

Conversation Analysis for Language Documentation: Interactional Perspectives on Lesser-described Languages

Daniela Veronesi

Free University of Bozen-Bolzano

daniela.veronesi@unibz.it

ABSTRACT

The paper offers a preliminary overview of studies on lesser-described languages carried out in recent decades within the theoretical and methodological framework of Conversation Analysis, an ethnomethodologically inspired approach to the investigation of language use and social interaction. Reported results of large-scale comparative investigations on fundamental conversational mechanisms like turn-taking, sequential organization and repair thereby show the universal character of such practices, while highlighting peculiarities of languages like ꠘAkhoë Hai||om, Cha'palaa, Murrinh-Phata, Yéli-Dnye and Tzeltal, in comparison with widespread Western European languages. It is thus discussed how Conversation Analysis – with its data-driven, emic, situated, and multimodal perspective on spoken interaction – can fruitfully complement language documentation work on lesser-described languages and speech communities.

Keywords: *Conversation Analysis, lesser-described languages, language use, ordinary interaction*

DOI: 10.23814/ethn.20.24.ver

1. Introduction

Over more than five decades of research, Conversation Analysis (cf. Sidnell & Stivers 2013) – driven by the assumption that social interaction, from the most casual conversation to institutional encounters, is organized in specific ways that are displayed by and to participants through verbal and non-verbal conduct – has provided extensive insights on the mechanisms that underlie talk-in-interaction in a variety of settings, as well as on language practices and language structures as they are thereby deployed to accomplish social actions. While studies in this field initially focussed on English, conversation analysts' interest gradually expanded to further Western European languages, as well as, in more recent years, to languages from other language families and groups, among which also lesser-described languages.

After a brief characterization of Conversation Analysis (CA) and of the fundamental mechanisms governing of social encounters as outlined within its theoretical and methodological approach – e.g. turn-taking, sequence organization, and repair – (§ 2), in this paper I will go over some large-scale CA-oriented studies on such mechanisms (§ 3.1-3.3.), as well as on further topics explored, for lesser-described languages, from a conversational perspective (§ 3.4). I thus aim at providing a first, exploratory overview of what CA has provided so far in the field, and at the same time at discussing how the emic, naturalistic, and action-oriented approach of CA can offer relevant descriptions of language use, and language structures, for small-scale, indigenous, lesser-described languages, this way possibly complementing established methods in the field of language documentation.

2. Investigating social interaction from the perspective of Conversation Analysis

Conversation Analysis (Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson 1974; Sacks 1992a) is an ethnomethodologically inspired approach to language use and human action, studied inductively on the basis of naturalistic data – audio and videorecordings of naturally occurring interactions, which are subsequently transcribed in their finest details (Jefferson 2004; Hepburn & Bolden 2013) –, with the aim of describing the procedures used by social actors to produce and recognize interactional conduct, and, thereby, the competences that “ordinary speakers use and rely on in participating in intelligible socially organized interaction” (Heritage & Atkinson 1984: 1). Since its inception in the late 1960s, CA – progressively gaining attention within a variety of disciplines like linguistics, anthropology, communication studies, and psychology, to name but a few – has provided detailed investigations of fundamental mechanisms governing talk-in-interaction such as turn-taking – with the basic rule “one speaker at a time” – and the phenomenon of “repair”, that is, the way in which social actors address problems in “speaking, hearing and understanding” (Schegloff, Sacks & Jefferson 1977). A further, primary organizational principle studied by CA scholars is the sequential organization of conversation in “adjacency pairs” – a first action by a speaker ‘calling for’ a second action by the interlocutor (such as “greeting-greeting”, “question-answer”, “request-compliance” and the like, cf. Schegloff & Sacks 1973) –, and the underlying system of (social) “preference” governing the relationship between the two actions. A request, for instance, is expected to be fulfilled, a question makes a particular type of answer relevant, a first assessment is typically followed by an agreeing second assessment, and the like (cf. Pomerantz & Heritage 2013). Conversation analysts have thereby examined how such mechanisms are differently deployed in ordinary, mundane conversations (for instance, among friends) and in “institutional” settings – classrooms, hospitals, courtrooms, radio and TV studios etc. –, showing how in these latter ones participants typically orient to institution-specific goals and to restrictions on the nature of their interactional contributions (Drew & Heritage 1992; Heritage 2005).

Interested in the sequential and temporal organization of talk and action, and, more and more in recent decades, in the way different semiotic modalities (talk, gesture, gaze, body movements etc.) are integrated so as to form coherent courses of action (cf. Goodwin 1981; Mondada 2009; Streeck, Goodwin & LeBaron 2011; Haddington, Mondada & Nevil 2013; Goodwin 2013; Hazel, Mortensen & Rasmussen 2014; Mondada 2019; Depperman & Streeck 2018; Haddington et al. 2023, among others), as an analytical perspective CA focuses on the collaborative and interactional aspects of speakers’ conduct, thus going beyond the boundaries of isolated, verbal “sentences” or “utterances” – for a long time the traditional focus of descriptive linguistics and pragmatics (cf. Drew 2018) –, to investigate turns-at-talk as well as visible and audible behaviour in their sequential context within interaction, and as a joint accomplishment of conversational partners.

As mentioned above (cf. §1), in its initial phase Conversation Analysis was mainly confined to English, to then expand to further widespread Western European languages – spoken in urban settings, with official status and writing systems –; against this background, as Dingemanse & Floyd (2014: 453) point out, the inclusion of ethnographic understandings to the analysis of language use in interaction was not widely appreciated, and was not part of the CA program, although scholars, as native members of the analyzed societies, were “able to rely on their own assumptions [...] for providing cultural context” (Dingemanse & Floyd 2014: 453).

What about, though, small-scale, unwritten languages, often spoken in remote places? While such languages, which are fundamental in terms of the world's linguistic diversity, have historically been the focus of cross-linguistic grammatical typology within descriptive linguistics – but have been thereby rarely compared in terms of interactive structures and practices – and linguistic anthropology has traditionally had a special interest for formalized language use, as Dingemanse & Floyd (2014) argue, it is only recently that CA and its methodology, complemented by ethnographic fieldwork¹, has been applied for cross-cultural comparative studies of conversation – starting with ordinary interaction – which also include lesser-described languages, as will be seen in the following.

3. CA and lesser-described languages: a preliminary overview

As mentioned above (cfr. §2), turn-taking, sequence organization and repair are considered the three fundamental ‘pillars’ of social interaction; in the following, I will illustrate the contribution provided by Conversation Analysis as pertains their functioning in some lesser-described languages, by mainly drawing, as a way of example, on results of large-scale comparative studies carried out within the Language and Cognition Department of the Max-Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics under the leadership of Stephen C. Levinson (1994-2017). Further investigations on selected topics, explored from a conversational perspective, will also be mentioned here.

3.1. Turn-taking

As a mechanism for coordinating verbal interaction, turn-taking is fundamental for the regulation of who is to speak next and when, in any given social encounter. As outlined in the seminal work by Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson (1974), in ordinary, informal conversations – by now largely studied by CA for English and further Western European languages and beyond –, turn alternation among speakers follows some basic organizational principles, that is, a current speaker can select the next speaker (“next speaker selection”, as in a question addressed to a specific interlocutor), while, if this is not the case, anyone can take the floor; if nobody self-selects, the current speaker may but need not continue. Furthermore, speakers tend to avoid overlapping talk (“one speaker at a time”) and to minimize gaps and silence between turns-at-talk: since utterances (e.g. “turn-constructive units”, cf. Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson 1974) can be grammatically or intonationally complete, as well as pragmatically embody a given action (cf. Clayman 2013), turn completion is to some extent predictable and recognizable (e.g. “projectable”) by participants, which makes ‘smooth’ turn transition (no overlaps, no gaps) possible.

From a pragmatic typological perspective, the question thus arises as to whether such turn-taking machinery has a fundamentally universal character: to test this hypothesis – against the background of widespread anthropological claims of radical cultural variability in the timing of conversational turn-taking – CA and pragmatics scholars participating in the “Multimodal Interaction Project” (Language and Cognition Group, Max-Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics, cf. above) examined selected data from a corpus of video recordings of informal, natural conversation (dyadic and multi-participant interactions) in 10 languages from all over the world, namely, Germanic languages (English, Danish, Dutch), Italian (Romance), Japanese (isolate), Korean

¹ On the relationship between CA and ethnography, cf. also Warfield Rawls & Lynch (2024).

(Ural-Altaic), Lao (Tai), as well as languages from traditional indigenous communities like $\text{ǀ}̣\text{ǁ}̣\text{ǂ}̣\text{ǃ}̣\text{Ǆ}̣\text{ǅ}̣\text{ǆ}̣\text{Ǉ}̣\text{ǈ}̣\text{ǉ}̣\text{Ǌ}̣\text{ǋ}̣\text{ǌ}̣\text{Ǎ}̣\text{ǎ}̣\text{Ǐ}̣\text{ǐ}̣\text{Ǒ}̣\text{ǒ}̣\text{Ǔ}̣\text{ǔ}̣\text{Ǖ}̣\text{ǖ}̣\text{Ǘ}̣\text{Ǚ}̣\text{ǚ}̣\text{ǜ}̣\text{ǝ}̣\text{Ǟ}̣\text{ǟ}̣\text{Ǡ}̣\text{ǡ}̣\text{Ǣ}̣\text{ǣ}̣\text{Ǥ}̣\text{ǥ}̣\text{Ǧ}̣\text{ǧ}̣\text{Ǩ}̣\text{ǩ}̣\text{Ǫ}̣\text{ǫ}̣\text{Ǭ}̣\text{ǭ}̣\text{Ǯ}̣\text{ǯ}̣\text{ǰ}̣\text{Ǳ}̣\text{ǲ}̣\text{ǳ}̣\text{Ǵ}̣\text{ǵ}̣\text{Ƕ}̣\text{Ƿ}̣\text{Ǹ}̣\text{ǹ}̣\text{Ǻ}̣\text{ǻ}̣\text{Ǽ}̣\text{ǽ}̣\text{ǿ}̣\text{Ǿ}̣\text{Ǡ}̣\text{ǡ}̣\text{Ǣ}̣\text{ǣ}̣\text{Ǥ}̣\text{ǥ}̣\text{Ǧ}̣\text{ǧ}̣\text{Ǩ}̣\text{ǩ}̣\text{Ǫ}̣\text{ǫ}̣\text{Ǭ}̣\text{ǭ}̣\text{Ǯ}̣\text{ǯ}̣\text{ǰ}̣\text{Ǳ}̣\text{ǲ}̣\text{ǳ}̣\text{Ǵ}̣\text{ǵ}̣\text{Ƕ}̣\text{Ƿ}̣\text{Ǹ}̣\text{ǹ}̣\text{Ǻ}̣\text{ǻ}̣\text{Ǽ}̣\text{ǽ}̣\text{ǿ}̣\text{Ǿ}$ ǀǁǂǃǄǅǆǇǈǉǊǋǌǍǎǏǐǑǒǓǔǕǖǗǙǚǜǝǞǟǠǡǢǣǤǥǦǧǨǩǪǫǬǭǮǯǰǱǲǳǴǵǶǷǸǹǺǻǼǽǿǾ in Namibia (Khoisan language group) Tzeltal in Mexico (Mayan), and YéǀǁǂǃǄǅǆǇǈǉǊǋǌǍǎǏǐǑǒǓǔǕǖǗǙǚǜǝǞǟǠǡǢǣǤǥǦǧǨǩǪǫǬǭǮǯǰǱǲǳǴǵǶǷǸǹǺǻǼǽǿǾ (isolate, spoken in Papua New Guinea).

To allow comparability, the study (Stivers et al. 2009) was based on the analysis of turn transition between “polar questions” (questions that expect a ‘yes’ or ‘no’ answer, as in *Have you heard from her?* and *Have you heard from her yet?*, respectively, and the most common question type in 9 of 10 languages in the corpus (corpus, e.g. 350 questions for each language) and measurements in milliseconds of the temporal relation between a question and its response (response timing). Possible factors for delayed answers, well documented in the existing literature for English, were also taken into account: this is the case of responses that do not answer the question (nonanswer responses, as *I don’t know*) or that run against the bias of the question (disconfirmations, e.g. A: *Is that your car?* B: *No.*), and which are typically delayed. Furthermore, it was considered that vocal answers may be preceded by nonverbal signals (head nods, head shakes) on the one hand, while a speaker’s gaze toward the listener may increase the pressure to respond quickly, on the other.

Results, as Stivers et al. (2009) point out, show strong parallels in turn-taking across languages: responses tend to be neither in overlap nor delayed by more than a half-second (with a continuum that goes from faster to slower responses, see Japanese, + 7ms, and Danish, + 469ms), while the factors that affect response timing are the same across languages; as a matter of fact, speakers of all languages provide answers significantly faster than nonanswer responses, and confirming answers faster than nonconfirming ones. As for the role of nonverbal conduct, it was noted that visible responses (through head nods, head shakes, shrugs etc.) are faster than speech across the whole corpus – although their inclusion as visible component varies across languages –, and that in 9 out of 10 languages responses are delivered earlier if the speaker is gazing at the recipient while asking the question, with statistical significance in 5 languages, thus hinting at a larger cultural variability of visible conduct as opposed to speech.

All this speaks for a universal organization of turn-taking in informal conversation, which is aimed at minimizing gap and overlap, as well as for a “universal semiotics of delayed response” (Stivers et al. 2009: 10591). Against this background, documented cross-cultural differences in response timing, as mentioned above, would not mine the universal hypothesis, but rather point to differences of “interactional tempo” across cultures, related to what counts as a delay in response because of the specific cultural interactional pace or the overall tempo of social life in a given culture².

According to Stivers et al. (2009: 10590), they thus constitute “minor variation in the local implementation of a universal underlying turn-taking system”: a conclusion which not only allows to substantiate ethnographic reports on widely studied languages³, but also to contribute to the description of indigenous languages like the ones included in the corpus, through the examination of spoken language in its natural habitat, that is, as it is used in social interaction (cf.; Schegloff 2006; Couper-Kuhlen & Selting 2018: 3).

² By taking into account the relative conversation’s rhythm of the examined languages, a silence of 200 ms was judged as a delay in most languages, while a response given after was still considered on time in Danish and Lao (cf. Stivers et al. 2009: 10590).

³ Japanese speakers, for instance, are said to respond after substantial gaps of silence, while in this study they are “on average, the earliest to respond”; Italian speakers are supposed to be more tolerant of overlap, but Stivers and colleagues found out that only 17% of all responses overlap, and that Italian speakers “leave a slightly longer [+ 310 ms] than average gap before producing a next turn” (Stivers et al. 2009: 10591).

3.2. Sequence organization: the example of questions and answers

A further area which was investigated by Levinson and colleagues, within the “Multimodal Interaction group’s Question and Response Project”, is sequence organization (Schegloff & Sacks 1973), namely, the way in which turns-at-talk, as means to perform social actions, are “positioned either to initiate a possible sequence of action or to respond to an already initiated action as part of a sequence” (Stivers 2013: 191); social actions, that is, occur sequentially and are organized in sequences, the most basic one being the adjacency pair (see above, 2).

Scholars (Stivers, Enfield & Levinson 2010) thereby focussed on question-response sequences, with the aim of describing and comparing the way questions are formally coded, via lexical/morphosyntactic and/or prosodic marking, in the 10 examined languages (see above)⁴. The social actions that can be performed through questions were also taken into account, namely “information requests” (so called ‘true’ questions, as in *What time is it?*), “requests for confirmation” (as in *Is that your car?*), “assessments” which make relevant an agreement (for instance *Isn’t it beautiful out today?*), suggestions, offers and requests – typically, in English, oriented to by speakers in terms of acceptance and compliance –, and, last but not least, questions which address conversational problems (so called “repair-initiation”, cf. §2). From a sequential perspective, responses were also examined, so as to test the generalizability of normative preferences for responding to questions as they were outlined for English in the CA literature – not only the fact that “a question creates a sequential context where an answer is expected, and makes the addressee accountable if an answer is not forthcoming” (Brown 2010: 2638, cf. Schegloff & Sacks 1973), but also, and more in detail, the specific interplay between question design and ‘preferred’ answer (cf. Hayano 2013) –, while inquiring about the overall role of non-verbal conduct (e.g. nodding, eye gaze) in question-response sequences.

Against the background of a general consistency across languages as pertains “the strong propensity for questions to be immediately followed by answers” (Brown 2010: 2647), it was thus possible to highlight language-specific peculiarities. In Tzeltal, for instance, as Brown (2010) observes, question-answer sequences strongly diverge from findings based on English conversation, in that Tzeltal speakers (comparatively) minimally deploy gaze in next-speaker selection and do not provide visible-only responses – mutual gaze being very restricted in this community. As for the actions performed through questions in Tzeltal, furthermore, it was noted how suggesting, requesting and offering are relatively infrequent, and how confirmation requests – via full or partial repetition of the interlocutor’s prior utterance offering new information –, in turn, are more frequent than information seeking requests. In other terms, as Brown points out, Tzeltal “routinely request confirmation of new information just supplied, not necessarily because they didn’t hear or don’t believe it, but simply to firmly establish it in common ground before proceeding with the topic” (Brown 2010: 2638). Also, repeats are the most frequent form for positive (affirming) answers to polar questions, while in English these are typically answered with a ‘yes’ or ‘no’, and repeats carry additional implications (for instance, a challenge to the question as formulated). This “repeat-as-affirmation response” has been in fact attested in other Mesoamerican languages, as well

⁴ A subsequent study into sequence organization (Kendrick et al. 2020) also includes Argentine Sign Language, Mandarin Chinese, Turkmen and Yurakaré (Bolivia).

as in Welsh, Estonian, Finnish and Japanese (cf. Brown 2010: 2640) and is thus not peculiar to Tzeltal only. Nevertheless, for this latter language there is strong evidence, also from Brown's previous studies, that repeats are part of the response system as a *default* way to agree with a prior utterance (not just as the expected response to polar questions, but also in non-question utterances): an insight which could open the door, as Brown (2010: 2647) suggests, to future, quantitative cross-linguistic studies on the association between repeats and agreement.

A further example of linguistic and cultural specificities highlighted by the project, worth mentioning here, comes from ꞤĀkhoe Hai||om (a Koe language of the Khoisan family spoken in Northern Namibia), which stands out, as for the distribution of question types, for a predominance of content questions (e.g. questions introduced by a question word, as in *What did you do last night?*), as opposed to polar questions, which were the majority for all other considered languages (Hoymann 2010). As a matter of fact, ꞤĀkhoe speakers ask more repair initiating questions than speakers of the other languages, and they do so mostly through content questions; furthermore, they never request confirmation – in other languages requests for confirmation make up between 20% and 50% of all questions –: a fact that explains why polar questions, which would be typically used for requesting confirmation, are fewer for this language.

The reasons for such preference can be found, according to Hoymann (2010), in the social hunter-gatherer culture of ꞤĀkhoe speakers, leading them “to pose questions in a way that is less coercive and less restrictive of the answerer than speakers of other languages do” (Hoymann 2010: 2736): indeed polar questions constrain the answerer to a ‘yes’ or ‘no’ answer, while content questions provide the interlocutor a greater ‘freedom’ in choosing how to answer; moreover, requests for confirmation, in the form of polar questions biased towards a yes answer, are highly coercive.

As Hoymann (2010: 2737) points out, anthropological studies on hunter-gatherer societies, particularly in Australia and Southern Africa, have claimed that their conversational style is characterized by the “acceptance of long silences, more overlap and less next speaker selection, which the researchers argue give the conversational partners more freedom, or in other words, are ways of being less coercive”. Similarly, in ꞤĀkhoe Hai||om “silences are relatively long compared to those of the other languages in the questions project” (Hoymann 2010: 2737) – thus documenting a cultural difference in the speed of the responses, which, though, does not affect the overall structure of the turn-taking system (see above, 3.1.) – and ꞤĀkhoe speakers select a next speaker, that is, address questions to a specific individual, “relatively less often than speakers of the other languages do” (Hoymann 2010: 2737). Finally, data show a high number of questions (23%) that obtain no response at all, which also hints at “a greater concern for other speakers’ independence”, in accordance with anthropological evidence on hunter-gatherers’ conversational style (Hoymann 2010: 2739). This, though, does not lead to the conclusion – as Hoymann argues – that there should be a *direct* cause-and-effect relationship between type of society (hunter-gatherers with an egalitarian lifestyle) and a high number of unanswered questions; rather, it is “the way in which these speakers pose the question” – resorting to content rather than polar questions – “that makes it possible not to answer questions” (Hoymann 2010: 2379). The influence of culture on conversational style, that is, is not to be seen at the level of the sequence of utterances (question-response), but rather at that of the function of these utterances, so that for the ꞤĀkhoe Hai||om speech community “a reluctance to pose direct questions, or questions that strongly pressure recipients to

answer, leads to a higher proportion of content questions or open questions and almost no requests for confirmation” (Hoymann 2010: 2379).

3.3. Repair

As mentioned above, “repair” is one of the fundamental mechanisms of social encounters, allowing to address problems as they emerge in the here-and-now of interaction; indeed, as Digemane et al. (2015: 1) observe, “there would be little adaptive value in a complex communication system like human language if there were no ways to detect and correct problems”. The way in which social actors interrupt the ongoing course of action to address, and solve, possible trouble in speaking, hearing or understanding was one of the mechanisms to be first explored in CA studies by Schegloff and colleagues (Schegloff, Jefferson & Sacks 1977; Kitzinger 2013), who described it in detail, differentiating between “repair initiation” (signalling a problem, that is, a so called “trouble source”) and “repair completion” (solving the problem), as well as in terms of who accomplishes repair, namely the trouble source speaker (“self-repair”) – preferred in ordinary conversation – or the interlocutor (“other-repair”).

Repair was also one of the targets of the Multimodal Interaction group led by Levinson (see above), with investigations focussing on “other-initiated repair”: cases in which the recipient of an unclear message signals trouble (*Huh? What?*, as well as through a “candidate solution” as in *You mean x?*), and the current speaker can ‘repair’ the original message and the trouble source, for instance by repeating this latter one or by confirming the interlocutor’s candidate understanding, typically in the form of a question-and-answer exchange between interlocutors.

For this study (cf. Dingemane et al. 2015; Dingemane & Enfield 2015), the sample was represented by 12 languages of 8 language families – Dutch, English, Italian, Lao, Yélf-Dnye, but also Icelandic, Russian, Argentinian Sign Language, Cha’paala in Ecuador (Barbacoan language family), Murrinh-Patha from Northern Australia (Southern Daly) and Siwu in Ghana (Kwa) –, with ca. 50 hours of recordings (4 hours per language); through the examination of more than 2,000 cases of other-initiated repair, it was thus observed that not only this is frequently used (on average about once per 1.4 minutes in any language), but also that it has common properties across languages, thus disconfirming assumptions of radical cultural variation.

Firstly, according to analyses, all languages share three basic types of repair initiator, namely a) “open request”, which signals a problem but does not specify its location or nature (as in *Huh? Sorry?*); b) “restricted request”, focussing on specification/clarification of a specific element of the trouble source (as in A. *Oh, Sibbie’s sister had a baby boy*; B. *Who?*); c) “restricted offer”, through which the interlocutor provides a candidate understanding and asks for confirmation (A. *She had a boy?*; B. *You mean x?*).

Secondly, these three basic types of repair initiation, representing the majority of cases in all languages, are accomplished using similar linguistic resources – interjections, question markers, prosody, and repetition of the trouble source turn –, and are drawn upon systematically, across languages, depending on the same contextual factors. So, for instance, open requests are more likely when, due to noise, overlapping talk or distractions to the listener’s attention (who might be engaged in a parallel activity), troubles in hearing, or processing what someone just said emerge; if an open repair initiation does not lead to a solution, further repair initiation is then done through more specific types.

In all languages, thirdly, listeners opt for more specific repair initiators over less specific ones whenever possible, this way minimizing joint collaborative work in the resolution of the problem, keeping disruptions to the progression of conversation to a minimum⁵, and thereby displaying an altruistic behaviour: a fundamental orientation that was first proposed by CA studies for English conversation, and that, according to the project results, also applies across languages. Findings thus support a pragmatic universal hypothesis: while languages, as Dingemanse et al. (2015: 9) conclude, “may vary in the organization of grammar and meaning, key systems of language use may be largely similar across cultural groups”, one of them being other-initiated repair. Against this background, the detailed, qualitative and quantitative analyses carried out for this study have also provided insights on the pragmatics of previously unexplored communicative practices within the repair machinery, in all examined languages (cf. also Enfield et al. 2013); for the purposes of the present article, some findings for Murrinh-Phata, Yélf Dnye and Cha’palaa will be briefly mentioned here.

For Murrinh-Phata, an aboriginal lingua franca spoken by around 2,700 people in communities in Australia’s Northern Territory, it has been noted how, against the background of widespread avoidance of certain personal names (recently deceased, certain in-laws and siblings), “candidate repairs” – restricted offers seeking confirmation, see above – are particularly useful “for handling complications relating to the domains of *place* and *person*, such as person identification when name avoidance is an issue” (Blithe 2015: 295). A further specificity is that the two open formats documented in the Murrinh-Phata data – the interjection “Aa?” (*huh?*) and the question word “thangku” (*what*) –, although occurring in the same interactional contexts, differ in terms of the type of trouble they address and the repair solution they yield, contrarily to “huh” and “what” in English, for which no functional or interactional differences have been documented so far (cf. Drew 1997 and Robinson 2006, quoted in Blithe 2015: 302). As a matter of fact, “Aa?”, which is four times more frequent than “tangku”, is used as repair initiator when issues of audibility or misaligned reciprocity – targeted recipients attending to something/someone other than the speaker, thus not having been listening attentively enough to produce a response, and therefore initiating repair – are at stake (Blithe 2015: 297); “thangku”, instead, is more often deployed for dealing with talk that is problematic in terms of speaker’s intended meaning, relevance or possible topical disjuncture.

Insights on how other-repair initiators may both conform to well-known European patterns as well as deviate from them are also provided by Levinson’s analysis of Yélf Dnye, a ‘Papuan’, i.e. non-Austronesian language, spoken by ca. 5,000 people on Rossel Island in Papua New Guinea (Levinson 2015: 386). Similarly to Murrinh-Phata, in Yélf Dnye the use of personal names (property of the clan of the father) is restricted, yielding frequent requests for referent clarification; since Yélf Dnye speakers systematically “try minimized reference and escalate only as required, step by step providing additional material in a specific order [e.g. person/number marking on a verb; kinterm; name plus kinterm] until referent identification succeeds” (Levinson 2015: 387, cf. also Levinson 2007), extended repair sequences initiated through restricted formats (wh-questions and polar questions) arise, suggesting that the high level of other-initiated repair previously

⁵ Such “conservation principle” (Dingemanse et al. 2015: 7-8) is also documented, in all languages, by the very short duration of repair completion, which lasts about the same temporal length of the trouble source turn, hinting at participants’ joint effort for efficient problem resolution.

documented for Yéli Dnye (Levinson 2010) “might be partly motivated by culture-specific norms for ‘under-telling’” (Levinson 2015: 387).

As for open repair initiators, remarkably, Yéli Dnye does not have forms that are equivalent to *what* or *sorry*; the only open class repair initiator is “:aa?”, or “:êê?” (a long nasalized low or central vowel, uttered with rising intonation), which, similarly to other languages, is employed to address acoustic problems. This scarcity of linguistic forms dedicated to open other-initiated repair is compensated, though, by the fact that Yéli Dnye speakers consistently draw upon non-verbal resources both for initiating repair – a “frozen look” (a fixed stare by the recipient), produced without moving – and completing it, as when a trouble source speaker engages in a slight brow rise to confirm a listener’s candidate repair, before uttering a verbal confirmation, if any.

That such practices are to be found in other language communities is in fact attested; nevertheless, in Yéli Dnye a heavy reliance on the visual modality seems to be a quite regular feature, made possible also by the community’s preference for dyadic face-to-face interactions – which facilitates the use of visual signs such as gestures and facial expressions –, and grounded in the existence of a “culturally conventionalized inventory of facial signals like the affirmatory blink and the affirmative eyebrow rise” as well as in the culturally “unusually sustained nature of mutual gaze that is required if visual signals are to be reliable” (Levinson 2015: 407).

An extensive role of non-verbal conduct in accomplishing repair was also documented for Cha’palaa – until recently, a relatively unstudied language –, spoken by the Chachi people (ca. 10,000 speakers) “in small communities and households along the rivers of the Equadorian Province of Esmeraldas between the Andean foothills and the Pacific coast” (Floyd 2015: 467). As a matter of fact, following other-repair initiation related to reference (as in “mu-nu-n”, *to whom?*), Cha’palaa speakers can use lip-pointing (towards the referent), while they draw on eyebrow flashes – a brief raising of the eyebrow – to confirm the interlocutor’s candidate repair solution (Dingemanse & Floyd 2014: 465); two culturally conventionalized bodily practices which diverge from the ones English speakers would rely upon in similar contexts (e.g. index finger pointing for personal reference, and head nodding for confirmation, cf. Whitehead 2011). In addition, in Cha’palaa conversation *open* other-repair initiation predominates over *restricted* types, as opposed to a general tendency for the opposite in the majority of the other languages examined: Cha’palaa speakers thus show “a preference for displaying hearing problems over understanding problems” (Floyd 2015: 472), possibly because open repair is neutral with respect to responsibility for the problem, while still allowing the trouble source speaker to repeat their turn but also to reformulate it. A further peculiarity of Cha’palaa is the fact that the interjection used for open repair initiation, that is, a long vowel /a/ with slight pre-glottalization (/ʔa:/), is produced with falling intonation – rather than with rising intonation as in all other languages, with the exception of Icelandic –, this way conforming to Cha’palaa standard falling prosody for content questions, and thus fitting into the wider phonological system of the language.

3.4. Further areas of CA investigations into lesser-documented languages

Investigations carried out by CA scholars on the relationship between cultural and linguistic diversity and pragmatic universals have not been confined to the above mentioned studies, but have extended to a number of further areas of conversational structures: so, for instance, within a larger project led by Nick Enfield (*Human Sociality and Systems of Language Use*, HSSLU 2010-2014) and which also involved members

of the Max-Planck Institute (see above), “recruitments” – getting others to do things, as in requests, offers, and suggestions – were examined in Cha’palaa, English, Italian, Lao, Murrinh-Patha, Polish, Russian and Siwu (Floyd, Rossi & Enfield 2020)⁶, with findings providing insights on the differences between the pragmatic systems of these languages, but also showing relatively low cross-cultural diversity, “in line with the idea that a species-wide infrastructure for interaction underpins the use of language, largely independent of the specific shape of that language” (Rossi, Floyd & Enfield 2020: 15).

A detailed study within the HSSLU project was also devoted to the expression of gratitude in the same corpus (Floyd et al. 2018), carried out under the assumptions that a) social reciprocity – involving the mutual exchange of goods, services and support, and the ability of individuals to experience gratitude – is a fundamental aspect of human organization, and that b) to understand the role of gratitude in the maintenance of social reciprocity, a differentiation between the *experience* of gratitude (as an emotion) and the (verbal or non-verbal) *expression* of gratitude (as a linguistic practice) should be drawn, with this latter to be observed in naturally occurring interactions, rather than in controlled laboratory conditions or on the basis of self-report questionnaires, as it was the case in previous research, mostly related to English. Thus, by drawing upon audio-video recorded episodes of ordinary, informal interactions of people who know each other well, and in which someone seeks and obtains a good, support or service from the interlocutor, the study examined whether and insofar the compliance of such “here-and-now” requests – for actions that are relatively straightforward and low-cost, as in *Can you pass me the salt?* – is responded to, by the requester, with verbal expressions of gratitude (as in *thank you, sweet* or other positive formulations), as well as with non-verbal acknowledgments like nods or hand gestures. Through the analysis of approx. 200 request and response sequences per language, it was thus shown how – as opposed to social and prescriptive attitudes about politeness found in English-speaking society – “the general norm is to tacitly acknowledge another’s cooperative behaviour without explicitly saying ‘thank you’ [...] relying on a shared understanding of the good, service or support received as part of a system of social rights and duties governing mutual assistance and collaboration” (Floyd et al. 2018: 3).

As a matter of fact, against the background of a generalized tendency towards fulfilment of requests across languages, it was noted how expressions of gratitude by requesters are quite infrequent (5.5% of 928 cases of successful requests), with minor but significant variation among languages, which shows how the expression of gratitude is more common in certain languages (here English, 14.5% and Italian, 13.5%) than others (Murrinh-Patha 4.5%, Russian 3.1%, Polish 2.2%, Lao 2%, Siwu 0.8%, and finally 0% in Chaa’paala, which does not even have a conventional way to say ‘thank you’)⁷. This, on the one hand, speaks once again for the caution that should be used

⁶ Thereby it was focussed on recruitments of practical actions (transfer of an object, performance of a manual task, or alteration of an ongoing bodily movement) to be performed immediately, and the way in which they are accomplished through linguistic resources – imperative, interrogative or declarative sentences, use of modal verbs, explanations, mitigations – as well as non-verbal conduct (gazing at the interlocutor, pointing at a desired object, etc.). Similarly, responses to recruitments – fulfilling, rejecting, or ignoring the recruiting action - were examined as for the inclusion of verbal and visible elements (for instance, “yes”, “sure”, “no”, head nods, head shakes, cf. Rossi, Floyd & Enfield 2020a and Floyd, Rossi & Enfield 2020b).

⁷ As Floyd and colleagues remark, though, “Lao, Polish, Russian and Murrinh-Patha are not statistically different from Siwu” (Floyd, Rossi & Enfield 2018: 6), and not affected by social-interactional variables as for instance interlocutors’ higher or lower status, while English and Italian frequencies are still low (in one out of seven episodes of fulfilled requests); in these latter languages, in fact, expressions of gratitude may occur mostly in institutional

when coming to generalizing conclusions based on speakers of English and other Western European languages; on the other hand, it demonstrates, as the authors conclude, that “[d]espite the attitudes encountered in some cultures that emphasize saying ‘thank you’ often, such practices do not appear to be necessary for the maintenance of everyday social reciprocity” (Floyd, Rossi & Enfield 2018: 8)⁸.

Not to be forgotten here are also the detailed investigations carried out on Australian Aboriginal languages, over nearly two decades, by Rod Gardner and Ilana Mushin, who explored conversational practices in Garrwa – spoken by some remote Aboriginal communities in Northern Australia –, such as turn-taking (Gardner & Mushin 2015; Mushin & Gardner 2009; Gardner & Mushin 2007) and question-answer sequences (Gardner 2010), and joined forces with colleagues to compare various Australian Aboriginal languages as pertains next-speaker selection (Blythe, Gardner, Mushin & Stirling 2018), as well as verbal and visible practices of personal reference and the thereby involved issues of epistemics (Blythe, Mushin, Stirling & Gardner 2022). The notion of epistemics, as outlined in CA (cf. Heritage 2012; Stivers, Mondada & Jakob 2021), has also been fruitful in further studies on languages in small communities, as detailed in a special issue of the *Journal of Pragmatics* dedicated to the topic, and which includes investigations on Datoga in Tanzania (Mitchell & Jordan 2022), Quechua in Ecuador (Grzech 2022) and Tzeltal, Yucatec and Zapotec in Mexico (Brown, Sicoli & Le Guen 2022).

4. Concluding remarks

In this exploratory paper I have examined how Conversation Analysis, with its orientation to language, language practices and language structures as situated in the here-and-now of social interaction, can provide a relevant contribution to the study of linguistic diversity, and, within this field, to the investigation of lesser-described languages from a praxeological perspective of language use in context, thereby offering its theoretical approach and its methods to the field of language documentation.

As a way of illustration, it was thus shown how basic mechanisms governing spontaneous, informal conversation such as turn-taking, sequence organization and repair have been compared cross-culturally, within some large-scale CA-oriented projects, through a detailed examination of how turns-at-talk are linguistically constructed, how they are embedded in sequences of actions, and by taking into account the role non-verbal conduct plays in performing social actions.

Further areas of CA investigations that I have mentioned here include recruitments, the expression of gratitude and issues of epistemics; far from being exhaustive, this list hints at the explicative potential of Conversation Analysis when it comes to describe language use in spoken interaction for lesser described languages: an area for which the conversation analytical theoretical and methodological framework, supported by ethnographic work, can fruitfully meet with, and integrate – as Dingemanse & Floyd (2014: 467) suggest for the comparative study of social interaction – linguistic and sociocultural anthropology, descriptive linguistics, corpus linguistics and gesture studies, and thus help to provide investigations that are ecologically valid (e.g. with language and social interaction studied in everyday face-to-face interaction as their

contexts and with strangers, as a comparison carried out by the authors with findings based on service encounters suggests (cf. Floyd, Rossi & Enfield 2018: 8).

⁸ See also Zinken, Rossi & Vasudevi (2020), comparing the expression of gratitude in British English, German, Italian, Polish, and Telugu.

natural-cultural habitat), ethnographically enriched, empirically grounded (that is, based on large records of data available for repeated inspection), multimodal, and comparable, that is, with data from comparable settings and sequential environments (cf. Dingemanse & Floyd 2014: 467).

References

- BLYTHE, Joe (2015) “Other-initiated repair in Murrinh-Patha”, *Open Linguistics* 1: 283-308.
- BLYTHE Joe, Rod GARDNER, Ilana MUSHIN, and Lesley STIRLING (2018) “Tools of engagement: selecting a next speaker in Australian Aboriginal multiparty conversations”, *Research on Language and Social Interaction* 51(2): 145-170.
- BLYTHE Joe, Ilana MUSHIN, Lesley STIRLING, and Rod GARDNER (2022) “The epistemics of social relations in Murrinh-Patha, Garrwa and Jaru conversations”, *Journal of Pragmatics* 91: 175-193.
- BROWN, Penelope (2010) “Questions and their responses in Tzeltal”, *Journal of Pragmatics* 42: 2627-2648.
- CLAYMAN, Steven E. (2013) “Turn-Constructional Units and the Transition-Relevance Place”. In SIDNELL Jack, and Tanja STIVERS (eds.), 150-166.
- COUPER-KUHLEN, Elizabeth, and Margret SELTING (2018) *Interactional linguistics. Studying language in social interaction*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- DEPPERMAN, Arnulf, and Jürgen STREECK (eds.) (2018) *Time in Embodied Interaction: Synchronicity and sequentiality of multimodal resources*, Amsterdam: Benjamins.
- DINGEMANSE, Mark, and Nick J. ENFIELD (2015) “Other-initiated repair across languages: Towards a typology of conversational structures”, *Open Linguistics* 1: 96-118.
- DINGEMANSE, Mark, and Nick J. ENFIELD (eds.) (2015a) Other-initiated repair across languages, *Open Linguistics* 1 (96-577), special issue.
- DINGEMANSE, Mark, and Simeon FLOYD (2014) “Conversation across cultures”. In ENFIELD, Nick J., Paul KOCHERMAN, and Jack SIDNELL (eds.), *The Cambridge Handbook of Linguistic Anthropology*. Pp. 447-480. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- DINGEMANSE Mark, Seán G. ROBERTS, Julija BARANOVA, Joe BLYTHE, Paul DREW, Simeon FLOYD, Rosa S. GISLADOTTIR, Kobin KENDRICK, Stephen C. LEVINSON, Elizabeth MANRIQUE, Giovanni ROSSI, and Nick J. ENFIELD, (2015) “Universal principles in the repair of communication problems”, *PLOS ONE* 10(9): 1-15.
- DREW, PAUL (1997) “‘Open’ Class Repair Initiators in Response to Sequential Sources of Troubles in Conversation”, *Journal of Pragmatics* 28: 69-101.
- DREW, Paul (2018) “The interface between pragmatics and conversation analysis”. In in ILIE Cornelia, and Neal R. NORRICK (eds.), *Pragmatics and its Interfaces*. Pp. 59-84. Amsterdam: Benjamins.
- DREW, Paul, and John HERITAGE (eds.) (1992) *Talk at Work*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- ENFIELD, Nick J., Mark DINGEMANSE, M., BARANOVA, Joe BLYTHE, Penelope BROWN, DIRKSMEYER, Tyko, Paul DREW et al. (2013) “Huh? What? – A first survey in 21 languages”. In HAYASHI, Makoto, Geoffrey RAYMOND, and Jack SIDNELL (eds.), *Conversational Repair and Human Understanding*. Pp. 343-380. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- FLOYD, Simon (2015) “Other-initiated repair in Cha’palaa”, *Open Linguistics* 1: 467-489.
- FLOYD, Simeon, Giovanni ROSSI, and Nick J. ENFIELD (eds.) (2020a) *Getting Others to Do Things: A Pragmatic Typology of Recruitments*, Berlin: Language Science Press.
- FLOYD, Simeon, Giovanni ROSSI, and Nick J. ENFIELD (2020b) “A coding scheme for recruitment sequences in interaction”. In FLOYD, Simeon, Giovanni ROSSI, and Nick J. ENFIELD (eds.), *Getting Others to Do Things: A Pragmatic Typology of Recruitments*. Pp. 25-50. Berlin: Language Science Press.
- FLOYD, Simon, Giovanni ROSSI, Julija BARANOVA, Joe BLYTHE, Mark DINGEMANSE, Kobin H. KENDRICK, Jörg ZINKEN, and Nick J. ENFIELD (2018) “Universals and cultural diversity in the expression of gratitude”, *Royal Society Open Science* 5: 180391.
- GARDNER, Rod (2010) “Question and answer sequences in Garrwa talk”, *Australian Journal of Linguistics*, 30(4): 423-445.
- GARDNER, Rod, and Ilana MUSHIN (2007) “Post-start-up overlap and disattentiveness in talk in a Garrwa Community”, *Australian Review of Applied Linguistics* 30(3): 35.1–35.14.
- GARDNER, Rod, and Ilana MUSHIN (2015) “Expanded transition spaces: the case of Garrwa”, *Frontiers in Psychology* 3: 1-14.
- GOODWIN, Charles (1981) *Conversational Organization. Interaction between Speakers and Hearers*. New York: Academic Press.
- GOODWIN, Charles (2013) “The co-operative, transformative organization of human action and knowledge”, *Journal of Pragmatics* 46 (1): 8-23.
- GRZECH, Karolina (2021) “Using discourse markers to negotiate epistemic stance: A view from situated language use”, *Journal of Pragmatics* 177: 208-223.
- HADDINGTON, Pentti, Lorenza MONDADA, and Maurice NEVILE (eds.) (2013) *Interaction and Mobility. Language and the Body in Motion*. Berlin: De Gruyter.
- HADDINGTON, Pentti, Tiina EILITTÄ, Antti KAMUNEN, Laura KOHONEN-AHO, Iira RAUTIAINEN, and Anna VATANEN (eds.) (2023) *Complexity of Interaction: Studies in Multimodal Conversation Analysis*, Cham: Palgrave Macmillan.
- HAYANO, Kaoru (2013), “Question design in conversation”, in SIDNELL Jack, and Tanja STIVERS (eds.), 395-414.
- HAZEL, Spencer, Kristian MORTENSEN, and Gitte RASMUSSEN (2014) “Introduction: a body of resources – CA studies of social conduct”, *Journal of Pragmatics* 65: 1-9.
- HEPBURN, Alexa, and Galina B. BOLDEN (2013) “The Conversation Analytic Approach to Transcription”. In SIDNELL Jack, and Tanja STIVERS (eds.), 57-76.

- HERITAGE, John (2005) “Conversation Analysis and Institutional Talk.” In K. L. FITCH K.L, and Robert E. SANDERS (eds.), *Handbook of Language and Social Interaction*. Pp. 103-147. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- HERITAGE, John, and Max ATKINSON (1984) “Introduction”. In HERITAGE, John, and J.M. ATKINSON (eds.), *Structures of social action: studies in Conversation Analysis*. Pp. 1-15. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- HOYMANN, Gertie (2010) “Questions and responses in ꞆĀkhoe Hai||om”, *Journal of Pragmatics* 42: 2726-2740.
- JEFFERSON, Gail (2004) “Glossary of Transcript Symbols with an Introduction”. In LERNER, Gene (ed.), *Conversation Analysis: Studies from the First Generation*. Pp. 2-23. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- KENDRICK, Kobin H., Penelope BROWN, Mark DINGEMANSE, Simeon FLOYD, Sonja GIPPER, Kaoru HAYANO, Elliott HOEY, Gertie HOYMANN, Elizabeth MANRIQUE, Giovanni ROSSI, and Stephen C. LEVINSON (2020) “Sequence Organization: A Universal Infrastructure for Social Action”, *Journal of Pragmatics* 168: 119-138.
- KITZINGER, Celia (2013) “Repair”. In SIDNELL, Jack, and Tanja STIVERS (eds.), 229-256.
- LEVINSON, Stephen C. (2010) “Questions and responses in Yéli Dnye, the Papuan language of Rossel Island”, *Journal of Pragmatics* 42: 2741-2755.
- LEVINSON, Stephen C. (2015) “Other-initiated repair in Yéli-Dnye: Seeing eye-to-eye in the Language of Rossel Island”, *Open Linguistics* 1: 386-410.
- MITCHELL, Alice, and Fiona M. JORDAN (2022) “Kinship, seniority, and rights to know in Datooga children’s everyday interaction”, *Journal of Pragmatics* 181: 49-61.
- MONDADA, Lorenza (2009) “Emergent Focused Interactions in Public Places: A Systematic Analysis of the Multimodal Achievement of a Common Interactional Space”, *Journal of Pragmatics* 41 (10): 1977-1997.
- MONDADA, Lorenza (2019) “Contemporary issues in conversation analysis: Embodiment and materiality, multimodality and multisensoriality in social interaction”, *Journal of Pragmatics* 145: 47-62.
- MUSHIN, Ilana and Rod GARDNER, (2009) “Silence is talk: conversational silence in Australian Aboriginal talk-in-interaction, *Journal of Pragmatics*, 41(10): 2033-2052.
- POMERANTZ, Anita, and John HERITAGE (2013) “Preference”. In SIDNELL, Jack, and Tanja STIVERS (eds.), 210-228.
- RAWLS, Anne W., and Michael LYNCH (2024) “Ethnography in ethnomethodology and conversation analysis: Both, neither, or something else together?”, *Qualitative Research* 24(1): 116-144.
- ROBINSON, Jeffrey (2006) “Managing Trouble Responsibility and Relationships During Conversational Repair”, *Communication Monographs* 73 (June): 137-161.
- ROSSI, Giovanni, Simeon FLOYD, and Nick J. ENFIELD (2020) “Recruitments and pragmatic typology”. In FLOYD, Simeon, Giovanni ROSSI, and Nick J. ENFIELD (eds.), *Getting Others to Do Things: A Pragmatic Typology of Recruitments*. Pp. 1-23. Berlin: Language Science Press.
- SACKS, Harvey (1992) *Lectures on Conversation*. Oxford: Blackwell.

- SACKS, Harvey, Emanuel A. SCHEGLOFF, and Gail JEFFERSON (1974) “A simplest systematics for the organization of turn-taking for conversation”, *Language* 50: 696-735.
- SCHEGLOFF, Emanuel A. (2006) “Interaction: the infrastructure for social institutions, the natural ecological niche for language, and the arena in which culture is enacted”. In ENFIELD, Nick J., and Stephen C. LEVINSON (eds.), *Roots of Human Sociality*. Pp. 70-96. London: Routledge.
- SCHEGLOFF, Emanuel A., and Harvey SACKS (1973), “Opening up Closings”, *Semiotica* 8(4): 289-327.
- SCHEGLOFF, Emanuel A., Harvey SACKS, and Gail JEFFERSON (1977) “The preference for self-correction in the organization of repair in conversation”, *Language* 53: 361-382.
- SIDNELL, Jack, and Tanya STIVERS (eds.) (2013) *The Handbook of Conversation Analysis*. Chichester: Blackwell.
- STIVERS, Tanya (2013) “Sequence organization”. In SIDNELL, Jack, and Tanya STIVERS (eds.), 191-209.
- STIVERS, Tanya, Nick J. ENFIELD, and Stephen C. LEVINSON (eds.) (2010) “Question-Response Sequences in Conversation across Ten Languages”, Special issue, *Journal of Pragmatics* 42(10): 2615-2860.
- STIVERS, Tanya, Nick J. ENFIELD, Penelope BROWN, C. ENGLERT, Makoto HAYASHI, Trine HEINEMANN, Gertie HOYMANN, Federico ROSSANO, Jan Peter DE RUITER, Kyung-Eun YOON and Stephen C. LEVINSON (2009) “Universals and Cultural Variation in Turn-taking in Conversation”, *PNAS (Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences)* 106(26): 10587-92.
- STREECK, Jürgen, Charles GOODWIN, and Curtis LEBARON (eds.) (2011) *Embodied Interaction: Language and Body in the Material World*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- WARFIELD RAWLS, Anne, and Michale LYNCH (2024) “Ethnography in ethnomethodology and conversation analysis: Both, neither, or something else altogether?” *Qualitative Research* 24(1): 116-144.
- WHITEHEAD, Kevin A. (2011) “Some Uses of Head Nods in Third Position in Talk-in-Interaction”, *Gesture* 11(2): 103-22.
- ZINKEN, Jörg, Giovanni ROSSI, and Reddy VASUDEVI (2020), “Doing more than expected: Thanking recognizes another’s agency in providing assistance”. In TALEGHANI-NIKAZM, Carmen, Emma BETZ, Peter GOLATO (eds.) *Mobilizing Others: Grammar and Lexis within Larger Activities*. Pp. 253-278. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins.