Spoken and Embodied Interaction in Facilitated Computer-Supported Workplace Meetings

by

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Abstract

Almost 25 years ago, Clawson, Bostrom, and Anson (1993) drew attention to the fact that “the ability to facilitate diverse human and technological interactions will be one of the most essential skills for leading and contributing to all levels of the organization in the future” (p. 547). Today, there is an increased interest in studying facilitated meetings, wherein facilitation is most commonly understood as the process of helping groups work effectively to accomplish shared outcomes. Nevertheless, little of the existing research has provided empirically-grounded insights into the practice of facilitation. This thesis aims to close this gap by means of providing a detailed analysis of how facilitators go about doing facilitation work in facilitated computer-supported workplace meetings. The data comprise 53 hours of audio- and video-recorded multi-party interactions among facilitator(s) and participants, occurring during facilitated meetings in a business setting. The data were analysed using conversation analysis to examine the talk and embodied conduct of facilitators and meeting participants, as these unfold sequentially.

The first analytic chapter reveals the macro-organization of the facilitated meetings, and it contrasts the practice view with the theoretical approach towards the organization of the facilitated meetings. The second analytic chapter investigates the interactional practices used by the facilitators to unpack participation that has already been elicited, captured, and displayed graphically on the public screen via the use of technology. In the third analytic chapter, I explore how the facilitators use computer software to build visual representations of the participants’ contributions. In the final analytic chapter, I investigate the practices of decision-making in meeting settings with multiple participants.

Overall, this thesis makes innovative contributions to our understanding of the practice of facilitated computer-supported workplace meetings. It challenges existing literature on facilitation by finding that facilitators can “orchestrate” participant input, questioning the facilitator’s role as “content-neutral”, as proposed by leading practitioners in the field of facilitation (e.g., Kaner et al., 2014). At the same time, it shows how the manipulation of computer software is an accountable action and how the decision-making process occasions or constrains the production of alignment between participant(s) and facilitator(s). The thesis also contributes to conversation analytic research on questioning, as well as the action of unpacking participation. I show that the notion that open-ended
questions better elicit participation than interrogatives is generally not supported empirically, at least in this context. The thesis contributes to existing literature on multi-party meeting interaction, showing how the departure from the canonical next-speaker selection technique which involves the use of address terms and address positions in an utterance takes place. Further, it enhances our understanding of how computer software constrains and/or affords progressivity in interaction. In this sense, I enhance our understanding of the concept of agency of artefacts. Finally, I contribute to knowledge on group decision-making, an under-researched yet core activity in facilitated and other types of meetings. Here, I contribute to the body of work on the interplay between deontics and epistemics in interaction.

This thesis shows the applicability of conversation analysis to the study of facilitation. By analysing talk and embodied conduct, communicative practices for accomplishing successful facilitated meetings are revealed and these should be of core interest to both professional and novice facilitators.
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Introduction

“The world meets a lot. The statistics are staggering. There are over […] 85 million [meetings every day] worldwide.”

This thesis explores patterns of interaction and communication in *facilitated computer-supported workplace meetings* (henceforth, *facilitated meetings*) in the United Kingdom, where groups of people and facilitators have conversations and look into the groups’ problems. Today, there is a growing body of literature on facilitated meetings, wherein *group facilitation*, broadly construed, is “a process in which a person whose selection is acceptable to all members of the group, is substantively neutral, and has no substantive decision-making authority diagnoses and intervenes to help a group improve how it identifies and solves problems and makes decisions, to increase the group’s effectiveness” (Schwarz, 2005, p. 21). These meetings are the only place where facilitators and individuals holding various types of “specialist knowledge” (Housley, 2000a, 2003) can meet together and have conversations together. Despite this, most of the theoretical and empirical studies available in the literature on facilitation have focused primarily on investigating and reporting the details of the content of the meetings, the “what” being discussed (for example, the topic for discussion and the agenda items, the task at hand, and the decisions to be made); by contrast, few studies only have investigated the process around these meetings, “how” things are being discussed and dealt with (for example, the group dynamics and management of relationships, and the methods, processes, tools, and techniques being used) (the few exceptions include the studies by Franco & Greiffenhagen, 2018; Franco & Nielsen, 2018; Nielsen, 2012; and Tavella & Franco, 2015). Hence, there is still a gap in our knowledge in understanding facilitated meetings *in situ* (Franco & Greiffenhagen, 2018).

In this thesis, I examine a corpus of 53 hours of audio- and video-recorded face-to-face facilitated meetings in a business setting. I analyse this data using Conversation Analysis (CA) (Sacks, 1992a; Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson, 1974), an approach designed to examine closely the details, nuances, and patterns in talk-as-it-happens. Unlike other methods, such as interviews, surveys, or experiments, CA provides the means to access what Stokoe (2010) calls the “analytic black box” of actual interaction during these type of meetings, looking at how speakers organize their talk and use it to accomplish various social actions. By means of
examining how facilitated meetings unfold, we can gain a better understanding of what the social organization of the facilitated meetings is. Why do we need this better understanding? The facilitation process has been developed to help groups do better (Schuman, 2005); nevertheless, there is evidence that many outcome implementations are not successful (Bourne, Neely, Mills, & Platts, 2003). As such, a better understanding can help design more effective facilitating processes in the field, as well as contribute to developing a more effective toolkit of linguistic resources for the training of novice facilitators.

Chapter summaries

The thesis unfolds as follows. First, in Chapter 1, I will position my thesis within the broader literature on workplace meetings, showing that while there is an abundant body of work on analysing meetings and meeting interaction (e.g., Asmuß & Svennevig, 2009; Chan, 2008; Cooren, 2007; Huisman, 2001; Kangasharju, 2002; Kangasharju & Nikko, 2009; Kwon, Clarke, & Wodak, 2014; Mondada, 2011; Nielsen, 2009), most of it has focused upon particular actions (such as beginning and closing a meeting, shifts and time-outs, turn-taking practices, the doing of emotion, humour and laughter, and the doing of leadership) that are somewhat different to the ones identified in the setting considered here. In particular, I will explore conversation analytic research on workplace meetings.

Furthermore, I will review what research exists investigating how facilitators perform facilitation and show that while there is a considerable body of literature on facilitated work group processes (e.g., Kaner et al., 2014; Schuman, 2005; and Schwartz, 2002), these studies tend to generally be comprised of theoretically-informed reflections about the facilitation practice, rather than empirically-grounded insights derived from studying the practices in themselves.

Furthermore, I also show that studies examining the facilitation process have generally done so mostly as a means to increasing the efficiency of the meetings. I will show that there is a lack of empirical studies focusing on facilitators doing facilitated meetings in situ and how facilitation is actually constructed as an interactional achievement; in return, this can help in finding ways to increase their efficiency. Finally, I will explore the use of technology in meetings and show that generally studies have not investigated the way technological artefacts are interactionally accomplished.

In conclusion, to the best of my knowledge, prior research in institutional interaction has not yet investigated facilitated computer-supported meetings in the setting considered
This review has inspired me to take a close and detailed look at how facilitators and groups of people communicate and interact with each other during this type of meetings. 

Next, Chapter 2 will introduce the methodological approach followed in this thesis, with an overview of the processes and steps involved in producing this research. In this sense, I will describe how facilitated computer-supported workplace meetings in this study are organized, the approach to data collection and analysis, and the ethical considerations, followed by the description of the most important concepts in Conversation Analysis. The next four chapters constitute the analytic work of the thesis, each examining: (a) the macro-organization of the meetings; (b) how facilitators elicit/unpack participation; (c) how the participants’ contributions are jointly structured by the participants and the facilitators using the “causal mapping technique” to build conceptual maps; and (d) how the decision-making process unfolds.

In the first analytic chapter, Chapter 3, I provide an overview of facilitated meetings and their organization, including how the facilitators and the participants proceed through the meetings, with a detailed consideration of talk between the facilitator and the participants being undertaken in the subsequent analytical chapters (Chapters Four, Five, and Six). This chapter is, thus, prepared in a way that reflects the overall organization of the meetings and considers the interactional tasks that facilitators worked to accomplish: how meetings open, how facilitators identify the issues at hand (problem identification and formulation), how they further organize and structure the participants’ contributions (integration), and how the decision-making process (launching alternative options) is finally managed and concluded. In describing the sequence of the meetings, I also aim to compare and contrast the “practice” view with the “theoretical” approach towards the organization of the facilitated meetings. I find that the more “theoretical” approach can be a misleading source of information about the practice of meetings, about just how meetings actually happen in a practical and immediate sense.

The second analytic chapter, Chapter 4, deals with the facilitator’s project of identifying the issues at hand - problem identification and formulation - and how participation is unpacked in this process. In this chapter, I focus on a particular phase of the interaction in which the facilitator presents some information visually and then prompts the participants to talk. I analyse the design and sequential position of such practices. I find that rather than using open-ended ways of eliciting talk (such as, “What do you think of X?”), facilitators use yes/no-interrogatives instead, which nevertheless, elicit “rich”, descriptive responses from the participants. This finding shows that at least in this context,
the use of open-ended questions is simply not supported empirically. Furthermore, I find that the facilitators often deploy a prefatory assessment and/or formulation first, before eliciting participation through yes/no-interrogatives. I argue that the facilitators’ prefatory assessments and/or formulations mark a departure from the usual elicitation of participation and are doing two things in addition to doing noticing. On the one hand, they represent a way of initiating the topic, as they project an invitation to a discussion of that which is being displayed on the public screen, and on the other hand, they are a way of creating a common frame of reference – in this sense, they constrain subsequent interaction. It is also remarkable to note that the prefatory assessments and/or formulations are always present, while the direct questions may be missing, which stands as evidence that the participants anticipate what the facilitators are likely to ask or the line of thought proposed for further discussion. Overall, these findings are particularly useful for facilitators, who can use assessments and formulations to “orchestrate” participant input, questioning, thus, the facilitator’s role as “content-neutral”, as proposed by leading practitioners in the field (e.g., Kaner et al., 2014; Schwarz, 2005).

Following on the topic of the identification of the issues at hand, the third analytical chapter, Chapter 5, explores how the participants’ contributions are jointly structured by the participants and the facilitators using a “causal mapping technique” to build conceptual maps. Conceptual maps, defined here as graphical tools for organizing and representing knowledge, include concepts, usually enclosed in circles or boxes of some type, and relationships between concepts indicated by a connecting line linking two or more concepts. In this chapter, I examine the design of the sequences that lead to the creation of such conceptual maps. I show that the presence of the facilitators and the use of the software introduce specific concerns and constraints on the overall organization of the meetings, allowing us to study how talk in interaction is an embodied, multimodal collaborative activity. In the process of building conceptual maps, I have found that there is a distinction between “the person who performs an action” and “the person who is accountable for it”. These are, indeed, socially managed and recognizable stances. I postulate that these are key categories for the facilitator doing facilitation generally, that actually both the facilitator and the participants are interested in making it clear who is responsible for a certain action (e.g., deleting something from the screen) and who is really accountable for the decision behind the action. Further, I show how the facilitators use conceptual maps to not only interact with the participants to produce knowledge about the issues at hand, but also to turn ideas into “talkables” available for the group to address. Built as a single case analysis, this chapter investigates the question of “agency”. I show that the “displayed” ideas become discursive
entities, physically severed from their producers, entities to which the participants are asked to react. Finally, I argue that conceptual maps are more than a means to achieve an end and that by inquiring into what it is to produce conceptual maps and casting an eye on how conceptual maps are actually mobilized by facilitators can enhance our understanding of the use of conceptual maps and the social actions that they are achieving. This seeks to contribute to our understanding of the complex sequential organization of interaction between facilitators and multi-party meeting participants, based on the use of technological resources; also, to our understanding of conceptual maps as interactional artefacts, which to the best of my knowledge, is a previously unstudied topic.

The final analytic chapter, Chapter 6, further looks at how the group decision-making process is managed. Here, I focus on sequences in which decisions about some hypothetical course of action are initiated and progressed and explore how participants and facilitators go about making decisions involving the distribution of organisational resources (organisational resources are understood here as both monetary <financial> and non-monetary <such as personal units of energy and effort>). I investigate two different ways of carrying out the decision-making process, which I have termed “selection-based” (technology-bound) and “discussion-based” (non-technology-bound), wherein: (1) The selection-based decision-making process affords the listing of possible courses of action from which the participants can individually and anonymously choose by selecting from the wireless turning-point system (TPS ) device; (2) The discussion-based decision-making process affords the launching of particular courses of action (proposals) by the facilitators, which participants can accept or reject. Among others, I will show that in the first case, the participants do not generally verbalise their decision-making process, but rather deploy other semiotic resources so as to make their participation and thus, their decision-making process, “visible” to others. In the second case, I will show the dynamic interplay between epistemic and deontic orientations. The facilitator’s proposals are generally uttered by orienting to the ultimate deontic right of the participants to accept or reject the proposals. Nevertheless, the proposals generally encompass only one possible course of action, thus adding pressure to affiliate with the facilitator’s deontic stance. In this sense, proposals are not neutral. Overall, these findings are very useful to the facilitators, as I will show that facilitators do have a substantive decision-making authority.

In the final chapter of this thesis, Chapter 7, I discuss the findings and contributions of this thesis, along with limitations, avenues for future research, and implications for training facilitators. Within the field of facilitation, this thesis has provided evidence to “break” the
postulate of the facilitator’s role as “content-neutral”, as well as the postulate of the facilitator’s “non-substantive decision-making authority” (Kaner et al., 2014; Schwarz, 2005). I show that facilitators can and actually do “orchestrate” participant input and the decision-making process, a finding that will impact practitioners and trainers in the world of facilitated meetings. Within the field of conversation analysis, this thesis has provided evidence to support the concept of “agency” of artefacts, showing how conceptual maps are utilized as a resource for interaction; also, how these themselves are an interactional achievement. I have also explored how epistemic and deontic orientations are raised and made relevant during discussion-based decision-making processes. In terms of implications for practice, the findings of this thesis can be used to improve the tool kit of linguistic resources that are being taught to novice facilitators interested in learning the practice of facilitation. By means of investigating the actual accomplishment of the natural growth of facilitated meetings, we can access and see how previously abstracts constructs are made visible in talk, and gain a better understanding of what actually happens during this type of meetings.

A great part of the existing literature comprises studies that advance idealized mental models about what meetings should look like, and consequently judge the effectiveness of meetings based on achieving and implementing particular courses of action. On this basis, we prematurely write off meetings as successes or failures and miss opportunities to learn what facilitated meetings truly are and what successful or unsuccessful meetings really look like. By understanding the machinery of communication, we can improve communication, and thus, stand a better chance to improve meeting outcomes (whichever these may be). This thesis aims to make generally considered “successful” facilitated meetings look a bit less special, and the rest of them a bit more so.
Chapter 1
The practice of facilitated computer-supported workplace meetings:
A literature review

“The role of the facilitator […] revolves around eliciting information from the assembled group, structuring the debate, probing the assumptions and, if necessary, challenging the decisions made.” (Bourne, Neely, Mills, & Platts, 2003, p. 7)

1.0 Introduction
Researchers have long established the meeting as a fundamental organizational phenomenon (e.g., Rogelberg, Leach, Warr, & Burnfield, 2006). Team meetings are ubiquitous in contemporary organizations (e.g., McComas, 2003; Rogelberg, Allen, Shanock, Scott, & Shuffler, 2010; Tracy, 2007), with researchers reporting that on average, employees attend at least three meetings per week, with increasing time spent in meetings at the managerial level (Schell, 2010). There are also reports that employees spend an average of six hours per week in scheduled meetings, and that those in larger organizations usually spend even more time in meetings (Rogelberg et al., 2006). A study by Rogelberg, Scott, and Kello (2007) further showed that senior managers were sitting in meetings for 23 hours a week on average. What these statistics indicate is that “meetings are ubiquitous and time-intensive workplace events” (Allen, Lehmann-Willenbrock, & Rogelberg, 2015, p. 3). Furthermore, meetings are a central part of the work environment that serve many purposes, such as decision-making, product development, information sharing, among others (Tracy and Dimock, 2003; McComas, 2003) and can affect many different aspects of one’s job, such as job satisfaction, work engagement, and team and organizational performance (Allen & Rogelberg, 2013; Kauffeld & Lehmann-Willenbrock, 2012; Rogelberg et al., 2010). For all the above reasons, meetings are important and interesting objects of research (Svennevig, 2012a).

In the following Sections, I will proceed to place the research into the wider context of existing literature on workplace meetings. First, in Section 1.1, I will start by looking at the various definitions of meetings and how their study has been approached. Then, in Section 1.2, I will situate the thesis within the broader literature on interaction in workplace meetings, showing the various methodological approaches that researchers adopted in studying the topic. Next, in Section 1.3, I will narrow down my focus by means of discussing the existing conversation analytic research on workplace meetings, wherein I will proceed
with conducting a systematic literature review. I will show that while there is an abundant body of work on the topic, it has largely ignored the setting of facilitated workplace meetings.

In Section 1.4, I will turn to the broader literature on facilitated meetings, showing that most research is theoretically-oriented and has focused on either studying the skills and competences of facilitators or on developing scripts and guidelines for the conduct of facilitation. I will also examine the body of work that is an exception to this. I will show that, in general, however, there is a lack of empirical work focusing on facilitators doing facilitated meetings in situ and how facilitation is actually constructed as an interactional achievement. I posit that if we want to improve practice, we need to understand what happens during these meetings and what the facilitators actually do and how they do it.

By the end of this chapter, in Section 1.5, I hope to have positioned my research within the existing literature to ascertain what we already know about facilitated computer-supported workplace meetings and reveal what we don’t know about them yet. I will have introduced the prior work which has driven this thesis and the research questions that I will answer over the following analytic chapters.

1.1 What are meetings and how have they been studied?

In time, meetings have been defined in a variety of ways. For example, in 1986, Schwartzman defined meetings as planned gatherings occurring between three or more individuals who assemble for the purpose of work-related interaction. Few years later, she provided a more elaborate definition (Schwartzman, 1989, p. 7):

> A communicative event involving three or more people who agree to assemble for a purpose ostensibly related to the functioning of an organization or a group, 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.

More recently, Rogelberg et al. (2006) defined meetings as purposeful work-related interactions that occur between two or more individuals and have the following characteristics: (a) have more structure than a simple chat but less structure than a lecture; (b)
are typically scheduled in advance and last, on average, from 30 to 60 minutes; and (c) can occur in different formats (face-to-face, Skype, conference calls, etc.). These operationalisations of meetings, however, “fall short of fully capturing both the depth and the breadth of workplace meetings” (Olien, Rogelberg, Lehmann-Willenbrock, & Allen, 2015, p. 13). They are much for than just gatherings, they are sites of social action and interaction (Boden, 1994; Van Vree, 2011).

For Boden (1994, p. 84), a meeting is:

A planned gathering, whether internal or external to an organization, 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 organizational function.

In this sense, from an ethnomethodological/conversation analytic perspective, meetings consist of people talking to each other (Asmuß, 2015). But they are also much more than talk, also including (a) body-related resources such as gaze, gesture, and body posture, and (b) artefacts, such as paper documents, pencils, turning point systems, computers/laptops, computer projections, coffee cups, meeting table, public screen, and flipcharts. Just for the purposes of exemplification, Figure 1.1 depicts these elements in the context of a meeting recorded for the purposes of the present research.
Meetings are characterized as a specific speech exchange system (Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson, 1974). As a general observation, meetings are perceived as “a place where shared understanding is paramount and must be done in an economical manner in line with the goals of most institutional interactions” (Barnes, 2007, p. 274). They are, furthermore, recognizable by the distribution of turns at talk (Barnes, 2007); involve an exchange of information (Huisman, 2001); and “are fashioned to establish direction and justification for institutional action in a time-bound and practical fashion” (Nikander, 2003, p. 124). Subsequently, teamwork is realized through the conversational accomplishment of collective actions (Middleton, 1996). According to Boden (1994), meetings provide the conditions for the “incremental accomplishment of organizational relations and of organizations” (p. 178).

Atkinson, Cuff, and Lee (1978) and Cuff and Sharrock (1985) are among the authors that offer good examples of studies conducted from an ethnomethodological/conversation analytic standpoint, concerned with revealing how the meetings come into being, and how these are made visible and recognizable through the turn-by-turn organization of activities. But I shall refer to this type of studies later, in Section 1.3.
For now, the point I wish to make is that meetings do not have a unique definition and that existing definitions are generally dependent on the methodological orientations of those who define them. As an observation, the general academic literature on research on meetings is extensive (going back as far as the 1930s), and it is scattered in journals that range from those concerned with psychology and sociology through business, organization, communication, and management science, among other fields. It is beyond the purposes of the present chapter (also, impossible to achieve in only few pages) to explore the great variety of literature on meetings; I will actually limit the present review to discussing the studies that are directly relevant to the present research. But one remark that I can make after having reviewed literally hundreds of such studies is that traditionally, interviews and surveys were the main medium to study meetings; also, that research has traditionally focused on ways to make meetings more efficient (Payne & Payne, 1999; Streibel, 2003). It is today, however, that the focus has started shifting toward (a) using discourse analytic approaches, (b) with prevalence in the area of organization and management studies (e.g., Boden, 1994; Alvesson & Karreman, 200; Jablin & Putnam, 2001; and Grant, Hardy, Oswick, & Putnam, 2004), as well as in business (such as the studies by Bargiela-Chiapini & Harris, 1997; Poncini, 2007; Clifton, 2006; and Asmuss, 2008), and (c) mainly conducted by linguists. Another interesting observation that I would like to make is that despite the amount of research dedicated to studying meetings, I could not identify a meta-analysis aimed at formulating a model of the practice of meetings.

Furthermore, despite the great number of research studies investigating workplace meetings in general, facilitated computer-supported workplace meetings which are a particular type of meetings, characterized by the presence of a facilitator, who assists meeting participants in achieving particular outcomes, have rarely been the focus of detailed empirical research. This means that both the scientific community and novice practitioners have very little understanding of what happens during these meetings. Over the following sections, I will investigate the existing literature on meetings, in an attempt to answer the question: What is there to be learned from the existing literature on workplace meetings and what is missing? Nevertheless, as mentioned above, I will limit the present review to discussing the studies that are directly relevant to the present research; as such, I will briefly discuss the literature on interaction in workplace meetings (Section 1.2), followed by conversation analytic research on workplace meetings (Section 1.3), and research on facilitation (Section 1.4).
1.2 Interaction in workplace meetings

In my search, I have come across a sizable amount of studies on meeting talk in the fields of conversation analysis, discourse analysis, action-implicative discourse analysis, rhetorical discourse analysis, critical discourse analysis, sociolinguistics, interactional linguistics, and interactional sociolinguistics. One of the first observations I would like to make is that broadly speaking, these studies can be classified into two groups: (a) a first group, wherein the research focus is on meetings themselves, on studying how meetings as an activity type are organized and accomplished through talk and interaction; and (b) a second group, wherein the research focus is not on meetings per se, but rather on particular organizational practices that take place during meetings (in this sense, meetings simply happen to be the “container” that provides the opportunity to study certain practices). It is not always easy to “see” this separation; authors do not necessarily orient towards making this separation explicit in their publications. In a similar vein, for example, research papers can adopt an interactional sociolinguistics approach without specifically mentioning the term anywhere in the write-up.

A second observation I would like to make is that together, the above approaches represent a family of qualitative frameworks for accounting for language and social interaction. As Raclaw and Ford (2015) indicated, however, each of these analytic frameworks emphasize different aspects, such as application (action-implicative discourse analysis), intergroup relations (interactional sociolinguistics), social criticism (critical discourse analysis), and linguistic inquiry (interactional linguistics), among others. Conversation analysis maintains core theoretical commitments that distinguish it from the rest of the approaches mentioned above. Probably one of the most distinctive features is that it excludes a priori social categories (e.g., race, class, gender, power, and so on), and furthermore focuses on discovering the practices and mechanisms that participants themselves treat as meaningful and socially consequential. In the words of Raclaw and Ford (2015, p. 270):

CA research on meetings thus problematizes the taken-for-granted order of meetings by subjecting meeting interaction, captured in real-time recording, to close analysis. The method uncovers and documents practices through which participants collaborate in establishing and maintaining meeting structure.
1.2.1 Programmes of work

It is also worth mentioning two different traditions of research on language and social interaction in work settings, which also consider computer-mediated technology, upon which I will draw throughout my thesis: *workplace studies* (Luff, Hindmarsh, & Heath, 2000) and *studies of institutional talk* (Drew & Heritage, 1992). These programmes of work have been fostered by both conversation analysis and ethnomethodology.

*Workplace studies* (or *ethnographic studies of work*) have emerged as an alternative to traditional studies of the workplace. As such, instead of relying on symbolic representations of what the workplace might mean, workplace studies aim to understand it as an everyday, ongoing social accomplishment. Workplace studies have largely emerged within the growing field known as computer-supported cooperative work (CSCW), wherein the focus is on studying how technology and artefacts in general feature in social action and interaction (see, for example, Engeström & Middleton, 1996; Heath & Luff, 2000; and Luff, Hindmarsh, & Heath, 2000). Luff and Heath (2002, p. 339) stated that:

> Workplace studies draw on a range of analytic developments in the social and cognitive sciences, and in various ways examine the socially organized practice and procedures through which people produce and coordinate technologically informed activities in organizational environments.

Settings explored by workplace studies include news production (Heritage, 1985), air traffic control (Harper, Hughes, & Shapiro, 1991), ship-board navigation (Hutchins, 1995), control rooms (Goodwin & Goodwin, 1996; Heath & Luff, 1992; Suchman, 1993), and financial trading rooms (Heath, Jirotka, Luff, & Hindmarsh, 1994-995), among others.

A second corpus of research is represented by *studies of institutional talk*, which have emerged within certain strands of conversation analysis (drawing thus more substantially on Sacks’ work) and have aimed to explain the organization of talk. By definition, studies of institutional talk focus on environments that are more constrained in nature when compared to mundane/everyday settings. As Hester and Francis (2000, p. 392) asserted,

> The basic assumption of the institutional talk program is that the concepts and methods of conversation analysis can be extended beyond the study of ordinary conversation to the investigation of various forms of ‘institutional talk’ in order to show that such interaction differs from ordinary conversation in systematic ways.
In line with Drew and Heritage (1992b), in organizational settings, goal orientations are institution-specific, generally there are constraints on the nature of allowable contributions to the business at hand, and institutional talk tends to be associated with institution- and activity-specific inferential frameworks. Activities explored by studies of institutional talk include medical assessment and diagnosis, conflict mediation and resolution, business meetings, political debates, and news interviews, among others.

In this programme of work, language has been studied to identify practices and organizations of practice for the accomplishment of, among others (Llewellyn, 2008):

(a) speaker transition (Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson, 1974);
(b) overlapping talk (Schegloff, 2000);
(c) topic management (Button & Casey, 1984);
(d) trouble management (related to speaking, hearing and understanding talk in interaction) (Schegloff, Jefferson, & Sacks, 1977);
(e) reference to people in talk (Sacks & Schegloff, 1979);
(f) reference to place in talk (Drew, 1978);
(g) openings and closing of encounters (Schegloff & Sacks 1973);
(h) the management of paired activities (Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson, 1974).

The above programmes of work have fuelled the analysis of talk during meeting interaction (see, for example, Boden, 1994; Ford, 2008; and Asmuß & Svennevig, 2009; among others). As Markaki et al. (2013, p. 6) summarized, overall, these studies are interested in “the joint organization of discussions, decision-making, the finding of solutions, negotiations, the interactional accomplishment of identities, roles, hierarchies, and the use of artefacts (texts, computers, PowerPoint presentations) in professional discussions”. With this in mind, I now turn towards exploring conversation analytic research on workplace meetings.

1.3 Conversation analytic research on workplace meetings
As previously mentioned, there is a sizable amount of studies on meeting talk in the fields of conversation analysis, discourse analysis, (interactional) sociolinguistics, and so on. In order to be able to have a general view of the conversation analytic research on workplace meetings specifically, in this section, I have performed a systematic literature review. Hence, I have searched for empirical studies of meetings based on transcripts of authentic interaction. To the best of my knowledge, a systematic literature review of CA research on workplace meetings has not been undertaken, and filling this gap will give a stepping stone for assessing “what is out there” and what is missing.
1.3.1 Search procedure

The procedures used for finding eligible studies included online searches in the databases of the five major corporations that have been reported to publish more than 50% of the existing scientific articles: Elsevier, Taylor & Francis, Wiley-Blackwell, Springer, and Sage (Larivière, Haustein, & Mongeon, 2015). The fact that these five publishers account for more than half of the publications can give us a reasonably good view of what has been published on multi-party workplace meetings. The following terms were used for the searches, in various combinations: “workplace”, “organisation”, “meeting(s)”, “team”, “group”, “discourse”, “interaction”, “conversation analysis”. As it can be observed, the search was approached very broadly, which led to the identification of a large number of studies (the order of thousands).

In order to limit the scope of the review, the search was therefore refined to include only the studies that simultaneously referenced the terms “workplace”, “meetings”, and “conversation analysis” in their text. This yielded a total of 1,400 studies, as follows: 142 studies in Elsevier, 289 studies in Taylor & Francis, 362 studies in Sage, 346 studies Wiley, and 261 studies in Springer. It was observed that not all of these studies were relevant for the purposes of the present review. For example, not all articles that mentioned “conversation analysis” have actually adopted such an approach in their methodology.

Subsequently, these 1,400 studies were manually checked to identify whether or not they complied with the selection criteria that I will now present in Section 1.3.2.

1.3.2 Selection criteria

Studies were included if they met the following criteria:

1. The study was directed at the verbal and/or nonverbal communication between participants at the meeting.
2. The study involved audio and/or video recordings of interaction.
3. Workplace meetings were treated as a core question in analysing the data.
4. The study involved research published in English, irrespective of year of publication.

Studies were excluded from the review when:

1. The topic of multi-party meeting interaction was approached based on interviews or questionnaires.
2. The study was a purely methodological or theoretical treatment of multi-party workplace meetings.
3. The setting of the multi-party workplace meetings was not the focus of empirical research.
4. The data were dyads and not groups.

1.3.3 Search results

Results after searches in the above-mentioned databases yielded a total of 35 CA studies on multi-party workplace meetings. These results were further complemented by additional searches in reference lists, which pointed towards two more publishers, De Gruyter and John Benjamins, which added 5 more CA studies. In sum, the systemic literature review performed gathered a total of 40 CA studies on multi-party workplace meetings (see Table 1.1). While this list of 40 studies may not be comprehensive due to possible errors arisen during the filtering of thousands of studies (for example, as previously indicated, a research paper can adopt a CA approach without mentioning it explicitly), it does nonetheless provide a generally good picture of “what is out there”. For example, immediate observations point to the fact that the business field concentrates most of these studies. Also, that research has been conducted in a variety of institutional settings.

Table 1.1. Search Results.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Empirical site</th>
<th>Research articles found</th>
<th>No. of research articles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public sector</td>
<td>Nissi &amp; Lehtinen (2016)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nissi (2015)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nissi (2016)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nissi &amp; Lehtinen (2015)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church</td>
<td>Stevanovic (2012)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stevanovic &amp; Peräkylä (2012)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stevanovic (2013a)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health and social care</td>
<td>Mori, Imamura, &amp; Shima (2017)</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Brassac, Fixmer, Mondada, &amp; Vinck (2008)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bangerter, Mayor, &amp; Pekarek Doehler (2011)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Veen &amp; de la Croix (2016)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Housley (1999)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Housley (2000b)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Geyer (2010)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Barnes (2007)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Velea (2013)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Oloff (2018)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It should be noted at this point that apart from the above-mentioned journal articles, I have also come across various books dedicated to analysing meeting interaction (e.g., Allen, Lehmann-Wollenbrock, & Rogelberg, 2015; Boden, 1994; Cooren, 2007; Housley, 2003), as well as additional research papers that although did not show up in the results, do comply with the selection criteria indicated previously; hence, in drawing up my conclusions regarding CA research on workplace meetings, I shall refer to these studies, as well.

Based on the data from Table 1.1, Figure 1.2 further tells us that there has been a generally increasing interest in studying workplace meetings using a CA approach in the last decade, with the peak around the year 2012.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Architecture</th>
<th>Mondada (2012a)</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>Mondada (2007a)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business and Education</td>
<td>Huisman (2001)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business and Church</td>
<td>Stevanovic (2013b)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health and social care and Education</td>
<td>Ford &amp; Stickle (2012)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total 40 studies
Another interesting observation to make is that while searching for literature, I have placed no constraints regarding the year of publication. Although practitioners identified meetings as an important target for improvement initiatives as early as the 1950s (Strauss & Strauss, 1951), Schwartzman (1989) was the first to take a scientific approach to the study of meetings in and of themselves as a focal target of inquiry. Furthermore, my search shows that the study of meetings using a conversation analytic approach can only be traced back two decades, starting about one decade later from the study of Schwartzman. So, without much doubt, it was around the year 2000 that the study of meetings has registered a turning point, with researchers starting to investigate meetings in and of themselves, and not just as a “container” to study other phenomena, such as decision-making (e.g., Baltes, Dickson, Sherman, Bauer, & LaGanke, 2002), and group facilitation and group development, among others (e.g., Kauffeld & Meyers, 2009).

1.3.4 Characteristics of the studies reviewed

Table 1.2 (see Appendix A) gives an overview of the studies reviewed in terms of titles, empirical data, artefacts used (if any), analytic approaches, research aims, and findings.

Among the 40 CA studies encountered, 19 deal with data from a business setting, which shows the interest that CA has raised in this field. One of the immediate notable things to observe is that 33 out of the 40 studies relied on video-taped data, which is consistent with today’s trend in capturing data, given the technological advancements in video recording.
equipment. Actually, today, hardly any CA study of face-to-face interaction in general is based on anything other than video recordings (Asmuß, 2015). Among these 40 studies, 13 studies have a purely CA approach, 19 studies combined CA with a multimodal approach, 6 studies adopted a CA + MCA approach, and 8 studies complemented their CA analysis with interviews and participant observation, discourse analysis and action-implicative discourse analysis, content analysis, activity theory, distributed cognition, actor network theory, ethnomethodology, video analysis, and/or interactional linguistics. Furthermore, 16 of these studies used some sort of artefacts and only 2 studies (Nielsen, 2014; Nissi, 2015) involved meetings which counted with a facilitator.

The point I wish to highlight here is the researchers’ interest in using mixed methods, but with a caveat: there seems to be an orientation towards combining CA with more ethnomethodologically-rooted approaches (hence, with approaches with which CA has similarities), rather than with approaches traditionally used in research on meetings (and not only), such as interviews.

I will now turn towards briefly discussing the content of the CA body of work on workplace meetings, in an attempt to highlight the main research strands with which such literature has been concerned. The systematic literature review performed points towards the existence of several topical categories. I complement the analysis with additional references, considering that as previously mentioned, there are studies which although have not been pinpointed by my systematic search are, nonetheless, relevant to the present discussion.

A first strand of research has examined the structural components of face-to-face meetings. In this sense, researchers have studied the resources available to participants to move between agenda items and non-agenda items (Atkinson, Cuff, & Lee, 1978; Boden, 1994; Cuff & Sharrock, 1985; Deppermann, Schmitt, & Mondada, 2010; Kangasharju & Nikko, 2009), the interactional strategies for gaining turns (Ford, 2008; Ford & Stickle, 2012; Markaki & Mondada, 2012; Mondada, 2007a) or closing turns (Arminen, 2001), and the practices for initiating and closing down topics of talk (Barnes, 2007; Button & Cassey, 1998/9; Ford, 2008; Linde, 1991; Svennevig, 2012b).

Agenda management is a particular focus of research in this research strand. Svennevig (2012b) and Linde (1991), for example, showed how participants use the agenda to move through meetings from one topic to the next. In particular, Svennevig (2012b) demonstrated how the written agenda can be an important resource in topic introductions: The participants refer verbally to the agenda and often gaze at the written document as they bring new topics into the conversation. Linde (1991), on the other hand, showed how
participants used discourse markers and physical movements such as postural shifts or shuffling through papers to close down topics.

A second strand of research has focused on meeting interactions as sites for constructing and enacting interactional and professional identities. For example, Clifton (2006), Nielsen (2009), Schmitt (2006), and Svennevig (2008, 2011) investigated the strategies used by team leaders to construct themselves as “leaders”. Pomerantz and Denvir (2007) and Potter and Hepburn (2010) focused on how chairpersons construct their identity as “chairs”. Sometimes other kinds of identities also emerge in meeting interaction. For example, participants can form alliances in meetings in relation to the issues being discussed and such alliances may be constructed in a way that conveys the parties’ identity as members of an organizational team (Djordjilovic, 2012). Furthermore, alliances can be used to display affiliation with particular team members so as to manage conflict in multi-party meetings (Kangasharju, 1996, 2002), which leads to a third area of research.

A third strand of research has examined how participants display emotion, humour, and laughter, and build relationships in meeting interactions, such as consensus and rapport (Adelswärd & Öberg, 1998). For example, Kangasharju and Nikko (2009) examined moments of joint laughter in leader-member meetings where laughter may or may not be associated with humour. The results demonstrated that joint laughter occurs in conjunction with specific meeting activities and contributes to diminish the hierarchical asymmetry of the interactants, increase the feelings of collegiality and closeness and have remedial property in challenging situations. These findings supported previous research done by Ashforth and Humphrey (1995), Glenn (1989), and Haakana (1999). Djordjilovic (2012) further examined affect and elements of relationship building in meeting talk, focusing on verbal and nonverbal strategies used by participants to collaboratively co-construct team identity. Vöge (2010) analysed how laughter in indirect complaint sequences played a key role in identity work in business meetings. As such, laughter in complaint sequences is a means of indicating organizational identities in regard to hierarchy by achieving different levels of implicitness. The degree of implicitness increases proportionally with the hierarchical position of the complainee. In this context, laughter serves as a tool in achieving this implicitness.

Lastly, I wish to point out that as Markaki and Mondada (2012) also observed, CA analyses of meetings have been enhanced with multi-modal sequential analyses (C. Goodwin, 1981, 2000; Schegloff, 1984), by giving more attention to the embodied conduct and embodied resources mobilized by the participants (see, for example, Deppermann, Schmitt, & Mondada, 2010; Ford, 2008; Markaki & Mondada, 2009; Markaki et al., 2010; Mondada,
2005a, 2005b) and the use of artefacts (Bruxelles, Greco, & Mondada, 2009; Mondada, 2006, 2008a). In this respect, also, the analysis of meetings can further benefit from the analyses conducted of other professional settings, such as airport and underground control rooms, surgical operating theatres, and other “centres of coordination” characterized by complex participation frameworks, technologically mediated working environments – as explored by workplace studies (Heath & Luff, 2000; Luff, Hindmarsh, & Heath, 2000; Suchman, 1997). I reserve the discussion of literature on the use of artefacts for Chapter 5, wherein I attend to these aspects in more detail.

In conclusion, what I hope is evident as of now is that the review of CA studies on workplace meetings indicates that while there is an abundant body of work on the topic, this has largely ignored the specific setting of facilitated meetings. In the following Section 1.4, I will now turn towards examining the broader literature on facilitated meetings, independent of how this has been approached methodologically.

1.4 Facilitated meetings

As a general observation, modern work life is characterized by a shift from the hierarchical organization to more collaborative forms (Halvorsen, 2010) involving groups of people. Such shift builds upon the belief that groups can face a problem in a much more effective way than a single individual. Nevertheless, there is evidence suggesting that groups often find working together difficult due to limited capabilities, competing interests, or negative group dynamics (Kerr & Tindale, 2004). The practice of facilitated meetings is one approach to tackle such problems.

Facilitated meetings are a particular type of meetings that are increasingly being conducted nowadays in order to assist groups in reaching certain outcomes. There is a growing body of literature on facilitated meetings, wherein group facilitation, broadly construed, is “a process in which a person whose selection is acceptable to all members of the group, is substantively neutral, and has no substantive decision-making authority diagnoses and intervenes to help a group improve how it identifies and solves problems and makes decisions, to increase the group’s effectiveness” (Schwarz, 2005, p. 21). These meetings are the place where facilitators and individuals holding various types of “specialist knowledge” (Housley, 2000a, 2003) can meet together and have conversations together.

There is an abundance of “how to” literature on facilitation, which aims to either (a) explain the skills that facilitators need in order to efficiently and effectively run facilitated meetings or (b) provide guidelines for the conduct of facilitation. Such is the case of the body
of literature on facilitated work group processes (e.g., Kaner et al., 2014; Schuman, 2005; and Schwartz, 2002). Nevertheless, these studies tend to generally be comprised of theoretically-informed reflections about the facilitation practice, rather than empirically-grounded insights derived from studying the practices in themselves.

Regarding empirical studies on facilitation, most of these have focused primarily on investigating and reporting the details of the content of the meetings, the “what” being discussed (for example, the topic for discussion and the agenda items, the task at hand, and the decisions to be made); by contrast, few studies only have investigated the process around these meetings, “how” things are being discussed and dealt with (for example, the group dynamics and management of relationships, and the methods, processes, tools, and techniques being used). There are few exceptions, which include the studies by Franco and Greiffenhagen (2018), Franco and Nielsen (2018), Nielsen (2012), and Tavella and Franco (2015).

Franco and Greiffenhagen (2018) adopted an ethnomethodological approach to show how overall the activities during a facilitated modelling workshop with a top management team are practically accomplished by those involved, moment by moment, and with what effects. Franco and Nielsen (2018) used conversation analysis to examine how the talk of the facilitator shapes group workshop interactions by using formulations. The authors found that formulations that encouraged reflection or facilitated action, together with those collaboratively produced, enabled sense-making and the achievement of a temporal conversational order among participants. Nielsen (2012) also used conversation analysis to show how a facilitator accomplished the workshop agenda and how he achieved that participants actively engaged in the group talk.

Lastly, Tavella and Franco (2015) conducted sequential analyses of participants’ interactions to identify links between behaviours and knowledge outcomes. They used a coding scheme to explore two sets of distinct practices, generative and calculative. The former involved communicative behaviours such as inviting, clarifying, building, affirming, and gently introducing expertise, and was associated with sharing or the creation of new knowledge by the group; the latter, on the other hand, consisted of behaviours such as challenging, reiterating and deploying authority, and it was associated with the reproduction of existing knowledge by the group. It should be noted, however, that unlike the previous three studies which relied on audio and video data, Tavella and Franco (2015) conducted analyses of audio recordings only; in this sense, then, the material aspects of the activity
performed (that is, the models and technology used in interaction, as well as gesture and movement) remain hidden.

What is evident at this point is that, overall, studies based on audio and video recordings of actual facilitated meetings are just beginning to appear. The above-mentioned studies offer interesting and valuable insights into the actual practice of facilitation. Nevertheless, they have limitations, in the sense that they are focused on quite specific and isolated dimensions of facilitation at a time (such as, the study of formulations in Franco and Nielsen, 2018; or agenda management and elicitation of participation in Nielsen, 2012) and a more comprehensive study that considers the unfolding of facilitated meetings from opening to closing is missing. These very same studies also call for the development of a further in-depth understanding of the microprocesses of the facilitation practice. In the words of Franco and Nielsen (2018, p. 752),

…there is considerable potential for future research into the practice of facilitated workshops using the conversation analytic approach […].

Hence, this thesis responds to calls for opening the “black box” of facilitated meetings at the micro-level. Otherwise stated, the thesis contributes to this emerging trend by realizing the opportunities afforded by conversation analysis to develop a more nuanced understanding of the actual practice of facilitation as an interactional achievement. My approach will help inform the “design” of these settings and practitioner training.

1.5 Summary and research questions
I have aimed to keep the present review concise, although comprehensive. This is because in each of the analytic chapters that follow, I will draw upon relevant literature and discuss associated research studies in more detail. For now, I hope to have offered a generally good picture of “what is out there”.

The literature review performed shows that: (a) on the one hand, there is a large body of research work on workplace meeting interaction that has nonetheless largely ignored the setting of facilitated meetings, and (b) on the other hand, there is a large body of literature on facilitation which has traditionally been approached either from a theoretical lens or from an empirical perspective, and with a concern on the content of the meeting, rather than on the process of the meeting.
As such, there is a lack of empirical studies focusing on facilitators doing facilitated meetings in situ and how facilitation is actually constructed as an interactional achievement. Despite the few exceptions indicated previously, we have very little understanding of what actually happens during this type of meetings. In light of this observation, it becomes clear that the present thesis is a contribution to both workplace meetings literature and to the facilitation literature.

Through analysing what is going on and how this is done (the machinery of talk) during facilitated computer-supported meetings, it can be revealed how previously “abstract” reified constructs can be made visible in talk. Consequently, by analysing the talk that makes visible the phenomenon of interest to researchers and practitioners, a tool kit of linguistic resources can be made available to practitioners and trainers in the world of facilitated meetings. It is in this context then, that the results of such research endeavours can give researchers a clearer insight into the real world of facilitated meetings and help practitioners improve their facilitating and communication skills.

To conclude this review, I will outline the research questions that have guided the current thesis overall. These questions are proposed considering the various activities that take place during facilitated meetings. I proceed to address these questions in the chapters that follow.

1. What is the macro-organization of facilitated computer-supported workplace meetings, from opening to closing? (Chapter 3)
2. How do facilitators elicit participation during these encounters? (Chapters 4, 5, and 6)
3. How do facilitators help the participants to identify and define the issues at hand? (Chapter 4)
4. How do facilitators organize and structure the participants’ contributions using computer software? (Chapter 5)
5. How are artefacts (conceptual maps) constituted interactionally (Chapter 5) and how are they drawn into interaction? (Chapters 4, 5, and 6)
6. What interactional resources for decision-making do facilitators use? (Chapter 6)
7. How are epistemic and deontic rights negotiated between facilitators and participants in these encounters? (Chapter 6)
Chapter 2
Methodology

“For something to become interesting, one just has to look at it long enough.”
- Gustave Flaubert (1926), Correspondance (p. 192)

2.0 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I have discussed the literature on meetings, pinpointing the research gaps, particularly the lack of studies analysing talk-in-interaction in facilitated computer-supported meetings. We know very little about how facilitators interact with the participants at the meetings, or how facilitators assist participants during the meetings. Building upon the gaps identified, I outlined the overall research aims of this thesis, which are twofold: (1) on the one hand, update our knowledge of what facilitated meetings look like; and (2) on the other hand, provide one of the first analyses of the social organization of the facilitated meetings, highlighting how social actions, such as eliciting participation, integrating ideas, and making decisions are interactionally accomplished.

In this chapter, I will describe the data corpus of audio and video recordings for this dissertation and the analytic method used to analyse them. The chapter is divided into four main sections: in Section 2.1, I will start by describing the approach to data collection; here, I will introduce the research setting and present the layout of the meetings, as well as the technology (that is, computer software) used; I will further provide details with regards to data collection, preparation, and transcription. Section 2.1 will also include descriptions of the practicalities of data collection. Ethical considerations will be discussed in Section 2.2 and Section 2.3 will explore data analysis; finally, methodological and analytical key concepts in conversation analysis will be discussed in Section 2.4; here, I will also discuss the challenges of applying CA to non-conversational data. Section 2.5 will summarise the chapter.

2.1 Approach to data collection

In this section, I will discuss the practicalities of data collection; as such, I will describe the research setting (2.1.1), the technology used during the meetings (2.1.2), the corpus of data (2.1.3), the preparation of the data (2.1.4), and the transcription of the data (2.1.5).
2.1.1 The research setting

The data for this dissertation was drawn from a corpus of 15 facilitated meetings, held with management and development teams in a business setting, and concerned with a wide range of issues involving strategy, innovation, change, performance, or productivity. Further, the data come from two corpora: (a) audio and video recordings of seven facilitated meetings from the archives of one of the supervisors; and (b) audio and video recordings of eight facilitated meetings “recruited” specifically for this dissertation.

The selection criteria for inclusion in the dissertation were relatively broad. The meetings were selected on the basis of the following criteria:

1. The meetings were all counting with the presence of at least one facilitator.
2. The meetings were all considered to be “strategic” meetings, wherein the overall purpose of the meetings was to achieve a shared understanding of the key strategic issues that the participants were facing at the time of the research conducted.
3. The meetings were all computer-supported.

No criteria were placed on the gender of the participants or on an upper limit to the number of participants in the meeting.

The below two Figures 2.1 and 2.2 depict the typical layout of the meetings.

![Figure 2.1. The typical layout of the meeting (angle 1).](image)
Heath, Hindmarsh, & Luff (2010) cautioned about the impact of the type of recording equipment as well as the placement of the recording equipment on the data collection, a view previously raised by C. Goodwin (1994), who stated that each camera angle has its own story to tell. I kept this aspect in mind. As such, one camera was placed at the back of the facilitator, because it gave a good view of all the participants. A second camera was placed at one of the other ends of the table, facing out towards the entrance, because: (1) it gave a satisfactory view of the projector screen and its content displayed during the meetings, and (2) the angle was considered to provide the best level of comfort to the participants, contributing to capturing the activities without staying in the way of the participants. The final decision regarding the placement of the two cameras was made, thus, thinking that the activities can best be observed from the respective positions (Laurier & Philo, 2006). Additionally, three audio recorders were placed in front of the participants.

The video cameras were set up in the room 30 minutes before the meetings would start and were, furthermore, left to run by themselves until the meetings had ended and participants had, eventually, left the room. The resulting corpus of data (videos and audio files) was transcribed and anonymized before proceeding with the analysis.
2.1.2 The technology

The particular tools used by the facilitators to do their work was a strategy map created with Group Explorer and a self-assessment tool created with Goalscape. Group Explorer is a networked computer system that uses a visual causal mapping technique to support decision making in teams (Eden & Ackerman, 2010). The map was used by the meeting participants to capture a range of strategic issues and their perceived implications. To construct the map, participants assembled in the room and sat at small tables generally arranged in a horseshoe-shaped layout, with a console laptop for each table. The consoles were connected to a master laptop operated by the facilitator, who used it to control the consoles and assemble the team’s contributions, and then displayed them on a large public screen located at the front of the room. The screen was visible to all the participants and provided a focal point around which group discussions about strategic issues took place. Participants’ contributions were gathered both anonymously through the consoles and quickly displayed on the screen as they were entered and with the help of the facilitator. In addition, and with the help of the facilitator, participants jointly structured their contributions to create a strategy map.

Goalscape, on the other hand, is a visual information management software application that represents data hierarchies as a multi-level pie chart. The activities undergone within the meetings using the Goalscape were designed to help the participants reflect on the department’s current collective performance and future potential through a performance development process. Most of the time was spent on exploring and debating the range of perceptions of the participants on each of the concerned issues, and through facilitation, the performance rating that the participants collectively gave it using a simple, 4-colour 1 ordinal scale metric. The issues were arranged and presented thematically in a set of slides, using the organization’s strategy drivers, together with a description of the 4-colour evaluation scale 2. The participants who joined the meetings were requested to simply capture their first, almost instantaneous response to each of the issues by means of an individual, anonymous vote, which would, furthermore, be displayed in a collective manner.

1 Gold = “Excelling; Outstanding; A benchmark standard; A potential source of learning and inspiration to others”; Green = “Performing; Working well; Fully functional, up to date and fit for purpose; High confidence based on evidence”; Amber = “Working on It; Need to improve; Solutions to challenges identified, action plans under way with signs of progress being made”; Red = “Need Help; Not working; Solutions to challenges not agreed, planned or activated”.

2 Two additional colors were provided for the “Unsure” and “Not Relevant” categories, but as these do not capture an actual evaluation, they are not considered to be part of the main scale metric.
2.1.3 The data

The analysis focuses primarily on the data collected within the eight facilitated meetings recorded specifically for this dissertation; hence, these data represent the core corpus explored during the study. This is further complemented by extracts of data from the other seven facilitated meetings, with permission from the concerned parties, where applicable.

The complete dataset is summarized in Table 2.1 below, which shows the dates data were collected and for how long. This made a corpus of 53 hours and 9 minutes of facilitated meeting interactions that were initially transcribed verbatim.

Table 2.1. Summary of Data Used for the Dissertation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Meeting</th>
<th>Total recording time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01/05/2007</td>
<td>PPDG-GE-070501</td>
<td>4 hours 30 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/05/2007</td>
<td>DMU-070510</td>
<td>6 hours 21 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18/05/2007</td>
<td>PPDG-SSM-070518</td>
<td>1 hour 26 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21/06/2007</td>
<td>WCC-LIB-070621</td>
<td>3 hours 6 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29/09/2009</td>
<td>WCC-SRD-090929</td>
<td>3 hours 29 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14/12/2009</td>
<td>MNDA-091214</td>
<td>5 hours 14 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18/12/2012</td>
<td>NAO-121218</td>
<td>2 hours 26 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03/03/2015</td>
<td>SR-150303</td>
<td>6 hours 20 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04/03/2015</td>
<td>SR-150304</td>
<td>3 hours 45 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26/03/2015</td>
<td>SR-150326</td>
<td>3 hours 37 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19/10/2015</td>
<td>ALT-151019</td>
<td>2 hours 22 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16/11/2015</td>
<td>ALT-151116</td>
<td>2 hours 49 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22/02/2016</td>
<td>ALT-160222</td>
<td>2 hours 54 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21/03/2016</td>
<td>ALT-160321</td>
<td>1 hour 10 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19/07/2016</td>
<td>CPP-160719</td>
<td>3 hours 40 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td></td>
<td>53 hours 9 minutes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although 15 meetings represent a lot of data and a lot of actions, it should be noted that not all segments are relevant to the present thesis; some segments of the recorded data comprise monologues (mostly of the facilitator) or time dedicated to brainstorming and group
activities. Having provided a summary of the data, I will now discuss how this collected data was prepared for the analysis.

2.1.4 Preparation of the data
The recorded data were converted into MP4 files and each meeting encounter and the respective clips that composed it, were given a corpus code. A similar approach was taken regarding the audio files. This was useful when searching the corpus for particular phenomena (Heath et al., 2010). At this stage, also, a preliminary review of the corpus was performed in order to catalogue some basic aspects of the activities that have been recorded, while keeping in mind that preliminary reviews should involve no more than a simple description and classification of the materials (Heath et al., 2010).

The first step, thus, involved a preliminary review of the data collected, which is important in terms of cataloguing the activities that have been recorded. By adhering to the concept of “unmotivated looking” and by means of reviewing the data repeatedly, the researcher may be in a position to identify possible phenomena of interest, for a further detailed analysis. “The starting point, thus, is some “noticing” in the transcript that something “interesting” seems to be happening at some point” (ten Have, 1999, p. 107). This was then followed by a second step, which involved a more substantive review of the data corpus, in an attempt to find further instances of phenomena, so as to enable comparisons and to delineate aspects of interactional organization (Heath et al., 2010).

When analysing the data, the researcher does not simply describe what is going on, but aims to show that these regularities are methodically produced (Heritage, 1988). At the same time, for any action, it is worth addressing the question “Why that now?”. The potential relations between actions can be unpacked through careful attention to the sequential organization that informs their production and intelligibility (Heath et al., 2010). Furthermore, both the talk and embodied conduct can be analysed in order to see how they relate to each other (Knoblouch, 2006).

2.1.5 Transcription of the data
Given the large corpus of data collected, the data were initially transcribed verbatim. Subsequently, and derived from the preliminary review performed, particular data segments of interest were extracted, assigned a meaningful code, and transcribed using the Jefferson (2004) transcription system. The Jeffersonian transcription provides a standard system for rendering talk-in-interaction in a way that can be textually reproduced (Hepburn & Bolden,
Although transcription is an initial step in the analysis process (Hutchby & Wooffit, 1998), “transcripts are necessarily selective in the details that are represented and thus are never treated by conversation analysts as a replacement of the data” (Hepburn & Bolden, 2013, p. 57).

The Jeffersonian transcription system was first developed by Gail Jefferson (1985) for early work in CA and in time has proven to be both a robust and a useful tool for understanding the ways in which language is used in social interaction (Liddicoat, 2007). It consists of a set of symbols or conventions used for transcribing talk. These conventions concern the transcript layout; the temporal and sequential relationships; aspects of speech delivery, such as pitch, loudness, tempo, degrees of emphasis, and voice quality; metacommentary and uncertain hearings; and ways of representing non-verbal elements, such as sighing, laughing, or crying (Hepburn & Boden, 2013). One of the most important aspects to be remembered when transcribing data is that analytic transcripts should and need to be detailed enough to facilitate the analyst’s quest to discover practices of social action in interaction that would not be able to discover otherwise.

Although the conversation analytic transcription conventions were developed considering primarily audio-recorded data, today’s technological advancements have permitted the analytic method of CA to be extended to include visual analyses. Visual representations accompanying a transcript of vocal conduct have the advantages of being easily interpretable and more holistic in representation (Hepburn & Boden, 2013, p. 70). Hence, its importance and applicability to studying social interaction lies within.

It is to be mentioned, however, that there is no one recognized and systematic transcription system for transcribing visual conduct. One of the most well-known approaches is that of C. Goodwin (1981), which nonetheless, is more suitable for transcribing eye gaze. I have also found interesting developments in visual transcripts in papers by Bennerstedt, Ivarsson, and Ivarsson (2012), Greiffenhagen (2013, 2014), Hindmarsh, Hyland, and Banerjee (2014), Hindmarsh, Reynolds, and Dunne (2011), Kendon (2004), Laurier (2014), Lymer, Ivarsson, and Lindwall (2009), Lindwall and Ekström (2012), Rossano (2012), and Streek (1993, 1994), just to name a few.

The above-mentioned studies are extremely informative; nevertheless, I found them to be a better fit for dyadic conversations and mostly oriented towards capturing embodied conduct (especially eye gaze). In this thesis, the data analysed is much more complex: meetings with multiple participants (who often speak in overlap) and wherein various artefacts are mobilized in interaction. The above-mentioned specialized notational systems
soon fell short of expectations to capture the level of detail and precise unfolding and coordination of visible behaviours. In this sense, I have found the multimodal transcripts developed by Lorenza Mondada (2007a, b, c; 2014) to be the most comprehensive system in terms of capturing not only multimodal details, but also temporality and action progressivity.

In short, data in general were transcribed according to the conventions developed by Jefferson (see Chapters 3, 4, 5, and 6) and multimodal details were transcribed according to the conventions developed by Mondada (see Chapter 5); these are presented in Appendix B and Appendix C, respectively. In the next section, I will explain the ethical considerations of the research and the process of ensuring informed consent.

2.2 Ethical considerations

It was important to ensure that the research project met with the ethical guidelines of Loughborough University. The access to the research site was negotiated through the facilitators. The recruitment process involved creating an information pack specific to the meetings, which was later used in the process of gaining access to the venue and consent from the research participants (facilitators and participants to the meeting).

The pack included a Participant Information Sheet (PIS, please see first side of Appendix D). The main points on the PIS were communicated in a concise and informative way. In this sense, the PIS explained the aims of the research and that these would involve to place audio and video recording equipment in the room. It was also mentioned that all the recordings would be stored securely and that the data would be kept anonymous and confidential. An example of a still from an anonymised video recording was provided.

Further, the PIS was accompanied by an Informed Consent Form (ICF, please see second side of Appendix D), which all the participants signed at the beginning of every facilitated meeting. An important element on the PIS was to explicitly mention the participants’ understanding of their right to withdraw from the research process at any time. It consisted of an 11-point checklist that the participants read before consenting to participate in the research.

2.3 Approach to data analysis

The approach to data collection was informed by the research tradition of Conversation Analysis, which was developed by Harvey Sacks and colleagues during the mid-1960s. Conversation Analysis has a deeply empirical approach (Sidnell, 2010), whose main objective “is to see how finely the details of actual, naturally occurring conversation can be
subjected to analysis that will yield the technology of conversation” (p. 413) (Note, “technology” is used here to describe the fact that the conversation is methodically organized).

Although CA was initially built upon audio recordings, today’s technological advances have allowed researchers to capture and analyse nonverbal interactions (e.g., Heath, 1992; Schegloff, 1998). In this sense, video recordings are much richer sources of conversational data than any other ways of capturing interaction (Heritage, 1984a, b, 1995). Furthermore, the importance of both audio and video recordings within CA emerges from the method’s analytical demands: as CA studies naturally occurring activities as they unfold sequentially and ordinarily, there is a necessity to record actual situated activities for a detailed analysis of the vocal, verbal, visual, and embodied resources that make up the interaction (Mondada, 2013a). Hence, the most appropriate method of data collection was to record exactly that: the naturally-occurring activities within facilitated meetings, by using both audio and video recording technology.

When compared to other existing methods of data collection, audio and video recordings allow the researcher to repeatedly analyse the data and access the “fine details of conduct and interaction” (Heath et al., 2010, p. 2), leading to accessing what Stokoe (2010, p. 262) called “the analytic black box” of interactions. Participant observations, interviews, focus groups, and experiments, for example, as some of the more traditional qualitative data collection methods in social sciences, involve some “editing” of the data (Liddicoat, 2007), which can lead to misrepresented interactions. Field notes, gathered through participant observation, consist of observations written down by the researchers; they are post-hoc recollections of the observer, thus, “are subject to memory limitations, situated selectivity, and locally occasioned interpretation and intuition” (Mondada, 2013a, p. 33). Interviews and focus groups, also, offer post-hoc reconstructions of actions in the form of narratives, within a rather constrained interactional format. Lastly, experiments aim at controlling the interactions in order to test pre-established hypotheses.

CA tackles the shortcomings of these methods by allowing researchers to view recordings repeatedly in order to reveal details that are almost impossible to detect otherwise (Sacks, 1984a), while aiming at discovering the way in which social actions are naturally organized by participants in context, without the “exogenous intervention of researchers imposing topics and tasks or displacing the context of action (Mondada, 2013a, p. 34). Furthermore, although conversation analysis studies an object that people understand
intuitively, it “routinely produces counter-intuitive findings about talk” (Albert et al., 2018, p. 398).

2.4 Conversation analysis: Talk and embodied conduct

The present dissertation aims to explore how the facilitators perform facilitation during computer-supported meetings. To this end, the data collected were analysed, as previously mentioned, using Conversation analysis. CA is an analytic approach to the study of the order, organization, and orderliness in talk in interaction, which grew out of the ethnomethodological tradition in sociology developed by Harold Garfinkel (1964, 1967, 1988). In the words of Garfinkel (1967, p. 11) himself, the term ethnomethodology refers to “the investigation of the rational properties of indexical expressions and other practical actions as contingent ongoing accomplishments or organized artful practices of everyday life”. Otherwise stated, “ethnomethodology as a field of sociology studies the common sense resources, practices, and procedures through which members of a society produce and recognize mutually intelligible objects, events, and courses of action” (Liddicoat, 2007, p. 2).

Garfinkel sought to study the social structure of actual instances of everyday lived experience or social interaction in order to develop an understanding of “how the structures of everyday activities are ordinarily and routinely produced and maintained” (Garfinkel, 1967, p. 38). This endeavour was further developed by the work of Erving Goffman (1959), who strongly believed that the mundane activities of everyday life were an important subject for study. The ethnomethodological character of CA means that “social actions in the world of everyday life are practical actions and are to be examined as ongoing practical accomplishments. The logic or organization of such actions is a practical logic, an achieved organization, locally produced, in situ, in the ‘there and then’ and the ‘here and now’” (Psathas, 1995, p. 3).

2.4.1 The analysis of talk

Talk can be analysed in numerous ways. Table 2.2 provides a comparison of a variety of discourse analytics methods, depending on where the researchers’ interests lie (what actions are to be revealed). What I wish to show here is the position that CA holds among these discourse analytic methods; in other words, what CA can and cannot do, when compared to these other discourse analytic methods. To this end, I draw upon Antaki (2008).
Table 2.2. Comparison Between Various Discourse Analytic Methods.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What actions are to be revealed</th>
<th>Candidate theory/method</th>
<th>Typical data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal meaning-making</td>
<td>Narrative Analysis, Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis</td>
<td>Interviews, diaries, autobiographies, stories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imposing and managing frames of meaning and identities</td>
<td>Interactional Sociolinguistics, Ethnography of speaking</td>
<td>Audio and video recordings, ethnographic observations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accomplishing interactional life in real time</td>
<td>Conversation Analysis</td>
<td>Audio and video recordings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Displaying and deploying psychological states; describing the world and promoting interests</td>
<td>Discursive Psychology</td>
<td>Audio and video recordings; texts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constituting and representing culture and society</td>
<td>[Generic] Discourse Analysis</td>
<td>Texts, interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constituting and regulating the social and the political world; the operation of power</td>
<td>Critical Discourse Analysis</td>
<td>Official and unofficial texts; speeches; media accounts and representations; interviews.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Taken from Antaki (2008).*

Conversation analysis as an applied research methodology to study the work of facilitators can prove to be of great benefit, as I shall have concluded in my last chapter (Chapter 7). With this belief, I attempt to show how CA can provide a fine-grained analysis of talk-in-interaction during facilitated meetings, revealing an emic perspective on “what is going on”. In other words, the present dissertation aims to show how CA is able to make explicit the normally “seen but unnoticed” (Garfinkel, 1967, p. 36) machinery of talk with which facilitation is enacted. In the words of Clifton (2006, p. 203), “CA thus casts itself as an observational science that relies on rigorous, naturalistic analysis to discover the generative features of conversation”.

There are few authors that drew attention to the assumptions of CA. I found Psathas’ (1995) work to be the most comprehensive one. According to Psathas, the assumptions are:

1) *Order is a produced orderliness.*
2) *Order is situated and occasioned.*
3) *Order is not the analyst’s conception, but it has to do instead with how the parties orient to that order themselves.*
4) *Order is repeatable and recurrent.*
5) *The analyst’s task is to discover, describe, and analyse the produced orderliness.*
6) The discovery, description, and analysis of the “machinery of talk” is not based on empirical frequencies.

7) Structures of social action can be described and analysed in formal terms. Peräkylä’s (2004) account of the assumptions of CA is also noteworthy and complementary to Psathas’ account. These assumptions are:

1) Talk is action, being understood as a vehicle for human action.

2) Action is structurally organized, with actors orienting themselves to rules and structures that make their actions possible.

3) Talk creates and maintains intersubjective reality; or otherwise stated, talk is examined as a site where intersubjective understanding about the participants’ intentions is created and maintained.

4) Understanding is publicly displayed, which means that CA focuses only on understandings that are made public through talk, remaining “agnostic” regarding people’s intra-psychological experience (Heritage, 1984a). Or in the words of Wooffitt (2001, p. 56, emphasis in original), “it is important to emphasise that the goal of conversation analysis is not to furnish an academic or “outsider’s” reading of some conversational sequence, but to describe the organised interpretations that people themselves employ in the moment-by-moment course of conversation”.

One disadvantage of CA could be considered its lack of experimental “control”; in other words, the impossibility (at least as of now) to isolate and manipulate independent variables and determine their effect on dependent variables to infer causality. In this sense, then, as Hoey and Kendrick (2018, p. 168) asserted,

with a diverse collection of cases, whatever extraneous variable one might posit as explanatory in one particular case is unlikely to hold for another, let alone for all cases in the collection. Rather than minimize variability through experimental control, the CA method exploits the variability of naturally occurring social interaction.

Otherwise stated, it is to some extent and depending on the phenomena of interest, rather hard to answer the question of “why that now?” and to aim for generalizability of results at the same time. Quantitative CA studies, however, have started to appear (see, for example, Kendrick, 2015), and these show how a quantitative analysis, such as statistical correlations, can complement CA findings.
All in all, CA has proven useful in studying the orderly social life across disciplines. For example, in studies of telephone conversations, Schegloff (1979) showed how participants display and achieve identification and recognition of each other; in studies of courtrooms, Drew (1992c) showed how attorneys can design questions that imply a version of the events which is at odds with the witness’s version of events and how the witness further resists these implications; and more recently, in studies of constituency offices, Hofstetter (2016) showed how constituents present themselves as “needing assistance” at the Members of Parliaments surgeries. For my work, CA will help me to uncover, for example, how facilitators break the postulate of neutrality and manage content during facilitated meetings, influencing topical talk.

2.4.2 Embodied and multimodal interaction

It is to be noted that Greiffenhagen and Watson (2009) argued that CA can be extended beyond the analysis of talk to the analysis of embodied conduct. As a matter of fact, ever since its beginnings, CA has continuously expanded its focus from verbal aspects of interaction to include other resources which people have access when interacting with one another (Asmuß, 2015). In most early CA studies and not only, talk has served as an “anchor point” (Mortensen, 2013, p. 3), which basically meant that the verbal mode was the favoured communication mode. In this sense, Streeck, Goodwin, and LeBaron (2011, p. 12) observed that “too often, analysts regard talk as their starting point, even when talk appears late in the order of things accomplished in face-to-face interaction”.

Despite this, however, CA has always acknowledged that there is more to social actions than verbal talk. For example, Sacks (1992b) himself acknowledged the importance of embodied resources. And over the past decades, thanks partly to the technological developments in video equipment, researchers have increasingly dealt with the relationship between talk and other semiotic modalities (Goodwin, 1986; Schegloff, 1984). To put it briefly, there has been a shift from focusing on talk and resources directly related to the participants’ body (such as gaze, gesture, body posture, and so on), referred to as “embodied” interaction, to also including aspects outside the body sphere, such as aspects related to artefacts (Streeck et al., 2011), and more recently, spatiality (Mondada, 2013a, b) and mobility (Haddington, Mondada, & Nevile, 2013), referred to as “multimodal” interaction.

Conducting analyses of embodied and multimodal interaction, however, raises specific concerns in relation to data collection, transcription, and analysis, and as such, there are certain considerations that should be taken into account. One of the most important
consideration has to do with *accessibility* and *capturability* of everything that the members have available to them and then ensuring that, as analysts, we do not have access to more than the members themselves. This same aspect has been captured by Asmuß (2015, p. 287) through the following:

One fundamental principle of CA is that the analyst should take the participant’s perspective (Heritage, 1988; Hutchby & Wooffitt, 1998, pp. 38ff; Mondada, 2008b). This means that data are required that allow the analyst access to the same resources that the participant can make use of when creating meaning. Partly because of technological developments that make digital video technology available for everyone, there is now an increased awareness within CA that the data collected should reflect the participants’ perspectives (Mondada, 2008b; Schegloff, 2002).

The following sections introduce the basic concepts in CA and provide a brief overview over their relevance in the analysis of audio- and video-recorded data. According to Drew (2005), there are four basic concepts that underpin CA’s explorations of the patterns, structures, and practices found in conversations: turn-taking, turn design, social action, and sequence organization. Additionally, I consider two more concepts: epistemics (Heritage, 2013) and deontics (Stevanovic & Peräkylä, 2012).

### 2.4.3 Turns at talk

One of the most noticeable features of conversation is that speakers change; this is named *turn-taking* and briefly stated, implies that when conversing, participants obviously switch their roles of speaker and hearer, *i.e.*, they take turns. As such, the participants use a variety of turn-taking strategies to indicate that they are ready to take the floor, all of which describe how the system of turn-taking actually operates (see Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson, 1974). Turns at talk are composed of *turn constructional units* (TCUs), which are units of conversation that complete a communicative act. When a speaker approaches the possible completion of his TCU, the transition to a next speaker becomes relevant. In this sense, if the transition occurs, the next speaker begins his turn immediately after the completion of the prior speaker’s TCU. The point of possible completion of a speaker’s TCU is referred to as the *transitional relevant place* (TRP) (Schegloff, 2007). It is to be mentioned that speaker change is a normative process which must be achieved by participants in the conversation. In
other words, “turn-taking behaviour is socially constructed behaviour, not the result of an inevitable process” (Liddicoat, 2007, p. 51).

2.4.4 Turn design

“When a speaker takes a turn at talk, he or she designs that turn, in the sense of selecting what will go in that turn, in two quite distinct respects. First, a speaker selects what action the turn will be designed to perform. Second, he or she selects the details of the verbal construction through which that action will be accomplished” (Drew, 2005, pp. 82-83). Few observations can be drawn from the above quote. First, turns are designed for recipients and with respect to the intended recipients (recipient design); this means that speakers design their turns in such a way as to take account of whom they are speaking to and what the recipient knows (or is expected to know). Second, turns are designed in ways that exhibit how they are connected with and responsive to prior talk; also, how they are connected with what the other will do in response to the current turn. Third, turns are designed to “do” something, to perform some action; for example, speakers can indicate whether they understand or not what the prior speaker said (achieving or not intersubjectivity), whether there is some problem with what was said, or whether they align or not with the other one (Drew, 2013). Turns at talk are, in the words of Heritage (1984b, p. 242), “context shaped and context renewing”.

2.4.5 Social action

By taking their turns at talk, the participants are not just talking, but they are performing an action (such as, greeting, inviting, offering, requesting, questioning, announcing, and so on). As Drew (2005) pointed out, it is important to note “CA investigates social action in a particular way that is distinctive from other approaches to speech acts” (p. 86). Particularly, the participants orient towards understanding each other’s conduct and how they actually come to do this connects turn design with the accomplishment of social action:

It is not enough to show that some utterance was understood by its recipient to implement a particular action… In order to provide analytically the grounds for the possibility of such understanding, an account must be offered of what about the production of that talk/conduct provided for its recognisability of such an action: that is, what were the methodical, or procedural, or “practiced” grounds for its production. (Schegloff, 1996, p. 173).
It is to be noted that social action is not only achieved through talk, but also through embodied conduct.

2.4.6 Sequence organization

Sequence organization is based on the premise that the central consideration for the organization of talk is that talk is a form of social action. Sequence organization can be defined in terms of its scope, which is the organization of courses of action enacted through turns at talk. In other words, “sequences are the vehicle for getting some activity accomplished” (Schegloff, 2007, p. 2). The analysis of sequence organization focuses on adjacency pairs, which are paired sequences of turns in which the second turn is conditionally relevant on the first. Hence, there is a first pair part (FPP), such as a question, which initiates a second pair part (SPP), such as an answer. Furthermore, the occurrence of the SPP is expected and its absence is seen as obvious and given some sort of interpretation. It is interesting to note that participants can respond to the actions of the others using resources other than talk, such as gestures; in this sense, gestures that respond to, but do not co-occur with, talk can be seen to accomplish sequential actions autonomously (Berger & Rae, 2012).

2.4.7 Epistemics

Epistemics is the study of how participants or interactants claim access to knowledge, and how these claims are asserted, contested, or defended in and through turns-at-talk (Heritage, 2013). The notion of “epistemic rights” refers to people’s “relative access to, or rights to assess, knowledge, events, behaviour, and the like in specific, locally organized sequences of talk” (Raymond & Heritage, 2006, p. 681).

A distinction is drawn between “epistemic status” and “epistemics stance”. The idea behind “epistemic status” is that, at a given time, any two speakers will have both their own “territories of knowledge” (Heritage, 2012, 2013), over which they have privileged access and sovereignty, and a different degree of access (epistemic gradient) to a specific element of knowledge. This means that a participant can be “more knowledgeable” (K+) or “less knowledgeable” (K-) about a topic, and to different degrees, in relation to another participant (Heritage, 2010; Heritage & Raymond, 2012). On the other hand, “if epistemic status is conceived as a somewhat enduring feature of social relationships vis-à-vis an epistemic domain, epistemic stance by contrast concerns the moment-by-moment expression of these relationships, as managed through the design of turns-at-talk” (Heritage, 2013, p. 377). In this
sense, a participant can take a more “knowing” or “unknowing” epistemic stance in relation to a topic, with research showing that an “unknowing” format generally invites elaboration and sequence expansion, while a “knowing” format generally invites confirmation and sequence closure (Heritage, 2010; Heritage & Raymond, 2012).

Furthermore, a distinction is also made between “epistemics of experience” and “epistemics of expertise” (Heritage, 2013). For example, research in medical settings has shown that patients corroborate medical diagnoses (epistemics of expertise) using their experiences of the symptoms (epistemics of experience) (see Peräkylä, 1998 and Weidner, 2011, among others). Overall, the study of epistemics has significant consequences for turn design, as a speaker can incorporate in his or her turn an epistemic claim to knowledge in relation to a topic and a recipient can assert or dispute that same epistemic claim.

2.4.8 Deontics
Stevanovic and Peräkylä (2012, p. 298) differentiate between epistemic and deontic authority as follows: “Epistemic authority is about getting the words to match the world, and deontic authority is about getting the world to match the words; epistemic authority is about knowing how the world ‘is’; deontic authority is about determining how the world ‘ought to be’”. In this sense, then, deontics is concerned with what one may, should, or should not do in a given set of circumstances (Cummins, 1996) and how deontic authority can be accepted or resisted (Stevanovic & Peräkylä, 2012). According to Stevanovic (2013c, p. 24), “the notion of deontic rights refers to the latent potential that a participant has in a specific domain of action in relation to his co-participants”. Together with epistemics, deontics offers the means to incorporate discussions of people’s social roles and identities in the analysis of what people accomplish through their turns (Stevanovic & Svennevig, 2015).

Similar to the case of epistemics, there is a “deontic gradient”, which means that authority is not a binary concept, with interactants’ deontic rights varying from situation to situation. For example, a restaurant may have the right to decide who they allow to enter the premises and what the specifics of the restaurant will be (what the menu will look like), but they might not have the rights to decide what ingredients can be used and they have absolutely no right to decide what dishes an individual customer will finally order.

A distinction is drawn between “deontic congruence” and “deontic incongruence”. “Deontic congruence” refers to a situation in which the speakers are in agreement about who has the right to determine future actions, while “deontic incongruence” indicates a situation in which the second speaker resists the suggested distribution of deontic rights (Stevanovic &
Moreover, a distinction is also made between “deontic status” and “deontic stance”, wherein “epistemic status” refers to the deontic rights that a speaker has in a certain domain (regardless of whether these rights are claimed or not) and “epistemic stance” refers to the positioning that a speaker occupies on a deontic gradient (Stevanovic, 2013c).

2.5 Summary
This chapter has provided an overview of the processes and steps involved in producing this research. The dissertation employs Conversation Analysis, which, briefly stated, involves performing inductive data-driven analyses aiming at finding recurring patterns of interaction.

The sample of 15 facilitated meetings could in no way be considered representative of a more general population. Nevertheless, the small number of meetings recorded does not impede the validity of the study. In traditional experimental research designs, attempts are made to generalize findings to a population, in which case, external validity would be contingent upon a representative sample (Bryman, 2004). However, the CA methodology does not lend itself to such validity checks nor to generalizations out to populations. This type of research seeks findings that can reliably inform a theoretical perspective and be applied by other researchers in different context (Silverman, 2006). The next chapter is the first analytic chapter. In this chapter, I will show how facilitated meetings work and are organized from start to end (the macro organization), reflecting the interactional tasks that facilitators work to accomplish.
Chapter 3

The Macro Organization of Facilitated Meetings

3.0 Introduction

When we study social life, we almost invariably extract segments. Conversation analysts often look at very short extracts, with the aim of understanding a particular conversational practice. While meritorious in its own way, what can be lost – and is not possible in this chapter, either – is a sense of a complete unfolding interaction, especially when it is a long interaction, as is the case with the present facilitated meetings, that can last for more than six hours in a row. While we might see entire conversations in studies such as Whalen, Zimmerman, and Whalen’s (1988) “When words fail: A single case analysis”, this is however, very unusual.

Harvey Sacks explicitly dedicated his lectures during winter 1970 to giving “a bunch of lectures under the title Overall Structural Organization of Conversation” (p. 157, emphasis added). In his own words, “this type [of organization of conversation] deals, roughly, with beginnings and endings, and how beginnings work to get from beginnings to something else, and how, from something else, endings are gotten to. And also the relationship – if there is one – between beginnings and endings” (p. 157). Robinson (2013) acknowledged the same when he wrote that single instances of interaction can be normatively organized as: (1) starting with an opening (Schegloff, 1986); (2) ending with a closing (Schegloff & Sacks, 1973); and (3) having ‘something’, that is turns, in between opening and closing. Despite this, however, works specifically dedicated to studying “overall structural organization” have received little attention (Robinson, 2013), making the subject not just little explored, but also little understood.

In line with this analytic interest, in this chapter I try, as much as possible, and particularly with the relatively unknown setting of facilitated meetings, to show how these facilitated meetings work and are organized from start to end. A detailed consideration of some of these constituent activities will be undertaken in the subsequent analytic chapters (Chapters 4, 5, and 6), but in order to situate that talk, I will first present the macro organization of the meetings. This chapter is, thus, prepared in a way that reflects this overall organization and the interactional tasks that facilitators worked to accomplish:
1. *(Opening)*

2. Identifying the participants’ initial views

3. Integrating the participants’ views

4. Decision-making

5. *(Closing)*

These constitute core tasks that the participants oriented towards in progressing the meetings forward. In describing the sequence of the meetings’ organization, I will also compare and contrast what happens observably and empirically (Section 3.2) with what apparently happens in such meetings “in theory” (as I shall show in Section 3.1).

Facilitated meetings may be remarkably varied, with differences in the type of problem at hand, as well as the type of visual materials being used (different computer software, PowerPoint presentations, and so on). But if one looks beyond the surface content of the talk to the underlying activities of which it is composed, the activity framework exhibits a remarkable degree of organization. Facilitated meetings as a group are distinguished from other types of meetings by the specificity of this framework. Their hallmark is that there is a facilitator involved and there are specific tasks that occupy the participants from the beginning of the meeting until the end.

For the purpose of characterizing what happens in facilitated meetings in terms of their macro organization, the tasks are mapped onto one canonical facilitated meeting in the following example, in Table 3.1. This exemplification provides an accurate view to how these tasks are manifested in an actual facilitated meeting, with the boundaries between the tasks being approximate.
Table 3.1. The Macro Organization of Facilitated Meetings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core tasks</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Actions</th>
<th>Example</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Opening</td>
<td>Thanking</td>
<td>Summoning</td>
<td>01 F: U::hm .hhh OH-KAY, thank you- thank you for coming</td>
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<td>02</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Setting the task (listing)</td>
<td>Directives</td>
<td>03 F: In your pai:rs (.) I want you to discuss this particular prompt, [...]</td>
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<td>05 P: (embodied acknowledgment)</td>
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<td>Identifying the participants' initial views</td>
<td>Clarifying*</td>
<td>Questioning</td>
<td>09 P: Do you want us to work in three people rather than a two an- a one.= Or do you want me to partner with Mark.</td>
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<td>12 F: You partner with Mark if you want.=</td>
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<td>Yeah, let’s do that.</td>
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<td>Discussing the results (unpacking participation)</td>
<td>Questioning</td>
<td>14 F: A lot of variation in this. .hh Eleanor scoring at the lowest, John scoring at the highest, overall. So:, I guess I’ll ask Eleanor and John maybe to reflect on their scd:res for a moment [...]</td>
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<td>19 P: Yeah, .hh I’m afraid this is a case of- I’m just tainted by expe:rience.</td>
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<td>Setting the task (linking)</td>
<td>Directives</td>
<td>21 F: I would like to understand how these ideas relate to each other,</td>
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<td>23 P: (embodied acknowledgment)</td>
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<td>Clarifying*</td>
<td>Questioning</td>
<td>24 P: Is this meant to be a one to one link.</td>
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<td>26 F: No? Ehh eh If you have (.) double arrows, eh I will ask you,</td>
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<td>Discussing the results (reconciling meanings)</td>
<td>Questioning</td>
<td>28 F: If I understood that concept, &lt;what we’re saying is that&gt; the people think that ensure marketing to support is at the moment- we do, but we don’t do enough, and this is a key area. So: that’s the way I read it.</td>
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<td>35 P: So &gt;I’m not su:re&lt; it’s about volume.</td>
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<td>Decision-making</td>
<td>Setting the task (prioritizing)</td>
<td>Directives</td>
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<td>41 P: (embodied acknowledgment)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Closing</td>
<td>Thanking</td>
<td>48 F: All right?</td>
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<td>49 F: Good.</td>
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<td>50 P: Thank you very much.</td>
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</table>

Before describing these activities and actions in detail, it is worth investigating what is written about how such meetings work and are organized, and that is what I address next.
3.1 The overall structure of facilitated meetings (“the theory”)

Researchers have long established the meeting as a fundamental organizational phenomenon (see, for example, Rogelberg, Leach, Warr, & Burnfield, 2006), with team meetings being ubiquitous in contemporary organizations (McComas, 2003; Rogelberg, Allen, Shanock, Scott, & Shuffler, 2010; Tracy, 2007). Research has shown that, on average, employees attend at least three meetings per week, with increasing time spent in meetings at the managerial level (Schell, 2010).

Most collaborative processes involve face-to-face meetings, with the effectiveness of any single meeting considered to be dependent on how well process issues are being handled – issues such as developing an agenda, deciding which heuristic problem-solving strategy to use and when, ensuring that everyone has a chance to speak, handling conflicts among participants, and so forth (Kjellberg & Saxton, 2006). As discussed in Chapter 1, the best way to deal with these process issues is considered to be through the inclusion of a facilitator in the meeting. Today, facilitated meetings are being conducted around the world, in both the public and private sector, and in diverse settings.

The layout of the agenda during these meetings can delineate the action that is needed, for example discussion versus decision-making. Research has shown that establishing an allotted time for agenda items can control the flow of the meeting. When the allotted time has expired, the group must decide how to move forward (for example, with a vote, assigning a task force, or by tabling the discussion for another meeting). Establishing the lead for agenda topics can also be useful and is readily accomplished by assigning people to topics on the prepared agenda. To get buy-in from meeting participants, participation in agenda building is highly desirable. Individuals and groups can identify priority issues and areas in which administrative or team support is needed (Kjellberg & Saxton, 2006).

In the following lines, I will proceed to describe how facilitated meetings are described in the available literature. There are numerous models, which share a focus on being theoretically-derived in some way. For example, Kaner et al. (2014) introduced the Diamond of Participatory Decision-Making (Figure 3.1), which is proposed as a useful “roadmap” for designing agendas.
Figure 3.1. Diamond of participatory decision-making (Kaner et al., 2014).

As per this model, facilitated meetings initiate with a new topic. The “divergent zone” is the next step, wherein the project at hand is to gather the diverse points of view of the participants. This is then followed by a “groan zone”, which focuses on building a shared framework of understanding among the participants. Finally, the meetings will reach a “convergent zone”, wherein participants orient towards developing inclusive solutions, upon which closure can be reached.

Alternatively, Straus (2002) refers to the overall structure of facilitated meetings as following a “bubble” format. A graphical representation of the “bubble” format is presented in Figure 3.2, wherein the major segments of the meeting are represented as shaded bubbles and the detailed activities as lines radiating from the bubbles (connections and flow are indicated by arrows). Although the figure shows that meetings initiate with “start-ups”, Straus considers that the first phase is actually “the perception phase of the problem space”, which provides an opportunity for the participants to present their views on a particular topic and express their emotions. The objective of this phase is, in the author’s words, “listening and seeking understanding”, not “listening and seeking agreement”. The main purpose is to acknowledge that there is a legitimate problem that needs to be addressed. Generally, this phase involves some time for the participants to present their views without interruptions and some time to answer a few clarifying questions. Then, to bring closure to the perception phase, the facilitator might check for agreement – in other words, check to see that everyone agrees that there is an issue that is important enough to try to resolve together. The group will
not be agreeing on a definition of the problem, just that a legitimate and important issue exists, that different people hold different points of view, and that it is time to move on to another phase.

Figure 3.2. Bubble agenda for the hypothetical meeting (Straus, 2002).
The next phase is the “vision space”, wherein participants are invited to explore common themes; this phase is composed of actions such as presenting, listing, discussing, eliminating, and clarifying, followed by some time to check for agreement. After alignment is reached on the vision, the next step is to delve into the “problem space-analysis” phase. This phase is focused on having the participants brainstorm ideas, in an attempt to discuss, clarify, and prioritize them. In other words, this phase is about breaking the issue into sub-problems, defining them, and understanding root causes, which can be potentially followed by proposing alternative solutions (ways to solve each sub-problem), discussing various scenarios (different ways to integrate the solutions to the sub-problems), comparing and evaluating the scenarios, and reaching consensus on one integrated solution (decision-making).

In short, for Straus, a meeting starts in the perception phase of the problem space, jumps to the vision space, and then returns to the analysis and definition phase of the problem space. These steps are located in between some normal start-up and closure steps. Straus advises that if the facilitator draws this type of agenda on a sheet of chart pad paper and tapes it to the wall of the meeting room, it will serve as a valuable facilitative tool, as participants can see at a glance the flow of the meeting and where they are at any point in time and the facilitator can intervene by pointing to a specific place of the process map to refocus participants on a common process. Furthermore, adding time specifications, assigning names to topics, and providing a layout conducive to resulting action would assist both facilitators and meeting participants (a view supported by Kjellberg & Saxton, 2006, as well).

A third and final example of work that attempts to standardize the method of conducting a meeting can be found in Hyer et al. (2003), who introduced a “Seven-Step Meeting Process” comprising the following steps:

1. Clarifying the objectives (Ensuring that all participants understand and agree with the meeting objectives.)
2. Reviewing the roles (Reviewing roles and deciding at what intervals feedback on time will be given.)
3. Reviewing the agenda (Reviewing details of agenda items and ensuring that all team members understand and agree with the agenda items.)
4. Working through the agenda items.
5. Reviewing the meeting record (Reviewing the record and looking for changes and additions, also deciding what outcomes should be kept and which could be discarded.)
6. Planning the next steps and next meeting agenda (Deciding who will do what before the next meeting and deciding what the objective and agenda items will be for the next meeting.)

7. Evaluating the meeting. (Identifying what the team did well that it should continue doing and what could be done differently to improve the meeting.)

The three models described are informative, containing a set of guidelines and rules that facilitators could follow when running their meetings. But they tend to focus on, for example, individuals’ evaluations of their meetings and how that impacts their subsequent attitudes and behaviours (see, for example, Rogelberg et al., 2010), rather than on how actual meetings happen. In this sense, they are developed as reflections. The point I wish to make here is that these models have or propose their own “scripts” of how to operate, which are “derived from concrete experience of events and thus represent ‘how the world works’. Nonetheless, they are very much abstractions from experienced reality” (Nelson, 1986, p. 8). They represent schematic understandings formed primarily through repeated experiences of facilitators. In the words of Peräkylä and Vehviläinen (2003, p. 728):

Practices are not accomplished merely by following theories, models or concepts. Theories and models are general idealizations, whereas practices are carried out in situ. Theories and concepts related to practices consist of ideals and visions of the ‘best possible situations’, whereas institutional practices constantly deal with the range of cases that do not reach such ideals. Furthermore, institutional practices always involve aims that are not articulated as ‘goals’ or ‘ideals’, but nevertheless fundamentally organize the actual practice. For example, control or sanctioning against deviance are such constitutive aims.

As such, the main problems with these models are that: (a) we do not know what actually happens in these meetings and (b) given what we know about the difference between scripts/models and empirical interactional reality (Antaki, 2011; Maynard & Schaeffer, 2000; Maynard, Schaeffer, & Freese, 2011; Stokoe, 2011), it is likely that the meetings are both more interesting and structured entirely different in reality. Findings based on applying CA can inform recommendations for future guidelines, training materials and interventions to improve communication skills for less experienced facilitators. To address this research gap, I now turn to describing the sequence of the facilitated meetings as they happen.
3.2 The overall structure of facilitated meetings

I will now turn to the analysis of live, real-time facilitated meetings. In what follows, I will provide extracts that exemplify each of the core interactional tasks identified through the analysis. I will proceed to describe briefly the specific actions that are being accomplished; in doing so, I will also aim to compare and contrast the findings with idealized notions and models of facilitated meetings described in the previous Section 3.1. The analysis of the data showed that the first core task is identifying the participants’ initial views on a specific topic. But before that, I will proceed to make some observations with regards to the opening of the meeting.

3.2.1 Opening the meeting

In this section, I examine the opening of the meetings. Note that the opening phases of the facilitated meetings that were audio-video-recorded for the present dissertation were present in only two of the recordings. The reason is that, as pointed out in Chapter 2, the cameras were turned on only after participants had had agreed to participate in the research. The analysis is, therefore, based on the two available openings that were fully recorded.

Following Boden (1994, p. 90), meeting openings can be characterized as structured sequences during which participants gain a local meeting membership and concurrently orient themselves to a “meeting mode”. It is also to be noted that although opening sequences have been studied widely in conversation analysis (e.g., Schegloff, 1979; Schegloff and Sacks, 1973; Button, 1987), openings of business meetings have not yet been extensively studied (Oittinen & Piirainen-Marsh, 2015). Generally, the opening sequence in my data starts with greetings, which take place every time a member to the meeting arrives at the meeting location (and before the meeting is formally declared open). Also, generally, the formal opening of a meeting is frequently preceded by multiparty informal talk (literature supporting such finding includes Boden, 1994; Bargiela-Chiappini and Harris, 1997; Chan, 2008; and Nielsen, 2013). It is thus understood that by the time the “formal” meeting is started, all participants have potentially seen and greeted each other already.

There is a tacit understanding that a critical mass of members is necessary to attend the meeting so that the meeting can actually start, which makes absences to be accountable matters – this finding, also, is supported by Boden (1984). In each of the facilitated meetings recorded, the unofficial head-count (marked by the facilitator looking in the room at the participants, an action which is sometimes complemented by him also having a look at a
sheet of paper containing the names of the participants), also marks the formal opening of the meeting. “The shift from the stage of pre-meeting talk to a common focus of attention and a different interaction order is an interactional achievement” (Asmuß & Svennevig, 2009, p. 13). In this sense, the agenda of the meeting proceeds without any further delay and without any further pre-meeting talk.

In the extract below, notice how the facilitator uses a particular conversational move to close down pre-meeting talk and shift to another agenda by initiating the opening of the meeting: “U::hm .hhh OH-KAY, thank you- thank you for coming”.

Extract 3.1

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01</td>
<td>F:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02</td>
<td>U::hm .hhh OH-KAY, thank you- thank you for coming an-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03</td>
<td>uhhh (.) uhhh perhaps the way we should start (.) ehhh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04</td>
<td>&lt;you probably are a bit overwhelmed&gt; with by</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05</td>
<td>paraphernalia he:re. It’s- it’s amazing but it has a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06</td>
<td>reason an- and I will explain that to you in a moment.=</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07</td>
<td>but perhaps we could start with Andrea introdu=cing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08</td>
<td>P:  =Okay, thank you::</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The facilitator’s long “U::hm” (line 1, with in-breath) marks a kind of transition or topic boundary, separating premeeting conversation from what is observably the opening of the meeting (Boden, 1994). This shift is also initiated by the use of the standard topic transition marker “okay”, produced with markedly loud volume. The business of the meeting then begins immediately, with a reference to the technological equipment present at the meeting and the summons uttered to Andrea to introduce the purpose of the meeting, which is accepted without hesitation at line 08.

There are several interesting things happening in this sequence. First, the initial greeting is not a greeting in the grammatical or action-oriented sense, but a turn that accomplishes the action of opening the meeting. This becomes so much more interesting if we consider that in news interviews (Clayman, 1989) and talk show interviews (Martinez, 2003), for example, “thank yous” are generally uttered with a falling tone at the end of the interviews, accomplishing the closing of the interviews. Furthermore, in the same interviews, “thank yous” are generally responded by a second pair part containing “thank you”, as well. In the present data, “thank yous” are used to open the meeting and are not being followed by their verbal counterparts. We might even say that a response from the audience is not even expected by the facilitator. This claim is supported by the fact that the facilitator proceeds to
other business (a discussion of what will happen next) immediately after delivering the “thank you”, which may signal that indeed, such a response is not considered compulsory. We might say then that “thank you” acts as a summons or does summoning, requesting the participants’ attention and calling the meeting to order.

By contrast, in the following Extract 3.2, the meeting is called to order not by the facilitator but by a participant. This represents yet another way of initiating the meeting, which is to explicitly propose getting started (“are you ready to make a start”). This is then continued in lines 05-06, by welcoming the participants and commenting on the attendance.

Extract 3.2

01 P: U:::hm are you ready to make a start Max, heh-heh=
02 F: =Yes we're ready.
03 P: Right. Can I (.). well (.). uhh I'll get everyone to run
04 round the table in a couple of seconds.= But can I
05 welcome you first .hh Mary and Alex and uhh as I've just
06 met Katie and Iain I think. ((monologue continues))

Once more, the long “U:::hm” marks the transition from pre-meeting talk to the official start of the actual meeting. The laughter at line 01 by the participant “heh-heh” stands as evidence of the participant’s orientation to the technically formal nature of the meeting and to its accountably casual atmosphere (Boden, 1994). The facilitator answers by “agreement + confirmation” in line 02. The participant then proceeds to welcome the last members to have arrived at the meeting, who by the very fact that they arrived last, missed the chance of being greeted during the pre-meeting talk.

A difference between the two extracts above is that while in the first extract the facilitator addresses the entire audience, in the second case, the participant addresses only one person, the facilitator. In both cases, however, the same outcome is achieved. By summoning either everyone’s attention or only one person’s attention, pre-meeting talk ceases, and participants orient towards the next order of business.

After this, the main resource for moving to the business of the talk is presenting the reason or purpose for the meeting, which is generally embedded in the first project. This is what I discuss next.
3.2.2 The first project: Identifying the participants’ initial views

In contrast to the task described above, which typically lasted for few turns only, the amount of time spent on performing the first project was considerably more. In the first project, the facilitators and participants showed a concern for accomplishing the following activities:

- Setting the task
- Clarifying
- *(Performing the task)*
- Discussing the results.

### Setting the task

At the beginning of this core task, the facilitator describes to the participants what the task will consist of. Generally, *setting the task* begins with the facilitator reading loudly, word for word, the question that is being displayed on the public screen. Examples of this are included in Extracts 3.3 and 3.4. In both these cases, the facilitator explains that the task consists of them having to write the answers to a *main* question. These answers are to be written in their console laptops. The facilitator then gives the participants a certain amount of time to work in pairs and introduce the answers in their laptop screens.

Extract 3.3

01 F: And *this* is the prompt question. *This* *What are the key* issues and opportunities that we need to focus on .hhh
02 over the next (. ) three to five yea:rs in order to
03 achieve an international reputation for excellence.

Extract 3.4

01 F: In your pai:rs (. ) I want you to discuss this particular prompt, which is (. ) *what aren’t we doing that will help*
02 us to improve our shop window to the world.

After having read the question loudly to the participants, the facilitator proceeds to *offer specific instructions* about how to perform the task and about how the technology provided (software and console laptops) is to be used while performing the task. Typical examples are provided below, in Extracts 3.5, 3.6, and 3.7. Let us start with Extract 3.5.
Extract 3.5

F: Now (.) what’s th- th- the format.= The format is quite specific. I’m going to ask you tuh write those statements <in a particular way>. What I want is you tuh- when you write your key issue or opportunity, think about including a verb in that description. (continues)

P: (embodied acknowledgement, participants nodding)

Now, it is worth mentioning that Extract 3.5 is typical of how the facilitator provided instructions about the task. Consider its design. “I’m going to ask you to do X” is not really asking or telling to do X, that is, it is neither a request, nor a directive yet, but rather designed as a pre-request or pre-directive type thing. It prefigures what participants are going to do, without issuing an actual request or directive. But the action that is accomplished, as we see in the next turn, is exactly that of a request or directive. The acceptance or compliance is, however, not verbal, but embodied, expressed by means of the participants actually starting working out the task. Extracts 3.6. and 3.7 are two more examples of instructions provided by the facilitator.

Extract 3.6

F: The OTher thing is, when you describe your issue, you shouldn’t use more than ten to fifteen words .hhh because if you go beyond that, it's because you are describing <more than one thing>. (continues)

P: (embodied acknowledgement, participants nodding)

Extract 3.7

F: Now (. ) you have a box .hh that says add statements, and a box that says add links or link statements. .hh <Forget about the linking for the moment>.= Just look at the statements. The three to fi:ve (. ) key: issues and opportunities, the answer to that question, .hh you should write one by one in that box. .ptk Once you write it, <according to the Rules that I suggested earlier before>, .ptk you put ADD and th- th- the statement will appear on the right hand side of your screen.= You can only see your own statements. You can’t see: who is writing what, apart from your (. ) partner, but you will see: the statement uhh on the screen. (continues)

P: (embodied acknowledgement, participants nodding)

Extracts 3.6 and 3.7 are interesting from a rather different perspective. There is a difference between saying “it is wrong to do” something and “you shouldn’t do” something.
The avoidance of a direct “it is wrong to do” something may highlight the existence of some sort of universal principle of politeness in the social interaction in meetings. On the other hand, “you shouldn’t do” something may also be heard as an upgraded version of the instructions. The facilitator has previously pointed out the things that the participants should do (Extract 3.5) and it is now upgrading the prior description by focusing on a different angle of understanding, which sets up the upper bound of what is permitted to do with the task.

While requests are in some way contingent on the recipient’s willingness or ability to comply, what is striking about the directives present in the above extracts is that they embody no orientation to the participants’ ability to perform the stated activity (Craven and Potter, 2010). Thus, in Extract 3.7, “you put ADD and th- th- the statement will appear on the right hand side of your screen.” does not orient to the participants’ ability to handle the technology or to their willingness to perform the task. In other words, the design of the directive does not orient to non-compliance as a response option. Furthermore, the directive construction does not treat the participants’ acceptance as a relevant issue. This means that, unlike a question or request, the directive does not make acceptance relevant as a next action, but rather compliance (M. Goodwin, 2006).

This phase of instructing during the setting of a task may also encompass an additional component: the provision of a visual example of a similar past task performed by another group. This is the case of Extract 3.8 below, which is a continuation of Extract 3.7.

Extract 3.8

01 F: Just to give you a flavour of the way it works, for example.= <this is an example of a gather> or a "brainstorming one" using the system. <What are the major strategic issues that this organisation is facing.> .hhh
05 And you can see for example, that in the top left corner, that's too- too long of a statement. Too long.
07 (continues)

In Extract 3.8, for example, the facilitator accompanies his previous directive (Extract 3.7) with a visual demonstration of how the task should not be performed. Particularly interesting about this extract is the facilitator’s choice not of a successful example of how things should be done, but of one that was not performed according to the instructions provided, which gives him the possibility to reinforce the instructions by means of letting the participants know what they should not do. This allows the facilitator to show the participants how to act in order to comply with the directive. By providing an example, rather than asking...
if one is needed, the facilitator restricts the participants’ ability to refuse to comply on the grounds of misunderstanding or lack of ability (Craven & Potter, 2010).

Instructions sequences may or may not be followed by participants asking for clarifications. But when instructions provided were considered to be insufficient by the participants, the participants did not progress the meeting any further by performing the task until the matter was resolved. I turn to present this activity next.

*Clarifying*

The next two extracts, Extract 3.9 and 3.10 show how the facilitator orients to solving the participants’ queries. In Extract 3.9, the participant raises a question with regards to whom he should partner in performing the task.

Extract 3.9

01 P: Do you want us to work in three people rather than a two-an-a one. = Or do you want me to partner with Mark.
02 F: You partner with Mark if you want. Yeah, let’s do that.
03 P: [embodied agreement]

The participant’s question is formulated in a way that exhibits two alternatives: forming a group of three people or partnering with a specific person (Mark). The facilitator’s second pair part is particularly interesting: firstly, the first part of his answer is tilted towards preferring a partnership with Mark, displaying alignment with the principle of *contiguity* (Sacks, 1987), according to which if there are two questions in a turn, the latter will usually get answered first.

Secondly, although this first part of his answer is presented as being contingent on the participant’s acceptance (“You partner with Mark, if you want”), the immediate second part of his answer (“Yeah, let’s do that.”) takes the shape of a directive, telling the participant to proceed with such alternative. We can observe that part of the facilitator’s answer is delivered in overlap with the participant’s embodied agreement, who nods his head before the facilitator finished delivering his proposal (“You partner with Mark, if you want”); this may explain why the second part of the facilitator’s answer is delivered as a directive, and this is because the participant has already accepted the proposal. In Extract 3.10, we further have an example of a participant who raises a different kind of query, related to the
technology/software being used. In this sense, he is interested to know whether he could link two statements on his personal console.

Extract 3.10

01 P: So I could link those two statements, couldn’t I?=
02 F: =Yes you could (.) if you wanted tuh.

His question is formulated in a way that anticipates a yes-answer. This yes-answer is indeed granted next by the facilitator (“Yes you could”), who nevertheless, adds “(.) if you wanted tuh”. What is interesting is that this particular commentary in the second part of his answer is aimed at highlighting that doing so is out of the scope for the current activity, allowing the facilitator to make sure that the activity to be performed “stays on track”.

Once every query has been clarified, all the participants proceed to engage in performing the assigned task. Once time has lapsed, the facilitator summons the participants’ attention and proceeds with the next activity, which is to discuss the results (unpack their participation).

- **Discussing the results**

The third activity to which the facilitator and participants orient after the participants performed the assigned task in their respective groups is to discuss the outcome of the task, which is now publicly displayed on the public screen. An example is provided in Extract 3.11.

Extract 3.11

01 F: Right u::hmm, .ptk let me see. I'm going to try to: make
02 sense of this. You have uhh uhh (.) you know, about
03 sixty concepts uhh already there, ehh and it took like
04 five minutes seven minutes which is- which is great.
The use of the standard topic transition marker “right”, accompanied by the long “u:::hmm” (line 1) marks the transition from the talk in small groups back to the talk in one single group. Once attention has been summoned, the facilitator proceeds with doing noticing (Schegloff, 2010) (“You have uhh uhh (.) you know, about sixty concepts uhh already there,”). In doing noticing, the facilitator is observed to read out the screen. In this reading, the facilitator glosses the details of the visual display, which involves the selection of certain features from the screen, in this case, the fact that there are about sixty concepts in total that the participants came up with (Figure 3.3). In a way, thus, doing noticing can be understood to provide a neutral summary. Extracts such as 3.11 are nevertheless, rare. Consider the next Extract 3.12.

Extract 3.12

01 F: And your views are
02 ((F displays the results of the votes.))

03 F: “that you” .hh doing oh-kay (1.0).hh an’ pretty well.

Figure 3.4. Visual display of results of the task performed by participants.
Here, “↑doing oh-kay_ (1.0) .hh an’ pretty well” is still doing noticing, despite being delivered as an assessment. The reason behind such an interpretation is the fact that “↑doing oh-kay_ (1.0) .hh an’ pretty well” is already visible in the display on the public screen of the collective results. The first three categories (named and coloured Gold, Green, and Amber) indicate the rather favourable position in which the organization finds itself on the matter being discussed. It can be noticed that these three categories further amass all the participants’ votes. The facilitator is thus not really assessing the results, but rather reading out what is already there, on the public screen. What is noteworthy however, is that he orients to highlighting particular features of the visual display, in this case, the fact that the participants are actually “↑doing oh-kay_ (1.0) .hh an’ pretty well”. He could have picked up any other feature to highlight (for example, picking up on a specific category or emphasising that there are no negative views on the matter, which is evidenced by the lack of votes in the Red category), but he chooses to highlight the entire left side of the graph. And this is the facilitator’s choice. What we can observe here is that in doing noticing, the facilitator is able to give the results a directional stance.

This practice of doing noticing (delivered via assessments or assessment-implicative formulations) can have a second function, which is that of doing questioning. Such is the case of Extract 3.13.

Extract 3.13

01 ((F brings up the results on the screen.))
02 (7.0)
03 F: Not sensing a need for a great debate,
04 (2.5)
05 P: I’m not sure because, (.) for me is the top of the
06 question (.) to me that’s (1.3) that’s vague I think (.)
07 >and then you look at all the sub questions and th-
08 they’re all asking different things,< ((continues))

In Extract 3.13, the facilitator builds a presupposition in his formulation (that the audience itself does not find anything in the results that would need further elaboration), which is designed for confirmation. In this sense, the formulation can be heard as a topic closing-implicative utterance. This is however, challenged by one of the participants, who rejects the facilitator’s proposal to close the topic and proceeds to elicit a narrative. In this sense, then, the facilitator’s first turn can be seen to do questioning, resulting in the unpacking of participation. The main point I wish to make here is that it is the participant
who orients to this activity of unpacking participation as an important one, whose successful accomplishment is relevant for the progression of the meeting.

Some other times, however, it is the facilitator the one who orients to the activity of unpacking participation as an important one, without which the meeting cannot progress further. Consider Extract 3.14.

Extract 3.14

01 ((F displays the results of the votes.))
02 (6.0)
03 F: It’s pretty strong,
04 (2.0)
05 F: .ptk (.) ptk >anybody< surprised by that?
06 (3.0)
07 P1: I’m quite >wondering< cos I “fee-ah” <with- my
08 ↑PER>sonal: (.) view is that (.) ((continues))

Here, unlike in Extract 3.13, the noticing of results (“It’s pretty strong.”) at line 03 does not elicit participation, which may indicate that the participants themselves orient to the completeness of this commentary; there is no need for further expansion of the same. Nevertheless, the facilitator orients to the elicitation of participation as an important activity, which is evidenced by the direct question that follows next at line 05 (“.ptk (.) ptk >anybody< surprised by that?”).

In brief, there are thus a number of ways in which facilitators can accomplish doing questioning: via noticings (designed as declaratives) or via direct questions (which can take the form of Yes/No-Interrogatives, Wh-questions, or a combination of both). A consideration of all the features of these sequences is beyond the scope of this chapter, but I will discuss these matters further in Chapter 4.

By working through this first core task, both the facilitators and the participants oriented to certain constraints on their talk that characterized the interaction as institutionally relevant. Both the facilitators and the participants, for example, treated the facilitators as having greater rights to initiate sequences – this may also be explained by the double role of the facilitator, as both a process enabler and a technology handler.

In performing this first core task, the facilitators showed a concern for eliciting and unpacking participation. These features were common across all the meetings and constituted a minimum requirement for the accomplishment of this task and the successful progression of the meeting.
3.2.3 The second project: Integrating the participants’ views

“Integrating the participants’ views” is one of the most complex projects, which can last for hours in a row. During this project, there is a clear orientation from the part of the facilitators and participants to accomplish the following main activities:

- Setting the task
- Clarifying
- (Performing the task)
- Discussing the results.

At the macro-level, these activities may look identical to the ones in the first project. In both the cases, facilitators and participants are concerned with setting a task, clarifying doubts, and performing the task, followed by a discussion of the results obtained. Nonetheless, I wish to stress the point that these activities differ in their core tasks: while in the first project they are concerned with eliciting and unpacking the participants’ initial and individual views on the topic under discussion, in the second project, they are concerned with integrating these views and reconciling their meaning, reaching views upon which participants can agree as a group.

- Setting the task

The setting of the task in the second project proceeds similarly to the setting of the task in the case of the first project (Section 3.2.1). I will thus not explore this further, but rather refer to Section 3.2.1 for a discussion of the same. The only point I wish to reintroduce here is the fact that the facilitator is once again accomplishing a directive via the use of pre-directive formulations. These prefigure what participants are going to do, without issuing an actual directive (lines 01, 08, 09, 10 in Extract 3.15 and lines 01-02 in Extract 3.16).

Extract 3.15

01 F: What I’ll- what I’d like us tuh do now, rather than
02 actually ehhh (.). ehhŋ group things in terms of just (.)
03 the <you know> th- the just the topics, I would like to
04 understand how these ideas relate to each other, BEcause
05 (.). perhaps if we look at you know, what facilitates
06 what: t, maybe that gives us a better idea about where
07 really the areas- potential areas of focus should be.=
08 And in order to do that, I would like you to do some
09 linking for me. Ehh rather than me doing the linking, I
10 would like to see you *doing the linking*.
11 P: (embodied acknowledgement)
Extract 3.16
01 F: So how do we do the linking? It's very easy. uhhh I am going to ask you to do this. .hhh If you want to link
02 two statements, in your- uhh in your gather, on the left,
03 on the bottom left, you have link statements.
04 ((continues))
05 P: (embodied acknowledgement)

- Clarifying

As noted before, instructions sequences may or may not be followed by participants asking for clarifications. But when they do, solving them becomes important, without which the meeting cannot progress further. I have previously shown two examples (Extract 3.9 and 3.10) wherein queries have been solved, although there was no evidence that the meeting did not progress otherwise. Here, I close this gap and show a sequence (Extract 3.17) in which the orientation towards having a query solved is evident.

Extract 3.17
01 P: Is this meant to be a one to one link.
02 F: No? Ehh ehh If you have (.). double arrows, ehh I will ask
03 you, I will <identify the double arrows,> and then
04 probably I will ask you later on (.). how is that the
05 arrow comes back .hh because probably there is a reason
06 why you have a loop.
07 P: If there’s four very similar, <twenty three to seventeen
08 to nine to five>, do you want to do twenty three
09 seventeen, twenty three five, twenty three nine,
10 [that sort of thing?]  
11 F: [oh::,] <that’s what you mean?>= Okay. Yeah
12 yeah. [So-]
13 P: [This] bunch is all linked to each other. Can I
14 do that.=
15 F: =you can do that but not in one go. You have to do one by
16 one. .hhh [Okay? °Very good°.]
17 [several participants nodding in agreement]
18 F: <Thank you for that>. Okay (.) So: I’m going to leave
19 this he:re. ((continues))

Here, the participant’s request for clarification (“Is this meant to be a one to one link.”) at line 01 is answered by the facilitator over an extended turn, at lines 02-06. Nevertheless, at lines 07-10, it becomes evident that the query has not been solved, as the participant takes the next turn at talk and reformulates his query, providing a more elaborate version of the same (which encompasses a specific example). At line 11, the facilitator displays a new understanding of the query, which is evidenced by the deployment of the
(“oh::,”) change of state marker (Heritage, 1984b), further stressed by the explicit “that’s what you mean?”, which seeks repair by asking for confirmation. The facilitator then goes through a process of integrating this new understanding into a new explanation (“you can do that but not in one go. You have to do one by one.”), following which he checks whether the query has now been resolved (“Okay?”), followed by an assessment (““Very good”). After all queries have been solved, the participants are seen once more to engage in performing the task they were assigned, following which the facilitator proceeds to once more discuss the results obtained.

- **Discussing the results**

Let us start with Extract 3.18. Generally, this activity initiates with the facilitator reconvening the plenary talk by summoning the participants’ attention (“Okay? Right?”, at line 01).

Extract 3.18

01 F: Okay? Right? Let me just check there are- there are
02 uhmmm those who are- which are uhh highlighted at the
03 moment in bo:xes, have no links, “just tuh- tuh let you
04 know”. <So you linked most of the stuff,> Ummm and yo-
05 you may want to link them later on.

Once the participants’ attention has been acquired, the facilitators and participants displayed a concern for reconciling meanings. By reconciling meanings, I refer to the fact that up until this point, the participants’ views were only elicited, individually, but not agreed upon as a group. These meetings consist of members who have different expertise and who hold different views of the same problem or issue under discussion; as such, simply sharing their views is not sufficient. In addition, the meaning of the shared views often needs to be reconciled before moving into the decision-making phase and both participants and facilitators display a clear orientation towards accomplishing such outcome.

Sometimes, the reconciliation of meanings was immediate and the meeting proceeded without difficulty, as in Extract 3.19.

Extract 3.19

01 F: Okay. Eh::: and then eh: is there anything else,
02 related to partnerships (0.5) eh:::
03 P: Number twelve.
In this extract, the facilitator’s question as to whether there is any other item on the screen that should be included under the cluster themed “partnerships” has led one of the participants to identify item “twelve” as belonging to the same thematic group. The integration of the participants’ views (in this case, via grouping these views based on their commonality) has thus unproblematically taken place. This may be explained by the fact that the meaning of the term “partnerships” is clear at this point in the interaction to everyone in the room.

In other instances, however, the meaning of the views displayed as items on the screen was not self-explanatory and the facilitator undertook additional work to achieve the unpacking of such meaning. In Extract 3.20, for example, the facilitator is seen to explicitly request clarifications regarding the meaning of the item “reputation” (lines 07-11), orienting to the term as being “a bit vague at the moment”. This is also transformed into a proposal by the inclusion of the interrogative (“Is that- is that what this means, number one?”), which requires the participants to respond both to the accuracy of the facilitator’s understanding and to the intended meaning by the participants themselves. This may account for the delay in the participant’s response at line 13: speaking in the name of all the participants is not an easy thing to do.

Extract 3.20

01 F: So (. ) now this, uhh . ptk apparently very messy thing,
02 (. ) actually may tell us something that uhh we- we know or
03 perhaps we don't know. What do you think are the busiest
04 concepts <just by looking at those,>
05  (0.5)
06 F: th- the busiest nodes?

07 F: So, for example ehhh (1.5) this ehh (. ) agree what we
08 want the reputation to be, eh yes.= so <because it's-
09 it's a bit vague at the moment>.= Is that- is that what
10 this means, number one? Agree what we want the reputation
11 to be for. Vague equals no reputation.= Yeah.
12 (1.5)
13 P: Strikes me that several of those a:re, talking about
14 failure of- as it were to communicate excellence rather
15 than achieve [it.= ]
16 F: [=uhmm.]
17 (3.5)
18 F: And is that- is that an issue,= Is that the issue,
19 Historically we've all agreed (. ) that we don't ma:rket
20 (. ) our achievements as well as we could.
Although clearly not with a direct answer to the facilitator’s question, the participant contributes by making an overall observation about the participants’ views. What is evident at this point is that the facilitator’s proposal is not accepted by the participants, at least not directly; furthermore, discussion is diverted. The facilitator, however, did not challenge the participant to change his answer and provide an explicit acceptance or rejection of his proposal and instead used the participant’s answer to build a new proposal (“And is that- is that an issue,= Is that the issue.”), which he again subjected for the participants’ approval. In this sense, the participant’s answer at lines 13-15 delivered in response to the facilitator’s proposal helped in achieving a new understanding of what the main issue could be about. It is in this kind of sequences that meanings are negotiated and reconciled.

Furthermore, the ease with which the facilitator abandons his proposal in the above sequence also discloses that the facilitator’s project may not actually be about having his proposals accepted (even when they are designed to be confirmed, such as is the case here), but rather that he makes use of proposals to challenge the meaning of the participants’ views. And this is remarkable, as it shows that proposals can have functions other than that of proposing a particular course of action: they can also perform the action of challenging.

Another point I wish to make here has to do with the issue of agency. The issue of agency (talking with and about the “screen”) is apparent particularly in the “integrating” phase. Agency is defined as the capacity to make a difference, that is, to produce some kind of change/transformation in the chain of actions. When a given (human or non-human) actor makes a difference, that is, does something, this action can always be appropriated by or attributed to another actor (whether collective or individual) who can be identified in the chain of action.

The structures “this apparently very messy thing” and “several of those” are the ideas that have been advanced by the participants and then clustered and organized on the screen by the facilitator, in collaboration with the participants. What is interesting is that these ideas are now discursive entities, physically severed from their producers, entities to which the participants are now asked to react. These entities “actually may tell us something” and “several of those are, talking about failure”; as such, they perform actions. Illustrating Weick’s (1979) famous maxim, everything happens as though the participants had to see what they say in order to know what they mean. The participants produced entities, here ideas and sentences on the screen, which they can now contemplate and assess.
The importance of highlighting this aspect resides in the fact that the attribution of agency to artefacts allows human participants to progress the meeting by enabling them to objectify what they hold as otherwise personal views (Cooren, Thompson, Canestraro, & Bodor, 2006). In other words, what is achieved here is an “interactional distance” (Peräkylä, 1995), established between the facilitator, the participants, and that which they are talking about, helping to neutralize any possible problematic or sensitive aspects raised by the facilitator’s enquiries in relation to the participants’ individual views. Challenging questions are thus addressed to participants not in relation to their views, but in relation to something that exists now independently of the participants; and in this way, it becomes a face-saving mechanism. This format can thus turn out to be an important resource for the management of the delicacy posed by challenging questions.

Let us have a look at one more Extract 3.21, which shows that reconciling meanings can further result in making adjustments to the visual display.

Extract 3.21

01 F: If I understood that concept, <what we’re saying is that>
02 the people think that ensure marketing to support is at
03 the moment- we do, but we don’t do enough, and this is a
04 key area. So: that’s the way I read it.
05 P_1: So >I’m not sure< it’s about volume. I think the thing
06 with marketing, it’s not about volume↓ it’s about
07 content. ((continues))

----------------------------------((lines omitted))----------------------------------

08 P_2: It’s more about your strategy for co:leagues (. as
09 opposed to marketing. Is that it’s different ( )
10 communication- strategies for communication.
11 F: >Let me just see<. There a:re a number of things about
12 communication the:re.=
13 P_2: =We were going to talk about stra[tegy.]
14 F: ['Kay,]
15 P_2: So [just-]
16 F: [So if] I don’t- if instead of putting markets, then I
17 put communication strategy,

----------------------------------((lines omitted, wherein P_1 and P_2 further provide arguments to support F’s proposal))----------------------------------

18 F: So:: if I <just edit that>. (0.5) Sorry. (0.5) Does that
19 encapsulate what you think? Yes?
In this extract, the facilitator formulates a candidate understanding of the concept being discussed (“marketing”). Although built based on the participants’ prior talk (“<what we’re saying is that> the people think”), by the end of his turn at line 03 he positions the proffered understanding as being his own (“So: that’s the way I read it.”). This understanding is challenged by the participant P_1 at lines 05-07, who proposes that “marketing” is not about volume but about content. Participant P_2 further makes a new proposal, that the concept should be understood as “strategies for communication”. This is further corroborated by the facilitator, who at lines 11-12, confirms that many of the issues (referred to as nodes also during the meeting) around “marketing” are about communication. This further leads to the facilitator proposing replacing the name of “marketing” with “communication strategy” (lines 16-17). Further talk ensues between participants P_1 and P_2, who support the facilitator’s proposal with additional arguments (lines omitted). Finally, the facilitator edits the entry “marketing” and replaces it with the proposed term of “communication strategy”, resulting in an actual change to the display on the public screen.

From a theoretical perspective, the wording of an issue (node) should matter less than the causal context within which it sits. In practice, nonetheless, interrogating the meaning of the wording of issues happens often, as shown in Extract 3.21 and in other extracts not shown here. This finding is supported by Franco and Greiffenhagen (2018). Furthermore, as Franco and Greiffenhagen (2018, p. 8) noted:

What is also important to note is the fact that the work of facilitating is not just done verbally (by asking the right question; by trying to formulate ‘compromises’), but also materially: only the facilitator can change the model on the display and thereby transform transient, verbal proposals into persistent, material ones. In other words, the facilitator is here ‘solidifying’ the proposal. It still could be challenged or changed – but at this point it stands ‘there’: not just as a verbal formulation in the room, but as a material representation on the display.

To summarize, in performing this second core task, the facilitators showed a concern for reconciling participants’ views, which could take place straightforwardly or with additional interactional work. Once again, this task was common across all the meetings and its accomplishment constituted a minimum requirement for the successful progression of the meeting.
3.2.4 The third project: Decision-making

Having identified and listed the participants’ initial views on the subject matter and obtained an understanding of the same as a group (reconciliation of meanings), the next step is for participants and facilitators to move towards the phase of making decisions, which involves the distribution of organizational resources for the attainment of various organizational objectives or projects. As such, the third and last main core task towards which the facilitators and the participants oriented to achieve is decision-making. During this project, there was a concern for accomplishing the following activities:

- Setting the task
- *(Performing the task)*
- Discussing the results.

*Setting the task*

This activity unfolded in a similar way to the *setting of the task* in the other main core tasks. I will thus provide three extracts below just for the purposes of exemplification, but for a discussion of the same, I will redirect the reader to Sections 3.2.2 and 3.2.3.

Extract 3.22

01 F: Now (.) *what I'm going to do is I give you a chance to do some preferencing here.*

Extract 3.23

01 F: *Can you: have a two minute discussion to pick up one statement* which represents for you a candidate priority for the organization?

Extract 3.24

01 F: And *what I would like to know is: what are those three or four things, where perhaps we should be focusing on, if we want to put the energy and the time and the effort?*
04 P: *(embodied acknowledgement)*
• **Discussing the results**

I will undertake a detailed analysis of the act of shared decision-making processes in Chapter 6, but for the purposes of the present chapter, and with the aim of showing the participants’ orientation towards this project as being a core interactional task, I will proceed to highlight few important aspects.

In some occasions, reaching a decision (at least a temporary one) is a straightforward activity. This is the case of decision-making processes wherein decisions represent the sum of everyone’s individual choice. Consider the following Extract 3.25.

Extract 3.25

01 F:  **So (...) <what priority would you give it> (1.5) °is (...)**
02 ((participants start picking up the individual TPS))
03 the: key question°.
04 (12.0) ((participants press the button and place the TPS on the table, with a loud noise))
05 F:  (H)One (... tuh go.
06 (5.0) ((some of the participants look at each other and then re-register their decisions and place the TPS back on the table, with loud noise))
07 F:  **THANK You:**
08 ((F makes some loud aspiration sound))
09 (4.0)
10 ((Facilitator displays the results on the public screen))
11 F:  **No surprise the:[re.**
12 (continues))
13 [((Chuckles in the room))]

The facilitator begins the decision-making process by means of displaying the question and the options to choose from on the public screen, while uttering “So (...) <what priority would you give it> (1.5) °is (...) the: key question°”. Although initiated as a *wh*-question, the directive is finalized as a declarative; given that the next action is represented by the participants picking up their individual TPS systems to register their votes, it can be said that the facilitator’s first turn is understood by the participants as a directive. Upon completing the registration of their decisions, the participants start placing the TPS on the table, one by one, with a loud noise, indicating in this way to the participants that they have taken their decisions. At line 05, the facilitator indicates that one decision is still missing, upon which some of the participants are seen to pick the TPS device once again, while looking at each other and displaying hesitation (they actually do not know whose decision may not have gotten registered by the system), and re-register their decisions. This is followed by them placing the TPS device on the table, again with a loud noise. The facilitator
thanks everyone (line 07) and after a 4-second gap, he displays the collective decisions on the public screen and assesses them, “No surprise the:re”, at line 10.

The point I wish to make here is just how unproblematically the decision-making episode unfolds. It initiates with a directive uttered by the facilitator with which the participants comply, it involves no talk from the side of the participants, and it ends with the facilitator displaying the collective decision on the screen, yet without verbalizing it, but instead directly assessing it. This is remarkable: a fully embodied engagement in the decision-making process by those who are expected to make the decision and the reaching of a decision that is never verbalized, only displayed.

In other occasions, materializing a decision is not such a straightforward activity, and the facilitators are seen to do extra interactional work to materialize a decision. This is the case of decision-making instances wherein the decision is no longer the sum of everyone’s individual decision, but one single decision that needs to reflect everyone’s choice. This might explain why the materialization of such decisional instances is generally initiated by the facilitators via proposals. By initiated, I do not wish to imply that a decision might not have already been made; actually, it might have already emerged in the participants’ talk, but what I mean is that at this point in the conversation when the facilitator utters the proposal, there is no clear indication that this is indeed a decision. Due to this, it becomes difficult to pin down key turns in talk in which decisions are being made. This might explain why the facilitator orients towards their materiality. See, for example, Extract 3.26:

Extract 3.26

01  F: So <that’s another one> tuh mark down as a potential non
02  pac answer.=
03  P: =Yeah.

Notice how the facilitator’s proposal at lines 01-02 is formulated as a conclusion following naturally from the previous talk that ensued over many turns; at the same time, by being delivered as declarative, it is strongly tilted towards preferring a confirmation, which is granted at line 03. The decision is thus being materialized.

Some other times, even when built on prior talk, proposals do not necessarily get approved. Such is the case of Extract 3.27:
As a general observation, then, participants talk without explicit reference to or orientation towards *materializing* decisions. In performing the activity of decision-making, there is a clear orientation from the side of facilitators to make decisions more clear-cut. Take the example of Extract 3.28.

**Extract 3.28**

01 F: Be clear. *If* you had to choose between those two financial services though, which one you would drop.
02 P: *Again, we can't drop ANY of them. One has already been decided and the other one—*
03 =
04 F: =Oh, I see.

Here, it is the facilitator the one who explicitly orients (“Be clear”) towards making overt decisions (“which one you would drop”). In this sense, the facilitator’s turn is used as a means to overtly request for decisions to be made. So, the facilitator can be seen not only to make decisions visible in the interaction, but also to pursue decisions. In a sense, also, facilitators can be seen to influence the participants’ decision-making by means of building and uttering proposals that are already tilted towards preferring a certain course of action.

As mentioned previously, given the complexity posed by the decision-making process, it is impossible to unpack every aspect of it in this chapter (I will attempt to do so in Chapter 6), but for now, for the purposes of the present chapter, I hope to have shown that decision-making is interactionally complex. I will now turn briefly to consider the closing of the facilitated meetings.

**3.2.5 Closing the meeting**

After the last core task has been finalized, facilitators and participants treated the business of the meeting as complete and moved towards closing the meeting. Like opening, closing is also a coordinated activity (Boden, 1994). In this sense, participants cannot conclude occasions of interaction simply by stopping talking or walking away, as this would be considered rude (Schegloff & Sacks, 1973). In order to appropriately close, participants must collaboratively work “to suspend the transition relevance of possible turn completion such
that stopping talking and/or leaving the room is understood as ending the occasion and thus not in violation of interactional norms” (Robinson, 2013, p. 277).

The solution to the closure problem is a sequence of talk specialized for this particular job, called the terminal sequence, such as Bye->Bye (Schegloff & Sacks, 1973); nevertheless, participants must establish interactional environments in which proposals of closure can be understood as such. This is further addressed by possible preclosing sequences, wherein sequence-initial Okays and Alrightst can be used to project shifts in topical talk.

It is to be noted that formal meetings with larger groups have more structured closings (Boden, 1994); in this sense, they have closings that mark “preclosing” sequences quite explicitly. The following Extract 3.29 exemplifies this in the case of a facilitated meeting, which furthermore represents a typical situation.

**Extract 3.29**

01 F: Yeah. .hh I think we could leave it there, summarise the
02 output for Simon, who may now want to have ANother
03 meeting tuh- tuh discuss all of- all of this with you.
04 His involvement.= Mike, do you have anything tuh add,
05 P: No.= Just to thank everybody. Obviously we’ll put a few
06 slides together, to put- to Si^ mon (. ) who w’ll sha:re
07 that with the whole group. ((continues))

In line 04, we can find an explicit preclosing sequence, in which the facilitator gives the participants the opportunity to reopen the discussion by introducing additional topics (“Mike, do you have anything tuh add.”). In line 05, however, Mike declines the invitation, although he further continues his turn by commenting on future actions. In this sense, then, his straightforward “No.” can be understood as a rejection to bring forward a new topic on the table, while his subsequent contribution can be understood as referring not to topic content, but to further steps to be taken in the process. Hence, in Mike’s view, the meeting is not yet concluded until this last project has been carried out.

Once facilitators and participants have successfully addressed any additional topics (regarding content and/or process), attempts to close the business of the meeting are reinitiated. Such is the case of Extract 3.30, wherein after a brief discussion regarding the agenda for the next meeting, participant P_1 delivers a sequence-initial “All right?” to propose a shift in topical talk. Delivered with a rising intonation at the end, P_1’s proposal is contingent upon the rest of the participants’ approval. The shift is confirmed by the facilitator
in line 02 (“Yeah.”), which is followed by P_1 thanking and P_2 aligning with the previous speakers by producing an acknowledgment (“Kay”).

Extract 3.30

01 P_1: All right?
02 F: Yeah.
03 P_1: Thanks very much.
04 P_2: ’Kay.
05 ((multiparty informal exchanges begin))

What is interesting to note is that while in Extract 3.30 it was a participant the one who initiated the pre-closing sequence, the granting was nonetheless provided by the facilitator and not by the other participants. Furthermore, this was not challenged by the other participants, who were further seen to align with the completion of the current project. Hence, it seems that both the facilitator and the participants still orient towards the facilitator having greater rights to close the meeting.

A second point I wish to make in relation to Extract 3.30 is that after the meeting closes effectively, it breaks up into multiparty informal exchanges immediately (line 05). This is a typical practice observed during closings of facilitated meetings. Terminal sequences such as Bye-Bye have not been observed.

In the following Section 3.3, I proceed to shortly summarize what I have done so far in this chapter, with the intent to highlight the ways in which our understanding of how facilitated meetings unfold is improved.

3.3 Discussion.

In this chapter, I have demonstrated the existence of a regular, sequential order that facilitators followed in managing the meetings. In tracing how this order was produced from moment to moment, I have described an outline of the macro organization of facilitated meetings. The meetings were organized over the following core interactional tasks that the facilitators addressed in sequence:

1. (Opening)*
2. Identifying the participants’ initial views
3. Integrating the participants’ views
4. Decision-making
5. (Closing)*
What positions the facilitator as the master of the sequencing is that he appears to be always the one who triggers the different sequences; in other words, he seems to be the prime mover. He is the one who initiates every project, so in this specific sense, he can be said to be the one who structures the activities; nevertheless, he does need the participants’ collaboration, contribution, and participation throughout the meeting.

A pictorial representation (following Stokoe’s (2014) “conversational racetrack”) of the way I think of these tasks is provided below, in Figure 3.5. This illustration shows the core tasks, but also “things” that are omnipresent (such as the “public screen”) and an indication of the presence of additional activities that may take place during the meeting (such as group activities).

![Figure 3.5. The macro-organization of the facilitated meetings.](image-url)

In the following lines, I will proceed to briefly explore the similarities and differences between the CA-informed findings of this chapter and the facilitation models previously presented in Section 3.1, which in the words of Peräkylä and Vehviläinen (2003) can be
understood or described as professional “stocks of interactional knowledge” (SIKs).

According to the same authors, SIKs are “organized knowledge (theories or conceptual models) concerning interaction, shared by particular professions or practitioners. SIKs have normative and descriptive elements, and vary in conceptual clarity and sophistication – some SIKs involve full-blown theories, whereas others involve models or concepts of less comprehensive type” (p. 730).

The possible relations between CA results and the SIKs are proposed to be as follows (Peräkylä & Vehviläinen, 2003, pp. 731-732):

(a) CA findings falsify and correct assumptions that are part of a SIK.
(b) CA findings provide a more detailed picture of practices that are described in a SIK.
(c) CA findings add new dimensions to the understanding of practices described by a SIK.
(d) CA findings expand the description of practices provided by a SIK and suggest some of the missing links between the SIK and the interactional practices.

Below, I proceed to discuss in detail these points, comparing and contrasting the CA findings of this chapter with the professional SIKs on facilitation. Although not comprehensive, this discussion can provide a clearer picture on how abstract SIK on facilitation is operationalized in practice.

**CA findings falsify and correct assumptions that are part of a SIK.**

A widely quoted recommendation in facilitation training materials (and not only) involves the use of “open-ended questions” to elicit participation, as it is argued that the open-ended questions allow the participants to explore their answers in their own terms, whereas the closed questions constrain the participants’ responses to only two possible answers, yes or no. Nevertheless, as can be observed in Extracts 3.13 and 3.14, the grammatical form of the facilitators’ question did not constrain the participants’ answers. As a matter of fact, I have found that facilitators regularly deploy yes/no-interrogatives and that the participants regularly provide “rich”, descriptive narratives as answers to these yes/no-interrogatives (I discuss this in detail in Chapter 4). So, Extracts 3.13 and 3.14 are cases in which CA findings falsified and corrected an element of the professional SIK on facilitation.

A second assumption that I was able to pinpoint in this chapter concerns the wording of an issue expressed by the participants, which as previously discussed, should matter less,
at least theoretically, than the causal context within which it sits. CA findings, however, show that in practice interrogating the meaning of the wording of issues happens often, as shown in Extract 3.21. Hence, this is yet another instance in which CA findings falsified and corrected an element of the professional SIK on facilitation.

A third point I wish to bring to attention here is the famous postulate of neutrality, which widely advocated for in the literature on facilitation. As per this postulate, the facilitator should be a neutral third party or “content-neutral”. But what I have shown is that in doing noticing via for example, assessments (Extract 3.12), the facilitators are in a position to narrow or constrain topical talk and as such, orchestrate participant input.

CA findings provide a more detailed picture of practices that are described in a SIK.

The existing facilitation guidelines are explicit in advising facilitators to engage participants in certain tasks by means of telling them what to do via a request or directive, but do not account for the fact that facilitators can get participants to do the exact same action by issuing a pre-request or pre-directive. In interactional terms, doing *pres* (simply telling people what you are going to ask them to do) achieves the same action as the actual request or directive (that is, getting the people to do that something) without having to issue the actual request or directive (for example, see Extract 3.5).

CA findings add new dimensions to the understanding of practices described by a SIK.

In Extract 3.20, I have shown that considering the ease with which the facilitator abandons his proposal regarding the meaning of an issue discloses that the facilitator’s project may not actually be about having his proposals accepted (even when these are designed to be confirmed, such as is the case in Extract 3.20), but rather that he makes use of proposals to challenge the meaning of the participants’ views. As I had noted at the time, this is indeed remarkable, as it shows that proposals can have functions other than that of proposing a particular course of action: they can also perform the action of challenging. In this sense, CA findings showed that a practice (*making proposals*), recognized by the professional SIK on facilitation, has functions other than those that were known by and discussed in the SIK.

The use of technology during facilitated meetings is widely acknowledged in the literature. Nowadays, facilitators regularly use, for example, computer software to collect and
structure participants’ views. What CA findings suggest, however, is that once these views have been collected through the software, they become discursive, stand-alone entities (see Extract 3.20). As argued before, the importance of highlighting this aspect resides in the fact that the attribution of agency to artefacts allows human participants to progress through the meeting by enabling them to objectify what they hold as otherwise personal views (Cooren et al., 2006). In other words, what is achieved here is an “interactional distance” (Peräkylä, 1995), established between the facilitator, the participants, and that which they are talking about, helping to neutralize any possible problematic or sensitive aspects raised by the facilitator’s enquiries in relation to the participants’ individual views. Here also, then, we have a practice (usage of computer software) recognized by the professional SIK on facilitation, which has functions other than those that were known by and discussed in the SIK.

**CA findings expand the description of practices provided by a SIK and suggest some of the missing links between the SIK and the interactional practices.**

Facilitation materials regularly mention and discuss how proposals should be managed, although the term “proposal” is given peripheral significance and remains in itself a highly abstract concept. For example, is not clear who makes proposals or how proposals emerge in interaction. CA findings show, however, that the activity of making proposals is one of the basic activities that the facilitated meetings consist of. Not only that, but proposals are regularly made by facilitators and are generally built upon the participants’ prior talk (see, for example, Extracts 3.26 and 3.27). In other words, facilitators very systematically prepare their proposals in ways which allow them to be interactionally grounded in the participants’ talk. The bigger picture here is that grounding proposals in the participants’ talk is a way to treat the participants’ own experience and expertise as the relevant frame of reference (making them harder to be rejected by the participants), while at the same time, holding control of the topical talk, and hence, influencing the act of decision-making. So, in this case, CA provides not only a more detailed picture of how proposal making takes place, but also expands the description of facilitating practices.

Facilitators are furthermore explicitly advised to “stay out of the group’s way” (Kaner et al., 2014, p. 307). However, in light of the above discussion, facilitators are noticed to be actively involved in the decisional process, uttering proposals that favour a particular course of action. This is contrary to the ideals presented in SIK, but instead of labelling the data as
“bad practice”, CA findings make it possible to give a detailed account of what was accomplished through the uttering of proposals (I discuss this further in Chapter 6).

Previous research has suggested that novice facilitators should shadow and follow expert facilitators in order to understand the unfolding of facilitated meetings (Ackermann, 1996; Keys, 2006; Kolfschoten, de Hengst-Bruggeling, & de Vreede, 2007). However, the tacit nature of the knowledge and expertise involved makes them difficult to be transferred from experts to novices, which leads to a lack of opportunities for novices to engage in meaningful and successful real-world interventions with clients (Keys, 2006, 2007a, b; Rosenhead, 2006; Eden et al., 2009; Ackermann, 2011; Carreras & Kaur, 2011). There are research works that have advised training novices through the use of seminars, case study approaches, laboratory settings, and group discussions and exercises (Córdoba-Pachón, 2011; Hindle, 2011); as these, however, do not replicate real-world problem situations (Ackermann, 2011), Ackermann, Andersen, Eden, and Richardson (2010, 2011) proposed the use of “scripts”, consisting of short statements that can be easily understood and which can help novices manage meetings by providing detailed descriptions of tasks to be carried out and linked within any given workshop to enhance the achievement of outcomes. Few studies only illustrate empirically how scripts are actually managed by novices to run facilitated meetings and those that do (for example, Tavella & Papadopoulos, 2015) use pre-defined scripts. In this chapter, I have aimed to question the very existence of these scripts, which are created based on pre-existent theoretical knowledge about what meetings should look like. The questions I have tried to answer are, thus, how do meetings look like in situ, as they happen? And what is it that we can learn when we overlap theory with actual practice? The implications of such findings for the training of novice facilitators are hence, rather obvious; I have already discussed them here to some extent and I will discuss them further in Chapter 7.

In the next Chapter 4, I will proceed to analyse the first core task towards which the facilitators orient in achieving, which can be described as “identifying the participants’ initial views” on a specific matter or problem. When participants recently begin working on a problem, their views of the problem may vary; in this sense, the first core task of the facilitator has to do with making participants’ similarities and differences in views “visible” to and for the members at the meeting.
Chapter 4
Unpacking participation:
Reading out and into the “public screen”

4.0 Introduction
In the previous chapter, I described the organization of the facilitated computer-supported workplace meetings, with the aim to provide an overview of how the facilitators and the participants proceeded through the meetings. In this analytic chapter, I will proceed to have a look at the first core task of the facilitator, which was previously termed as “identifying the issues”. This core task corresponds to Kaner et al.’s (2014) “divergent zone”, characterized by a situation wherein at the beginning of the meeting, when people recently begin working on an assigned problem, their views are not unified; instead, their views vary widely across many parameters (goals, priorities, problem definition, critical factors for success, options for action, resources needed, and so on). The first core task of the facilitator has to do with making participants’ similarities and differences in views “visible” to and for the members at the meeting. This chapter explores how facilitators unpacked participation to address this issue and in this sense, I explore the concepts of “questioning” and “elicitation of participation”. Notably, there were no examples of sequences where the facilitator elicited participation via interrogative syntax only. This is a key moment in the initiation of the discussion because whether the participants shared their views or not as a result of the facilitators’ communicative strategies significantly impacts the content of the discussion that follows. Considering the different designs of and responses to the facilitators’ invitations to discuss an issue is therefore a matter of interest in our understanding of how facilitators proceed through the initial core task and how they use turns to shape the content of the discussion.

In the following Section 4.1, I will briefly discuss the concept of “questions”, followed by a consideration of elicitation of participation during meetings in Section 4.2. I have further organized the analysis (Section 4.3) into two sections, considering first the “prefatory” turns (Section 4.3.1) which emerge prior to the “unpacking” of participation via direct interrogatives (Section 4.3.2). Finally, in Section 4.4, I will summarize the analysis presented.
4.1 Questions

Questions have been defined in a multitude of ways, based on their form, function, and sequential positioning, and as such, there is no unique view or definition. Defined in terms of their form, questions are interrogatives marked by both their prosody and grammar. Functionally, questions are described considering the interactional moves they perform (such as, requesting information, informing, and asking for clarification). Sequentially, questions represent the first part of an adjacency pair whose second part is heard as conditionally relevant upon the first (Hultgren & Cameron, 2010).

Questions can be multifunctional and this represents an essential feature that has important practical implications. Multifunctionality refers to the fact that questions can be performing actions that are not overtly disclosed in their form. For example, Allwood (1980) and Sinclair and Coulthard (1975) showed that, in classrooms, teachers’ questions about what students are doing are commonly taken as instructions to stop doing it and pay attention. Harris (1984) identified that, in courtrooms, information-seeking questions addressed by judges to defendants may apparently be interpreted as accusations or threats. In the same vein, the facilitators’ questions can be understood by the meeting participants (are commonly are) as requests for information, clarification, or explanation, although on the surface, their form would simply indicate a request for confirmation.

In view of the above observations, and in order to avoid identifying questions too narrowly, in this thesis I have adopted an inclusive definition of questions as “utterances that solicit (and/or are treated by the recipient as soliciting) information, confirmation, or action” (Hultgren & Cameron, 2010, p. 328). That does not, however, mean that the form of a question is irrelevant for analysis of what it accomplishes in the context of interaction. As a matter of fact, the analysis presented in this chapter is organized around the choices that facilitators are observed to make about how to do questioning. Having provided a brief conceptualization of questions, I will now proceed to discuss the topic of “elicitation of participation” during meetings.

4.2 Eliciting participation

In this section, I will review what we already know from previous research about eliciting participation in meeting interaction. I begin by reviewing the literature on eliciting and managing participation in workplace meetings more generally (4.2.1) before reviewing what is known about eliciting participation in the specific context of facilitated meetings (4.2.2).
4.2.1 Eliciting participation in workplace meetings

Modern work life is characterized by a shift from a stereotypical hierarchical organization to more collaborative forms (Halvorsen, 2010) involving groups of people. Such shift builds upon the belief that groups can face a problem in a much more effective way than a single individual. Central to this discussion is the concept of participation, which is defined as “actions demonstrating forms of involvement performed by parties within evolving structures of talk” (Goodwin C. & Goodwin M., 2004, p. 222). Nevertheless, there is evidence suggesting that groups often find working together difficult due to limited capabilities, competing interests, or negative group dynamics (Kerr & Tindale, 2004). The practice of meetings is one approach to tackle this matter, with the study of meetings largely focussing in time on the ways to increase their efficiency (Payne & Payne, 1999; Streibel, 2003).

Empirical research on participation elicitation based on transcripts of authentic interaction, in the existing literature, has been concerned with the study of three main topics: the role of the chair, turn-taking, and topic progression. In the following lines, I will briefly turn to the respective literature.

The role of the chair

Meeting chairs have a special role in meetings, in the sense that they are given institutional authority to moderate the talk and manage participation. Chairs may, thus, enact a role as facilitating group participation and take a role in controlling the actions of the participants (Asmuß & Svennevig, 2009). Two examples of empirical studies that have dealt with studying the role of the chair are those by Pomerantz and Denvir (2007) and Holmes, Schnurr, and Marra (2007). Pomerantz and Denvir (2007) showed how an appointed chair in an upper-management meeting encouraged team members to participate in discussions by presenting directions to the participants as suggestions that required ratification from them. Holmes et al. (2007) analysed two successive managers in an IT department and showed that one of them encouraged participation by bringing up topics of their own, while the other one moderated the talk by systematically allocating turns to the participants.

Turn-taking

Turn-taking in informal everyday settings differs from turn-taking in formal institutional settings (Drew & Heritage, 1992a): the former is mostly unconstrained and unplanned while the latter is mostly restricted and specialized. Furthermore, Schegloff (1995) showed that in institutional situations, involving a larger group of people, the turn-taking format could take a
different shape by restricting the number of people who speak and by the tendency to focus on a main speaker.

According to Mondada (2013b), although the systematics of turn-taking practices have been studied within multi-party interactions (explored mainly in relation to classrooms (McHoul, 1978; Mehan, 1985; Macbeth, 1992; and Lerner, 1995) and professional meetings (Boden, 1994; Ford, 2008), they remain understudied as they are managed within larger groups. As such, her study represents a contribution in this sense. Findings of her study showed that turn-taking can be initiated by any of the participants (usually by producing extensions of a previous speaker’s turn or by simply speaking up at a transition relevance place); nevertheless, it is the characteristic of the more formal meetings to distinguish themselves by the presence of the formal appointed chair who has the formal right and usually exercises it to manage the interaction among the participants (also see Asmuß & Svennevig, 2009). As such, it is the chair who usually pre-allocates turns and speakers wishing to take the floor must find a way to let the chair know. It is then the job of the chair to allocate the turn and then monitor the length of the contribution and the topic relevance. Boden (1994), on a different note, insisted on the existence of different levels of formality, and, therefore, on the existence of a mixture between self-selection by the speakers and pre-allocation of turns by the chair.

Turn-taking has, furthermore, been studied in relation to the multimodal resources deployed, as they have been shown to shed some light on the complex organization of multi-party interactions (Schegloff, 1995). As pointed out by C. Goodwin (2002), “through the combined use of posture and gaze, these participants thus create embodied frameworks that display and visibly sustain local spates of focused interaction intermixed with periods of disengagement” (p. S30). Ford (2008) showed that in order to make oneself visibly bidding for the turn, non-verbal resources can be employed, such as gazing, leaning forward, raising hands, although she does also recognize the possibility of taking the turn without addressing the chair.

Mondada (2013b) studied turn-taking within larger multi-party institutional interactions and reached similar conclusions. Her analysis focused on the identification, selection, and establishment of the next speaker, the selection of multiple candidate speakers and their queuing, the defence of speakership against overlapping turns, and the organization of antagonistic turn-taking in debates. Probably one of her main contributions was to acknowledge that the forms of participation in larger groups do not only make observable the practical problems encountered by the participants in accessing and controlling the floor, but
that they also show vividly the wide range of multi-modal resources that the participants mobilize to achieve turn-taking.

Lastly, by acknowledging that the study of turn-taking and participation in multi-party interactions and the study of identity and membership categorization are two central topics for the comprehension of how meetings work, Markaki and Mondada (2012) offered an analysis of specific turn-taking practices observable in international business meetings. As such, they provided a description of the embodied orientations of the participants as they address each other, as they address particular people in a recipient designed way and as they make relevant specific participants’ identities.

**Topic progression**

The chair has a central position in controlling the topical progression of the talk (Asmuß & Svennevig, 2009). It is generally acknowledged that the issues to be addressed during the meeting are specified in advance and usually made available to the participants in a written agenda (Svennevig, 2012b). It is then the responsibility of the chair to make sure that the issues are addressed during the meetings and that the discussion is kept on track (Holmes & Stubbe, 2003). There is, nonetheless, large room for variation in how strictly the chair will control the topic by reference to the agenda, or allow the topic to be locally managed and possibly drift into adjacent matters, in which case, the degree of formality and leadership style will be decisive (Holmes et al., 2007).

What I hope is clear, based on the literature presented above, is that to date, there is a growing literature on the study of the way topics are initiated and participation is produced and managed in meetings; however, less is known about topic initiation and participation elicitation in facilitated meetings. In the next Section 4.2.2, I will present what we do know about participation elicitation in facilitated meetings, as well as what we do not know yet.

### 4.2.2 Eliciting participation in facilitated meetings

Many facilitation training materials (for example, Kaner et al., 2014; Schuman, 2005; Schwarz, 2002; among others) provide a step-by-step all-inclusive guide into how to efficiently run a facilitated meeting and realize its purposes. These materials are often produced by practitioners with a wealth of experience and, hence, are to some extent grounded in their practical experience of conducting facilitated meetings. But the prescriptive guidelines for the conduct of facilitation that they offer are not based on the empirical study of talk as it happens during facilitation episodes. They are rich and in-depth theoretically-
informed reflections about facilitation practice, rather than empirically-grounded insights derived from studying facilitation practices in themselves. As such, these professional publications may turn out to be a misleading source of information about the actual practice of facilitated meetings, about just how they actually happen in a practical and immediate sense.

An example of such prescriptive guideline refers to the use of questions. “Effective questioning”, understood as the ability to elicit the information that facilitators require at each stage of the facilitation process, is an issue of great importance for practitioners in the field. This view of “effectiveness” also seems to underpin the classification of questions into “open” and “closed” types. In linguistic terms, the distinction between the two types of questions corresponds to the “contrast between wh-interrogatives and other question forms, such as yes/no interrogatives, tag questions, and declaratives uttered with rising intonation” (Hultgren & Cameron, 2010, p. 325).

Generally, facilitation training materials (see, for example, Kaner et al., 2014) make the distinction between open and closed questions, and note that the former should be asked when the facilitators are trying to elicit more detailed answers, while the latter should be used when the objective is to confirm accuracy and/or clarify details. These training materials further state that open-ended questions encourage conversation and relationship-building and are less controlling of the topic, eliciting multiple answers. Closed-ended questions, on the other hand, usually elicit a limited number of short and predictable responses and are considered to be a strategy for controlling interaction and keeping the speech exchange on task.

For instance, Kaner et al. (2014, p. 269), in their chapter on the principles and tools that promote participation, suggests that one straightforward activity that encourages participants to offer their own points of view on the topic at hand is to pose open-ended questions such as the following:

- **How would you describe what’s going on?**
- **How does this problem affect you?**
- **What is your position on this matter?**
- **Why, in your opinion, is this happening?**

As Stokoe (2011) asserted, however, there are differences between simulated and actual conversation; between guidelines-for-talk (or “talk-in-theory”) and talk itself (or “talk-in-practice”). Or, in the words of Speer (2005, p. 54), “hypotheses about how talk works [...]
caricature what happens in practice”. In this chapter, I am interested in identifying whether there are discrepancies between the idealized guidelines for eliciting participation (such as the above-mentioned questions) and the conversational practices used by facilitators during actual meetings.

To summarize, there is, therefore, a lack of empirical studies focusing on how facilitators elicit participation during facilitated meetings in situ and how facilitation is actually constructed as an interactional achievement. There are few exceptions to this, such as the studies by Franco and Greiffenhagen (2018), Franco and Nielsen (2018), Nielsen (2012), and Tavella and Franco (2015). I will not discuss these studies in detail here, as I have already done so in the literature review chapter (Chapter 1). Nevertheless, what I would like to state at this point is that apart from the study by Nielsen (2012), the analyses of the other three studies, although empirical, rely on predefined theoretical-informed coding schemes, and differ therefore, from the conversation analytic approach adopted here. Nielsen’s (2012) study, on the other hand, follows a conversation analytic perspective and in this chapter I compare and contrast my results with those obtained by her. Nielsen (2012, p. 87) showed how “multimodal orientation to a range of semiotic resources (whiteboard, coloured cards, speed markers, re-usable adhesive putty, body posture, gestures, gazes, pauses and talk) is used to manage topical talk, elicit talk from a particular person, manage speaker transition, secure progression and shifts, perform shift in participant identity and elicit talk performing particular social actions, explanations and accounts”. Her findings revealed that the facilitator used Kaner et al.’s (2014) technique of “drawing people out” to elicit participation, which consists in paraphrasing the participants’ statements and follow-up with open-ended, nondirective questions. An example of this technique in practice would be as follows: “You’re saying to wait six more weeks before we sign the contract; what does this bring up for you?” (Kaner et al., 2014, p. 45).

What I hope is clear at this point is that, to the best of my knowledge, the above-mentioned studies are among the few ones that empirically examined the topic of eliciting/unpacking participation in a facilitation context. Through analysing how participation elicitation during facilitated meetings actually happens, I hope to reveal how previously “abstract” reified constructs can be made visible in talk. Consequently, by analysing the talk that makes visible the phenomenon of interest to researchers and practitioners, I will attempt to contribute to the improvement of the existing tool kit of linguistic resources, which can be further made available to practitioners and trainers in the world of facilitated meetings. It is in this context then, that compared to other works on
facilitated meetings, the results of the present chapter may give researchers a clearer insight into the real world of facilitation and help practitioners improve their facilitating and communication skills.

4.3 Analysis

The analysis is presented across two sections. First, in section 4.3.1, I will present the facilitator practice that can be generally characterized as a “prefatory” turn which emerges prior to the actual “unpacking” of participation via a direct question; I take a sustained look at how the prefatory turn is done and what it achieves. Then, in section 4.3.2, I will analyse the ways that facilitators “unpack” participation and describe the conversational practices that emerge, along with the participants’ responses. In this chapter, I use extracts from a single meeting in order to reduce the space required for introducing the context for each example. This meeting was held during the course of a full working day and lasted for 6 h 20 min. The analysis and findings are not affected by this decision, however, and the patterns identified across the entire data corpus are herewith exemplified via the extracts selected from this one meeting.

The meeting in question is a self-assessment meeting and was organized to help the organization prepare for its forthcoming quadrennial review. To this end, the top managers across all the departments were invited to the meeting to reflect on their current collective performance and future potential. The meeting involved spending time to build what is best thought of as a 360-degree profile of the organization, with the aim to obtain a complete picture of the organization. The purpose was to develop a self-assessment tool that could be used by every department in the organization to improve their performance.

During the meeting, participants were shown 37 elements arranged and presented thematically, using the organization strategy’s drivers, together with a description of the 4-colour evaluation scale\(^1\) that the participants would use to capture their answers (also see Chapter 2). For each element, a question is posed, seeking the participants’ perceptions of the organization as a whole, beyond their personal experiences. Using an individual, wireless device called the turning-point system (TPS), participants were asked to capture their first,

\(^1\)Gold = “Excelling; Outstanding; A benchmark standard; A potential source of learning and inspiration to others”; Green = “Performing; Working well; Fully functional, up to date and fit for purpose; High confidence based on evidence”; Amber = “Working On It; Need to improve; Solutions to challenges identified, action plans under way with signs of progress being made”; Red = “Need Help; Not working; Solutions to challenges not agreed, planned or activated”.

\(^2\)Two additional colors were provided for the “Unsure” and “Not Relevant” categories, but as these do not capture an actual evaluation, they are not considered to be part of the main scale metric.
almost instantaneous response to the each of the 37 questions. Figure 4.1 shows the arrangement of the meeting participants in relation to the screen and the position of the facilitator.

Figure 4.1. The meeting layout.

In this chapter, I am interested in exploring a particular sequence of the core task “identifying the issues”, which takes place after participation has already been elicited, captured, and graphically displayed on the public screen via the use of technology. What is noteworthy about this sequence is that participation is not verbally elicited or at least the first phase of it is not. Instead, participants’ issues are initially captured individually and anonymously through the TPS device. The next project of the facilitator is then to assist the participants in exploring the range of answers obtained and make sense of the same. I term this project the “unpacking of participation” and distinguish it as a second phase of the overall core task of “identifying the issues”.

As such, in this chapter, I explore the ways in which facilitators unpack participation, which takes place immediately after the new information is displayed on the public screen (hereafter, also referred to as “post-screen” participation). It should also be noted that “new information” refers to information that has not been displayed or discussed previously by the participants; furthermore, this information is the result of the participants’ action of
responding anonymously and electronically via the turning-point system (TPS) to questions asked by the facilitator). At this point in the meetings, when the results of the activity undertaken have just been displayed on the public screen, the next activity that takes place is the discussion of those results; hence, the next project is closely related to who is to speak first. The chapter aims to explore how the facilitator addresses this issue. Across the analysis, the turns of interest are shown in bold type, for ease of reading.

4.3.1 Before the elicitation (“prefatory turns”): Reading out the “public screen”

Here, I first describe the design of the facilitators’ prefatory turns and consider to some extent the possible actions that these turns may be accomplishing. The reason behind my cautiousness in clearly describing the action being implemented has to do with the fact that at this stage of the analysis, in which I simply consider one turn, it is fundamentally impossible to be sure about the action being realized without a consideration of the following turn(s). For example, the fact that “strong” in Extract 4.1 below is an assessment does not necessarily make the turn’s action to be an assessment; where is the evidence for such claim, unless we see what happens next? I hope, nonetheless, to have addressed the identification of actions in Section 4.3.2, once the next turns are examined. The analysis revealed that prefatory turns take the form of:

(a) assessments (Section 4.3.1.1);
(b) formulations (Section 4.3.1.2); or
(c) a combination of both (a) and (b). Given that the vast majority of instances fit the pattern of either (a) or (b) and only one instance was found as an example of (c), I have made a decision to include such fragment and analyse it in Section 4.3.1.2, given that the very first component of the turn is a formulation.

In the following Section 4.3.1.1, I will first focus on the first design of the prefatory turns, that is, assessments, which are delivered in view of the information displayed on the public screen.

4.3.1.1 Assessments

Let us start by having a look at Extracts 4.1 and 4.2 (here and elsewhere throughout the chapter, I will generally group and present extracts together if they have a similarity in design). We can appreciate the first examples of the facilitator using assessments to refer to
what is currently displayed on the public screen, that is, the results of the collective results of the participants’ votes.

Extract 4.1
01 ((F displays the results of the votes.))
02 (6.0)
03- F: It’s pretty strong,

Figure 4.2. Results.

Extract 4.2
01 ((F brings up the results on the screen.))
02- F: Pretty positive.

Figure 4.3. Results.

In the above Extracts 4.1 and 4.2, the facilitator self-selects a speaking turn and produces utterances which may be understood to assess the vote result that is displayed on the public screen (“It’s pretty strong,” and “Pretty positive.”, respectively) (hereafter, “screen assessment”). These assessments can be understood to refer to the peaks of the bar charts (Figures 4.2 and 4.3). In this sense, “It’s pretty strong” evidences the concentration of the
votes into two categories only (Green and Amber), while “Pretty positive” indicates that the majority of the results are to be found concentrated towards the left of the graph (with two categories Gold and Green indicating a favourable situation for the organization, while a third category indicates a situation wherein changes are currently being made to bring the situation to a favourable position). Both assessments are mitigated (“pretty”).

This particular type of assessment occurs at the sequential position corresponding to the first environment described by Pomerantz (1984a), which happens when participants have access to a particular referent or experience. Here, the facilitator delivers his first assessments that are derived from his participation in receiving and displaying the collective results/votes on the screen. A similar assessment can be observed in Extract 4.3.

Extract 4.3

01 ((F brings the results of the votes on the screen.))
02 (3.0)
03>F: **Very strong (.) very strong.**

![Figure 4.4. Results.](image)

Note that, in Extract 4.3, when compared to the assessments produced in Extracts 4.1 and 4.2, we encounter a high-grade assessment (that still orients to the informational content displayed on the public screen), which is marked both by the superlative construction “very strong” and the repetition of the same. Overall, I find these three extracts to be noticeable.

When looking at the associated Figures 4.2, 4.3, and 4.4, I wonder what makes the facilitator to consider one result “pretty positive” or “pretty strong”, but consider the third one “very strong (.) very strong”.

For example, in Figure 4.3 most of the results are concentrated in the Green category, while in Figure 4.4, most of the results are concentrated in the Amber category, in both cases with a relatively good number of votes distributed across the remaining categories. In a sense, they both are “strong”, although the facilitator refers to them as “positive” and “strong”,

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respectively. Although I cannot say what made the facilitator distinguish between these two types of appreciation of the results, what can be said, nonetheless, is that, independent of the type of assessment deployed, the reason why the presence of assessments is important lies in the fact that they do not only show the stance of the facilitator toward the information (seemingly choosing to focus on the “positive” side of one of them), but they also direct the participants’ attention towards specific parts of the graphs displayed on the public screen, having the potential to constrain the topical talk. And this has important practical implications, as intentionality might not be just in people’s heads anymore, but might also be made “visible” in the materiality of the artefacts used by people.

The point I wish to make here is that the above consideration might shed new light onto the use of assessments, moving analyses beyond the what and the how, and attempting to answer the why of their deployment. This avenue of enquiry is enabled by the employment of technology, which at least in this case, allows us to compare the verbalized talk with the visual display that accompanies it. Just like the study of talk has expanded to include the analysis of embodied conduct (Greiffenhagen & Watson, 2009), we might be able to enhance our understanding of the use of assessments when complementing their analysis with the visual technological displays to which they refer in the first place. I position this as a direction for future research. Returning to the analysis of assessments, let us consider a next example, Extract 4.4.

Extract 4.4

01 ((F brings up the results on the screen.))
02 (7.0)
03 F: Pretty pretty good that I think, .hh

Figure 4.5. Results.

04 (0.5)
05 F: It’s not an easy one tu:h- (0.5) tuh face.
I would like to make two observations here. Firstly, the remark made previously with regards to the word choices that the facilitator makes to refer to the graphs displayed ("strong", "positive", "pretty", and "very") is even more relevant now. Observe Figures 4.1 and 4.5, which show a striking degree of similarity in shape (in both cases, most of the results are concentrated in the categories Green and Amber, with the Green bar being taller than the Amber bar). The question that arises is why is Figure 4.1 “pretty strong”, but Figure 4.4 is “Pretty pretty good”? It is obvious that while the former draws attention to the fact that most votes are concentrated in a specific part of the graph, the latter draws attention to the overall inference that can be made with respect to the display (the fact that, overall, the results are “pretty pretty good”). And while both utterances are based on a simple reading of the screen, they may frame the following discussions differently (In Section 4.3.2, I will show that indeed, they do; but for now, this is beyond the scope of the present Section 4.3.1).

Secondly, what is noteworthy about Extract 4.4 is that the turn at line 03, which encompasses an assessment of the results displayed (“Pretty pretty good that I think”), is followed by a second turn at line 05, “It’s not an easy one tu:h- (0.5) tuh face”. And the question is why that now? As mentioned in the paragraph above, the “Pretty pretty good” assessment is tilted towards contemplating the positive side of the graph (the left-hand side), to the detriment of those participants whose votes reflect a rather negative perspective (the right-hand side of the graph). Let us remember that the interpretation of the category Red is “Need Help; Not working; Solutions to challenges not agreed, planned or activated”. It is thus the choice of the facilitator to indicate or present (Note that I refrain here from saying “to assess”; I will return to this observation at the end of Section 4.3.1) the good side of the results and this might explain why his utterance is completed with “I think” (wherein the facilitator assumes authorship of such statement). His utterance is then followed by “It’s not an easy one tu:h- (0.5) tuh face” at line 05, which can be heard to provide an explanation or justification as to why he “thinks” the results are “Pretty pretty good”: the fact that the question being voted upon (referred to with the indexical component “it” is not an easy one to answer.

The next Extracts 4.5 and 4.6 show a different design of assessments, with possibly different actions being performed. Please note that I have superimposed the bell-shaped curve of a normal (Gaussian, in statistical terms) distribution on the graphs to show the accuracy of the turns uttered by the facilitator. The fact that the results are “almost” normally distributed is a statistical fact.
In Extracts 4.5 and 4.6, the facilitator self-selects and produces the utterances “That’s almost normally distributed.” and “Again almost a- almost an even distribution”, respectively, which are delivered as declaratives. These utterances are not referring to particular categories, as was the case before, but rather they draw attention to all of the categories at once. The point I wish to make here is that even though, as mentioned, the assessments proffered are based on statistical facts, they are far from being neutral. The facilitator might have referred to the displays using previous word choices, such as “strong”, an assessment which would also be accurate to use in these cases. But he does not, and the
question is why? Why similar graphs trigger different word choices from the part of the facilitator?

The analysis made so far seems to indicate that the facilitator displays a concern for proposing "what is essential, or currently relevant, what is taken as jointly understood, and a basis on which to proceed" (Edwards, 1997, p. 126). And given the fact that he is the one who determines what is essential or relevant to talk about through the use of assessments, it can be said that he holds control of the meeting. In this sense, then, the assessments deployed both afford and constrain participation at the same time.

In the next three Extracts 4.7, 4.8, and 4.9, the facilitator similarly utters assessments; nevertheless, their design is different: these assessments are delivered using the token “hmmm”.

Extract 4.7
01    ((F brings up the results on the screen.))
02    (8.0)
03   F:  Hmmm ↓hmmm

Figure 4.8. Results.

Extract 4.8
01    ((F brings up the results on the screen.))
02   F:  HMmm

Figure 4.9. Results.
In both Extracts 4.7 and 4.8, “hmmm” can be heard as a basic response, which does not construct the results as either good or bad (Maynard, 2003). They are, nevertheless, indicative of the facilitator’s certain stance (unknown, however!) toward the information that is brought up on the screen. Extract 4.9 displays a similar pattern, although here we have additional features that allow us to identify the kind of stance that the facilitator displays.

Extract 4.9

01 F: I think ↑Somebody’s gonna go for not relevant,
02 ((F brings up the results on the screen.))
03. F: No, huhhh .huh hhh hmmm °huhhhh°.

Figure 4.10. Results.

In the above Extract 4.9, the facilitator makes an assessment-implicative prediction before the results of the votes are displayed on the screen. Specifically, he utters his expectation that some of the participants might vote for the sixth category titled “Not relevant”. Following the display, however, it becomes obvious that no participants considered the question as irrelevant. The facilitator is seen to self-select the next speaking turn, wherein he proceeds to show disagreement with his own prior prediction, “No,”, after which he chuckles. Subsequently, he says “hmmm” and then he chuckles again. The deployment of “hmmm” at line 03 provides no lexical information. Just by itself, “hmmm” has no particular meaning beyond that of being heard, just like in the previous two cases, as a basic response.

But the sequential positioning of the same is relevant for the action that is accomplishing. The token “hmmm” is produced after it is evident that his expectation was not fulfilled, and in this sense, it becomes indicative of the facilitator’s surprise at the results displayed. Overall, the facilitator’s entire turn at line 03 can be heard as a monologue; there is no evidence that he is addressing the audience. Rather, his “hmmm” stands as a verbalization of his internal thoughts.
What is different in Extracts 4.7, 4.8, and 4.9 when compared to other cases discussed before, is that these “hmmm” assessments, although evaluative in nature (and indicative of the facilitator’s own stance), do not have any linguistic features that would indicate that they constrain the topical talk. In the following Section 4.3.1.2, I consider another design of the prefatory turn, which is represented by the formulations of the information displayed on the public screen.

4.3.1.2 Formulations

The prefatory turns considered in this Section are designed, overall, as formulations. Coined initially by Garfinkel and Sacks (1970), formulations have been studied in various institutional settings, such as news interviews (Heritage, 1985), general practice consultations (Gafaranga & Britten, 2004), therapy and counselling (Antaki, 2008a; Hutchby, 2005; Weiste & Peräkylä, 2013), judicial settings (Van der Houwen, 2009), and police interrogations and job interviews (Young Sliedrecht, Van der Houwen, & Schasfoort, 2016). These studies are generally diverse both in their findings and in their considerations of the form that formulations take and the interactional functions that they perform. As Antaki (2008a, p. 34) indicated: “[..] the institutional agent's formulation picks out something in the other's words, and while putting it forward as a mere neutral summary or implication, uses the opportunity to edit it in ways that will help the speaker's own institutional interests”.

In this chapter, I follow the narrower definition given by Heritage and Watson (1979, p. 129), who defined formulations as utterances that “[..] characterize states of affairs already described or negotiated (in whole or in part) in the preceding talk”. In the extracts that I present here, the facilitators may be heard to be formulating the sense (that is, proposing their own candidate understandings) achieved until that point in the talk. One significant feature is that the formulations, which are uttered by the facilitators, do not emerge based on the preceding talk, but based on the graphical display on the public screen of the results of the activity previously performed by the participants.

Let us start with Extract 4.10. Here, using individual laptop consoles, meeting participants have already introduced their individual views in relation to a particular issue titled “building international partnerships”. We enter the extract at the moment when the facilitator displays these views on the public screen.
Extract 4.10

01  ((F displays information on the screen.))
02  F:  Right.
03  (4.0)
04- F:  So those are the (1.0) ideas that you have uhm (.)
05- entered for (0.8) for this area of building international
06- partnerships.

At line 02, immediately after the display of the results, the facilitator self-selects and produces a receipt acknowledgement (“Right”). After another 4.0 seconds, at line 04, he produces an utterance, which does not seem to be addressed to anyone in particular; the evidence for this lies in the fact that while he utters it, he does not face the meeting participants, instead he only looks at the screen. The utterance may be taken as a formulation – that is, a gist formulation, that provides “clarification, or demonstration of comprehension or in-touchness with the talk thus far” (Heritage & Watson, 1979, p. 130) of the information displayed on the screen. It is also recognizable as a formulation through the use of the marker “so”, which ties it to the display on the screen. The main observation I would like to make here in terms of its design is that this is a neutral gist formulation, whose occurrence, at least in the data considered for this thesis, is rather rare.

In the next Extract 4.11, we enter the discussion at a point where the facilitator displays the collective results of the participants’ votes on the screen. What we have here is a formulation in the first turn, followed by an assessment in the second.

Extract 4.11

01  ((F displays the results of the votes.))
02  (1.5)
03- F:  So no golds?
04  (2.5)
05- F:  <Pretty strong> on green,

Figure 4.11. Results.
In terms of speaker selection, there are no features to indicate that the utterance is addressed to anyone in particular. Moreover, because of the facilitator’s constant gaze at the screen only, it can be said that his utterance is delivered for everybody. Attribution is there only by implication (Pomerantz, 1984b). To explain this particular phenomenon in more detail: after a 1.5-second gap in line 02, we get an utterance, “So no golds?”, at line 03, that is not addressed to anyone in particular, and which is heard as a gist formulation. This is not taken up verbally, which is evidenced by the long gap of 2.5 seconds at line 04, on which the facilitator self-selects again and provides an assessment of the results displayed on the screen.

Actions can be performed in a multitude of ways; hence, how a particular turn is actually organized is a meaningful choice (ten Have, 1999). Turns can be designed to show that they are doing the preferred or dispreferred alternative action – they are formulated in ways that show their relative preference status. The reason behind considering the facilitator’s first turn as formulation resides in the fact that his utterance may be understood as a gist of the votes displayed on the screen (which also seems to be assessment-implicative) – this is evidenced by the use of the discourse marker “so” as a turn-initial inference marker (Schegloff, 2007), which serves to connect the facilitator’s formulation to the unspoken opinions of the participants. In this sense, in terms of the action achieved, the facilitator’s first turn can be understood as formulating summary, with the facilitator as the recipient of the votes’ outcome, while also selecting particular elements for further discussion. In this way, what the formulation seems to be doing is providing a line of thought; it is a way of initiating a topic, it invites a discussion of the results displayed.

Let us return to the facilitator’s first utterance, “So no golds?” which, as mentioned, can be heard to be addressed to the entire audience. This formulation relocates the participants’ focus of attention on the screen and brings the main topic of discussion to the forefront of the current activity being done. The reference within the formulation (i.e., “So no golds?”) refers to the global votes that the facilitator claims to have seen with his own eyes; it, thus, stands as a product of participation. Further, the turn initial “so” serves to introduce the first intended line of thought and constructs the facilitator’s turn as built off a prior topic, in this case, prior display on the screen. Thus, the facilitator’s formulation, “So no golds?”, brings “into current relevance something that was already on the conversational agenda” (Bolden, 2006, p. 666).
The following three extracts 4.12, 4.13, and 4.14 present a different design of the formulations. Here, the formulations can be heard as implicative of the audience’s likely assessment of the collective results displayed on the public screen.

Extract 4.12
01 F: And your ↑views a::re
02 ((F displays the results of the votes.))
03- F: °that you° .hh ↑doing oh-kay_ (1.0).hh an’ pretty well.

Figure 4.12. Results.

In the above Extract 4.12, the utterance “↑doing oh-kay_” can be heard to accomplish a particular action, i.e., a compliment of the audience’s situation. There is no screen assessment that precedes it. In the 1.0 second that follows, we have a turn-relevant place (TRP), which makes turn transition relevant. This TRP, nonetheless, is not taken up by the participants. The facilitator then continues his turn and provides a second audience assessment, “an’ pretty well_”. The facilitator's utterances, “↑doing oh-kay_” and “an’ pretty well.”, are low-grade audience assessments that would require, as a first pair part, confirmation.

It is also to be noted that previous treatment of “okay” as an assessment has focused especially upon its delivery as a response to the “how are you” question in mundane conversations (Jefferson, 1980; Sacks, 1975; Schegloff, 1986). Nevertheless, in this fragment, “okay” is used as an assessment deployed in sequential positions, and accomplishes actions (that will be shown in the Section 4.3.2) that are distinct from the okays responsive to the “how are you” question (Pillet-Shore, 2003). Another salient feature is that “↑doing oh-kay_” and “an’ pretty well.”, delivered one after the other, do not seem to be synonymous. In this context, the second assessment can be heard as an upgraded version of the first.
The formulations in Extracts 4.13 and 4.14 perform a similar action of assessing the audience’s own likely view on the results displayed; nevertheless, their design shows that the formulations are delivered via negatively-worded utterances (“I’m not sensing that surprises anybody in the room.” and “Not sensing a need for a great debate,”, respectively).

Extract 4.13

01  ((F displays the results of the votes.))
02- F: Right (.), hh well (.) I’m not sensing that surprises anybody in the room.

Figure 4.13. Results.

Extract 4.14

01  ((F displays the results of the votes.))
02  (7.0)
03- F: Not sensing a need for a great debate,

Figure 4.14. Results.

Unlike in Extract 4.14, in Extract 4.13, the facilitator initiates his turn with “Right (.)”, a discourse marker indicating receipt of results, which is immediately followed by another discourse marker “well (.)”, a sentence initial that further introduces the negatively-worded formulation of the audience’s likely assessment of the results (“I’m not sensing that
surprises anybody in the room.”). The discourse marker “well” can be heard as contrastive to the discourse marker “Right”; in this sense, the combination of “Right (. ) well (. )” anticipates an utterance with a negative stance attached to it. In terms of similarity of design, in both Extracts 4.13 and 4.14, the facilitator builds a presupposition in his formulations (that the audience itself does not find anything in the results that would need further elaboration), which is designed for confirmation. In this sense, the formulations can be heard as topic closing-implicative utterances. In the following Section 4.3.1.3, I provide a deviant case, the only one I could find across the segments analysed.

4.3.1.3 A deviant case

The below Extract 4.15 is different from the pattern identified in the previous Sections 4.3.1.1 and 4.3.1.2. In those sections, it could be noticed that the prefatory turns were routinely initiated by the facilitators. It is the facilitators who generally secure the first turn at talk. In this extract, however, it can be observed that it is a participant at the meeting who delivers the initial turn. In this data at least, this phenomenon is a rare occurrence.

Extract 4.15

01 ((F brings up the results on the screen.))

02 ➔ P: Oh, wow .hh I can ask if you had an impact.

(a)

(b)

Current results
2. Green
1. Amber
4. Red
5. Unsure
6. Not relevant

Figure 4.15. Results.

03 ((knocks on the chair arms))

04 P [many]: Huhhh HUH HUH HUHHH HUHHH
The participant’s overall “Oh, wow” acts as a discourse marker that indicates display receipt. The lexical form involves the deployment of the “oh” change of state marker (Heritage, 1984b) with the surprise token “wow” (Wilkinson & Kitzinger, 2006). This is then followed by a comment that is to be treated as light-hearted (indicated by the “knocking on the chair arms” by the participant himself). The laughter that follows immediately in the room stands as evidence for such uptake.

Unlike any of the extracts presented before, this extract that I introduce here as a deviant case, presents a characteristic that might explain its occurrence. This characteristic has to do with the fact that unlike in the other cases, what we deal with here is a re-vote. I have indicated this in Fig. 4.15 by means of the labels “Current results” and “Previous results”. The issue in question was previously voted upon by the participants; nevertheless, the discussion that followed immediately afterwards revealed that there had been a misunderstanding in the meaning of the issue. As such, a decision was taken to have the issue voted upon again. Following this second vote, it becomes obvious that the difference in the results obtained is striking. The clarification of the misunderstanding led the participants to shift the graph almost entirely from an overall negative evaluation to a rather positive one. This might stand as evidence for the participant’s almost instantaneous reaction of surprise at line 02, which allowed him to secure the first turn.

In Section 4.3.1, I described the various formats that the prefatory turns can take; these, however, can be generally classified into two main types of design, as either assessments or formulations. As it was shown from the analysis, the facilitators make choices about each component of their turns. Through their prefatory turns, facilitators are seen to both project an invitation to a discussion based on that which is being displayed on the screen and possibly frame the subsequent discussion based on those components that they have selectively chosen to include in their utterances. During my analysis, I have refrained at times from saying that what the assessments were doing was assessing or that what formulations were doing was formulating. This is because my overall sense of these prefatory turns, when looking at the overall data, is that they are doing “noticing” (Schegloff, 2010) more than any other type of action. For example, the fact that “pretty strong” in Extract 4.1 is an assessment term does not make the turn’s action to be an assessment: it rather conveys the noticing of the status of the results displayed on the public screen.

As I shall show in the next Section 4.3.2, these prefatory turns do not generally trigger a participant’s response. And this might stand as evidence for considering these prefatory turns as doing “noticing”, being addressed not to others, but to one-self, as an outloud
(Goffman (1978) called it “self-talk”), serving as an account for the physical action that the facilitator is undertaking in handling the technology (that is, manipulating the computer software and displaying the results). Not being addressed to anyone, then it is no wonder why there is no uptake from the part of the participants.

Furthermore, the analysis performed so far raises interesting questions about the relationship between the use of assessments/formulations and the facilitator’s power (understood as interactional control over the topical talk). Let us consider, for example, line 03 in Extract 4.12, wherein the facilitator utters “°that you° .hh ↑ doing oh-kay_°”. It is without much doubt that these are matters regarding which the participants know more about than the facilitator (so-called “B-events” (Labov & Fanshel, 1977)). Nonetheless, the facilitator is able to deliver such “noticing” based on the results displayed on the screen. There is thus, a delicacy involved in exercising power. As I shall show in the next section, the facilitator is able to influence topic progression while seemingly delivering this neutral statement (in the end, his utterance is simply an oral expression of something that is already displayed on the screen as a statistical fact). But then again, the fact that “°that you° .hh ↑ doing oh-kay_°”. is delivered as a statistical, neutral, unbiased fact does not mean that the facilitator’s role is neutral. He exercises choice in the way he frames his noticing and it is this choice that can influence topical talk. In this sense, then, the facilitators do not have power over meeting participants by virtue of institutional position, but rather to the extent that they are able to exploit sequential properties of talk. There is a clear advantage for the facilitator in taking the first turn at talk: he can make the first contribution and unproblematically select and put forward certain features from the screen, which will constrain the person who goes second in the utterances that (s)he can deliver.

In doing noticing, the facilitators are observed to read out the screen. In this reading, the facilitators gloss the details of the visual displays, which involves the selection of certain features from the screen. As such, positioned as doing noticing, the act of reading out the screen gives the results a directional stance. In the following Section 4.3.2, I analyse what happens next after the delivery of prefatory turns.

### 4.3.2 The elicitation of responses: Reading into the “public screen”

In this section, I analyse the next turn following the prefatory turns. There are a number of ways in which facilitators design these turns, which are found to make a response relevant as the next action. The analysis revealed that these turns take the form of:
(a) Yes/No-Interrogatives (Section 4.3.2.1);  
(b) Wh-questions (Section 4.3.2.2); or  
(c) a combination of both (a) and (b) (Section 4.3.2.3);  

On the other hand, nonetheless, I have also found examples of prefatory turns that elicit a response, and I discuss these in Section 4.3.2.4.

4.3.2.1 Yes/No-Interrogatives  
By far, the most common type of design in facilitated meetings is the Yes/No-interrogative (YNI). In general, questions are powerful because when they are asked an answer becomes due (Puchta & Potter, 2004). Because YNIs are grammatical questions, which moreover concern matters that the meeting participants know more about than the facilitator (Labov & Fanshel, 1977), they make an answer from the participants particularly relevant (Stivers & Rossano, 2006). Let us have a look at Extracts 4.16 and 4.17.

Extract 4.16

01 ((F displays the results of the votes.))
02 (6.0)
03 F: It’s pretty strong,  
04 (2.0)
05> F: .ptk (. ) ptk >anybody< surprised by that?
06 (3.0)
07 P1: I’m quite >wondering< cos I “fee-ah” <with- my
08 ↑PER>sonal: (. ) view is that (. ) ((continues))

Extract 4.17

01 ((F displays the results of the votes.))
02 (1.5)
03 F: So no golds?
04 (2.5)
05 F: <Pretty strong> on green,
06 (3.0)
07> <Anybody> surprised by that.
08 (5.0)
09 F: I think it’s a (. ) good example of how we live by
10 splitting around .hh how we think about o- our programmes
11 ((continues))

In both Extracts 4.16 and 4.17, following the facilitator’s assessments of the information displayed on the screen, the facilitator deploys YNIs, “ptk (. ) ptk >anybody< surprised by that?” and “<anybody> surprised by that.”, respectively. The negative polarity of the question (evidenced by the use of “anybody” instead of “somebody”) is hearable as
implying that no-one is actually expected to be surprised (Heritage, 2002). In both cases, the participants choose the dispreferred response, agreement, and continue to elaborate a justification for the dispreferred responses.

The YNI is audience-assessment implicative. In term of its action-type preference, the question embodied in the turn prefers a negative answer. Nevertheless, as Raymond (2003) emphasised, in addition to its action-type preference, when speakers produce YNIs, their design will “prefer” either a “yes” or a “no” response – this is known in the literature as the polarity of the interrogative (Horn, 1989). As such, it can be noticed that both the facilitator’s question and its polarity align in preferring a “no” response.

Furthermore, we can notice that the YNI incorporates a candidate answer (Pomerantz, 1988). Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson (1974) described proffering a candidate answer as a “correction invitation” device – this type of YNI invited correction and elaboration. “A speaker who uses a correction invitation device implicitly asks the recipient to either confirm the guess as correct or provide the correct answer if the guess is wrong” (Pomerantz, 1988, p. 366). Had the facilitator asked the participants to report on what they thought about the results displayed on the screen, for example, by saying “What do you think of the results?”, the participants would have been in a position to determine what sort of answer to give and whether or not to account for their responses. By incorporating a candidate answer, evidenced by the use of the structure “surprised by that” (wherein that is a reference to the prefatory turns), the facilitator instructed the participants on what type of answer would satisfy his purpose-for asking: a confirmation of being “surprised” or a replacement for it.

The participants’ responses come next in lines 07-08 and 09-10, respectively. In their responses, the participants confirm the matter raised by the facilitator’s questions, thereby producing a dispreferred response relative to the first pair part’s (FPP) action-type. These two first examples of YNIs are asked from a position of knowledge and are designed to convey an assertion about the participants’ stance on the issues under consideration. This assertion is deduced from the public displays which gather the participants’ views on the issues. As such, a disconfirmation of the assertion, as it happens here, is treated as accountable. The presence of the accounts suggests that the participants orient to their responses as dispreferred (Pomerantz, 1984a). The non-conforming responses to the facilitators’ turn design are further marked by the lengthy delays of 3.0 and 5.0 seconds, respectively, that precede them. The following Extract 4.18 shows a more complex design of the YNI.
Extract 4.18

01  ((F brings the results of the votes on the screen.))
02  (3.0)
03  F:  Very strong (.) very strong.
04  (5.0)
05.> F:  .hh is this when we can: move forward because
06.> most people are aware of the challenge,= <we'll look at
07.> the priority you give it>.
08  ((F brings up the next slide.))
09  (2.0)
10  P:  Any ↑numbers ↓for?

In Extract 4.18, after the facilitator’s high-grade assessment of the information displayed on the screen at line 03 (“Very strong (.) very strong.”), there is no immediate uptake by the participants, which is marked by the long gap of 5.0 seconds at line 04. Then, the facilitator self-selects and makes an interrogatively-shaped proposal at line 05, “.hh is this when we can: move forward”, followed by an account of the proposal (which is audience assessment implicative) and an explicit description of the next activity to be pursued. His next action is to bring another slide on the screen (line 08), which after a 2.0-second gap (line 09), is followed by the intervention of a participant who solicits additional information (line 10).

Note the design of the interrogative at lines 05-07 and, as mentioned, the actions that it is achieving. First, the use of the high-grade assessment may be linked to its sequential positioning – it appears in a sequence of transition from one topic to another; it seems that it is being used to close the “question-display of the answers on the screen” pair (hence, the action it accomplishes is signalling a move to a new topic). The second turn of the facilitator presents a certain design feature, the use of the word “this”, which marks the implicit acceptance of the facilitator’s previous turn (a similar phenomenon was present in Extracts 4.16 and 4.17). This turn is remarkable in one more way. The facilitator changes from having addressed the rest of the participants with a plural “we”, meaning him included, to speaking of “most people” being aware of the challenge, which distances him from the same. He is distancing himself from the status of participant at the meeting by constructing himself as an observer and interpreter, thereby also aligning with the rest of the participants.

Furthermore, by defining the situation overtly as people being “aware of the challenge”, the facilitator makes his request to move forward in the discussion hearable as an invitation for confirmation. Both the facilitator’s question and its polarity align in preferring a “yes” response. His invitation is, nonetheless, denied, with the participant responding by
asking further information with regards to the actual number of people who have responded in a particular way, turn through which he temporarily suspends moving forward with the next topic. What I would like to point out at this time is the more complex design of the YNI, which incorporates a reading into the public screen. The fact that the results are “very strong (. . .) very strong” is, as mentioned before, a reading out of the screen, wherein the peak of the graph is indeed prominent (see Extract 4.3); but the fact that “most people are aware of the challenge” is not a factual record, but a reading in of a particular explanation for such results. I will return to this observation in the summary provided at the end of this section. The next Extract 4.19 presents a more cautious design of the YNI.

Extract 4.19

01 ((F brings up the results on the screen.))
02 (7.0)
03 F: Pretty pretty good that I think.
04 (0.5)
05 F: It’s not an easy one tu:h (0.5) tuh face.
06 (7.0)
07.> F: Anybody that’s- that’s less than green feel comfortable sharing some insights that would=
08.> 
09 P: =I put amber but you know that’s one of the ((continues))

After a long gap of 7.0 seconds at line 06, the facilitator takes the floor, with a direct YNI. As it can be observed, his question is only initiated, but not fully delivered, as a participant cuts in and takes the turn at talk. The cautiousness in the facilitator’s YNI can be appreciated in the use of the words/structures: “feel comfortable”, “sharing”, and “would”. This projects less certainty about the facilitator being able to elicit a response, which is contingent on someone actually “feeling comfortable” to “share” their insights. The facilitator is observed, thus, to orient to the delicacy of the issue under consideration, which he already indicated in the prefatory turn at line 05 (“It’s not an easy one tu:h (0.5) tuh face.”). As such, his YNI displays lower entitlement and higher contingency. At the same time, however, the same cautiousness allows the facilitator to show affiliation with the participants and this might explain the choice of the participant to disclose his own vote at line 09, even before the facilitator fully delivered his question. Here, we might be able to also answer the question of “why that now”, in the sense of why the cautiousness of the facilitator in formulating his question? The answer might lie in the fact that the facilitator is basically asking those participants who have voted less favourably on the issue to identify themselves. There is, thus, a delicate issue involved: disclosing one’s vote (supposed to be anonymous), which
furthermore is also not favourable (but instead it is indicative of some trouble). Disclosure of
votes can be elicited even without such cautiousness being present, as can be seen in the
following Extract 4.20.

Extract 4.20

01  ((F displays the results of the votes.))
02  F:  Okay.
03  (1.0)
04  Again almost a- almost an even distri°bution°
05  (5.0)
06  F:  Could I encourage some (.). some (.). examples of either
gold or red_
07  P:  I suppose would be: ( ) residential course
08  in conjunction with the ((continues))

In Extract 4.20, after a 5.0-second gap at line 05, the facilitator takes a third turn at
talk and utters a YNI, “Could I encourage some (.). some (.). examples of either gold or red_.”
It is interesting to note the use of the modal form “Could”, which expresses a high degree of
entitlement, while also orienting to the low contingency (Curl & Drew, 2008) of granting
what is requested. Indeed, after the above request is produced, we get immediate participant
uptake at line 08. Based on Extracts 4.19 and 4.20, we might be able to assert that
independent of the type of contingency and entitlement that they exhibit, requests for a
particular information are granted. What seems to make the difference, however, is the
cautiousness built in the request: when the issue to be disclosed is more delicate (such as in
Extract 4.19), the facilitator is seen to be doing affiliation, both in the prefatory turn and in
his direct YNI. Furthermore, through the references used within the requests in both Extracts
4.19 and 4.20 (“less than green” and “gold or red”), the facilitator is seen once more to direct
the topic of the discussion. Other YNIs can take the form of alternative interrogatives linked
by or, as can be seen in Extract 4.21, at lines 04-06.

Extract 4.21

01  ((F brings up the results on the screen.))
02  F:  HMMm
03  (10.0)
04  F:  .ptk (.). does that wo:rkin’ on it suggests you’ve got a
05  plan and it’s:. a bit of the following wind: or is this a
06  recognition that you’re not where you want to be .hhh.
07  (1.5)
08  F:  °an’ ne:ed a°
09  P:  I’ve voted green °solely on the basis of ( )
10  I’ve used it once.
Here, several features can be observed in terms of design. Firstly, the YNIs are designed as upshot formulations and they select particular features of the display as a topic to be pursued further, framing thus, the discussion. Secondly, the YNIs encompass indexical components (“that.” and “this”), which refer back to the display of the results on the screen. Thirdly, asking “does that. wor:kin’ on it suggests you’ve got a plan” seems to be tilted in favour of a preferred answer; that is, towards a “yes”. However, the facilitator immediately continues his turn by adding an alternative interrogative, “or is this a recognition that you’re not where you want to be .hhh.”. The second interrogative which is continued at line 08 after 1.5 seconds at line 07, is delivered in soft speech, which is indicative of the completion of the facilitator’s turn. Evidence for such interpretation is also the fact that the participant self-selects for the next turn without waiting for the facilitator’s turn to actually be completed.

The participant could have begun his answer after the first interrogative, as well as after the second interrogative; the fact that he does not may signal that he disagrees with both the alternatives advanced. Indeed, at line 09, the participant proffers a third candidate answer, which leads him to disclose his own vote. Noteworthy at this point is the departure of the participant’s response from the principle of contiguity (Sacks, 1987), according to which if there are two questions in a turn, the latter will usually get answered first. By not answering any of the two questions and by providing a third possibility, the participant is seen to break the said principle.

In line with Pomerantz (1988, p. 367), the feature of providing an answer as a model to the participants is useful when the facilitator seeks some particular information given in a particular way; it is also useful when the facilitator values efficiency in getting particular information. With his interrogative, the facilitator advances that the audience knows what the results mean and that they can describe them. Instead of leading off with a question asking for example, “What do the results mean?”, the facilitator uses his lead question to focus on the two accounts of the results that are relevant for the immediate purpose. This is an efficient way of highlighting the current relevance of the results displayed for the participants. As such, in offering candidate answers, the facilitator can shape the context of the inquiry (Pomerantz, 1988).

Finally, these either/or interrogatives are designed as “B-events” (Labov & Fanshel, 1977), or events about which the participants (recipients) know more than him (the questioner) and in this sense, interrogatives can be understood as doing questioning, constituting a request for confirmation. One of the other things that these interrogatives achieve is to offer a choice between two different interpretations about which, as already
mentioned, the participants know more than the facilitator. There is an epistemic asymmetry between the participants and the facilitator. And although the participants are in a more knowledgeable position \((K^+))\) than the facilitator \((K^-)\) concerning the meaning of the results, the facilitator is seen to invoke a different degree of knowledge, based on the visual display. What is interesting to observe here is how the interrogatives display the facilitator’s candidate understandings of the results, allowing him to perform what I called earlier a *reading into the screen*. Next, I turn to a different design of the turn following the prefatory turn, and this is represented by the *wh*-question.

### 4.3.2.2 Wh-type questions

Participation can also be elicited with a *wh*-question; nonetheless, these are quite rare occurrences. Below, in Extract 4.22, I provide an example of one such case.

**Extract 4.22**

```plaintext
01 ((F displays information on the screen.))
02 F: ↑Right.
03   (4.0)
04 F: So those are the (1.0) ideas that you have uhm (.)
05 entered for (0.8) for this area of building international
06 partnerships.
07   (2.0)
08 F: Uhm (1.3) what do you think?
09   (4.0)
10 P: One oh sevens pretty compelling, (0.5) because the world
11   beats a door to you if you’re good enough.
```

Generally speaking, *wh*- questions are in principle much more open in terms of the freedom that they allow the respondents in choosing the type of response to provide (Marley, 2002). However, as I have shown throughout my analysis so far, prefatory turns can be used to frame subsequent topical talk and this is exactly what seems to happen here. In the above Extract 4.22, the facilitator’s gist formulation at lines 04-06 is narrowing the subsequent talk to talk about “building international partnerships” only. Although the *wh*-question is heard as a request for information about the items displayed on the public screen, this information is restricted only to the items that are included in the “building international partnerships” topic. This observation is supported by the participant’s answer at lines 10-11, a type-conforming response delivered within the boundaries set by the prefatory turn. Nevertheless, the difference between a *wh*-question and a YNI, at least in this context, is that unlike the latter, the former does not perform a “reading into the screen”, in other words, it does not advance.
an interpretation of the results displayed. The degree to which the participants’ responses are constrained by wh-questions is, thus, different. In the following Section 4.3.2.3, I further provide an example of an extract that deploys a wh-question after a YNI.

### 4.3.2.3 Yes/No- and Wh-type questions

A slightly more complex way of eliciting participation involves the deployment of a Y/N-interrogative and a wh-question, one after the other, as in Extract 4.23 below.

**Extract 4.23**

01   ((F brings up the results on the screen.))
02   F: ↑Pretty positive.
03   (10.0)
04   F: Could the <unsu:res> (.) be simply about awareness? = °or°
05   (2.0)
06   F: What is going on?
07   (2.0)
08   P1: ↑Yeah.
09   (2.0)
10   F: Thank you.

At line 04, the facilitator produces a YNI, which is interesting from multiple perspectives. Firstly, the interrogative is a question that selects particular features of the display as a topic to be pursued further (“the <unsu:res> (.)”) and that is audience assessment implicative (“be simply about awareness?”). The facilitator is showing the same type of cautiousness that I previously indicated in Section 4.3.2.1, which is evidenced by the use of hedging (via the word “simply”). This might be explained by the fact that the facilitator is once again requesting a sensitive issue: disclosure of votes. Furthermore, in putting forth the first candidate answer, the facilitator recognizably offers the candidate answer as a likely possibility. The particular choice of the candidate answer may be treated as a display of the facilitator’s knowledge of and familiarity with the situation (Pomerantz, 1988), which he acquired throughout the meeting.

Secondly, the turn includes the “or” particle. Asking “Could the <unsu:res> (.) be simply about awareness?” seems to be tilted in favour of a preferred answer, that is, towards “yes”. However, the facilitator immediately continues his turn by adding “or”, which may be understood as neutralizing the preference for a particular preferred answer (Stokoe, 2010), while also indicating that neither answer would be problematic. In this way, he mitigates the delicacy of his request even further.
After a 2.0-second gap in line 05 he delivers a wh-question, “what is going on?” which opens the possibility of yet other candidate answers – although he does not state which these would be. The participant could have initiated his answer both after lines 04 and 06, which are transition-relevant places; the fact that he does not may signal that he disagrees with the candidate answer proffered. This may also be indicated by the further 2.0-second gap at line 07. Nevertheless, at line 08, the participant produces a minimal, type-conforming response showing agreement (“Yeah”), which is heard as a response to the first YNI. In the next Section 4.3.2.4, I will show how participation can also be elicited via prefatory turns themselves.

4.3.2.4 Prefatory turns that elicit participation

In the previous sections, I have shown that facilitators use questions that are designed to prefer either “yes” or “no” answers, or alternatively, that are neutral in this respect, to elicit participation. There is, however, another way through which facilitators have been observed to elicit participation and make agreement, disagreement, or simply a response relevant as next action. This other way is represented by prefatory turns themselves, which are designed as declaratives. Let us start with Extract 4.24.

Extract 4.24

01 F: And your ↑views a:rh,
02 ((F displays the results of the votes.))
03 F: °that you° .hh ↑doing oh-kay_ (1.0) .hh an’ pretty well
04 (6.0)
05 F: Your boss is frowning.
06 P2: No (.)
07 F: (((Chuckles)))
08 P2: [I was just ] <wondering> why nobody was saying anything.

In Extract 4.24, at line 05, the facilitator proffers an assessment of a particular participant, which is designed as an affirmation, “Your boss is frowning.”, and which makes the next relevant action to be either a confirmation or a disconfirmation. This participant-oriented assessment elicits an immediate response from the part of the “boss” in question, who disagrees with the assessment straightforwardly, “No.”. This is further followed by the facilitator’s chuckles in overlap with the participant’s expansion of his prior turn. This assessment-implicative description is particularly interesting, as this is addressed not to the entire audience, but to a specific person in the audience (“the boss”) and furthermore, although stated in a joking mode, is heard as deprecation (“Your boss is frowning.”).
The literature indicates that the most efficient way in which one can refer to a person is by means of a “recognitional”, such as a first name (Ten Have, 1999); in this case, however, the facilitator chooses to refer to the participant by the word “boss”, referring to his superior rank within the organization. Furthermore, the participant’s response is prompt – a minimal, nevertheless, strong, stated disagreement (“No.”), which is directly contrastive with the prior description. This can be explained by the fact that the reference to a particular participant (in this case, the boss) enables that participant to self-select as soon as his identity has been mentioned, at the first transition-relevance place (TRP) following the turn construction unit (TCU) containing the reference (Markaki & Mondada, 2012). Addressing a particular person makes that person accountable to provide an answer.

The immediate chuckle of the facilitator happens right after the participant’s strong disagreement and it is not a joint chuckle. His unilateral chuckle can be heard as displaying some embarrassment (Haakana, 1999), but, perhaps, also as an invitation to joint chuckle – although there is no uptake. Equally interesting is that the participant’s expansion of his prior turn, in an attempt to provide an explanation of what he was actually thinking, takes places in overlap with the facilitator’s chuckle. The seriousness and straightforwardness of the participant’s response seems to indicate possible trouble in the interaction’s progress; hence, the facilitator uses the next TRP, just after the disagreement is produced, to indicate through chuckle that his prior description should not be taken as a serious assessment. Chuckles seem, thus, to offer the facilitator an important secondary device for achieving intersubjective understanding. As a general view, the facilitator makes two assessments of the audience before he formulates a specific participant description that further elicits participation. Declaratives, however, can also be negatively formulated and the next Extracts 4.25 and 4.26 are two such examples.

Extract 4.25

01 ((F brings up the results on the screen.))
02 F: Right (.). hh well (.). I’m not sensing that surprises
03 anybody in the room.=
04 P: =No.
05 (1.5)
I have previously argued that the prefatory turns in Extracts 4.25 and 4.26 at lines 02-03 and 03, respectively, that the facilitator builds a presupposition in his formulations (that the audience itself does not find anything in the results that would need further elaboration), which is designed for confirmation. In this sense, the formulations can be heard as topic closing-implicative utterances (see Extracts 4.13 and 4.14). And while in the first case, the participant offers a minimal but nonetheless, type-conforming response (“=No.”, line 04), in the second case, the participant offers a non-type conforming response (initiating at line 05), challenging the topic closing-implicative utterance. This also explains the 2.5-second gap that precedes it at line 04, which anticipates that something is problematic and disagreement forthcoming.

What makes the participants to proffer an answer here? Or, in other words, what is it that makes them to understand that an answer is due? The answer that I put forward is that there are several elements to be considered. Firstly, the declaratives are marked as upshots of the visual displays. What they are doing is no longer just “noticing” or “reading out the screen”, but rather “reading into the screen”, inferring and attributing a particular interpretation to the audience. Being audience-assessment implicative, these utterances hold the audience accountable to provide agreement or disagreement. Secondly, both declaratives are delivered as B-events, wherein the participants know more about the results than the facilitator. We have seen, however, that these two elements do not necessarily trigger a response (see, for example, Extract 4.24, wherein at line 04, 6.0 seconds lapse without any participant confirming or disconfirming the assertion made). This brings me to the third element, which is about both utterances being delivered using a negative format and, as such, being heard as topic-closing implicative. It is this topic closing that the participants need to agree or disagree on. The fact that the discussion might move on to a next topic is oriented to by the participants as in need of ratification from them. In this sense, then, moving from one agenda topic to another is an interactional achievement, negotiated between the participants and the facilitator, and not merely a discrete event.
In the next two Extracts 4.27 and 4.28, participation elicitation is produced after the facilitator’s “hmmm” tokens.

Extract 4.27
01  F:  I think †Somebody’s gonna go for not relevant,
02        ((F displays the results of the votes.))
03  F:  †No, ((chuckles)) hmmm_ ((chuckles again))
04        (6.0)
05  P1:  ((indistinct)) °cause I was thinking of the definition of
06            prestigious awards°_

Extract 4.28
01          ((F brings the results of the votes on the screen))
02          (8.0)
03  F:  Hmmm ↓hmmm
04          (5.0)
05  P:  I think probably that (.)<(  )> in the recent
06            changes in terms [of          
07            [your journey]

In both Extracts 4.27 and 4.28, I have previously remarked that the “hmmm” tokens could be heard as a basic response, which did not construct the results as either good or bad (Maynard, 2003), but which were, nonetheless, indicative of the facilitator’s certain stance (unknown, at least at the time) toward the information that was brought up on the screen.

Here, however, I postulate that the facilitator’s stance is a negative one and that “hmmm” is used as a token to deliver such stance. To support such claim, I will briefly refer to Extract 4.21, which I reintroduce below:

Extract 4.21
01          ((F brings up the results on the screen.))
02  F:  HMMmm
03          (10.0)
04  F:  .ptk (. ) does that wo:arkin’ on it suggests you’ve got a
05  plan and it’s: a bit of the following wind: or is this a
06  recognition that you’re not where you want to be .hhh.
07          (1.5)
08  F:  °an’ ne:ed a°
09  P:  I’ve voted green ↑solely on the basis of (  )
10  I’ve used it once.

What we have here is one more example of the token “HMMmm” being uttered by the facilitator (at line 02) upon seeing the results. But what we also have right after that is the
next utterance of the facilitator. As such, after a 10-second gap, the facilitator re-takes the
turn at talk and delivers alternative questions at lines 04-06 and 08. What I wish to draw
attention upon here is that the interpretation that he encompasses in both of the alternative
questions is tilted towards reflecting the problematic side of the results.

Returning now to Extracts 4.27 and 4.28, I wish to place below the visual displays
that are accompanying them (previous Figures 4.9 and 4.10), respectively:

![Figure 4.9. Results.](image)

![Figure 4.10. Results.](image)

What is noticeable in Figures 4.9 and 4.10 is that they are quite similar and, moreover,
they both indicate a high number of votes in the Amber category (category no. 3) and a
significant number of votes in the Unsure category (category no. 5). Both categories suggest
that overall, there is something problematic going on. The facilitator’s “hmmm” might thus
stand as evidence of such problematization. This meaning seems to also be worked out by the
participants, who then join the talk and provide reasons as to why they did not “go for the not
relevant option”- as they had interpreted the question in a certain way, which further leads to
questioning the question (Extract 4.27); or accounting for a possible explanation as to why
the results are emerging the way they do (Extract 4.28), respectively. In both cases, however,
after the facilitator’s “hmmm”, the participants are seen to orient towards discussing the
negative side of the graphs. Based on the above, “hmmm” becomes a trouble-indicative
discursive token.

Lastly, I provide one more Extract 4.29, wherein we have participant uptake after the
facilitator’s evaluative comment at line 03; this happens at line 05, with the participant’s
“YEAH” in overlap with the facilitator’s chuckles at line 04.
Extract 4.29

01 ((F displays the results of the votes.))
02 (2.0)
03 F: That’s almost normally distributed.
04 [([F’s chuckles])]
05 (P1): [YEAH ]((various participants show agreement))
06 (3.0)
07 F: Comments .hh
08 (2.0)
09 P2: ( )
10 ((chuckles in the room))

Here, I wish to make two observations. On the one hand, given that the facilitator’s chuckles at line 04 and the participant P1’s “YEAH” are produced in overlap, this may indicate that the facilitator might not have heard the participant’s response and that this is why he further pursues a response by uttering a direct question at line 07 (“Comments .hh”). On the other hand, however, the participant’s “YEAH” is produced loudly and is clearly hearable on the tape, almost covering the facilitator’s chuckles (Note: All recording devices were compared to draw such conclusion). Considering this detail, I argue that the participant’s agreement is not taken as a sufficient response by the facilitator, who as mentioned, after a gap of 3.0 seconds in line 06, self-selects and utters a direct question to elicit participation, “Comments .hh”. This is an example wherein the facilitator orients to the participant’s response as being insufficient and needing further elaboration, which he successfully triggers at line 09. This also stands as an example of how meanings are interactionally negotiated.

In Section 4.3.2, I analysed what happened next after the delivery of prefatory turns. I have noted that prefatory turns did not generally trigger participation and that the facilitators were observed to deploy direct interrogatives in the next turn to elicit participation. In most of the cases, the action accomplished by prefatory turns was noticing or reading out the screen, while also providing a directional stance for such noticing; while the action accomplished by the direct interrogatives was reading into the screen. Both reading out and reading in are done selectively; but while reading out the screen refers to factual details displayed on the public screen, to which everyone has access (positioning both facilitators and participants on the same $K+$ knowledgeable position), reading into the screen refers to reading in a particular interpretation of the results, to which not everyone has access. As a matter of fact, the participants are in a $K+$ position, while facilitators are in a $K-$ position, which might explain why the next relevant action becomes an agreement/ disagreement or confirmation/
disconfirmation from the side of the participants. It is thus the *reading into the screen* that which generally performs the act of *questioning*.

I have further showed that there are cases in which prefatory turns (and I call them as such because of their sequential positioning, being deployed right after the display of the results on the screen) can do *questioning*. I argued that this happens when prefatory turns do not do *noticing* anymore, but rather *reading into the screen*.

I have also found that unlike communication training materials on facilitation (such as, Kaner *et al.* (2014)) write, progression through the agenda (*process*) can be negotiated by the participants and meaning-making (*content*) can be negotiated by the facilitators, and this may hold important consequences for the teaching of facilitation skills. In the following Section 4.4, I proceed to summarize the main findings and discuss implications for practice.

### 4.4 Discussion

In this chapter, I have identified specific conversational strategies used by facilitators to do their work in relation to the unpacking of participation. I showed that assessments and formulations deployed in prefatory turns can play an important role in accomplishing at least two institutional tasks. First, they play a part in the transformation of written issues authored by meeting participants into an oral account, verbalized by the facilitator. Second, they play a role in setting the direction for the topical talk. The main action that they accomplish is “noticing” (Schegloff, 2010) or “reading out the screen”. As such, there is no wonder that there is generally no uptake by the participants. They can also do “questioning”, wherein we do see uptake as the relevant next action. I argued that prefatory turns can do “questioning” when they switch from *reading out the screen* to *reading into the screen*.

*Reading into the screen*, however, is generally performed by direct questioning turns deployed after prefatory turns. I have shown that apart from prefatory turns which may sometimes do questioning, questioning turns generally take the form of (a) YNIs (including alternative interrogative questions), (b) *wh*-questions, or (c) a combination of both (a) and (b). In the vast majority of cases, facilitators were observed to utter YNIs, which triggered “rich”, descriptive narratives from the participants. Notably, there are no examples in which the facilitators proceed to elicit participation post-screen by directly asking an interrogative. This is a key moment in the recruitment of the audience because the ways facilitators use the prefatory turns to then deploy an interrogative affects the subsequent discussion on the topic.
By working through this first core task of the facilitator, termed as “identifying the issues”, both the facilitators and the participants oriented to certain constraints on their talk that characterized the interaction as institutionally relevant. Both the facilitator and the participants, for example, treated the facilitator as having greater rights to initiate sequences – this may also be explained by the double role of the facilitator, as both a process enabler and a technology handler.

It is within the patterns identified throughout the chapter, that we now have the following evidence emerging from the analysis, with regards to facilitated meetings:

1. Both the facilitators and the participants collaborate in interpreting the meaning of that which is displayed on the screen – project of collaboration. Facilitation is interactionally constructed and interpretations are negotiated.

2. Moving from one agenda topic to another is an interactional achievement, negotiated between the participants and the facilitators, and not merely a discrete event.

3. It is generally observed that the facilitators produce prefatory turns, via which they do “noticing” and frame the subsequent topical talk. The prefatory turns are, thus, *reading out the screen*.

4. Based on point 3 above, the facilitators actively shape the process by orchestrating participant input (Nielsen, 2012). In this sense, the facilitator role as “content-neutral”, as proposed by leading practitioners in the field (see Kaner et al., 2014), is questioned.

5. Facilitators do not have *power* over meeting participants by virtue of institutional position, but rather to the extent that they are able to exploit sequential properties of talk. In this chapter, I have shown that they display *interactional control over topical talk*.

6. Generally, participation is elicited via direct questioning turns that are deployed after prefatory turns. Direct questioning takes the form of YNIs, *wh*-questions, or a combination of both. These questioning turns are *reading into the screen*.

7. There are examples wherein participation is elicited via prefatory turns, but in such a case, prefatory turns must do *reading into the screen*.

The implications for practice (training of facilitators) are many. As Eden (1992) advanced, maintaining a negotiated social order is crucial to both political feasibility and to emotional commitment from the participants in relation to the various action-oriented decisions that may be proposed during the facilitated meetings. The findings seem to show support for the facilitators including prefatory turns, as a means of providing a line of thought
to be pursued further by the participants. The assessment/formulation seems to act as an initial stimulus and is generally not challenged by the participants. In this sense, facilitators are seen to secure interactional control over topical talk.

Furthermore, I find the facilitators’ prefatory turns to be fascinating. Reading out the screen allows the facilitators’ work to remain almost invisible. Their reading out the screen is in some sense, a non-contribution, since nothing is truly added in their readings: things were already there, the only difference is that they are now revealed through the work of the facilitators. But they are, of course, contributing something as these readings provide a direction to the topical talk through their choice of which aspects of the public screen to emphasize. It thus seems that this is one of the key aspects of the facilitator’s work: adding something without appearing to add anything, contributing without appearing to contribute. This may explain why prefatory turns are generally not challenged by the participants.

Another important implication is that there seems to be no significant practical difference between the use of YNIs and open-ended questions; in both cases, the participants provide “rich”, descriptive responses. I have thus found that there are discrepancies between what facilitation training materials specify “in theory” about procedures for eliciting participation and what actually happens “in practice”. The general point I wish to make is that facilitation training guidelines are based on a misunderstanding of how interaction works in situ.

These findings do not constitute sufficient evidence to propose the standardisation of facilitation training scripts in an attempt to “influence” facilitation outcomes. As Speer and Stokoe (2014) stated, “we cannot stop people from talking using normative conversational procedures. However, we might seek to understand how interaction works before constructing guidelines for actions that are to be delivered interactively (Stokoe, 2011).” In this case, the idea is to understand better how interaction works before constructing facilitation guidelines. In the next Chapter 5, I proceed to analyse the “integration of ideas elicited” sequence and explore the collaborative production of conceptual maps.
Chapter 5

Integrating the participants’ ideas:
The collaborative production of conceptual maps

5.0 Introduction
In this chapter, I move on from the “unpacking of participation” sequence (Chapter 4) to the “integration of ideas elicited” sequence. The latter is the next action in the facilitated meeting. I focus specifically on a particular moment of the integration sequence in which the facilitator turns public displays of information into “talkables” and invites, but not demands, that others contribute to the initiated discussion. This, implicitly, will lead to the production of a “conceptual map” (n.b., “conceptual maps” are to be understood as a graphical way to organise individual ideas and indicate relationships between them by connecting lines that link the ideas). In this way, the chapter is concerned with the way the collaborative production of a conceptual map on the public screen is initiated and organised, and how both the facilitator and the participants shape their activities with regard to the conduct of others. A key focus of the chapter is how particular technologies present during the meeting (that is, computers and Group Explorer software) are recruited and mobilized as essential resources in accomplishing the conceptual map and how their use is coordinated with the concurrent actions and activities of others.

The chapter is organised as follows. Section 5.1 briefly presents some analytical considerations, positioning this chapter as a single-case analysis. The next Section 5.2 draws upon the existing literature that has been concerned with the use of artefacts (such as speed markers, coloured cards, sticky notes, whiteboards, but also digital artefacts, such as computer software) to enact collaborative work in meetings. I postulate that although these studies are informative, they take the artefacts for granted and in doing so, they make implicit assumptions about the artefacts. In other words, this chapter aims to make a distinctive contribution to the literature on meetings by considering how conceptual maps (which are, in fact, digital artefacts built with the use of the computer software Group Explorer) are interactionally achieved. Section 5.3 then considers the design of Group Explorer and its interactional implications, wherein I aim to highlight its envisaged purposes. Subsequently, in Section 5.4, I introduce the single fragment of interaction chosen for this chapter and describe the activities therein, making few analytical remarks. The following three sections are dedicated to analysing the minute details of turns in the fragment that are of particular
analytical interest, with a focus on the facilitator’s action of inviting the participants to review a particular cluster of items (that is, participants’ ideas) displayed on the public screen (Section 5.4.1), a participant’s subsequent absent request to delete a duplicate item and an absent apology for creating the duplicate in the first place (Section 5.4.2), and the facilitator’s next act of correcting the cluster of items (offer of assistance) in accordance with the participants’ inputs (Section 5.4.3). The final Section 5.5 summarizes the findings.

5.1. Single-case analysis: Analytical considerations

In contrast to the previous chapter (wherein I worked with a collection of fragments of talk to describe the single phenomenon of “unpacking of participation”, the type of data analysis employed in this chapter is different: it is the analysis of a single episode of interaction. Schegloff (1987a) refers to it as an exercise in which “the resources of past work on a range of phenomena and organisational domains in talk-in-interaction are brought to bear on the analytic explication of a single fragment of talk” (p. 101). The main concern, thus, is not to find new phenomena (although this is not excluded), but rather to use existing knowledge about conversational practices to analyse instances that such knowledge should be able to explain.

The reason behind the selection of a single episode of interaction lies in what Schegloff (1987a) calls the “fundamental responsibility of social analysis, namely the capacity to explicate single episodes of action in interaction as a basic locus of social order” (p. 101); each episode can be studied to provide an analysis that meets the criteria of “unique adequacy” (Garfinkel & Sacks, 1970). This view is further supported by Psathas (1995, p. 50), who wrote that “one instance is sufficient to attract attention and analytic interest”. Psathas also emphasized that one instance is sufficient to discover how that instance is organised and that its recurrence, although possible and probable, is not a proof of the adequacy of the analysis performed. Building collections of instances has its own motivation, but they only provide “another example of the method in the action, rather than securing the warrantability of the description of the machinery itself” (Benson & Hughes, 1991, p. 131).

Psathas (1995) provides an interesting analogy, comparing the “machinery of turn-taking” to the “rules of chess” (p. 51), wherein the rules are not an expression of how often they are being used by the players, but they are rather an indication of how the game is organised that allow the game to be chess and not some other game. Important examples of “single case analyses” can further be found in the works of Sacks (1975), C. Goodwin (1984), and Jefferson (1980). Orderliness is, thus, to be found even in a single episode of
interaction [Sacks (1984a, p. 22) referred to the same as “order at all points”]. Robinson (2007, p. 66) further supported such argument by elegantly stating that:

The argument for order at all points is supported by 40 years of research showing that the ability of communities of humans (and, in some cases, all humankind) to “make sense” in and of inter-“action” is largely predicated on the existence of socially conventionalized (i.e., recognizable and predictable) orchestrations of conduct-in-interaction that are understood, by all members, to make particular communication norms/rules relevant and accountable.

In this thesis, I explore a particular type of meeting (that is, facilitated computer-supported workplace meetings) that I hypothesize has not received enough attention in the literature; in this context, a single case analysis allows to track in detail the various devices and strategies used by the facilitator and participants to accomplish a particular action (Schegloff, 1988), which could represent the starting point for further analysis in the future. Based, therefore, on a single fragment of interaction, this chapter explores the verbal and embodied orientations of the participants, which enable specific members at the meeting to participate and make their participation locally relevant to the matter at hand. More particularly, the analysis focuses on a practice in which, starting from the facilitator’s invitation to review a group of ideas displayed on the public screen, a specific male participant recognizes himself as entitled to intervene and make a correction.

The particular episode of interaction here was selected for a single case analysis for two reasons: First, it allows to draw upon a variety of previously-studied conversational resources that are important for the organisation of conversation during the meeting. Second, I have selected an episode wherein I observed a departure from conversational norms (such as, for example, the departure from the canonical next-speaker selection technique which involves the use of address terms and address positions in an utterance; or an absent request which is nonetheless understood as a request and is subsequently granted). To sum up, my primary analytic interest in the extract analysed is to show how conceptual maps are locally and collaboratively produced in facilitated computer-supported meetings. By exploring the methodical multimodal achievement of the conceptual map, I hope to contribute evidence to improve our understanding of such issues as multi-party interaction, turn-taking, and participation in facilitated computer-supported workplace meetings.
5.2 The use of artefacts during meetings
The computer has had a profound impact on the way in which people work and how people work with others (Heath & Luff, 2000). Consequently, this has been accompanied by an increasing amount of academic research, mainly in social and cognitive sciences, and in particular, in the area of Human–Computer Interaction (or HCI). Although this field studies how people interact with computers, it has, however, tended to disregard how technology and artefacts in general feature in social action and interaction, which led researchers to develop other fields, such as Computer-Supported Cooperative Work (or CSCW), wherein the focus is on studying how technologies feature in everyday organisational conduct and communication. There is, thus, still a lack of studies exploring how technology features in social action and interaction and this chapter aims to be a contribution in this sense.

Facilitated meetings are a particular case of institutional talk/interaction; they are goal-oriented activities in settings with special constraints on the sequential organisation of talk, on what the participants will treat as allowable contributions to the business at hand, since their talk may be associated with inferential frameworks and procedures that are particular to a specific institutional context (Drew & Heritage, 1992b). Furthermore, facilitated meetings are increasingly incorporating the use of artefacts (particularly, digital artefacts) to support groups of people doing work together. There are few research works that have noted that, assisted by the facilitator, team members’ contributions are jointly structured by the team using the causal mapping technique (Ackermann & Eden, 2011; Eden & Ackermann, 1998). Nonetheless, little, if anything, is known about how this is actually achieved in an immediate sense. As for the use of material artefacts, in her study, Nielsen (2012) advanced that artefacts from office supply stores (speed markers, coloured cards, sticky notes, whiteboards, flipcharts, etc.) play an important role in the meetings, being introduced by the facilitators to foster shared cognition and allowing the participants’ thoughts to turn into notes and the notes into talk.

Particular attention to the use of artefacts has been paid in the field of organisation science and strategy-as-practice. For example, Kaplan (2011) performed an ethnographic study to look at how the use of PowerPoint mediates the discursive practices of strategy making and Giraudieu (2008) examined how the use of “transient plans” (the drafting process of strategic plans) can lead to “the emergence of new strategies, not just the programming of predefined strategies” (p. 291). More generally, strategy was observed to be conducted with artefacts of various kinds, from flip-charts, “post-it” notes, PowerPoint and other visual aids (Kaplan 2011; Molloy & Whittington, 2005), to analytic tools and statistical
software (Faure & Rouleau, 2011), used for analysing and making predictions about the business environment. Indeed, a variety of material artefacts from simple visual aids through to advanced statistical tools may be entangled in the strategy work (Jarzabkowski, Spee & Smets, 2013) to the extent that it is difficult to separate the strategist from the material arrangements within which strategy work is performed (Callon & Law, 1997). Based on the above, it can be said that the existing studies are focusing on the use of technology and digital artefacts to accomplish certain outcomes during meetings, but, to the best of my knowledge, there are no studies exploring how digital artefacts are interactionally built. This chapter is uniquely positioned from this perspective, aiming to analyse how conceptual maps are interactionally and collaboratively constructed.

Within a multimodal, interactional perspective (C. Goodwin, 2013; Mondada, 2011), “the term participation refers to actions demonstrating forms of involvement performed by parties within evolving structures of talk” (C. Goodwin & M. H. Goodwin, 2004, p. 222). The use of artefacts during the meetings raises new concerns with respect to the management of participant visibility and participation in the meeting room. The presence of the facilitator and the use of the computer software introduce specific concerns and constraints on the overall organisation of the meeting, allowing us to study how talk in interaction is an embodied, multimodal collaborative activity. The actual discursive practices are influenced by the way the facilitator is positioned during the meeting and by the very use of the software. For example, during the Q/A sequence in the “integration of ideas” phase, the facilitator generally sits at the master laptop, and is thus able to manage the software to capture the participants’ additional comments, contributions, and/or clarifications. During this Q/A sequence, the facilitator and participants collaborate to produce appropriate sequencing of talk, which are consecutively introduced in the software and displayed on the public screen by the facilitator.

Available resources to smoothly manage the flow of speech are shaped by the facilitator’s use of the software. When he is introducing the information into the software (something that everybody can see, as the information is being displayed publicly on the public screen), he may achieve the queueing of the speakers by means of repeating the same exact words of the participant whose contribution is being captured at that particular moment. This indicates that a particular contribution has been selected to be introduced into the software, which automatically queues the speakers, without the need for the facilitator to use any additional linguistic resources. It is noticed that participants orient to such queuing activity. Nevertheless, this can also lead to specific interactional problems, such as recycling...
turns initiated by the participants who have uttered contributions in overlap with the participant whose contribution has been selected to be added to the cluster first and who have thus not been “seen” by the facilitator, but who as mentioned above, have been automatically queued. Hence, some questions of interest are: how are speakers making themselves “visible” to the facilitator? How is the facilitator queueing the speakers’ contributions? How do the facilitator and the participants produce and recognize the base building blocks of their activities during the above-mentioned Q/A sequence, such as invitations to participate, proposals, declinations, and/or acceptances?

The main analytic task in this chapter is to explicate local resources that the facilitator uses to assemble courses of facilitating (integrating) activity. Hence, it contributes to the micro-analytic study of authentic multimodal meetings by showing how a facilitator uses computer software to structure the participants’ contributions and how the same contributions assist in the collaborative achievement of a conceptual map. In the following section, I turn to the design of the software used in the extract under consideration in this chapter.

5.3 The design of the software and interactional implications

Before proceeding with the analysis of the extract selected, it is relevant to cast an eye over some of the envisaged purposes or aims of the piece of technology (Greiffenhagen, 2008) used by the facilitator in this case. The particular tool used by the facilitator to perform his work is Group Explorer. Group Explorer is a networked computer system that uses a visual causal mapping technique (or conceptual map) to support decision-making in teams (Eden & Ackerman, 2010). The map is used by the meeting participants to capture a range of important issues and their perceived implications.

To construct the map, participants are assembled in the room and sit at small tables generally arranged in a horseshoe-shaped layout, with a console laptop for each table. The consoles are connected to a master laptop operated by the facilitator, who uses it to control the consoles and assemble the team’s contributions, and then display them on a large public screen located at the front of the room. The screen is visible to all the participants and provides a focal point around which group discussions about strategic issues can take place. Participants’ contributions are gathered both anonymously through the consoles (and quickly displayed on the screen as they are entered) and with the help of the facilitator. In addition, with the help of the facilitator, participants engage in jointly structuring their contributions to create a conceptual map. This is, without much left to say, how Group Explorer is supposed
to work. The design of the software can be said to reflect the purposes for which it was created:

❖ The emphasis on *key issues*. Group Explorer is seen as a tool for visualizing the issues or ideas elicited from the participants (“tangibility affordance”, according to Paroutis, Franco, & Papadopoulos, 2015).

❖ The possibility for *integrating ideas*. Group Explorer makes the visual association of the key issues possible by allowing different types of links between issues to be drawn (“associability affordance”, according to Paroutis, Franco, & Papadopoulos, 2015).

❖ The possibility for *writing*. The facilitator is not just conceiving Group Explorer in terms of visuals, but also as a way to get the participants to write, that is, add, remove, or modify contents (“editability affordance”, according to Paroutis, Franco, & Papadopoulos, 2015).

❖ The importance of *choices*. Group Explorer, envisaged as part of active participation, provides the participants with the possibility to visually track both temporally and structurally its contents, allowing for example, the choice of where to visually focus or not (“traceability affordance”, according to Paroutis, Franco, & Papadopoulos, 2015).

I will now turn to introduce some further aspects of the technology used. Group Explorer supports the real-time collaborative production of textual materials, and furthermore, allows participants to view how textual materials and implicitly, conceptual maps, are actually being edited by the facilitator. This particular feature is referred to in CSCW as the system supporting “synchronous” interaction between individuals. During this process, text is transformed into talk and talk itself can occasion the production of text. Furthermore, the facilitator has a certain amount of discretion in manipulating the software and thus the text available on the public screen: (1) he is the only one who can edit the items on the public screen once they are introduced by the participants, something that he actually is seen to be doing; and (2) he can decide at times to freeze or black out the display on the public screen, while privately working on the master laptop.

The facilitator, therefore, faces an interesting problem. The text is localized on the public screen and it is, thus, visible to others, although not accessible to them. The manipulation of text present on the public screen is only accessible for editing purposes, as mentioned, to the facilitator. This setting provides an interesting opportunity to explore the
relationship between talk and text and to consider the competent use of particular computer software which relies on the facilitator’s ability to co-ordinate his actions, in real-time, with the contributions of the participants (Heath & Luff, 2000). There is not much time for editing purposes and the facilitator generally engages rapidly in editing the text, while also having to consider the multiple suggestions from the participants, sometimes produced in overlap.

So, in one sense, the facilitator can work alone, moving items on the screen, identifying which individual items seem to belong to the same thematic cluster, correcting spelling mistakes, and so on. But on the other hand, the facilitator also needs to work closely with the participants sitting at their own desks. For example, grouping few items under the same thematic category or cluster has an impact on the general understanding of the issue being discussed; hence, it may turn out to be of importance to have the participants “okay” the category that the facilitator put together before moving on to the next relevant activity. Also, editing a particular item is of great importance as it can alter the conceptual map. Decisions to make major changes to the map are generally done in consultation with the participants. Major changes are to be understood as involving a change to content. A case in point is the deletion of an item. The facilitator is observed to generally cross-check several times with the participants before pressing the Delete button on his master laptop. This balance between individual and collaborative work has to be achieved in the face of a substantial amount of material available on the public screen, which, as mentioned above, is available for manipulation only to the facilitator.

5.4 Description of a single case

In this section, I introduce the extract to be analysed and describe the main activities that the facilitator and the participants are involved in during the process of integrating the participants’ contributions. The segment is located 21 minutes and 52 seconds into a meeting. At this point, the participants have already concluded a prior activity they were involved in, wherein in groups of two they entered items on the public screen via their personal console laptops. While participants were engaged in this activity, the facilitator engaged in re-organising and grouping the items on the public screen with the help of his master laptop (Figure 5.1). Items were grouped together based on the themes they related to. Figure 5.2 shows, for example, the grouping of the items related to the theme of “partnerships”. The facilitator’s next action is to invite the participants to review a particular cluster of ideas or “items”, in this case the ones grouped under the theme titled “partnerships” (Figure 5.2); the
individual items have already been selected on the public screen with the help of the facilitator’s laptop mouse.

**Figure 5.1.** Facilitator operating the mouse from his master laptop to group the participants’ ideas.

**Figure 5.2.** The facilitator’s selection of the cluster of ideas titled “partnerships”.

 Indicates individual ideas or ‘items’ selected by the facilitator for potential inclusion in the ‘Partnerships’ cluster.
The activities that can be observed in the extract below are as follows:

1) *Issuing an invitation* to review a cluster of ideas (by the facilitator)

2) The act of issuing corrections to the cluster of ideas (or *Absent request*) (by a participant)

3) The act of correcting the cluster of ideas on the public screen, in accordance with the participant’s contribution (or *Offer of assistance*) (by the facilitator)

4) Attempts to *close the act of reviewing* (by the facilitator)

5) *Declinations to close the act of reviewing* (by the participants)

I will now proceed to show the full multimodal transcript of the fragment analysed (Extract 5.1). The multimodal transcript is the working transcript and I reproduce it here to provide a comprehensive view of how complex the interaction segment under analysis is. As I develop my analysis, I will also provide simplified versions of key fragments. Embodied actions are transcribed according to the conventions developed by Mondada (2014), which I found to be extremely useful in capturing every detail of the interaction (see Appendix C).

**Extract 5.1**

01  F:  «β*Okay. Eh:: and then eh: is there anything else,  
     «>>looks at public screen--->  
     β_moves the mouse across public screen--->  
     related to β#partnerships (0.5) eh:::β  
     ---»β_moves mouse around partnerships itemβ

02  p_1:  *>>looks at public screen--->

fig      #fig.5.3

F looks at the public screen, while manipulating the laptop mouse.

5.3

03  P_?:  «(inaudible)

f:  --»«looks at personal screen#--«looks at public screen-->

fig      #fig.5.4
View of the public screen, with individual ‘items’ selected by the facilitator for potential inclusion in the ‘Partnerships’ cluster.

5.4
04 P_1: Number twelve.
05 F:   Number twelve(h). %
       %points at public screen%
       βremoves hand from mouse--->
06                               (1.0)
07 P_6: That’s the same as thirteen. =
08   =I had a (. ) β a wobbly finger.
09                               ---β:places hand on mouse again--->
10 F:   ---βremoves hand from mouse--->
11 (0.2)
12 F:   Eh:: [°ah hah ha° hah hah ]
13 P_many: [ah HAH HA HA HAH HAH]
14 F:   [β£W(h)ere isf] %moves mouse on public
       screen--->
15                               where is where is [thirteen, β   ] (.)
       ---βremoves hand from mouse--->
16                               (.)
17 ---βremoves hand from mouse--->
18 P_4:   [@Δ<straight up>.
19 @>>looks at public screen--->
       Δpoints at public screen--->
20 F:   Clock.#
21                               β(0.5)β
22 f:---βdraws clock quadrants in the airβplaces hand back on the mouse--->
23 fig         #fig.5.5
5.5

17 P_6: Straight up. Straight up. (inaudible)

18 F: Up. βOΔ::hΔ this one.
   --->βmoves mouse around item thirteen on public screen-->

19 p_4: --->△lowers hand and stops pointing△

20 P_4: Ye@ah.@
   --->@looks at facilitator@

20 F: Yeah. βOkay.=
   --->βremoves hand from mouse#---->

fig #fig.5.6

5.6

21 P_6: =It was so: imporβtant I pressed it twice.

fig #fig.5.7
Individual item no. 12 is selected.

5.7
24 P_11: =<You bet yeah>.
25 F: Yeah↓ that's fineβ.
   -->βselects item twelve with mouse
cursor-->
26 Ca- β=can I delete that,
   -->βremoves hand from mouse and reaches the delete button
   on personal laptop-->
   -->«looks at personal screen-->
27 "≈(1.0)
   f: -->«looks at public screen-->
28 F: Err::
29 P_3: Yes.

30 F: Yeaβhβ .ptk
   -->β#presses delete button and removes item twelve from
   the public screenβ
fig
   #fig.5.8

Individual item no. 12 is deleted.

5.8
31 F: So↓
32 β(1.0)
   f: βplaces hand on mouse again-->
The multimodal transcript, and video still images, permit our analysis of how the activities mentioned above take place. Particular moments within this fragment will be analysed further in more details, in separate sections (Sections 5.4.1, 5.4.2, and 5.4.3), wherein I aim to make in-depth analytical claims. But first, given the complexity of the transcript, I will proceed to describe the transcript and the activities that take place therein.

At lines 01-02 in Extract 5.2, the facilitator invites the participants to review the cluster of ideas titled “partnerships”. This invitation is delivered as a grammatically yes/no question (“Okay. Eh:: and then eh is there anything else, (.) related to partnerships (0.5) eh:::”).

Extract 5.2
01 F: «β*Okay. Eh:: and then eh: is there anything else, «>>looks at public screen—–>

β moves the mouse across public screen—–>

related to β#partnerships (0.5) eh:::β

02
This invitation is furthermore accompanied by the facilitator’s gaze at the public screen and by the movement of the laptop mouse across different clusters of ideas on the public screen and particularly, around the “partnerships” cluster when he specifically mentions it. This invitation is implicitly accepted by participant P_1 who first looks at the public screen and then at line 04 provides an answer (“Number twelve”). As such, the yes/no question is responded to with a modification to be made to the cluster of ideas.

Extract 5.3

03 P_?: ~(inaudible)
04 P_1: Number twelve.
05 F: Num%ber twe:lve(h).%β
06 P_1: %points at public screen%
βremoves hand from mouse-->

At line 05, the facilitator recycles participant P_1’s turn, while he selects with the mouse the item, therefore including it in the cluster, and while P_1 points to the public screen and silently witnesses the action. Immediately afterwards, the facilitator is seen to remove the hand from the mouse. After a 1-second gap at line 06, participant P_6 indicates that “number twelve” is the same as “thirteen” at line 07 (Extract 5.4), and subsequently at line 08 identifies himself as the author of both the items.

Extract 5.4

07 P_6: That's the same as thirteen.=
08 =I had a (.)β a wobbly finger.
09 F: Eh:: [°ah hah ha° hah hah ]
10 P_many: [ah HAH HA HA HAH HAH] [βHAH HAH ]

Participant P_6 being the author of items “twelve” and “thirteen” is the relevant participant to talk at this stage. P_6’s self-selection to speak is, however, not unmotivated. As Lerner (2003) pointed out, “when the requirements for responding to a sequence-initiating
action limit the eligible responders to a single participant, then that participant has been tacitly selected as next speaker”. Furthermore, he does not only provide a correction, but also provides an account for why this happened (“I had a (.) a wobbly finger”). This is supported by Jefferson’s (1987) statement that “once correcting has become the business, there is room for accounting” (p. 97, emphasis added). Before P_6 finishes his turn, the facilitator places his hand on the mouse again. At the same time, there is some joint laughter in the room (lines 10-11, Extract 5.5), with the facilitator asking in overlap at lines 12-13, the location of item “thirteen” on the screen. Part of his question is also in overlap with P_4’s answer “straight up” at line 14.

Extract 5.5

11 P_many:       [ah HAH HA HA HAH HAH] [βHAH HAH   ]
12 F:            [β£W(h)ere isβ]
                 ---βmoves mouse on public
                 screen--->
13 where is where is [thirteen,β   ] (.)
                 ---βremoves hand from mouse--->
14 P_4:          [βΔ<straight up>.]
                 @>looks at public screen--->
                 Δpoints at public screen--->
15 F:            Clock.#

16 β(0.5)β
f:---βdraws clock quadrants in the airβplaces hand back on
the mouse--->
fig #fig.5.5

We may argue that the facilitator did not hear P_4’s answer, which was delivered in overlap with the facilitator’s utterance. Evidence for this is the fact that the facilitator then utters “clock” at line 15 and proceeds to draw the clock quadrants in the air, as an indication to the participants that they could provide the exact location of item “thirteen” according to the hands of the clock. It is interesting to note how both the facilitator and the participants find items on the public screen. This is not an easy task. Pointing at a particular item may not achieve the purpose, given the distance between the participants and the public screen; also, given the multitude of items displayed. Both the participants and the facilitator are seen to use other means to indicate and identify, respectively, the location of items on the public screen. As mentioned, the facilitator draws upon the pre-existing metaphor of the clock, but
we can see that this is not reciprocated by the participants. A response aligned with the facilitator’s instruction would have been to utter “twelve o’clock”; instead, at line 17 (Extract 5.6), participant P_6 is heard to utter “straight up”. This points to the complexity posed by the public screen in multi-party interaction, in the sense that existing interaction formats may still lack a structure that can easily be used in technological contexts.

Extract 5.6

17  P_6: Straight up. Straight up. (inaudible)
18  F:  Up. ßOΔːhΔ this one.
      --->ßmoves mouse around item thirteen on public screen-->
      p_4:  --->△lowers hand and stops pointing△
19  P_4:  Ye@ah.@
      --->@looks at facilitator@
20  F:  Yeah. ßOkay.=
      --->ßremoves hand from mouse#-->
      fig
      #fig.5.6
21  P_6:  =It was so: important I pressed it twice.
      f:  --->ßplaces hand on mouse again-->

At line 17, P_6 recycles P_4’s contribution by repeating twice “Straight up. Straight up”. At line 18, the facilitator discovers “number thirteen”, which is indicated by the “oh”-prefaced (Heritage, 1984b, 1998) utterance (“Up. Oːh this one.”). P_4 confirms the discovery with “Yeah”. The facilitator then follows up with a subsequent upgraded confirmation, composed of confirmation and agreement “Yeah. Okay.”. As the facilitator removes his hand from the mouse, P_6 reveals that “twelve” and “thirteen” are not there as two different categories that are similar, but that actually it is the same category entered twice (line 21). It is interesting to note that although P_6’s statement is an implicit acknowledgement of a mistake, he refers to it not as a mistake, but as something which was so important that he had to enter it twice (“=It was so: important I pressed it twice.”). At the same time, we may argue that the participant’s pursuit is indicative of the facilitator’s failure to remove the duplicate; nevertheless, he preserves the integrity of the facilitator’s work by taking full responsibility. The facilitator is seen to understand P_6’s intention, as he places his hand on the mouse before P_6 concludes his statement.
Extract 5.7

22 F: Tha- that's fine. So (.\(\beta\)this one
---\(\beta\)moves mouse on item thirteen--->
23 is the same as \(\beta\)twelve; yeah?
---\(\beta\)#places mouse cursor on item twelve--->
fig
24 P_11: \(<\text{You bet yeah}\.\>)
25 F: Yeah\downarrow that's fine\(\beta\).
---\(\beta\)selects item twelve with mouse
cursor--->

At this point, at lines 22-23 (Extract 5.7), the facilitator identifies “thirteen” on the screen by placing the mouse on the category and asks if it is the same as “twelve” (“Tha-
that's fine. So (.\(\beta\)this one is the same as twelve\downarrow yeah?\(\beta\)=”). P_11 confirms at line 24. This is followed by the facilitator’s recycling of his prior turn (“that’s fine”) which is prefaced by the acknowledgement token “yeah” (line 25).

Extract 5.8

26 Ca- \(\beta\)\(\beta\)can I delete that,
---\(\beta\)removes hand from mouse and reaches the delete button
on personal laptop--->
---\(\beta\)#looks at personal screen--->
\(\approx\)(1.0)
27 f: ---\(\beta\)#looks at public screen--->
28 F: Err::
29 P_3: Yes.

30 F: Ye\(\beta\)\(\beta\)h\(\beta\) .ptk
---\(\beta\)#presses delete button and removes item twelve from
the public screen\(\beta\)
fig
#fig.5.8

The facilitator then asks if he could delete the duplicate (“Ca- can I delete that, (1.0) err”) at line 26 (Extract 5.8), indicating his intention by removing his hand from the mouse to reach the delete button on his personal laptop. P_3 confirms with a “Yes”, which is then followed by the facilitator’s action of deleting the duplicate (see Figures 5.7 and 5.8). The facilitator may have deleted the duplicate category at lines 22-23 – we may, thus, ask ourselves at this point why he did not do that. The answer may lie in the fact that, even though he is the one to perform the action of deleting the category from the screen, the accountability for the decision to delete belongs to the participants, and thus, is given back to
the participants. Thus, there seems to be a difference between the person who performs an action and the person who is accountable for the action.

Extract 5.9

31 F:  So↓
32      β(1.0)
33 f:    βplaces hand on mouse again--->
34 F:    β<that's mo:re or less> what I think (.)>
   -->βselects with mouse cursor all items from category partnerships--->
34 I mean there might be others< (. ) but (. )
35 do they make sense to you.β
   -->βholds hand on mouse--->

At line 31 and then lines 33-35 (Extract 5.9), the facilitator attempts to sum up the current talk and conclude the current activity (“So (1.0) <that's mo:re or less> what I think (. ) >I mean there might be others< (. ) but (. ) do they make sense to you.”). P_5’s answer at line 36 (Extract 5.10) is interesting, by providing another correction to be made.

Extract 5.10

36 P_5: Fifteens (. ) different.
37 P_4: °Thir[ty two is°] 
38 F:   [Fifteens different.]β
   -->βunselects item fifteen with the mouse cursor--->

We may argue that while this is a further “correction” to be made to the screen/cluster of ideas, rather than a straight declination to close the topic/stop the current activity, it is part of a project to avoid moving on while there are still corrections to be made. The facilitator is then seen to use the mouse to unselect number fifteen after he recycles P_5’s contribution at line 38. In this sense, the facilitator orients to “fifteens different” not as an implicit declination to close the topic, but as something problematic that he can solve or correct. It is to be noted that the facilitator’s recycling at line 38 takes place in overlap with P_4’s contribution (“Thirty two is”) at line 37. After the facilitator completes his current activity of unselecting number fifteen, P_4 pursues his contribution at line 39 (Extract 5.11), with an increased pitch (“THIRTY TWO. Thirty two in to the left.”).
The facilitator once again recycles the utterance of the participant (line 40) and proceeds to add number thirty-two into the cluster (“Thirty two to the left(h) ehh: [. there] you go.”). He then removes his hand from the mouse and re-attempts to close the current activity (“<So thats kind of a>=”) at line 42, a project which again fails as P_5 indicates that a further addition is needed to the cluster (“=And NIne”), at line 43. The facilitator proceeds to add number nine to the cluster at line 44 and then proceeds to deliver a rather long monologue.

One additional noteworthy observation to make at this point has to do with the several recycling turns performed by the facilitator. We may ask ourselves why this happens, and although the answer could only be hypothetical, the outcome that the action of recycling achieves is visible in the conduct of others and may thus turn out to have important implications for practice (for queuing practices). When the facilitator is introducing the information into the software (something that everybody can see, as it is being displayed on the public screen), he repeats the exact same words of the participant whose contribution is being captured at that moment and this seems to indicate to the rest of participants that a particular contribution (among the many uttered) has been selected to be introduced into the software, which positions the facilitator as busy and automatically queues the other speakers, without the need for the facilitator to use any additional linguistic resources to formally perform the act of queuing. As such, he implicitly achieves the queueing of the speakers. The proof for such analytical conclusion may be found at line 39, wherein P_4 waits until the
facilitator completes the task that he is currently engaged in (that is, unselecting number fifteen with the mouse, as per the indication of P_5) and then only he initiates a reformulation to pursue his prior turn. Nevertheless, this may also lead to specific interactional problems. Considering the same example above, although P_4 is seen to wait until the facilitator completes his current task, most probably aligning with the idea that he has been queued, he does not have the certainty that he has been “seen” by the facilitator and that the facilitator will return to collect his contribution upon completion of the current task. This may explain why the participant recycles his prior turn immediately after the facilitator completes his current task, without waiting for the facilitator to make a next move. In any case, note that by just physically indicating the completion of the current task (that is, the recording of the contribution of P_5), the facilitator opens a new sequence (P_4’s contribution) while closing the previous one.

Heritage and Stivers (1999) introduced the notion of “online commentary” in the context of primary care and emergency room settings, referring to it as what the physician is seeing, feeling or hearing during physical examination of the patient. They found that the use of online commentary can help in “pre-empting patient resistance to upcoming ‘no problem’ diagnostic evaluations which could delegitimize patients’ decisions to seek medical assistance, or deprive them of anticipated medical benefits” (p. 1501). Online commentary may be useful to anticipate or determine probable next steps of the co-speaker. The notion of online commentary can be extended to the setting of facilitated computer-supported workplace meetings. In this context, the facilitator describes what he is doing during the manoeuvring of the public screen in front of the meeting participants. But whether this type of online commentary actually facilitates effective communication by forecasting next actions, allowing the participants to anticipate probable next steps of the facilitator, may be too simple of a statement. Based on the extracts above, I postulate that it could be a vehicle for other actions. As explained above, the facilitator’s online commentary seems to have not only benefits (queuing the speakers) but also disadvantages (speakers do not know they have been queued), and these emerge as a consequence of the multi-party aspect of the meeting, which raises specific interactional constraints. It is certainly a topic worth pursuing, but analyses of additional cases would be needed. Having described the single fragment of interaction chosen for this chapter, in the next three sections, I proceed to analyse the minute details of three particular instances of interaction.
5.4.1 “Is there anything else”: The invitation to review a cluster of items

My first analytic interest was to find out how the invitation to review a particular cluster of items displayed on the public screen was initiated by the facilitator. At the start of the sequence, the facilitator utters “is there anything else, (. ) related to partnerships” (lines 1-2, Extract 5.12), indicating that he has chosen the cluster of items themed “partnerships” to be reviewed by the participants. This is heard as a unilateral announcement.

Extract 5.12

01 F:  «β*Okay. Eh:: and then eh: is there anything else,
     «>>>looks at public screen--->
     β moves the mouse across public screen--->
02 related to β#partnerships (0.5) eh:::β
     --->β moves mouse around partnerships itemβ
     p_1:  *>>>looks at public screen--->
     fig                #fig.1
03 P_?:  «(inaudible)
     f:  --»>>>looks at personal screen#--»looks at public screen--->
     fig                #fig.2
04 P_1:  Number twelve.
05 F:  Num%ber twe:lve(h).%β
     p_1:  %points at public screen%
     β removes hand from mouse--->
     (1.0)

The invitation to review the cluster of items is thus delivered under the form of a follow-up question, formatted as a yes/no interrogative. The utterance invites, but not demands, the participants to contribute to the revision of the cluster of ideas put together by the facilitator just few minutes before. This utterance draws attention once again (see Chapter 4, as well) to the issues of question polarity (Raymond, 2003) and preference and how the departure from what may seem to be a conversation analytic norm takes place. In conversation analysis, it is a well-known feature of polar (“yes/no”) questions that they are generally tilted towards a “yes”- or “no”-type of response. Sacks (1987) observed that responses that are aligned to the preference of the question are more frequent than dispreferred responses, a finding that was supported empirically by a ten-language study of polar questions (Stivers et al., 2009).

What we can observe, however, in the present extract, is that although the question is tilted toward preferring a “No”-concern answer, it receives a dispreferred response, the participant delivering what would be a sequentially non-appropriate answer. This
misalignment may also seem to be supported by the 0.5-second pause that precedes it, in the facilitator’s turn (line 02). This is a transition relevant place and the fact that the participants do not take turns at talk at this point may indicate that something problematic is anticipated. Nevertheless, this 0.5-second pause may actually turn out to owe its presence to a quite different reason when we consider the visual conduct of the participants. The transcript is accompanied by descriptions of particular actions performed by the facilitator and participants. We can observe that the facilitator continues to look at the public screen upon delivering his question; he then looks at his personal screen and then at the public screen once again, without turning his gaze towards the participants. We may thus argue that the participant P_1 withholding his reply until the facilitator would actually turn from the screen to face the participants. But this never happens. And indeed, P_1’s reply is delivered immediately after the facilitator turns his eyes from his personal screen back to the public screen, which may be an indication that he will not be looking in the room at the participants, after all. The shift of alignment performed by the facilitator (between public screen and personal screen) occasions P_1’s response and progression into the business, namely the delivery of an item to be included in the cluster of items. It may also be the case that, by withholding a response to the topic-initiating question, the participant encourages the facilitator to, at least temporarily, finish looking at his personal screen and provide some further display that he is prepared and ready to listen by means of orienting his gaze at the public screen, where “they can all meet each other”.

This immediately points to couple of insights:

1) There is evidence to suggest that the participants are sensitive to the use of the computer software and in particular to the facilitator’s gaze at the public screen. The timing of P_1’s answer at line 04 seems to be intimately related to the facilitator’s shift in gaze between the public screen and the personal screen.

2) The public screen becomes the site where “everyone can meet each other”, without the need to locate each other physically in the room. This is occasioned by the position of the participants and the facilitator in the room, with the facilitator being the closest to the public screen. This allows the participants to be aware of two matters at the same time: the activities that the facilitator is engaged in and the activities that are taking place on the public screen. This may thus turn out to have important implications for the design of the room layout.

To continue the analysis concerning the facilitator’s question’s preferred response (that is, a “no”-concern answer), I will further draw upon the findings of Heritage, Robinson,
Elliott, Beckett, and Wilkes (2007) and Heritage and Robinson (2011). Heritage et al. (2007) noted that in primary-care interactions, physicians often ask “Is there anything else you want to address in the visit today?” to elicit additional concerns from patients in medical visits. In everyday conversation, the “any”-formulation conveys an expectation that the co-participant will say “no”, whereas the “some”-formulation anticipates a “yes”. Heritage et al. (2007) found that when doctors used the “any”-formulation to elicit additional concerns, patients who had indicated on a pre-visit survey that they had multiple concerns oriented to this formulation as they would in everyday contexts: they were more likely to respond that they had no more concerns. However, when patients who were asked “Is there something else you want to address in the visit today?” were more likely to express additional concerns. Citing Heritage et al. (2007), Heritage and Robinson (2011) further noted that doctors rarely perform the follow-up question (such as, “Is there anything else we need to take care of today?”) at the recommended time, that is, after the problem presentation vs. at the closing of the visit, which means that answers might not just get delayed, but actually suppressed altogether, thus negating the question’s purpose in eliciting additional concerns. In the extract presented in this chapter, however, what we can notice once more is that although the question prefers a “no”-type answer, the invitation to review is implicitly accepted and the next action is P_1’s proposal of an item to be added to the cluster of ideas. What was achieved, therefore, was the actual recruitment of assistance of participants. So then, the next relevant question that comes to mind is when did exactly this happen, at what sequential position? At the “problem presentation” stage or at the “closing of the topic” phase?

Considering how the findings in this chapter seem to be rather contrasting with the findings of Heritage et al. (2007) (in the sense that people can actually say “yes” to the “any”-formulated questions) and more aligned with the findings of Heritage and Robinson (2011) regarding the timing of the turn, also that the 0.5-second pause may actually not anticipate something problematic but rather the participant’s delicate search for the right time to talk (that is, when the facilitator would actually become attentive to his answer), let us further consider an additional element to the analysis, which may turn out to explain the phenomenon under consideration and shed light onto how exactly it is possible to deliver an invitation to review under the shape of a “yes/no”-interrogative which seems to prefer a “no”-type answer. The question under investigation, “is there anything else, (. ) related to partnerships”, is prefaced by the word “okay”, which made me interested in how the entire turn was built and the relevance of the same for the interaction. For this further analysis, I will draw upon the study by Button and Casey (1984).
Button and Casey (1984) studied the *boundaried* form of topic transition, in which the closure of one topic is followed by the opening of another. They examined the use of topic initial elicitors and the sequence of talk that they initiate. As per their findings, topic initial elicitors segment talk and one of the places where they may occur is following closing components, such as the marker “okay”. Additionally, utterances that act as topic initial elicitors include components (such as “else”) that indicate that anything that is said in response to the enquiry is an invitation to provide new material, so it is “further” for a topic that is approaching closure. In the words of Button and Casey (1984, p. 170), “else is a component that is commonly used in topic initial turns to mark an orientation to a contrast between prior and further talk” [emphasis added]. In line with the above, the utterance “Okay. Eh::: and then eh: is there anything else, (.) related to partnerships” can be heard to segment talk, wherein the further talk elicited will be positioned as emerging out of the enquiry made by the facilitator and not out of the immediately prior talk. Hence, it is relevant to topic organisation. This may explain why the participants in the extract analysed produced further participation.

5.4.2 The absent request to correct the cluster of items and the absent apology

The next sequence to be examined is concerned with the act of correcting (lines 07-21, Extract 5.13), in particular, the absent request to delete a duplicate category that has been introduced by mistake on the screen by one of the participants. The fragment is also displaying an absent apology.

**Extract 5.13**

```
07   P_6: That's the same as thirteen.=
08      =I had a (.).β a wobbly finger.
    f:        --->β:places hand on mouse again--->
09         (0.2)
10   F:   Eh::: [°ah hah ha° hah hah ]
11   P_many: [ah HAH HA HA HAH HAH] [βHAH HAH ]
12   F:   [βEW(h)ere isβ]
        --->βmoves mouse on public
        screen--->
13   where is where is [thirteen,β ] (.)
        --->βremoves hand from mouse--->
14   P_4:   [0Δ<straight up>.]
    @>>looks at public screen--->
    △points at public screen--->
15   F:   Clock.#
```
Here, the item numbered “thirteen” on the screen is identical to item numbered “twelve”. In fact, what has happened is that one of the participants has accidentally pressed the Enter key button twice on his individual laptop, which led to duplicating the item that he had typed in. The next relevant action is thus the correction of the public screen by means of eliminating the duplicate. Two additional observations are that (1) the participant having made the mistake is the only one who knows there is a mistake (as the other participants may just believe that two different people could have thought and typed in the same item) and (2) the deletion of the duplicate can only be performed by the facilitator, as he is the only one who can edit the public screen from his master laptop.

This fragment shows a complex request, that I argue is, in fact, an absent request. The first observation I would make is that some other action could have happened at line 07, such as a direct request to delete the duplicate category from the screen (e.g., “Could you delete number thirteen as thirteen and twelve are the same.”). But this does not happen and we may thus wonder what happens instead. The speaker P_6 starts off with an announcement, an action-projecting: “That’s the same as thirteen” (line 07). As Schegloff (1980) showed, an action-projecting often prefaces the preface of the projected action, that is, it prefaces the pre-request, the pre-advice, pre-suggestion, pre-announcement, etc. And so the action-projecting functions as a “pre-pre”, as a preliminary to the preface. Schegloff also stated that a preface prepares for the final action by providing the topic of the projected action, that is, it leads up to the projected action. P_6’s action-projecting is followed by an account of the problem (“I had a wobbly finger”) at line 08.
This announcement is initially acknowledged by the facilitator, who is seen to place his hand on the mouse again, followed by a question (lines 12-13) intended to locate the item “thirteen” on the screen, which he finally finds at line 18. His discovery is confirmed by P_4 at line 19. The combination between the acknowledgement marker “okay” uttered at line 20 and the removal of his hand from the mouse is insufficient however to put matters to rest and this is seen in P_6’s next turn, who intervenes with an upgraded account at line 21 (“=It was so: important I pressed it twice”). Having not been granted the implicit request to delete the duplicate, P_6 uses his turn at line 21 to upgrade his prior account of the problem. But what we can see is that P_6 never formulates a direct request. It is interesting, as stating the problem does not just preface the projected implicit action by providing the topic of the projected action. It also serves as the account for the request, and it implicitly provides the reason why the recipient, that is, the facilitator, should accept the request (stated bluntly, I had a wobbly finger and I pressed the button twice. But you have the solution to remove the duplicate from the screen).

What it is achieved then is the facilitator accepting to grant the request before it has been explicitly produced by the participant; in other words, after the pursuit of P_6, the facilitator will actually end up making an offer (“Ca- can I delete that,”) at line 26 (see next Section 5.4.3), wherein an offer can be generally seen to satisfy “some want or need of the recipient’s or […] assist in the resolution of a difficulty or misfortune experienced by the recipient” (Curl, 2006, p. 1258). Building up the sequence in this way, the participant enables the facilitator to make an offer. This is made possible by the succession of a request-projection uttered as an announcement and the stating of a problem, to the effect that the stating of the problem is to be heard in the context of the projected action, for which the facilitator is supposed to have the solution (see Houtkoop-Steenstra, 1990, for a more in-depth study regarding accounting for requests or proposals).

The design of the sequence could be summarized as follows:

- **Action-projecting announcement** (“pre-pre” or preliminary to the preface)
- **Account of the problem** (“pre” or preface)
- **(Absent request)**
- **Offer**

When an action-projecting turn is followed by a description of the problem, such description prepares for the projected action in the following ways:

1) It defines the projected action as a request, rather than as an announcement.
2) It provides an account for the projected request. In this sense, then, the speaker shows that he has good reasons to ask the recipient to do something, which again may convince the recipient that he should preferably accept the request.

Therefore, I suggest that building up a request in this way — that is, using action-projecting announcement and accounts of the problem, but never uttering a direct request — does mainly accounting work which plays a role in establishing a preference for accepting the request rather than rejecting it. Additionally, such prefaces also play a role in assigning the preference for offers over requests, supporting Sacks (1992b, p. 207)’ claim that “[t]here is in general a difference between requests and offers, a preference for offers over requests” (the study of the preference for offering rather than requesting can also be found in the works of Lindström, 2005; Robinson & Bolden, 2010; and Schegloff, 1979, 2007).

The indication of a problem by the participant and the offering of a solution by the facilitator achieve the same outcome as a request sequence (that is, the removal of the duplicate item from the public screen). But what is different is that requests and offers create different normative obligations (Kendrick & Drew, 2014). In this sense, a request is generally the first pair part of the adjacency pair and restricts the possible actions in the second pair part to only two, acceptance or rejection (Schegloff & Sacks, 1973), with the recipient having an obligation to commit to the provision of assistance or not; an offer, on the other hand, is generally made in the next position (second pair part) after the uttering of a problem which creates not an obligation, but an opportunity for the recipient to offer assistance. Although finding that the empirical evidence does not necessarily support the claim that offers are preferred actions and requests are dispreferred, Kendrick and Drew (2014) note that “the observation that indications of problems commonly elicit offers of assistance suggests that there may be a normative, though not necessarily obligatory, relationship between recognizable problems and offers of solutions in social interaction” (p. 111).

Furthermore, another interesting aspect of the above fragment is the presence of an absent apology (Drew & Hepburn, 2016). Apologies are composed structurally of two components: “an apology word/phrase” + “admission/transgression/nature of transgression”. Here, the “admission/transgression/nature of transgression” is uttered by the participant P_6 twice, at lines 8 and 21 (Extract 5.14).
P_6 admits thus to having made some mistake/wrongdoing, but while his admission is accompanied by explanations (accounts), it is not accompanied by an apology in none of the cases. Moreover, P_6’s second admission and explanation at line 21 is followed by the facilitator’s “that’s fine” at line 22 (Extract 5.15). I will discuss the action that “that’s fine” accomplishes in the next Section 5.4.3.

I found this sequence to be similar to the examples provided by Drew and Hepburn (2016, p. 127), such as the following:

(18) [NB:IV:10:22-23]
1    Lottie:  WuhI got th:twro:n.g.
2                   ()
3    Emma:  Oh that’s ( ) th:at’s t|okay2·hhhhh

The pattern is the same: the speakers admit to some wrongdoing (and may or may not accompany the admission with an account), but do not apologise; in response to which the recipients absolve them of the wrongdoing. In this sense, as Drew and Hepburn (2016, p. 128) pointed out, “because absolution is the appropriate action with which to accept an apology, absolution without an apology having been made treats the other as though they had apologised”.

5.4.3 “That’s fine”: The offer to correct the cluster of items
For the next analytical claims, I turn to lines 21-30 (Extract 5.16), wherein I am particularly interested in the use of the expression “that’s fine” by the facilitator and its interactional implications. As established previously in Section 5.4.2, there is a correction to be performed; this correction has been finally recognized by the facilitator, when he places his hand on the
mouse (while P_6 is still delivering his turn at line 21), projecting a possible action that he is about to perform.

Extract 5.16

21  P_6: =It was so: imporβtant I pressed it twice.
    f: --->βplaces hand on mouse again--->
22  F: Tha- that's fine. So (.)βthis one
    --->βmoves mouse on item thirteen--->
23  is the same as βtwelve; yeah?=
    --->β#places mouse cursor on item twelve--->
    fig
24  P_11: =<You bet yeah>.
25  F: Yeah↓ that's fineβ.
    --->βselects item twelve with mouse
        cursor--->
26  Ca- βcan I delete that,
    --->βremoves hand from mouse and reaches the delete button
        on personal laptop--->
    --->«looks at personal screen--->
27  w(1.0)
    f: --->«looks at public screen--->
28  F: Err::
29  P_3: Yes.
30  F: Yeaβhβ .ptk
    --->β#presses delete button and removes item twelve from
        the public screenβ
    fig

The facilitator’s “Tha- that’s fine” at line 22 may be employed as one form of sequence-closing assessment, as a means to mark a no-problem orientation to what P_6 displayed concern about (that is, that one issue has accidentally been entered twice on the screen). Line 22 can also be understood as re-assessing the situation at hand as non-problematic following the insufficiency of “okay” (line 20, Extract 5.13) to put such matters at rest. In any case, “Tha- that’s fine” positions the facilitator as voicing what is acceptable to happen during the meeting. The facilitator continues his turn by asking for reassurance that the two categories are the same (lines 22-23). He gets confirmation from P_11 at line 24, upon which he recycles his previous turn and at line 25 utters “Yeah that’s fine”, followed immediately by selecting the item “twelve” on the public screen.

As the facilitator selects number “twelve” on the screen, he makes explicit what “yeah that’s fine” left unstated: that it is actually “not fine” and will proceed to attend to the matter further by initiating the procedure of deleting the duplicate. The participant’s project is not to
just have the problem acknowledged as non-problematic, from his “perspective” things are not yet resolved, as the category is still on the screen, when in fact it should be deleted. The evidence for this lies in P_6’s pursuit at line 21 (“It was so: important I pressed it twice”). It is now that the facilitator’s removal of hand from the mouse is immediately followed by the placement of the same hand on the Delete button located on the laptop, while asking for permission to delete, which is granted by P_3 at line 29. This is in contrast with the facilitator’s prior removal of hand from the mouse, which triggered P_6’s pursuit.

Based on the analysis performed in this Section 5.4.3, we can infer that both participants and the facilitator orient to three kinds of sets of deontic rights: the right to make an offer (“Ca- can I delete that,”, performed by the facilitator), the right to accept and/or reject the offer (“Yes”, performed by the participant), and the right to implement the offer (embodied action, the actual action of deleting the duplicate item, performed by the facilitator). These rights comprise further aspects of a deontic status, namely, the socially and institutionally grounded rights of the facilitator to carry out a certain action, and a deontic stance, a public display of these rights (Stevanovic & Peräkylä, 2012).

There is, nonetheless, a fourth kind of deontic right, which seems to emerge as an interactional achievement. What is noticeable is that the duplicate category was introduced by participant P_6; nevertheless, the final confirmation requested by the facilitator to delete the duplicate is granted by another participant, P_3. It becomes obvious then that once the category has been interactionally established to be a duplicate, then any of the participants become entitled to confirm the act of deletion, and not just the author of the duplicate. The right to accept the facilitator’s offer to delete the duplicate becomes a shared right among the participants.

5.5 Discussion

When facilitated meetings happen to involve the use of digital artefacts, the interrelated issues of how the facilitator manages to collect the participants’ contributions, introduce them into the computer software to create a conceptual map, and further structure them, arise. It is fruitful, thus, to consider the facilitator’s project not only as a mere operation of the digital artefact, but as a fully embodied activity which involves the accomplishment of multimodal participation.

At the most basic level, the facilitator has to help the team members to structure and integrate their ideas. On some occasions, such processes take place relatively easy, in the sense that participants communicate with each other, regardless of the facilitator’s facilitating
routine. On other occasions, however, interaction seems to matter for the determination of outcome. This becomes obvious when the facilitator issues invitations to review the public “screen”, moment when he becomes part of the process and discussion going on. I have provided an example of such encounters. In the extract presented, if the facilitator had not issued an invitation, the participants might have not intervened and the facilitator would had been able to move to the next topic.

By examining the facilitator’s work, the chapter has recovered previously unelaborated, to the best of my knowledge, features of facilitation work. To the best of my knowledge, also, this is the first attempt to access such phenomena directly in the context of real-time facilitation. For example, I have found that there is a distinction between “the person who performs an action” and “the person who is accountable for the action”. These are, indeed, interactionally managed and recognizable states in my extract. I presume these are key categories for the facilitator doing facilitation generally, that actually both the facilitator and the participants are interested in making it clear who is accountable for a certain action (e.g., “deleting” something from the “screen”) and who is accountable for that decision.

Then, it is interesting to note that throughout the extract presented, the facilitator never turned away from the screen to face the participants; he always looked either at the public screen or at his personal screen. Even when he asked questions, he never looked at the participants. What is interesting is that this does not seem to be problematic, interactionally speaking, at any point in time. This practice shows how facilitators and participants smoothly and unproblematically “find” each other without the need to look at each other and how they come to recognize where they are in the process of structuring the ideas only by means of orienting to the public screen/conceptual map involved.

In this sense, we might also say that parts of the smooth accomplishment of participation/integration of the ideas is achieved by virtue of the participants’ “indirect seeing” of the embodied conduct of the facilitator, which is facilitated by both his position in the room and by the use of the computer software. Consequently, this thesis takes the “seeing” of the screen more seriously, in the analysis of integrating ideas with the aid of technology. This is in contrast with the findings of other papers, such as the one by Nielsen (2012), who found that after reading from a coloured card, “there is a pause in which the facilitator changes his body posture. He turns away from the whiteboard, faces the group and scans their faces. By not speaking while gazing at the rest of the participants, the facilitator shows them that something is to come from them, that he is not the one to speak” (p. 95).
One of the challenges would be to grasp how alternative ways of looking at the screen (such as staring, glancing, looking closer, and so on) might become relevant for the practical constitution of facilitation.

A key insight is that although it is the participants who initially come up with the ideas displayed on the screen, the cluster of ideas is in a sense achieved through the subsequent work of the facilitator which involves the manipulation of the computer software; this work is then “okayed” or corrected by the participants. Given that a facilitator is generally defined as a process expert and not a content expert (Kaner et al., 2014), this makes sense: the process of creating the cluster is managed by the facilitator, who is the expert in the use of Group Explorer software and the content of the cluster is reviewed by the participants, who are the content experts at the meeting. This may explain the facilitator’s failed attempts to close the activity of reviewing the cluster and move on to a next one: the participants orient to such division of labour, insisting on carrying forward the cluster correction. In other words, the facilitator’s initial invitation to review the cluster of ideas invokes a claim that he lacks certain information (being in a K- position) and that the participants at the meeting have that information (being projected in a K+ position) (Heritage, 2012). But on the other hand, the process of grouping ideas under the same theme to create a cluster means that the facilitator is also managing the content itself, having and exercising the possibility to decide what might be or might not be included in the cluster; and in this sense, he is projected as in a knowledgeable or K+ position. What I find interesting and intriguing is the temporality and relativity of the K-/K+ epistemic gradient.

Furthermore, by reviewing the extract presented, I became very much interested in the question of what both “facilitators” and “participants” look like, how bodily movements (besides talk) during the meeting might display intentions towards the accomplishment of a particular action. Being a facilitator and being a participant – both categories take work and there is little doubt that both sides have to be skilled in recognizing each other’s work. By reviewing their practices, studies might start to access previously unexamined skills and competencies that are, presumably, central to so much facilitating activity. For example, eye-contact is one of the highly praised skills, more of a common-sense knowledge. Nevertheless, even without eye-contact during physical encounters, people can “find” each other by means of displaying embodied intentions and accomplishing actions, which are understood by the rest of the audience. This seems to be especially the case when the meeting involves the use of computer software. This is not to say that eye contact is not important, but rather that our
knowledge of it is only partial and that technology has an important role to play, constraining and/or affording progressivity in interaction.

Lastly, by having all the participants’ contributions publicly displayed through the conceptual map, *reading at a glance* becomes possible. Not only that, but the available pool of ideas also makes it possible for the facilitator to select any of them to talk about first. Hence, choosing a particular topic is really up to the facilitator. He decides which ideas to pick, and therefore, which ideas to discuss. Hence, although as an analyst of the process it may not be possible to determine whether he randomly or deliberately picks an idea/cluster as the first to talk about, it is possible to ascertain that by him doing so, he has the capacity to shape the process by orchestrating the topical talk. This questions the facilitator’s role as content-neutral, as proposed by leading practitioners in the field, such as Kaner *et al.* (2014), a finding which is also indicated by Nielsen (2012).

I have built this chapter as a single case analysis. Schegloff (1988) noted that although single cases can serve “to launch a proposal” (p. 442) about a pattern in interaction, the proposal will be nonetheless, only “a conjecture” (p. 442) and proving the practice will require the collection of a “substantial number of occurrences” (p. 451). I am, thus aware, that additional work is required to be able to make analytical claims about patterns in interaction in the creation of conceptual maps during facilitated meetings, but hope that this represents an initial step towards such endeavours. As Hindmarsh and Llewelyn (2018) stated: “[…] even a few seconds of video allows us to unearth a dense and rich social organisation. It facilitates insights into the fleeting, yet fundamentally ordered and organised, nature of everyday work” (p. 431). Or in the words of Schegloff (2010), “one of the key tasks of researchers in developing claims for a phenomenon is not to sacrifice the detailed examination of single cases on the altar of broad claims” (p. 42). The next chapter is the last analytical chapter and in it, I will further focus on the process of shared decision-making.
Chapter 6

The act of shared decision-making

6.0 Introduction

The previous chapter described how, in facilitated meetings, the “integration of ideas elicited” sequence unfolded, which further led to the construction of a conceptual map. However, at this point in the meetings, the participants have only agreed upon the existence of a group of thematic issues of significance that would need further discussion. These thematic issues are further to be assigned a level of priority, upon which participants need to make a decision regarding the allocation of organizational resources to the chosen priorities. Hence, this chapter follows on to explore how participants and facilitators go about making decisions involving the distribution of organisational resources that are considered to be limited in nature (organisational resources are understood here as both monetary <financial> and non-monetary <such as personal units of energy and effort>). Given the great variation existent in defining and understanding decision-making and decisions, as I shall show in the next subsection, in this chapter I aim to gain some analytic control over the phenomenon of decision-making by limiting my analysis to instances in which the participants specifically talk about the allocation of organisational resources to the chosen priorities.

Here, I am also interested in how talk is bound by various objects which are mobilized in these activities. A key focus of the chapter is how different objects in the meeting’s environment emerge and are constituted as essential resources in accomplishing the initiation of the decision-making process. The objects (artefacts) of interest are the public screen, the personal screens, and the turning-point system devices. I will show how the participants and facilitators recruit and index these artefacts at particular junctions in the decision-making process and how they work collaboratively with talk, to progress the activity of decision-making. Furthermore, I am also interested in exploring how epistemic and deontic orientations are shaping decision-making discussions and constituting facilitator-participant interactions.

The chapter has the following structure. In what follows, I first provide a brief discussion of the literature on decision-making (Section 6.1). I further organize the analysis into two main analytical sections, according to whether the decisional process is selection-based (Section 6.2) or discussion-based (Section 6.3). Thus, I will first describe how
facilitators initiate the decision-making process and I will then show how both facilitators and participants orient to the meeting’s “semiotic field” (C Goodwin, 2000, p. 1499; C. Goodwin, 2013, p. 11), that is, how the screens and turning point system devices are mobilized in response to the facilitator’s initial turn, aiming to reach a decision. Further, I summarize the findings and reflect on their implications for the study of decision-making sequences in facilitated computer-supported workplace meetings (Section 6.4).

6.1 Decision-making
What is a decision and what is decision-making? And are they really noticeable in interaction? We often talk about decisions as if they were concrete, manifest “things” (Huisman, 2001). But they are largely intangible and cannot be really attributed to a certain utterance in the interaction. As such, when I looked at my data corpus, it became clear to me that it is not always straightforward to identify when a decision is actually made. It is safe to say, then, that in my data, decision-making is indeed an incremental activity in which the members move their agendas forward, step by step (Boden, 1994). But even under such circumstances, even if I cannot limit the chapter to the analysis of single utterances, it should still be possible to identify particular episodes of talk in which decisions occur, as such, it should be possible to:

1) Locate the emergence of decision-making at the turn-by-turn level of the interaction in which meeting participants share their views. Otherwise stated, it should be possible to identify the exact moment the decision-making process is initiated.  
2) Identify at what moment in the interaction we can reasonably assume that the facilitator and/or the participants feel that a decision has been reached.  

In this data, the decision-making process is either selection-based or discussion-based. I will show that in the episodes of interaction identified, facilitators recursively formulate prior talk and assess the states of affair. I will also show that the usual starting point of a decision-making episode can take a variety of grammatical forms and is generally initiated by the facilitators.

Some other questions that I have raised during the examination of the meeting data and that have guided my analytical insights are:

1) What does “shared decision-making” look like in practice? Does it mean it is shared among the participants or is it shared between participant(s) and facilitator(s)?  
2) Who is entitled to propose a course of action: the participants or the facilitators? And how do the participants orient to such proposals?
3) Who utters positive or negative assessments? And do all assessments matter for the decision to be made? In other words, is there any redundant assessment?

4) Finally, whose agreement is relevant for the decision to be made? Can a decision be made by a single participant at the meeting or should everyone agree with the proposed course of action?

The studies that have investigated team decision-making from a discourse perspective are rather limited (Atkinson, 1995; Boden, 1994; Cicourel, 1968; Sarangi & Roberts, 1999; Silverman, 1987). The reason behind may be that it is often difficult to identify when a decision has been made or even whether a decision has been made, in a conventional, speech act way. It is worth noting that conversation analysis can show how actions are done inexplicitly, in the sense that we all understand that something that been done even when it is “intangible”. Furthermore, decisions as outcomes are frequently confused with decision-making as a process, with the presumption that the latter is related to the former in some unproblematic way (Halvorsen, 2010): “Decisions as such are, in fact, largely invisible as empirical objects; they only stand still as long as a static, snapshot observation is made” (Halvorsen, 2010, p. 276). Decision-making, on the other hand, can be located in the interactional sequences, in the “laminations of actions and reactions” (Boden, 1994, p. 22) of the organization. The decision-making process is an incremental activity, as such, decisions cannot generally be attributed to single utterances: “Decisions are virtually never standalone affairs but rather are part of a sequence of “tinkering” with some organizational problem or policy” (Boden, 1994, p. 182).

Previous analyses of discourse strategies that participants employ provide evidence of the situated nature of decision-making. A range of different sites have been studied, among which the following fields received more contributions: education (Barnes, 2007; Bartu, 2003; Hjörne, 2005; Mehan, 1983), business (Henderson & Jurma, 1981; Huisman, 2001; Kwon, Clarke, & Wodak, 2009; Menz, 1999; Sanders, 2007; Wasson, 2000), health and social care (Cicourel, 1990; Graham, 2009; Hall, Slembruck & Sarangi, 2006; Hughes and Griffiths, 1997; Måseide, 2006; Nikander, 2003; Shaw, Stokoe, Gallagher, Aladangady, & Marlow, 2016); nevertheless, there are still relatively few studies within each empirical domain. A systematic discussion of some of the above studies and more can be found in Halvorsen (2010). Additionally, there is still a need for further studies of team decision-making across a variety of workplace contexts. Huisman (2001) further calls for confronting decision-making theories with empirical data from actual talk. To the best of my knowledge,
the context considered in the present chapter (and thesis, overall) has not been examined so far in relation to decision-making.

Generally, decisions are seen as a “commitment to future actions” (Miller, Hickson, & Wilson, 1996). Consistent with this definition, I investigate the interational and linguistic features that refer to the construction of a commitment to a future action. Furthermore, this chapter aligns to some extent with Weick’s (1995) and Simon’s (1945) works. Weick, on the one hand, investigated how sense-making in organizations is being produced; nevertheless, he had a more psychological-cognitive approach, and this chapter aims to look at the micro-details of the interactions during which collaborative sense-making and shared decision-making takes place. Simon, on the other hand, advanced that decisions tend to be satisficing, rather than optimizing; in this chapter, I aim to show how the process of decision-making is not bounded only rationally and cognitively, but it is also contingent upon the context of talk, in this sense, I aim to show that decisions are socially situated and interactionally achieved (Boden, 1994), and also technologically-bound.

In the analysis that follows, I investigate two ways of carrying out the decision-making process, which I have termed “selection-based” (technology-bound) and “discussion-based” (non-technology-bound), wherein: (1) The selection-based decision-making process affords the listing of possible courses of action from which the participants can individually and anonymously choose by selecting from the turning-point system (TPS) device; (2) The discussion-based decision-making process affords the launching of particular courses of action (proposals) by the facilitators, which participants can accept, counter, or reject.

### 6.2 Selection-based decision-making

In this first section, I focus on unpacking the “selection-based decision-making” process. These are rather short and compact episodes, which allows me to be able to present and describe them in their entirety. The typical layout of the meeting employing a selection-based decision-making process is provided in the below Figure 6.1. Here, the participants were given the task of deciding between four possible courses of action, that is, do, plan, sub-contract, or monitor, for every issue under discussion (the descriptions of these four definitions are provided in Figure 6.3).

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1 The TPS device is a Personal Response System for use within PowerPoint. Each participant at the meeting uses a portable, handheld device that allows them to vote or make a selection by pressing a button.
The episode (Extract 6.1) chosen to unpack first starts with the facilitator displaying on the public screen the question to which he has requested the participants to decide upon. Figure 6.2 shows the question displayed on the public screen, along with the four options to select among and Figure 6.3 presents the significance or meaning of the said four options, as it is displayed to the participants. Option 1, called DO, refers to a matter which has high impact on the organisation, requires ongoing focus and effort, or needs immediate intervention. Option 2, called PLAN, indicates a matter that has high impact on the organisation, but which does not need immediate intervention. Option 3, called SUB-CONTRACT, denotes an issue of low impact within the organisation, but which needs immediate intervention. Lastly, option 4, called MONITOR, indicates an issue of low impact within the organisation, which moreover does not need immediate attention.
In Extract 6.1 above, lines 1 and 3 indicate the initiation of the decision-making process through the facilitator’s wh-question (“The key question is, (1.0) what would be the priority you would give it.”). It is observed that the participants anticipate what they will be asked to do, which is reflected by them picking up the TPS device before the facilitator fully delivers his question. The facilitator’s turn is thus heard as a directive and participants orient to it as such.

Figures 6.5-6.9 illustrate the embodied actions of the facilitator after he has initiated the decision-making process and whilst the participants register their decisions via the TPS device.
We see the facilitator looking at his screen (Figures 6.5, 6.7, and 6.9), looking at some papers on his desk (Figure 6.6), and taking some notes (Figure 6.8). He does not look at the participants, nor does he display that he is “doing nothing” while waiting for the participants to decide, but rather engages in other activities, displaying at this time a preference for progressivity with minimal interaction between him and the participants. Thus, he ensures that the participants have their moment of privacy in the act of deciding, without any surveillance from the facilitator. At the same time, participants are engaged in pressing buttons on their TPS devices, after which they can be noticeably seen to place the TPSs on the table (Figure 6.10), with a loud noise. This takes 15 seconds.
After 15 seconds have passed, there are no more TPS devices being placed on the table, which indicates that participants have finished registering their decisions. The facilitator is then seen to look at his screen, upon which he delivers an utterance as a declarative (line 05), indicating that there are still participants left to record their decisions, “A couple more”. The facilitator’s utterance does not indicate, however, who is missing to register the decision. Nor does he know who is “missing”. The way the technology works is that as the participants respond by selecting and pressing a button, the “Responses” box on the facilitator’s master laptop will indicate how many votes have been counted; this also tells if anyone is yet to respond. The “Responses” box can only be seen by the facilitator. In case the number of responses does not match the number of participants (or handsets), then the participants can press again until the number of responses matches the number of handsets. The TRP system will not double-count the votes that did register the first time around.

The point I wish to make here is that some asymmetry of knowledge between the participants and the facilitator is revealed. The facilitator has a master laptop which acts as an intermediary between the personal consoles and TPS devices of the participants and the public screen. Thus, the facilitator is able to see everything that the participants do by means of technology. Hence, he is able to check and identify the number of decisions registered on
his master laptop. He knows if any are missing. The participants, on the other hand, do not have this knowledge; even more so, participants do not have the certainty that their decisions have even been registered upon pressing the button. This is reflected at line 06, after the facilitator’s utterance, wherein within the 10 seconds gap many participants are seen to pick up their TPS devices and re-register their decision; in this sense, they orient to the facilitator’s utterance (“A couple more”) as being a new directive.

Let us take one specific example, that of participant P, who in the video recording is seen to look around at the other participants in a hesitative manner, before deciding to pick up the TPS once again (Figure 6.11). This hesitation also suggests that the new directive by the facilitator may not have been expectable at this point in the interaction.

Extract 6.1-cont.

07 F: One tuh go.
08 -----------------------------------(2.0)-----------------------------------
  ((P presses the button and places the TPS on the table again, with a loud noise))

*Figure 6.12*

As the facilitator indicates that just one more decision is missing (line 07), “One tuh go”, participant P is seen to finally decide to press the button of his TPS device again, upon which he places the TPS on the table (Figure 6.12), with a loud noise.
Extract 6.1-cont.

09 (1.0)
10 F: THank you.
11 (5.0)
   ((Facilitator displays the results on the public screen))
12 F: Very clear.

Figure 6.13

After a 1-second gap, the facilitator indicates that all decisions have been recorded with a “THank you” (line 10), followed by him displaying the results on the public screen. At line 12, the facilitator then proceeds to proffer an overall evaluation of the collective decisions – in this particular case, most of the participants have decided that the action to take is a “PLAN”, indicated by the heightened bar in Figure 6.13, and which leads the facilitator to utter “Very clear.”. The facilitator is then seen to proceed to the next topic.

Let us consider Extract 6.2, which provides a second example of the way the facilitator proceeds through the selection-based decision-making process. For simplicity of exposition, Figures are not included here, but relevant comments with regards to the embodied actions identified are placed in parenthesis.
Extract 6.2

01  F: So (.) <what priority would you give it> (1.5) °is (.)
02    (participants start picking up the TPS))
03  03 the: key question°.
04    (12.0) (participants press the button and place the TPS on the table, with a loud noise))
05  05 F: (H)One (.) tuh go.
06    (5.0) ((some of the participants look at each other and then re-register their decisions and place the TPS back on the table))
07  07 F: THANK You: ((F makes some loud aspiration sound))
08    (4.0)
09    ((Facilitator displays the results on the public screen))
10  10 F: No surprise the:[re.][continues])
11    ((Chuckles in the room))]

The same basic structure from Extract 6.1 can be observed in Extract 6.2: the facilitator initiates the decision-making process by means of displaying the question and the options to choose from on the public screen, while uttering “So (.) <what priority would you give it> (1.5) °is (.) the: key question°”. Although started as a wh-question, the directive is finalized as a declarative; nevertheless, although formulated slightly different, the facilitator’s turn is still understood by the participants as a request to do something, in this case, to register their decisions, which is what they do next. Once again, it can be observed at line 2 that the participants start picking up their individual TPS devices before the facilitator has fully delivered his directive, which stands as evidence of the participants’ understanding of what is required from them. Once again, upon completing the registration of their decisions, the participants start placing the TPS on the table, one by one, with a loud noise. At line 05, the facilitator indicates that one decision is still missing, upon which some of the participants are seen to pick the TPS device once again, while looking at each other and displaying hesitation, and re-register their decisions. This is followed by them placing the TPS device on the table, again with a loud noise. The facilitator thanks everyone (line 07) and after a 4-second gap, he displays the decisions on the public screen and assesses them, “No surprise the:re”, at line 10.

The remaining instances of interaction identified displayed the same pattern. I proceed, thus, to provide an overall view of the other cases. To summarize, in the above explored cases, the facilitator is seen to initiate the decision-making process with a directive, while displaying on the public screen both the issue under discussion and the possible courses
of action that participants must choose from. In general, the directives are observed to be delivered via one of the following three ways: (1) *wh*-questions, (2) YNIs, and (3) declaratives.

(1) *wh*-questions:

Extract 6.3
01  F: The key question is (.) what would be the priority you would give it.

Extract 6.4
01  F: What would be the priority you would give it (2.5) to do anything about.

(2) YNIs:

Extract 6.5
01  F: Is it a priority to do anything about,

Extract 6.6
01  F: So: does it come up as a priority.

(3) declaratives:

Extract 6.7
01  F: So (.) <what priority would you give it> (1.5) "is (.) the: key question".

Extract 6.8
01  F: So (.) your PRIority please,

Extract 6.9
01  F: So: (.) the priority you would give it (.) please.

Extract 6.10
01  F: Let’s look at the priority you give it (.) please,

Extract 6.11
01  F: Let’s capture,

Extract 6.12
01  F: Let’s get your priority on this.

Extract 6.13
01  F: Let’s try that (.) please.
Participants generally anticipate what they are asked to do; the evidence resides in the fact that they tend to pick up the TPS device to mark their decision before the facilitator completes the delivery of his directive. In other words, participants anticipate the end of turns and prepare to respond before the current TCU is complete (Sacks et al., 1974; Schegloff, 1987). Further, as soon as they mark their decision by means of pressing a specific button, they start placing the TPS down on the table, generally with a loud sound, one by one, indicating that they have completed the task. Thus, the actual decision-making of the participants is not verbalized, but rather embodied, and is both visible and audible through the conduct of the participants. The silence that follows next is indicative of everyone having completed the registration of their decisions.

It is within the short period of silence that emerges after the loud sounds stop, that the facilitator checks the number of decisions on his master laptop and indicates if there are decisions yet to be registered; it is understood that the reason why he knows such information is because he can see the number and type of decisions on his master laptop as these are being produced by the participants. He generally indicates the “missing” decisions via one of the following turns, delivered using either declaratives (in most of the cases) or YNIs:

\[(1) \textit{declaratives:}\]

Extract 6.14
01 F: One tuh go.

Extract 6.15
01 F: There’s one out there (.). still.

Extract 6.16
01 F: Uhmm↓ (.). it’s still saying (.). one to go.

Extract 6.17
01 F: Four tuh go.

Extract 6.18
01 F: We’re still two votes short.

Extract 6.19
01 F: A couple mo:re please.

Extract 6.20
01 F: One tuh go (.). we’re still one short.
Extract 6.21
01 F: Still need one more (.) I’m afraid.

Extract 6.22
01 F: No: luck (.) I’m afraid,

Extract 6.23
01 F: ONE: to go (.) you’re- the finish line beckons.

(2) YNIs:
Extract 6.24
01 F: One more (.) ↑Any takers,

Extract 6.25
01 F: One more (.) anyone,

Following the indication of “missing” decisions, participants generally display a hesitating behaviour and look at each other, upon which they pick up the TPS device once again and press a specific button to register their decisions again, which will either override their prior decision (in case their prior decision was successfully recorded) or newly register their decision (in case the prior pressing of the button failed to register their decision). In any case, they do not have access to such information and their re-pressing of the button can be understood as simply trying to make sure that they have indeed registered their decisions. As such, the participants orient to the turn of the facilitator that indicates “missing” decisions as a new directive, with which, after a moment of hesitation, they comply; through their hesitation, however, the participants orient to the new directive as having lower entitlement and higher contingency than in the first case. The activity of re-pressing the button is noticed to generally solve the problem of the “missing” decision, leading to 100% of decisions being recorded. Subsequently, the facilitator indicates when everyone’s decision has been successfully recorded in the system via a declarative format, such as the following:

(1) declaratives:
Extract 6.26
01 F: Thank you.

Extract 6.27
01 F: We’re all in.
Great.

Thank you, we’re all in.

We’re there WELL done.

I have found only one case, presented below in Extract 6.31, in which the activity of re-pressing the button does not solve the problem of the “missing” decision. I take a look at what happens next.

So your PRIority please, (participants pressing the TPS)
There’s one out there (. ) still. (indistinct chatter, participants pressing the TPS again)
It is a shame that it won’t display the polling on the screen (. ) as it (. ) does on the pee cee. (participants pressing the TPS again)
One MO:re (. )↑Any takers, (participants pressing the TPS again)
Ummm (. ) it’s still saying (. ) one to go (1.0) very bizarre.

(10.0)({indistinct chatter, participants no longer pressing the TPS})

Oh kay, I’ll settle for now. (F chuckles, then displays the results on the public screen)

What we see here at line 13 is that the facilitator takes the decision to display the results on the public screen (“Oh kay, I’ll settle for now”) despite not having been able to collect all individual decisions. The following may be a possible explanation for the occurrence of “I’ll settle for now”: The selection-based decision-making process is, at least at this stage, a hypothetical one, in the sense that participants are not expected to express commitment to the outcome. They are rather in a position in which they themselves are attempting to obtain as much information as possible about the others’ position on a certain issue so as to gain a shared understanding. But commitment to implement a particular course
of action is not sought at this point in the interaction and a definitive decision is yet to be made, most likely in a future meeting. This analytic comment is also supported by the use of the expression “for now”, which refers to the decision to “settle” as being a \textit{temporary} one.

It is noticeable that it takes five turns (lines 3, 5, 8, 10, and 13) for the facilitator to finally “settle” and display the results without the inclusion of one individual decision. This may be explained by the fact that the first three turns are followed by the participants pressing the button on the TPS, re-recording their decisions, and displaying alignment with the facilitator’s directive. But after the fourth turn, none of the participants complies anymore, dis-aligning with the facilitator’s utterance and bringing total silence in the room. This silence is then broken by the facilitator who chooses to “settle”. But the fact that it does take five turns to “settle” is indicative of the facilitator’s struggle to include everyone’s decision into the results. It is only when this project fails repeatedly and participants do not comply anymore with the directive, that he orients instead to advancing the process, and thus, display the results. The orientation towards the advancement of the process is further evidenced by the use of the personal pronoun “I” in “I’ll settle for now”, in which the facilitator is clearly articulating that it is \textit{he} who is \textit{settling}, and not the participants.

To continue with the description of the patterns identified throughout the extracts, it is noticed that upon the display of the results on the screen, the facilitator utters either an assessment or a formulation. These include the following possibilities:

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textbf{(1) assessments:}
  \begin{itemize}
    \item Extract 6.32
    \begin{verbatim}
      01 F: O(h): kay, fantastic.
    \end{verbatim}
    \item Extract 6.33
    \begin{verbatim}
      01 F: VErY clear.
    \end{verbatim}
    \item Extract 6.34
    \begin{verbatim}
      01 F: It’s not a bur:ning issue.
    \end{verbatim}
    \item Extract 6.35
    \begin{verbatim}
      01 F: Okay (.) it’s not the \textit{burning} platform.
    \end{verbatim}
  \end{itemize}
  \item \textbf{(2) formulations (that have an evaluative character attached to them):}
  \begin{itemize}
    \item Extract 6.36
    \begin{verbatim}
      01 F: It’s a plan do.
    \end{verbatim}
  \end{itemize}
\end{itemize}
Extract 6.37
01  F:  "O(h):kay", it needs a PLAN.

Extract 6.38
01  F:  It’s a one.

Extract 6.39
01  F:  Okay (.) not the predominantly planning.

Extract 6.40
01  F:  That’s a pattern emerging between two and four (.) in this group.

A confirmation or disconfirmation of the assessment or evaluative formulation would be the next relevant action to take place and should be performed by the participants. But it does not happen. This indicates that what assessments and formulations do are noticing (see Chapter 4, also). There is no invitation to review or discuss the outcome and upon delivering an assessment or evaluative formulation, the facilitator closes the current topic under discussion and moves to the next thematic issue that requires a decision. By moving to the next thematic issue, the facilitator closes the current decision-making episode, at least temporarily.

In sum, the selection-based decision-making process can be represented as follows (Figure 6.14). Here, letters in parentheses indicate who is performing the respective action, either the facilitator (F) or the participant (P):

- **Decision**
  - Directive (F) ——— Option Selection (P)
  - Assessment (A)
  - Formulation (F)
  - Topic Closure (F)

Figure 6.14. The unfolding of the selection-based decision-making episode.
In line with the discussed above, I conclude that:

➢ The decision-making process is a complex phenomenon, comprising four (4) identifiable moments: (a) the utterance of a directive by the facilitator (which can be an iterative process, in case not everyone’s decision has been recorded), (b) the selection of an option and registration of the decision by the participants, (c) the delivery of an assessment or formulation by the facilitator, and (d) the topic closure by the facilitator (indicated by him moving on to the next thematic issue).

➢ The decision-making process starts with the facilitator uttering a directive, which can take the form of an interrogative or a declarative. In both the cases, the participants are seen to align with the directive by means of selecting an option and registering their decisions.

➢ The analysis reveals that a decision (at least a hypothetical one) has been reached upon the participants’ selection of a specific option. This is a fully embodied action. The evidence for this claim resides in the fact that, after everyone has registered his or her individual decision, no further “discussion” of the decisions registered takes place.

➢ The facilitator will generally do noticing either via assessments or formulations. Both the cases are delivered as declaratives and are immediately followed by the facilitator’s topic closing activity. This shows that the facilitator is generally not looking to elicit further participation. I say generally, as I found two cases (which I consider deviant) wherein the facilitators display an orientation towards triggering further discussion. I present one of these two cases below, in Extract 6.41.

➢ The entire decision-making episode is completed upon the facilitator’s topic-closing turn, which he uses to introduce a new topic, as well. In this sense, the same utterance is both topic-closing and topic-initiating.

➢ One of the aspects that are noticeable is that the participants’ decision-making process is fully embodied; no talk is present. The participants make a noticeably loud sound after they register their votes when they place their individual TPS on the table, to which the facilitator orients as indicative of the decision-making activity being complete.

➢ Overall, the decision-making process is seen to be technologically-bound and this can have important consequences for the interaction if we also consider the constraints of the process. The TPS plays a vital role in making a shared decision “visible” to others. As I have explained above, should a TPS fail to work, this would have a strong impact for the concerned participant, as it will not record his or her decision. The
facilitator shows a strong orientation towards including everyone’s decision in the results by means of repeating the activity, but when this is not possible (an impossibility to which participants themselves contribute by means of not complying with the facilitator’s directive to re-register their decisions), he shows an orientation to the progression of the process. I argue that this is possible only on the basis that the decision-making process in question is an exploratory one, and to some extent hypothetical, being more concerned with providing an overall snapshot of everyone’s positions on a certain issue rather than with establishing commitment to implement the decision.

As mentioned few lines above, before concluding this section, I provide one more extract (Extract 6.41), which I consider to be deviant (I have only found two instances showing the same pattern). The breaking line (---) indicates missing turns; these were not provided as they are not relevant to the analysis performed.

Extract 6.41

01 F: We're waiting just for two?
02 ((Group discussion))
03 F: Done? One more?
04 ((Group discussion))
05 F: Done? Excellent. Right. So: red is short term focus.
06 Green is LO:ng term.
07 (0.5)
08 F: Does THAT surprise you,
09 P_1: They're positive green ones.= Actually that does look very interesting. I'm interested in the very TOp one (.)
10 the green (. ) why our reputation should be LO:ng term.
11 F: Yeah.
12 -----------------((discussion continues))-------------------------
13 F: Oh-kay. It's an ongoing thing. Oh-kay. ((continues))

Here, after the facilitator’s formulations at lines 05-06, we see him uttering a YNI at line 08. This triggers a short episode of participation from participant P_1, which gives him the opportunity to express his view with regards to the collective decision displayed. The facilitator’s YNI is treated as an invitation to discuss the decision, which is accepted. The point I wish to make here, however, is that the discussion that emerges does not modify the decision collectively taken and publicly displayed. It can thus be said, once more, that a decision has been reached upon the participants’ selection of a specific option. In the next Section 6.3, I turn to the analysis of a second way of carrying out the decision-making process, which I have termed “discussion-based” (non-technology-bound).
6.3 Discussion-based decision-making

The previous section has shown how the unfolding of the selection-based decision-making process, which was characterized by the participants being able to individually and anonymously register their decisions via the TPS devices. In contrast, this section presents the conversational practices identified in the case of the “discussion-based decision-making” processes. When compared to the previous situation (that is, selection-based decision-making), these episodes are rather long and not very “compact” (they are spread alongside many utterances, inserted within other sequences); this made it difficult to pin down key turns in which decisions were being made. Despite this, it was possible to identify: (a) how decision proposals were initiated and (b) how proposals were dealt with in the next turn. This Section 6.3 is organized to reflect points (a) and (b). At the same time, the discussion-based decision-making process also permitted the analysis of the dynamic interplay between epistemic and deontic orientations. I thus examine how facilitators and participants rely on their relative epistemic and deontic statuses as interactional resources to negotiate the ideal of sharedness in decision-making.

In the extracts that I will be presenting, participants must decide over the conformation of an optimal portfolio of projects. The allocation of organisational resources is expressed by one of the participants in the following words (verbatim transcription):

Extract 6.42 (verbatim transcription)

01 So we have 100% value and there is no value lost. As we start
02 forcing projects in which are not in this optimal portfolio
03 we're going to start losing value. Basically, the way we have
04 calculated this is the following, if every project is worth
05 £250,000, if it decreases by 10%, then basically we know that
06 the eighteen projects times £250,000 is X. So, if we are
07 losing 10% of X, you are losing basically an amount of money.
08 So, that's really to give just a feel about that non-optimal
09 portfolios actually have a cost. I mean, it's a bit
10 fictional, the cost, but I think it really does make sense.
11 Does it make sense what I've explained? So, the first
12 eighteen projects, yeah? To implement it costs £250,000 times
13 eighteen, and that's 100%. Now, that's the overall value of
14 this portfolio. If you start including projects that are less
15 valuable, then basically you are actually moving away from
16 this optional portfolio and there is a cost in time with that.
17 So, for example, a 10% drop in terms of this overall value,
18 then it's a 10% drop in terms of the cost.”

In the next Section 6.3.1, I will first discuss how the decision proposals are made during the discussion-based decision-making process.
6.3.1 How decision proposals are made

The analysis reveals that it is generally the facilitator the one who initiates the decision-making process by launching decision proposals during the “discussion-based decision-making” sequences. There are three ways in which the facilitator performs this:

➤ By launching a proposal in a straight-forward way; this invitation generally takes the form of a YNI.
➤ By gradually launching a proposal, wherein “gradually” is to be understood in the sense of following some prior discussion going on, with the proposal only being made “tangible” by the facilitator. This generally takes the form either of a YNI or of a declarative. More rarely, it can also take the form of a wh-question.
➤ By launching a more complex type of proposal, which I will term “satisficing proposal”. This generally takes the form of a YNI.

6.3.1.1 Launching a proposal in a straight forward way

Launching a proposal in a straight-forward way is not very common. The following two Extracts 6.43 and 6.44 are examples of launching a proposal in this manner. In both the extracts, the aim of the participants is to have a look at the newly-established portfolio of projects, given the scoring of the various projects involved, and see if there is a right balance across different site areas considered and different criteria. The participants are thus allowed to make modifications to the portfolio, in terms of including projects or taking out projects, considering that each change will affect the amount of resources with which they count.

Extract 6.43

01 F:1 Shall we start (.) by forcing in the ones that we know are approved.

Extract 6.44

01 F: Shall we sort the ones that we've got (h) (.) into different–

In Extract 6.43, the facilitator proposes to start the decision-making process regarding the conformation of the optimal portfolio of projects by considering first the projects that have already been approved to be a part of the portfolio. In Extract 6.44, the facilitator proposes sorting the projects that the participants have already discussed considering their scoring.
In each of the two extracts above, the initiation of the decision-making process is performed by the facilitator, whose proposals are made explicit via YNIs (Raymond, 2003) and are delivered using the modal shall, which displays low entitlement and low contingency (Asmuß & Oshima, 2012). The formulations represent a request for permission, thus acknowledging the participants’ deontic right to accept or reject the proposals. However, the polar interrogatives present only one possible course of action, which displays a preference for granting as the next action (Raymond, 2003), thus adding pressure to affiliate with the facilitator’s deontic stance. In this sense, although it is the facilitator the one to proffer the proposals, it is the participants the ones who are entitled to accept them and the facilitator orients to such accountability. What we have here is a first instance of balancing between the facilitators’ and the participants’ deontic rights.

6.3.1.2 Gradually launching a proposal

Proposals can also be launched via YNIs that build on prior talk by the participants. For example, in the following Extract 6.45, the participants discuss the possibility of adding a project to the portfolio, titled “work programme”, with one participant having extra information that would support the project being carried out in the following year(s). The initial proposal is uttered earlier on in the meeting by participant P_7 at line 01, who proposes the inclusion of two projects in the portfolio as an upshot of prior conversation.

Extract 6.45

01 P_7: So that's two transport ones (.). <that we kind of need to
02 force in>.
03 F_2: Sorry. Which ones,= can I take the numbers.
04 P_7: I can't see it. They're not on the screen at the moment
05 so I'm not sure which ones they are.
06 F_2: So: can you go down.
07 P_7: It's maintaining the road network .hh number eleven an-
08 number fifteen .hh procurement of rolling stock.
09 P_3: <So eleven should be in,>
10 P_7: Yes please and number (inaudible).
11 F_1: Are there any more.
12 P_8: What's (inaudible) doing here.
13 P_2: I'm not quite sure where we are on the work programme.=
14 =but I guess we'll have to do some more FOLLOW up at
15 some point (inaudible).
16 P_8: Well (. ) they had the debate yesterday .hh didn't they, 17 and I would have thought what is- Oh, they apparently
18 made a $commi(h)tment$ that something would have happened
19 by 2013, which is sort of ludicrous for him to do so.
20 But that probably does support the:re being a further
21 study in thirteen fourteen.
The participant P_7’s proposal is understood to also be a decision, which is evidenced by the facilitator F_2 at line 02, when he asks for the project numbers so that those numbers could be added to the portfolio, in the computer software. At line 07, the participant P_7 grants this information by identifying the two projects as being numbered eleven and fifteen. It is interesting to note that the immediate turn at talk is taken by the participant P_3, whose question at line 09 is a partial recycle of P_7’s utterance, and can be heard as implying some reluctance or resistance from the participant P_3’s part. Indeed, there does not seem to be any other reason as to why P_3 would ask whether project eleven should be added to the portfolio; he has clearly heard P_7’s statement which is evidenced by his own partial recycling. Participant P_7, however, does not treat P_3’s utterance as an indication of resistance, but rather as a request for confirmation, which he does at line 10. As the discussion progresses, the proposal slowly loses momentum, with participants P_2 and P_8 deviating from the initial proposal and displaying hesitation (“I’m not quite sure” at line 13, “I guess” at line 14, and “probably” at line 20).

It is the facilitator F_1 who, nonetheless, orients towards the need for a decision in relation to the initial proposal. To this end, he delivers a YNI (line 03) that builds upon prior talk (“So”), while also recycling the initial proposal made by P_7 (line 01). In terms of design, the proposal is tilted towards preferring granting (the inclusion of the project into the portfolio). Furthermore, the way it is formulated, the proposal displays higher entitlement and lower contingency, which may be explained by the initial strong positive stance of the participants towards the inclusion of the project in the portfolio, to which the facilitator F_1 orients.

The first point I wish to make here is that formulations of the participants’ prior talk can be a vehicle not necessarily for offering interpretations of the participants’ prior talk, but for refining the participants’ accounts and advancing the decision-making process. In using these formulations, the facilitators are in a position to guide the participants towards subsequent steps in the decision-making process. In this sense, the decision-making episode is characterized by a pressure for progressivity, to which the facilitator F_1 orients.

The second point I note is that the facilitator F_1 could have proceeded (but he does not) to add both the mentioned projects to the portfolio after their respective numbers were provided by the participant P_7 at lines 7-8. This is because by asking the numbers, the
second facilitator F_2 implicitly orients to the proposal as being decision-implicative. This interpretation is further supported by the use of the word “definite” at line 22, which indicates that the decision here is not about whether to include the projects or not but whether or not this is a “definite” decision. There is thus some sort of ambiguity in the initial proposal uttered by the participant P_7, which is amplified by the resistance of participant P_3 at line 09 and the uncertainty expressed by participants P_2 (“I’m not quite sure” at line 13, “I guess” at line 14) and P_8 (“probably” at line 20). In this sense, at line 22, the facilitator F_1’s proposal addresses the ambiguity of the initial proposal. This finding aligns with the study by Nissi (2016), who identified that proposals have a peculiarity attached to them, namely that the proposals are not visibly there in the preceding turns but that they can be abstracted from the earlier discussion. This was referred to as ambiguity, which has been previously identified as one of the central characteristics of organisational decision-making (Shapira, 1997). Here, I find that the facilitator orients towards making proposals explicit, and avoid ambiguity.

Proposals can also be built on prior talk without having been explicitly proffered before that point in the conversation. The following two excerpts show such pattern. In Excerpt 6.46, the participants discuss the option of taking the PIPs project out, since this project would not be implemented until years later; and in Excerpt 6.47, the participants re-discuss the composition of the portfolio, with a focus on the “price setting” project.

Extract 6.46
01 F: So, do we want to make the change for the PIPs going out?

Extract 6.47
01 F: So: we might want to look, if we looked again at the portfolio, we would force in price setting. =Is that all right, .hh is that the one to force in?

Built on prior talk and not having been proffered earlier in the conversation, the formulations delivered by the facilitator, in both extracts, are heard as being his own candidate understanding of what had been discussed by the participants, and in uttering his own understanding to make a proposal, he claims partial epistemic rights. These rights are grounded in his participation at the meeting. In both the extracts, the interrogative format indicates a request for permission, thus acknowledging the participants’ deontic right to accept or reject the propositions. Nevertheless, the design of the polar interrogatives indicates
a preference for a yes-answer (Raymond, 2003), thus adding pressure to affiliate with the facilitator’s deontic stance. A similar pattern can be further observed in the following four Extracts 6.48 to 6.51. The only difference is that the proposals are not uttered as YNIs, but as declaratives. I have found these to be quite common. They still emerge based on the prior talk of the participants and the next preferred action is a confirmation.

Extract 6.48
01 F: So, if we forced Green Deal in, then we’d lose consumer impact an- Infrastructure spend.

Extract 6.49
01 F: So, effectively, for transport you need the (inaudible) financial services ones <and then> hh an additional one.

Extract 6.50
01 F: So <that’s another one> tuh mark down as a potential non pac answer.

Extract 6.51
01 F: Yeah.= You could put Aspire in an- take out Royal Mail.

The facilitator’s proposals are formulated as a conclusion following naturally from the previous talk, thus constituting an upgraded claim to epistemic rights. At the same time, by being delivered as declaratives and strongly tilted towards preferring a confirmation, the facilitator also claims higher deontic rights. There are also instances in which declarative proposals are delivered as B-event statements (Labov & Fanshel, 1977). The following two Extracts 6.52 and 6.53 show such design.

Extract 6.52
01 F: The question was, can we get 4G in anywhere? And at the moment everyone's quite committed to those that are in there.

Extract 6.53
01 F: Yeah, <all of which I mean>, taking into account what has been said, would suggest that <probably Ed would feel less comfortable> advocating this one than he would perhaps 4G.
In Extract 6.52, the facilitator refers to everyone being “quite committed” to the current conformation of the portfolio and in Extract 6.53, the facilitator makes an inference with regards to a participant’s preference for a particular project. In making statements about a B-event, the facilitator’s proposals are heard as requests for confirmation.

I have also found one example of a proposal being uttered by the facilitator under the form of a *wh*-question. The extract is presented below (Extract 6.54). Here, the participants discuss the price setting implication of the projects, but do not seem to come to a decision regarding which project to keep in the portfolio.

**Extract 6.54**

01  F: Be clear. *If* you had to choose between those two
02  financial services though, *which* one you would drop.

As a general observation, participants talk without explicit reference to or orientation towards making decisions. It is the facilitators the ones who explicitly orient (“Be clear”) towards making overt decisions (“which one you would drop”). In this sense, the facilitators’ proposals are not only (or necessarily) used as a means to propose a course of action that the participants can accept or reject, but also as a means to overtly request for decisions to be made. In this sense, the facilitators are both proposing and pursuing decisions. Extract 6.54 is a straightforward example of such phenomenon, which seems to be a central activity in facilitation.

### 6.3.1.3 “Satisficing” proposals

A third type of proposals identified in the data is of a much more complex nature. In this case, the proposals are launched gradually, following some prior discussion going on among the participants. In this sense, they are similar to the previous type of proposals (Section 6.3.1.2). But what sets them apart is that the proposals implicitly target a manifest problem and in the process, show an orientation towards achieving a “satisficing” outcome. I thus call them *satisficing proposals*. To the best of my knowledge, the work that this type of proposals does has not been examined in the existing literature. I believe it is worth a closer examination, as it allows us to study how the facilitators’ rights to know things about others (epistemic rights) and their rights to tell others what to do (deontic rights) are finely interwoven.
Thirty years ago, Anderson, Hughes, and Sharrock (1987) asked the question: “If satisficing is recognizable in what managers do and say, what does that recognizability consist in and how is it achieved?” In this section and related content in Section 6.3.2, I aim to answer this question by showing how the concept of satisficing is achieved and recognisable in interactional terms.

The notion of “satisficing”, as outlined in Simon (1979) and first studied in Simon (1976), refers to a rational strategy whereby the goal of achieving maximal goals is replaced by one which tries to obtain objectives which will do. Satisficing and maximizing don’t vary in the importance they place on desirability, but on feasibility (Luan & Li, 2017). In other words, there is an orientation not towards achieving perfection, but towards “attaining a set of compromises and outcomes which are “good enough” for the purposes and the “best that can be done” in the given context” (Shapiro, 1994, p. 421).

I find that satisficing proposals are generally uttered by the facilitator and are shaped as YNIs. The following two Extracts 6.55 and 6.56 exemplify this concept. Here, despite lengthy efforts, the participants at the discussion were not able to agree on particular projects being included or dropped out of the portfolio. The facilitator thus proposes a compromise (or satisficing solution) in each of the cases. Let us start with Extract 6.55.

Extract 6.55

01  F: Yeah. Shall we force PIPs out ↓ (.) for the time being,

In Extract 6.55, I am particularly interested in the expression “for the time being”, which is delivered with final rising intonation after the proposal is put forward (“Shall we force PIPs out”). I postulate that “for the time being” has three roles: (1) Firstly, it is indicative of the temporary nature of the decision being made, that is, for the PIPs project being forced out. Here, the facilitator orients towards avoiding future disagreement and reaching a decision by invoking the ephemeral nature of the decision. This is not a definitive decision. The participants can, at any time, force the PIPs project back into the portfolio and the facilitator’s current proposal is constructed to leave this possibility open. (2) Secondly, “for the time being” provides grounds to finish the current talk going on. It displays an exhaustion of understanding, which makes relevant the closure of the current topical talk. As such, satisficing proposals project not only a compromise solution, but also an invitation to close current topic and move to the next one. (3) Thirdly, as a result of points (1) and (2) above, “for the time being” does not only stand as a marker of temporality, but also as a
marker of “the best that can be decided upon” in the current situation. In a subtler way, it is a marker of a manifest problem – the fact that participants could not agree on the future of the PIPs project. The proposal thus provides a satisficing solution once impasse is evident. And in an equally subtle way, the facilitator asserts his epistemic right to know that such impasse has been reached. In summary, the facilitator explicitly claims his deontic right in proposing a solution to the participants (although in a mitigated form) by implicitly orienting to his epistemic right of knowing that a solution is indeed needed because a problem is present.

The satisficing nature embedded in the facilitator’s proposal can also be observed in Extract 6.56; but while in Extract 6.55 the satisficing nature of the solution is constructed by explicitly considering the ephemerality of the decision, in Extract 6.56, the satisficing nature builds upon the facilitator’s explicit statement of the impasse.

Extract 6.56

01 F: Shall we leave it at that- (.) for what the portfolio is,
02  because obviously .hh I don't think we're going to agree
03 on This one?

In Extract 6.56, the facilitator utters a proposal (“Shall we leave it at that- (.) for what the portfolio is,”) which targets, once more, a problem or “trouble spot” (Kärkkäinen, 2003). The problem is made explicit in the account that follows the proposal and is represented by the fact that the participants do not seem to agree on what to do with a particular project. Here, I am particularly interested in the expression uttered by the facilitator “obviously I don’t think”, a personalized epistemic stance marker that marks the facilitator’s own stance towards the participants’ discussion up until that point.

This extract has several subtle features. On the one hand, the facilitator plays down aspects of his right to tell the participants what to do: He frames the proposal as a decision for the group to make (instead of asserting what the decision would be) and he also builds it with the modal “shall”, which sets up the relevance of the participants in accepting or rejecting the proposal. But on the other hand, in the second half of his turn, by crediting the authorship of “I don’t think” to himself, he reinforces his own legitimacy in making the proposal. His legitimacy is further strengthened through the use of a particular word (“obviously”), which appeals to his epistemic right to know that something is problematic as a result of his participation at the meeting. It is very hard to dispute something when that something is claimed to be “obvious”. Thus, the facilitator’s conversational strategy of conceptualizing
and assessing the current state of affairs makes the solution he proposes to seem rather obvious.

I thus argue that the facilitator has at least two elements that he can manipulate so as build satisficing proposals: one is the ephemerality of the solutions proposed; the other one is the appeal to epistemic rights. Satisficing solutions have two main features:

(a) **Trouble Spot.** In this sense, they address a visible problem. The facilitator offers an implicit candidate understanding which identifies a trouble spot (the conversation can no longer progress under current circumstances) and offers a solution that will put matters to rest, at least temporarily.

(b) **Subjectivity.** This type of proposals incorporates an element of assessment that is biased and subjective on the part of the facilitator. In other words, they are not neutral, being indicative of how the facilitator conceptualizes and assesses the problem.

A general conclusion up until this point is that proposals commonly materialise as interrogative or declarative clauses. Regardless of the shape they take, however, the proposals proffered indicate, in all extracts presented throughout, both the shape and the content of the decisions. In the following Section 6.3.2, I proceed to discuss how proposals are dealt with in the next turn by the participants.

6.3.2 How proposals are “received”

The extracts that I show below encompass the full spectrum of response types that I observed in the collection of instances analysed for the purposes of this chapter. Generally, I have found that proposals uttered by facilitators are met with four different responses, which range from simple proposal acceptance to outright rejection and to covert rejection:

- With a simple proposal acceptance (that is, minimal uptake). (Section 6.3.2.1)
- With a complex proposal acceptance (that is, accepting with accounts) (Section 6.3.2.2)
- With a simple rejection (that is, straightforward rejection) (Section 6.3.2.3)
- With a complex rejection (that is, rejecting with accounts) (Section 6.3.2.4)
- With a covert rejection (Section 6.3.2.5)

6.3.2.1 Simple proposal acceptance (minimal uptake)

Simple proposal acceptances, delivered with a minimal response, are not very common. The below two extracts 6.57 and 6.58 exemplify this pattern. Here, the participants’ approval is conveyed via minimum tokens (“yeah”).

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184
Extract 6.57

01 F: So <that’s another one> tuh mark down as a potential non pac answer. =
02
03 P: =Yeah.

Extract 6.58

01 F: So, effectively, for transport you need the (inaudible)
02 financial services ones <and then> .hh an additional one.
03 P: Yeah.

On the one hand, we can notice that there is a claim to knowledge (epistemic rights) made by the facilitator in offering his own candidate understanding of what had been discussed by the participants, which is accepted by the participants at line 3, respectively. On the other hand, proposals can be seen to belong to directives, namely, to social actions that attempt to get the recipient to perform some action (Stevanovic & Svennevig, 2015). In this sense, proposals have an inbuilt deontic right which can be claimed by the one who utters them, in this case the facilitator. The facilitator’s deontic authority, in other words, the authority to determine others’ future actions, is further strengthened in this case by the delivery of the proposals as declaratives. This claim might explain the rather minimal agreement uttered by the participants. Furthermore, the participants’ acceptance is immediate, which is a regular structural feature of aligning responses (Schegloff, 2007).

6.3.2.2 Complex proposal acceptance (accepting with accounts)

More common are complex proposal acceptances. Here, the facilitators’ proposals are accepted, but unlike in the previous Section 6.3.2.1, participants make their deontic stance explicit in the acceptance.

There are few cases in which the proposals are uttered initially by the participants and pursued by the facilitators later in the conversation. Such is the case of Extract 6.59 below. Here, participant P_7 had initially proposed at line 01 that two projects should be a part of the portfolio; nevertheless, as the discussion progressed, the participants distanced themselves from committing to a decision and the proposal lost momentum. We can, thus, observe that at line 22, the facilitator recycles the participant P_7’s proposal (line 01) and pursues a decision on the matter.
Extract 6.59

01  P_7: So that's two transport ones (.) <that we kind of need to
02  force in>.
03  F_2: Sorry. Which ones= can I take the numbers.
04  P_7: I can't see it. They're not on the screen at the moment
05  so I'm not sure which ones they are.
06  F_2: So: can you go down.
07  P_7: It's maintaining the road network .hh number eleven an-
08  number fifteen .hh procurement of rolling stock.
09  P_3: <So eleven should be in,>
10  P_7: Yes please and number (inaudible).
11  F_1: Are there any more.
12  P_8: What's (inaudible) doing here.
13  P_2: I'm not quite sure where we are on the work programme.=
14  =but I guess well have to do some more F0llow up at
15  some point (inaudible).
16  P_8: Well (.) they had the debate yesterday .hh didn't they,
17  and I would have thought what is- Oh, they apparently
18  made a $commi(h)tment$ that something would have happened
19  by 2013, which is sort of ludicrous for him to do so.
20  But that probably does support the:re being a further
21  study in thirteen fourteen.
22  F_1: So is that a definite in,
23  P_8: I mean .hh it's not yet.= but I think it's pretty likely.
24  F_1: Well (.) let's put it in then. <for the first in line>.

Formulated as a YNI and delivered using the word “definite”, the facilitator’s proposal at line 22 is tilted towards preferring a confirmation. Indeed, the decision here is not about whether to include the projects or not in the portfolio, but whether or not this is a “definite” decision. This is interesting, because we have a first instance of differentiation between weak and strong agreements. For some reason, the P_7’s initial proposal at line 01 and further insistence on the same at line 10 are not taken as decision-implicative by the facilitator F_1, and the facilitator makes this explicit several turns later when he pursues a decision at line 22. Weak agreements do not display sufficient deontic rights to be heard as decision-implicative, proof is the fact that the facilitator pursues a “definite” decision few turns later. In this sense, then, the participant P_7’s utterance is heard as a proposal not based on his initial turn at line 01, but based on the facilitator F_1’s recycling at line 22, which receives participant uptake at line 23.

In this subsequent invitation to decide, the facilitator F_1’s proposal displays higher entitlement and lower contingency, given that it is delivered based on the prior talk of the participants. In this sense, then, the deontic gradient is also steeper. This may explain why the participant P_8 taking the turn at talk in line 23 is less inclined to decline the proposal or make a counter-proposal, but rather accepts the proposal, although the agreement itself is
weak. The participant makes it clear that while the decision is not “definite”, it is, nevertheless, “pretty likely” to be adopted.

In conclusion, by displaying that the suggested decision is contingent upon the participants’ approval, the facilitator also suggests a somewhat relative distribution of deontic rights (Stevanovic & Peräkylä, 2012). What is noticeable, however, is that while agreeing with the proposal per se, the participant seeks to establish a stronger deontic position for himself. Instead of simply approving the proposal, the participant introduces the decision in a negative way (“I mean it’s not yet”) but grants it nevertheless, thus presenting himself as the person who really decides on the matter. The same pattern can be observed in the following Extract 6.60, wherein the participants are negotiating forcing in or forcing out of the portfolio particular projects.

Extract 6.60

01 F: So: perhaps we ought to leave the West Coast Franchise, force that one out, and force in the Green Deal. Should 03 we do that.
04 P: I'm still not convinced that the personal independence payments should be in the:re= But ye:ah (.) I mean (.) 06 I’m happy to see that forced out.

Here, the facilitator’s proposal, taking the form of a declarative followed by an interrogative clause, is uttered as not binding but contingent (Curl & Drew, 2008) on the participants’ approval. The non-binding but contingent character of the facilitator’s turn is revealed by two means: (a) the modal verbs “ought to” and “should” that treat the projected action as an option, not an obligation (Sorjonen, 2001) and (b) the softener “perhaps”, that marks the uttered proposal as an option among others possible.

“Ought to” is an assertive deontic modal verb, which is stronger than “should”. The declarative is thus implying more deontic authority than the YNI that follows. As a matter of fact, through his YNI, the facilitator reduces his deontic stance by making the decision contingent on the participants’ approval. What is noticeable here once again is that while agreeing with the proposal per se, the participant seeks to establish a stronger deontic position for himself. The participant makes it clear that while he is “still not convinced”, he nevertheless accepts the proposal. In this sense, the participant’s utterance works to reduce further the facilitator’s deontic rights.
In both Extracts 6.59 and 6.60, the participants’ acceptances of the proposals are thus uttered as based on independently formed deontic and epistemic stance (Stevanovic, 2012; Heritage & Raymond, 2012). The same holds for the following Extract 6.61.

Extract 6.61:
01 F: Yeah.= You could put Aspire in an- take out Royal Mail.
02 P: Yeah, but our portfolio- a bit unbalanced ((continues, overlapping talk))

In Extract 6.61, the participant agrees with the facilitator’s proposal, but offers an assessment of the same, judging that the decision would make the portfolio be “a bit unbalanced”. By doing this, the participant presents himself as having the epistemic authority to evaluate the object of the facilitator’s proposal. In other words, the participant has an epistemic domain of expert knowledge which he can use as a basis to defend his higher deontic stance. This claim to higher epistemic rights by the participant is even more evident in the following Extract 6.62:

Extract 6.62
01 F_1: Shall we start (.) by forcing in the ones that we know are approved.
02 F_2: Let’s force in the ones that have already been agreed.=
03 F_1: Which is <currently in?>
04 P_1: The infrastructure.
05 F_2: Okay .hh so one that is in is already in (.) so there is no extra cost.= Now .hh of course, if you are including one that is 57, you have to drop the eighteenth project .hh right? You see the eighteenth project? Now the eighteenth highest value project has to be forced out, because if- can just (inaudible) project.
07 F_1: And we force that one because that’s the-
08 F_2: =So force it in please huuuh .huh hhh. So let’s force it in please.
09 P_1: <But actually,> time becomes an issue on some of these things. We all know that privatization hasn’t happened yet. Per:sonal independence PAyments has now slipped till 2015.
10 P_2: In terms of process though, we need to do the forcing in and then we work out-
11 P_1: Yeah. =but what I am saying is, I do:n’t think you should just <knock off> the bottom project. Question marks exist about some of those study proposals, for timing reasons.

Here, at line 01, the facilitator F_1’s proposes to first force inside the portfolio those projects that have already been approved. This proposal is seconded by the second facilitator
F_2, who modifies it to include only those projects that have been agreed upon. Unlike F_1’s turn, the facilitator F_2’s turn does not suggest that the activity being described would be contingent upon the participants’ approval. Instead, he delivers his proposal with a rather blunt claim that he holds deontic authority in the domain in question. At lines 16-19, the participant P_1 challenges this.

In this sense, the participant P_1 takes a strong epistemic stance “we all know” (which indexes not just subjective but also intersubjective positioning, implying that the information is shared by the other participants); he uses the claim to epistemic rights to claim a share of the deontic rights, which was something F_2 was not offering at all. What is interesting is that at lines 20-21, participant P_2 rejects P_1’s stand not by attending to the epistemic stance, but rather by orienting to the progressivity of the meeting. Having thus failed in using the higher collective epistemic stance to claim deontic rights, the participant P_1 proceeds, at lines 22-24, to appeal to his own epistemic rights by identifying himself explicitly (“I don’t think”), indicating a personal commitment to the assertion made previously.

Eventually, the facilitators’ initial proposal is accepted approximately two minutes later in the conversation (data not shown here), but the point I wish to make is that participants can claim higher epistemic rights in order to establish a stronger deontic stance for themselves. This is particularly the case when facilitators make proposals which are delivered as independent from the participants’ prior talk. Indeed, both the facilitators’ proposals are delivered as unilateral proposals, for which the participants’ agreement was not sought. There is thus some sort of struggle for deontic rights going on when facilitators build their proposals without the participants’ concern. And as I have shown above, this has important procedural consequences.

6.3.2.3 Simple rejection (straightforward rejection)
Facilitators’ proposals can also be met by straightforward rejections, but these are not very common and are generally uttered when the proposals contain some incorrect information, which the participants correct. Below is an example showing this pattern.

Extract 6.63

01  F: So: we might want to look, if we looked again at the
02                    portfolio, we would force in price setting. =Is that all
03 04  P: No No, it'd be the regulation one.
As previously mentioned, the polar interrogative “Is that alright? Is that the one to force in?” represents a request for permission to add the “price setting” project to the portfolio, thus acknowledging the participants’ ultimate deontic right to accept or reject this option. At the same time, however, the polar interrogative presents only one option, displaying a preference for a confirming response (Raymond, 2003) and thus adding pressure to affiliate with the facilitator’s own deontic stance. The participant’s disaffiliative stance is expressed via a straightforward no, followed by a correction, according to which “price setting” is not the project to force in, but the “regulation” one instead.

6.3.2.4 Complex rejection (rejecting with accounts)
As indicated previously, facilitators generally deliver their proposals based on prior talk (with some exceptions already discussed), taking the form of YNIs or declaratives. The main difference between them is that declaratives are assertions that have an inbuilt upgraded claim to deontic rights. As such, they are tilted towards preferring a particular type of response, generally a confirmation. Furthermore, by being built based on prior talk of participants, these proposals pose a different kind of problem: it is not easy to reject them. In being built based on prior talk, they are delivered as natural consequences of the talk, and hence they display an epistemic stance. Their rejection is thus not a straightforward activity and is usually accompanied by accounts as to why the proposed courses of action could not be implemented. In this sense, then, they are complex or elaborate rejections. In what follows, I present three extracts that show such pattern. Extracts 6.64 and 6.65 show rejection that is displayed by appealing to the specific, restrictive contingencies imposed by some previous fixed decisions, while Extract 6.66 will draw upon factors associated with third parties. Let us start with Extract 6.64, wherein the contingency is represented by the fact that both financial services in question are projects that have already been agreed upon.

Extract 6.64

01 F: Be clear. If you had to choose between those two
02 financial services though, which one you would drop.
03 P: Again, we can’t drop ANY of them. One has already been
04 decided and the other one—=
05 F: =Oh, I see.

In Extract 6.64, the participant avoids choosing one among the two options indicated by the facilitator’s proposal. The participant frames his shift with the marker “again”, a transition that retroactively indexes and constructs the sequence initiated by the facilitator’s
intervention as one that strays from the point the group (“we”) is trying to communicate. Furthermore, the rejection is framed with high modality (“we can’t”), through which the participant displays to the facilitator that he is certain of the impossibility to accept the proposal. In Extract 6.65, the participant also orients to the need to expose the grounds for rejection.

**Extract 6.65**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line</th>
<th>F:</th>
<th>P:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01</td>
<td>So, if we forced Green Deal in, then we’d lose consumer</td>
<td>Yeah, but we forced that one in, so we CAN’t let it fall off.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02</td>
<td>impact an- Infrastructure spend.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Extract 6.65, following the facilitator’s proposal at lines 01-02, the participant provides weak agreement with the idea (“yeah”), followed by a rejection of the proposal at lines 03-04, a typical structure for a dispreferred response (Pomerantz, 1984a). The participant rejects the proposal on the grounds that the Green Deal project was “forced” in previously by the participants themselves and cannot thus be removed from the portfolio. This account further suspends the “participation framework” (Garfinkel, 1967), positioning the decision as non-negotiable. The following Extract 6.66 shows a slightly different pattern, in the sense that the restrictive situational factor is represented by the absence of a participant from the meeting.

**Extract 6.66**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line</th>
<th>F:</th>
<th>P:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01</td>
<td>Yeah, &lt;all of which I mean&gt;, taking into account what has</td>
<td>But then .hh isn’t that his decision to do?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02</td>
<td>been said, would suggest that &lt;probably Ed would feel</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03</td>
<td>less comfortable&gt; advocating this one than he would</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04</td>
<td>perhaps 4G.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The facilitator’s proposal is formulated as a consequence which follows naturally from the previous talk (“taking into account what has been said”). In this sense, the expression “taking into account what has been said” is a disclaimer that works to reduce the facilitator’s epistemic stance. At the same time, however, by being built upon “what has been said”, the proposal constitutes an upgraded claim to deontic rights. Overall, the proposal is framed to strongly prefer an acceptance.

Nevertheless, the proposal gets rejected. Here, the participant’s response works to reduce the deontic stance implied by the facilitator, namely that the facilitator could decide
that Ed would feel more or less comfortable supporting a particular project. This is relatively easy to do, as knowledge about Ed’s preference is not within the facilitator’s domain of knowledge (it is a B-event statement); at the same time, however, this knowledge is neither in the participant’s domain of knowledge (for him, too, this is a B-event), which might explain why in rejecting the proposal, the participant does not orient to epistemic rights but rather to Ed’s ultimate deontic right to decide. Hence, although the participant does not reject the possible interpretation of the facilitator, he does make an appeal to the third party’s deontic right to decide instead, which has less probability of being challenged by the facilitator.

To sum up, the participant’s response draws not on the asymmetrical epistemic status between him, the facilitator, and Ed, but on the asymmetrical deontic status: in claiming deontic rights in the name of Ed, he works to withdraw the deontic stance implied by the facilitator’s proposal and indirectly confers to Ed to be the decision-maker.

6.3.2.5 Covert rejection

The last pattern identified is represented by covert rejections, wherein rejection is not clearly articulated. The participants’ rejections do not respond to the grammatical constraint of the interrogative, in the sense that they do not provide any sort of “no” response (Heritage & Raymond, 2012). Nonetheless, in this case, also, proposals will turn out to be rejected later in the conversation. Let us start with Extract 6.67. The facilitator’s proposal at line 01 is framed as an interrogative and delivered using the modal “Shall”, which highlights the contingent nature of the proposal (Curl & Drew, 2008), inviting the participants to either confirm or reject the proposal, with a strong preference, however, for confirmation (or granting).

Extract 6.67

01  F: Yeah. Shall we force PIPs out↓ (,) for the time being,  
02  P: I thi:nk all we can do .hh is put a mark over that.

One of the first things to notice is that the form of the proposal itself is constituted from two different domains of reasoning. “Shall we” invokes a deontic domain, which is being shared with the participants. The expression “for the time being” invokes an epistemic domain, which is a result of the fact that the facilitator’s view rests on his knowledge accumulated as a result of his participation at the meeting. I have postulated before that “for the time being” has a threefold role, which I briefly mention here again:
(1) Firstly, it is indicative of the temporary nature of the decision being made, that is, for the PIPs project being forced out. Here, the facilitator orients towards avoiding future disagreement and reaching a decision by invoking the ephemeral nature of the decision. This is not a definitive decision. The participants can, at any time, force the PIPs project back into the portfolio and the facilitator’s current proposal is constructed to leave this possibility open.

(2) Secondly, “for the time being” provides grounds to finish the current talk going on. It displays an exhaustion of understanding, which makes relevant the closure of the current topical talk. As such, satisficing proposals project not only a compromise solution, but also an invitation to close current topic and move to the next one.

(3) Thirdly, as a result of points (1) and (2) above, “for the time being” does not only stand as a marker of temporality, but also as a marker of “the best that can be decided upon” in the current situation. In a subtler way, it is a marker of a manifest problem – the fact that participants could not agree on the future of the PIPs project. The proposal thus provides a satisficing solution once impasse is evident. And in an equally subtle way, the facilitator asserts his epistemic right to know that such impasse has been reached. In summary, the facilitator explicitly claims his deontic right in proposing a solution to the participants (although in a mitigated form) by implicitly orienting to his epistemic right of knowing that a solution is indeed needed because a problem is present.

In view of the above comments, the design of the proposal makes it hard for the proposal to be rejected straightforwardly. But it does and it actually takes another 18 minutes of conversation from this point onwards until the proposal is finally dropped. I thus argue that although the rejection is acknowledged 18 minutes later, the rejection itself actually happens much earlier in the conversation, at line 02, which is why I have named it a “covert rejection”.

The participant’s rejection at line 02 is not articulated explicitly, most probably due to the fact that the participant’s opposing stance has already been stated previously in the meeting (data not shown). Instead, he delivers what would constitute an account for his rejection. “I think” is an epistemic claim which is indicative of the participant’s personal commitment to the assertion being made. In this sense, it could imply that the participant is taking a position that will not change. On the other hand, the word “all” shows “troubles resistance” by indicating that this is something that the participants cannot agree on. “All we can do” marks thus a strong deontic stance, which closes down any other possible course of action.
I argue that the participant does extra interactional work to uphold his ultimate right to
decide, in opposition to the facilitator’s clearly formulated recommendation. As such, in
order to counter the facilitator’s strong deontic stance delivered through his proposal, the
participant himself has to take a strong deontic stance. Let us have a look at one more example, Extract 6.68, before drawing some final conclusions.

Extract 6.68

01 F: Shall we leave it at that- (.) for what the portfolio is,
02 because obviously .hh I don't think we're going to agree
03 on This one?
04 P: I Think we should think about our mutual friend.

In Extract 6.68, the facilitator utters a proposal (“Shall we leave it at that- (.) for what
the portfolio is,”) which targets, once more, a problem or “trouble spot” (Kärkkäinen, 2003).
The problem is made explicit in the account that follows the proposal and is represented by
the fact that the participants do not seem to agree on what to do with a particular project.

The facilitator’s proposal delivered as a YNI marks the participants’ acceptance as the
preferred next action. Nevertheless, as previously mentioned, shall displays low entitlement
and high contingency (Asmuß & Oshima, 2012). In other words, the facilitator is the one to
proffer the proposal, but it is the participants who are entitled to accept it. As indicated
previously, here too, the facilitator makes a proposal by taking a strong epistemic stance (“I
don’t think”). His legitimacy in proffering the proposal is further strengthened by the use of a
particular word (“obviously”), which appeals to his epistemic right to know that something is
problematic as a result of his participation at the meeting. It is very hard to dispute something
when that something is claimed to be “obvious”. Furthermore, the word “obviously” works to
imply that the proposal is common-sensical and something that anyone might propose under
those circumstances. Thus, the facilitator’s conversational strategy of conceptualizing and
assessing the current state of affairs makes the solution he proposes to seem rather obvious.
The proposal is indeed presented as a natural consequence of the preceding talk. But in this
case, also, the proposal is counteracted at line 05, by a participant who indicates that they
“should think about their mutual friend”.

Interestingly enough, although created to propose a solution that would be the best
that can be achieved under the circumstances, satisficing proposals actually tend to get
rejected. Satisficing proposals are generally met by covert rejections. It is not easy to reject
this type of proposals. In order to reject them, participants are unable to invoke their ultimate
deontic right by orienting to their primary epistemic access to their experience. And this is because the same experience is being shared by the facilitators. As a matter of fact, the facilitators’ satisficing proposals are being built based on their own perception of the experience.

In this section 6.3, I have shown how the discussion-based decision-making process unfolds and how the interplay between claims of epistemic and deontic stance takes place. In line with the discussed above, I conclude that:

➢ It is generally the facilitator the one who initiates the decision-making process with a proposal. This can take the form of a YNI or declarative, and more rarely of a wh-question. Furthermore, proposals can be delivered straightforwardly, gradually (emerging naturally from the participants’ prior talk), or in a satisficing manner.

➢ A general property of decisions in discussion-based decision-making is that they can be quite elusive; it may be unclear if a decision has been made or not and at which point in the conversation. This may explain the facilitator’s orientation towards making both proposals and decisions explicit in talk.

➢ Proposals built as formulations of the participants’ prior talk can be a vehicle not necessarily for offering interpretations of the participants’ prior talk, but for refining the participants’ accounts and advancing the decision-making process. In using these formulations, the facilitators are in a position to guide the participants towards subsequent steps in the decision-making process. In this sense, the decision-making episode is characterized by a pressure for progressivity, to which the facilitator orients.

➢ The facilitator’s proposals are generally uttered by orienting to the ultimate deontic right of the participants to accept or reject the proposals. Nevertheless, the proposals generally encompass only one possible course of action, thus adding pressure to affiliate with the facilitator’s deontic stance. In this sense, proposals are not neutral.

➢ The facilitator has at least two elements that he can manipulate so as build satisficing proposals: (a) one is the ephemerality of the solutions proposed; (b) the other one is the appeal to epistemic rights.

➢ Furthermore, satisficing proposals have two main features: (a) they identify a trouble spot (in this sense, they address a visible problem for which the facilitator offers a solution) and (b) they incorporate an element of assessment that is biased and subjective on the part of the facilitator (in other words, they are not neutral, being indicative of how the facilitator conceptualizes and assesses the problem).
➢ A general conclusion up until this point is that proposals, independent of the way they materialise, indicate both the shape and the content of the decisions.

➢ Proposals are usually met with four different responses: simple acceptance, complex acceptance, simple rejection, complex rejection, and covert rejection.

➢ Proposals have an inbuilt deontic right attached to them, which in this case is claimed by the facilitator.

➢ Even when the facilitators’ proposals are accepted, it is generally observed that participants seek to establish a stronger deontic position for themselves.

➢ Participants can claim higher epistemic rights in order to establish a stronger deontic stance for themselves. This is particularly the case when facilitators make proposals which are delivered as independent from the participants’ prior talk. Indeed, it was observed that when facilitators’ proposals were delivered as unilateral proposals, for which the participants’ agreement was not sought, some sort of struggle for deontic rights was present. This turns to have important procedural consequences.

➢ Participants’ rejections are generally accompanied by an appeal to specific, restrictive contingencies.

➢ Interestingly enough, although created to propose a solution that would be the best that can be achieved under the circumstances, satisficing proposals actually tend to get rejected.

➢ Satisficing proposals are generally met by covert rejections. It is not easy to reject this type of proposals. In order to reject them, participants are unable to invoke their ultimate deontic right by orienting to their primary epistemic access to their experience. And this is because the same experience is being shared by the facilitators. As a matter of fact, the facilitators’ satisficing proposals are being built based on their own perception of the experience. As such, participants are observed to do some extra interactional work to deliver their rejection (such as, indicating a personal commitment to the assertions being made, invoking immutable prior decisions, or making a reference to an absent participant).

➢ Reaching a decision can be represented diagrammatically in a simplified form, as follows (see Figure 6.15):
Nevertheless, the analysis showed that the dynamics involved in reaching decisions are much more complicated, involving a constant negotiation between claims of epistemic and deontic stance, as summarized above.

6.4 Discussion

This chapter offered an analysis of shared decision-making in facilitated meetings. I have explored how participants and facilitators go about making decisions involving the distribution of organizational resources for the attainment of various organizational objectives or projects. In these meetings, the participants need to make countless minor decisions concerning a variety of issues. The recurrence of these small decisions provided me with a relatively large collection of relevant instances of data.

A general conclusion is that group decisions are interactionally complex. I have sought to identify what conversational practices are used during decision-making episodes. To this end, I have investigated two different ways of carrying out the decision-making process, which I have termed “selection-based” and “discussion-based”. I found that they have different trajectories.

In discussion-based decision-making, the decisional process initiates with a proposal. The analysis revealed that proposals are usually uttered by facilitators, are generally built based on participants’ prior talk and are tilted towards preferring an acceptance. The facilitators’ proposals have an inbuilt deontic right attached to them, although are generally uttered to also orient to the ultimate deontic right of the participants to accept or reject the proposals. Nevertheless, the proposals generally encompass only one possible course of action, thus adding pressure to affiliate with the facilitator’s deontic stance. In this sense, proposals are not neutral. Moreover, this kind of subtleties may obscure at times the question of whose decision it really is.
It is also interesting to observe the recognizability of satisficing proposals, wherein the goal of achieving maximal goals is replaced by one which tries to obtain objectives which will do (or the best that can be achieved under the circumstances). I have shown that satisficing proposals have two main features: (a) they identify a trouble spot (in this sense, they address a visible problem for which the facilitator offers a solution) and (b) they incorporate an element of assessment that is biased and subjective on the part of the facilitator (in other words, they are not neutral, being indicative of how the facilitator conceptualizes and assesses the problem).

It was observed that deontic authority is constantly negotiated between the facilitators and the participants. Even when the facilitators’ proposals are accepted, the participants seek to establish a stronger deontic position for themselves. To claim a stronger deontic stance, participants can appeal to higher epistemic rights, and this is particularly the case when facilitators make unilateral proposals, which are not directly built on participants’ prior talk and for which participants’ agreement was not sought.

Participants reject proposals by making an appeal to specific, restrictive contingencies. A special case is represented by satisficing proposals, which are generally met by covert rejections. In this case, however, participants cannot invoke their ultimate deontic right to reject the proposal by claiming a higher epistemic stance. The reason behind is that at the moment of the proposals being uttered, the same experience based on which proposals are grounded is being shared by both the facilitators and the participants. In order to reject these proposals, participants do some extra interactional work to deliver their rejection (such as, indicating a personal commitment to the assertions being made, invoking immutable prior decisions, or making a reference to an absent participant).

In conclusion, in the discussion-based decision-making process, the dynamics involved in reaching decisions are complex, involving a constant negotiation between claims of epistemic and deontic stance. The reaching of decisions is the achievement of both the participants and the facilitators. The “accountability” (Garfinkel, 1967) for the decisions is determined by both categories. It is in these dynamics that a power asymmetry between facilitators and participants is noticeable.

Unlike in discussion-based decision-making, wherein it was difficult to pin down key turns in which decisions were being made (due to them either being elusive or inserted within other sequences), in selection-based decision-making, the episodes were quite compact. As such, I found that the episodes generally comprise four identifiable moments: (a) the utterance of a directive by the facilitator (which can be an iterative process, in case not
everyone’s decision has been recorded), (b) the selection of an option and registration of the decision by the participants, (c) the delivery of an assessment or formulation by the facilitator, and (d) the topic closure by the facilitator (indicated by him moving on to the next thematic issue). The analysis further revealed that a decision has been reached upon the participants’ selection of a specific option. This is a fully embodied action. The evidence for this claim resides in the fact that, generally, after everyone has registered his or her individual decision, no further “discussion” of the decisions registered takes place that changes the decision made.

As such, I found that when facilitators used selection-based decision-making, a different trajectory opened up, characterized by stronger alignment between the facilitators and the participants. There is no negotiation between claims of epistemic and deontic stance among the participants and the facilitators. Key features of these sequences further included the construction of the future course of action as a “hypothetical” plan rather than a decision, the provision of information that did not favour a particular outcome, and the listing of options to choose from rather than proposing a single course of action.

I also found that, through an invitation from the facilitator, the selection-based format provided opportunity for participants to assess the decision. This assessment was formatted in a collaborative, rather than challenging way. This is possible because the assessments come after the decision (which encompasses everybody’s views) has been made. In selection-based decision-making, any participant is able to assess the decision without misaligning with the other participants. The same holds for the facilitators’ assessments.

In essence, in selection-based decision-making, assessments arise in a non-adversarial context. In selection-based decision-making, facilitators are seen to embody the peer model of the facilitator-participant relationship. In other words, in using options/selections, the facilitators shifted from the traditional paternalistic relationship to one that emphasizes participant empowerment. This notion is central to the concept of shared decision-making, in which participants’ preferences are considered from the very beginning and become the “springboard” for further discussion, and they are involved in the choice of options. The underlying principle of shared decision-making is therefore to increase the participants’ information, sense of autonomy, and control over decisions.

As already mentioned, in discussion-based decision-making, the facilitators’ proposals have an inbuilt deontic right attached to them, although are generally uttered to also orient to the ultimate deontic right of the participants to accept or reject the proposals. In this sense, the responsibility for the decision is more evenly distributed here when compared to
the selection-based decision-making process, where the responsibility for the decision is only placed with the participants.

Huisman (2001) indicated that each group creates its own patterns for how decisions are handled. It seems like much of the interaction occurs in ways that do not have an obviously discernible pattern, which indicates that the activity of group decision-making is not very structured, or that the degree of conventionalization is low. One explanation for this may lie in the very general nature of the category “group decision-making”. Group decision-making can appear in many situations. And such a wide variety of situations works against conventionalization. In my data, the basic pattern of proposal-acceptance also shows variation, as I have previously shown. Despite this, however, I have found one similarity across the dataset: In both discussion-based and selection-based decision-making, the facilitators orient towards making decisions explicit in talk.

When a course of action is being proposed, a commitment to the suggested action becomes due as the relevant next action. Nevertheless, as Stevanovic & Peräkylä (2012) indicated, commitment needs to be separated from the actual performance of the action because in many cases, they are two different matters. In this data, at least, proposals are indeed not used to create definite commitment (Heath, 1992) to a future course of action, but they rather appear to be ideally suited to the prime orientation of the facilitators, that is, eliciting the kinds of information that are central to the business of facilitation. I have shown that proposals (in their various forms) are a conversational device through which decision-making in facilitating settings can be initiated or accomplished.

It is generally believed that when every individual in a group has said that he wants the decision to be made, then the decision has been made. Nevertheless, the present data is showing that it may be more complicated than that. My findings point to the need to consider that maybe if none of the participants speak against the decision, then the decision has been made. Furthermore, decision-making is often thought about as being something grand and abstract, but in this data at least, decision-making is quite ordinary: recognizably ordinary. There is no grand episode of decision-making. Decision-making, although it can be spread across multiple turns, comprises many short decision-making processes. And these sub-processes are simply part of what people do during meetings. It is part of their activities.

Facilitators can influence the participants’ decision-making process. In this data, at least, I have shown that facilitators recurrently invoke deontic rights to propose courses of action. These deontic rights are rooted in their participation at the meeting (access to experience). At the same time, however, participants also claim deontic rights for themselves.
There is, thus, a struggle for power and authority between facilitators and participants. My findings align with the findings by Stevanovic & Peräkylä (2012, p. 318), who stated that:

It is not about the choice between competing views about future action, but about the ways in which the participants acquiesce to the decisions that are being made. These power struggles are not about the boundary between voluntary submission to authority and resistance against illegitimate power. Instead, they are about the boundary between voluntary submission to authority and reframing this submission as something that comes from the subject’s own will. In other words, we may not be that concerned about our ability to bring about consequences, but about our capacity to maintain our views about ourselves.

Without doubt, participants generally do hold primary access to topic expertise. Nevertheless, I found that during discussion-based decision-making, facilitators can also mobilize topic expertise to launch proposals. This topic expertise is the result of the participants being present and having access to the information discussed during meetings. Knowledge and sense-making are being shared and created, respectively, during the meetings, and in this sense, the facilitators also share that primary access to knowledge. My analysis argues thus against the distinction between an epistemics of expertise and an epistemics of experience, as proposed by Heritage (2013). In this case, during discussion-based decision-making, facilitators and participants are on the same epistemic gradient (unlike at the beginning of the meeting when the epistemic gap does exist). The reason behind is that facilitators have direct access to the meeting content. As I have shown, in case of proposal resistance, the participants cannot draw upon a higher epistemic stance, as this does not exist. Instead, resistance is managed via extra interactional work, such as appeals to specific, restrictive contingencies and claims to higher deontic rights. In this sense, the epistemics of expertise and epistemics of experience are intertwined.

I would like to conclude by mentioning that the epistemic status associated with expertise (here, participants’ knowledge) has traditionally given participants superior deontic rights, that is, the right to decide on a course of action in the meeting. Facilitators’ epistemic and deontic rights on the other hand, have traditionally not been acknowledged. Kaner et al. (2014), for example, explicitly advised facilitators to “stay out of the group’s way” (p. 307). In this chapter, however, I have shown that facilitators not only that do not stay out of the group’s way, but they are actively involved in decision-making, uttering proposals that favour
a particular course of action and claiming deontic status. I thus advocate that facilitation training materials should encourage facilitators to become equal partners in the decision-making based on their epistemic stance that is grounded in their participation at the meeting.
Chapter 7

Discussion and conclusions

7.0 Introduction

The aim of this thesis was to examine how facilitators go about doing facilitation work in facilitated computer-supported workplace meetings. I investigated the sequence of the activities which comprise the facilitation process, by identifying and analysing the organization of actions as they unfolded. To this purpose, I looked at a corpus of 53 hours of audio- and video-recorded face-to-face facilitated computer-supported workplace meetings in a business setting. I analysed this data using conversation analysis (CA) (Sacks, 1992b; Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson, 1974), a method for examining the details, nuances, and patterns in talk-and-embodied-conduct in interaction (Schegloff, 2007). The main analytic focus was to examine how facilitators assist participants in identifying the issues at hand (problem identification and formulation), how they organize and structure the participants’ contributions (integration of knowledge), and how they manage the decision-making process as, during the analysis, these emerged as the core activities of the meetings. Additionally, I have also aimed to show how CA can be effectively used to analyse not only the facilitators’ and participants’ talk, but also their embodied conduct. In this sense, I have shown that the embodied conduct is integral to our understanding of how participants make sense of the unfolding actions.

The research questions that have guided the current thesis are:

1. What is the macro-organization of facilitated computer-supported workplace meetings, from opening to closing? (Chapter 3)
2. How do facilitators elicit/unpack participation during these encounters? (Chapters 4, 5, and 6)
3. How do facilitators help the participants to identify and define the issues at hand? (Chapter 4)
4. How do facilitators organize and structure the participants’ contributions using computer software? (Chapter 5)
5. How are artefacts (conceptual maps) constituted interactionally (Chapter 5) and how are they drawn into interaction? (Chapters 4, 5, and 6)
6. What interactional resources for decision-making do facilitators use? (Chapter 6)
7. How are epistemic and deontic rights negotiated between facilitators and participants in these encounters? (Chapter 6)

In the following sections, I will first summarise the key findings from the analysis presented over the four analytic chapters (Section 7.1). Then, I will explore the contributions that the findings make to CA, along with limitations and potential directions for future research (Section 7.2). Finally, I will discuss the relevance of the findings for the practice of facilitation in computer-supported meetings, and provide recommendations for training novice facilitators (Section 7.3).

7.1 Summary of findings

I began this thesis (Chapter 1) by showing that, although there are plenty of studies on meetings in the interaction literature, facilitated computer-supported meetings in particular have largely been ignored, making them an under researched setting. On the other hand, the literature on facilitation comprises studies that have traditionally been approached from a theoretical perspective, lacking thus empirical studies that attend to the minute detail of doing facilitation *in situ*. This, in turn, provided the motivation for the research in this thesis.

In the first analytic chapter (Chapter 3), I provided an overview of how the facilitators and the participants proceeded through the meetings. This chapter was prepared in a way that reflected the overall organization of the meetings and further considered the main interactional tasks that facilitators worked to accomplish. These were: (a) identifying the participants’ initial views (problem identification and formulation), (b) integrating the participants’ views (integration of knowledge); and (c) decision-making (launching options and courses of actions), which were located in between some opening and closing steps. One of the first observations I made was that facilitated meetings may be remarkably varied, with differences in the type of problem at hand, as well as the type of (computer-supported) visual materials being used. But if one looks beyond the surface content of the talk to the underlying activities of which it is composed, the activity framework exhibits a striking degree of organization.

I compared the “practice” view with the “theoretical” approach towards the organization of the facilitated meetings and found that while the more “theoretical” approach is informative, it does not capture how this type of meetings happen in a practical and immediate sense. To this end, I have explored the similarities and differences between the CA-informed findings of this study and the existing models on facilitation (referred to as “stocks of professional knowledge” or SIKs (Peräkylä & Vehviläinen, 2003)). In doing so, I
have shown how CA findings falsify and correct assumptions that are part of the SIK on facilitation, how CA findings provide a more detailed picture of practices that are described in the SIK on facilitation, how CA findings add a new dimension to the understanding of practices described by the SIK on facilitation, and how CA findings expand the description of practices provided by the SIK on facilitation and suggest some of the missing links between the SIK and the interactional practices. This analysis has thus helped to enhance our understanding of the actual practice of facilitated computer-supported workplace meetings.

In the second analytic chapter (Chapter 4), I explored the first main interactional task, which is “identifying the issues at hand” (problem identification and formulation). My main interest was to identify specific conversational strategies used by facilitators to do their work in relation to the elicitation and unpacking of participation. I found that rather than using open-ended questions for eliciting talk (such as, “What do you think of X?”), facilitators use yes/no-interrogatives instead (such as, “Does X surprise you?”), which nevertheless, elicit “rich”, descriptive responses from the participants. This finding shows that in this type of meetings at least, the use of open-ended questions is not supported empirically.

Furthermore, I found that the facilitators often deploy prefatory assessments and/or formulations before eliciting participation through yes/no-interrogatives. I showed that assessments and formulations deployed in prefatory turns can play an important role in accomplishing at least two institutional tasks. First, they play a part in the transformation of written issues authored by meeting participants into an oral account, verbalized by the facilitator. Second, they play a role in setting the direction for the topical talk. The main action that they accomplish is “noticing” (Schegloff, 2010) or “reading out the screen”. In this case, there is generally no uptake from the part of the participants. But prefatory assessments and/or formulations can also do “questioning” or “reading into the screen”, in which case I argued that they mark a departure from the usual elicitation of participation (via interrogatives) and are doing two things in addition to eliciting participation. On the one hand, they represent a way of initiating the topic (as they project an invitation to a discussion of that which is being displayed on the public screen) and on the other hand, they are a way of creating a common frame of reference – in this sense, they constrain subsequent interaction. It is also remarkable to note that the prefatory assessments and/or formulations are always present, while the direct questions may be missing, which stands as evidence that the participants anticipate what the facilitators are likely to ask or the line of thought proposed for further discussion. Overall, I argued that these findings are particularly useful
for facilitators, who can use assessments and formulations to “orchestrate” participant input, questioning, thus, the facilitator’s role as “content-neutral”, as proposed by leading practitioners in the field (e.g., Kaner et al., 2014).

In the third analytical chapter (Chapter 5), I explored how the participants’ contributions were jointly structured by the participants and the facilitators using a “causal mapping technique” to build conceptual maps. In this chapter, I examined the design of the sequences that led to the creation of such conceptual maps. I showed that the presence of the facilitators and the use of the software introduce specific concerns and constraints on the overall organization of the meetings, allowing us to study how talk in interaction is an embodied, multimodal collaborative activity.

In the process of building conceptual maps, I have found that there is a distinction between “the person who performs an action” and “the person who is accountable for it”. I postulated that these are key categories for the facilitator doing facilitation generally, that actually both the facilitator and the participants are interested in making it clear who is accountable for a certain action (e.g., deleting something from the public screen) and who is really accountable for the decision behind the action. Further, I showed how the facilitators used conceptual maps to not only interact with the participants to produce knowledge about the issues at hand, but also to turn ideas into “talkables” available for the group to address. Finally, I argue that conceptual maps are more than a means to achieve an end and that by inquiring into what it is to produce conceptual maps and casting an eye on how conceptual maps are actually mobilized by facilitators can enhance our understanding of the use of conceptual maps and the social actions that they are achieving.

Furthermore, this thesis furthers our previous understanding of the public screen (which can display a variety of materials, such as conceptual maps using specific software, PowerPoint slides, and so on) as a textual and material resource for the participants to use (Knoblauch, 2008; Rendle-Short, 2006). Here (and in Chapter 4), I showed how the facilitators produce commented readings of the display on the public screen and thus employ the public screen to construct their talk. Because of this, the facilitators’ turns are visibly connected to the structural features of the public screen, to which they refer both verbally and multimodally. However, the public screen as a text and as a material object is not only available to the facilitators – the rest of the participants at the meeting may also utilize it in the same manner in order to add, modify, clarify, or delete some aspect of the display on the public screen. This is because the public screen is directly accessible to all meeting participants, who are able to evoke and exploit it for their own purposes. By doing so, the
public screen acts as the participants’ shared semiotic resource in negotiating the meaning of the display on the public screen.

In the fourth and final analytical chapter (Chapter 6), I investigated interaction in group decision-making. A general finding was that group decisions are interactionally complex. I have sought to identify what conversational practices are used during decision-making episodes. To this end, I have investigated two different ways of carrying out the decision-making process, which I have termed “selection-based” and “discussion-based”. I found that they have different trajectories. In discussion-based decision-making, the decisional process initiates with a proposal. The analysis revealed that proposals are usually uttered by facilitators, are generally built based on participants’ prior talk and are tilted towards preferring an acceptance. The facilitators’ proposals have an inbuilt deontic right attached to them, although are generally uttered to also orient to the ultimate deontic right of the participants to accept or reject the proposals. Nevertheless, the proposals generally encompass only one possible course of action, thus adding pressure to affiliate with the facilitator’s deontic stance. In this sense, proposals are not neutral, allowing the facilitators to influence decision-making. This kind of subtleties may obscure at times the question of whose decision it really is.

It was observed that deontic authority is constantly negotiated between the facilitators and the participants. Even when the facilitators’ proposals are accepted, the participants seek to establish a stronger deontic position for themselves. To claim a stronger deontic stance, participants can appeal to higher epistemic rights, and this is particularly the case when facilitators make unilateral proposals, which are not directly built on participants’ prior talk and for which participants’ agreement was not sought. I have shown that participants reject proposals by making an appeal to specific, restrictive contingencies. A special case is represented by satisficing proposals, which are generally met by covert rejections. In this case, however, participants cannot invoke their ultimate deontic right to reject the proposal by claiming a higher epistemic stance. The reason behind is that at the moment of the proposals being uttered, the same experience based on which proposals are grounded is being shared by both the facilitators and the participants. In order to reject these proposals, participants do some extra interactional work to deliver their rejection (such as, indicating a personal commitment to the assertions being made, invoking immutable prior decisions, or making a reference to an absent participant).

Unlike in discussion-based decision-making, wherein it was difficult to pin down key turns in which decisions were being made (due to them either being elusive or inserted within
other sequences), in selection-based decision-making, the episodes were quite compact. As such, I found that the episodes generally comprise four identifiable moments: (a) the utterance of a directive by the facilitator (which can be an iterative process, in case not everyone’s decision has been recorded), (b) the selection of an option and registration of the decision by the participants, (c) the delivery of an assessment or formulation by the facilitator, and (d) the topic closure by the facilitator (indicated by him moving on to the next thematic issue). The analysis further revealed that a decision has been reached upon the participants’ selection of a specific option. This is a fully embodied action. The evidence for this claim resides in the fact that, generally, after everyone has registered his or her individual decision, no further “discussion” of the decisions registered takes place that changes the decision made. Each of the analytic chapters contributed to our knowledge of facilitated computer-supported workplace meetings, yet they each have their own contribution to traditional areas of conversation analytic research and to the literature on facilitation. I turn to explore these aspects in the next Section 7.2, along with limitations and avenues for future research.

### 7.2 Overall evaluation of research: contribution, limitations, and future research

In this thesis, I have made contributions to our knowledge and understanding of the practice of facilitated computer-supported workplace meetings. First, I have provided a detailed analysis of spoken and embodied interaction in this type of meetings, which has been largely overlooked in the existing literature, but which represents a growing part of current organizational life. Second, I have contributed to our understanding of how technology (computer software, computer screens, etc.) constrains and/or nurtures progressivity in interaction; in this sense, I enhance our understanding of the concept of agency of artefacts. Third, I have contributed to the conversation analytic literature on multi-party interaction by means of examining a variety of topics. For example, this thesis contributes to research on questioning, as well as the action of eliciting/unpacking participation. I showed that the use of open-ended questions to elicit participation is generally not supported empirically, at least in this context. Further, the thesis contributes to existing literature on multi-party meeting interaction, showing how the departure from conversational norms takes place (such as, for example, the departure from the canonical next-speaker selection technique which involves the use of address terms and address positions in an utterance; or an absent request which is nonetheless understood as a request and is subsequently granted).
In Chapter 1, I drew attention to the fact that the present thesis bears similarities to four research studies in particular, namely those by Franco and Greiffenhagen (2018), Franco and Nielsen (2018), Nielsen (2012), and Tavella and Franco (2015). Here, I wish to briefly discuss the contributions that I have made to the cited debate. My research supports and contests the findings of these studies in four ways. First, I have found that although from a theoretical perspective, the wording of an issue (node) in the conceptual maps developed should matter less than the causal context within which it sits, in practice, nonetheless, interrogating the meaning of the wording of issues happens often, as also found by Franco and Greiffenhagen (2018).

Second, I have shown that by having all the participants’ contributions publicly displayed through the conceptual map, reading at a glance becomes possible. Not only that, but the available pool of ideas also makes it possible for the facilitator to select any of them to talk about first. Hence, choosing a particular topic is really up to the facilitator. He decides which ideas to pick, and therefore, which ideas to discuss. Hence, although as an analyst of the process it may not be possible to determine whether he randomly or deliberately picks an idea/cluster as the first to talk about, it is possible to ascertain that by him doing so, he has the capacity to shape the process by orchestrating the topical talk. This questions the facilitator’s role as content-neutral, as proposed by leading practitioners in the field, such as Kaner et al. (2014), a finding which is also indicated by Nielsen (2012).

Third, findings of the present research also show that even without eye-contact during physical encounters, participants and facilitators can “find” each other by means of displaying embodied intentions and accomplishing actions, which are understood by the rest of the audience. This seems to be especially the case when the meeting involves the use of computer software. In this sense, parts of the smooth accomplishment of participation/integration of the ideas is achieved by virtue of the participants’ “indirect seeing” of the embodied conduct of the facilitator, which is facilitated by both his position in the room and by the use of the computer software. Consequently, this thesis takes the “seeing” of the screen more seriously, in the analysis of integrating ideas with the aid of technology. This is in contrast with the findings by Nielsen (2012), who found that after reading from a coloured card, “there is a pause in which the facilitator changes his body posture. He turns away from the whiteboard, faces the group and scans their faces. By not speaking while gazing at the rest of the participants, the facilitator shows them that something is to come from them, that he is not the one to speak” (p. 95).
Fourth, I have shown that formulations are commonly used by facilitators to “orchestrate” participant input, questioning, thus, once again the facilitator’s role as “content-neutral”. This finding contrasts, nonetheless, with the study by Franco and Nielsen (2018), who found that facilitators can use formulations to draw out the participants’ contributions on their behalf without influencing content.

In terms of limitations, one of the main limitations of this thesis has to do with the capturability of both talk and embodied interaction in its material environment. As stated in the methodological chapter (Chapter 2), the data for the present thesis is multi-party interaction, with 15 participants on average in each of the meetings. Quite often there would be overlap in talk and distinguishing who says what became impossible at times. Also, there were only two cameras, one placed next to the public screen and the other diagonally opposite. While most of the interaction going on was indeed captured, it was not possible to capture every angle. As such, the activities occurring outside of what the video cameras captured were not available. Furthermore, because there were so many participants present during the meetings, the cameras were positioned quite far away from any one individual to capture as much as possible; the downside of such decision implied that sometimes it was hard to identify certain bodily movements or interactions, such as facial expressions or gazes. I could have used more cameras, but I would argue that this would have been perceived as intrusive by the participants, who have been promised that cameras would be located in such a way so as to not interfere with the natural look of the setting. Furthermore, capturing “all the angles’ would not necessarily be a “strength”, since as an analyst I would have access to more information than the participants themselves.

Another potential limitation is that findings are restricted to the data used in this research. My findings cannot be said to be representative of all organizations of similar type. However, the data represents 15 different meetings (totalling 53 hours), run with 4 different facilitators, and collected during 2007-2016. This suggests a reasonable amount of data to provide a detailed look into what happens during computer-supported facilitated meetings. Most importantly, I was able to identify patterns, which indicated that the findings, although not generalizable, are robust. Here, I would also argue that conversational analysts do not seek to generalize findings, but rather investigate how members of a particular setting organize their conduct to produce meaningful and recognizable actions, that come to form what we may understand as “facilitation”.

Finally, I wish to address one additional point, which I believe is no deficit to the present research alone, but is true for most research that uses a conversation analytic
approach. Some non-CA researchers to whom I presented my work at conferences were very much interested in raising the question of whether I have gone too far in attaching to utterances interactional meanings that the participants do not consistently orient to themselves. To this, I would like to answer that although I grant that I have focused on what utterances could mean and not what we can say with certainty that they “did” mean, I have tried to provide as much evidence as possible to show that there is some basis in interpreting the participants’ utterances the way I have. In this regard, I have relied on the “next-turn proof procedure”, wherein I studied the way in which the recipient of a turn at talk displayed, in the next turn, his or her understanding of what the prior turn was about. On the other hand, however, I would like to provide the following observation by Sanders (2007, p. 181) as a reply to such concerns:

…we sell our work short if we are overtly rigid about shying away from meanings. First, it would make it difficult to examine speakers’ and hearers’ indirectness (e.g., Drew, 1984; Pomerantz, 1980, 1986). Second, […] part of what participants often have to cope with in interaction is precisely indeterminacy about a speaker’s meaning – knowing what an utterance could mean, without any certainty that the speaker means that by it. And speakers may or may not respond to those possible meanings, or that equivocality, in an overt way. Third, it is sometimes the mark of artfulness and success if one fashions one’s turns to avoid a need or option for anyone to directly register their significance and effect, and we stand to render ourselves unable to capture those instances if our work centers on just those matters to which participants visibly attend. In short to restrict ourselves to what meanings participants visibly orient to is to overlook some of the most difficult problematics of interaction (when speaker’s meanings are only possible, not certain, but consequential, and possibly strategically effective).

Overall, this thesis has provided the first detailed analysis of what happens during facilitated computer-supported workplace meetings, from opening to closing. The analysis made shows how facilitated meetings are managed and interactionally accomplished. I have analysed how facilitators proceeded through the meetings, how they elicited and unpacked participation, how they used technology to help participants structure and integrate their views, and how they managed the decision-making process. I have added to our
understanding of meetings by analysing a particular type of meeting (“facilitated computer-supported workplace meeting”) and showing how they work in actual workplace settings.

It is without much doubt that future research could touch upon a variety of aspects. I have previously indicated in the discussion section of each analytic chapter, directions for future research. Rather than repeating the same here, I would like to provide two directions for research that emerged based on my reflection when looking back at the chapters and thinking how the analysis could be taken one step further in the future.

One direction for future research is related to the presence of artefacts. There is a general tendency for CA research studies, at least as of now, to orient to artefacts as resources and constraints in interaction; as such, agency is a feature that has been generally associated with human beings (Giddens, 1984) and not with artefacts. In this thesis, I have aimed to contribute to existing literature on the topic by not only orienting to artefacts as resources that constrain or enable interaction, but also by looking at how these very artefacts are interactionally constructed. I believe, however, that there is at least a third dimension that could and should be added to such analysis, which is represented by seeing artefacts with their non-human agency. It is about seeing what artefacts actually do in interaction, and assigning them a position on a par with that held by human agency in interaction. Cooren et al. (2006) stated that “to orient to a contract as a resource and/or a constraint means that we, as analysts, acknowledge that the persons who signed it bound themselves through an agreement that is enforceable by law, but such an analysis neglects what the contract typically does, which is precisely to commit its signatories to do specific things” (p. 536). Chapter 5 has partially answered the call made by Cooren et al. (2006), but there is scope for much more research in this area.

I believe that this methodological orientation would bring the CA approach adopted in this thesis closer to its ontological roots, established in ethnomethodology. By seeing how human and non-human agencies articulate with each other and how they both “do things” in practice, we would be able to return to Garfinkel’s (1988) plenum, that is, a world in which entities with different ontologies compose and structure our world and study such world from different, innovative, and possibly fascinating new angles. In Garfinkel’s words, “recognizing non-human agency can thus be identified as an epistemological position that consists of acknowledging that we share our world with entities that do things in some specific circumstances” (p. 536). Doing things, of course, implies that others have to proceed with a certain course of action. For example, informing of a decision, as a speech act, presupposes
that meeting participants will not only read the conceptual map, but also that they will further act accordingly and this will be visible in interaction.

The reason why I emphasise the need for such research is that we need to consider today’s rise of artificial intelligence and machine learning. The starting point is no longer only human agency. I do believe it is limiting to consider that technology used during facilitated meetings will remain as it is today (such as the technology studied in Chapter 5, which is Group Explorer). Consider that few years back facilitators relied mostly on paper documents and that today they rely mostly on computer software; hence, what tomorrow will bring is an exciting topic. Maybe in few years’ time the format of interaction using technology will change and maybe the facilitator will turn out to be a machine rather than a human being – hard to imagine straight away, but a possibility, nonetheless. But the only way to allow for this thought to be a possibility is to consider the addition of new dimensions to the analysis.

In sum, the practical implications for such endeavour would be: by acknowledging that artefacts do things, we could observe, for instance, how a conceptual map gathering the individual contributions of the meeting participants already hints at a possible decision that most probably will be taken by the end of the meeting; or how an individual console laptop asks the meeting participants to click on certain keyboard buttons or hyperlinks to register their contributions. In other words, if we were to eliminate the visual representations on the public screen, then it may become necessary to use many more words to substitute the representations and do the same work as the representations.

The implications can be extended: for example, when facilitators refer to the conceptual maps, they can choose to what entity they want to attribute agency to and this can have important rhetorical implications (Conrad, 2004). For example, there is a difference between saying “what this conceptual map tells me is that” and “what you are telling me is that”. Both ways of reporting the display on the public screen are correct, but they illustrate a selection in a chain of agencies: the conceptual map acts on behalf of the facilitators. Selecting among agencies can be a matter of strategy in the sense that the selection may frame the following discussion in a specific way, by distancing or not the participants from that which they produced (and thus “saving face”). In this sense, then, “intentionality is not a phenomenon that should be reduced to what happens in people’s heads, but should also be expanded to include all the objects that are produced by human beings. In other words, texts, machines, tools, and artifacts in general are all intentional objects […] and this intentionality is taken into account when we orient to them as doing something in a specific context”
(Cooren et al., 2006, p. 539). Of course, more research would be needed to identify such subtleties and identify whether subsequent talk indeed takes different courses of action and has different interactional consequences.

A second direction for future research that I would be interested in pursuing further has to do with questioning, meeting agenda, and intentionality. As I have argued in various places throughout this thesis (but mainly in Chapters 4 and 6), questions are powerful because when they are asked an answer becomes due (Puchta & Potter, 2004) and because findings show that questions constrain recipients by setting agendas (Boyd & Heritage, 2006; Clayman & Heritage, 2002a, 2002b). As Hayano (2013) argued, a question sets two agendas: a topical agenda (what is being talked about) and an action agenda (what the speaker is doing with the question). Reconsider the following Extract 3.20, from Chapter 3.

**Extract 3.20**

01 F: So (.) now this, uhh .ptk apparently very messy thing,
02 ( .) actually may tell us something that uhh we- we know or
03 perhaps we don't know. What do you think are the busiest
04 concepts <just by looking at those,>
05 (0.5)
06 F: th- the busiest nodes?

-----------------------------------((lines omitted))-------------------------------------

07 F: So, for example ehhh (1.5) this ehh (. ) agree what we
08 want the reputation to be, ehh yes.= so <because it's-
09 it's a bit vague at the moment>.= Is that- is that what
this means, number one? Agree what we want the reputation
10 to be for. Vague equals no reputation.= Yeah.
11 (1.5)
12 P: Strikes me that several of those a:re, talking about
13 failure of- as it were to communicate excellence rather
14 than achieve [it.= ]
15 F: [=uhmm. ]
16 (3.5)
17 F: And is that- is that an issue,= Is that the issue,
18 Historically we've a:ll agreed (. ) that we don't ma:ket
19 (. ) our achievements as well as we co:ld.

In lines 09-10, the facilitator asks the participants if they agree with the interpretation of issue number one, “agree what we want the reputation to be for”. The polar question (“Is that- is that what this means, number one?”) sets as an action agenda the subjective interpretation of issue number one using a format that makes a yes- or a no-answer due. On the other hand, the facilitator sets the topical agenda to discuss issue number one. In lines 13-
15, we can see that the participant P conforms to the facilitator’s topical agenda, but not to its action agenda. What I find striking is the ease with which the facilitator actually abandons his interrogatively-formulated proposal delivered at lines 09-10. Instead of pursuing an answer to his initial question (hence, pursuing the action agenda), the facilitator’s turn at line 18 shows him producing a new question, built upon the participant’s contribution.

I argue that this may disclose that the facilitator’s project may not actually be about having his proposals accepted (even when they are designed to be confirmed, such as is the case here), but rather that he makes use of proposals to challenge the meaning of the participants’ views. And this is remarkable, as it shows that proposals can have functions other than that of proposing a particular course of action: they can also perform the action of challenging. In light of the above, I advance that the institutional context of facilitated meetings may exhibit peculiar questioning practices, which may benefit from further research. In the last Section 7.3, I will now proceed to discuss the implications of the findings for training facilitators.

7.3 Implications for training facilitators

Overall, this thesis makes innovative contributions to our understanding of the practice of facilitated computer-supported workplace meetings. It challenges existing literature on facilitation by falsifying and correcting assumptions and adding to or expanding our understanding of facilitation practices (see Discussion section in Chapter 3). I highlight some of the most notable ones in Table 7.1, based on the chapters of this thesis, and considering one of the most well-known materials on facilitation, which belongs to Kaner et al. (2014).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Framing: “The essence of this technique [framing] is to gently step back from the content and remind the group the purpose of the conversation.” (p. 111)</th>
<th>Supported empirically?</th>
<th>This study</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>It was noticed that generally, facilitators do not step back from the content. They frame the discussion by “orchestrating” participant input (hence, the content). (See Chapters 4 and 6)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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| Neutrality: “Regarding the process of communication, a facilitator is a neutral third party.” (p. 267) | No. | It was noticed that assessments and formulations are commonly used by facilitators to “orchestrate” participant input, questioning, thus, the facilitator’s |

Table 7.1. Facilitation Assumptions That Are Challenged by CA-Informed Findings.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>The Divergent Zone</strong>: Referring to the means of encouraging participation that would enable participants to quickly gain a picture of the breadth of the group’s thinking, Kaner et al. suggest to “pose an open-ended question [emphasis added] such as: How would you describe what’s going on? How does this problem affect you? What is your position on this matter? Why, in your opinion, is this happening?” (p. 269)</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>I showed that the notion that open-ended questions better elicit participation than yes/no interrogatives is generally not supported empirically, at least in this context. Overwhelmingly, facilitators in this context were observed to deploy yes/no interrogatives that elicited “rich” responses. (See Chapter 4)</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>The Groan Zone</strong>: Kaner et al. write that categorizing involves two separate tasks, creating categories and sorting items into categories. They further mention that “Creating categories as a group means having a philosophical discussion. This is both the value and the cost of creating categories from scratch. A philosophical discussion puts a group into the Groan Zone, where they will have to struggle to integrate one another’s beliefs and definitions. The process is uncomfortable and frustrating, and people will resist it.” (p. 91)</td>
<td>Not necessarily.</td>
<td>Both categorizing and sorting are generally performed by the facilitator and okayed by the participants. In this context, at least, there was no evidence of participants struggling, being uncomfortable and frustrated, or resisting this phase of the interaction process. (See Chapter 5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Convergent Zone</strong> + <strong>Decision-Making</strong>: Kaner et al. state that “A silence is not an agreement.” (p. 335)</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Findings show that it is enough for one person to disagree with a proposal to invalidate the decision; but the same holds for accepting a proposal. If one person okays the proposal, and this is not challenged by any other member, then the decision is considered to be agreed upon. One does not need for everyone to agree with a proposal in order to accept the proposal and make a decision. In interactional terms, a silence does something and that something can be an agreement. (See Chapter 6)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**“Decision-Making”: Kaner et al. explicitly advise facilitators to “stay out of the group’s way”** (p. 307).

| No. | In discussion-based decision-making, facilitators are actively involved in the decisional process, uttering proposals that favour a particular course of action, claiming deontic status, and influencing decision-making. |

The implications for practice (training of facilitators) are many. As Eden (1992) advanced, maintaining a negotiated social order is crucial to both political feasibility and to emotional commitment from the participants in relation to the various action-oriented decisions that may be proposed during the facilitated meetings.

The present thesis has identified communicative practices that should be of core interest to both professional and novice facilitators. Based on the findings of the present thesis, I highlight them below:

1. It is possible for facilitators to influence topical talk. In this sense, doing *noticings* (“reading out the public screen”) via assessments and formulations can be used by facilitators to project an invitation to talk, while also “framing” the discussion that will emerge further.

2. Facilitators need not be concerned about using only interrogative formats to elicit talk. For example, yes/no declaratives get more than confirmation, they get some form of elaboration.

3. It also seems there is no significant practical difference between the use of yes/no questions and open questions; in both cases, the participants provide “rich”, descriptive responses.

4. When asking participants to perform a task, it is possible to reduce the interactional pressure of actually issuing a request or directive by issuing a pre-request or pre-directive. In interactional terms, doing *pres* (or, telling participants what you are going to ask them to do) achieves the same action as the actual request or directive (that is, getting participants to do that something) without having to issue the actual request or directive.

5. Grounding proposals in the participants’ prior talk is a way to treat the participants’ own experience and expertise as the relevant frame of reference, making them harder to be rejected by the participants. At the same time, they allow the facilitators to hold control of the topical talk, and hence, influence the act of decision-making.
6. Although designed to be accepted, especially because they are uttered as a solution that would be the best that can be achieved in a specific situation, satisficing proposals are actually recurrently being resisted by the participants.

7. Participants generally seek to establish stronger deontic positions for themselves. As such, when the facilitators’ proposals are delivered as unilateral proposals (that is, not built based on the prior talk of the participants), participants appeal to their epistemic domain of expert knowledge to defend their higher deontic stance.

8. Skills considered central to facilitating activities, such as making eye-contact, are called into question. Findings show that even without eye-contact during physical encounters, participants and facilitators can “find” each other by means of displaying embodied intentions and accomplishing actions, which are understood by the rest of the audience. This seems to be especially the case when the meeting involves the use of computer software. This is not to say that eye contact is not important, but rather that our knowledge of it is only partial and that technology has an important role to play, constraining and/or affording progressivity in interaction.

9. When facilitators provide instructions about the task, acceptance is not made relevant as the next action, but rather compliance (see Goodwin, 2006).

10. Regarding the use of formulations: the facilitators’ formulations are generally based on the screen representation (after input), rather than retrospective analysis of deliberation. This is particularly important as it gets to the nub of what the technology used is actually about.

11. Regarding the elicitation of participation: “reading into the public screen” generally comprises a wider set of turns than “reading out the public screen”, which may stand as a feature of this phase of facilitated meetings. This shows that “reading into the public screen”, which refers to a particular interpretation of the results displayed that further makes the relevant next action to be an agreement/disagreement or confirmation/disconfirmation, requires extra interactional work from the part of the facilitators.

12. The use of the clock gesture in Chapter 5 as a locational device seems to be a repair method that displays the mismatch between interaction order and technology/software (“poor design”). This is particularly important as it shows features of the technology used by facilitators that need improvement.

The conventional research on facilitation has reproduced the idea that content and process are separable and this sharp distinction has been maintained by both practitioners and
researchers. This has happened because “the studies have taken the process management account to be an accurate description of practice rather than a persuasive account aimed at managing competing normative injunctions or a theoretical account rife with contradiction” (Aakhus, 2001, p. 365). To the best of my knowledge, these conventional studies have not considered how facilitators might cross the line between process and content and how their talk and actions might be consequential for the outcome of the meetings. The consequence is a loss in developing better assumptions about how systems for exchanging speech relate to the production of knowledge (Drew & Heritage, 1992). As Aakhus (2001) further postulated, this distinction “is apparently taboo territory even though it would be exceedingly enlightening to investigate such matters. Such studies could document what practitioners do in dilemmatic situations which could be used to foster the communicative imagination of practitioners and refocus professional development” (p. 365).

The analytic approach adopted in this thesis has enabled me to show that the distinction between content and process is not supported empirically and it is not a good description of how communication works in situ during facilitated meetings. Probably the most important contribution of this thesis was to show that facilitators do manage content, a finding which contributes to gaining a better understanding of the constitutive aspects of the practice of facilitation and which impacts how facilitators position themselves as facilitators throughout the interaction.
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L’analyse des actions et des discours en situation de travail. Concepts, méthodes, et applications (pp. 135-154). Louvain.


Mondada, L. (2007b). Participants’ online analysis and multimodal practices: Projecting the end of the turn and the closing of the sequence. Discourse Studies, 8(1), 117-129.


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Sociological Inquiry, 50(3-4), 204-152.


Order: Studies in Social Organization and Embodied Activities (pp. 31-42).

American Journal of Sociology, 102(1), 161-216.


interaction: language and body in the material world (pp. 1-26). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.


Table 1.2. Characteristics of the CA Studies Reviewed.

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<tr>
<th>Authors</th>
<th>Article title</th>
<th>Data</th>
<th>Artefacts</th>
<th>Approach</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nissi &amp; Lehtinen</td>
<td>Negotiation of expertise and multifunctionality: PowerPoint presentations as interactional activity types in workplace meetings</td>
<td>Project meetings held in a Finnish city organization. The project group consisted of 30 city employees from various municipal departments, a project leader and other project management, outside consultants and various guest speakers. A total of 15 h video-taped.</td>
<td>PowerPoint slides.</td>
<td>Conversation analysis, multimodality</td>
<td>Examine how participants orient to each other's expertise, what is accomplished through the exchange, and how the PowerPoint slide is interwoven with the process.</td>
<td>The exchanges establish the presentation as information delivery in which the complexity of professional knowledge is displayed and negotiated. There is an orientation to directive functions of the presentation activity. The PowerPoint slides act as the participants' shared semiotic resource in negotiating the meaning of the presentation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nissi (2015)</td>
<td>From entry proposals to a joint statement: Practices of shared text production in multiparty meeting interaction</td>
<td>A total of 15 h video-taped planning meetings held in a Finnish city organization and attended by project management and a project group consisting of personnel from different municipal departments. Participants comprise 20 project members and a facilitator.</td>
<td>Various written materials, such as meeting invitations, memos, plans, reports, PowerPoint slides, etc. Whiteboard.</td>
<td>Conversation analysis, multimodality</td>
<td>Investigate the practices of shared text production in multiparty meeting interaction.</td>
<td>The activity of shared text production unfolds as two recurrent sequences, in which the construction of the text is accomplished through the interplay between verbal, embodied and material resources of the setting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nissi (2016)</td>
<td>Spelling out consequences: Conditional constructions as a means to resist proposals in organisational planning process</td>
<td>Meetings held in a Finnish city organisation and established to develop the customer services of the municipality. Most of the meetings were attended by a project leader who was employed specifically for the project and acted as a chair in the meetings, approx. 30 city employees from different municipal departments, the manager of the city's innovation services, outside consultants as well as various guest speakers.</td>
<td>None.</td>
<td>Conversation analysis, discourse analysis</td>
<td>Investigate the way proposals may be resisted in organisational planning process by means of conditional constructions.</td>
<td>By introducing a problematic hypothetical situation, conditional constructions outline the undesirable consequences of the proposed idea in real work life. Furthermore, by highlighting the experience of the customer, conditional constructions present the organisation as benefiting from the potential rejection of the idea.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nissi &amp; Lehtinen</td>
<td>Conducting a task while reconstructing its meaning: Interaction, professional identities and recontextualization of a written task assignment</td>
<td>A series of meetings held in a Finnish city organization. Most of the meetings were attended by a project leader who was employed specifically for this project and acted as a chair in the meetings, approx. 30 city employees representing different municipal departments, the manager of the city’s innovation services, outside consultants as well as various guest speakers. A total of 15 h video-taped. Single case analysis.</td>
<td>PowerPoint slides and written papers.</td>
<td>Conversation analysis, multimodality</td>
<td>Investigate the way an institutional task of a meeting is oriented to by different meeting participants and developed in and through local interaction.</td>
<td>At a general level, the analysis shows how spoken interaction and written texts interweave and form a reciprocal relationship in organizational life.</td>
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<td>Church</td>
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<td>None.</td>
<td>Conversation analysis</td>
<td>Investigate how participants involved in joint decision-making display their approval of their co-participants’ proposals, signal the emergence of new decisions and implicate sequence closure.</td>
<td>Second speakers’ approval turns that are delivered with a (1) dynamic prosody (increased loudness, excessive pitch movement) establish new decisions, no matter whether the turns are action declarations or positive evaluations. Approval turns with a (2) flat prosody (decreased loudness, minimal pitch movement) do not—alone—suffice for new decisions to emerge. When speakers signal their approval with a (3) flat-stylized prosody (stylized figure, embedded in flat prosodic features), new decisions emerge just like with dynamic approval turns.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stevanovic</td>
<td>Prosodic salience and the emergence of new decisions: On approving responses to proposals in Finnish workplace interaction</td>
<td>A total of 10 h of video-recorded Finnish conversations in 15 workplace meetings, in which church officials are planning their joint work tasks. Participants comprise 15 pastors and 10 cantors. The meetings are dyads or triads.</td>
<td>None.</td>
<td>Conversation analysis</td>
<td>Investigate how participants involved in joint decision-making display their approval of their co-participants’ proposals, signal the emergence of new decisions and implicate sequence closure.</td>
<td>Second speakers’ approval turns that are delivered with a (1) dynamic prosody (increased loudness, excessive pitch movement) establish new decisions, no matter whether the turns are action declarations or positive evaluations. Approval turns with a (2) flat prosody (decreased loudness, minimal pitch movement) do not—alone—suffice for new decisions to emerge. When speakers signal their approval with a (3) flat-stylized prosody (stylized figure, embedded in flat prosodic features), new decisions emerge just like with dynamic approval turns.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stevanovic &amp; Peräkylä (2012)</td>
<td>Deontic Authority in Interaction: The Right to Announce, Propose, and Decide</td>
<td>The data are drawn from the data corpus of 15 video-recorded church workplace meetings (10 h), wherein pastors and cantors discuss their joint future work tasks (planning meetings). The data were collected in seven congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Finland. The meetings are dyads or triads. Participants comprise 15 pastors and 10 cantors.</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Conversation analysis</td>
<td>Explore deontic congruence and incongruence in sequences of decision making.</td>
<td>The distribution of deontic rights depends on whether decision-making sequences are initiated by assertions or proposals.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stevanovic (2013a)</td>
<td>Constructing a proposal as a thought: A way to manage problems in the initiation of joint decision-making in Finnish workplace interaction</td>
<td>Fifteen video-recorded workplace meetings where pastors and cantors are planning upcoming church events. The data were collected in seven congregations in the regions of several bishoprics of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Finland. The meetings were dyads or triads, with fifteen different pastors and ten different cantors.</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Conversation analysis</td>
<td>Describe what participants do when they construct their proposals as thoughts.</td>
<td>Constructing a proposal as a thought seems to be a practice with which participants may enable the symmetrical distribution of deontic rights at the very beginning of joint decision-making sequences.</td>
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**Health and social care**

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<tr>
<td>Mori, Imamura, &amp; Shima (2017)</td>
<td>Epistemic management in the material world of workplace: A study of nursing shift handovers at a Japanese Geriatric Healthcare Facility</td>
<td>A total of 135 minutes of handover meetings. Participants comprise outgoing and incoming nurses and nursing care workers.</td>
<td>Personal notebooks, binders, and clipboards.</td>
<td>Conversation analysis, multimodality</td>
<td>Investigate how nurses working at a Japanese geriatric healthcare facility report, confirm and reconstruct information concerning care receivers during routine handover meetings.</td>
<td>Participants incorporate various evidential markers as a resource to present different kinds and levels of access they have to particular pieces of information and to indicate their epistemic stance. The analysis also uncovers how the presence of documents that contain information regarding care receivers impact the ways in which outgoing nurses construct their reports, as well as the ways in which incoming nurses initiate repair.</td>
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<td>Brassac, Fixmer, Mondada, &amp; Vinck (2008)</td>
<td>Interweaving Objects, Gestures, and Talk in Context</td>
<td>Video recording of a meeting among a group of professional experts (including physicians and software engineers) working on the computerization of a blood-transfusion traceability device.</td>
<td>Various objects, such as drafts of procedures, PowerPoint presentations, “sheets in use” or prototype sheets of the patient file, computer screens, etc.</td>
<td>Conversation analysis, activity theory, distributed cognition, actor-network theory, multimodality</td>
<td>Analyse the group’s collaborative practices during a work session focused on the introduction of computerized medical records at a hospital in France. The article showed that some objects are defined praxeologically and contextually both as categories (ordonnance and prescription) and as artifacts (their plasticity mobilized in interaction). The artifacts were not effective instruments for fulfilling a function specified once and for all.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bangerter, Mayor, &amp; Pekarek Doehler (2011)</td>
<td>Reported Speech in Conversational Storytelling During Nursing Shift Handover Meetings</td>
<td>Video recordings of three of the four nursing shift handover meetings per day during five consecutive days, in both the surgery unit and the cardiovascular rehabilitation unit (30 handovers in total).</td>
<td>None.</td>
<td>Conversation analysis, with content analysis; multimodality</td>
<td>Study the interactional functioning of reported speech in handover storytelling.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Veen &amp; de la Croix (2016)</td>
<td>Collaborative Reflection Under the Microscope: Using Conversation Analysis to Study the Transition from Case Presentation to Discussion in GP Residents' Experience Sharing Sessions</td>
<td>A total of 47 reflection meetings of 13 groups, resulting in 76 hours of video recording. The sessions comprised five to 14 GP residents per group.</td>
<td>None.</td>
<td>Conversation analysis</td>
<td>Describe the structure and characteristics of group reflection by describing transitions in interactions. Also, describe the tutor’s role.</td>
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<td>The transitions are ambiguous, as there is ambiguity about what will happen next and the floor is open. Transitions are an arena for negotiations between case presenter, participants, and tutors, in which knowledge and the right to take the floor play an important part. The tutor can have different interactive roles, namely, that of teacher, expert, facilitator, and active participant.</td>
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<td>Housley (1999)</td>
<td>Role as an Interactional Device and Resource in Multidisciplinary Team Meetings</td>
<td>Recordings of a number of team meetings and allocation meetings of a Flood Support Team that included the Team Leader, three Social Workers, a Counsellor, a Lay Volunteer Coordinator and a Social Work student.</td>
<td>None.</td>
<td>Conversation analysis, membership categorization analysis</td>
<td>Explore the notion of role as an interactional device through the analysis of talk in interaction within multidisciplinary social/ care work team meetings.</td>
<td>Among others, within the course of team meetings role is both interactionally accomplished, recognised and used as a resource to carry out further work in meeting talk.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Housley (2000b)</td>
<td>Story, narrative and team work</td>
<td>Recordings of a number of team meetings and allocation meetings of a Flood Support Team that included the Team Leader, three Social Workers, a Counsellor, a Lay Volunteer Coordinator and a Social Work student.</td>
<td>None.</td>
<td>Conversation analysis, membership categorization analysis</td>
<td>Examine the use of story formats in team talk-in-interaction.</td>
<td>Stories and narrative sequences, in members' talk, are designed and constructed in situations that may invite overlap, interruption, questioning and disagreement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geyer (2010)</td>
<td>Teasing and ambivalent face in Japanese multi-party discourse</td>
<td>Faculty meetings at secondary schools in the Tokyo metropolitan area. Each meeting lasts from 20 to 90 min. At each meeting, seven participants are present, with the head teacher acting as chairperson.</td>
<td>None.</td>
<td>Conversation analysis, with ethnography</td>
<td>Examine teasing – an interactionally delicate social action, which appears to be both face threatening and face enhancing – situated in Japanese institutional multi-party discourse.</td>
<td>Teasing sequences represent instances in which a tacit norm of appropriateness becomes observable in discourse. Facework can be depicted as an argumentative process in which one's face ascription is contested and altered. Face threats involved in specific teasing segments are related to the tease recipients' mode of participation in their community of practice.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Barnes (2007)</td>
<td>Formulations and the facilitation of common agreement in meetings talk</td>
<td>Corpus of eight hours of video-recorded meeting interactions from a medical school.</td>
<td>None.</td>
<td>Conversation analysis, multimodality</td>
<td>Analyse a particular subclass of formulations: candidate pre-closings.</td>
<td>Formulations are used by chairpersons to close the business-at-hand and facilitate the move on to the next topic. They also help to establish, record, and preserve shared understanding incrementally in a time-limited task-focused environment.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Velea (2013)</td>
<td>Imperatives and commitments in Romanian academic meeting interactions</td>
<td>Audio-recorded academic meeting interaction (48 minutes).</td>
<td>None.</td>
<td>Conversation analysis</td>
<td>Explore the Romanian imperative form in the institutional setting of an academic meeting.</td>
<td>The imperative expresses actions that display no contingency or difficulty in managing them due to the existence of mainly prior explicit commitments (suggestions, proposals, agreements, previous allocated tasks) that entitle the speakers to use the imperative form in order to direct their recipients.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oittinen &amp; Piirainen-Marsh (2015)</td>
<td>Openings in technology-mediated business meetings</td>
<td>Ten video-recorded technology-mediated business meetings in an international company. The meetings were carried out using live audio-connection and simultaneous viewing of shared documents. The number of participants ranged from two to over 20, grouped in teams in different geographical locations.</td>
<td>Video conferencing technology (Microsoft Live software).</td>
<td>Conversation analysis, multimodality</td>
<td>Shed light on the multimodal accomplishment of distant meeting openings that are influenced by several participation frameworks and the use of technology.</td>
<td>The stepwise unfolding of the opening phase requires the coordination of verbal and bodily conduct as well as the affordances of the technological artefacts utilized.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oloff (2018)</td>
<td>“Sorry?”/“Como?”/“Was?” – Open class and embodied repair initiators in international workplace interactions</td>
<td>Video-taped international business meetings and interactions at a customs post. For the purpose of the study, only about 19 hours of data were analysed.</td>
<td>None in the international business meetings; Computer system at the customs post.</td>
<td>Conversation analysis, multimodality</td>
<td>Investigate various open class and embodied other-initiations of repair.</td>
<td>Open class repair initiators are accompanied by embodied conduct. Furthermore, participants treat embodied other-initiation of repair as referring either to troubles in hearing or to troubles in understanding the linguistic format.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deppermann, Schmitt, &amp; Mondada (2010)</td>
<td>Agenda and emergence: Contingent and planned activities in a meeting</td>
<td>Video-taped regular meetings in the editing department of an international strategy consultancy in Germany. Fourteen members of the editing department take part in the meeting, which also counts with a Chair, the head of the department.</td>
<td>Flip-chart, papers, and a file.</td>
<td>Conversation analysis, multimodality</td>
<td>Investigate how participants manage transitions between bounded activities which are prescheduled by an agenda.</td>
<td>Participants collaboratively accomplish an emergent interactional state of affairs (a break-like activity) which differs widely from the state of affairs which was projected by a written agenda (the next presentation), although in doing so, the participants still show their continuous orientation to the agenda. The authors argue that a multimodal approach needs to be taken in order to understand how an emergent course of action develops.</td>
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<td>Svennevig &amp; Djordjilovic (2015)</td>
<td>Accounting for the right to assign a task in meeting interaction</td>
<td>The data come from two corpora of video-recorded business meetings in various corporations: 5 management meetings in a Norwegian holding company owning various broadcasting infrastructure and distribution companies across Scandinavia and 17 management and team meetings in two companies, one in the production sector and the other in the finance sector.</td>
<td>None.</td>
<td>Conversation analysis</td>
<td>Analyse how meeting participants account for their right to assign a work-related task to a colleague in meeting interaction.</td>
<td>Accounts are shown to be related to the deontic rights of the participants in that subordinates engage in more extensive accounting practices than do managers. Accounts that evoke other interests than benefits to the organization are shown to be vulnerable to being questioned or rejected.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Markaki, Merlino, Mondada, &amp; Olof (2010)</td>
<td>Laughter in professional meetings: The organization of an emergent ethnic joke</td>
<td>The data come from a video-recorded corpus of meetings in a multinational company within the pharmaceutical domain. A total of 13 participants (managers from different European national branches). Single case analysis.</td>
<td>None.</td>
<td>Conversation analysis, membership categorization analysis, multimodality</td>
<td>Explore how the uttering of a name becomes a ‘laughable’ and then a resource for an ethnic joke. Focus on laughter following the production and pronunciation of the name of an absent third party in international business meetings.</td>
<td>The progressive emergence of the name as available for its transformation into a laughable is not achieved through a simple sequence, but through a long episode achieved methodically in time, prepared by other actions, accomplished through different laughing phases and responded to collectively by the group. Furthermore, laughter is an embodied phenomenon and is also made relevant by the ethnic categorization of the laughable.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mirivel &amp; Tracy (2005)</td>
<td>Premeeting Talk: An Organizationally Crucial Form of Talk</td>
<td>A total of six video-taped weekly Nutrition Corporation staff meetings. Interviews were conducted with selected group members. About 60 h were spent observing and taking notes on different facets of organizational life, and memos and handouts were collected.</td>
<td>Papers, pen, water bottles and coffee cups.</td>
<td>Conversation analysis, microethnography with interviews, and action-implicative discourse analysis, multimodality</td>
<td>Examine premeeting talk by analysing the talk that occurred in one organization’s weekly meetings from the moment the first two people arrived in the meeting room until someone uttered a phrase such as “Okay let’s get started,” and the meeting began.</td>
<td>There are four kinds of premeeting work: small talk, work talk, meeting preparatory work, and shop talk. Premeeting talk serves individual and group-level identity functions.</td>
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<td>Clifton (2014)</td>
<td>Being in the Know: Socio-Epistemics and the Communicative Constitution of a Management Team</td>
<td>Audio-recorded monthly staff meeting (management team) in a national office of a worldwide British cultural organization which has its head office in the United Kingdom. The participants included 18 members of staff and the director of the centre.</td>
<td>None.</td>
<td>Conversation analysis</td>
<td>Explicate how orientation to epistemic rights talks the hierarchy of the organization into being.</td>
<td>The negotiation of rights to have and to display status-based knowledge of head office index the discursive identities of knowing participants, which enacts the situated identities of hierarchic superiors.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hazel (2015)</td>
<td>Identities at odds: embedded and implicit language policing in the internationalized workplace</td>
<td>Video and/or audio recordings of business meetings and university help desk service encounters, in Denmark.</td>
<td>None.</td>
<td>Conversation analysis, membership categorization analysis</td>
<td>Explore how linguistic identities are indexed against members' institutional positions in particular workplace interactional settings.</td>
<td>Members topicalize linguistic identities that go against normative expectations, implicitly engaging in language policing at a praxeological level and treating members of the workplace community who do not meet with expectations regarding language repertoires as deviant or even sanctionable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nielsen (2014)</td>
<td>Sizing up ‘the box’ in order to fit in</td>
<td>Three meetings were video-recorded in an NGO in Copenhagen, wherein the aim was to develop a new brand strategy for the organisation. A workshop day was video-recorded in a consortium, with the institutional aim of developing user-driven, personal comfort in the workplace.</td>
<td>None.</td>
<td>Conversation analysis</td>
<td>Explore how participants in design processes are ‘sizing up the box’, while participating in meetings or workshops in order to develop a design.</td>
<td>Participants identify key stakeholders of the designated design project; they share their own expectations of these key stakeholders’ possible perceptions, discuss the success criteria and negotiate the values that are to govern the design team in the development process.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oittinen</td>
<td>Multimodal accomplishment of alignment and affiliation in the local space of distant meetings</td>
<td>Video recordings of 14 business meetings held in the Central European office of an international company. The number of participants present in the physical location where the recordings take place varies.</td>
<td>Video conferencing technology (Microsoft Live software). Other relevant materials include tables and Word files; as well as the mouse and the shared screen.</td>
<td>Conversation analysis, multimodality</td>
<td>Investigate the ways in which alignment and affiliation are constructed multimodally between physically co-present participants, who coordinate their actions in multiple interactional spaces: the local space and the overall meeting space.</td>
<td>When local participants display their orientation towards a shared problem they engage in a parallel turn-taking system, thus departing from the main activities of the meeting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Svennevig</td>
<td>The agenda as resource for topic introduction in workplace meetings</td>
<td>The data come from two corpora of videotaped business meetings: a corpus of management meetings in international subsidiaries of a large Norwegian manufacturing company, located in Dubai, Malaysia and Spain; and a collection of various management and team meetings in an inter-Scandinavian bank, held in various locations in Scandinavia.</td>
<td>Documents (Sheets of paper).</td>
<td>Conversation analysis, multimodality</td>
<td>Present some characteristic practices used for introducing agenda-based topics.</td>
<td>Topic introductions generally take the form of unilateral announcements by the chair rather than proposals presented for the interlocutors to accept or decline. When the introduction is related to the agenda, a gaze down at the written document is used as a public display of the same.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Djordjilovic</td>
<td>Displaying and developing team identity in workplace meetings – a multimodal perspective</td>
<td>Five hours of four video-recorded meetings of an intranet editorial group in a multinational telecom company operating in Serbia. The number of participants varies across meetings.</td>
<td>Computer.</td>
<td>Conversation analysis, multimodality</td>
<td>Investigate the way in which a range of previously identified practices for making a team relevant in meetings are combined with interactional management of epistemic rights and accountability.</td>
<td>Being treated as a team is accomplished as much by body and gaze orientation and nodding, as through talk.</td>
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<td>Nielsen (2009)</td>
<td>Interpretative Management in Business Meetings: Understanding Managers' Interactional Strategies Through Conversation Analysis</td>
<td>The data are from department meetings in five Danish firms and organizations, in each of which between 1 and 9 meetings were recorded. Fifteen of the meetings have been recorded on audiotape and videotape, two on audiotape only.</td>
<td>None.</td>
<td>Conversation analysis</td>
<td>Investigate how middle managers interpret experiences and observations of employees and relate them to organizational contexts, practices, and strategies.</td>
<td>Middle managers and employees collaborate in interpreting tasks in relation to organizational context. This interpretative work is based on language acquisition: learning the vocabulary of the organization. The managers articulate the process, explicitly defining reality and influencing language use. Employees show expectation of having their experiences interpreted by managers. Employees may challenge managers with competing interpretations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kangasharju &amp; Nikko (2009)</td>
<td>Emotions in Organizations: Joint Laughter in Workplace Meetings</td>
<td>About 35 hours of videotaped internal workplace meetings in two large Finnish-Swedish corporations. The length of the meetings varies from 1 h to almost 6 h, and the number of participants varies between 4 and 10.</td>
<td>None.</td>
<td>Conversation analysis</td>
<td>Investigate the different functions that joint laughter have in leader-member meetings; the kind of activities the joint laughter is connected to; and the interactional practices used when accomplishing joint laughter.</td>
<td>Humour and laughter can be strategically used by team leaders to create collegiality and a good working atmosphere. Laughing together is connected to closing down a topic or a phase in a meeting in a way that displays mutual understanding. Shared laughter initiated by team members can be used to reduce tension in challenging situations. Laughing together can be used to do remedial work in problematic or conflicting situations. Joint laughter can be used to improve task performance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Markaki &amp; Mondada (2012)</td>
<td>Embodied orientations towards co-participants in multinational meetings</td>
<td>Video-recorded corporate meetings of a multinational company, in which managers coming from several European branches convene.</td>
<td>Computer slides.</td>
<td>Conversation analysis, membership categorization analysis, multimodality</td>
<td>Investigate a practice in which, through the mention of the name of a country accompanied by bodily orientations and gaze directions, a representative of that country is locally addressed within the meeting and collectively recognized as entitled to respond on behalf of this country.</td>
<td>Analysis casts light on issues of multi-party interaction, participation and membership categorization by taking into account the local, collective and interactionally emergent orientations of the co-participants.</td>
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<td>Clifton (2009)</td>
<td>Beyond Taxonomies of Influence - &quot;Doing&quot; Influence and Making Decisions in Management Team Meetings</td>
<td>Video-recorded meeting of the management team at a private for-profit language school in the north of France, which provides language training courses to local businesses.</td>
<td>None.</td>
<td>Conversation analysis, membership categorization analysis</td>
<td>Analyse how superiors, as well as subordinates, can influence decision-making episodes of talk.</td>
<td>Resource for influencing decision making include: formulations, co-constructions, repair, and laughter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Larsson &amp; Nielsen (2017)</td>
<td>The Risky Path to a Followership Identity: From Abstract Concept to Situated Reality</td>
<td>The sequences chosen for this study come from a larger corpus of audio- and video-recorded leadership meetings from team meetings and department meetings in eight organizations that form the sample. The interaction sequences come from 52 business meetings comprising a total of approximately 61 hours.</td>
<td>None.</td>
<td>Conversation analysis, membership categorization analysis</td>
<td>Examine how people collaboratively construct identities, and how identity development shapes and organizes interactions between people.</td>
<td>The findings reveal the risks of misidentifying the task at hand, of being too authoritative, and of claiming too much knowledge. Also, analyses highlight that leader and follower roles remain abstract in workplace interactions and, instead, people focus more on negotiated, task-oriented, practical identities.</td>
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<td>Avison &amp; Banks (2008)</td>
<td>Cross-cultural (mis)communication in IS offshoring: understanding through conversation analysis</td>
<td>Audio recordings of telephone conferences between offshore vendor staff in India and UK/US employees of a major pharmaceutical company.</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Conversation analysis</td>
<td>Analyse the asymmetries of participation across cultural divides, looking for underlying causes, such as different attitudes to hierarchy and a lack of shared understanding of expected responses. Also, analyse the differences in the rhetorical organisation of conversation by participants.</td>
<td>A lack of shared understanding of expected responses results in an increase in asymmetry of participation. A lack of cues and listener responses results in a disproportionately high occurrence of hyperexplanations within offshoring communications. A major factor of observed asymmetries of participation is perceived hierarchical differences. The rhetorical organisation of turns during conflict/negotiation is culturally contexted. Misunderstandings within cross-cultural communications take more effort to repair than would be expected within 'single' culture communication.</td>
</tr>
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</table>

**Architecture**

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mondada (2012a)</td>
<td>Video analysis and the temporality of inscriptions within social interaction: the case of architects at work</td>
<td>Video recording of a workplace meeting in an architectural office, in which three architects read, discuss, and draw plans in the course of their ordinary work. Documents and visualization such as images, maps and plans.</td>
<td>Conversation analysis, ethnomethodology, video analysis; multimodality</td>
<td>Explore the way in which the temporal and interactional feature of inscriptions in interaction can be preserved and analysed on the basis of video data, highlighting some of the challenges of producing adequate video recordings and video transcriptions of these phenomena.</td>
<td>Inscription-in-interaction and plans-in-action show that participants not only dialogue with material objects and through objects, but they also reflexively constitute them, their capacity of voicing absent parties, their validity, and their visibility, as they manipulate them.</td>
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<td>Mondada (2007a)</td>
<td>Multimodal resources for turn-taking: pointing and the emergence of possible</td>
<td>Video recordings of a series of work-meetings (the corpus is composed of</td>
<td>Various objects, such as maps, pens, folders, documents, among others.</td>
<td>Conversation analysis, multimodality</td>
<td>Investigate the use of pointing gestures predicting possible turn completions and projecting</td>
<td>Analysis outlines a systematic use of pointing as a method for projecting self-selection, designing a transition space, and more</td>
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<td></td>
<td>next speakers</td>
<td>six sessions, for about 15 hours of video data) in which agronomists</td>
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<td>the emergence of possible next speakers.</td>
<td>generally defining speakership within a range of sequential positions.</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>and computer scientists collaborate to develop a common cartographic</td>
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<td>language for modelling agricultural land.</td>
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<td>**Business and</td>
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<td>Video recordings of twelve management meetings in three Dutch</td>
<td>None.</td>
<td>Conversation analysis, with interviews</td>
<td>Identify interactions and linguistic features which characterize decision-making.</td>
<td>In decision-making episodes, participants recursively formulate situations, events, and actions and implicitly or explicitly assess these states of affairs. Different teams orient to different participation frameworks. Furthermore, analysis demonstrates the importance of considering the subjective, situational, and interpretive characteristics of formulations.</td>
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<td>Education</td>
<td></td>
<td>organizations (a division of an information and communications</td>
<td></td>
<td>and participant observation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Huisman (2001)</td>
<td>Decision-Making in Meetings as Talk-in-Interaction</td>
<td>technology company, a service department in a university hospital, and</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>an academy of higher professional education), totaling 37.5 h. Also,</td>
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<td>audio recording of a key meeting of teaching staff at a Dutch school.</td>
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<td>Also, interviews and participant observation.</td>
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<td>**Business and</td>
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<td>Database consisting of 32 instances of humming in three different</td>
<td>Various objects, such as books and papers, pens and pencils, laptop, daily</td>
<td>Conversation analysis, multimodality</td>
<td>Describe the interactional resource of</td>
<td>Humming can be used to manage problems caused by the participants either failing to perform the expected actions or performing inappropriate actions. Humming is also related to morality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church</td>
<td>Managing participation in interaction: the case of humming</td>
<td>settings: (i) everyday conversations, (ii) church workplace meetings,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>humming.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stevanovic (2013b)</td>
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<td>and (iii) corporate meetings. Video recordings.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ford &amp; Stickle</td>
<td>Securing recipiency in workplace meetings: Multimodal practices</td>
<td>A corpus of 26 hours of videotaped workplace meetings (medical meetings and university committees) in a mid-sized US city. The number of participants in meetings ranged from 7 to 19.</td>
<td>Documents (Sheets of paper).</td>
<td>Conversation analysis, with interactional linguistics</td>
<td>Contribute to a multimodal account for interactionally distributed and tightly temporally organized practices of securing recipiency in workplace meetings.</td>
<td>Notions of primary speakership and non-primary speakership are interactionally consequential in accounts for turn taking in meetings. Given that multiple participants are non-primary speakers, meetings demand particular interactional work when a non-primary speaker self-selects and attempts to gain ratified speakership.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Appendix B:
### Jefferson transcription symbols

- **word.** Full stop marks falling intonation
- **,** A comma indicates slight rising intonation
- **?** A question mark indicates rising intonation
- **↓** Fall in pitch
- **↑** Rise in pitch
- **Word** Underlining indicates emphasis
- **>word<** Faster pace than surrounding talk
- **<word>** Slower pace than surrounding talk
- **WORD** Loud talk
- **°word°** Quiet talk
- **wo:rd** Elongation of the prior sound
- **wo-** Word cut off
- **#word#** Creaky voice
- **@word@** Change in sound quality
- **$word$** Smiley voice
- **heh heh** Voiced laughter
- **.hhh** In-breath
- **hhh** Out-breath
- **hh(h)h** Outbreath produced through laugh
- **[** Beginning of overlapping talk
- **]** End of overlapping talk
- *** ** Beginning of overlapping nonverbal action
- **=** No pause between two adjacent utterances (latching)
- **(0.5)** Pause in seconds
- **(.)** Micro pause (less than 0.2 seconds)
- **(word)** Item in doubt, untranscribable word, or transcriber’s guess
- **( )** Talk not heard by transcriber
- **((word))** Transcriber’s remarks
Appendix C:
Mondada transcription symbols

* * Gestures and descriptions of embodied actions are delimited between ++ two identical symbols (one symbol per participant) and are synchronized with correspondent stretches of talk.

*---* The action described continues across subsequent lines
-----** until the same symbol is reached.
>> The action described begins before the excerpt’s beginning.
ric Participant doing the embodied action is identified when (s)he is not the speaker.
fig The exact moment at which a screen shot has been taken
# is indicated with a specific sign showing its position within turn at talk.

Furthermore, for the specific purpose of the extract under analysis in Chapter 5, the following conventions were also adopted:

∞ For gaze by facilitator F
β For gestures done by facilitator F
* For gaze by participant P_1
% For gestures done by participant P_1
@ For gaze by participant P_4
△ For gestures done by participant P_4
Zooning in on the use of visual tools in workshops
PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Background to the project
I am a management scientist and an expert in group decision making. I have provided decision support to management teams for almost 20 years, and have a world reputation as a problem structuring methods academic. My research examines the use of decision support tools in group meetings with a view to identify effective tool use, which feeds into tool and process design. My colleague is Prof Stokoe, a social psychologist and an expert in social interaction. She developed the Conversation Analytic Role-play Method (CARM), an approach to communications skills training based on evidence. She uses conversation analysis to study interaction processes in a variety of workplace settings including mediation, police interviews, sale calls, and patient-doctor communication.

Prof Stokoe and I are co-supervising a PhD research project undertaken by Ms Tatiana Gherman at Loughborough University. The project is aimed at advancing our understanding of the role and impact of visual tools in facilitated workshops. Using ethnomethodological and conversation analytic methods, the research examines the interactional practices that workshop participants use when discussing issues, and the impact that visual tools have on these practices. The ultimate aim of the research is to identify what works and what is less effective in facilitated workshops supported by visual tools, with a view to developing best practice in these settings.

What do I have to do?
Nothing! We will record your workshop using two video cameras and a digital voice recorder. All the information recorded will be kept confidential. You have the right to ask for the recording to stop at any point during the workshop.

Ethics and confidentiality
1. Any recordings made will be stored securely and only anonymized data, in which participants in the workshop cannot be identified, would ever be used in research papers and training workshops. We use software that deletes names and other identifying features, and transforms voices by altering their pitch.

2. As employees of Loughborough University, we are bound by professional codes of conduct. All this means that if we were to use the data in an unethical way we would be guilty of academic misconduct. So we have a stake in working with your data responsibly! If participants are unhappy with how the research is conducted, the University has a policy relating to Research Misconduct and Whistle Blowing:

www.lboro.ac.uk/admin/committees/ethical/Whistleblowing(2).htm

Contact Professor L. Alberto Franco, Loughborough University, LE11 3TU, UK
l.a.franco@lboro.ac.uk +44(0)1509 228004
PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

This form accompanies a Participant information Sheet outlining the purpose of the research project.

Please tick all that apply

☐ I have read and understand the Participant information Sheet and this Consent Form.

☐ I understand the purpose and details of the research project.

☐ I have had an opportunity to ask questions about my participation.

☐ I understand that as part of this project audio/video recordings of me will be made while participating in the research.

☐ I understand that the data will be stored securely.

☐ I understand that I have the right to withdraw my consent at any time during the research without reason and that the data collected will be destroyed.

☐ I understand that all names and other identifiable information in recordings will be kept confidential.

☐ I understand that the collected unanonymized recordings (the raw data) will be seen and stored only by the research team.

☐ I agree that the anonymized transcripts in which I cannot be identified can be used by the researcher in her thesis, academic papers and presentations.

☐ I agree that the anonymized recordings in which I cannot be identified can be used by the research team for training purposes.

☐ I understand that all the information I provide will be treated in strict confidence and will be kept anonymous and confidential unless it is judged that confidentiality must be breached for the safety of the participant or others.

Name of participant [printed]  Rank/Job Title

Dept/Organisation

Signature Date

Contact Professor L. Alberto Franco, Loughborough University, LE11 3TU, UK
l.a.franco@lboro.ac.uk  +44(0)1509 228004