Enacting the Roles of Boss and Employee in German Business Meetings

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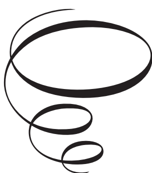
A Conversation Analytic Study of How Social Roles are Co-Constructed

By

Tobias Barske

Cambridge Scholars Publishing



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To Valerie

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

What makes a business meeting a business meeting? Does any conversation held around a conference table represent a business meeting? Do participants in a business meeting simply enact a pre-assigned social role whenever they assemble for a business meeting? In this book, I address these questions as central to my analysis of how participants talk German business meetings into existence. My study of business meetings as a specific speech exchange system contributes to a long history and large body of previous works on the phenomenon of meetings. Linguists, social interaction scholars, and researchers from many other disciplines identify meetings of all kinds as events deserving close investigation. Studies on this phenomenon include sociological histories of meetings (e.g., van Vree 1999), organizational ethnographies (e.g., Schwartzmann 1989), works on how to teach the language of business meetings (e.g., Wadsorn 2005), and studies on politeness in the workplace (e.g., Wasson 2000). In addition, psycholinguistic studies (e.g., Deese 1978), translation studies (e.g., To and Jernudd 2001), and a substantial number of reports by linguists (e.g., Bilbow 2002, Kleinberger Günther 2003, Poncini 2002b, 2003, Yamada 1990a, Holmes and Stubbe 2003, Brünner 1992) complement the multi-faceted research-to-date. Within the corpus of research on business meetings, scholars examine various languages including American English (e.g., Mirivel and Tracy 2005, Ford 2008), Australian English (e.g., Marriott 1993), British English (e.g., Bargiela-Chiappini and Harris 1997), Cantonese (e.g., Du-Babcock 1999), English as a Second Language (e.g., Du-Babcock 1999), German (e.g., Müller 1997, Vöge 2010, 2008, Barske 2009), Italian (e.g., Bargiela-Chiappini and Harris 1996), Dutch and Japanese (e.g., Emmett 2003).

Within the abundance of existing research, the past 10 years have seen a growing body of studies appear, which address the systematic organization of meeting talk. These new studies do not approach the phenomenon of meetings as a past event using research data gathered once the interaction is concluded. As Deirdre Boden explains:

> Virtually all organizational studies study organizations and decisions long after they occur. They depend on interviews, or questionnaires, or the residual records of the organizations themselves, losing entirely the dynamism that is such a central feature of *all* social organization. That dynamism is, to be sure, methodologically untidy, but it is central to what organizations *are*, how they *work*, and even why they don't (1994: 10).

To maintain this dynamism, she suggests the analysis of naturally occurring meetings based on audio- or video-recorded data. In this sense, naturally occurring meetings refer to meetings not staged for research purposes that take place in the ordinary day-to day experience of conducting business. This kind of data, although difficult to access, offers researchers new possibilities in understanding the structure underlying business meetings.[1] In particular, the detailed analysis of audio- and/or video-recorded meetings allows researchers to describe the construction of social order on a moment-by-moment basis. Through the analysis of talk-in-interaction, scholars may address how participants co-construct social roles such as chairperson or employee and the ways in which participants enact and challenge these social roles. Within the interaction of a business meeting, social roles do not simply exist as stable, established positions based on a given title or rank in a company. Rather, as this book will demonstrate, participants collaborate to produce a specific speech exchange system and to talk business meetings into existence.

My analysis of business meetings also includes an examination of the distinction between institutional and ordinary talk. Working within the ethnomethodological framework of conversation analysis (CA), I contribute to a growing body of research that systematically describes the institutionality of task-specific interactions. For example, conversation analysts address different institutional contexts including 911 calls (e.g., Whalen and Zimmerman 1987, Zimmerman 1992), news interviews (e.g., Clayman and Whalen 1988/89, Heritage 1985, Heritage and Greatbach

[1] Various researchers comment on their problems in convincing companies to participate in research projects that consist of audio- or video-taping meetings on company premises (e.g., Saft 2000: 60, Müller 1997: 8, Brünner 2000: 23-25, Maheux-Pelletier 2006: 70-77, McAll, Montgomery, and Tremblay 1994). In contacting companies, one of my contacts mentioned concerns regarding business espionage for not choosing to participate in my research project. After contacting 180 companies per telephone, Maheux-Pelletier received rejections from almost all of them. She states that "[t]he main reason invoked for not wanting to participate was that the presence of the recording devices was a threat to industrial secrets, a factor affecting the productivity of the employees, and a source of uneasiness among personnel" (2006: 70).

1991), cross-examinations in court (e.g., Drew 1992), classroom interaction (e.g., Egbert 1998, Markee 1995, 2000, 2004a, McHoul 1990, Mori 2002), and business meetings (e.g., Boden 1995, 1994, Mirivel and Tracy 2005, Nielsen 2012, Ford and Stickle 2012). All of these studies avoid the use of *a priori*, *etic* categorizations such as "teacher" and "student" (Markee 2000, 2004a), "native speaker" and "non-native speaker" (Mori 2002), or "interviewer" and "interviewee" (Clayman and Whalen 1988/89, Heritage 1985, Heritage and Greatbach 1991).[2] Instead they examine details of the "procedural infrastructure of situated action" (ten Have 1999: 37) based on an *emic* perspective, specifically the orientations and relevancies that participants display to each other through their interactional conduct (Schegloff 1992c).[3] CA-studies show how social interactors co-participate to enact and to accomplish social order, creating contexts such as doctor-patient interaction and news interviews. Simply because someone speaks in a doctor's office or a business meeting does not automatically make their talk institutional. Similarly, participants in ordinary conversations may at times invoke institutional talk through phrases such as "don't lecture me," "you're not my boss," etc.

Yet, despite CA's central focus on *emic* as opposed to *etic* categories in order to describe social actions, only recently have studies begun to integrate systematically a description of embodied actions into the analysis of business meetings (e.g., Markaki 2012). I choose to employ the term "embodied action" as opposed to "gesture" as a means of referencing a range of bodily movements including eye gaze, head nods, and facial expressions. Traditionally, conversation analysts utilize the term gesture predominantly to refer to hand movements (e.g., Kendon 1995, Streeck 1993). In discussing a negotiation between two German business professionals, Streeck & Kallmeyer (2001) extend the term gesture to include graphic acts such as inscriptions (e.g., drawing a summation line). Within their study, Streeck and Kallmeyer problematize whether or not these inscriptions function as turn-constructional units. However, Goodwin (1986b) problematizes the use of the term gesture in two ways. First, Goodwin notes, "it is not always certain whether some particular body movement is in fact a gesture" and second, "only the most stereotypic gesture can be translated into print" (1986b: 30). Farnell (2004) extends Goodwin's statements by commenting that "[o]ne must wonder, however, whether the category of "gesture" will itself turn out to

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[2] According to Pike (1967), an etic perspective relies on extrinsic concepts and categories that have meaning for scientific observers.

[3] Following Pike (1967), an emic perspective focuses on intrinsic cultural distinctions that are meaningful to the members of a given group.

be limiting when there are many other human practices in which body movement and speech are integrated" (2004: 100). In addition to the term gesture, Golato (2000) and Heath (2002) reference terms such as "embodied action," while Mori & Hayashi (2006) and Olsher (2004) discuss "embodied completion" to denote a larger class of "non-vocal resources" (Mori and Hayashi 2006: 195) that includes both gestures and other embodied displays. As conversation analysts place a growing emphasis on how to incorporate bodily actions into descriptions of talk-in-interaction, terms and naming practices have yet to be standardized. In an effort to intervene in these discussions and to consider a wider range of bodily movements as relevant to conversation analytic studies, I provide analyses of embodied actions throughout this book as part of producing an *emic* description of how participants co-construct social roles.

Through my analysis of talk in interaction including descriptions of relevant embodied actions, I will demonstrate how the social roles of "boss"/"chairperson" and "employee"/"meeting participant" are enacted in business meetings in a small German company. The results of this book will provide a more detailed understanding of how participants accomplish interactional tasks in German business meetings. Furthermore, I will illustrate specific interactional resources available to participants. These resources include various uses of the token *ok* and the meeting-specific routine of employees' reports. The results of this book will not only be of interest to conversation analysts and organizational scholars, but also to researchers working in the area of interaction studies, linguistic anthropology, applied linguistics, and sociology.

CHAPTER TWO

RESEARCH ON BUSINESS MEETINGS

Introduction and Overview

In order to situate the significance of this book, I provide a two-part overview covering the most relevant studies on business meetings. I begin by discussing literature that deals with data in languages other than German. Next, I explain research that specifically addresses German business meetings. Researchers discuss business meetings in at least four different languages and four varieties of English. The sociolinguistic studies by Hochshild (1997), Schwartzmann (1989), Tracy & Dimock (2004), Tracy & Naughton (2000), Holmes (2000), and Holmes & Stubbe (2003) provide a useful starting point for understanding the organization of meetings. Holmes & Stubbe (2003), for example, address various issues related to power at the workplace and discuss how the concept of politeness relates to challenges of colleagues who are in a hierarchically more powerful position. Furthermore, studies by Bargiela-Chiappini (2002), Bargiela-Chiappini & Harris (1995, 1996, 1997), Bilbow (2002, 1997, 1995), Du-Babcock (1999), and Poncini (2002b, a, 2003, 2004) examine several aspects of cross-cultural business meetings. For instance, Bargiela-Chiappini & Harris (1995) discuss structural differences in British and Italian business meetings. The authors conclude that cultural variables such as the role of "group" and the frequency of overlap contribute toward these differences. According to their findings, the authors argue that participants structure Italian meetings more loosely than English meetings, such that the chair of Italian meetings "is often left to struggle to regain his or her role" (Bargiela-Chiappini and Harris 1995: 551). In addition, Bargiela-Chiappini & Harris attribute the looser organization of Italian meetings to the fact that Italians take the floor through successful interruptions. They conclude that cultural differences such as the ways in which participants claim the floor may result in negative consequences in cross-cultural encounters between British and Italian business professionals.

Furthermore, in studies based on speech acts, Bilbow (2002, 1997,

1995) addresses various interactional, attitudinal, and linguistic differences between native and non-native speakers of English in business meetings. In analyzing meetings held in Hong Kong, he contrasts the ways in which Chinese and Western participants realize directive speech acts of directing and suggesting (Bilbow 1997). Whereas Chinese participants equate authority in meetings with a speaker's style of delivery, Westerners consider the semantic content of a speaker's utterance more important than the delivery. Finally, Poncini (2002b, a, 2003, 2004) analyzes meetings in an Italian company in which suppliers from up to 15 different companies participate. She applies Goffman's (1981, 1979, 1974) notion of frames in order to define the social activities in which the participants engage during these meetings. For example, she discusses the use of personal pronouns, specialized lexis such as in-group identity markers, and evaluative lexis (2002b). In the end, she claims that problems in multiparty interaction in a multicultural environment may not be reduced to cultural differences, but rather factors (i.e., linguistic factors) need to be considered as well—uh, this is unclear, couldn't cultural differences include linguistic factors?. For this book, these studies provide either background or points of departure for my own analysis. While I agree that power is inherent in business meetings (e.g., Bargiela-Chiappini and Harris 1995), I use conversation analytic means in order to show how participants of meetings collaborate in constructing power during meetings.

From a conversation analytic point of view, a number of studies address a variety of aspects related to meetings. For instance, Cuff & Sharrock (1985) provide a basic description of meetings, stressing the local *in-situ* production of activities, and commenting on various aspects of turn-taking. For example, they show that the activities of talk coordinators shape the distribution of talk in meetings. Beach (1990a), who uses the term "facilitator" in referring to the talk coordinator, shows how the facilitator's use of *ok* closes larger sequences-at-talk during meetings and signals a move to the next topic. In addition, Mirivel & Tracy (2005) discuss various forms of pre-meeting talk and demonstrate the organizational function of each form. Concentrating on pre-meeting talk rather than actual meeting interaction, they describe work talk, meeting preparatory talk, and shop talk. They also display how talk preceding the start of meetings reflects institutional identity work. Specifically, Mirivel and Tracy show how participants display and co-construct a group-level identity tied to the company for which they work. Finally, Mondada (2004) expands the traditional notion of meetings to incorporate technological advances by analyzing meetings that contain video-conferences (for studies on how chats are integrated into meetings,

see Markman 2009, 2010a, b). In these meetings, multilingual doctors from various European cities discuss problematic cases using English as the *lingua franca*. Mondada identifies ways in which participants in these meetings accomplish "doing-being-plurilingual" by describing the sequential achievement of ratifying English as the meeting language locally and repeatedly.

In the most comprehensive conversation analytic study on meetings to date, Boden (1994) focuses on meetings in various institutions such as a hospital, a university, and a TV station. She challenges the necessity of a distinction between the "micro" and the "macro" contexts of interaction. In other words, she questions the difference between social interaction, the micro-level of language use, and social structure such as institutions, the macro-level. Boden writes, "the world is of a piece, single and whole" (Boden 1994: 5). She adds, "there is no such thing as "micro" and "macro,"" but rather "our theories and analytic strategies try to make it so" (1994: 5). By focusing on the interactional methods used by members of a company to conduct business, she demonstrates the importance of interaction for the basic institutional structure of the company. Instead of interaction being only loosely coupled with the institutional character of the company, it represents the main vehicle through which the company organization is constructed, maintained, and reinforced. As Boden demonstrates, even though the relevance of meetings may be a local matter, the results of meetings have global consequences (Boden 1995, 1994). More recently, Asmuß and Svennevig (2009) and Svennevig (2012b) provide valuable summaries of how conversation analytic research has managed to provide analyses of meetings on a microscopic level.

Expanding upon the research on English meetings, various researchers focus on Japanese meetings. Yamada (1990a, 1992, 1990b), Emmett (2003), and Jones (1995) provide comparative studies of American and Japanese business meetings. In addition, Saft (2000) analyzes how participants in faculty meetings at a Japanese university utilize arguments in order to accomplish institution specific goals. With regard to meeting structure, Boden (1994) already establishes that business meetings and departmental meetings represent comparable speech exchange systems. In his study, Saft focuses on departmental meetings (called *kyooshitsu kaigi*), where participants discuss how university life is structured. He shows that issues discussed in the *kyooshitsu kaigi* meetings immediately impact university life, affecting what courses will be taught, how courses will be scheduled, and how the department will attract more students. Since the decisions of these meetings influence the organization of university policies and life, arguments during the *kyooshitsu kaigi* meetings require

participants to sequentially position concerns and disagreements as closely as possible to the mentioning of an issue in order to avoid not being able to voice their concerns. Participants in the *kyooshitsu kaigi* meetings, "went about constructing a speech exchange system that allowed them to use the *hookoku jikoo* (university-level meeting) as a place to discuss and negotiate their monthly business" (Saft 2000: 75). Saft extends this research on university faculty meetings by describing how concessions are accomplished (2001) and also by conflict is a collaborative achievement in these settings (2004). Similar to research on other institutional settings (e.g., courtrooms, news interview, etc.), participants actively co-operate in constructing institutional talk by orienting towards institutional goals.

All of these studies focus on the construction of meetings on a moment-by-moment basis. In addition, these works show how participants of meetings achieve this co-construction. Moreover, the studies of English and other languages described above emphasize the importance of meetings to the larger organization of companies and universities. Finally, studies such as Boden (1995, 1994), Beach (1990a), and Saft (2000) address the issue of how the actions of meeting facilitators influence the turn-taking system, the organized back-and-forth between participants in meetings and how this speech exchange system differs from ordinary conversation.

Similar to research in other languages, a number of studies address German business language in various ways. Schönfeld & Donath (1978) describe linguistic differences in business German. Based on a survey in two East German manufacturing plants, they present a quantitative analysis of business vocabulary to compare and contrast the different social groups working in these plants. Furthermore, Brünner (1978, 2000) identifies various forms of business discourse such as sales conversations (*Verkaufsgespräche*), complaint conversations (*Reklamationsgespräche*), service conversations (*Servicegespräche*), negotiations (*Verhandlungen*), and meetings (*Besprechungen*). In discussing various business-related speech exchange systems, she offers an initial analysis of each system in order to highlight the benefits of using naturally occurring language data. Similarly, Henne & Rehbock (2012) and Brons-Albert (1992) discuss how to analyze sales conversations through discourse analysis. More specifically, Henne & Rehbock (Henne and Rehbock 2012) examine one 8 minute sales interaction to explicate various aspects of this speech exchange system by using a combination of conversation analysis and speech act theory. In distinguishing between the macro- and microlevel of sales talk, they evaluate the opening and the closing sequence, but also emphasize the importance of prosody and sentence structure for analyzing

conversation. Additionally, Prokop (1989) explains a typology of discourses that occur in office communication. With regard to technical meetings (*Technikerbesprechungen*), Marquard (1994) discusses problem solutions during arguments, and Lenz (1989, 1994) illustrates the process of speaker change and the establishment of topics of discussion. Furthermore, Kleinberger Günther (2003) discusses various business linguistic aspects of communication within companies. Finally, Vöge discusses how laughter serves as a tool to construct professional identities in meetings (2010, 2008)

Despite existing research on various business-related areas outside of actual meetings, very little research addresses German business meetings specifically. Müller (1997) and Dannerer (2001) represent rare exceptions to this statement. Dannerer's (2001) study argues for process-oriented rather than goal-oriented models of business negotiations to capture their complex patterns of interpersonal transactions. However, she does not offer a very detailed discussion of the negotiations themselves. Müller (1997), on the other hand, discusses in great detail social hierarchies and relationships in companies, mechanisms to direct conversations (*Steuerungsmechanismen*), and the exercise of control in meetings. However, Müller assumes a pre-structuring of institutional, specifically of conditions related to work communication (a "'Vorstrukturiertheit' institutioneller, speziell arbeitsweltlicher Kommunikationsbedingungen" (1997: 9)). In contrast to assuming any pre-existing structures and hierarchies, my analysis of talk-in-interaction will describe how participants of meetings collaborate in talking social roles into existence. In my discussion of examples where social roles are challenged, I demonstrate that pre-conceived notions of institutional talk, such as Müller's assumption about pre-structures in work communication, impacts the way he conducts his analysis and consequently the findings of his research.

Given the amount of research on meetings in languages other than German, the limited attention to German meetings is quite striking. With this book, therefore, I provide the first major conversation analytic study of German business meetings. In contrast to previous research in German, I discuss how participants co-construct this speech exchange system on a moment-by-moment basis. Furthermore, my analysis is based on video-recorded data, which allows me the opportunity to provide extensive discussions of embodied actions including eye gaze and head nods. With the possible exceptions of Mirivel & Tracy (2005) and Mondada (2004), my book represents an intervention in the research to consider the co-expressive function of speech and embodied actions in the construction of social roles within the institutional context of business meetings.

Research Methodology

The qualitative methodology I employ in this book is commonly referred to as conversation analysis (CA), an empirical methodology which developed from the field of sociology in the late 1960s. CA research investigates how participants of conversations manage to produce order and meaning in conversations as they interact with each other. While I provide a brief summary of the fundamental goals of CA in the following section, I also discuss conversation analytic research relevant to each argument in the individual analysis chapters.[1]

When Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson started their initial investigations in the early 1970s (Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson 1974, Schegloff and Sacks 1973), none of the disciplines of sociology, anthropology, linguistics, nor philosophy addressed talk-in-interaction. For example, sociological research was largely based on Weber's methodology of interpretive understanding (Weber 1949) focusing on idealized examples in a decontextualized way (Silverman 1998). In approaching the relationship of language to culture, anthropological research following Parsons (1937) addressed internalized norms to explain personality (Heritage 1984b). Furthermore, linguists at the time primarily concentrated on providing structural rules of language based on imagined cases (i.e., Chomsky 1965, Saussure 1983). In the field of philosophy, scholars such as Austin (1975) and Searle (1969), analyzed isolated, mostly invented speech acts without considering the interactional context of these utterances (Silverman 1998). As a consequence, the study of talk-in-interaction started as a research enterprise outside existing disciplinary boundaries and continues to develop as a largely interdisciplinary endeavor.

Conversation analytic research is rooted in a microscopic analysis of how interlocutors co-construct talk-in-interaction. As a consequence, CA-researchers analyze actual conversations in naturalistic settings. The production of talk-in-interaction and the way in which recipients of talk participate in this process represent the object of investigation. Specifically, Schegloff (1986) refers to naturally occurring talk as "the primordial site of sociality." Regardless of the possibility of being examined and in some way analytically dissected for purposes of research, everyday interactants simply go about their business performing routine and often mundane tasks. While any speaker produces talk in order to accomplish a specific

[1] Heritage (1984b), Hutchby & Wooffitt (2001), Levinson (1983), and ten Have (1999) among others provide more extensive reviews of CA.

action, he/she also displays an understanding of what came before their current turn-at-talk. This reaction to preceding talk becomes available for inspection both to other participants of the conversation and to researchers. In other words, researchers use the "architecture of intersubjectivity" inherent in social interaction in order to understand interlocutors' orientation to actions that talk-in-interaction achieves (Schegloff 1991, 1992b, Heritage 1984b). Instead of dismissing any detail that occurs during a conversation, CA studies have shown the value of constantly posing the question, "why that now?" (Heritage 1984b). Based on the analysis of the interlocutors' own conduct, CA-analysts attempt to uncover systematic practices inherent in talk-in-interaction.

The conversation analytic approach has been extremely successful in accounting for details of talk-in-interaction that previously eluded the attention of researchers. CA findings focus on the description of general mechanisms that allow interlocutors to take turns (e.g., Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson 1974), implement various courses of action (e.g., Schegloff 2007, Jefferson 1972), repair problems of hearing, speaking, and understanding (e.g., Schegloff, Jefferson, and Sacks 1977, Schegloff 1979a), and coordinate entry in and exit from interaction (e.g., Schegloff 1968, Schegloff and Sacks 1973, Schegloff 1986). CA research has established, four levels of organization, which operate within talk-in-interaction. First, the organization of turn-taking deals with constructing and exchanging turns-at-talk (Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson 1974). Second, sequence organization explains the implementation of courses of action through sequences of turns (Schegloff 2007). Third, the organization of repair provides means to resolve problems in hearing, speaking, and understanding (Schegloff, Jefferson, and Sacks 1977). Finally, the overall structural organization of conversation as a unit addresses the organization of conversations such as openings and closings of conversations (Schegloff 1986, Schegloff and Sacks 1973).

While conversation analysis was first developed on English language data, the methodology has been successfully applied to many other languages. For example, Hopper (1989) conducted studies on Arabic while Houtkoop-Steenstra (1991), Lentz (1997), and Mazeland & Huiskes (2001) performed studies on Dutch, and Hakulinen (2001), Helasvuo (2001), Peräkylä (1998, 1991), and Sorjonen (2001, 1996) published works on Finnish. Hopper (1989) published a study on French telephone opening. Extensive research exists on German by Auer (1979, 1986, 1984, 1980), Auer & Uhmann (1982), Auer (2006, 1993, 1991), Betz (2008, 2013, 2011, 2008), Couper-Kuhlen (2006, 2001, 1999), Egbert (2004, 1998, 1997b, a, 1996), Egbert, Niebecker, & Rezzara (2004), Golato (2005,

2003, 2002a, b, c, 2000, 2010, 2012a, 2013, 2012b, 2011), Günthner (2000), Huth (2007, 2006), Kotthoff (2000, 1993), Liefländer-Koistinen & Neuendorff (1990), Rehbein (1994), Schönfeldt & Golato (2003), Selting (2000, 1995, 2006), Streeck (1996, 1993), Streeck & Kallmeyer (2001), and Taleghani-Nikazm (2002a, 1998, 2006, 2002b, 2005, 2008, 2011). While Pavlidou (1994) and Sifianou (1989) published studies on Greek, Maschler (2002) conducted research on Hebrew. Furthermore, studies on Italian include Kendon (1995) and Müller (2006) and on Japanese include Emmett (2003), Fox, Hayashi, & Jasperson (1996), Hayashi(1997, 2001, 2003, 2004a, b, 2005b, a, 2009, 2010, 2012, 2013, 2014), Jones (1995), Maynard (1997), Mori (2002, 2004), and Saft (2000). Studies by Kim (2001) and Park (2002, 1998) deal with Korean. While Wu (1997, 2003) analyzed Mandarin, Bolden (2006, 2004, 2008a) provided the first studies on Russian. Finally, Beach & Lindström (1992) and Lindström (1989, 1994) provided research on Swedish and Moerman (1977, 1988) on Thai.

CA-analysts assume that talk-in-interaction is the principal means through which persons pursue various practical goals. Consequently, it is the central medium through which the daily work activities of many professionals and organizational representatives are conducted. As Hutchby and Wooffiitt explain:

> Rather than seeing contexts as abstract social forces which impose themselves on participants, conversation analysts argue that we need to begin from the other direction and see participants as knowledgeable social agents who actively display for one another (and hence also for observers and analysts) their orientation to the relevance of contexts (Hutchby and Wooffitt 2001: 147).

Interaction in any institutional sense, then, differs from ordinary talk because interlocutors co-construct the context collectively. CA assumes "that it is fundamentally through interaction that context is built, invoked, and managed" (Heritage 1997: 163).

Previous research on talk at the work place has investigated some specific ways in which talk in work settings is organized. Topics under investigation include 911 calls (Zimmerman 1992), news interviews (Heritage 1985, Heritage and Greatbach 1991), and cross-examinations in court (Drew 1992). These studies focus primarily on how interaction in an institutional environment differs from ordinary conversation, and how it reflects and defines institutional roles and norms. As one example, Heath (1992) demonstrates that in specific instances asymmetries are created by the interlocutors in doctor-patient interactions. The institutional character of such interaction is not a result of the circumstances that one interlocutor

is a doctor and the other is a patient. Institutional talk, in other words, is not a product of the roles assigned to participants in an institutional setting. A given interaction cannot be declared institutional based on the location of the interaction alone (Drew and Heritage 1992, Boden 1994). Institutionality of an interaction arises as interlocutors actively construct and maintain a specific relationship through language.

In his study, Heath focuses on the sequential environment of the doctor's delivery of a diagnosis and the patient's response. Doctor-patient interactions predominantly follow the common sequential structure of a question-answer pair. After doctors offer their patients "information about the nature or state of the condition" (Heath 1992: 240) patients often fail to respond at all, or they respond only with a minimal answer in the form of *er* or *yeh*. Since patients consult a doctor in order to receive an explanation for a health problem, one might expect patients to be more inquisitive about this news. After being presented with a medical assessment, patients always have a sequential spot in the interaction to respond. However, based on transcripts of doctor-patient interactions, patients most often pass on their turn. As a consequence of this action, the initiative to talk returns to the doctor who can steer the interaction into the direction he or she chooses. The reoccurring pattern in interactions of this kind demonstrates how doctors and patients construct the identity of doctor and patient in part by creating an asymmetry. The institutional character of doctor-patient interaction arises only if both participants actively contribute towards the asymmetry between a professional talking in order to pass on knowledge and a lay person listening.

News interviews represent another context that has attracted a great deal of attention from CA analysts (Heritage 1985, Heritage and Greatbach 1991, Clayman and Whalen 1988/89). These studies reveal that interviewers orient primarily towards displaying a position of neutrality. This orientation is expected by the audience because an interviewer asks questions for an overhearing audience. Similar to doctor-patient interaction, the basic structure of an interview is the question-answer sequence. However, the turns of interviewers differ significantly from similar turns in ordinary conversations. Two major differences between ordinary conversations and interviews are a lack of assessments and the missing use of "oh" in order to mark the receipt of new information (Heritage 1984a). When news is introduced in talk-in-interaction, interlocutors often assess the new information. In addition, the receipt of new information most commonly is marked with the receipt token "oh." Interviewers, however, are not the recipients of the interviewee's answers. The interviewer, at least on a surface level, asks questions in place of an

audience. At the same time, interviewers, ideally, are not supposed to pass judgment on the interviewee's answers in any way. Since the information is meant for the television audience, interviewers need to show that they do not receive the information. This task is accomplished by eliminating assessments and information receipt markers from their answers.

Both interviewer and interviewee need to orient and work towards the interactional accomplishment of displaying a neutralistic stance.[2] Thus, an interview is a collaborative effort by the two parties involved. In the case of a highly controversial interview between Dan Rather and then vice-president George Bush Sr. in 1988, the interview turned into an open confrontation as Rather's aggressive questioning moved the interaction away from the institutional event (Schegloff 1989, Clayman and Whalen 1988/89). In the case of this interview, Bush refused to contribute towards the accomplishment of a neutralistic stance by the interviewer. Since institutional talk requires an active orientation and contribution from all participants, this interview serves as a prime example between the close relationship of institutional and ordinary talk.

As mentioned earlier, conversation analytic research focuses on actions achieved through an organization of turn-taking into larger sequences. Even though native speakers have intuitions about how to perform a task through talk, such intuitions do not necessarily match findings on how speakers actually perform specific actions (Golato 2002a). Microscopic analysis of talk-in-interaction shows that the

> intuitive view is inadequate. By relying on the private realm of individual awareness, it fails to account for the essentially *public* means by which participants display for one another their orientation to context and their understanding of each other's actions (Hutchby and Wooffitt 2001: 148).

Describing how social roles are co-constructed in business meetings, then, requires a close analysis of the actual interaction between participants rather than the use of presupposed, intuitive notions. In order to examine a speech-exchange system as complex as business meetings, a close look at the basic mechanics of ordinary conversations will serve as the baseline for this book. Similarly, research on other institutional contexts will provide a framework of comparison, in which to situate my findings.

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[2] The term neutralistic is more appropriate in this case than the term neutral, because both interviewer and interviewee coconstruct a question-answer format that seems to be neutral (Schegloff (1988/89).

The data for this study derive from a series of business meetings recorded between July and November 2004.[3] The collection consists of seven meetings recorded in a small company in a major German city.[4] Besides the office where I recorded, the company has a second branch office in another major German city. Furthermore, the company merged with a different company during the time of recording, adding a third branch office in yet another German city. I provide this information upfront because meeting participants at various times refer to these branch offices, the colleagues working there, and the merger.

Members of this company assemble at least once a month in order to discuss general company business, to report about the progress of ongoing projects, and to announce new projects. The time span between these meetings differs depending on the demand for discussion and the availability of employees. Participation in the meetings is mandatory unless the boss explicitly excuses a given member of the company.[5] As detailed in Table 1, the staff of the company and the number of meeting participants varies.

During five months of recording, the staff consists of eleven employees. In alphabetical order, these include Becker, Danner, Fichte, Jahn, Kaiser, Luchs, Nickl, Scholz, Stelzer, Strom, and Teich. Additionally, Bartl participates in the meeting on August 8. Following a one month long training period, he began working in another branch office. Finally, the company regularly hires interns. During their internships, Prak, Gross, and Zahn also participated in the meetings. All participants are native speakers of German from various parts of Germany.

[3] The data collection was made possible by the Ernst Alfred Philippson Graduate Research Travel Award, presented by the Department of Germanic Languages and Literatures at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign.

[4] The data collection occurred in compliance with the regulations and policies set by the Institutional Review Board of the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. Participants consented in writing to the participation in this project. I changed all names in the transcripts (e.g., meeting participants, customers, project names, etc.) in order to assure the subjects' anonymity.

[5] During the initial part of the meeting, the boss/chairperson of the meeting repeatedly announces why certain employees are not participating in a meeting. In fact, once he announces an unexcused absence of an employee.

Table 1: Company Employees Participating in Meetings

Speaker	Meetings 7/5	7/21	7/28	8/10	9/16	10/11	11/3
Becker	absent	√	√	absent	absent	√	√
Danner	√	√	√	absent	√	√	√
Fichte	absent	absent	absent	√	√	√	absent
Jahn	√	√	absent	absent	√	√	√
Kaiser	absent	√	√	√	√	absent	√
Luchs	√	absent	absent	√	√	√	√
Nickl	absent	absent	√	√	√	√	√
Scholz	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Stelzer	√	absent	√	√	√	absent	absent
Strom	absent	√	√	√	√	√	√
Teich	absent	√	√	√	√	√	√
Bartl	---	---	---	√	---	---	---
Prak (Intern)	√	√	√	---	---	---	---
Gross (Intern)	---	---	---	√	√	---	---
Zahn (Intern)	---	---	---	---	---	absent	√

I transcribed the data according to the transcription notation method developed by Gail Jefferson (1984). Regarding the transcription of "vocal sounds into graphic representations," Duranti discusses the implications of either using standard orthography or the alphabet devised by the International Phonetic Association (Duranti 1997: 137). With regard to visual representations other than writing, he refers to Goodwin's (Goodwin 1979, 1981) attempt to incorporate eye gaze, Haviland's (1996) combination of transcription, verbal descriptions of gestures, and figures, and Farnell's (1995) use of Labanotation to describe human movements. However, conversation analytic analysis of data always starts with the transcription of talk and addresses embodied actions such as eye gaze only where the researcher deem them to be relevant to the interaction. For this reason, I choose the CA-specific "Jeffersonian transcription system" (Psathas and Anderson 1990: 76) since it is most suitable to capturing details of talk-in-interaction and adding embodied actions where applicable.

CA-transcripts include numerous details of speech such as audible pauses, participants speaking simultaneously, and characteristics of speech

delivery (e.g., pitch, loudness of voice, etc.). In order to capture as much detail as possible in the transcripts, the following conventions mark details in speech:

Symbol	Meaning
.	a period indicates TCU-final falling intonation
,	a comma indicates TCU-final continuing intonation
?	a question mark indicates TCU-final rising intonation
:	a colon indicates an extension of the sound it follows
:::	multiple colons indicate a longer extension of the sound it follows
-	a single dash indicates an abrupt ending or cut-off
emphasis	underlining of one or more letters indicates emphasis
LOUD	capital letters of one or more letters indicates an utterance that is spoken much louder than the surrounding talk
°	a degree sign indicates talk that is much quieter than the surrounding talk
(hhh)	audible aspirations
.hh	audible in-breath
hh.	audible out-breath
ha:ha::	different vowels (i.e., e, i, a) indicate different vowel quality of laugh tokens
( )	single parentheses indicate items that are unclear to the transcriber
>quick<	talk that is delivered quicker than the surrounding talk
<slow>	talk that is delivered slower than the surrounding talk
[i see [i swim	utterances by two or more speakers starting simultaneously are marked with left-hand brackets
i [see [i swim	when an utterance by one speaker overlaps an utterance by another speaker, left-hand brackets mark the point at which the overlap begins
i see.] i sw]im	the end of an overlap is marked using right-hand brackets
=	when an utterance by one speaker starts immediately after an utterance by another one ends, equal signs indicate that the second utterance is latched to the first one
(0.5)	periods of silence are timed relative to the speed of the surrounding talk in intervals of 0.2, 0.5, 0.7, 1.0, 1.2, etc.

Since the present study uses German data, the transcripts include three lines for every line of speech. The top line provides the original German talk, the middle line provides a word-by-word English gloss, and the bottom line provides an idiomatic English translation (Duranti 1997). In order to differentiate visually between German and English and to increase readability, the two English versions are written in italics and the German original appears in bold letters. Expanding on Goodwin's (1979, 1980) notation conventions regarding eye gaze, I integrate information on

embodied actions with sequences of turns at talk where I deem them relevant to the interaction. In an effort to reflect the interactive nature of body-related actions within the transcript, the speaker's embodied actions (e.g., eye gaze, body orientation, gestures) appear above the utterance; those of the recipient of the utterance appear below the utterance. Brackets, finally, mark the duration of each embodied action.

Throughout this book, I employ several key conversation analytic concepts. Specifically, I rely on the notion of a *turn constructional unit* (TCU), a *turn*, and an *adjacency pair* sequence for the analysis of data samples. In CA, a *turn* is typically defined as the spate of talk that a speaker utters before another one talks. Even a cursory look at conversation analytic transcripts shows that speakers vary the size of turns and construct turns out of different components called *turn-constructional units* (TCUs). A TCU is a unit of talk that can be considered syntactically, pragmatically, and prosodically complete (Orestrom 1983) and may consist of a word, a phrase, a clause, or a sentence as demonstrated by the following four examples.

Example 1: Employee_17

SCH = Scholz

1 → SCH: gu:t.
good.

Example 2: Employee_17

SCH = Scholz

1 → SCH: der herr kaiser?
the mr. kaiser?
mr. kaiser?

Example 3: Employee_18

SCH = Scholz
ST = Strom

1 → ST: h-stadt l-stadt vorrangig?=u[:und] in s-stadt (.) dinge die
h-town l-town primarily? =a[:and] in s-town (.) things that
h-town l-town primarily? =a[:and] in s-town (.) things that
[ ]
2 SCH: [hm:.]
[*uh h*]*uh.*

3 → **dort ansteh'n?**
there come up?
come up?

Example 4: Employee 17

SCH = Scholz

1 → SCH: **das is' das (0.2) <u>eine</u> projekt.**
that's the (0.2) <u>one</u> project.

Scholz's TCU in example 1 only consists of the word *gu:t.* "good." A more extensive example of a TCU represents Scholz's phrasal TCU in example 2. Furthermore, Strom produces an even more complex TCU in example 3 (*u:und in s-stadt (.) dinge die dort ansteh'n?* "a:and in s-town (.) things that come up?") that includes a verb but does not include a subject. Finally, Scholz's TCU in example 4 consists of a grammatically complete sentence.

The relevance of TCUs arises from the way in which speakers employ them as part of a rule-driven turn-taking system. Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson (1974) demonstrate that speaker change may become relevant with the completion of a TCU. That is to say, listeners monitor the ongoing talk for potential opportunities to claim the floor after the completion of a TCU and to accomplish a speaker change as a result. Auer (2006), Ford & Thompson (1996), Goodwin (1979, 1981), and Goodwin & Goodwin (1987), among others, describe in more detail how syntax, intonation, gaze, and pragmatic structure represent aspects of TCUs that assist participants in projecting the end of turn constructional units.[6] *Transition-relevance places* (TRPs) are the places in ongoing TCUs at which the end of that TCU can be projected by the coparticipant (Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson 1974: 703).

Conversation analysts consider TCUs to be the most basic unit of analysis (Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson 1974) as not only turn-taking but also the organization of social interaction rest on the description of different TCUs. As Sacks argues, describing the most basic units of interaction allows researchers "to study actual activities" (Sacks 1992b: 95). In designing TCUs, speakers select an action that the TCU will

[6] The list of publications dealing with the definition of turn-constructional units is extensive. Other relevant publications on this topic include Ford, Fox & Thompson (1996), Ford & Thompson (1996), Lerner (1989, 1991), Schegloff (1980, 1982, 1987, 1996, 1988), and Selting (2000).

accomplish and details of the construction that will accomplish this action (Drew 2005). TCUs are fundamental in the organization of turn-taking in that at the end of a TCU, a speaker change may become relevant. In other words, at the end of a given TCU, either a current speaker may continue or else a speaker change may take place. Who claims the right to talk after the end of a given TCU is interactionally managed by the coparticipants. In other words, the right to talk represents an interactional achievement which is based on a set of rules. The basic assumption is that from the outset, a current speaker has the right to produce one TCU (Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson 1974: 704).

According to Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson (Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson 1974: 704), the current speaker may construct a turn in order to select the next speaker. The selected speaker "has the right and is obliged to take the next turn to speak" (Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson 1974: 704).[7] The following data sample, an expansion of example 2, offers an instance of speaker change.

Example 5: Employee_17

SCH = Scholz
K = Kaiser

1	**SCH:**	**der herr kaiser?**
		the mister kaiser?
		mister kaiser?
2		**(0.8)**
3	**K:**	**ja. heut' und morgen (0.2) noch in s-stadt?**
		yes. today and tomorrow (0.2) still in s-town?
		yes. today and tomorrow (0.2) still participating?

In line 1, Scholz designs his TCU to select Kaiser as the next speaker. He marks the completion of his TCU, and in this case also his turn, with rising intonation. The pause in line 2 further illustrates that Scholz does not intend to produce more talk and expects a speaker change. Indeed, Kaiser aligns with Scholz's speaker selection and begins his own turn-at-talk in line 3.

Since the current speaker not always specifically selects another speaker, a speaker other than the current speaker may self-select. In this

[7] Speaker change does not always occur without overlap. Research discussing overlap management includes, among others, Goodwin (1980), Jefferson (1986, 1973, 1974, 1983), Lerner (1989, 1991, 1996), Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson (1974), and Schegloff (2000, 1987).