finger))  
 ((S3 is looking down writing))

11. S3 Mhm  
 12. S4 business ↑



((S3 stops writing and gazes at S4))

13. S3 yep↑  
 14. S4 what's going on↑ (.) what-what how are you (.)continuing  
 15. from the lit review now↑



((S4 unclenches his hands and starts rubbing them))

In extract 5.01, S4 brings the participants to a single focused talk. S4 does not make the transition to meeting talk abruptly but rather makes five sequentially organised moves that change the footing and secure a particular outcome. This finding is different from Richards (2006: 31), who found that opening moves may emerge unilaterally with the chair suddenly cutting in to open the meeting without making a concession to the current topic, thereby plunging straight into business. It is also different from Lee and Hellermann (2013: 13), who noted that “if the topic shift is not disjunctive, speakers may move on to a new topic through gradual steps”. The chairperson in this data moves in gradual steps to make the disjunctive transition (Jefferson, 1984).

Firstly, as S2 and S1 reach the end of their topic with S2 gazing away from S1 in line 1, S4 overlaps with S1's turn in line 3, producing a tongue click 'tze' and a transition marker 'right'. Such transition markers are disjunctives, in that "they work to disengage the forthcoming turn from being tied or connected to, or coherent with, its prior turn" (Drew and Holt 1998: 510). A large number of studies have illustrated that these small phrases are associated with topic changes (Grosz and Sidner 1986; Hirschberg and Litman 1993; Passonneau and Litman 1997).

Secondly, during the production of the transition marker S4 gazes down at the paper (meeting agenda) and rolls his sleeves up to indicate readiness to start and that a transition is taking place. In this data, these embodied actions (to orient to the meeting agenda and signal transition) are always made during the transition process and alongside the production of the transition marker. In other words, transitional turns or the transition marker is heavily supported by gesture (gazing down at the agenda and pushing sleeves up) during its production.

The object to which S4 orients is important (i.e. gazing down at the meeting agenda) because of its relevance to the transition of the interaction. In this data, the meeting agenda is a transition-relevant object. The employment of verbal and non-verbal resources, as well as the placement of S4's turn (being at the end of the prior topic and interaction), serve to signal topic transition and alert the participants to the upcoming action.

S4 is able to signal a topic transition before the actual transition by providing the transition marker to notify the recipients of what is to come. In other words, S4's turn design of a verbal transition marker 'right' and a nonverbal transition marker simultaneously shows his orientation to indicate some disconnection between utterances. S4 places his turn as the other speakers reach the end of their topic, which indicates S4's monitoring of the ongoing sequence of interaction. It also indicates S4's display of incipient speakership to make the disjunctive transition to the meeting talk, thereby a transition to the discussion phase (Goodwin, 1987a).

S4's verbal and nonverbal transition markers seem to trigger the co-participants' orientation and response towards signaling topic transition. Each of the co-participants provides a response, as shown in the following paragraphs.

S2 turns towards S4, who is looking down at the meeting agenda and about to make the transition to meeting talk, thereby the transition to the next phase of the meeting. S7, who was attending to S2 and S1's topic as a listener, moves his body back along with his gaze direction to its home position (Sacks and Schegloff, 2002), indicating his withdrawal and reaching possible topic closure since no one is interacting with S1. S3 gazes at S4 and S6 finishes signing the last paper received from S4 while S1 self-selects to take a turn with a reduced volume of summary assessment in line 4. Summary assessment is commonly used to conclude a topic and it usually takes the form of a statement on the preceding topic, which seems to close off the topic from further discussion (Pomerantz 1984; Howe, 1991:77-88). As well as passing turns to talk, the co-participants show readiness verbally and nonverbally. The co-participants are orienting away from one another during the time of the disjunctive topic transition. However, it appears that orienting away from one another in this delicate moment of interaction is actually a group orientation to the transition. Moreover, that this co-constructed set of embodied actions happens at the time of the transition does not seem coincidental. The co-participants individually respond verbally and nonverbally, thereby providing both a response to and an analysis of S4's set of actions as an attempt to signal a transition. This shows how embodied actions such as the kind described in this extract can serve to mark the transition.

Goodwin (2000, 2003) argued for analysis of interaction to take into account the physical surroundings, activities, participation frameworks and sequential actions in which they are embedded. Goffman (1981) termed an interactional 'move' a unit of interaction that includes turns at talk, not limited to talk, in filling slots of sequentially organised interaction. In this extract, by signalling topic shift, S4 succeeds in achieving mutual orientation through the establishment of a common focus of attention and creating an interactional space shaped by embodied actions of S4 and the other participants becoming now co-participants in a joint action (Mondada, 2009: 1983). Based on the co-participants' responses (verbal and nonverbal) to display their availability to start the meeting and passing turns to talk as a way of showing readiness, S4 in line 5 makes the disjunctive topic transition to meeting talk, and thereby a phase transition i.e discussion phase.

Thirdly, in line 5, S4 reaches the anchor position (Schegloff, 1986) and self-selects to take a turn with an inhalation and a transition marker produced with a higher volume than the immediate surroundings, orienting to serve the dual purpose of attending to prior talk by closing it off and paving the way to next-positioned matters (Nielsen, 2013). The sequential

placement of the in-breath, accompanied by body behaviour, serves as a transitional sigh (Hoey, 2014), especially given that it is produced outloud during an ongoing sequence state on incipient talk (Schegloff and Sacks, 1973; Berger, 2012). The sigh in this case resembles what Szymanski (1999: 19) found for outlouds as a device for re-engaging talk in a state of incipient talk. These outloud utterances can provide for the possibility of interaction in furnishing a resource for further talk (Hoey, 2014: 190). In other words, placing an in-breath sigh supported with body behaviour interstitially between sequences is a way to bring the prior sequence to closure and orient to the possibility of interactionally moving on to the next matter (Hoey, 2014).

S4's extended turn, starting in line 5, discursively creates a distinction between meeting talk and meeting preparatory talk (Boden, 1994). This finding echoes work by Boden (1994: 96-97), who discussed that meeting openings were typically prefaced by a standard topic transition marker such as 'so, okay, uh or ehm'. Moreover, Couper-Kuhlen (2004) discussed how people in conversations change topic by using a high pitch.

Fourthly, after a pause of two seconds, S4 produces a statement to 'get started' or an announcement to start (Boden, 1994: 96-97) *post-exam (.) time to get down to business*. This technique in this sequential placement is an important preface for securing the beginning of an extended turn-at-talk as it leads the co-participants to monitor a multiplicity of conversational objects (Boden, 1994: 98). Interestingly, while producing the transition marker, S4 does not have a mutual gaze at turn initial position; he moves his body forward and places his left arm on the table. By withdrawing his gaze, he marks speakership shift as not relevant (Goodwin, 1979). He then claps his hands, placing them in front of his face, and then he rubs them together while producing the statement to 'get started'. S4's turn in lines 3 and 5 displays prefatory work that precedes the launching of the agenda or reference to procedure (Nielsen, 2013). It is designed to secure reciprocity and to foreshadow features of the upcoming actions. This would "enhance the co-participants' possibility to identify the incipient courses of action and to navigate through it" (Pekarek Doehler and Pochon-Berger, 2015: 248).

The co-participants function as separate individuals to align supportively with S4's topic and phase transition. They individually accept S4's situated identity (Zimmerman, 1998) as a chair for this meeting since the role of the chair is explicitly marked by S4's employment of footing (Goffman, 1979). They also display an acceptance of the meeting (educational)

agenda over the social agenda (Fisher, 1996) through embodied actions that indicate their individual orientation to the phase transition. The co-participants' embodied actions are displayed as follows: S7 moves his body forward and gazes at S4 while S1 puts his phone in his pocket. At the same time, S2 and S3 gaze at S4. How S4's footing operates in this extract could also be indicated by the way the co-participants individually orient (non-verbally) to the footing through these embodied actions.

Finally, S4 opens the meeting talk with reference to procedure (Nielsen, 2013). He does so by formulating a three-part sequence to set the meeting agenda. This echoes some of Heyman's (1986: 37) observations of 'work-to-come' and 'work-at-hand'. Firstly, in line 6, S4 provides an overview of the agenda of what is broadly to be discussed in this meeting (.) we need to work out what (.) everyone's doing (.) individually. Secondly, he provides a suggestion of how to start the next phase of the meeting in lines 7-10 (.) u:m (.) so maybe we should have a discussion on (.) where we're (.) each gonna go (.) with our part of the project (0.8) a:nd u:m(2.0) basically how we're gonna start. Notice here the strategic use or avoidance of pronouns that might distance S4 from the co-participants. For example, the inclusive use of third person plural 'we' suggest solidarity between the participants. According to Brown and Levinson (1978), such common strategies work by suggesting solidarity between speaker and hearer. It illustrates that the participants in an interaction share common ground with their interlocutor. Finally, S4 selects a speaker and a topic to start the discussion 'work-at-hand'. This is accomplished as follows:

In line 10, S4 holds the floor with a lengthened transition marker sɔ: : while rubbing his hands in front of his face, clenching them together and gazing at the co-participants to select a primary speaker, thereby selecting a topic (each of the participants is responsible for one part of the project, making them the expert of that part, such as, for example, business, foundations, etc).

By doing so, S4 is making a stepwise topic transition to the roundtable update. It is worth mentioning here that all of the co-participants are still gazing at S4, showing availability to be selected as a primary speaker, except for S3, who shifts his gaze to look down at his paper to write. Interestingly, in line 10, S4 selects S3 as the primary speaker both verbally by indicting his name and nonverbally by pointing at S3 with clenched hands and pointing index. S3 enacts being busy at doing something else (looking down at his paper and writing), thereby displaying unavailability to participate (Lauzon and Berger, 2015: 18). In line 11, S3 orients

to the situated identity of S4 being the chairperson by accepting and acknowledging this turn allocation with the acknowledgement token (mhm). This acknowledgement token shows that S3 was attending to S4's talk and speaker selection. Once S4 in line 12 selects the topic (business↑), being the part that S3 is responsible for, S3 stops writing and lifts his head up to have a mutual gaze with S4. In line 13, S3 accepts S4's topic initiation with a raising positive acknowledgement token (yep↑). S4, in lines 14 and 15, unclenches his hands and starts rubbing them together while producing a FPP, which launches the first topic and discussion point for the roundtable update. This formulation of the gist of the meeting functions as a topic opener and it is in such formulations that the official start of the meeting becomes visible to the participants and to the analyst (Heyman, 1986).

In this extract, S4 does the transition through footing by the employment of verbal and embodied actions. In order to make this transition and start the meeting, S4 recipient-designs his turn to display to his co-participants the type of sequence being opened through extended turn-at-talk, which suspends the normal turn-taking rules (Jefferson, 1978). Moreover, S4 displays the local relevancy of the upcoming course of actions to the ongoing interaction through the start announcement (Jefferson, 1978; Sacks, 1974). This indicates how S4 recipient-designs his talk and actions to be recognised and accepted by the co-participants, who individually construct their actions to allow them to manage transition to the meeting talk. The next section will present two deviant cases of the disjunctive topic transition to meeting talk.

### 5.2.1 Topic Transition to Meeting Talk: Two Deviant Cases

The following extract does not follow the usual sequential transition to meeting talk in their meeting. Prior to this extract, the chairperson (S1) provides an apology for absence from one of the participants and the reason for his absence.

#### *Extract 5.02: We'll start with Alex*

[00:50:00 – 00:01:17]

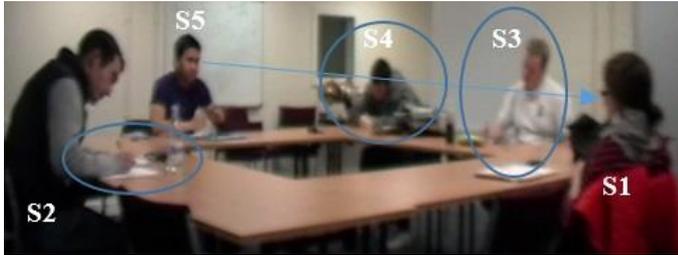
1. S1 °>we could've moved it< (0.4) (unclear speech) last
2. week°(.) but that's cool



((S2 signs the minutes received from S5))

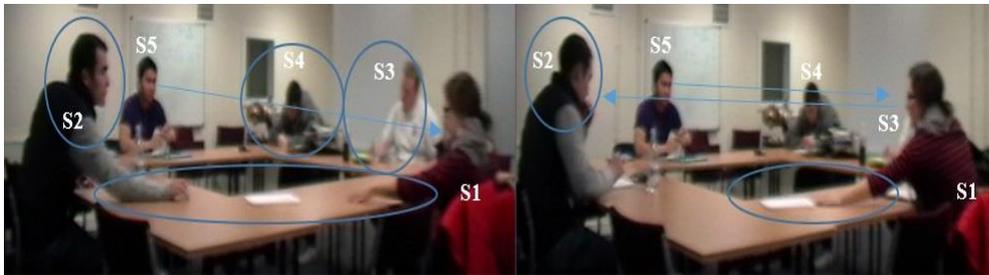
((S5 looks at S2 signing the minutes))  
((S4 writes on a notebook))  
((S3 writes on a notebook))

3. (0.5)



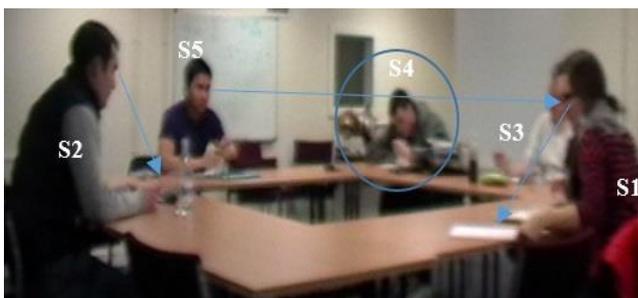
((S2 signs the minutes))  
((S5 looks at S1))  
((S4 writes on a notebook))  
((S3 writes on a notebook))

4. S1 er:m so:  
5. (0.6)



((S5 looks at S1))  
((S4 writes on a notebook))  
((S3 writes on a notebook))  
((S2 looks away after passing the minutes to S1))  
((S1 receives the minutes from S2 and looks at him))

6. we'll go in a different order this time!  
7. (0.3)  
8. we'll start with alex!  
9. (1.1)



((S1 looks at the minutes received from S2))  
((S2 looks down))  
((S3 and S4 are writing on a notebook))  
((S5 looks at S1))

10. S2 er yeah (.) er i've been doing (.) i've just finished



((S2 looks quickly at S1 then looks down))

((S1 still looks at the minutes received from S2))

((S3, S4 and S5 are writing on a notebook))

11. my supply chain database (0.7) a:nd er i've (.) started
12. on my supply chain (0.4) sort of analysis (0.7)
13. i've found a consultancy (0.6) that does it in
14. real life (0.8) erm and their website's actually
15. really helpful (.) so because i'm trying to make it
16. sort of as realistic as possible (0.6) as close to real life

In lines 1 and 2, the topic of attendance is terminated by the same participant who initiated it, namely, the chairperson. The co-participants' embodied actions are interesting as they do not seem to show willingness to develop the topic further. They enact being busy, thereby displaying unwillingness to participate in the topic or orient to topic termination (Lauzon and Berger, 2015; Koole, 2007). This is indicated as follows: S2 signs the minutes received from S5 while S5 is looking at S2 signing the minutes. At the same time, S3 and S4 write on their notebook.

The gap in line 3 is another indication that the topic is terminated since any co-participant could self-select to take a turn and develop the topic further by perhaps commenting on S1's complaint that they had the ability of moving the current meeting to last week but they did not do it: °>we could've moved it< (0.4) (unclear speech) last week° (.) but that's cool, 'it' refers to the current meeting. The reason for Yousuf's absence is because of his job interview, so if the meeting was moved to last week he could have attended the meeting since each of the participants is responsible for one part of the project. Therefore, the presence of each participant is important to update the team on their progress throughout the project. During the gap of five seconds, the co-participants do not show readiness to start the meeting, unlike in the rest of the transitions. They continue to enact being busy at doing something else, thereby displaying unavailability to participate or orient to the transition (Lauzon and Berger, 2015; Bezemer, 2008; Fasel Lauzon and Pochon-Berger, 2010). This is indicated by S2 signing the minutes while S3 and S4 are still writing on their notebooks. However, S5 is the only participant who shows readiness to start the meeting by looking at S1.

Interestingly, in line 4, S1 does not follow the usual sequential transition of their meeting. She does not wait for the co-participants to show readiness and nor does she signal the transition to meeting talk or wait for the co-participants' response or orient to the transition. Not waiting for the participants to show readiness (verbally or nonverbally) led to an unsuccessful attempt to make a disjunctive transition to meeting talk in the previous chapter. However, in this extract, S1 accomplishes the disjunctive transition to meeting talk, although the participants do not show readiness before or during this transition. In line 4, S1 self-selects to take a turn with the standard topic transition markers 'erm' and 'so:' (Boden, 1994) that work to start the meeting. After a gap of six seconds in line 5, she self-selects again to indicate that the roundtable update will be different in line 6: *we'll go in a different order this time*. After a gap of 0.3 seconds, S1 self-selects for the third time to allocate a turn to S2: *we'll start with alex*. Unlike the usual transitions, in this data the co-participants do not display orientations to this transition and turn allocation, except for S5, who looks at S1. S4 and S3 continue to write on their notebooks while S2 passes the minutes to S1 and then looks away. Interestingly, when S1 receives the minutes from S2, she looks at him while he is looking away and she selects him as the primary speaker. S1 does not select S5, who displays a visible 'willing next speaker' (Mortensen, 2008); instead, she allocates a turn to S2, who is potentially unavailable or unwilling to speak.

Line 9 shows a relatively long gap of 1.1 seconds that is unusual after turn allocation in this data. During this gap, the selected speaker S2 is looking down while S1 is looking at the minutes. At the same time, S3, S4 and S5 continue to display the same embodied actions. The reason for this long gap (compared to the other meetings) could be that S1 did not recipient-design her turn by formulating the three-part sequence of setting the meeting agenda (a detailed analysis of this sequence is presented in extract 5.01). This three part sequence consists of what is broadly to be discussed in this meeting, a suggestion of how to start the discussion phase and selecting a speaker with a certain point to report. S1's speaker selection indicates selecting a topic since each of the participants is responsible for one part of the project, such as designs, foundations, etc. However, the chairperson should indicate the points to be discussed on each topic according to the meeting agenda.

In line 10, S2 looks quickly at S1, acknowledging and complying with this turn allocation, despite his prior unavailability, and engages in the production of the expected second pair part (Lauzon and Berger, 2015). S2's hesitation and false start in line 10 *er yeah (.) er i've been doing (.) i've just finished* indicates his unsureness on what to report as it has

not been indicated by S1. Even though the co-participants do not display orientation to S2's turn, he self-repairs his turn initial and continues to report on his work. In so doing, he succeeds in moving the interaction forward.

The following extract is a continuation of extract 4.07. After the unsuccessful attempts to make the disjunctive transition to meeting talk by S6 (chairperson), this extract illustrates how a transition is finally accomplished. Furthermore, it shows a deviant case of misplacement of a turn by S3 during S6's extended turn-at-talk. The participants are all engaging in passing their stack of documents around to be signed.

***Extract 5.03: So on to the lit review***

[00:06:30 - 00:07:13]

1. S3 my minutes (.) are <somewhe:re↓>
2. (0.8)
3. S6 er: b[y: the: ] (.) [yea:h ]
4. S3 [>here they are<]
5. S2 [er: yes] you have er:
6. er:m mohammed's just got to sign these ones=
7. S6 =yea:h i think (.) mohammed's is the only one
8. needs to [sign↓]
9. S1 [who's ] not signed those↑
10. (0.9)
11. S1 kairull [and mohammed↓ ]
12. S5 [ i haven't yet ]
13. (0.8)
14. S3 done↓=
15. S6 =okay↑
16. (0.4)
17. S3 thank you=
18. S6 =SO: on to:: the lit review (.) the dreaded lit
19. review [uh ]
20. S3 [oh↑ ] mohammed hasn't
21. (0.7)
22. S2 it's fine↓
23. (0.6)
24. S6 er:m (.) basically obviously you-you can't really
25. (.) read us your lit review (.) just tell em tell
26. us how it's going (.) how (.) roughly your word count
27. (1.1)
28. roughly how many references (.) and (.) how it's basically (.)
29. panning out (0.3) just let us know and so (.) the reason why i'm
30. looking at you cos you're first on the list=
31. S2 =((laughter))=
32. S6 =((laughter))=
33. S2 =thank you
34. (0.5)

In this extract, S6 does not cut through the interaction to make the disjunctive transition, as in extract 4.07. She joins the topic of signing the minutes in lines 3, 7 and 8, and then waits until the participants have reached the end of the topic and activity. This seems to be accomplished by S3 only in line 14 with an explicit adjective 'done↓', said with a falling intonation after an eight-second gap in line 13 (S3 is the last person to finish passing his minutes around to be

signed, and therefore he is the one that seems to end the topic and activity). This explicit use of *done*<sub>↓</sub> indicates that the activity is no longer happening, and is thereby a topic termination. In line 15, S6 times her turn well to start the disjunctive topic transition, unlike extract 4.07 when her mistiming of a turn led to an unsuccessful topic transition.

Firstly, in line 15, S6's self-selected turn latches with S3's turn with a topic transition marker said with rising intonation *okay*<sub>↑</sub>, which indicates the culmination of a sequential activity and the progression to something new (Beach 1995). The sequential placement of this transition marker (Schegloff and Sacks 1973) after topic termination is oriented to by the co-participants non-verbally as signalling topic transition, and thereby a transition to the meeting talk. This is indicated by the four-second gap in line 16. As has been analysed in the previous chapter, the placement of this gap indicates the participants' readiness to start the meeting by passing their turns to talk (unfortunately, embodied actions are not indicated in this extract as it was audio recorded). In line 17, S3 orients to signal a transition verbally with an exclamation *thank you* that accepts this transition. The free-standing 'okay' is similar to what Jefferson (1981: 5) aptly described (in terms of 'yeah') as speaker shift-implicative actions possessing a "topically dual-faceted character", making "topical movement transparently relevant". S6 relies on 'okay' and therefore designs her talk so as to be responsive to prior talk, yet also shapes next-positioned activities in specific ways. Such 'okay' usages are uniquely and variously consequential for unfolding interaction (Beach, 1993: 326).

In line 18, S6 latches with the previous turn in order to reach the anchor position (Schegloff, 1986). S6 self-selects to take a turn with the elongated transition marker *so*: produced with a higher volume than the immediate surroundings. The transition marker *so*: has a salient tendency to appear in an anchor position. It only seems to appear at anchor position when the topic initiator has a specific purpose to start the conversation. In other words, topics that are initiated at anchor position with the transition marker *so* foreshadow a conversational purpose (O'Neal, 2011).

According to Bolden (2006, 2008), the transition marker 'so' is deployed when the speaker begins to implement 'incipient actions,' that is, the speaker prefaces his first pair part utterances with the transition marker 'so' when the action he is about to initiate represents an action that is not directly coordinated with immediately prior talk, and is thereby a disjunctive topic transition (Sacks, 1976). This transition marker is followed by describing the gist of the agenda in lines 18 and 19 *on to:: the lit review (.) the dreaded lit review [uh*

]. This is one example of an important preface that works to secure the beginning of an extended turn-at-talk and suspends any interruptions or overlaps. However, in line 20, S3 misplaces his turn to overlap with S6's extended turn-at-talk [oh↑] mohammed hasn't either. This misplacement of a turn works to reintroduce the previous topic and activity of signing the minutes, which has been terminated by S3 in line 14. Moreover, S3 and the other co-participants showed readiness and acceptance for S6 to start the transition. In line 14, S3's use of oh↑, produced with a rising intonation in turn-initial, is a change of state token (S3 realised after terminating the topic and activity that Mohammed had not signed the paper) and it is also a news marker (S3 initiates the news that Mohammed has not signed the paper and marks its newsworthiness with 'oh'), which conveys a shift in attention (Heritage, 1998, 1984). This shift in attention is designed as a disjunctive movement (Sacks, 1976) to shift the topic to reintroduce the previous terminated one.

Unlike extract 4.06 in meeting preparatory talk, misplacement of a turn to make a topic transition is not ignored here. The gap of seven seconds in line 21 illustrates that both the chairperson and the other co-participants do not respond to S3's attempt to topic transition. Perhaps the co-participants expect the chairperson to stop this topic transition since her role of being a chair is explicitly indicated once the topic is terminated, the transition is signaled and oriented to, the transition marker is deployed, the gist of the agenda is described and the transition is taking a place. Interestingly, in line 22, S3's attempt is picked up and responded to by S2. S2's response in line 22 (it's fine↓) is a dual-faceted response, acknowledging S3's turn and working to stop this topic transition. By doing so, S2 brings S3 back to a single joint focus. The gap of six seconds in line 23 indicates that S2's response seems to work since all turns are suspended, including S3. It also shows the readiness to continue the meeting by the co-participants. In lines 24- 26 and 28-30, S6 self-selects to take a turn with er:m, which frequently marks the introduction of a topic in phase transition (Boden, 1994: 96-97). S6 continues with the sequence to set the meeting agenda, introduce a topic of what will be discussed, and select a primary speaker, thereby enacting a stepwise topic transition to roundtable update (detailed analysis of this sequence is presented in the next extract). It should be noted that S6's extended turn-at-talk does not get interrupted or stopped. The next section will illustrate the fourth form of talk in the meeting, the roundtable update. In this section, the chairperson takes control of the interaction, thereby controlling topics and turn-taking.

### 5.3 Topic Management in Roundtable Update

The analysis of this section will illustrate how participants who develop the topic align and orient to the situated identities of the particular participants in the meeting (Zimmerman, 1998). According to Zimmerman (1998: 90-94), discourse identities are integral to the moment-by-moment organisation of the interaction in initiating an action: one party assumes a particular identity and projects a reciprocal identity for co-participants as they engage in the various sequentially organised activities: current speaker, listener, story teller, story recipient, information seeker, elicitor, repair initiator, and so on. Situated identities come into play within the precincts of particular types of situation: call-taker, chairperson, secretary and so on. Discourse identities can shift turn by turn whereas the situated identities remain constant within a given setting. In this data, this change of discourse identities is used as an interactional tool to manage the topic and move the interaction forward.

Extract 5.04 demonstrates how the topic that is being terminated by the primary speaker is further developed by the chairperson through changing the discourse identities. Prior to this extract, the chairperson (S4) allocated the turn to S2 in order to update the group with her work on generators and monitoring systems. Turn allocation occurred with S4 addressing S2 by name to be the primary speaker. In this meeting, S2 reports back her work on the attempt to model how she can join two tidal and waves together in order to get outputs of each with the speeds. Once that is modelled, she can then look into the selection of the different models to give weight components. This extract starts after S2 has presented the information on her work and after she has received SPP for her FPP regarding her uncertainty and concerns about how the power electronics would work behind the generators and monitoring systems as she has more moving pieces involved in her part of the project than the other participants.

#### *Extract 5.04: how the electronics would work*

[00:17:55 – 00:19:20]

1. S2 okay↓ (.) well (.) i'll t-tal- i'll talk to rose cos i genuinely
2. (.) that's one thing i've no idea how (0.7) how (0.4) the electronics
3. would work behind that, [you know] whether (.) there's a (.) small
4. S4 [yeah ]
5. S2 (0.5) motor↓=
6. S4 =yeah↓
7. (0.3)



((S2 raises both her arms off the table with open palms hands))

8. S2 i've [no:::] idea↓



((S2 gazes at S4 and brings her arms down placing them on the table))

9. S4 [tze] ((tongue click))



((S4 raises his head and adjust his body posture while gazing at S2))

10. S4 what's this↑ to::  
11. S2 to let-let's [e::r to-to: move ] the blades=



((S2 raises both of her arms opposite each other with open hand palms and slightly moving them back and forth))

12. S4 [to STA::RT the blades↓]  
13. S2 =>no no< [not start but]  
14. S4 [oh↑ you mean ] to e::r (0.9) change the pitch↓  
15. (0.4)  
16. S2 yeah to [change the pitch] so let's say we need to move  
17. S4 [ah↑ right okay↓ ]  
18. S2 the (0.8) well you know an-an-anything to do with like (0.7)  
19. [movement] you don't really consider(0.5)as a (0.5) main movement  
20. S4 [yea:h ]  
21. S2 (.) so power making movement >if you see what i mean< (0.7) e::rm  
22. (0.9) so::=  
**((Lines 23 – 48 have been omitted in this extract))**  
49. S2 =because e::rm (1.2) basically a g- a generator is rated (0.8)  
50. at a certain torque (0.9) and that torque is determined by (.) the  
51. temperature (0.2) so you could run at a higher- higher than rated  
52. torque [fo:r ] let's say five minutes as long as you've been  
53. S4 [right]  
54. S2 running (0.3) twenty minutes below rated torque  
55. (0.5)  
56. S4 right↓ okay↓



((S4 takes his gaze away from S2 and looks down at the agenda))

In this interaction, topic is developed by S4 and S2. In this extract, topic is not only developed through the production of FPP by the chairperson (S4). S4 moves from producing minimal acknowledgement tokens in lines 4 and 6 (acknowledging the individual components of S2's update) to develop the topic further by changing discourse identities<sup>14</sup> (Zimmerman, 1998), for example information seeker, elicitor, and so on.

In lines 1, 2, 3, 5, 7 and 8, S2 designs her turn to be closure-relevant as a concluding summary or commentary of her concern about how the electronics part would work. The attempt to topic closure is made by first producing a pre-closing minimal acknowledgment token and discourse marker followed by subsequent fuller turn 'okay + well + the work of additional turn constructional unit i.e. commentary/concluding summary'.

In line 1, S2 designs her turn by first producing a turn initial recipient acknowledgment token with falling intonation 'okay↓' as pre-closing. S2 relies on 'okay' to preface the next positioned commentary or summary (cf. Jefferson, 1981: 39; Pomerantz, 1984), that is, to speak to Rose about the electronics as a solution to her concern. The sequential placement of 'okay' in the third turn receipt (follows S4's SPP to S2's initial query) projects forthcoming action-sequences in the accomplishment of task-specific activities (Beach, 1993). 'Okay' is deployed in turn initial position by S2 as responsive to the prior turn and preparatory in movements to what is offered as relevant for the ensuing talk. It appears to simultaneously resolve the problem of attending to what was projected in the prior turn (acknowledging/affirming), paving-the-way for next-positioned matters (summary, commentary, reassuring, assessing). S2's deployment of 'okay' in line 1 is working towards achieving pre-closure or pre-termination of the talk-in-progress (Beach, 1993).

S2 produces the acknowledgment token with a maintained eye gaze with S4, which creates a two-speech exchange system in this sequential environment. S4 (and the rest of the co-

<sup>14</sup> Zimmerman (1998: 87) proposed treating identities as an element of context for talk-in-interaction. He uses the term 'discourse' as shorthand for referring to talk-in-interaction, the domain of concerted social activity pursued through the use of linguistic, sequential and gestural resources.

participants) treat ‘okay’ as non-continuative and closure-relevant as there are no competitive overlaps to take the floor from S2 (lines 1, 2, 3, 5, 7 and 8). In reference to the token ‘yeah’, Jefferson suggested that:

The token is observably, albeit minimally, ‘on topic’; observably, albeit minimally, attending to the rights and obligations entailed by the fact of talk-in-process with participants distributed as ‘speaker’ and ‘recipient’. It is, albeit minimally, ‘responding to’ prior talk and not - quite - yet introducing something new.

(Jefferson, 1981: 36)

S2’s turn in line 1 is prefaced by ‘okay’ and ‘well’. The discourse marker ‘well’ in this sequential position (and after a micro pause) serves to mark that the turn it prefaces will privilege S2’s perspective or project relative to the expectations for action established in the prior turn and sequence (Heritage, 2015). In other words, the placement of ‘well’ in this sequential environment (third turn receipt) functions as my side corroborations of descriptions and judgments (Heritage, 2015; Schegloff and Sacks, 1973), and since one of the characterisations of ‘well’ is topic attrition, it might predict subsequent termination of the topic (Jefferson, 1981: 4). Moreover, ‘well’ functions to be treated as an initial component of an expanded turn that will take additional units to complete (Schegloff and Lerner, 2009; Heritage and Clayman, 2010).

In lines 1, 2, 3 and 5, S2 continues the work of additional TCU, okay↓ (.) well (.) i'll t-tal- i'll talk to rose cos i genuinely (.) that's one thing i've no idea how (0.7) how (0.4) the electronics would work behind that, [you know] whether (.) there's a (.) small (0.5) motor↓. S2 refers to work which she will do outside the meeting and this suggestion for future action functions as a pre-closing since it suggests that it is not currently productive to continue discussing the topic until the proposed work is complete. This technique of pre-closing ties the current topic not only to the agenda of the current meeting, but to future actions as well (Linde, 1991: 303). The move to pre-closing (Schegloff and Sacks, 1973; Schegloff, 2011) is done by recapitulating the next action as a solution and a summary to her concern, that is, to speak to Rose about how the electronics would work. Interestingly, *you know* is a strategic device used by S2. Erman (1987: 137) describes *you know* as marking shared knowledge and it appears to mark statements whose implications are critical to the point being made (Jucker and Smith, 1998). S2’s extended turn attracts minimal response (Heritage, 2015) from S4 (lines 4 and 6), whereupon S2’s turn initiates a direct shift into the closing sequence. According to Schegloff

(1996: 60), “there are analytical results to be achieved by examining... talk by reference to the unit ‘TCU’ which are not available by reference to ‘sentences’ or ‘clauses’”. In lines 4 and 5, S4’s *yeah* utterance is not only a continuer; it provides an insight into how conversational partners S2 and S4 keep track of each other’s ongoing actions, activation and integration of information. The role of S4’s acknowledgment token *yeah* is to show supportive alignment. In other words, S4 ratifies and supports S2’s turns at talk and what she has to say (Gordon, 2003: 397; Bateson, 1972).

In addition to pre-closings, there are also explicit markers of topic closing, which almost always follow the negotiation process of pre-closings (Linde, 1991: 304). In line 8, S2 moves toward a summative closing to exit the conversation as a whole by repeating one part of her turn in line 2 but with more emphasis on [no::] ‘i’ve [no::] idea’. S2’s statement encourages topic closure since repetitions “underline what was said previously, and thus turn this into a point or a conclusion. [They] may be a signal that the speaker is not willing or able to expand on the current matters” (Svennevig, 2000: 190).

This turn is supported by embodied devices (i.e. gesture) during the gap in line 7 (Goodwin, 1980; Stivers and Sidnell, 2005; Mondada, 2006, 2007; Enfield, 2009). In line 7, S2 continues gazing at S4 and raises both of her arms off the table with an open palms hand gesture. In line 8, S2 slowly brings her arms down with the open palms hand gesture and places them on the table by the time she finishes producing the last utterance of her turn. Including embodied resources among the means used for designing a turn and TCUs could assist in closing a topic. According to Linde (1991: 303), using the physical movements serves as pre-closing indications and they play an important role in topic management.

However, S4’s turn in line 10 does not confirm S2’s attempt to terminate the topic. S4 develops the topic further with a stepwise topic transition as an information seeker or an elicitor to elicit more information from S2. This change of discourse identities is derived from the main purpose of the meeting activity/talk, all of which relate to information gathering, problems, options, expert opinions or decisions (each participant could be considered an expert in the part s/he is responsible for), and opportunities (Halvorsen and Sarangi, 2014). Interestingly, S4 signals his turn-taking in line 9 with a tongue click ‘tze’ overlapping with the previous turn. This tongue click is accompanied with S4 adjusting his body posture while gazing at S2 by changing his body position from resting his head on his closed hand with his arm leaning on the table to raising his head, placing both of his elbows on the table, clenching

his hands together and placing them against his chin. This action of signalling turn-taking before the closing of previous topic is fully achieved as an indication that the chairperson (S4) is about to take a turn. This turn will suspend or interrupt this closing by developing the topic further to elicit further information on one aspect of the current topic.

In line 10, S4 makes a stepwise topic movement by producing the FPP, *what's this↑ to::* that refers to the motor mentioned in line 5 as part of the electronic topic. In other words, they were talking about the electronics in general but now S4 is moving the topic further by enquiring the function of the 'motor' as part of the 'electronic' topic. The lengthened *to::* here prompts an action by the recipient.

In line 11, S2 starts to produce SPP, *to let-let's [e::r to-to: move] the blades=*, but she struggles to provide the information requested by S4 as she hesitates to deliver a full response to *to let-let's [e::r to-to:..* While producing this SPP, S2 raises both of her arms opposite each other with open palms, slightly moving them back and forth. S2's turn accompanied by gesture is a case of enactment (Sidnell, 2006; Goodwin, 1979; Streeck, 2002) to describe the movement of the blades. During the production of S2's turn and embodied actions, S4 in line 12 overlaps to produce a possible description of her enactment, [*to STA::RT the blades↓*]. Both S4 and S2 build in concert with each other relevant actions that contribute to the further progression of the activity in progress (Hayashi, 2005: 21). Lines 13 - 17 are a case of negotiation of understanding through repair sequence. In line 13, S2 is a repair initiator as S4 provides an incorrect description of her enactment of the word she is trying to describe. In line 14, S4 overlaps to self-repair and produce the correct description [*oh↑ you mean] to e::r (0.9) change the pitch↓*. In lines 15-17, S2 and S4 reach an agreement and understanding of the described action that 'the motor behind the electronics is to change the pitch of the blades'. In line 16, S2 shows acceptance of S4's turn by repeating his utterance *yeah to [change the pitch]* and S4 overlaps in line 17 to produce acknowledgement tokens [*ah↑ right okay↓*], showing understanding has been reached, and closes the sequence of negotiation of understanding. S4's overlaps in lines 12, 14 and 17 are 'progressional' overlaps (Jefferson, 1983, 1986) since S4's turn is placed where there has been some type of breakdown in the progressivity of the prior turn such as S6's hesitation and stuttering. S2 continues her extended turn (lines 16, 18, 19, 21 and 22) to provide more information on the motor and its main movements of the blades.

Due to the long development of this topic, lines 23 to 48 have been omitted in this transcript. In the omitted lines, S2 continues to produce extended turns at talk that receive overlapped acknowledgment tokens from S4. Once S2 gives in all of her update in lines 49-52 and 54, S4 takes control over the interaction and produces two discourse makers as a sequence closing thirds (SCTs) with falling intonations *right↓ okay↓* which terminate the topic and close S2's work update. Goodenough and Weiner (1978) demonstrate the relevance of *ok* to topic shift(s) in conversations. During the production of the discourse marker, S4 shifts his gaze away from S2 and turns to gaze down at the meeting agenda. The SCTs are supported by S4's gesture and his orientation to the meeting agenda work to signal topic transition.

The following extract, 5.05, illustrates how topic is developed by co-participants (non-chair and non-primary speakers) who have particular responsibilities in particular parts of the project that are related to the primary speaker's area. The co-participants who have been included nonverbally in the topic by the primary speaker are likely to be able to influence topic development and the direction of the discussion when it relates to their areas of responsibilities. It will also illustrate how the non-chair puts in more interactional work to take a turn in order to develop the topic.

This extract is a continuation of extract 5.04. Prior to this extract, the previous participant (S2) has given in her update and the chairperson produces transition markers to close off the topic. S4 makes a stepwise topic transition by selecting S6 to present his recent updates.

**Extract 5.05: structures before the geotechnical analysis**

[00:21:45 -00:23:10]

1. S4 (.hhh) kairul↑ (0.2) anything to:: (0.1) add (.) about the structures↑



((S4 looks down at the meeting agenda then turns to look at S6))  
 ((S2, S3, S7 gaze at S6))

2. (0.1)

3. S6 basically we need to start with the: (.) geotechnical analysis



((S4 gazes at S7))  
 ((S2, S3, S7 gaze at S6))

4. (0.4) [e:rm ] (0.2) >i'm hoping< [to:: ] hoping to finish that  
 5. S7 [°well°]



((S7 moves his body back))  
 ((S4, S6 and S1 gazes at S7))

6. S7 [>°sorry!°<]



((S1, S4, S6, gaze at S7))

7. S6 about (0.2) this week↑



((S6 gaze at S4))

8. (0.3)  
 9. S4 yeah=

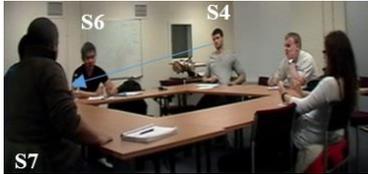


((S4 looks down at the meeting agenda))

10. S6 =or maybe a li- next week↑ (.) latest and then (2.2) get the  
 11. calculations for the structures done (0.2) by: >as you said< february



((S6 turns to gaze at S7))  
 ((S4 gazes at S7))



((S4 gazes at S7))

12. (0.3) or maybe (.) earlier (1.3) then i could go onto the::



((S6 turns to gaze with S1))

13. [(0.2) ] prop design



((S6 gazes at S1 and quickly points at S1 with his pen))

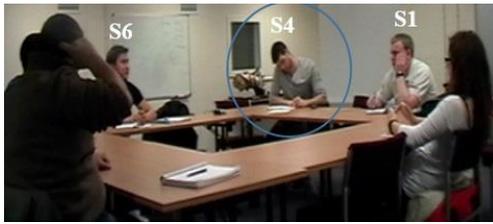
14. S1 [ m↑hm↓ ]



((S1 gazes at S6 and nods his head))  
 ((S4 is looking down at the meeting agenda))

15. (0.6)

16. S4 yeah↓ (.) >°okay↓<=



((S4 is looking down at the meeting agenda))

17. S7 =a-a-actually we'll need (0.3) structures (0.1) befo:re (0.2) the



((S7 gazes at S6, raises his hands with index finger towards S6))



((S4 lifts his head up and gazes at S7))

((S1, S2, S3 and S6 gaze at S7))

18. geotechnical (0.3) because we need to know (.) what's are the load  
 19. that's gonna be exerted (0.2) to know how deep the piles should go,  
 20. (0.1) so:: we need to do the structures [ (0.2) and the force ]  
 21. S6 [structures first then g-]  
 22. S7 (0.1) that goes into the pile a:nd (.) the whole thing [befo:re]



((S1 gazes at S7, nods his head and moves his hand slightly away from his mouth))

23. S1 [e::rm i ]

24. imagine it's going to be an iterative process|=



((S7 and S6 gazes at S1))

((S1 gazes at S7))

25. S7 =>it's ] gonna be < an iterative process (.) yeah, [°certainly,°]



((S7 looks at S1 and nods his head))  
 ((S6 gazes at S7))  
 ((S4 looks down at the meeting agenda and writes))

26. S6 = [yes ]  
 27. S1 [it's gonna ] be  
 28. make some massive assumptions to start with [(0.4 ) and just]  
 29. S7 [yes↓ that's ]  
 30. S1 [find] (.) keep going round until [you get] a good answer=  
 31. S7 [yep ]  
 32. S7 [ yeah ]  
 33. S7 =yep=  
 34. S6 =because we need the geotechnical to:: (0.9) [decide the ]



((S6 gazes at S7 pointing at S7 with his pen))  
 ((S1 and S7 gazes at S6))

35. S7 [what would- would]  
 36. S6 diameter (0.7) and everything do we↑  
 37. (0.1)  
 38. S7 e::r well- well (0.3) we need geotechnical (.) layers to decide



((S4 gazes at S7))  
 ((S1 looks down at the paper in front of him))

39. (0.8) how deep (.) it's gonna need to [go (0.3) ] but (0.5) we need  
 40. S6 [ >right↓< ]  
 41. S7 to know as well (.) what's the forces exerted to see how deep  
 42. [you need ] to go as well (0.4) (.hhh) so: e::r (0.3) e::r it-it's  
 43. S6 [correct ]  
 44. S7 like (0.4) hand in hand process [but ] (0.7) it's like somebody say (.)



((S4 lifts his head up to gaze at S7))

45. S6 [yeah]  
 46. S7 it's iterative (.) °you have to just keep doing°=



((S4 straightens his back while looking down at the meeting agenda))

47. S4 =yeah↓



((S4 moves his body forward to table))

48. (0.1)

In line 1, the chairperson makes the final stepwise topic transition in the roundtable update. S4 takes a turn with inhalation, broadcasting imminent entry (Hoey, 2014). He then selects a primary speaker, S6, who is the last co-participant to give his update. S4 selects S6 by indicating his name while looking down at the meeting agenda, (.hhh) kairul↑ (0.2) but then he turns to look at S6 by the end of his turn anything to:: (0.1) add (.) about the structures↑. The rest of the co-participants gaze at S6 and S4's in-breath, gaze behaviour appearing to be recognisably prior to his turn at talk and project the onset of that talk (Hoey, 2014).

In line 3, S6 accepts this turn allocation by taking a turn and starts giving in his update. During S6's turn, all of the co-participants, including the chairperson, gaze at S6 until S6 refers to the geotechnical analysis. This is when the chairperson, S4, turns to gaze at S7, basically we need to start with the: (.) geotechnical analysis. The reason for gazing at S7 is that S7's part of the project is related to the geotechnical analysis as part of the structures. In line 5, S7 moves his body back and overlaps with S6's turn with [°well°]. This turn is not designed to take the floor since his [°well°] is produced with a lower volume than the immediate surroundings. Although he secures all of the co-participants' orientation as they gaze at him, S7 does not compete to take the floor. However, in line 6, S7 produces a quick apology for interrupting [>°sorry↓°<] with a reduced volume and falling intonation. S7 is doing 'self-directed talk' (Kohler and Thorne, 2011). Such a turn has an ambiguous action whether the speaker is directing the talk to be publically available to the other participants as they attend to this private talk or it is private thinking aloud (Schegloff ,

1988a). By apologising for his overlapped utterance and interruption of the ongoing interaction, S7 displays his orientation to the interactional organisation of the meeting and the situated identity of the chairperson.

In line 11, S6 refers to S7 with the third person pronoun 'you' (0.2) by: >as you said< february while turning towards S7 to secure a mutual gaze. At the same time, S4 turns to gaze at S7. In line 12, S6 turns to look at S1 since he is giving information on when he can possibly finish the analysis for his part to then move on to S1's part. During the pause in line 13, of 0.2 seconds, S6 continues gazing at S1 and points at him with his pen and then refers to S1 with the part he is responsible for, i.e. prop design. In line 14, S1 overlaps with S6's pause to acknowledge S6's action by nodding his head at S6 while maintaining mutual gaze. By doing this, S7 and S1 are now part of the topic being developed. Therefore, any self-selection from S7 or S1 to develop the topic (after S6 gives in all his report) is acceptable. The reason for addressing S1 and S7 during this topic development is because S6 is responsible for running analysis that is needed for S1 and S7's part of the project. The rest of the co-participants are part of the interaction as listeners as well as monitoring the ongoing sequence of interaction, which is seen in shifting their gaze according to who is taking the turn. In line 16, the chairperson produces a turn of SCTs accompanied with embodied actions by looking down at the meeting agenda to signal a transition. However, in line 17 S7 latches with the chairperson topic transition signal and self-selects to delay this transition.

Analysing units of talk by relying a priori on linguistic units has recently drawn criticism. For example, Ford, Fox and Thompson (2013) propose that this type of analysis is neither adequate nor appropriate when investigating naturally occurring interaction from the participants' perspective. For this reason the following analysis will show the visual cues that the co-participants deploy to take a turn.

In this extract, S7 develops the topic by changing his discourse identities to repair initiator (other-repair) to repair a prior information or understanding. In line 17, S7 gazes at S6, raises his hands with index finger towards S6, then produces the first utterance with hesitation until all of the co-participants turn to gaze at him, including the chairperson, who lifts his head up to gaze at S7. Mondada (2007) focuses on pointing as a practice to self-select as a next speaker.

In line 17, S7 designs his turn with the discourse marker ‘actually’<sup>15</sup>, a striking feature seeks to project the following turn as the object of attention. In line 17, S7 produces the discourse marker ‘actually’ in turn-initial as well as TCU-initial that indicates that S7’s subsequent turn is an observation that has been triggered<sup>16</sup>. Moreover, it suggests that something in S6’s prior talk has served as the trigger (that S6 should run analysis on structures before the geotechnical not vice versa). According to Clift (2001: 266), turn-initial, ‘actually’ seems to propose that what follows constitute a revision of the speaker’s prior turn and that “‘actually-marked turn’” contrasts with information that has been explicitly formulated in the prior turn. The sequential placement of ‘actually’ as turn-initial and placed at the point of possible speaker transition serves to secure an extended turn and it is invulnerable to incipient talk by a next speaker (Clift, 2001). The placement of actually-prefaced turn works to keep the topic from terminating as it serves to link S6’s prior turn and S7’s current turn, projecting back to the prior and offering the alternative information in S7’s current turn. In other words, the placement of ‘actually’ in the TCU is consequential to the trajectory of a topic in repair procedures. In lines 17-23, S7’s actually-prefaced turn keeps the topic alive by proposing a remedial course of action

=a-a-actually we'll need (0.3) structures (0.1) befo:re (0.2) the geotechnical (0.3) because we need to know (.) what's are the load (0.1) so:: we need to do the structures[(0.2) and the force] (0.1) that goes into the pile a:nd (.) the whole thing [befo:re].

According to Clift (2001: 281, 282), speakers are sensitive to the placement of ‘actually’ to accomplish different activities in talk. This finding is different from Clift (2001) who found that ‘actually’ TCU-initial “marks a shift of direction within the topic to mark what follow as still relevant to the prior talk, but constituting a shift of direction.” Clift (2001) is referring to stepwise transition, however, in this finding ‘actually’ in turn initial position serves to develop the topic further with no transition taking place.

In line 23, S1 self-selects to overlap with S7’s turn to participate in developing the topic. He does so by putting in interactional work to be part of developing the topic. Firstly, S1 in line 22, moves from being a listener and monitoring the ongoing sequence of interaction to being part of topic development by the employment of embodied actions. S1 gazes at S7 and nods his head to show alignment with S7’s turn, then moves his hand slightly away from his mouth which indicates a preparation to take a turn. This is seen as a cue that serves to signal turn

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<sup>15</sup> Goldberg (1982) and Lenk (1998) discuss ‘actually’ as part of group of discourse markers or particles for their role in achieving discourse coherent.

<sup>16</sup> See Jefferson (1978:220) for an extended consideration of such triggered, locally occasioned stories in talk.

transition. The research conducted by Goodwin (1979, 1981, 1995) and Schegloff (1984b, 1988), show that bodily visual cues has been found to provide essential information for turn transition. They acknowledged the bodily-visual makeup of turns and units and the bodily – visual cues for turn transition. For example, gaze, gestures, body position and movement, facial expression, material objects in the scene and the surroundings in general. Scholars from a variety of languages illustrated the rich ways in which speakers deploy different resources for the tasks related to turn taking (Mondada, 2006, 2007; Li, 2013; Ford et al. 2012; Kendon 2004; Streeck, 1995).

In line 23, S1 overlaps with S7 and secures mutual gaze while S6 turns to gaze at S1. Then, S1 designs his turn to rephrase or summarise what S7 is trying to explain to S6. S1's overlap in line 23 and his second overlap in line 27 are recognitional overlaps (Jefferson, 1983, 1986). It shows that's S1 attends to the general sense of the ongoing utterance. Jefferson (1983: 20) observes that the turn with recognitional onset consequently begin at a point where an understanding of at least the general thrust of the utterance can have been achieved.

In line 25, S7 aligns with S1's turn by repeating parts of S1's prior turn (Radford and Tarplee, 2000) with agreement = [*>it's*] gonna be < an iterative process (.) yeah↑ [*°certainly↓°*]. This verbal action is supported by nonverbal actions that is the mutual gaze between S1 and S7 while S7 nods his head to show agreement. S6 also aligns to S1's turns by taking a turn to produce acknowledgment tokens.

After that, in lines 34 and 36, S6's turn latches with the previous turn by changing the discourse identity to information seeker and addressing S7 as the information provider while gazing at S7 and pointing at him with his pen. S6's turn is designed as checking shared understanding. At the same time, both of S1 and S7 gaze at S6 while S4 is gazing down at the meeting agenda. In line 38, S7 starts to provide SPP to S6's FPP that is when S1 shifts his gaze to look at the paper in front of him which indicates his withdrawal from the topic. In line 44, S4 lifts his head up and gazes at S7. As S7 reaches the end of his turn S4 starts to straighten his back while shifting his gaze and gazes down at the meeting agenda signalling topic termination. In line 47, the topic is terminated with S4 latches with S7's turn and moves his body forward to the table and produces the SCTs =yeah↓ with falling intonation. The gap of 0.1 seconds in line 48 contributes to topic termination (Howe, 1991; Jefferson, 1993) and marking a topic transition (Maynard, 1980). S4's placement of his embodied actions shows that he is monitoring how S7, S1 and S6 develop the topic without taking active verbal part in this development.

The following section 5.4 illustrates how the participants achieve the closure of the meeting and thereby the status of any further talk.

#### 5.4 Forms of Talk in Closing Phase

The interactional work of closing a conversation is a predictable set of activities which include pre-closing that form a closing section (Schegloff & Sacks, 1973: 304) or closing sequence (Schegloff, 2007) which is required to achieve closing properly (Schegloff & Sacks, 1973). In other words, pre-closing sequence constitute expressions and adjacency pairs which accepting their latter component in the pair shows the end of the talk. To give a full picture of the meeting interaction, this section illustrates how the students bring the meeting to a close by first analysing the transition to wrap-up talk where the meeting is officially closed and how they move the interaction to post-meeting talk.

##### 5.4.1 Topic Transition to Wrap-up Talk

Closing is interactional local achievement and in order to understand the dynamics of closings it is necessary to uncover the organisation of talk in adjacency pairs (Schegloff and Sacks, 1973). The following extract will present the five sequentially organised moves to bring the meeting to an end through archetype closing that organises the termination of conversation over a section of talk rather than in the course of one turn which displays an orientation to legitimising conversation's termination (Button, 1987: 102).

In this extract, the chairperson S2, brings the co-participants to the closing phase of the meeting after they have covered all the relevant points in relation to the meeting agenda.

##### *Extract 5.06: right any other business*

[2:13:07- 2:13:30]

1. S2 right↓ (0.1) any other busi↑ness↓



((S2 tabs his hand on the table then gazes at the meeting agenda))



((S1, S4 and S3 gaze at S2))  
(1.7)

2.



((S2 turns right to look at S1 and S4))



((When S2 slowly turns left to look at S3, S1 and S4 shake their heads displaying a 'no' answer))

3. S2 no<sub>i</sub> (0.3) good. (0.1) (.hhh) er:: (0.3) time and date of  
4. next meeting<sub>i</sub> (.) ten aye em next week<sub>i</sub> (0.7)



((S1, S3 and S4 gazes at S2))

5. con[ference] client<sub>i</sub>  
6. S1 [yes ]  
7. (0.1)  
8. S4 < c::lient<sub>i</sub>>  
9. (0.2)  
10. S2 client room (0.3) (.hhh) (hhh.) (0.2) done<sub>i</sub>



((S2 looks at the documents and turn over a page))



((S2 looks at S4 ))

- 11. (0.1)
- 12. S4 [ye]ah↑
- 13. S2 [ev]
- 14. S2 everything↑ (0.1) good to go↑
- 15. (0.8)



((S2 starts collecting his papers))

- 16. S3 good to [go:↑ ]
- 17. S1 [yeah ]
- 18. S4 [°yeah°]
- 19. (0.2)
- 20. S2 (.hhh) end of -°end of meeting↓°

Firstly, the topic initial elicitor appears in line 1 as topic-bounding turn (Button and Casey, 1984, 1985). S2 designs his turn as a possible pre-closing by formulating a topic bounding (Schegloff and Sacks, 1973: 306; Button and Casey, 1984) by producing the sequence closing device *right↓* with falling intonation and a pause of 0.1 seconds that serves to do a possible pre-closing. Transition markers such as ‘right’ are possible closings when placed after a point, which the co-participants can interpret at the end of a topic (Button, 1987; Schegloff and Sacks, 1973: 305, Nielsen, 2013). Then, S2 continues formulating his turn with last call for new mentionables (Nielsen, 2013) and makes it explicitly possible for further meeting talk which shows the co-participants that they are heading toward the closing of the meeting, *any other business↓*.

Inviting the co-participants to bring in new mentionables and marking such an invitation as a last chance to do so is an important technique by the chair to close the meeting (Nielsen, 2013). Employing topic initial elicitors as the topic-bounding turn in the closing sequence propose that any topic produced as a result of their enquiry is downgraded in newsworthiness, are sensitive to, and apt for a sequential environment in which the introduction of a new topic may be a delicate matter (Button and Casey, 1985: 45).

Interestingly, the lexical material *any other business*<sub>↓</sub> is present in all of the pre-closing of the meetings. This choice of lexical material refers to new topics as *any other* marking it as less central than the previous topic i.e., as an additional lesser topics. This way of formulating a TCU may in itself discourage the bringing up of something at this stage. According to Nielsen (2013: 54) central issues that are placed in exactly these sequential surroundings will need to be strongly marked as essential if they are not to be treated as peripheral. The lexical material is similar to the lexical material found in pre-closing sequences in American meetings “anybody else? got anything else?, Do we have any (.) other business? any new business?” (Boden, 1994: 104, 105).

In comparison to the doctor-patient consultation closings, the particular wording or formulation of the TCU makes a difference. Using ‘some’ rather than ‘any’ when inviting the patient to talk about their concerns may allow more concerns to be identified (Heritage, Robinson, Elliott, Beckett, & Wilkes, 2007). Asking the patient ‘Do you have some other concerns that you’d like to address today?’ or ‘Is there something else you want to address in the visit today?’ has been shown by Heritage et al (2007) to be more likely to lead to the patient mentioning further concerns; whereas asking ‘Do you have any other concerns’ or ‘Is there anything else you want to address in the visit today?’ is a question design that favours a ‘no’ response.

S2’s turn is supported by embodied actions as he taps his hand once on the table while producing the sequence closing device to mark topic bounding and then gazes down at the meeting agenda making sure that they have covered all the points for the meeting. Once S2 taps his hand the other co-participants turns to gaze at S2.

Secondly, during the 1.7 seconds gap in line 2, S2 turns to look at S1 and S4 then slowly turns to look at S3 who shakes her head. When S2 slowly turns to look at S3, both S1 and S4 shake their head displaying a ‘no’ answer. This set of embodied actions and monitoring each other’s nonverbal actions create an interactional space (Mondada, 2013). This physical interactional space is used as an interactional resource to take a turn or withdraw from a topic. The co-participants pass these opportunity spaces for moving out of closings (Button, 1987: 128), thereby showing readiness to close the meeting.

Thirdly, in lines 3-5, after the co-participants display through embodied actions that they have nothing further to contribute on last mentionable, S2 terminates the invitation to any other business with closing device + pause + an assessment to do another topic bounding and possible pre-closing *no↓ (0.3) good*. These instances of topic bounding are classified as sequence-closing-sequence works to close down a topic and they occur as a preliminary to closing (Liddicoat, 2007). After that, S2 moves on to produce arrangements to confirm details for the next meeting (Schegloff and Sacks, 1973; Button, 1987; Liddicoat, 2007).

Arrangements are commonly found as the last topic in conversation and after an arrangement a conversation may proceed quickly to closing (Liddicoat, 2007; Button, 1991b; Schegloff and Sacks, 1973) *(.hhh) er:: (0.3) time and date of next meeting↓ (.) ten aye em next week↓ (0.7) con[ference] client↑*. Arrangements in this sequential placement involves two interactional features or actions. Firstly, arrangements orient to conversation-in-a-series (Button, 1985) and they provide an orderly link between the current encounter and future encounter (Button, 1985). Secondly, since arrangements provide for future encounter, they allow for closing of the current encounter by proposing that other possible topics for talk could be reserved until the next conversation (Button, 1987; Liddicoat, 2007: 262). These two interactional features or actions allow arrangements to be oriented to a closing implicative and for the chairperson S2 to initiate closing talk as a next action on the completion of an arrangement.

In lines 6 and 8, S1 and S4 produces minimal response tokens as an agreement to close the meeting. Moreover, the co-participants show their orientation to this closure by passing opportunities to speak (Nielsen, 2013) during the gaps in lines 7 and 9.

Fourthly, S2 confirms the name of the meeting room for the next meeting *client room (0.3)* then he does the first check that the meeting is done *(.hhh) (hhh.) (0.2) done↑* after a gap of 0.1 seconds with no response to his check to close the meeting. S2's turn overlaps with S4 confirming the closing with minimal response token *[ye]ah↑* in line 12 and S2 is about to do a second check that the meeting is done in which he continues to produce in line 14 *everything↑ (0.1) good to go↑*. After that, all of the co-participants starts taking turns and overlap to agree that the meeting is done in lines 16, 17 and 18 *good to [go:↑], [yeah], [°yeah°]*.

Finally, in line 20, S2 self-selects with an audible in-breath and makes an explicit ending statement or an announcement of closure (Button, 1991b; Schegloff and Sacks, 1973) (.hhh) end of -°end of meeting↓°.

The following section presents how the participants move the interaction to post-meeting talk which can either be institutional by referring back to previous meeting topic or social talk about drinks or going out for dinner.

#### 5.4.2 Topic Management in Post-Meeting Talk

The following extract is a continuation of the previous one, after the meeting has officially ended with an explicit end statement from the chairperson S2. S1 who is seated right next to S2 initiates a topic through back referencing and in-conversation objects (Button, 1987) to a previous topic and orients to it as not part of the official meeting.

#### *Extract 5.07: licensing* [2:13:31 -2:13:55]

21. S1 so (.) you've got the licensing↑  
22. (0.1)



((S2 is looking at the document))  
((S1 is looking at S2))

23. S2 ah↑ no↑ i wrote a little bit (.) just er::m (0.6)  
24. [about ho::w ] marine scotland (.) were like (.)  
25. S1 [>cuz i was going to say<]  
26. S2 [er::m] (0.3) reducing their applicants and stu[ff↓]  
27. S1 [yeah ]  
28. S1 [uhm] (0.3)  
29. i've got a few (0.2) articles you might want to do  
30. (.) you-you might



((S1 and S2 gaze at the documents))

31. (0.1)



((S2 glances at S3))

32. S2 i just did a lit review you know like on the: el ey cy sort of  
33. things (0.1) [and the levy ]extension certificates a:nd  
34. S1 [privacy and stuff↓]  
35. (0.2)  
36. S1 yeah i'll get the bit about the el ey cys too  
37. (0.3)  
38. S2 °cool°  
39. (0.8)

In line 21, S1 re-topicalises material drawn from prior topic (Liddicoat, 2007). He does so by formulating his TCU as in-conversation objects (Button, 1987), so you've got the licensing↑, which are used to mark the receipt of prior talk and to provide for the speaker to continue (Liddicoat, 2007: 272; Button, 1987). They work to show that S1 is not offering any new material for talk in the conversation, instead, they indicate that the speaker is available for further talk. Interestingly, S1 initiates his re-topicalized material with the transition marker 'so' that has only been deployed by the chairperson during topic transition.

In lines 23 and 24, S2 chooses to produce SPP to S1's in-conversation objects, thereby produce more talk on the topic ah↑ no↑ i wrote a little bit (.) just er::m (0.6) [about ho::w] marine scotland (.) were like (.) [er::m] (0.3) reducing their applicants and stu[ff↓]. While S1 overlaps with acknowledgment responses in lines 25 and 27. The topic is further developed with S1 in lines 28, 29 and 30 providing commentary statements of academic articles that could help S2's writing part [uhm] (0.3) i've got a few (0.2) articles you might want to do(.) you-you might. At the same time both S1 and S2 are gazing at their documents. S1 and S2 do not orient to the interaction or topic as part of the official meeting in regard to the situated and discourse identities. However, they orient to the topic as institutional since it is related to the previous talk. The topic is developed with exchange of information between S2 and S1 in lines 32-36. After that, the topic is terminated with a gap of 0.3 seconds in line 37 then a summary assessment in line 38 produced with a low volume by S2 °cool° (Pomerantz 1984; Howe, 1991).

The final extract of this chapter presents how social talk is managed in post-meeting talk. After the closing of the meeting, all of the co-participants in extract 5.08 participate in social talk. The topic is quickly developed and the interaction is rapidly moving forward when the participants are joking around and trying to decide where to go for Christmas drinks. This extract is similar to social talk in Chapter 4 as there are hardly any gaps or pauses and it is full of humour.

**Extract 5.08: drinks for Christmas**

[1:34:56 – 1:35:24]

1. S7 are we going out (.) fo::r a drink for christmas↓=
2. S6 =>i was gonna say that↑<
3. Ss laughter
4. (.)
5. S6 i think we should↑
6. S3 i'll check my schedule↓ (hhh.)
7. (.)
8. S6 °i was just about to do that too::°=
9. S1 =go for it (.) >where d'you wanna go↑<
10. S7 it's up to you guys↓=
11. S3 =doug doesn't even drink↓
12. S1 i [don't]
13. S3 [ if we go] out for a drink you have to have alcohol↓=
14. S1 = >no i don't↓<=
15. S3 =>yeah you do ↓<=
16. S1 no↓
17. S3 °please↑°=
18. S1 = >nope ↓<
19. S3 °i'll spike it↓°  
(S7 laughs)
20. S1 i'll taste it
21. Ss laughter
22. S1 [the joys of being teetotal ]
23. S6 [e::rrm do we wanna -do we wanna ] go out for da (0.1) drink or
24. do we wanna go out fo::r (.) for dinner maybe↑

In line 1, S7 initiates a topic with an itemised news enquiry (Button and Casey, 1984, 1985) as a first pair part are we going out (.) fo::r a drink for christmas↓=. The topic is very quickly accepted and oriented to by S6 in line 2 with a commentary statement indicating that she was about to ask the same question as S7 =>i was gonna say that↑<, which elicits group laughter in line 3. All of the participants agree to go for drinks and start to check their schedules in lines 5, 6, 8 and 9. After that, in line 9, S1 develops the topic further with an itemised news inquiry (Button and Casey, 1985) in the form of a question (FPP) (Heritage, 2012) >where d'you wanna go↑<, which receives a second pair part from S7 in line 10 it's up to you guys↓=. S3, in line 11, quickly takes a turn with a news item (Button and Casey, 1985) =doug doesn't even drink↓ that leads to stepwise topic transition from talking about Christmas drinks to S1 does not drink. In line 12, S1 confirms S3's news item i [don't], and that is when S3 participates again in the interaction with an overlap in line 13

[if we go] out for a drink you have to have alcohol! =, ordering S1 in a friendly way to drink with them. Interestingly, the topic is rapidly developed from lines 13 to 24 through humour, group laughter and friendly teasing between S1 and S3 orienting to their identity as close friends and classmates. In line 23, S6 overlaps with the previous turn to suggest going for Christmas dinner instead of drinks since S1 does not drink. Unfortunately, the recording was cut off, and so it is not possible to know the end of the topic.

## **5.5 Concluding Remarks**

This chapter has demonstrated that the formulation of each turn achieves an interactional action in relation to topic management. It has illustrated how topic management and multimodality are intertwined, which is evident in:

1) The five sequentially organised moves deployed by the chairperson to make the disjunctive transition to meeting talk or to bring the meeting to a close. More specifically the chairperson recipient-designs his turn by the employment of verbal and embodied actions to be recognised and accepted by the co-participants and the co-participants individually construct their actions in order to orient together to topic transition.

2) How the participants manage topics in roundtable update which is different from the previous forms of talk (see chapter 4). It has illustrated how the co-participants' turns accompanied by embodied actions worked in developing their topic. In addition, how changing discourse identities according to the situated identities is seen as an interactional resource or means to manage topics and move the interaction forward by the co-participants.

3) The turn-taking system in this phase is different from the opening phase since there is a clear control over the floor and speaker transition by the chairperson, and there is a clear floor transition between adjacent floor holders. In this part of the meeting, topic transition is only possible if the chairperson allows it.

4) How topic is developed by a non-chair, non-primary speaker when his/her area of responsibilities is related to the primary speaker and how a non-chair, non-primary speaker puts in more embodied and interactional work to take a turn to develop the topic. This topic development is only possible if the chairperson allows it by changing his/her discourse identity to be the listener and monitor of the ongoing sequence of interaction. Overall, the participants' monitoring and understanding of each other's embodied actions have illustrated how topic management and multimodality are closely interlinked.

## Chapter 6. Multimodal Resources in Different Forms of Topic Resistance

*“Multimodality looks beyond language and examines these multiple modes of communication and meaning making.”*

(Gunther Kress, 2010)

### 6.1 Introduction

This chapter illustrates the multi-dimensional embodiment in different forms of topic resistance<sup>17</sup> that can be seen in the different stages of topic management, i.e. topic development, topic reinitiation, stepwise topic transition, and hasty topic termination to resist a disagreement. The analysis examines how gazing is one of the foundational forms of resistance accompanied with multi-semiotic resources that the participants utilise to reveal their unwillingness to participate in the talk. It also demonstrates the extent to which multiple bodily movements co-occur, as well as the use and interplay of bodily resources which is still not well explored in topic management. It shows that multiple bodily movements are a regular feature of spoken language use and they matter when analysing how topics are managed. This is consistent with the notion that language is inherently multimodal (Stec et al, 2016).

### 6.2 Resistance in Topic Development

After presenting the detailed sequential analysis of one of the topics in social talk in Chapter 4, this section demonstrates participants' displays of resistance to developing a sensitive topic. They do so by displaying their unwillingness, both verbally and non-verbally, to join the topic. Extract 6.01 is the start of their fourth meeting. The chairperson of this meeting (S1) initiates a topic while waiting for the meeting to start. The participants are talking about their last weekend, which included meeting Caleb's father as part of their weekend plan.

#### *Extract 6.01: The weekend*

[00:00:03 – 00:00:56]

1. S1 good weekend everyone↑
2. (0.7)
3. S2 yea:h >°it was good°<
4. (1.6)
5. S1 how's em (1.3) caleb's parents and stuff↑
6. (0.8)
7. S2 i don't know i didn't see him actually (0.3) i
8. [was sort of ]=
9. S1 [°did you not↑°]

---

<sup>17</sup> Resistance in this research refers to the unwillingness to participate in the interaction, not orienting/responding to a particular action or not accepting it (an action can be oriented to but necessarily accepted).

10. S2 =like i was (.) locked in my room doing er (.) work  
 11. yesterday  
 12. (2.6)  
 13. S3 apparently caleb's father was going around kissing  
 14. all the girls(.)you missed out



((S3 looks at his bag and put it on the floor))



((S3 looks at S1))

((S4 puts a folder in his bag and quickly glances at S3 then looks away and continues to put his folder in his bag))

((S2 looks at S3 then immediately looks down))

15. (0.7)  
 16. S1 i [kno::w ] what [a sha:me ]  
 17. Tan [(°see ya later °) ]  
 18. S3 [(°see ya°) ] it was  
 19. actually(0.9) yeah



((S4, S5 and S2 are all gazing down))

20. (3.0)  
 21. S1 ☺you said- you said that then ☺



((S1 undoing her coat while looking at S3))



((S3 opens his coke bottle then looks at S1 and laughs))

23. (0.8)  
 24. S1 who said what↑(0.8) so we won't forget it °we were

25. recording↑°(0.9) >okay↑ no problem<



((S1 takes off her coat while smiling and withdrawing her gaze away from S3 and turning around to put her coat on the chair))

((S3 slowly withdraws his gaze from S1 and starts drinking his coke))

26. (7.5)

((S1 starts to get ready by opening her notebook and the rest follow suit))

27. S1 i take it there wasn't a lecture then↑

28. (1.0)

29. S3 when↑

30. (0.2)

31. S4 no

32. (0.5)

33. S2 is that next

34. (0.3)

35. S3 if there was i didn't go

36. (1.5)

37. S4 well (.) no one else did(0.8) either

38. (0.4)

The interaction in this extract is different from the rest of the opening phase in the other meetings. Firstly, the social talk in this meeting is brief (lines 1-25) and there are few cases of overlaps to take turns. Secondly, extract 6.01 is replete with pauses and gaps within and between turns. Thirdly, there is hardly any laughter, humour or assessment, in contrast with the rest of their social talks (see Chapter 4). Finally, the participants do not develop the topic further; instead they withdraw from participating in the topic through their embodied actions.

S1 initiates a sequence (lines 1-3) of adjacency pair by a topic-initial elicitor that works as an introduction of a potential topical talk. S2's response in line 3 projects his unwillingness to deliver any information about the weekend (Jefferson, 1980). This is evident with the fast and lowered speech volume of (>°it was good°<) and the gap of 1.6 in line 4. During this gap, none of the other participants self-select to take a turn to provide another SPP to S1's FPP. Consequently, in line 5, S1 reaches the anchor position (Schegloff, 1986) and launches a topic by an itemised news inquiry in the form of a question (FPP) (Heritage, 2012), which is considered to be a 'news generational' device (Button and Casey, 1985). The recipient's - S2's - no-news response leads to the production of an itemised news inquiry by S1 that pursues talk on a particular topic. By asking about specific recipient related activity in contempt of no new response or a long gap of silence, the itemised news inquiry can be seen as 'accusatory'. In other words, it suggests that a possible news item is being withheld (Sidnell 2010:229).

Line 5 is designed with an itemised news inquiry to be responded to by any of the (potential) participants as one of their weekend plans to meet Caleb's father. In line 7, S2 took the initiative again with self-selection to provide a dispreferred SPP to S1's question (FPP). In lines 10 and 11, S2 gives a reason for his answer that shows his inability to provide further news about Caleb's father. The long gap, of 2.6 seconds, in line 12 works to close the current sequence and topic. This can be shown by the absence of solicitations for further talk on the current topic (Maynard, 1980).

After the long gap of 2.6 seconds in line 12, the topic is expected to be terminated since the participants are reluctant to participate in the topic. This is evident with the series of silences and participants' passing up their turns. Moreover, the recipients of a topic-generating move are withholding the news item (Button and Casey, 1985) when presented with the opportunity to tell it.

However, S3 collaborates in further topic development (topic progression) in lines 13 and 14 with an affirmative declarative clause (sequence expansion), which provides extra information 'news' about Caleb's father. This extra information promotes gossip and changes the interaction as a result of topic sensitivity (*apparently caleb's father was going around kissing all the girls*). S3 orients to the use of the itemised news inquiry to generate the topic rather than simply fill a gap in knowledge (what happened at the weekend) by adding another TCU (*(.)you missed out*) to his turn after a micro-second pause. The use of (*apparently*) means something can be either true or false. The employment of this adverb opens the floor to everyone for further talk about the news.

The way S3 delivers the news and how the participants receive it is important to show their unwillingness to join the topic. The following embodied actions all occurred in parallel, indicating their reluctance to interact when a sensitive topic is being raised. The participants' gesture is seen as a 'conversation of gestures' (Mead, 1934) and as an individual response to S3's turn.

When S3 starts delivering the news in line 13, all participants look up at S3 and acknowledge his turn, which makes them active listeners to the topic. When S3 starts giving the news about Caleb's father, he looks away and busies himself by taking his bag and putting it on the floor. Interestingly, S3 did not make any eye contact with the other participants (in a conversation

when a speaker delivers news, the other speakers make eye contact with the news-teller). S3's utterance of ((.)you missed out) could result in a possible topic development.

S4 puts a folder in his bag when S3 starts delivering the news. When S3 reaches the main point of the news (caleb's father was going around kissing all the girls), S4 glances at S3 and then quickly looks away in the micro second pause of S3's turn and continues to put the folder in the bag before S4 places his bag on the table. The bag is placed between S4 and S3, which is unusual for their meetings; they normally put their bags down on the floor or away from each other. Additionally, S2 looks at S3 when he first starts delivering the news and then immediately looks down once S3 mentions the 'kissing the girls' part of his turn.

One observation is that none of the participants show any element of surprise, disbelief or shock upon hearing this news. However, how the participants receive the news from S3 is unusual. The way they quickly withdrew their gazes and avoided eye contact with S3 and S1 after the news is delivered by S3 is an indication of withdrawing themselves from the topic and showing unwillingness to develop it. The participants are reluctant to progress the topic further. The participants may have not participated in topic development or maintenance. However, by virtue of their presence they become part of the topic by being in the status of listenership (being the audience of the dialogue between S3 and S1). They do not stop or terminate the topic verbally, but their embodied actions show their unwillingness to participate in the topic.

As noted above, S1's response in line 16 does not only pick the topic for further development and encourage further gossip, but also shows that S1 has prior knowledge of what Caleb's father did last weekend. This is evident in the first lengthened TCU of S1's turn (i kno::w) and her lengthened disappointment for missing the situation in the second TCU of S1's turn (what a sha:me). S1's turn is overlapped with Tan's leave-taking in line 17 (Tan is the data collector) and exchanges of goodbyes with S3 in Line 18. In Lines 18 and 19, after the exchange of goodbyes, S3 produces an incomplete utterance (Sidnell, 2010) and does not continue in developing the topic. The rest of the participants (S4, S5 and S2) show readiness to start the meeting by gazing down and avoiding to have a mutual gaze with the primary speakers (S1 and S3). In addition, during the gap of 3.0 seconds in line 20, none of S5, S5 and S2 took a turn to develop the topic, which is another indication of resistance and unwillingness to join the topic.

In line 21, S1 starts to terminate the topic. Firstly, she self-selects to take a turn designed for S3 (addressed recipient) with a smile voice (*you said- you said that then*). In line 22, S3 responds to S1's turn non-verbally by first acknowledging S1's turn by having eye-contact with S1 and by accepting S1's turn with laughter. Secondly, in lines 24 and 25, S1 terminates the topic in a humorous way as it was said with a giggling voice. S1 explicitly indicates that they are being recorded, and then produces a pre-closing (*okay↑*). The use of (*no problem*) appears to curtail the development of topical trajectory (Sidnell, 2010). Both of S1 and S3 busy themselves while producing their turns, which can be seen as a way of distancing themselves from interacting. All participants accept topic termination by withdrawing their gazes and not taking a turn during the gap of 7.5 seconds. Instead, S1 starts opening up her notebooks and the rest follow suit, showing readiness to start.

S1 does not start the meeting immediately after terminating the previous topic. In line 27, S1 initiates another topic with a disjunctive topic transition (Sacks, 1976). S1 initiates a topic related to the institutional context but it is not a topic to do with the actual meeting, i.e. information gathering, reporting back their assigned work and making decision (lines 27-37). This works as a 'bridging' strategy between social talk and meeting preparatory talk. It retrieves participants' interaction before starting the actual meeting, which is evident when S1, S2, S3 and S4 participate in the topic.

The sensitivity of a topic can be seen in how the parties treat it during their interaction through verbal and non-verbal actions. Participants' choice of not joining in a topic and showing readiness to start the meeting is a form of resistance. This extract has also shown how the deployment of the 'bridging' strategy by the chairperson (lines 27-37) worked to retrieve the interaction (Weijts et al., 1993; Linell and Bredmar, 1996; Silverman, 1997). It has also shown how the listeners orient to what has been said through their embodied actions.

### **6.3 Resistance in Reinitiating a Terminated Topic**

This section presents another form of resistance to ratify and accept a previously terminated topic that is reinitiated by the chairperson. In this extract, the participants are all engaged in signing the minutes from the previous meeting as well as managing topics of the interaction.

*Extract 6.02: It might relax a bit*  
[00:02:54 – 00:03:28]

1. S4 well (.) hope everyone enjoyed their brief (.) weekend

2. break (.hhh)  
 ((S4 gazes at S3 and S7))  
 ((S3 lifts his head up to look at S4 then nods his head))  
 ((S7 turns his head and looks at S4))  
 ((S2 is signing the minutes))  
 ((S1 is checking the second minutes after signing them ))
3. S3 °yeah↑ well↓°  
 4. S4 two days and then (.)straight back into  
 5. (.)[advanced] hydrodynamics↓ that was fun↓  
 ((S1 and S2 exchanging the minutes to sign))
6. S3 [°yeah° ]  
 7. Ss ((laughter))  
 ((S2 laughing while signing))
8. S4 °yea:h°  
 9. (4.0)  
 ((S1 passes paper to S4))
10. S7 ((S3 passes paper to S7)) i thought (.)arin used to do  
 °would have done that one°  
 ((S7 gazes at S1))  
 ((S3, S1 and S2 gaze at S7))  
 ((S4 gazes at S7 then quickly looks back at the paper in his hand))
11. S3 °no°=  
 12. S1 =he does part of it  
 ((S1 gazes at S7))  
 ((S7 gazes at S1 and nods his head))  
 ((S2 gazes at S1))  
 ((S6 and S3 look down))
13. S2 °who did it↑°



((mutual gazing between S2 and S1))

14. S1 °huh↑°=  
 ((mutual gazing between S2 and S1))
15. S4 =so hopefully it'll er

S2 = is that u:m  
 ((S2 gazes at S1))



16. it might it might relax a

S1 (°unclear speech°)



((S2 gazes at S1))

17. bit

S2 (°unclear speech°)



((S2 gazes at S1))



((S4 straightens his back and gazes at S7 and S3))  
 ((S3 looks down at the table))  
 ((S7 looks at the paper received earlier from S2 and signs it))  
 ((S2 and S1 are talking to each other))  
 ((S4 looks down again at the paper received from S1 and sign it))

18. S1 °the same chap↓°



((S1 nods and smiles at S2 while S7 passes paper to S3 then turns to look at S1))

19. S2 oh aarin or darin=  
 20. S1 =yeah=  
 21. S2 =oh  
 22. S1 yeah no it's er i don't know(unclear speech)=  
 23. S2 =oh right=

After S4's (the chairperson) work-related joke and the participants' orientation to it (see extract 4.06), the recipients treat the shared laughter in line 7, S4's soft and lengthened °yeh:h° in line 8 and the long noticeable gap of 4.0 seconds, as a closing sequence of the work-related joke. As a result, the participants join in a different topic initiated by S7 in line 10. As analysed in the previous extract (4.06), all the participants turn their heads towards S7 and keep gazing at him until he reaches the end of his turn. However, S4 gazes at S7 but quickly shifts his gaze to look back at the document placed in front of him (the paper that he had received from S1) before S7 finishes his turn. The embodied action of gaze withdrawal and looking at the document is signalling S4's withdrawal from the topic. The rest of the participants' gaze is directed towards S7. Once S7 receives two SPPs in lines 11 and 12 for

his FPP, S6, S3 and S4 look down at the documents in front of them, except for S2, who maintains her gaze at S1 (resulting in a mutual gaze) and directs her turn of FPP to him.

What appears to happen in lines 13-15 is that S6, S3 and S7 withdrew from the topic about Arin by withdrawing their gazes and busying themselves with the document. It is only S2 and S1 who continue to develop the topic further. Looking at where the participants are sitting, S2 and S1 are sitting close to each other. Their topic development is observed to be 'exclusive talk' between themselves because of the unclear soft low volume speech, which cannot be heard clearly from the recordings (audio and video). Talking in a lower volume than the rest of their utterances indicates the 'exclusiveness' of the topic development. The reason for this 'exclusiveness' could be that S2 and S1 are displaying prior experience whereby S1 and S2 draw upon their 'mutually assumed knowledge of one another's biography' to occasion talk about the third party (Arin) (Maynard and Zimmerman 1984: 403; see also Stokoe 2000: 192). In line 15, the interaction is split into two sequences, i.e. schisming (Goffman 1963; Sacks et al., 1974). First, between S1 and S2 on one side (with their 'exclusive talk'). Second, between S4 and the rest of the participants on the other side. This is illustrated below.

S4 straightens his back to self-select a turn in line 15 with a side sequence (Jefferson 1972) within two ongoing sequences of S2 and S1 interacting together, and the potential addressed recipients of S4 engaging in the activity of signing and looking down at their documents. S4's turn in line 15 (*so: hopefully it'll er it might it might relax a bit*) is related to his previous topic of the work-related joke in lines 1, 2, 4 and 5. Given that, their weekend was brief and they have to go straight back to work, S4's work-related turn is not only a joke but is also an outburst of sarcasm complaining about going to work after a brief weekend ('British stereotype' to complain about going back to work after the weekend). S4 in line 15 mitigates his sarcasm by hoping that 'it will relax a bit' ('it' refers to 'work'). It is unclear whether S4 was attending (listening) to the topic about Arin but he self-selects after S7's question (FPP) about Arin received an answer (SPP). S4 orients to the 'exclusiveness' of S1 and S2's topic development as 'exclusive talk' by not addressing them as recipients. This is evident with S4 not including them in his gaze at the rest of the participants and he did not stop or attend to their 'exclusive talk'. Once S4 straightens his back to take a turn in line 15 and produces the transition marker (*so*), he lifts his head to gaze at the potential addressed recipients in front of him (S3 and S7). None of the addressed recipients (not even S6) was attending to S4's turn. They are all busy engaging with the activity of signing the minutes and checking their documents. S4 does not cut his turn or make any interactional movement or

work to gain their attention. When S4 gets no response (verbally or non-verbally), he withdraws his gaze to look down at the document and sign it.

S4's misplacement of his turn within two ongoing sequences resulted in an unsuccessful attempt to reintroduce a topic. Despite gazing at the other participants, which could be to invite a response, the participants show a form of resistance by not orienting to S4's turn in line 15. S4's turn gets no uptake by the other, it is not continued by the speaker himself, it is not returned to later in the meeting, and the fact that this topic is abandoned is not given special treatment. S4's turn in line 15 is 'doing non-next' to the prior utterance (Arin), and not at all related to the prior speaker's immediate talk (Nielsen 2013: 44). The reason and action for S4's turn is ambiguous. It is not clear if S4's turn is to re-establish his topic in lines 1, 2, 4 and 5, or if S4's turn is a pre-closing statement of the MPT. If the participants respond to S4's statement in line 15, it could have resulted in either developing the topic further or acceptance of the pre-closing statement. It is worth mentioning here that S4 did not show readiness to start the meeting while producing his turn; he was holding his pen and about to continue signing the documents (meeting minutes). In addition, the other participants do not show availability or readiness for the meeting to start either (see extract 5.01 for a continuation of this extract and how the chairperson made a disjunctive topic transition to meeting talk).

#### **6.4 Resistance in Stepwise Topic Transition**

One aspect of the chairperson's role is to take responsibilities for ensuring the agenda is fully covered in the time available (Holmes and Stubbe, 2003). This involves moving the co-participants back to the agenda topics during the action of topic transition. In this data, topic control strategy is typically signalled verbally and nonverbally by a firm and explicit statement.

The following extract shows how S4, S7 and S1 are involved in topic negotiation sequence of S7 and S1 interacting to develop the topic through a stepwise topic transition and S4 resist this transition twice by not accepting it. The subsequent analysis of the extract reveals step by step how this sequence of topic negotiation is initiated, picked up, stopped and how the series of verbal and nonverbal actions are accounted for. It also reveals the interactional work done by S4, S7 and S1 through the investigation of their verbal and embodied actions and how they are intertwined, yet deployed in an orderly interactional means.

Prior to this extract, S1 started to provide an update of his work on prop design after being selected by the chairperson S4. This extract illustrates how topic shift is negotiated and how turn allocation and topic are overtly managed by the chairperson functioning as a ‘central switching station’ for the meeting (Boden, 1994: 99).

**Extract 6.03: Just a question for you**

[00:14:46 - 00:15:36]

1. S4 =>yeah but< they're not THAT big are they↑
2. (0.5)
3. S1 well no (.) we'll just go bigger↑
4. (0.3)
5. S4 NO↓ i'm just saying it'll be (.) interesting [to: ↑ ] (.) have a
6. S1 [yea:h↑ ]
7. S4 a prototype design fo:r↑ (.) a very very large duct↓ ((sniggering))
8. (0.7)
9. S1 °yes (.) interesting who's ducted now↑°=

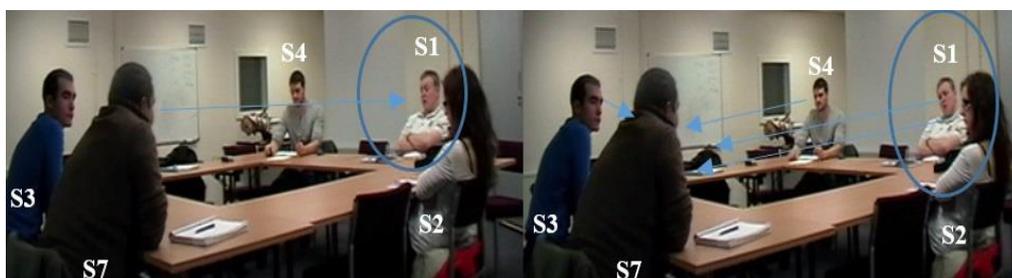


((S4 moves his body back, straightens his back and gazes down at the agenda))

10. S7 =°jus-° just a question for you dough↓ (0.1) d-do you have any ti:me



((S7 gaze at S1))  
((S4 gazes at S7 then places both of his arms on the table))



((S1 turns to gaze at S7, raises his eyebrows and tilt head right side))  
((S2, S3 turns to look at S7))

11. f- (0.8) sca:les o:r any: to >you know↑< whe:n (.) thin [gs will ]
12. S1 [WHEN i ]
13. want to get things done↓ (.) er::m=

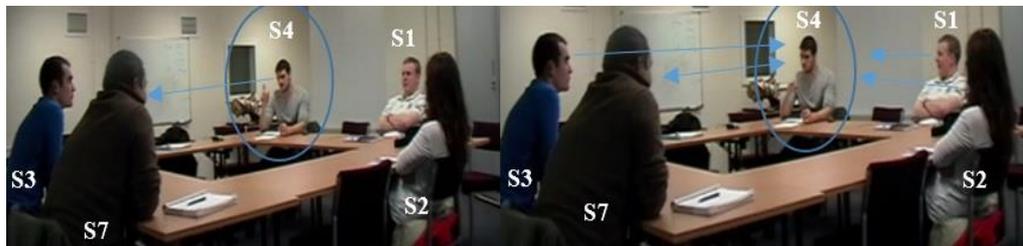


((S1 raises his eyebrows and lifts his head upright))



((S4 turns to glance at S1))  
 ((mutual gaze between S1 and S7))

14. S4 =((tongue click)) this is, (.) the next discussion,



((S4 gazes at S7, raises his right hand with index finger pointing at S7))  
 ((S3, S7, S2 and S1 gaze at S4))

15. (0.3)  
 ((S4 continues pointing at S7 with index finger))  
 ((S3, S7, S2 and S1 continue gazing at S4))

16. S7 °sorry!°



((S7 quickly raises his right hand up then down at S4))  
 ((S4 stops pointing at S7 and lowers his right hand))  
 ((S1, S2 and S3 look at S4))

17. S4 [so:↑ °i just°]

18. S7 [°okay!° ] (.) JUST BECAUSE i want to see:↓ (.) [where we]



((S4 gaze at S7))  
 ((S7 gazes at S1))

19. S1 [ yeah↓ ]



((S1 nods his head and smile))  
 ((S4 gazes at S1))  
 ((S2, S3 gaze at S7))

20. S7 can fit↓ how we can help [and that] sort of [things↓] (.) [cos ]  
 21. S1 [ i know↓ ]  
 22. S1 [ yeah↓ ]  
 23. S4 [yea:h↑]



((S4 gazes down at the paper on the table with a left open palm up gesture))

24. S7 it's e:r=  
 25. S1 =yea:h↑ no i'm aware of that↓ (0.3) er:m (0.2)=



((S1 is gazing away))  
 ((S2, S3 and S7 look at S1))

26. S4 =i just wanted to hear what everyone (0.6) was gonna do first↓



((S4 looks at S7 then looks down at the agenda))



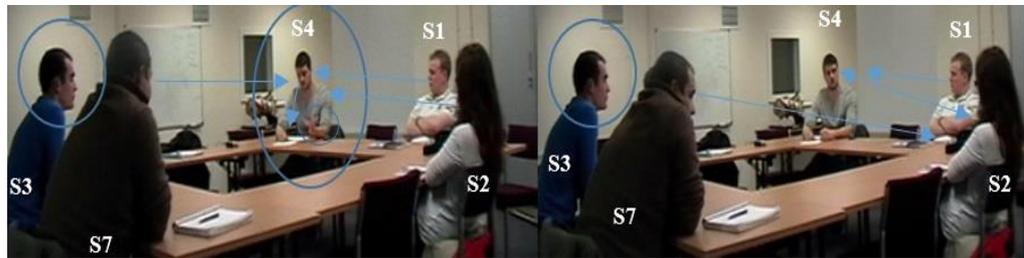
((S7 nods and quickly raise his right hand then places it down))  
 ((S1, S2 and S3 look at S4))

27. [and ] then we can discuss [how ] we're gonna↑ (0.4) get



((S4 gazes at S7))  
 ((S1 and S2 gaze at S4))  
 ((S3 nods his head and gazes down))  
 ((S7 nods his head))

28. S7 [yeah]  
 29. S7 [ >sure↑< ]  
 30. S4 everything done in time [(0.5) ] together↑ (0.3) bu:t i mean↑=  
 31. S7 [ >sure< ]  
 32. S1 =yeah [er: ] okay fine↓  
 33. S7 [ >yeah↓< ]  
 34. (0.3)  
 35. S4 yeah↓ well i was just (0.6) wondering where (0.4) ellie (0.3)



((S4 points at S2 with an open hand while looking at the agenda))  
 ((S4 turns to look at S2))  
 ((S1, S2 and S7 gaze at S4))  
 ((S3 gazes down))

36. where are you gonna (0.6) [go ] with this now↑



((S7, S3, S4 and S1 are looking at S2))  
 ((S2 is looking at S4))

In lines 1-9, S1 and S4 reach the end of their topic as S1 in line 9 takes a turn with summary assessment produced with a soft voice °yes (.) interesting who's ducted now↑°, serving to affiliate with S4's prior turn and terminate the topic from further discussion followed by a gap (Howe, 1991). By doing so, S1 not only ends a topic but also brings a close to the sequence (lines 1-8) and opens up the interactional space for speaker shift. During S1's production of the summary assessment, S4 moves his body back from the table, straightens his back and gazes down at the meeting agenda as a way to signal topic termination and transition.

In line 10, S7 self-selects to take a turn by latching with the prior one preventing the topic from terminating. He does so by directing FPP to S1, addressing him by his name and gazes at him =°jus-° just a question for you dough↓. Once S1's name is addressed, he instantly responds with mutual gaze, raised eyebrows and tilted head to his right side. S1's non-verbal response shows his acceptance of S7's FPP. While S7's producing the beginning of his turn, S2 turns to gaze at S7, S4 gazes at S7 then places his arms on the table, indicating attentive listenership.

In lines 10 and 11, S7 continues to formulate his turn of FPP with hitches, lengthening and pauses due to uncertainty and hesitation. S7's turn in lines 10 and 11 provides to initiate an embedded question sequence (Button and Casey, 1984), which results in an apparent attempt to stepwise topic transition. In line 12, S1 overlaps with a reformulation of S7's FPP in line 13 [WHEN i] want to get things done↓ (.) er:m (0.2)=. S1's turn is accompanied with gesture of S1 raising his eyebrows again and lifting his head upright to the 'home position' (Schegloff, 2002), indicating a shift from being a recipient of S1's FPP to a primary speaker selected by S7 -a non-primary and non-chair speaker- to provide SPP. S1's overlap is 'progressional' (Jefferson, 1983, 1986) as it is placed at a grammatical point in the prior turn whe:n (.) thin[gs will] where there has been some type of breakdown in the progressivity of the turn with S7's hitches, lengthening and pauses. Jefferson observes that this type of behaviour may be aimed at getting the recipient to become active (the same analytical point is made by Goodwin, 1981; also by Chevalier, 2008, a later researcher on this phenomena). It is also 'recognitional' (Jefferson, 1983, 1986) in that it attends to the general sense of the ongoing utterance.

During S1's turn in lines 12 and 13, S4 turns to glance at S1 while S1 and S7 maintain their mutual gaze and S1 produces a lengthened hesitation marker er::m to give him more time to think in order to provide SPP. However, in line 14, S4, who has been silent for some time listening, intrudes to prevent the stepwise topic transition before they have covered all the relevant topics in relation to the meeting agenda (Holmes and Stubbe, 2003). S4 immediately latches with the previous turn with an audible tongue click that cuts off S1's lengthened hesitation marker. In line 14, S4 designs his turn as a firm explicit statement that this is the next discussion point and it does not fit at this point this is↓ (.) the next discussion↓. S4 heavily supports his explicit statement with embodied actions as he gazes at S7 (the initiator of the stepwise topic transition) and raises his right hand with index finger pointing at S7 while all the co-participants gaze at S4. S4 continues to point at S7 with mutual gaze until

S7 apologises in line 16 °sorry↓° accompanied with iconic gesture by quickly raises his right hand then down again at S4.

After S7's apology, S4 in line 17 produces a prolonged transition marker so:↑, which serves to control topic and bring the group back to the agenda topics (Holmes and Stubbe, 2003: 73, 74). However, this turn is interrupted with an overlap by S7 in line 18. S7's turn in lines 18, 20, 24 is designed as an explanation for his action in lines 10 and 11 [°okay↓°] (.) JUST BECAUSE i want to see: (.) [where we] can fit↓ how we can help [and that] sort of [things↓] (.) [cos] it's e:r=.

S7's overlap in line 18 is interruptive and competitive as he raises his voice at the third beat [°okay↓°] (.) JUST BECAUSE while moving his right hand to point forward as he raises his volume and competes for the floor, whereas S4 lowers this voice at the third beat [so:↑°i just°] and drops out from the overlapping talk (Schegloff, 2000). This is different from how the participants compete for the floor in social talk (see Chapter 5) by continuing their turns until one of them drops out.

Interestingly, during the production of S7's turn (lines 18, 20 and 24), he gazes at S1, not S4, to explain his previous action. Addressing S1 with this combination of talk and directed gaze aims to get S1 the recipient to become active (Goodwin, 1981) in developing the topic. By doing so, S7 is making a second attempt to pursue his FPP in lines 10 and 11. S7's turn in lines 18, 20 and 24 is a reformulation of his previous turns in lines 10 and 11 by targeting a specific item - 'S1's time scale or plan for finishing certain things in his part of the project'. On the one hand, in lines 19, 21 and 22, S1 affiliates and aligns with S7 nonverbally by nodding his head and smiling, and verbally with multiple affirmative response tokens produced with falling intonation [yeah↓] [i know↓] [yeah↓]. On the other hand, S4 in line 23 displays disaffiliation by giving a short verbal response said with raising intonation [yea:h↑] and nonverbally by withdrawing his gaze from S7 towards the paper on the table, with his left hand open-palm-up gesture.

In line 25, S1 latches with the previous turn with i'm aware of that↓ as an upgrade of [i know↓], displaying an understanding of S7's reasons for his question initiated in lines 10 and 11 (time plan) and that he is aware of it. Then he continues to hold the floor with a prolonged hesitation marker in an attempt to answer S7's previous question. The same action is previously deployed at the beginning of the sequence by S1 in line 12 and 13. S4 does the

same action previously deployed in line 14 by intruding and taking a turn to cut off S1's ongoing turn being held with a hesitation marker that indicates he is thinking of SPP to respond to S7's question. However, the way S4 designs his turn is different from his first attempt to stop the transition in line 14. This time S4 orients to the meeting agenda.

S4's turn in lines 26, 27 and 30 is designed to reaffirm the proceeding of the meeting agenda and oriented to his situated identity as the chairperson. Firstly, S4 refers to the ongoing topical agenda that has not finished yet (roundtable update) =i just wanted to hear what everyone (0.6) was gonna do first↓ then indicates the next agenda item, which is the time plan for each one's work and that is where S7's proposed topic will be discussed [and ] then we can discuss [how] we're gonna ↑(0.4) get everything done in time [(0.5) ] together↑ (0.3) bu:t i mean↑=.

While S4 produces his turns, he orients to the meeting agenda. He first looks up at S7 to secure a mutual gaze as he starts uttering his turn =i just wanted, then looks back down at the meeting agenda during his production of to hear what everyone, before lifting his head up to gaze at S7 and the rest of the co-participants for the rest of his turn.

During S4's extended turn (lines 26, 27 and 30), all of the co-participants, one after the other, display affiliation and align with S4. They display alignment verbally with minimal affirmative responses produced by S1 and S7 [yeah],[>sure↑<], [>sure<], =yeah [er:] okay fine↓, [>yeah↓< ] in lines 28, 29, 31 and 32 as well as nonverbally with head-nods while gazing at S7 or down (lines 26 and 27) and iconic gesture in line 26 by S7 (the same iconic gesture that has been deployed by S7 when providing an apology in line 16). Minimal responses suggest that a participant has nothing further to contribute to the topic (they are part of the pre-sequence for closings in dyadic conversations; see Schegloff & Sacks 1973). This combination of talk, directed gaze and body movement serves to accept S4's verbal and nonverbal actions to resist and stop the stepwise topic transition and cease the topic negotiation sequence. The gap in line 34 reconfirms this topic termination (Howe, 1991) as the co-participants pass the opportunity to take a turn. It is then that S4, in lines 35 and 36, takes a turn and makes a stepwise topic transition to the next update by allocating a turn to S2. He does so by pointing at S2 with an open hand while gazing down at the agenda, before gazing at S2, which results in a mutual gaze and indicating her name.

S4's interactional work is a form of resistance to stop S7's stepwise topic transition and to reorient the group to the interactional trajectory of roundtable update. Overall, the interactional 'business at hand' (Garfinkel, 1967) of negotiating topic and of implementing and re-implementing speech turns can be seen to constitute much of the interactional work.

### **6.5 Resistance of a Disagreement: Hasty Topic Termination**

After the participants have provided their work updates, the chairperson makes a topic transition to the next discussion point in the meeting agenda. In terms of the topic transition to the next discussion point, the transition looks identical to the canonical instances examined previously in topic transition to meeting talk (see Chapter 5) in that the chairperson makes the transition through the sequentially organised interactional moves except for the 'statement to get started.' Therefore, the analysis of the transition to the next discussion point is not provided. The next discussion point is to check everyone's time plan and how quickly they want to get things done since each participant needs the information or results from another participant whose part of the project is related to him/her. Referring to the previous extract (6.03), this is where S7's embedded question sequence (Button and Casey, 1984) (stepwise topic transition) fits.

The following extract presents a case of disagreement between the participants. S7 suggests having a meeting every two weeks instead of once every week to gain more time to work on their findings and present them to the group. All the participants agree with S7 except for S1 as his concern is that in two weeks if they have not done what they said they will do or if they find that it is suddenly going wrong then they have lost that week. During the interaction, the participants align with S7 by taking turns to give their opinions, including the chairperson. S2 then tries to get S1 to agree by suggesting alternating between quick brief informal meeting to have a check-in once a week to see if everyone is on target and a formal meeting where they present their work. Extract 6.04 illustrates the closing sequence of the disagreement by the chairperson.

***Extract 6.04: right well that's that***  
[00:29:08 - 00:30:52]

1. S1 =but you see e::r but i don't have e::r (0.1) i don't have a problem



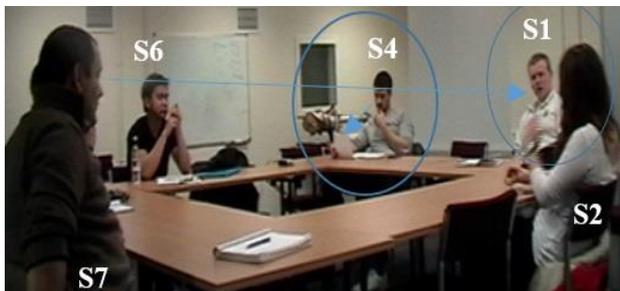
((mutual gaze between S1 and S7))  
 ((S2, S6 gaze at S1))  
 ((S4 holds the agenda with his right hand raising it slightly up the table and gaze at the agenda))

2. with that (.) cos su:rely: (.) you can come to the first week's
3. meeting (0.1) you present and you go:: (.hhh) i'm halfway
4. through testing (.) results look okay at the moment (.) i'll
5. tell you next week how it's going (.hhh)[and at the end of it ]
6. S2 [yeah↑ i think that's why]



((S1, S7 and S6 turns to gaze at S2))  
 ((S4 is still doing the previous action in line 1))

7. (.) we need an informal (0.1)=
8. S1 =yeah↓=
9. S2 =and formal (.) vice versa (.) you know - you know alternating↓=
10. S1 =>yeah yeah< okay (.) e::rm [when you say ]



((mutual gaze between S1 and S2))  
 ((S7 gazes at S1))  
 ((S4 is still doing the previous action in line 1))

11. S4 [right well that's]



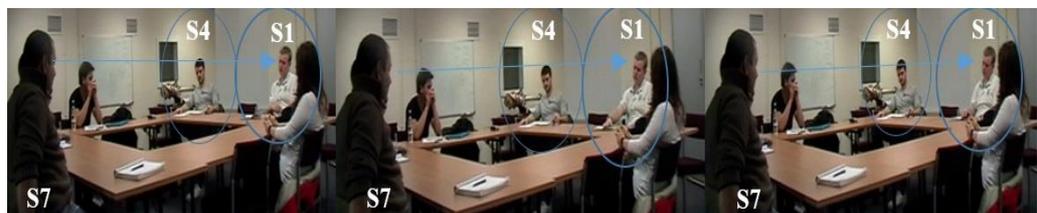
((S4 gazes at the slightly raised agenda, flicks his raised left hand and shakes his head several times))

12. that (.) we'll just have (.) a brief (0.4) progress meeting on (0.5)  
 13. monday then [(.) a::nd] that'll be fine



((S6, S7, S2 gaze at S4))  
 ((S1 gazes down ))  
 ((S4 places the agenda on the table and gazes down))

14. S2 [yeah ]  
 15. S2 >yeah<=  
 16. S4 =( .hhh) e::rm [(0.2) ((tongue click)) ]



((S4 gazes down at the table))  
 ((S1 gazes down at the table and reaches for his notebook and drags it towards him))  
 ((S7 gazes at S1))

17. S7 [are you happy we did that↑]



((S7 gazes at S1))  
 ((S1 glances at S7))  
 ((S4 gazes at S7))

18. (0.2)  
 19. S1 °yeah yeah°



((S1 gazes down))  
 ((S7 gazes at S1))  
 ((S4 gazes at S7))

20. (0.1)  
 21. S4 >i think< the thing e:r i don't know (.) if this is for advice



((S4 gazes at S7 then the participants))  
 ((S1 gazes down))  
 ((S7 gazes at S4 and moves his body forward))  
 ((S3, S2 gaze at S4))

22. i mean i'm sure (0.4) when people wanna (.) get down to work  
 23. (.) they get down to work but i find sometimes (hhh.) to get work  
 24. started a bit earlier (0.1) you need a little push



((S7 sniggers))  
 ((S4 gazes at S7 and smiles))

25. (.)  
 26. S4 (.hhh) no (.) i mea:n (0.3) you know like (.) it's not like (0.5)  
 ((S7 sniggering))  
 27. i'm gonna come (0.1) straight out of this meeting today and i'm  
 28. gonna start straight away on my project (.) i'd like to be in  
 29. that mind set (.) but (.) i'll be honest with you i'm not (.) i'll  
 30. usually start in a couple of days a few days (.) i'd rather people  
 31. (0.1) (hhh) get on top of people almost say (.) o:h you're doing  
 32. this (.) you're doing that (.) i mean i d- i don't mind being  
 33. °fucking° asked if i've done anything (.) and then i can be



((S4 gazes at S7 and smiles))  
 ((S2 laughter))  
 ((S7 laughter))

34. honest (.) and then say (.) o:h no: i should really start (.)  
 35. and if they say (.) come on get started (.) then it's fine (.) so  
 36. i think we all need [to like help e:r]  
 37. S1 [when he swears ] at you (.) he doesn't mean it



((mutual gaze between S7 and S1))  
 ((S4 turns to gaze at S1))

- 38. Ss ((laughter))
- 39. S4 what↑



((S4 gazes at S1))

- 40. (.)
- 41. S1 when he swears at you he doesn't mean it=



((S4 gazes at S1))  
 ((S1 looks at S4 then turns to gaze at S7))

- 42. Ss ((laughter))
- 43. S4 =>exactly< (0.1) e::rm (.) NO i'm just telling um about like



((S1 gazes down at his notebook))  
 ((S4 looks down at the agenda then gaze at S7))  
 ((S7, S2 and S3 gaze at S4))

- 44. helping each other along just [(0.1) keeping tabs ]
- 45. S2 [hiya, how's it going, ]
- 46. S4 [keeping tabs] [in a nice way]
- 47. S7 [yeah ]



((S7 gazes at S4 and nods his head))

48. S2 [yeah ]  
 49. S7 [yeah ]  
 50. (0.1)  
 51. S4 alright↓  
 52. (0.6)  
 53. S4 i think it'll just (.) cos we do need to sta::rt (0.3)  
 54. rolling a bit more (.) i mean (.) i know we've done a lot for  
 55. the lit review but (.) it was still (.) not (0.2) it's not HOW:  
 56. we: (.) would be wor- say: (.) the dissertation last year  
 57. (.) how: (0.1) it was just nonstop (.) i mean that will start  
 58. soon (0.2) e:r (.) so i hope we're all ready for it↓

During S1's turn in lines 1-5, there is a mutual gaze between S1 and S7 while S2 and S6 gaze at S1. At the same time, S4 gazes at the agenda while holding it with his right hand, raising it slightly over the table (S4 continues these nonverbal actions until line 11). In line 6, S2 overlaps with S1's turn to rationalise her previous suggestion of alternating between formal and informal meeting [yeah↑ i think that's why] (.) we need an informal↓(0.1)=and formal (.) vice versa (.) you know - you know alternating↓=.

During S2's turn in lines 6-7 and 9, all of the co-participants turn to gaze at S2 while she is gazing at S1. After that, S1 immediately takes a turn by latching with S2's turn and quickly produces acknowledgement tokens repeated twice that indicate he gets her point =>yeah yeah< okay↓ (.). He then continues to inquire about her suggestion e::rm [when you say]. However, S4's unexpected hasty topic termination in line 11 overlaps with S1's turn. This kind of overlap is 'interruptive' (Jefferson 1983, 1986) in that it is produced as if it was totally legitimate, without any hesitation markers or other cues, such as competitive prosody (Vatanen, 2014). S4's turn in lines 12-13, supported by embodied actions, acts quickly to seize control of the topic and interaction with an upshot formulation (Barnes, 2007) that is hastily and swiftly employed to resist the disagreement by terminating the topic and moving the co-participants towards a decision [right well that's] that (.) we'll just have (.) a brief (0.4) progress meeting on (0.5) monday then [(.) a::nd] that'll be fine.

During S4's turn, he continues his previous nonverbal action of gazing at the slightly raised agenda but this time he continuously and slowly flicks his slightly raised left hand and shaking his head while all of the co-participants gaze at him except for S1. S1 does not orient to S4's topic termination (lines 11-13) as he gazes down at the table. By the end of his turn, S4 continues gazing at the agenda while placing it down on the table. S4's nonverbal actions mark that any attempt to speakership shift (Goodwin, 1979) or any disagreement as not

relevant. S4 enacts his situated identity being the chairperson and uses his 'reserved right' to shut the topic down (Sacks et al, 1974).

S4's turn is a form of topic resistance to halt the topic by refusing to contribute to its development and terminating the topic (Svennevig 2000: 189). Since S4 is not the addressee, the placement of his interruption of S1's TCU appears to be a hostile violation of S1's rights as the current speaker (Zimmerman and West, 1975) and it is an explicit delineation of S1's turn (Gibson, Hall and Callery, 2006). S4's unmarked (there are no cues to signal topic termination or clear orientations to what is currently occurring as he begins to speak) hasty topic termination in lines 11-13 (see Sacks, 1971, for unmarked topic shift) is formulated as an implicit acceptance of a series of turns that have gone before [right well that's] that and as an explicit take up of S2's suggestion (Barnes, 2007) (.) we'll just have (.) a brief (0.4) progress meeting on (0.5) monday then [(.) a::nd] that'll be fine. S4's formulation displays to the co-participants that prior discussion has been orderly, understandable, coherent, and, most importantly, decidable (Heritage and Watson 1979: 156). In Jefferson's (1984b) terms they display 'interactional cohesiveness'. It is clear then how S4 managed to resist the disagreement and how he moved the co-participants to a final decision since none of the participants interrupted the hasty topic termination supported with S4's embodied actions.

In line 16, S4 takes a turn with an audible in-breath and hesitation marker to signal topic transition while gazing down at the agenda. However, S1 is resisting S4's action by not orienting to S4's turn as he continues (lines 11-16) to gaze down at the table and reaches for his notebook and then drags it towards himself (all the participants were gazing at S4 during the hasty topic termination lines 11-13). The analysis below illustrates how S1's resistance (as noted through his embodied actions) is oriented to and resolved by the co-participants.

Interestingly, S7 is monitoring S1's embodied actions and takes a turn addressing S1, which overlaps with S4's delicate moment of topic transition. S7 in line 16 treats S1's embodied action as dissatisfaction of S4's decision and topic termination. This is evident in S7's turn in line 17 to check if S1 is fine with the decision [are you happy we did that↑] which reopens the terminated topic.

During S7's turn, he gazes at S1 and S1 glances at S7 then turns to gaze down at his notebook. Topic termination is just like the closings of an interaction, they are a delicate

matter both technically, in the sense that they must be so placed that no party is forced to exit while still having compelling things to say, and socially, in the sense that both over-hasty and over-slow terminations can carry unwelcome inferences about social relationships between the participants (Levinson, 1983: 316).

In line 19, S1 responds to S7 with two acknowledgment tokens said with low volume °yeah yeah° while gazing down at his notebook and S7 is still gazing at S1 at the same time S4 gazes at S7. Interestingly, S4 and S1 have been avoiding interacting with each other since there has not been any mutual gaze or a glance or any sort of nonverbal action that orients S4 and S1 to each other. S4 takes S7's point further with an extensively extended turn in lines 21-36 which then continues from lines 43-46. Due to time limitations, this analysis only picks on certain points in S4's extensively extended turn.

When S4 self-selects to take a turn, he gazes at S7 and then gazes at all the co-participants except for S1, who is gazing down at the notebook, while everyone gazes back at S4 and S7 moves his body forward to gaze at S4. S4 formulates his turn as a justification for all the co-participants. Interestingly, in line 33 S4 deploys the word °fucking° in a low volume while smiling to create a sense of humourousness as a marker of tension release after a difficult discussion (Holmes and Stubbe, 2003), which elicits S2 and S7's laughter. S4 continues his extended turn until line 37, when S1 overlaps to pick on S4's attempt at humorousness in line 33. S1 directs his humorous turn to S7 by addressing him with a mutual gaze [when he swears] at you (.) he doesn't mean it. S1's humorous turn elicits a group laughter in line 38, except for S4 who did not hear S1's turn. S4 in line 39, finally orients to S1 as he turns to gaze at him with an open class repair initiator (wh-question) said with rising intonation what↑. S1, in line 41, finally orients to S4 as he looks at him then repeats the same verbal and nonverbal action of gazing at S7 and repeats his humorous turn when he swears at you he doesn't mean it=, which once more elicits group laughter, including S4.

In line 43, S4 aligns with S1 =>exactly< and then continues his turn of justifying his decision. During S4's turn, S1 gazes back at his notebook and the rest of the participants gaze at S4 while he looks down at the agenda and then gazes back at S7. After that, S2 aligns with S4 in lines 45 and 48 as well as S7 in lines 47 and 49. That is when they reach a gap of 0.1 seconds in line 50, which is an indication of topic termination (Howe, 1991) followed by minimal responses as sequence closing thirds in line 51 alright↓. After a gap of 0.6 seconds in line 52, S4 makes a stepwise topic transition. The alignments, agreement, gaps, minimal

responses (Maynard, 1980) jokes and laughter<sup>18</sup> (Jefferson 1984b, Jefferson et al. 1987) all serve to mark and signal topic transition. Moreover, S4's extended turn to justify his position appears to terminate the topic and resolves S1's resistance and disagreement by giving what seems to be produced as the definitive position of the group, as determined by the chairperson.

## **7.6 Concluding Remarks**

In this chapter, the analytical observations have clearly illustrated the different forms of resistance in the different stages of topic management. The participants display resistance through changes in body orientations and the employment and interplay of bodily resources, with gaze being the foundational form of resistance. The analysis has shown the interactional resources utilised by the primary speaker to generate and establish a sensitive topic, for example, topic-initial elicitor, itemised news inquiry, news generational device, turn design, and how construction of a TCU opens the conversational floor for further topic development. However, it has also illustrated the co-participants' unwillingness to develop this topic through gaze withdrawal and display of body movements that distance them from the interaction. It has also demonstrated how the resistance is dealt with by presenting how the topic is terminated and the employment of a bridging strategy to retrieve the interaction. The analysis of this chapter has also shown the co-participants' resistance by not orienting to the reinitiation of a previously terminated topic as a result of misplacement of a turn within two ongoing sequences. It has also examined how the chairperson resist stepwise topic transitions during the development of a topic and the employment of hasty topic termination to resist a disagreement and moving the co-participants towards a decision through series of verbal and nonverbal actions.

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<sup>18</sup> Commonplaces and jokes rely on implicit shared understandings (Jefferson et al., 1987).

## Chapter 7. Discussion

*‘‘Make everything as simple as possible, but not simpler.’’*

(Albert Einstein)

### 7.1 Introduction

This study has investigated the management of topical talk in student group meetings within the context of problem-based learning. It has focused on the faculty of Science, Agriculture and Engineering (SAGE) at Newcastle University, particularly the undergraduate degree of Naval Architecture. It has examined how a single group of students utilise verbal and non-verbal resources in an ongoing sequence of interaction along with their orientations to meeting artefacts to manage the topics of their meetings. This chapter begins with a brief discussion of the analytical observations made in chapters 4, 5 and 6 in relation to the relevant literature. These analytical observations are further, and more broadly, discussed in relation to the relevant literature on topic management (Section 7.3.1) discussed in Chapter 2. Section 7.3.2 presents the practical implications for higher education. Finally, Section 7.4 outlines the research outcomes of this study and looks toward potential avenues for future research.

### 7.2 Discussion of the Analysis

The analysis chapters illustrated that meeting interaction is more than transmitting information. It is much more about the local construction of relevance. In addition, what is meant by certain utterances sometimes becomes clear when a speaker sees and hears what follows. This section will address each analysis chapter in turn by first providing a summary of the analytical observations and then proceeding with a brief discussion of the existing literature, which will be further discussed and linked to the relevant literature topic management in Section 7.3.

#### 7.2.1 *Forms of Talk in Opening Phase*

The analytical observations in Chapter 4 presented the overall structural organisation of how the five student group meetings are structured in terms of their topical organisation. It showed how the students organised their interaction according to the three phases of their meetings, namely: opening phase, discussion phase, closing phase. In addition, it demonstrated the different forms of talk in each phase, namely: social talk, meeting preparatory talk, meeting talk, roundtable update, wrap-up talk and post meeting talk.

The analysis in section 4.3 illustrated how the topics as well as the interaction in social talk are managed differently from the other forms of talk in the five meetings. This section

examined the turn-by-turn generation of topic and the resulting organisation of topic across multi-turn segments of talk. It presented a case of self-directed talk (Kohler and Thorne, 2011; Schegloff, 1988a 'out aloud mutterings'; Goffman, 1964 'self-talk'; Flavell, 1966 'private speech') that was not designed to establish a topic. However, it was oriented to as topic initiation by another student who developed it further by relying upon mutually assumed knowledge and prior history of shared experience (Maynard and Zimmerman, 1984). Interestingly, this self-directed talk was a form of an assessment, and according to Pomerantz (1984; Howe, 1991), assessment is commonly used to conclude a topic but in this data it is oriented to as topic initiation. The topic was further developed through the employment of a topicaliser (Button and Casey, 1985), designing a turn with a topical question that is publicly available to the other students to participate in the topic, repetition of prior turn to show willingness to develop the topic (Radford and Tarplee, 2000), the use of sequential conjunction (Mazeland and Huiskes, 2001), and resumption of earlier talk (cf. Jefferson, 1972). It demonstrated how a speaker pursues a topic through the strategy of 'thinking out loud,' which is humorously designed to invite other participants to participate in topic development, and reintroduce the topical question (Radford and Tarplee, 2000). In addition, it showed how participants deal with problematic overlaps since the turn-taking system is locally managed by the participants.

This section then moved on to examine how the same topic was further developed with a non-minimal post-sequence expansion (Schegloff, 1990) in a form of a stepwise topic transition (Atkinson and Heritage, 1984; Sacks, 1992b; Jefferson, 1984). It showed how the primary speaker could bring a participant back to the topical talk through turn design, insert expansion in a form of joke preface (Stubbs, 1983) and post-expansion (Schegloff, 1990). This section presented the four closing sequences in social talk and the interactional resources that mark social talk as a distinctive characteristic in the five meetings, i.e., turn taking and lexical choice.

Additionally, the section demonstrated that the participants do not always initiate social topics at the start of their meetings; they also initiate semi-institutional topics (Ilie, 2001). It involved topics that are related to the structure of the meetings but they also share some of the characteristics of social talk. For example, shared humour interaction is not controlled by the chairperson and topic in this talk is not predefined by an agenda. In addition, this form of talk is positioned in a sequential place where students typically participate in non-work related topics, which give more affordance to being humorous. The topic in this case was initiated by

an opinion preface (Stubbs, 1983) and it was developed through the recipients' co-implication in order to produce a joint decision or agreement (Gill and Maynard, 1995). To this point, the interaction has the characteristics of the discussion phase, i.e. institutional talk<sup>19</sup>. However, an interactional twist occurred when the students changed the interaction to social talk through a positive face strategy (Brown and Levinson, 1987; Benwell and Stokoe, 2002) by designing a humorous turn to express the speaker's unwillingness to take a certain role. The topic was further developed with social humour among the students, involving shared laughter. Then the topic was terminated through shared laughter and a gap. This way of terminating a topic was only found in social talk. This case was found interesting as it examined how the participants manage a topic that drew on both social talk and institutional talk during a single sequence of interaction with no topic transition.

Finally, the section demonstrated an unsuccessful attempt to make a disjunctive topic transition to meeting preparatory talk. This attempt was made by a non-chairperson through one feature of recipient design (Sacks, 1992) - perspective display series (Maynard, 1989) - as a self-presentational technique to establish interactional alignments. This allowed the speaker to assess the recipients' opinion before a disjunctive topic transition could be made. One of the reasons for this unsuccessful attempt was because the disjunctive topic transition from one form of talk to another is usually made by the chairperson, who is the incipient speaker of the transition.

Section 4.4 revealed how the chairperson made the disjunctive topic transition to meeting preparatory talk and how the participants oriented to it. The co-participants showed readiness through embodied actions and passing their turns to make the disjunctive topic transition. It also showed how the phenomena of footing is a vital technique to mark the interactional role through language, gaze, gesture and posture (Levinson, 1988). In addition, the transition from the social talk to meeting preparatory talk is seen as an interactional achievement that requires interactional work from the both speaker and hearers. The topic transition was made by the chairperson through a pre-closing statement/formulation (Barnes, 2007) which drew the end of the social talk. The sequential place of this pre-closing is crucial as it was placed after the previous topic is terminated with shared laughter and a gap (Holt, 2010; Howe, 1991). In addition, it illustrated how the transition was made by the chairperson through the utilisation

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<sup>19</sup> In this data, topics in institutional talk are predefined by the meeting agenda. They involve the discussion points that are related to the task (i.e. discussion phase) and the reasons for holding the meeting.

of topic transition markers, assessment of attendance, and embodied actions by the chairperson and co-participants (e.g. gaze, gesture) to show readiness to start the meeting. This is related to research by Nielsen (2013) and Boden (1994: 96-97) on meeting openings. They argued that meeting openings are typically prefaced by a standard topic transition marker such as 'so', 'okay', 'uh' or 'ehm'.

This section demonstrated how the participants engage in different topics to fill in the time while signing the documents of their previous meeting. The type of topics that the participants initiate in this part of the meeting is not like the ones seen in social talk (non-work related) as they still orient to the chairperson's termination of social talk. The analysis showed how the topic was initiated by the chairperson through the utilisation of the transition marker 'well' in turn initial. This transition marker in this sequential environment marks the introduction of a topic that is not linked sequentially to the previous utterance. The co-participants accepted and oriented to the topic by showing interest through embodied actions (e.g., head lifted up to gaze at the primary speaker, nodding, and mutual gaze). This is in line with Goffman's (1981) interactional 'move,' which is a unit of interaction that includes turns at talk, not limited to talk, in filling slots of sequentially organised interaction. The topic was developed through the utilisation of a first pair part that requires a second pair part. Finally, this section presented a case of mistiming of a turn, made by the chairperson, to make the disjunctive topic transition to meeting talk as part of the discussion phase.

Overall, the section demonstrated how the interaction in social talk is different from meeting preparatory talk through the participants' interactional adjustment. This is evident in the decrease of the overlaps to take turns even though the turn-taking system is still not fully controlled by the chairperson. In addition, lexical choice in meeting preparatory talk is different from social talk (e.g., there are no negative assessments from a 'joke preface' perspective or swear words) and participants showed alignment and agreement with shared laughter and smiles.

These findings of the utilisation of different linguistic, embodied and interactional resources to manage topics will be further discussed and linked to the relevant literature in Section 7.3. The next section presents a brief discussion and summary of the analytical observations in the discussion and the closing phases of the five meetings.

### *7.2.2 Forms of Talk in Discussion and Closing Phases*

The analytical observations in Chapter 5 illustrated how the participants manage topics in the discussion and closing phases of the meetings by including the multimodal aspect and manipulation of objects into the analysis. Particular attention was paid to gaze and object manipulation as the key aspects of multimodal resources which augment our understanding of topic management. This is in line with Goodwin's (2000, 2003) call for analysis of interaction to take into account the physical surroundings, activities, participation frameworks and sequential actions in which they are embedded. It demonstrated that the overall organisation of the meeting and the topical organisation are closely interlinked. In addition, the analytical observations are found to be interesting as some of these observations are different from what have been found in the previous research on topic management (e.g., Richards, 2006; Lee and Hellermann, 2013; see Section 7.3.1).

Section 5.2 examined how the chairperson made the disjunctive topic transition to meeting talk through the utilisation of five sequentially organised moves that changed the interactional footing and secured a particular outcome, namely: 1) the timing of the chairperson's turn with a transition marker; 2) gazing at the transition-relevant object during the production of the transition marker; 3) placement of the transition marker in the anchor position (Schegloff, 1986) (the sequential environment of the transition marker served the dual purpose of attending to prior talk by closing it off and paving the way to next-positioned matters, see Nielsen, 2013); 4) placement of a statement to 'get started' (Boden, 1994), and; 5) formulation of a three-part sequence to set the meeting agenda.

This section also demonstrated the individual verbal and non-verbal responses (e.g., gaze direction, body posture) of the co-participants towards the topic transition. These responses showed withdrawal from the topic and the reach for topic closure. These five sequential moves secured mutual orientation through the establishment of a common focus of attention and created what Mondada (2009) termed 'interactional space.' They also enhanced the co-participants' possibility to identify the incipient courses of action and to navigate through them (Pekarek Doehler and Pochon-Berger, 2015: 248).

The individual embodied actions towards this transition (e.g., moving body forward, gazing at the chairperson, placing the phone away and gazing at the chairperson) indicated the participants' individual orientation to the disjunctive topic transition and to what Zimmerman (1998) referred to as 'situated identity', i.e., the role of the chairperson for this meeting. In

addition, it demonstrated how the chairperson made a stepwise topic transition to the roundtable update by selecting a primary speaker and thereby selecting a topic. This was done through the utilisation of the embodied actions of gazing at the primary speaker, pointing at him and verbally by indicating his name.

Section 5.3 presented the fourth form of talk in the meeting, i.e. roundtable update. It illustrated how the participants who developed the topic align and orient to the situated and discourse identities during the meeting (Zimmerman, 1998). It showed that the change of discourse identities was employed as an interactional tool to manage the topic and move the interaction forward. The analysis of this section examined how the primary speaker designed her turn to be closure relevant as a concluding summary or commentary by first producing a pre-closing minimal acknowledgment token and discourse marker, followed by subsequent fuller turn 'okay in third turn receipt + well + the work of additional turn constructional unit, i.e. commentary/concluding summary. This is related to Beach's (1993) argument that the sequential placement of 'okay' in the third turn receipt could achieve pre-closure or pre-termination of the talk-in progress. Additionally, the utilisation of 'well' in this sequential placement is related to Jefferson's (1981) discussion that one characterisation of 'well' is topic attrition that might predict subsequent termination of the topic. The termination of a topic is accomplished through the repetition of some part of a prior turn with more emphasis and is supported by embodied actions. Svennevig (2000: 190) argued that repetitions underline what was said previously, and thus turn this into a point or a conclusion. They may be a signal that the speaker is not willing or able to expand on current matters. Additionally, using physical movements serves as pre-closing indications and they play an important role in topic management (Linde, 1991: 303).

The topic was developed further by the chairperson with a stepwise topic transition by changing his discourse identity to an 'information seeker' or an 'elicitor' to elicit more information from the primary speaker. This change of discourse identities is derived from the main purposes of the meeting, all of which related to information gathering, opinions or decisions (Halvorsen and Sarangi, 2014). This topic development was first signalled with an overlapped tongue click with the previous turn and accompanied with embodied actions (e.g., adjusting body posture, gazing at the primary speaker). Then the stepwise topic transition was made with a first pair part. Additionally, it showed how the topic was further developed through the enactment (Sidnell, 2006; Goodwin, 1979; Streeck, 2002) of a certain action to reach mutual understanding. The topic was then terminated through the utilisation of

discourse makers as a sequence closing thirds (SCTs) with falling intonations supported by embodied actions and physical orientation (e.g., gazing) to the meeting agenda.

This section also demonstrated how a topic was developed by non-chair and non-primary speakers. These speakers have mutually agreed responsibilities for certain parts of the project that are related to the primary speaker's task. The non-chair and non-primary speakers were included in the development of a topic through the utilisation of embodied actions (e.g., turning around to secure mutual gaze, pointing with a pen) by the primary speaker. It also illustrated how the non-chair puts in more interactional work to take a turn to develop the topic. For example, gazing, raising hand with index finger, latching with the chairperson's topic transition and self-selecting to delay this transition. The topic was developed by changing the discourse identities to 'repair initiator' (other-repair) to repair a prior information or understanding.

Section 5.4 illustrated how the participants achieved the closure of the meeting and thereby the status of any further talk. This section presented the five sequentially organised moves that brought the meeting to a close through archetype closing that organised the termination of conversation over a section of talk. This type of closing displayed an orientation to legitimising the conversation's termination (Button, 1987: 102). The chairperson moved the interaction to the closing phase by designing his turn as a possible pre-closing and formulating a topic bounding (Schegloff and Sacks, 1973; Button and Casey, 1984). The transition to the wrap-up talk was accomplished through the utilisation of 1) a sequence closing device that served to perform a possible pre-closing when placed after a point, which the co-participants could interpret at the end of a topic (Button, 1987; Schegloff and Sacks, 1973; Nielsen, 2013); 2) the formulation of a turn as a 'last call for new mentionables' (Nielsen, 2013); 3) the utilisation of a set of embodied actions (i.e. gazing at the co-participants) to invite them to bring in new mentionables, and marking this invitation as a last chance to do so (Nielsen, 2013); 4) producing arrangements to confirm details for the next meeting (Schegloff and Sacks, 1973; Button, 1987; Liddicoat, 2007), and; 5) a confirmation check that the meeting is done and an explicit 'end' statement or an announcement of closure (Button, 1991b; Schegloff and Sacks, 1973).

Additionally, this section examined the interactional movement to post-meeting talk, which can either be institutional by referring to a previous topic on the agenda or social topic such as going out for dinner. The institutional topic in the post-meeting talk was initiated through

back referencing and in-conversation objects to a previous topic (Button, 1987). The in-conversation objects were utilised to mark the receipt of prior talk and to provide for the speaker to continue (Liddicoat, 2007: 272; Button, 1987). The topic was developed through the utilisation of FPP, SPP and commentary statements that serve to exchange information, and it was terminated with a gap and a summary assessment (Pomerantz 1984; Howe, 1991).

Finally, topics in social talk as part of post-meeting talk were managed in the same way as the opening phase. The topic was quickly developed and the interaction moved rapidly forward with hardly any gaps or pauses, and was replete with humour and jokes. It was initiated with an itemised news enquiry (Button and Casey, 1984, 1985) as FPP and it quickly picked up and developed with a commentary statement, an itemised news inquiry (Button and Casey, 1985), news item (Button and Casey, 1985) and stepwise topic transition. It illustrated how the interaction in the post-meeting talk mirrored the opening phase and how the students did not orient to the situated identity of the meeting once it was brought to an end. Overall, the utilisation of the sequential organised moves, the co-participants' responses, monitoring the ongoing sequence of interaction, the utilisation of verbal and non-verbal resources, the timing and placement of an action, and the design of a turn to secure a certain outcome were employed by the co-participants to manage the various topics of their meetings.

### ***7.2.3 Multimodal Resources in Different Forms of Topic Resistance***

The third analysis chapter examined instances of multi-dimensional embodiment in different forms of topic resistance. Particular attention was paid to how gazing is one of the foundational forms of resistance along with multi-semiotic resources that the participants employ to show unwillingness to participate in the topic. Additionally, it demonstrated the use and interplay of bodily resources, which are crucial in analysing topic management. In the current study, resistance is defined as the unwillingness to participate in the interaction, not orienting/responding to a particular action or not accepting it (an action can be oriented to but not necessarily accepted).

Section 6.2 illustrated how the participants resist developing a sensitive topic. It revealed how they displayed unwillingness, both verbally and non-verbally, to join the topic. They enacted 'being busy,' thereby displaying an unwillingness to participate in the topic and oriented instead to topic termination (Lauzon and Berger, 2015; Koole, 2007). This is what Mortensen (2008) described as the absence of a visible or audible 'willing next speaker' in his study on selecting the next speaker in the second language classroom. This section illustrated the

interactional work that had been done by one of the participants to pursue the topic. The topic was initiated by a topic-initial elicitor (Button and Casey, 1984, 1985). Then it was developed through an itemised news inquiry (Button and Casey, 1984, 1985) as topic pursuit, news generational device (Button and Casey, 1985), and the construction of the TCU, which opens the conversational floor for topic development. In addition, it demonstrated how the sensitive topic is terminated by showing readiness (Nielsen, 2013) to start the meeting through the participants' embodied actions (e.g., gaze withdrawal, passing turns to talk and gazing down at the notebook). Furthermore, it illustrated the deployment of the bridging strategy between social talk and meeting preparatory talk to move the interaction forward. It showed how the chairperson retrieved the interaction by initiating a topic, with a disjunctive topic transition, related to the institutional context. This section argued that the unwillingness of the participants' to join in the sensitive topic and showing readiness to start the meeting is a form of resistance. This was evident in the listeners' orientation to what has been said through their embodied actions.

Section 6.3 presented another form of resistance to ratify and accept a previously terminated topic that was reintroduced by the chairperson. The analysis of this case showed the co-participants' resistance by not orienting to the action of topic reintroduction. The reason for this resistance is a case of misplacement of a turn within two ongoing sequences (verbally and non-verbally) to reintroduce a topic. It illustrated the three co-participants' involvement in the non-verbal activity of signing the documents while two other participants were involved in topic development. It also showed that displaying prior experience, which is one of the ways to initiate a topic (Maynard and Zimmerman, 1984) was employed, in this data, by the co-participants to develop the topic.

Section 6.4 demonstrated the chairperson's resistance to a stepwise topic transition. The analysis showed how a non-primary speaker self-selects to make a stepwise topic transition. It showed how the chairperson stopped this transition twice as a form of resistance. The subsequent analysis revealed step by step how this sequence of topic negotiation was initiated, picked up, stopped and how the series of verbal and nonverbal actions were accounted for. It also revealed the interactional work done by the chairperson, the non-primary speaker and the primary speaker through the examination of their verbal and embodied actions and how they were intertwined, yet deployed in an orderly interactional means.

Finally, section 6.5 presented a case of the chairperson's resistance of the disagreement between the co-participants. This resistance led to an unexpected hasty topic termination by the chairperson through an interruptive overlap (Jefferson 1983, 1986). This interruptive overlap was produced as if it was totally legitimate, without any hesitation markers or other cues, such as competitive prosody (Vatanen, 2014). This technique was supported by the chairpersons' embodied actions such as gaze withdrawal, holding and gazing at the meeting agenda, head shake and flicking of the slightly raised hand. The deployment of these interactional resources worked to quickly seize control of the topic and interaction with an upshot formulation (Barnes, 2007) that is hastily and swiftly employed to terminate the topic as well as the disagreement and move the co-participants towards a decision. The analysis showed how the co-participants accepted this hasty topic termination by gazing at the chairperson with head nods. It also showed how a co-participant, who caused the disagreement, resisted the topic termination through the utilisation of bodily resources. Finally, it demonstrated how this resistance was oriented to and resolved by the rest of co-participants, which led to the reopening of the terminated topic.

This section has summarised and discussed the analytical observations from the three analysis chapters. The next section will further discuss the overall findings in relation to the literature on topic management.

### **7.3 Further Discussion**

This section will further discuss the contributions and practical implications in light of the analytical observations and in relation to the relevant research discussed in Chapter 2. The next section will discuss the contribution of incorporating into the analyses the utilisation of interactional and multimodal resources as well as manipulation of objects in terms of the existing research on topic management.

#### ***7.3.1 Multimodal Resources and Topic Management***

This study contributes to the small body of research on topic management by clarifying the relationship between topic management and multimodality. It argues that incorporating the multimodal aspects into the analysis augments our understanding of how topics are managed. It suggests that multimodality, manipulation of meeting artefacts and topic management are interrelated. This point will be elaborated below.

In its thorough analysis of not only how topics are managed (verbally and non-verbally) but also how they are verbally and nonverbally responded to by the participants, the present study builds on these and other classic studies on topic management and meeting interaction (e.g., Button and Casey, 1984, 1985, 1988/89; Maynard, 2003; Schegloff, 2007; Button, 1987; Zimmerman, 1998; Maynard and Zimmerman, 1984; Sacks, 1992; Schegloff, 1968,; Schegloff and Sacks, 1973; Boden, 1994; West and Garcia, 1988; Drew and Holt 1998; Linde, 1991; Schmitt, 2001; Svennevig, 1999, 2000, 2012; Mondada et al., 2010; Asmuß, and Svennevig, 2009; Nielsen, 2009, 2013; Atkinson et al., 1978; Deppermann et al., 2010; Barnes, 2007; Richards, 2006; Howe, 1991; Ford, 2008; Mirivel and Tracy, 2005; Pomerantz, 1984a).

As discussed in Chapter 2, past studies on topic organisation have identified different ways to initiate a topic. For instance, displaying prior experience, setting talk, pre-topical sequences (Maynard and Zimmerman, 1984), and topic initial elicitor, which consists of a three-turn sequence: 1) a newsworthy event and topicaliser, 2) an itemised news enquiry, and 3) a news announcement (Button and Casey 1984, 1985). In this study, these interactional techniques for a topic to be initiated were only utilised in social talk (i.e. opening phase and post-meeting talk as part of the closing phase), suggesting that they were considered mundane forms of interaction.

Extrapolating on this point, this study has investigated how semi-institutional topics in the opening phase are managed since the interaction draws from social talk and institutional talk. The analytical observations have illustrated that the participants employed certain interactional techniques that are designed to initiate a topic and involve the co-participants in topic development. For example, displaying perspective sequences (Maynard, 1989; see Extract 4.04) is designed as a three-part sequence requiring a response from the recipients. Opinion preface (Stubbs, 1983; see Extract 4.03) is an extended turn-at-talk followed by a direct statement. This technique receives the attention and acceptance of the co-participants, which is evident in the production of the acknowledgment tokens and alignments to show interest in the topic. Furthermore, the direct statement is designed in a humorous way<sup>20</sup> as a positive face (Brown and Levinson, 1987). According to Benwell and Stokoe (2002), a positive face is concerned with having the speaker, actions and belongings approved of. Therefore, it is designed to involve the recipients in the topic development. Another

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<sup>20</sup> This is evident in the speaker's laughter at the end of his turn, which successfully elicited further group laughter.

technique to initiate a topic is through the utilisation of a transition marker *supported by embodied actions* (e.g. eye-gaze - see Extract 4.05). This study has shown that topic initiation can be accepted and oriented to through the co-participants' use and interplay of bodily resources (e.g., lifting head up to gaze at the speaker, nodding to indicate acceptance and listenership, and turning head to gaze at the speaker to show interest as well as showing acceptance and interest through shared laughter). Additionally, the analysis in Chapter 6 showed that the sequential placement of topic initiation is important for a topic to be accepted. It argues that when topic initiation is placed within two ongoing sequences of interaction - verbally and non-verbally - it is highly unlikely to be accepted, which is a form of resistance (see Extract 6.02).

Furthermore, the analytical observations have shown that topics in roundtable updates (i.e. discussion phase) are only initiated by the chairperson. This is accomplished verbally through primary speaker selection, and non-verbally by gazing at primary speaker while pointing at him with clenched hands and pointing index until a mutual gaze is secured.

Previous studies on topic management have investigated the process of developing a topic through the cooperation of the co-participants, which can be understood through an examination of the turn-taking system (Sacks et al. 1974: 728; Maynard, 1980: 263; West and Garcia, 1988: 553). Such studies have demonstrated the ways of maintaining and developing an initiated topic. For instance, preferred responses that display interest in the topical item (Sukrutrit, 2010), post-expansions (Schegloff, 2007), minimal responses that allow the speaker of the initiated topic to develop it further (Maynard, 1980), repeating some parts of the prior turn that involve the potential topical talk 'reformulation' (Radford and Tarplee, 2000), and asking a question by the recipient to develop the initiated topic (Maynard, 1980). Additionally, there are other techniques to develop a topic that has received curtailed responses, such as itemised news enquiries, recycling a no-news report, return of topic initial elicitor (Button and Casey, 1985) and stepwise topic transition (Sacks, 1992b). Most of these techniques were employed by the participants in social talk. However, displaying prior experience, which is one of the ways to initiate a topic (Maynard and Zimmerman, 1984), was employed in meeting preparatory talk to develop a topic.

Further, the analytical observations here have illustrated other ways to develop a topic. Firstly, the analysis in Extract 4.01 showed the use of a 'thinking out loud' technique to maintain the topic by indirectly invite speakers to participate in the topic and keep it from

termination. This technique, if successful, may lead to topic development or possible stepwise transition. Secondly, the analysis in Section 5.3 showed that the change of the discourse identity (Zimmerman, 1998) and at the same time the alignment to the situated identity were used as an interactional tool or means to manage topics and move the interaction forward. Thirdly, the analysis throughout Chapter 5 showed the utilisation of verbal and multimodal resources to develop topics (e.g. mutual gaze, raised eyebrows, tilted head, head nods and orientation to the meeting agenda). This is evident in the analysis of Extract 5.04, which showed that participants developed a topic through negotiation of understanding. Participants' turns in this case are supported by embodied actions as a case of enactment (Sidnell, 2006; Goodwin, 1979; Streeck, 2002). Further, the analytical observations in Extract 5.05 illustrated that the utilisation of interactional and multimodal resources were employed by the primary speaker to include a certain participant in topic development. Finally, the analysis in Extract 6.04 showed that the interplay of bodily resources can lead to the reopening of a terminated topic by the chair.

As discussed in Chapter 2, CA analysts have identified various techniques that may be deployed to terminate a topic-in-progress in order to make the transition to the next topic. For instance, a series of silences (Maynard, 1980), recipient commentary, minimal responses, recipient assessment (Jefferson, 1983), making contributions (West and Garcia, 1988), formulating summaries, projecting future activities, announcement of closure (Button, 1991), summary assessments, acknowledgment tokens, repetition, laughter or pauses (Howe, 1991). In addition, Sacks (1992b: 566) argued that “‘at the end of a conversation some topics come to an end and then people will exchange ‘so’s or ‘okay’s and go into closing’”. This study argues that assessment could be oriented to as topic initiation according to its sequential placement (see Extract 4.01).

Further, the analytical observations throughout chapters, 4 5 and 6 illustrated participants' topic withdrawal. They enact being busy, thereby displaying unwillingness or resistance to participate in the topic and instead orient to topic termination (Lauzon and Berger, 2015; Koole, 2007). This is in line with what Mortensen (2008) has described as the absence of a visible or audible ‘willing next speaker’. The analysis also demonstrated that a topic is terminated by showing readiness (Nielsen, 2013) to start the meeting through the participants' embodied actions. Finally, the analysis in Extracts 6.03 and 6.04 showed that the chairperson's turn to terminate a topic or stop a transition is heavily supported by embodied actions as a form of resistance (e.g. gaze withdrawal and physical orientation to the agenda).

Taking this point further, the analyses have demonstrated the individual verbal (summary assessment; Pomerantz, 1984) and non-verbal responses (e.g., gaze direction, body posture and the movement of the body to ‘home position’; Sacks and Schegloff, 2002) of the co-participants towards the transition. These responses show withdrawal from the topic and reaching possible topic closure. The five sequential moves noted above secure mutual orientation through the establishment of a common focus of attention and by creating what Mondada (2009) terms ‘interactional space.’ This study supports Goodwin’s (2000, 2003) argument that analysis of interaction should take into account the physical surroundings, activities, participation frameworks and sequential actions in which they are embedded.

Overall, the analytical observations in chapters 4, 5 and 6 explained how participants’ verbal and embodied actions are intertwined, yet deployed in an orderly interactional manner. This section has illustrated that multimodal resources and manipulation of objects play an important role in topic management. The next section will present the practical implications of this study.

### ***7.3.2 Implications for Higher Education***

A growing number of studies in higher education have provided evidence that employers require employees who are capable of applying skills and knowledge in a variety of situations (Dennis et al., 2012; see also Court et al., 1995; DfEE, 1998; Harvey et al., 1997; Hawkins and Winter 1995; Nove et al., 1997; Purcell and Pitcher, 1996; Quintini, 2014; Shah et al., 2004; Yorke, 2006). Other studies have revealed employers’ dissatisfaction with the development of such skills in graduates (Kemp, Seagraves, 1995: 315; see also Roizen and Jepson, 1985; Tolley, 1991; Otter, 1992; Harvey et al., 1993).

A large number of researchers have argued that there is a noticeable gap between the skills that the students need to gain an academic degree and the skills that employers require (Azevedo et al., 2012; Dennis et al., 2012; Hinchliffe and Jolly, 2011). Similarly, Oria (2012; see also Dennis et al., 2012; Fallow and Steven, 2000) argued that most universities focus on implanting content and theory into students and ignoring the fact that most graduates go into jobs that require transferable skills (also referred to as employability skills, generic skills, soft skills, personal competence, key skills, and personal skills). According to Kemp and Seagraves (1995: 315), transferable skills can be defined as the skills and abilities which are considered applicable in more than one context, such as communication skills, team working and problem-solving abilities which are necessary in both educational and workplace settings

(OECD, 2012; Kemp and Seagraves, 1995). Such skills play an important role in professional practice. For instance, it was discussed in Chapter 2 that meeting interaction is a significant communicative event in the workplace. It establishes the main arena for organisational communication and it consumes a huge amount of work time for many employees. Therefore, “universities across the globe are increasingly required to produce highly skilled graduates who are able to respond to the ever changing and complex needs of the contemporary workplace” (Andrews and Higson, 2008: 411; see also Weil, 1999; Sleezer et al., 2004; Possa, 2006).

Based on these observations, this study argues that student group meetings with no teacher presence are examples of how students ‘practice being professional’. The research findings could be applied to train and prepare students for the working sector by developing a skill set such as communication skills that are transferable to contexts outside of their academic field of study. The conversation analytic findings of this study can be trainable in relation to the Conversation Analytic Role-play Method (CARM)<sup>21</sup>. CARM is an approach to communication skills training based on “conversation analytic evidence about the sorts of problems and roadblocks that can occur in interaction, as well as the techniques and strategies that best resolve and overcome them” (Stokoe, 2014: 255, 256). Using video and audio recordings of real-life meeting interaction to train students could help them understand the structural organisation of interaction and the different techniques that can control interaction or move it forward. For instance:

- The timing, placement and design of a turn are very crucial in order to manage the topics of the meeting, i.e., what we say, how we say it and when to say it matters.
- The utilisation of multi-semiotic resources (e.g., gaze, facial gestures, body movement) and orientations to meeting artefacts (e.g., meeting agenda as a transition relevant-object) play a crucial role in signalling and making the transition to the next topic.
- Designing a turn to set the meeting agenda (e.g., statement to ‘get started’ and the formulation of a three-part sequence) enhances the co-participants’ possibility to navigate through the ongoing sequence of interaction.

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<sup>21</sup> See <http://www.carmtraining.org/>

Overall, the findings of this research have the potential to provide the training and background that prepare graduates for the working sector, thereby improving students' transition from the university to the workplace. The final section of this chapter will provide a number of recommendations for further research.

#### **7.4 Conclusion**

This study has demonstrated the usefulness of the multimodal analytic approach in the explication of educational talk. In addition to the contribution to the CA research on topic management, this study can be located within the small body of research that examines talk in post-compulsory education settings. The study presented conversational data - academic discourse - that is rarely examined in the language and education arena. It focused on a small area of research in social interaction: the management of topical talk in a context where the content of the topic is monitored for its relevance to an externally imposed agenda. Instead of deploying the categories of pre-meeting talk, on- and off-task talk, the focus was on how students themselves managed the topics of their meetings and how some topics are treated as relevant to the academic discussion. By doing so, an understanding of academic discourse is grounded in students' own orientations and treatment of their activities.

The review of the literature in Chapter 2 demonstrated that studies on institutional interaction in general, and meeting interaction in particular, have overlooked student group meetings within the context of PBL in higher education. Therefore, this study has focused on student group meetings in the Faculty of Science, Agriculture and Engineering at a UK university, particularly the undergraduate degree of Naval Architecture. It has analysed five hours of video and audio recordings of naturally occurring data. These five hours of recordings comprised five meetings, with each meeting lasting for nearly an hour of interaction. These meetings involved a single group of six undergraduate students on the BSc Naval Architecture working on their final year funded. As part of PBL, the students as a group decided on certain parts of the project to be assigned to each student. Additionally, the role of the chairperson and the secretary was explicitly assigned and changed for each meeting. This study has examined these meetings as a truly multimodal enterprise and it has also considered how students manage their meeting interaction with no tutor presence. This examination has proved to have implications for research in higher education.

The review of the literature has also demonstrated that research on topic management from a conversation analytic perspective is still scant in comparison to the number of studies on other

interactional recourses. Seedhouse and Harris (2011) argued that analytic attention to topic in CA research is noticeable by its absence. Similarly, Wong and Waring (2012) noted that studies of topic from a CA perspective have generally been lacking. Therefore, addressing Svennevig's (2012) call to study meeting interaction from a multimodal approach, this study has examined how university students manage the topics of their meetings from a multimodal conversation analytic perspective. This examination has contributed to the study of topic management by illustrating that multiple bodily movements are a regular feature of spoken language use and they matter when analysing how topics are managed. This is consistent with the notion that language is inherently multimodal (Stec et al, 2016), an insight which can deepen our understanding of how topics are managed during meeting interaction.

The analytical observations of this study have presented the overall structural organisation of how student group meetings are organised in terms of their topical organisation. It has been illustrated that the participants organised and adjusted their interaction according to the three phases of their meetings, namely: opening phase, discussion phase and closing phase, as well as the transitional moves between them. This was also found in the work of Holmes and Stubbe (2003; see also Bargiela-Chiappini and Harris, 1997: 209; Boden, 1994; Chan, 2008; Fisher, 1982; Sollitt-Morris, 1996). Each phase included different forms of talk with a number of topics: 1) the opening phase involved social talk and meeting preparatory talk; 2) the discussion phase involved meeting talk and roundtable updates, and; 3) the closing phase involved wrap-up talk and post-meeting talk.

The analytical observations in the opening phase illustrated how topics, and interaction in general in social talk are managed differently from the other forms of talk in the five meetings. Additionally, they indicated the students' verbal and non-verbal orientations according to the different topics in the opening phase.

The analytical observations in the discussion and closing phases illustrated how the participants managed topics by including the multimodal aspect and manipulation of objects into the analysis. This is in line with Goodwin's (2000, 2003) call for analysis of interaction to take into account the physical surroundings, activities, participation frameworks and sequential actions in which they are embedded. It has demonstrated that the overall organisation of the meeting and topical organisation are closely interlinked.

The final analytical chapter illustrated how gazing, accompanied by multi-semiotic resources, is one of the foundational forms of topic resistance. It demonstrated the key aspects of multimodal resources that the participants utilise to reveal unwillingness to participate in the management of topical talk. It also showed the extent to which multiple bodily movements co-occur.

This study's thorough analysis has contributed to the research area of topic management by clarifying the relationship between topic management and multimodality, which can deepen our understanding of how topics are managed not in meeting interactions. It has suggested that multimodality, manipulation of meeting artefacts and topic management are interrelated. It has also added other techniques in which topics have been initiated and developed. It has explained how participants' verbal and embodied actions are intertwined, yet deployed in an orderly interactional manner. Additionally, it has illustrated that multimodal resources and manipulation of objects play an important role in topic management.

Overall, this study has contributed to the research area of topic management by building on and adding to previous research in the field (e.g., Drew and Holt 1998; Linde, 1991; Schmitt, 2001; Svennevig, 1999, 2000, 2012; Mondada et al., 2010; Asmuß, and Svennevig, 2009; Nielsen, 2009, 2013; Atkinson et al., 1978; Deppermann et al., 2010; Barnes, 2007; Richards, 2006). A breakdown of the contributions is as follows:

- 1) Incorporating into the analyses the utilisation of interactional and multimodal resources, as well as the manipulation of objects. This contribution is in line with the analyses of embodied interaction that have shown that even within a turn, co-participants use a combination of vocal and non-vocal actions to coordinate their actions (e.g. Goodwin, 1980, Goodwin, 1984; Goodwin and Goodwin, 1992; Iwasaki, 2009; Nakamura, 2011; Streeck et al., 2011).
- 2) Talk is supported by embodied actions. This is evident in: a) how speakers' recipients design their talk through the employment of both linguistics resources and embodied actions to be accepted by certain co-participants in the ongoing interaction; b) how the speakers display readiness to start the meeting or resistance to participate in a topic, and ; c) the chairperson's physical orientation to the meeting agenda as an interactional tool to make topic transitions.

3) Suggesting that topic management is both a collaborative and an individual achievement. It is a collaborative achievement in the sense that the participants build action in concert with one another to sustain mutual understanding. It is an individual achievement since each participant has to closely monitor the ongoing verbal and non-verbal courses of action to accurately place and time his/her actions into the flux of ongoing talk. Put simply, knowing when and when not to speak and in what manner.

4) The practical implication of this study is the possibility for its conversation analytic findings to be trainable in relation to the Conversation Analytic Role-play Method (CARM). These findings could optionally be applied to train and prepare students for the world of employment.

#### ***7.4.1 Recommendations for Future Research***

Firstly, further study on higher education is needed to examine how topics are managed in other academic disciplines. While selecting the data from the NUCASE corpus, it was noticed that the interaction during student group meetings (with no teacher presence) in the faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences is managed differently from Science, Agriculture and Engineering. It was found that student group meetings in Humanities and Social Sciences do not have the explicit role of a chair or an agenda, and hence topic management is completely different from the data in this study.

Secondly, there is also a need for research to be conducted into topic management in other institutional settings. For instance, studies on primary care consultations are uncommon in comparison to other institutional interactions (e.g., classroom and workplace meetings). This is due to the difficulties in recording routine consultations, including obtaining ethical permission, recruiting participants and organising data collection, safe transfer, and storage (Jepson et al. 2017: 345). However, examining how certain topics are raised and discussed during GP-patient consultations could not only expand our understanding on topic management, but could also help improve patient experiences.

Finally, it would be of interest to examine topic management in Online Intercultural Exchanges (OIEs). They are online interactions between foreign language learners in geographically distant locations. These forms of online interactions are becoming more commonplace in language education, with many teachers aiming to provide their learners

with opportunities for multicultural contact. Understanding how topics are managed in language learning and teaching settings is a significant research aim because in such settings topic is both a vehicle and a focus of the interaction (Seedhouse and Supakorn, 2105). This area of research may be among the most complex conversational phenomena to be investigated, especially in OIE, due to differing frames of time, space and culture among the participants.

## Appendix A: CA Transcription Conventions

[ text ]	Indicates the start and end points of overlapping speech.
=	Indicates the break and subsequent continuation of a single utterance.
(0.2)	A number in parentheses indicates the time, in seconds, of a pause in speech.
(.)	A brief pause, usually less than 0.2 seconds.
. or ↓	Indicates falling pitch or intonation.
? or ↑	Indicates rising pitch or intonation.
,	Indicates a temporary rise or fall in intonation.
-	Indicates an abrupt halt or interruption in utterance.
>text<	Indicates that the enclosed speech was delivered more than symbols rapidly than usual for the speaker.
<text>	Indicates that the enclosed speech was delivered more than symbols slowly than usual for the speaker.
◦ ◦	Indicates whisper, reduced volume, or quiet speech.
CAPS	Indicates shouted or increased volume speech.
<u>underline</u>	Indicates the speaker is emphasizing or stressing the speech.
:::	Indicates prolongation of a sound.
(hhh.)	Audible exhalation.
(.hhh)	Audible inhalation.
( text )	Speech which is unclear or in doubt in the transcript.
(( <i>italic</i> ))	Annotation of non-verbal activity.

*Adapted from Atkinson and Heritage (1984)*

## Appendix B: Transcriptions

1. S2 right↓ (0.9) any other busi↑ness↓  
(S2 clicks pen four times)
2. (2.7)  
(S2 turns right to look at S1 and S4.  
When S2 slowly turns left to look at S3,  
S1 and S4 shake their heads displaying a 'no'  
answer)
3. S2 no↓(0.3)good.(0.2)(.hhh)er::(0.3)time and date of
4. next meeting↓(.)ten am next week↓(0.7)con[ference]  
client↑
5. S1 [yes ]
6. (0.7)
7. S4 < c::lient↓>
8. (0.6)
9. S2 client room (1.3) (.hhh) (hhh) (0.7) done↑  
(S2 looks at the documents and turn over a page)  
(S2 looks at S4 and S1)
10. (1.0)
11. S4 [ye]ah↑
12. S2 [ev]
13. S2 everything↑ (0.6) good to go↑
14. (0.8)
15. S3 good to [go:↑ ]
16. S1 [yeah ]
17. S4 [°yeah°]
18. (0.8)
19. S2 (.hhh) [end of ]-°end of meeting↓°=

20.	S1	[so >you said you've<]	
21.	S1	=so you've got the	
22.		licensing↑	S3 do i just leave
23.		(0.7) ((S2 is looking at the document))	these (.)
24.	S2	ah↑ no↑	S3 with her-here
25.		i wrote a little	(0.5)
			((S4 stops writing and looks up at S3 and the document))
26.		bit (.)just er::m (0.6)	S4 yeah
			((S3 puts the documents on the table))
27.		[about ho::w ]marine	
28.	S1	[>cuz i was going to	
29.		say<]	
30.	S2	scotland (.) were like	((S3 opens her bag))
31.		(.)[er::m]	
32.	S1	[yeah]	
33.	S2	(0.8)reducing their	
34.		applicants and	
35.		stu[ff↓]	
36.	S1	[uhm]	
37.		(0.6)	
38.	S1	i've got a few	S3 oh actually no i
39.		(0.5)articles you might	do have any other
40.		want to do (.)	business↓ (.)crap
41.			[i'm ] sorry
42.		you-you might	S4 [sorry↓]
43.		((S1 and S2 are looking at the documents))	S4 go on=
44.		(3.3)	S3 =you know like
45.		((S2 glances at S3))	referencing↑
		((S2 then looks at S1 immediately when S3	

		<i>doesn't return the gaze))</i>	
46.			(0.4)
47.			S4 yes↑
48.			(0.3)
49.			S3 obviously i'm doing
50.	S2	i just did a lit review	referencing as i
51.		you know	go along (0.7)you
52.		like on the: LEC	know like whole
53.			reference tab=
54.		sort of	S4 =yeah
55.		things (0.7)	(0.7)
56.		[and the levy ]extension	S3 how(0.4)-how
57.	S1	[privacy and stuff↓]	
58.	S2	certificates a:nd	(1.3)do you
59.		(0.7)	want me to
60.	S1	yeah i'll get the bit	do it(.) cos
61.		about the LECs too	that's difficult
62.		(0.9)	if i'm copying
63.			and pasting↓
64.	S2	°cool°	(2.0)
65.		(0.8)	
66.	S1	just so we	
67.		don't overlap that's	S4 er::
68.		all↓	
69.		(0.4)	(0.2)how
70.	S2	renewable obligations	do you mean
71.			sorry↑
72.			(0.3)
73.		(0.6)they're quite	S3 well let's say i
74.		interesting actually	give you my lit
75.		(.)er:	review and you
76.			collaborate it all
77.			(0.4)
78.		the money	S4 yeah↑
79.		you can almost er::=	(1.3)

80.	S1	=well i've done a lot	S3	your computer
81.		on the money i couldn't		won't have all my
82.		[do any ]		references on
83.	S2	[no you know] like them		them [it'll just]
84.			S4	[o↑kay↓ ]
85.			S3	have the:=
86.		you can add value to	S4	=yeah we discussed
87.		your [company↓]		this last week↓
88.	S1	[>yeah↑< ]		(0.3)what we were
89.				gonna try and
90.				do:(0.7)i:s=
91.	S2	(0.9)by:: getting	S3	=>is to do< the
92.				endnote (.)
93.				°thing°
94.				(0.4)
95.		apparently (.)you get	S4	yeah (.)i'm trying
96.		awarded points (0.3)		to set up(.)
97.				[a group](.)folder
98.			S3	[°yeah°]
99.			S4	>andrew hasn't
100.		for what (.)		been here last
101.				week<
102.				(0.5)
103.		megawatts	S3	oh↓[okay↓]
104.		you can create	S4	[so i'll] try and
105.		(0.3)		set up
106.	S1	>yeah↑<		a group folder
107.		(0.3)		and i'll set
108.	S2	and then these are		up an endno:te
109.		wo:rth money↑(0.7)		library↑(0.8)
110.		[and ]		
111.	S1	[>yeah↑<]		
112.	S2	the people you-you <u>sell</u>		that we can
113.				<u>all</u> (0.4)
114.		them to people↑		reference
115.		(0.4)		[our ]
116.			S3	[°yeah°]

117.	S1	when↑ ( <i>S1 points at the paper</i> )		work [from ]
118.		(0.5)	S3	[>okay good<]
119.	S2	>yeah↑<= ( <i>S2 looks at where S1 pointed</i> )	S4	(0.6)
120.	S1	=>when the golden	S4	er:m=
121.		(unclear word)< goes		
122.		through there=		
123.	S2	=>yeah yeah yeah↑<	S3	=so in the mean time
124.		(0.5)well		i'll just carry on
125.				[until we're live ]
126.		they were saying like	S4	[yeah↑(.)if you
127.				just]
128.		er:m(2.7)		carry on as it is
129.				(0.7)er:m and
130.				then we can put
131.				them all together
132.				at the end and
133.				that's
134.		what were they		fine(0.5)
135.		saying↑(0.7)		
136.		they were saying(0.4)		[>not a problem↓<]
137.			S3	[°okay↓° ]
138.				(1.6)
139.		this is a big wa:y	S3	i think the thing
140.		that(.)people get(.)		is i'm going to
141.				have shit loads of
142.				references you
143.				know=
144.		er: confidence in the	S4	=ab- <u>absolutely</u> fine
145.		market °when the°		that's what we want
146.		(0.6)		(0.5)
147.	S1	it's the way that the	S3	( <i>laughter</i> )
148.		government's trying		

149. |           to get into it >but |  
150. |           yeah< er:m(0.5)so it |  
151. |           (0.4) |  
152. | S2        i have to write this↓ |  
153. |           (0.7) |  
154. | S1        so you're writing the |  
155. |           grid stuff↑ |  
156. |           (0.4) |  
157. | S2        er: SHOULD I: hold on (.) to both of these |  
158. |           minutes↑(0.2)o::r |

1 S6 °i'm rubbish°  
2 (3.5)  
3 S1 i'm intrigued as well(.)how i got sand in my pockets=  
4 S2 =i've got loads of sand in my pocket  
5 S1 but i don't understand((laughter))  
6 S2 no=  
7 S1 =cos i didn't r[oll around] on the beach  
8 S2 [cos well ]  
9 S1 yeah i only did it with one finger how did I get it  
10 in both pockets↑ ((laughter))  
11 S2 yeah i don't know↓  
12 S1 damn beach  
13 (1.3)  
14 S3 yeah sand's like glitter it just gets basically you  
15 don't know how it got there  
16 S2 i can't believe you guys didn't go on the sand  
17 S1 you're rubbish=  
18 S3 =no i don't do sand  
19 S2 do you not do san[d]  
20 S3 [No]  
21 S2 [oh right(.)i wore my wellies but ]  
22 S1 [i didn't really until ellie and justin] went(.)let's  
23 go on the beach↑ and i went alright [(laughter)]  
24 S2 [((laughter))]  
25 S1 it was fun though (.)[did make some]  
26 S2 [we are chi- ] we are big  
27 children=  
28 S1 =yeah did make some dinosaur porn so it's all good  
29 ((laughter))=  
30 S3 =i did see that[((laughter))]  
31 S1 [((laughter))]  
32 S3 i thought is that what it's <supposed to  
33 [be↑> ((laughter))]  
34 S1 [((laughter)) ]

35 S7 ((throat clearing))

36 S2 best offers i ever got

37 (4.2)

38 S1 oh happy birthday by the way(.)((laughter))

39 S2 oh (.)oh↑

40 (1.6)

41 S2 he:y is it my birthday↑=

42 S1 =yeah on facebook it is ((laughter))=

43 S3 =i saw that i thought as w-was that yesterday as well=

44 S1 =i think that was jack yesterday=

45 S3 =yeah cos i thought i felt really bad i thought

46 °he hasn't pressed anything has he°

47 (1.7)

48 S1 well you see i looked at it and went(.)i don't

49 remember ellie's birthday being in january i'm pretty

50 confident she would have said something [about it]

51 had it been today

52 S3 [yeah ]

53 S2 yeah i'd be like oh↑ it's my birthday

54 tom[orrow ]no↑ it's not my birthday [but]

55 S1 [y:eah((laughter))]

56 S1 [i

57 didn't]

58 think it was but[you ]

59 S2 [have i ] got f- happy birthdays=

60 S1 =yeah ((laughter))

61 Ss ((Laughter))

62 S2 yea:h that's really insane

63 (2.0)

64 S2 °oh good°

62 S4 there's nothing like a good facebook rape

63 S2 °No° cos i thought he <raped me> well(.)okay

64 [((laughter))he did he did he did facebook rape me=

65 Ss [((laughter))]

66 S3 =are we recording↑=  
67 S4 =yeah [°that's° ](.) that  
68 Ss [((laughter))]  
69 S2 are we recording are we↑  
70 S5 oh don't worry abou[t it]  
71 S4 [that] recorded [°what's this↑°]  
72 S5 [i'm trying to ]  
73 figure out how you use this one somewhere  
74 S4 we'll just wait for the camera to turn on then  
75 we'll start  
76 S5 oh it's fine  
77 (2.7)  
78 S3 thirty first today↑  
79 S6 ye[ah ]  
80 S1 [it is ]  
81 (1.6)  
82 S1 ((non-verbal activity))  
83 (9.0)  
84 S4 are we good↑=  
85 S5 =°see you later° =  
86 S4 =ok[ay ] see ya=  
87 S5 [°thanks°]  
88 S1 =thank [you:]  
89 S2 [°bye°]=  
90 S6 =bye bye  
91 S4 r:ight(.) (.hhh)nobody absent(.)everybody's present  
92 S7 yes  
93 S4 so:(.)su:re(.) (.hhh)er:: um(1.6)right er: should we  
94 sign off the:: minutes from the previous meeting  
95 first  
96 S6 and there's the one from (.)the twenty fifth of  
97 oc-tober as well  
98 S4 right oh↑ there's two ((laughter))  
99 S1 you expect me to remember what we did



134 S2 =oh it is=  
135 S1 =yeah [no ] it's um  
136 S4 [right]  
137 S1 °poor norwegians°  
138 S4 (.hhh)so(0.2)post-exam(.)time to get down to  
139 business(.)we need to work out what everyone's  
140 doing (.)individually(.)u:m(.)so maybe we should  
141 have a discussion on(.) where we're(.)each gonna go  
142 (.)with our part of the project(.)a:nd u:m(0.2)  
143 basically how we're gonna start↓  
144 (0.2)  
145 S4 so::(0.2)(.hhh)jacob↑  
146 S3 mhm  
147 S4 business↑  
148 S3 yep↑  
149 S4 what's going on↑ (.)what what how are  
150 you(.)continuing from the lit review now↑

1. S4 i'm sure if somebody:(.) is picked chairman and  
2. then someone says oh i quite fancy being  
3. chairman this [week ] [(.) ] [we ]can work =  
4. S2 [yeah↓]  
5. S1 [↑mm↓]  
6. S2 [yeah]  
7. S4 =[around it(.)]if somebody doesn't wanna be=  
8. S3 [then we can ] ((nods his head))  
9. = -if someone doesn't wanna be secretary  
10. and somebody [does ](.).then sure [(.)but like ]  
11. S3 [yeah ]  
12. S2 [°yep that's fine°]  
13. S4 you know↓  
14. (.)  
15. S4 i::'ll be honest i probably don't wanna be secretary  
16. after this((laughter))  
17. Ss [((laughter)) ]  
18. S2 [no that's fine↓ °no no°]  
((said with a giggling voice))  
19. S1 it's a pain=  
20. S4 =[i feel bad on ]-i feel bad on alex↓=  
21. S3 [surprise °surprise°]  
((said with laughter))  
22. S4 =[(.). cos he wanted to ((laughter))]  
23. S3 [((laughter)) ]  
24. Ss ((laughter))  
25. S1 >writing minutes at the meeting<

1. S2 yeah she is  
 2. (0.9)  
 3. S1 she was pretty good at cards though I was not  
 4. impressed  
 5. S2 she's very clever  
 6. (0.4)  
 7. S1 i tell you do not ever play deleep at cards  
 8. S3 is she very clever↑  
 9. S2 he is so good at cards  
 10. (0.7)  
 11. S2 like(0.6) it's ridiculous  
 12. (0.4)  
 13. S2 he plays he- you know Hearts↑  
 14. (0.5)  
 15. S3 mm-hm↑  
 16. S2 he plays an indian version of that(0.3)andit's  
 17. (0.3)you have (.) basically have to memorise two  
 18. packs of cards(0.3)[and if ] you c- yo-(0.7) =  
 19. S1 [((laughter))]  
 20. S2 =i don't understand how yo- you've got this and this  
 21. (0.8)  
 22. S1 ((laughter))  
 23. S2 H::O:W↑  
 24. (1.7)  
 25. S2 we've been playing for like two hours  
 26. [how can you know this↑]  
 27. S1 [((laughter)) ]  
 28. (0.7)  
 29. S2 he's the o- well he can beat everyone he's  
 30. just=  
 31. S1 =yeah  
 32. (0.7)  
 33. S2 he's unbelievable at cards  
 34. (1.0)  
 35. S1 sally got a bit upset though  
 36. (0.4)

37. S2 really↑  
38. (0.4)  
39. S1 yeah we ruined one of their set of cards  
40. (0.9)  
41. S2 °oh dear°=  
42. S1 ¢=we were playing irish snap  
43. (0.4)  
44. S2 yeah=  
45. S1 =and the problem is there were nine of us  
46. playing irish snap (0.6)so of course  
47. if you were if it's your your turn about  
48. to [go: ]and you're=  
49. S2 [yeah]  
50. S1 =going in you kind of go in with the card when>  
51. you're snapping (0.4)and so that gets smashed  
52. and then you get n- eight other people coming  
53. in it was absolute carnage  
54. (0.7)  
55. S1 and then we played spoons as well and that was  
56. a bit messy  
57. (1.0)  
58. S1 thank you  
59. (0.5)>  
60. S4 see you in a while↑  
61. S1 t[ra ]  
62. S2 [see ya]spoons can get dangerous  
63. (0.6)  
64. S1 yeah  
65. (0.3)  
66. S2 last time i played that somebody jumped on my  
67. ba:ck and i had to carry them up the stairs and  
68. then he nicked the spoon after all [it was]  
69. like=  
70. S1 [ yeah ]  
71. S2 =[ (what the fuck) ]  
72. S? [ ((laughter) ) ]  
73. S? ((cough))

74. (1.9)

75. S2 °ah good times°

76. (16.2)

77. S1 °now what was° the date then two weeks ago↑

78. (1.4)

79. S3 what [is the]

80. S2 [i left] the date too °i thought she'd

81. put in all that stuff°

82. (0.3)

83. S1 yeah °i should work it out° now the date today

84. is the:: sixth↑=

85. S5 =sixth

86. S3 yeah↑

87. (1.1)

88. S5 should be fif-teenth(0.4) o::r⊘(0.5) twenty=

89. S1 =twenty s-econd i think

90. (0.4)

91. S5 yeah ⊘<94353>

92. (0.5)

93. S1 last week was the second meeting she recorded

94. (0.5)and that was that twenty-ninth yes=

95. =[yes so]

96. S5 [yeah twenty-second] twenty-ninth

97. (.)

98. S1 this is the twelfth(1.5)t:twenty ten(2.0)

99. and ten hundred

100. (2.9)

101. ((vocal sound))

102. (0.4)

103. S2 ((sniggering)) °touched it°=

104. S5 =looks fancy

105. (2.3)

106. S1 mm↑

107. (1.7)

108. S? ((sniggering))

109. S2 it's also (v f m)((laughter))

110. Ss ((laughter))

111. S3 yeah i know=  
112. S1 =yeah  
113. (0.4)  
114. S2 yeah  
115. (2.4)  
116. S2 is that a little decibel metre on it if you  
117. speak loudly↑  
118. (0.7)  
119. S3 i think it could hear everything i did  
120. (0.9)  
121. S2 °that's quite cool°  
122. (3.1)  
123. S1 i'm not actually doing anything so rude↑  
124. (0.3)  
125. S3 mm↑¤<134655>  
126. (1.7)  
127. S1 do you want to try and ring mohammed↑  
128. (0.9)  
129. S3 you won't get any signal  
130. (0.7)  
131. S2 yeah it's a bit of [a dead spot in]=  
132. S3 [it's a iron box]=  
133. S2 =[here]  
134. S1 [ah ]mohammed candusi sorry i'll i'll be  
135. late bus is thirty minutes late so far  
136. (0.9)  
137. S3 ((*vocal* sound of disappointment))  
138. S1 he's only coming in from benwell  
139. (1.1)  
140. S5 yeah=  
141. S1 =he can walk it less than ((*sniggering*))thirty  
142. minutes ((*laughter*))  
143. (1.1)  
144. S3 maybe he's already on the bus  
145. (2.2)  
146. S2 when was tha- yeah when was that↑(.)was that  
147. just now you got that one↑

148. (1.2)

149. S1 eh it must have been yeah(0.3)eh at  
150. nine fifty seven

151. (2.1)

152. S1 i vote we just start without him and=  
153. S2 =yeah<164426>

154. (0.5)

155. S5 i'm sure it'll be ok=  
156. S1 =°go for it i think°

157. (0.6)

158. S6 is mohammed coming↑  
159. (0.4)

160. S1 eh yeah he's running thirty minutes late though  
161. so,  
162. (0.6)

163. S6 oh ok (unclear speech)=  
164. S3 =shall we begin↑  
165. (1.1)

166. S6 yeah how are you feeling Jacob↑=  
167. S2 =i'm good (.) i'm getting better  
168. (0.5)

169. S6 °good°  
170. (0.8)

171. S2 are you eh↑=  
172. S3 =wha- what was wrong with you↑  
173. (0.7)

174. S2 i (.) don't know i just felt (.)  
175. seriously ill last week i don't know why  
176. (1.3)

177. S2 i manned up,  
178. (0.5)

179. S2 °i got over it°  
180. (0.8)

181. S2 with the help of lemsip=  
182. S1 =went to the library and looked at daily mail  
183. website=  
184. S2 =i did

185. (0.4)

186. S1 it was all good

187. (0.3)

188. S2 i do live on that web[site]

189. S3 [i'lll ]give you

190. i'll give you your man card back then

191. (0.8)

192. S2 what↑ because of the daily mail↑=

193. S3 =for the recovery

194. (0.3)

195. S2 oh↑ ((*laughter*))i thought the daily mail's

196. not very manly

197. S3 ((*laughter*))

198. S1 can you sign that one please↑

199. (0.6)

200. S6 ¢yeah¢

201. (6.2)

202. S6 so mohammed is he okay are you secretary

203. considering it's going back round again↑

204. (0.9)

205. S2 am i secretary again↑

206. (0.6)

207. S2 oh right [that's fine]

208. S6 [i think ] there's (.)

209. i [mean because

210. S1 [well everyone's] been secretary [now] so:=

211. S6 [yeah]

212. S6 =beca-[em]

213. S1 [if ]you want to be (.) or whoever wants to

214. be sec- [you:'re chair]man definitely=

215. S6 [yeah ]

216. S6 =ye[ah ]

217. S1 [sorry] chairperson=

218. S6 =chair per- yeah=

219. S1 =sorry ¢<218546>

220. S2 so the five=

221. S6 =oh god don't worry [doesn't matter]

222. S2 [if it's back ]round  
223. again i might as well  
224. (0.7)  
225. S1 yeah=  
226. S2 =i might as well do it  
227. (0.5)  
228. S6 °okay° well and then like in the in any other  
229. business we can eh(0.5)¤this one needs to be  
230. signed em(0.4)we can discuss who wants to be:  
231. (0.8)  
232. S1 what yeah=  
233. S6 =°yeah°  
234. (0.6)  
235. S6 em¤(0.3)oh cheers  
236. (0.4)  
237. S1 ((laughter)) what's my name↑((laughter)) >  
238. (6.2) ((passing the paper))  
239. S6 okay  
240. (.)  
241. S6 okay↑ so apologies for absence(0.2)>kind of not  
242. an apology for [absence but ] he'll be(.)=  
243. S1 [hopefully not ]  
244. S6 =[late half] an hour late so he should be here=  
245. S1 [eh yeah ]  
246. S6 =in fifteen minutes=  
247. S1 =yeah  
248. (1.1)  
249. S6 okay cool  
250. (0.5)  
251. S6 sign off minutes\_  
252. (0.4)  
253. S6 pass that round cos i've got  
254. (2.4)  
255. S1 i've got minutes from last week if everyone's  
256. happy with them  
257. (0.3)  
258. S1 i'd just put your correction

259. (0.9)

260. S6 =cool=

261. S1 =yeah<262885>

262. (0.2)

263. S1 is everyone else happy with them↑=

264. S3 =yeah

265. (.)

266. S5 yes

267. (0.6)

268. S3 very happy

269. (0.5)

270. S1 cool

271. (5.1)

272. S6 (unclear speech) as well

273. (1.6)

274. S1 if i sign those mike and jacob

275. (1.1)

276. S1 mohammed can you sign those please↓

277. (2.2)

278. S1 do you have any minutes↑

279. (0.4)

280. S3 have i signed them↑=

281. S1 =well it says you have

282. (2.7)

283. S6 °d'you° do you want to

284. [pass it°round back round] that way°=

285. S3 [from last week↑]

286.

287. S3 =Oh [did] you sign them in the design no=

288. S? [n:o]

289. S1 =no that's(.) elly's meeting that's this week's=

290. S3 =ah

291. (0.3)

292. S1 or last week's(.)yeah everyone's

293. signed your minutes didn't they jacob

294. (0.4)

295. S2 yeah i got a full co- signed copy here

296. (0.7)

297. S1 cos i think

298. (1.1)

299. S3 i [think i don't think Kairul's signed mine]

300. S5 [em mohammed hasn't signed mine ]

301. (0.4)

302. S1 sorry↑

303. S5 mohammed haven't signed mine(0.2) he was (.)

304. [in morocco that week]

305. S1 [and only mohammed ]hasn't signed yours

306. (0.4) he hasn't[signed those ((sniggering))] >

307.

308. S6 [mohammed hasn't signed mine]=>

309. S1 =[he hasn't ((said with laughter))]

310. S3 [mohammed and kairul ]hasn't[signed mine]

311. S5 [i haven't signed]

312. that one i think

313. (0.9)

314. S1 we're going to get to the end of this and just

315. mohammed won't have signed ((sniggering))

316. [any of it] ((said with laughter))

317. S2 [they'll be ] big ga[ps]

318. S1 [i did] the first

319. meeting and that was it ((laughter))

320. (0.7)

321. S2 if he's not signed anything just forge his

322. signature

323. (0.4)

324. S1 yeah=

325. S3 =wait a minute

326. (0.2)

327. S6 okay s[o ]

328. S3 [oh no] these are the ones¤<323428>

329. (0.7)

330. S1 and then (.) yours

331. (0.8)

332. S1 has everyone signed yours↑

333. (2.3)

334. S3 i don't think

335. (9.4)

336. S2 °thank you°

337. (8.8)

338. S1 em you need to sign those off

339. (17.6)

340. S6 i get bored of doing my signature that

341. [i just kind of like] it started off really(.)=

342. S1 [((laughter)) ]

343. S6 =you know

344. (1.2)

345. S1 that's why mine is [really] boring((sniggering))

346. S2 [neat ]

347. (0.4)

348. S2 mine just goes neugh=

349. S1 =yeah [((laughter)) ]

350. S2 [i i give up ]

351. (0.8)

352. S1 [special]

353. S6 [especially] when you've got cold hands you're

354. just kind of like oh god=

355. S1 =mine's just getting shorter and shorter

356. eventually i'll just put a tick[((laughter))]

357. S2 [ It'll be it'll

358. be a blur]

359. S5 [yes]

360. S1 [yep]

361. (0.2)

362. S2 [a cross]

363. S1 [thank you] next (( laughter))

364. (0.5)

365. S2 i wish i was zorro then i could just (.) do a z

366. (0.3)

367. S6 yeah=

368. S1 =yeah

369. (0.8)

370. S6 [o ] kay↑

371. S1 [hav-]

372. (0.3)

373. S1 have you signed those elly↑

374. (0.3)

375. S3 my minutes are somewhere

376. (0.8)

377. S6 err by the [ yeah ]

378. S3 [here they are]

379. S2 eh yes you have eh em mohammed's just got to

380. sign these ones=

381. S6 =yeah i think mohammed's is the only one that

382. needs to [sign ]

383. S1 [who's] not signed those↑↗

384. (0.9)

385. S1 kairull [and mohammed]

386. S5 [ I haven't yet]

387. (0.8)

388. S3 done↑=

389. S1 =okay↑

390. (0.4)

391. S3 thank you=

392. S6 =so on to lit review(.)the dreaded lit review

393. [uh]

394. S3 [oh ]mohammed hasn't either

395. (0.7)

396. S? it's fine

397. (0.6)

398. S6 em basically obviously you you can't really

399. read us your lit review just to em tell us how

400. it's going (.) how roughly your word count

401. (1.1)roughly how many references(.)and (.)how

402. it's basically panning out (0.3) just let us

403. know and so the reason why I'm looking at you

404. cos you're first on the list=  
405. S2 =((laughter))=  
406. S6 =((laughter))=  
407. S2 =thank you  
408. (0.5)  
409. S2 errr (0.6) i have currently i've got i was  
410. going to say you can look at all my notes if  
411. you want i'm currently doing the::  
412. macroeconomics(0.7)o:f offshore wind (0.4)and  
413. the sort of renewable sectors as it(.)as it were  
414. (1.8)  
415. S2 err=  
416. S1 =what's the micro economics↑

1. S1 good weekend everyone↑  
2. (0.7)  
3. S2 yea:h it was good  
4. (1.6)  
5. S1 how's em (1.3) richard's parents and stuff↑  
6. (0.8)  
7. S2 i don't know i didn't see him actually (0.3) i  
8. [was sort of ]=  
9. S1 [°did you not↑°]  
10. S2 =like i was (.) locked in my room doing  
11. er (.) work yesterday  
12. (2.6)  
13. S3 apparently richard's father was going around kissing all  
14. the girls(.)you missed out  
15. (0.7)  
16. S1 i [kno:w ] what [a sha:me ]  
17. S? [(°see ya later °)]  
18. S3 [(°see ya°)] it was  
19. actually(0.9) yeah  
20. (3.0)  
21. S1 you said- you said that then  
22. S3 ((S3 looks at S1 and smiles))  
23. (0.8)  
24. S1 who said what↑(0.8) so we won't forget it °we were  
25. recording↑°(0.9) okay↑ no problem ((S1 taking off her  
coat))  
26. (7.5)  
27. S1 i take it there wasn't a lecture then↑  
28. (1.0)  
29. S3 when↑  
30. (0.2)  
31. S4 no  
32. (0.5)  
33. S2 is that next  
34. (0.3)  
35. S3 if there was i didn't go  
36. (1.5)  
37. S4 well (.) no one else did (0.8) either

38. (0.4)

39. S3 °what's the time↑°

40. (0.5)

41. S3 no what date even↑ (0.3) twenty first↑

42. (0.5)

43. S1 yeah twenty-first

44. (2.9)

45. S1 okay so (.) apologies (.) i got an email from

46. mohammed [so it's]

47. S3 [er ]

48. S2 [yeah ]

49. (1.2)

50. S1 erm he also had his job-job interview [thing]

51. S2 [ yeah]

52. S1 so (1.5)°we could move it(0.4) last week°

53. (.)but that's cool

54. (0.5)

55. S1 erm so(0.6)we'll go in a different order this

56. time(0.3) we'll start with jacob ((S2 passes the signing sheet to S1))

57. (1.1)

58. S2 er yeah (.) er i've been doing (.)i've just finished

59. my supply chain database (0.7)and er i've (.)

60. started on my supply chain(0.4)sort of analysis

61. (0.7)i've found a consultancy(0.6)that does it

62. in real life(0.8)erm and their website's actually

63. really helpful (.) so because i'm trying to make it

64. sort of as realistic as possible (0.6)as close to

65. real life

66.

25. S7 are we going out (.) fo::r a drink for Christmas↓=  
 26. S6 =>i was gonna say that↑<  
 27. Ss laughter  
 28. (.)  
 29. S6 ithink we should↑  
 30. S3 i'll check my schedule↓ (hhh.)  
 31. (.)  
 32. S6 °I was just about to do that too::°=  
 33. S1 =go for it (.) >where d'you wanna go↑<  
 34. (.)  
 35. S7 it's up to you guys↓=  
 36. S3 Doug doesn't even drink↓  
 37. (0.1)  
 38. S1 i [don't]  
 39. S3 [ if we go] out for a drink you have to have alcohol ↓=  
 40. S1 = >no I don't↓<=  
 41. S3 =>yeah you do ↓<=  
 42. S1 no↓  
 43. (.)  
 44. S3 °please↑°=  
 45. S1 = >nope ↓<  
 46. (.)  
 ((S7 laughs))  
 47. S3 °i'll spike it↓°  
 48. S6 e::r[rm]  
 49. S1 [i'll ] taste it  
 50. Ss laughter  
 51. S1 [the joys of being teetotal]  
 52. S6 [do we wanna -do we wanna ] go out for da (0.1) drink or  
 53. do we wanna go out fo::r (.) for dinner maybe↑

1. S4 (.hhh) kairul↑ (0.2) anything to:: (0.1) add (.) about the structures↑
2. (0.1)
3. S6 basically we need to start with the: (.) geotechnical analysis
4. (0.4) [e:rm ] (0.2) >i'm hoping< [to:: ] hoping to finish that
5. S7 [°well°]
6. S7 [>°sorry↓°<]
7. S6 about (0.2) this week↑
8. (0.3)
9. S4 yeah=
10. S6 =or maybe a li- next week↑ (.) latest and thenu (2.2) get the
11. calculations for the structures done (0.2) by: >as you said< february
12. (0.3) or maybe (.) earlier (1.3) then i could go onto the::
13. [(0.2) ] prop design
14. S1 [ m↑hm↓ ]
15. (0.6)
16. S4 yeah↓ (.) >°okay↓°<=
17. S7 =a-a-actually we'll need (0.3) structures (0.1) befo:re (0.2) the geotechnical0.3) because we need to know
18. ( (.) what's are the load that's gonna be exerted
19. (0.2) to know how deep the piles should go↑
20. (0.1) so:: we need to do the structures [ (0.2) and the force ]
21. S6 [structures first

then g-]

22. S7 (0.1) that goes into the pile a:nd (.) the whole thing  
[befo:re]

23. S1 [e::rm i ]

24. imagine it's going to be an iterative process↓

25. S7 [=]>it's [ ] gonna be < an iterative process (.) yeah↑  
[°certainly↓°]

26. S6 [yes [ ]

27. S1 [it's gonna] be make some massive assumptions

28. to start with [(0.4 )and just]

29. S7 [yes↓ that's [ ]

30. S1 [find] (.) keep going round until [you get] a good answer=

31. S7 [yep ]

32. S7 [ yeah [ ]

33. S7 =yep=

34. S6 =because we need the geotechnical to:: (0.9) [decide the ]

35. S7 [what would-  
would]

36. S6 diameter (0.7) and everything do we↑

37. (0.1)

38. S7 e::r well- well (0.3) we need geotechnical (.) layers to  
decide

39. (0.8) how deep (.) it's gonna need to [go (0.3) [ ] but  
(0.5) we need

40. S6 [ >right↓< [ ]

41. S7 to know as well (.) what's the forces exerted to see how  
deep

42. [you need ] to go as well (0.4) (.hhh) so: e::r (0.3)  
e::r it-it's
43. S6 [correct ]
44. S7 like (0.4) hand in hand process [but ] (0.7) it's like  
somebody say (.)
45. S6 [yeah]
46. S7 it's iterative (.) °you have to just keep doing°=
47. S4 =yeah↓  
(S4 moves his body forward to table)
48. (0.1)

1. S4 =>yeah but< they're not THAT big are they↑
2. (0.5)
3. S1 well no (.) we'll just go bigger↑
4. (0.3)
5. S4 NO↓ i'm just saying it'll be (.) interesting [to: ↑ ]  
(.) have a
6. S1 [yea:h↑ ]
7. S4 a prototype design fo:r↑ (.) a very very large duct↓  
((sniggering))
8. (0.7)
9. S1 °yes (.) interesting who's ducted now↑°=
10. S7 =°jus-° just a question for you dough↓ (0.1) d-do you  
have any ti:me
11. f- (0.8) sca:les o:r any: to >you know↑< whe:n (.) thin  
[gs will ]
12. S1 [WHEN i ]
13. want to get things done↓ (.) er::m=
14. S4 =((tongue click)) this is↓ (.) the next discussion↓
15. (0.3)
16. S7 °sorry↓°
17. S4 [so:↑ °i just°]
18. S7 [°okay↓° ] (.) JUST BECAUSE i want to see:↓ (.)  
[where we]
19. S1 [ yeah↓ ]
20. S7 can fit↓ how we can help [and that] sort of [things↓] (.)  
[cos ]
21. S1 [ i know↓ ]
22. S1 [ yeah↓ ]

23. S4 [yea:h↑]
24. S7 it's e:r=
25. S1 =yea:h↓ no i'm aware of that↓ (0.3) er:m (0.2)=
26. S4 =i just wanted to hear what everyone (0.6) was gonna do  
first↓
27. [and ] then we can discuss [how ] we're gonna↑ (0.4)  
get
28. S7 [yeah]
29. S7 [ >sure↑< ]
30. S4 everything done in time [(0.5) ] together↑ (0.3) bu:t i  
mean↑=
31. S7 [ >sure< ]
32. S1 =yeah [er: ] okay fine↓
33. S7 [ >yeah↓< ]
34. (0.3)
35. S4 yeah↓ well i was just (0.6) wondering where (0.4) ellie  
(0.3)
36. where are you gonna (0.6) [go ] with this now↑

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