CONDUCTING A TASK WHILE RECONSTRUCTING ITS MEANING:
INTERACTION, PROFESSIONAL IDENTITIES AND RECONTEXTUALIZATION OF A WRITTEN TASK ASSIGNMENT

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Abstract

This article investigates the way an institutional task of a meeting is oriented to by different meeting participants and developed in and through local interaction. Our data come from a city organization, where a large organizational change is planned and prepared through a series of face-to-face encounters and accompanying written texts. Using the notion of recontextualization and by connecting it to the conversation analytical method and to the notion of intersubjectivity, the study examines how the institutional task that is verbalized in written form prior to the meeting is conceptualized by meeting participants in their turns of talk. By doing so, the study will particularly shed light on the question of how different recontextualizations are motivated by their sequential position in interaction. Based on this, it also investigates how the meeting participants construct their professional identities through the conceptualizations made. In a wider sense, the article shows how spoken interaction and written texts interweave and form a reciprocal relationship in organizational life. Thus, it contributes to a deeper understanding about the multifaceted connections between the interactional management of meetings and wider organizational practices and processes that these encounters have been set up to advance.

Keywords: Institutional task; Agenda; Recontextualization; Meeting interaction; Professional identity; Conversation analysis; Intersubjectivity.

1. Introduction

Meetings have been famously defined as communicative events involving three or more people, who convene for the sake of the functioning of a larger group (Schwartzman 1989). Thus, as social encounters they are distinguished by their task-oriented nature. Meeting participants assemble for various organizational purposes, and there are two characteristics of meetings that are especially connected to these organizational goals. Firstly, meetings as encounters are intertwined with many kinds of organizational texts, most notably the agenda of the meeting, in which the tasks that should be accomplished are verbalized and made shareable between the meeting participants. Secondly, unlike many other institutional settings that involve a professional and a layman, meetings are typically attended by professionals from the same organization. However, despite the apparent absence of a discrepancy between professional and lay perspectives and the

asymmetries it may generate, meetings can still be characterized by different views and standpoints. As Boden (1994) has noted, in them the organizations as social entities are talked into being in the continuum of day-to-day practices by their various members. Meetings can thus be literally seen as 'meeting places' of stocks of professional knowledge and different identities, rights and responsibilities they entail.

In this article we will shed light on this intrinsic complexity of meetings. As our data, we will use a meeting that is part of an organizational project that aims at developing the customer services of the organization. In particular, we will concentrate on how the meeting participants handle a task that involves reporting on the ways the customer services currently operate in the city organization. This task of describing the current customer service practices is verbalized in written form prior to the meeting. Our main aim is to show how the meeting participants display different understandings of the institutional task of the meeting and how the nature of the task is thus negotiated during the course of the meeting encounter. Importantly, we will connect this negotiation to the turn-by-turn sequential structure of the meeting, and investigate how the participants display and construct their professional identities through their turns of talk. Finally, on the basis of our analysis, we will discuss how written texts and face-to-face interaction form a reciprocal relationship in organizational life.

Theoretically, our analysis is based on two strands of research. Firstly, we utilize the concept of 'recontextualization', which has been defined by Linell (1998b: 144–145) "as the dynamic transfer-and-transformation of something from one discourse/text-in-context to another". The transferred elements may be, for instance, specific lexical items, arguments, narratives, values, conceptions and ideologies. Through the transfer, the meaning of these elements is transformed as they are refitted into new contexts. (Linell 1998a: 155; Linell 1998b: 145, 148.) In this view, recontextualization can be intratextual, intertextual, or interdiscursive. Intratextual recontextualization takes place within one text or conversation, while intertextual and interdiscursive recontextualization happen across multiple texts and discourses.[1] Our approach incorporates both intertextual and intratextual dimensions. By tracing specific lexical references, we will show how a written task assignment that is introduced as an agenda item is recontextualized in spoken interaction in the meeting, so that the meeting participants do not only orient to the written assignment but also to meanings that have been given to it during the course of the meeting encounter.[2] Secondly, we draw on the

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[1] It is beyond the scope of this article to give a detailed account of previous studies on recontextualization practices. However, earlier studies of recontextualization in the organizational context have, for the most part, concentrated on interdiscursive phenomena and worked on the level of 'discourses' (see e.g. Asimakou and Oswick 2010; Campbell and Roberts 2007; Oswick and Robertson 2009; Scheuer 2001; Thomas 2003). While there are numerous studies on the intertextual level in other professional contexts (see e.g. Andruss 2011; Sarangi and Brookes-Howell 2006; Van Charldorp 2011), studies in the organizational contexts have rarely touched on the recontextualization of specific texts or conversations. Anderson (2005), however, shows how recontextualized reported speech plays a role in organizational change discourse. Wolfram Cox and Hassard (2010) carry out a thorough study of a series of administrative documents in a public health setting and show how 'stable referents' are given new meanings in new contexts, in order to further changing administrative agendas. Aggerholm, Asmuß and Thomsen (2012) look at the recontextualization of a theme ('market situation') in the process of authoring, implementing and interpreting corporate strategy

[2] In previous studies, Mikkola (2014) has similarly examined the way the speakers refer to the written text and how the text is thus recontextualized in spoken interaction. Moreover, there is also some earlier conversation analytical work (Lehtinen 2009; Nissi 2013) that shows how the meanings of written

conversation analytical model of intersubjectivity (Heritage 1984). A central tenet in conversation analysis is that the intersubjective understandings of speakers about what is happening in the interaction are publicly displayed in their turns-of-talk and also updated on a turn-by-turn basis. Thus, the basis of intersubjectivity is that the participants of interaction can continually inspect each other's contributions as to how they interpret the talk-thus-far. However, as Goodwin and Goodwin (1987) have noted, speakers do not only present their analysis of prior talk in their utterances, but they often also exploit it for their own purposes and thus transform the meaning of prior talk (see also, Sidnell 2010). It is, in particular, in this idea of transforming meaning that the concept of recontextualization and conversation analysis meet in our approach. Thus, in this article, we analyze meeting participants' publicly displayed understandings of the organizational task that transform its meaning both with regard to previous turns and the written task assignment.

The article has the following structure: In section 2, we will review previous studies of meeting interaction and specify how our analysis contributes to prior knowledge of meetings. In section 3, we will introduce our data and methodology. Section 4 contains our analysis, in which we will investigate four distinct recontextualizations of the meeting's institutional task. Finally, in the concluding section we will discuss the implications of our work for the study of meeting interaction and organizational practices.

2. Agenda and identities in meetings

There is a sizable amount of studies on meeting talk in the fields of conversation analysis, discourse analysis and sociolinguistics. Broadly speaking, there are two kinds of contributions in these studies. Firstly, they show us how meetings as an activity type are organized and accomplished through talk and interaction. Secondly, they inform us about how talk and interaction in meetings are also vehicles for organizational practices, and thus, for the activity of organizing on a wider level. In the following, we will review earlier studies from these two perspectives. While there are prior reviews of studies of meeting talk in general (Asmuß & Svennevig 2009; Svennevig 2012a), we will concentrate here on issues that have a direct relevance for our work, namely, meeting agenda and identities of the participants. We will discuss how these phenomena can be seen as vehicles for the organization of a meeting as a specific kind of interactional encounter as well as means for conducting broader organizational practices.

In their study of meetings as a genre, Angouri and Marra (2010) posit agenda management by the chair as one of the most general characteristics of this genre. It is typical of both formal and informal meetings. It is often the case that the agenda is based on a written document that organizes the item-by-item progression of the meeting (Asmuß & Svennevig 2009). However, even though the agenda is formulated in a written form before the encounter, the actual topical progression in the meeting is always a local achievement that is contingent on the participants' displayed commitment to the agenda. Thus, the meeting participants need and use various interactional resources for closing and opening topical items. Linde (1991), for example,

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texts are sequentially negotiated in face-to-face interaction, although they do not utilize the notion of recontextualization.

shows how participants use discourse markers and physical movements such as postural shifts or shuffling through papers for closing down topics. Topic introductions can also be done verbally, e.g. with explicit proposals, or multimodally, e.g. through manipulating folders. Svennevig (2012b) demonstrates how the written agenda itself can be an important resource in topic introductions: The participants refer verbally to the agenda and often gaze at the written document as they bring new topics into the conversation. Furthermore, there are also transitions between agenda items and non-agenda items in a meeting and these shifts must also be accomplished with various multimodal resources (Deppermann, Schmitt and Mondada 2010). One can thus say that the interactional achievement of managing the agenda is crucial for the practical organization of the meeting as a specific kind of an encounter.

However, as Boden (1994) argues, meetings are also part of wider organizational practices. Therefore, also, the topical items in meeting agendas can be treated as glosses for larger organizational issues, e.g. projects, tasks or decisions. Boden's (1994) study of reports is a case in point. As she illustrates, meeting agendas may be ordered as a set of reports. However, eventually reports may end up as discussion or debate about future actions that should be undertaken vis-à-vis the issues the reports are concerned with. This makes meeting agendas resources for wider organizational action.

What has been missing in these earlier studies is the focus on the intertextual nature of the meeting agenda (cf. Asmuß and Svennevig 2009). That is, the interactional treatment of agenda items has not been analyzed in relation to the actual textual form of written agendas and other documents that are used in organizing meetings. In our study, using the notion of recontexualization, we will show how participants of the meeting construct the meaning of an agenda item – in this case an institutional task that has been assigned in written form – through their contributions to the meeting interaction and the development of this task-based activity. Furthermore, the agenda item in question is demonstrably part of a larger organizational planning process, and, as we will later argue, the participants' recontextulizations of the task display divergent positions toward the process. Thus, our analysis contributes to a deeper understanding of the multifaceted connections between the management of meeting agendas in the local sense and organizational practices and processes that meetings have been set up to advance in the first place.

Similar to meeting agendas, identities of the meeting participants can also be seen in the context of the organization of meetings as well as in the context of organizing in the wider sense. The organization of the meeting is usually interwoven with and dependent on the situated identity of one of the participants as a chair (Bargiela-Chiappini and Harris 1997). The chair is in charge of, e.g. turn-taking (Boden 1994), topical organization (Svennevig 2012b) and time allocation (Potter and Hepburn 2010). Even though the chair is usually determined beforehand, chair identity is, as Angouri and Marra (2011) note, eventually constructed during the meeting. Sometimes other kinds of identities also emerge in meeting interaction. As Kangasharju (1996, 2002) has shown, participants can form alliances in meetings in relation to the issues under discussion.

However, meetings are also a site where organizational identities are displayed and reconstructed. Chairs often have a position as a superior to the meeting participants in the organization, but this is not always the case. As Pomerantz and Denvir (2007) show, the organizational position of the chair is displayed in her or his conduct in the

meeting. Likewise, alliances in meetings can be constructed in a way that conveys the parties' identity as members of an organizational team (Djordjilovic 2012). Organizational identities can also be displayed in and through story telling in meetings (Holmes 2006), as well as through interpretative work (Nielsen 2009). Nielsen's (2009) study, for example, shows how middle managers' work comprises of interpreting the organizational strategy for the employees on the lower lever. It is important to note, however, that both meeting-internal identities and organizational identities are dynamically useable resources. For example, Mondada (2012) conducts a detailed analysis of a sequence of action in a meeting during which a number of changes take place in the participation framework of the meeting: A previously silent participant is established as an expert in a situated way, and the turn-taking organization of the meeting changes from a chairman-centered to a facilitator-centered one.

In our study, we will integrate the above mentioned issues in the analysis of a step-by-step recontextualization process of a written task in meeting interaction – a task that has a crucial role in the process of organizational planning and change. We will look at the way this 'same' task is recontextualized by different meeting participants and examine how the recontextualization work is connected to their roles in the organization. Thus, we will connect identity work to the development of institutional tasks in a conceivable way. Also, as the recontexualizations of the task take place as part of the sequential organization of the same encounter, we will further connect the construction of professional identities to the sequential flow of the meeting and show how sequentiality and identities are interwined in situated recontextualization work.

3. Data and method

Our data consist of a series of meetings held in a Finnish city organization. The meetings were set up to conduct an organizational change in the service sector of the municipality. They took place over eighteen months and within this time a new model was created for the city's public services including areas such as health care, education, recreation and telecommunications. The aim of the customer service project was to merge all the various service sectors together to create a more transparent and accessible system for the municipality citizens to use and to make the public services more cost effective. Most of the meetings were attended by a project leader who was employed specifically for this project and acted as a chair in the meetings, approximately 30 city employees representing different municipal departments, the manager of the city's innovation services, outside consultants as well as various guest speakers. Figure 1 shows a typical set-up of the meetings. The project members are seated around the table except for the project leader or possible presenters, who are standing at the head of the table. In the front part of the meeting room there is a whiteboard where the Power Point slides of each presentation are projected.

Figure 1. Meeting arrangements

The purpose of collecting this data was to examine naturally occurring talk in meetings with a particular interest in how written documents and spoken interaction mutually shape each other and form intertextual networks in this kind of a strategic planning process. To this end, the first six months of the project – approximately 15 hours – were video-taped by using two cameras and all the written documents connected to the meetings were collected. The interactional data was then transcribed according to the conversation analytical notation system (see Hepburn and Bolden 2012) and analyzed from a multimodal conversation analytical perspective. Persons and places are presented anonymously in the transcription.

This article focuses on the third meeting of the project. Following the generic features of a strategic process (see Pälli, Vaara and Sorsa 2009), the project proceeded from charting the current state of the organization to visualizing the prospective future activities and eventually finalizing and implementing the plans developed during the process. Prior to the meeting in focus here, the participants have had two introductory meetings where they have discussed the aims of the project on a general level and agreed about various practicalities. The project leader has also divided the project group into three smaller work groups and given them the task for the following meeting. This task of describing the current state of the city's public services is delivered and explained by showing two PowerPoint slides to the project members – the slides are then saved on the intranet for the use of the work groups. According to the instructions appearing on the first slide, the work groups should first and foremost engage in describing the current state of the services (see figure 2). A second slide presents a more detailed description of the task and explicates its meaning in terms of its instrumental value – the task is shown to enable the planning of a new service model (see figure 3).

Välitehtävät xx.xx. xxxx projektikokoukseen:

1. Asiakaspalvelun toimintaympäristön nykytilan kuvaus. Tarkempaa tietoa seuraavalla sivulla.

Ensimmäinen välitehtävä on tärkein. Jos se on tehty jo aikaisemmin, miettikää seuraavaa tehtävää. Jos sekin on jo tiedossa....

2. Eteenpäin esiselvityksessä – Ideariihi **konkreettisista** tavoitteista käyttäen ensimmäisen tehtävän tietopakettia ja peilaten nykytilan kuvaukseen

3. Miettikää viisi (5) projektiimme mahdollisesti kohdistuvaa riskitekijää. Luokitelkaa ne seuraavasti: a) riski b) todennäköisyys ja kriittisyys asteikolla 1-5 ja c) varautuminen

Intermediate tasks for xx.xx. xxxx project meeting :

1. The description of the current state of the customer service operating environment. More detailed information on next page.

The first intermediate task is the most important one. If it has already been done earlier, think about the next task. If that is also clear...

2. Moving forward in preliminary stage – brainstorming about **concrete** targets utilizing the information package of the first task and relating it to the description of the current state

3. Think of five (5) potential risks concerning our project. Classify them in the following manner: a) a risk b) probability and criticality on a scale 1-5 and c) preparation

Figure 2. Slide 1: Instructions for the task.

Asiakaspalvelun toimintaympäristön nykytilan kuvaus

Asiakaspalvelukeskuksen toimintaympäristön kuvaus tulisi sisältää kokonaiskuvauksen siitä, millaisessa asiakaspalveluympäristössä kunnassa nykyisin toimitaan. Toimintaympäristön nykytilan kuvauksen yhtenä tärkeimpänä tavoitteena on muodostaa usein sirpaleisista asiakaspalvelutoiminnoista selkeä kunnan asiakaspalvelutoiminnan kokonaiskuva, jonka perusteella tavoitetilan mukaista toimintamallia voidaan alkaa suunnitella.

Henkilöt   Tilat   Tietojärjestelmät   Tukipalvelut

The description of the current state of the customer service operating environment

The description of the customer service operating environment should include an overall description of the current customer service environment in the municipality. One of the main objectives of the description of the current operating environment is to form a clear overall picture of the municipality's often fragmented customer service activities, so that the planning of the operating model based on the target state can begin.

Personnel   Premises   Data systems   Support facilities

Figure 3. Slide 2: The description of the task.

Work groups have met up in their own time to accomplish the task, and during the meeting analyzed in this paper they are expected to report on their group work results to other project members. This is also announced in the written agenda that is sent to the project members by e-mail before the meeting. The agenda notes that in the meeting the participants will, among other things, go through the intermediate task done by the work groups. Thus, the meeting has a specific institutional task, which has been set up earlier

in written form, providing the meeting participants a shared semiotic, artefactual resource. However, although the meeting agenda has this kind of known-in-advance status, it also has an emergent nature and needs to be fitted to the local, sequential interaction (cf. Svennevig 2012b). This, in turn, enables different interpretations of the task: Despite prior planning, the meeting content is not a stable entity, but recurrently developed throughout the encounter. As a matter of fact, we chose this meeting as the object of detailed analysis after an initial observation that there was noticeable discordance between the participants in terms of the meeting activities and the meaning given to the task at hand. This led us to examine specifically the way the written task assignment was recontextualized during the meeting. We sampled all the instances where the task was addressed and categorized them into four distinct turns or larger interactional units depending on how they transformed the meaning of the task – figure 4 demonstrates how these turns are sequentially related to one other.[3]

Project leader asks the work groups to report about their group work results

        Group three answers

        Group one answers

               Innovation manager comments on the answer of group one

        Group two answers

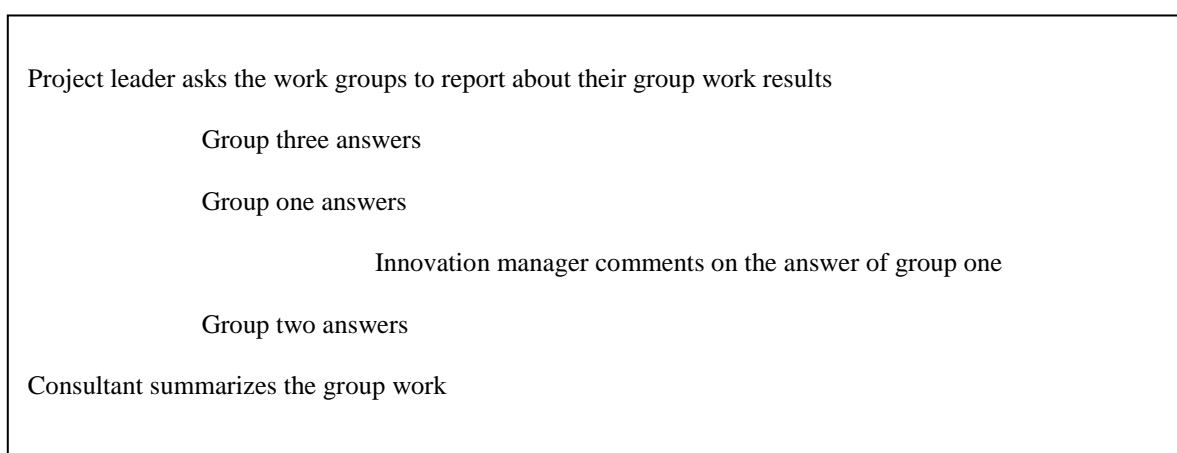Consultant summarizes the group work

Figure 4. The sequential organization of the studied turns.

Analyzing these turns, we noted that not only was the task conceptualized diversely in them, but the differing recontextualizations also contributed to constructing different situational and professional identities for the meeting participants and positioned them divergently towards the given task as well as each other.

    In the light of this observation, this article is an in-depth single case analysis of this particular meeting and the practices that are peculiar to this encounter. While the most usual approach in conversation analysis is to investigate a collection of similar cases, single case analysis is used to show how a longer stretch of talk-in-interaction displays orderliness (Schegloff 1987). In particular, as Mondada (2012) notes, single case analysis can be employed to illustrate how various kinds of changes take place in interaction, as it allows the analyst to observe the changes from multiple perspectives. In our case, we follow such changes, as we show how the task of the meeting is developed during the meeting by different participants. However, we also see the analyzed encounter as one occasion in a series of meetings that are inherently linked to

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[3] The figure only shows the relation of turns analyzed in this paper. The actual meeting interaction is more complex in terms of its turn-taking.

each other, and more specifically, as the outset to a wider discursive and social process (cf. Nielsen 2012).

4. Recontextualization of the institutional task of the meeting

In this section, we will present an analysis of how the participants of the meeting display and negotiate their understanding of the institutional task of the meeting. As already mentioned, we will focus on four turns or larger interactional units where the meaning of the task is noticeably transformed. In our analysis, we will first examine how the analyzed turns refer to the written task assignment by recycling the words and expressions appearing on two PowerPoint slides, and by doing so, build different conceptualizations for the meeting's task. Together with this, we will analyze the sequential position of the turns these references are part of, and show how the process of 'transfer-and-transformation' (Linell 1998b: 144-145) is generated by the social actions the turns are used to accomplish. This we will further connect to the display and construction of professional identities of the meeting participants.

4.1. *The task as a means to enhance group cohesion and employee engagement*

The institutional task of describing the current state of the customer service operating environment is initially mentioned by the project leader (=PL), who introduces this agenda item into the meeting interaction. Extract 1 demonstrates how the topical progression of the meeting is made visible with the use of a turn-initial particle *no* 'well' and temporal adverbs *seuraavaksi sitten* 'next then' (cf. Mikkola 2014; Svinhufvud 2011) that are combined with a gaze directed at printed papers in her hand – the latter can be seen to draw attention to the meeting agenda and its listed, pre-scheduled activities (cf. Svennevig 2012b). However, while referring to the written task assignment, the project leader quotes it only partially (cf. Mikkola 2014), repeating the word *välitehtävä* 'intermediate task' (line 2) presented in the title of the first slide.[4] This highlights the forthcoming activity specifically as a "task", and more specifically, as a task belonging to a broader scheme of work – the project leader uses an identify marker *tämmönen* 'this kind of' in order to bring these features of the referent into the spotlight (VISK § 1411). Furthermore, her turn also clearly suggests the agent of the task ('you', 'work groups') and explicates that it was conducted already in the past ('had'), creating an expectation that the following activity will involve disclosing the results of the group work undertaken prior to the meeting.

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[4] The word is also in a singular form, suggesting that there is only one task to attain.

Extract 1

    *LOOKS AT THE PAPERS IN HER HAND

                        *LOOKS AT THE PARTICIPANTS AROUND THE ROOM

01 PL: ***no ↑<u>seu</u>raavaksi sitten (1.1) ↑työ*ryhmillä teillä oli**
    well ↑n<u>e</u>xt then (1.1) ↑work groups you had

02   **tämmönen (0.4) välitehtävä? nykytilan (0.4) kuvausta**
    this kind of (0.4) intermediate task? the description (0.4) of the current state

    ((words omitted: PL says that all the information can also be found on the intranet))

03   **jolla (0.8) ↑pyrittäis vähän katsomaan ää (0.7) ↑minkälainen joukko**
    through which (0.8) ↑we'd try to have a little look at uhm (0.7) ↑what kind of bunch

04   **meillä on koolla. (.) mitä tämä joukko tekee t<u>y</u>ökseen**
    we have gathered over here. (.) what does this bunch do for a l<u>i</u>ving

05   **minkälaisissa työoloissa?**
    in what kind of working conditions?

    ((words omitted: PL elaborates the idea and importance of knowing each other))

          *MAKES A ROUNDED GESTURE TOWARDS THE PARTICIPANTS

06   **.hhh eli *t<u>i</u>etäisimme t<u>ä</u>män (0.6) ↑meidän projektiryhmämme joka**
    .hhh so we would kn<u>o</u>w th<u>is</u> (0.6) ↑our project group which

07   **nykyisin taitaa olla (0.5) kooltaan kolmekymmentä↑viisi henkilöä. (.)**
    I think is currently (0.5) thirty ↑ five people in size. (.)

08   **↑meidän kaikkien (0.7) t<u>y</u>öoloja (0.4) t<u>o</u>imipisteitä (.) ja muita.**
    ↑all of our (0.7) w<u>o</u>rking conditions (0.4) w<u>o</u>rk sites (.) and others.

    ((words omitted: PL says that she will write a memo afterwards and explains
    the order in which the work groups should perform their tasks))

      *TURNS THE GAZE TOWARDS THE MEMBERS OF GROUP THREE
09   **on*ko ↑<u>k</u>olmosella jotain sellaista yhteistä (0.9) t<u>ä</u>ssä**
    does number ↑thr<u>ee</u> have something common (0.9) to tell

10   **tilanteessa kerrot°tavaa°. (0.4) työryhmä numero k<u>o</u>lmo°sella°.**
    in th<u>is</u> situa°tion°. (0.4) work group number th°r<u>ee</u>°.

After announcing the new topical item, the project leader begins to elaborate the meaning of the task. Interestingly, in her turn the task is defined in terms of its instrumental value (*nykytilan (0.4) kuvausta jolla (0.8) ↑pyrittäis vähän katsomaan* 'current state (0.4) description through which (0.8) ↑we'd try to have a little look at', lines 2-3), and in this way, her task description resembles the one presented originally on the second PowerPoint slide. However, the project leader again quotes the title of the slide only partially (*nykytilan kuvausta* 'the description of the current state') (cf. Mikkola 2014), omitting the actual genitive appearing on the written text

(*asiakaspalvelun toimintaympäristön* 'of the customer service operating environment').
In this way, what the description of the current state concerns is left open. Furthermore,
although the project leader addresses the same core elements that were listed on the
bottom of the second slide ('personnel', 'premises'), she recontextualizes them by using
a lexicon, which personalizes the organizational discourse and shifts the interpretative
frame from the level of the municipality and management to members of the project
group and their everyday working conditions: *minkälainen joukko meillä on koolla. (.)*
mitä tämä joukko tekee työkseen minkälaisissa työoloissa 'what kind of bunch we have
gathered over here. (.) what does this bunch do for a living in what kind of working
conditions' (lines 3-5). This group orientation becomes even more explicit in lines 6-8,
where the project leader produces a paraphrase of her earlier talk with the use of a
particle *eli* 'so' and presents the task as an enabler of a heightened awareness of each
other's work. She also establishes a new level of intimacy in her turn by referring
explicitly to 'our project group', by mentioning the exact number of project members
and by directing a rounded gesture towards all of them. Therefore, while the turn of the
project leader initiates a new task-based activity in the meeting, it simultaneously
conceptualizes the task differently from what was originally presented on the
PowerPoint slides. Here, the task is no longer about charting the public services of the
municipality, but about sharing information concerning the work and working
conditions of the project members.

In reflecting on the function of this new conceptualization, it is important to
analyze the sequential position of the project leader's turn more closely. As already
noted, the listed meeting agenda had been issued beforehand, for example in the
meeting invitation. However, despite this foregoing briefing, the meeting agenda still
has to be made interactionally relevant in local turns of talk. Importantly, prior to extract
(1), there has been a presentation by two outside visitors, during which the project
members have formed one single audience. Thus, as the project leader begins a
transition to the new activity, she does not only have to introduce a new agenda-item,
but also to ensure that the project members are attuned to it and will engage with the
forthcoming activity. This way, the new conceptualization of the task appears in the
turn, where there are significant changes in the participation framework of the ongoing
activity (cf. Mondada 2012). The recontextualization practices can be seen to
accommodate these changes by handing the ownership of the task to the work groups
and by creating an expectation that it obliges each one of them.[5] In other words, the
written, pre-planned task is recontextualized in the turn of a project leader, so that it can
be fitted to the ongoing, sequential interaction. Here, it is also important to consider the
broader interactional environment, as mapping the current state of the organization is a
conventional part of a strategic planning process (see Pälli et al. 2009), and thus in this
case, a starting point for shared work in a series of meeting encounters. By
recontextualizing the task in the described manner the project leader contributes to
establishing group cohesion and maximum employee involvement as the project
proceeds, making visible her professional identity as a project leader, whose core
responsibility is to keep the project members motivated throughout the process.

Once the task has been introduced this way, the project leader gives the turn to
group three by naming the group collectively and by gazing at its individual members

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[5] There is also self-repair in her talk: She changes a third person form 'work groups' to a second-
person pronoun 'you'. This creates even stronger expectation of participant involvement.

(lines 9-10), thus making an answer a conditionally relevant response (see Schegloff 2007). The way she formulates the request continues to build up to the orientation established earlier in the turn. Thus, the project leader is specifically asking group three to voice some 'common' thoughts. This implies that the meaning of the task is related to the value it can bring to the project group as a whole.

4.2. *The task as a duty to provide information about one's own work*

The previous section showed how the turn of the project leader forms a discernible intertextual link to the task description presented on the PowerPoint slide while recontextualizing it in order to initiate a new activity in the meeting. However, as the task-based activity begins to unfold in the interaction, the new conceptualizations of the task are not only intertextually connected to the written task assignment, but also intratextually related to the earlier conversation and the conceptualizations made by the previous speakers (cf. Honkanen and Nissi 2014). This double-orientation can be seen in the two-part structure of the answers that the work groups produce. Thus, at first, there is a turn-initial narrative, which reports how the members of the work group assembled to accomplish the given task. By offering such a narrative the work groups display an orientation towards the prior turn of the project leader (*teillä oli tämmönen välitehtävä* 'you had this kind of preliminary task'), conceptualizing the task as their work-related duty that is understood to have taken place in the past and that the work groups are accountable for. Through the narrative the groups display their own perception of their accomplishment and create an interpretative frame for the rest of the turn. Secondly, there is the actual answer, in which the work groups engage in disclosing their group work results and thus describe the current state of the customer service environment. In this latter part of the answer, they also refer to the slides, as can be seen from the following extract (2). In it, the secretary of group three (Henna) provides an answer to the prior request of the project leader.

Extract 2

Work group 3
01 Henna: **joo >no tota< (1.0) (-) tota (0.5) joo (.) me (.) istahettiin tässä (0.3) pari**
           yes >well uhm< (1.0) (-) well (0.5) yes (.) we (.) had a quick sit down (0.3) a

02   **päivää sitte alas ja (0.7) todettii että (0.5) meiän palvelut eroaa**
           couple of days ago and (0.7) noted that (0.5) our services differ

03   **toisistaan niin paljo että (0.4) meil on nyt rajallinen aika et me**
           from each other so much that (0.4) we only have a limited amount of time now that

04   **ei lähetä (0.6) kertomaa tämän hetkistä tilannetta.**
           we won't be (0.6) explaining the existing situation.

           ((turn continues: Henna goes on to list some fears that were raised in the meeting concerning the ongoing project and planned organizational change))

In her turn-initial narrative, Henna uses the verb *istahtaa* 'sit down' (line 1). In Finnish, this verb comprises a suffix *-Ahta*, which adds a meaning of hurried activity to the root word and could be translated as 'having a quick sit down'. This is combined with an unspecific time definition *pari päivää sitte* 'a couple of days ago' (lines 1-2), by which the speaker displays uncertainty in remembering the exact time of the meeting (cf. Goodwin 1987) and thus reinforces the rushed and sporadic nature of the described encounter.

Following this introductory preface, Henna moves on to the second part of the answer. However, instead of beginning to describe the current state of customer services, she rejects the given task explicitly (lines 3-4). In the turn, the rejection is formulated as a collective decision that already took place in the group meeting (*todettii että* 'we noted that', line 2) and was in fact the main outcome of the gathering after the group members discovered the impending time limits and the heterogeneous consistency of the work group (see lines 2-3). By embedding the rejection in the narrative the speaker is able to warrant the missing description as the story shifts the blame from the group to external circumstances, leading to the conceptualization of the task not only as a duty, but more specifically, as a duty too difficult to carry out. Interestingly, here the speaker also refers to the written task assignment. Thus, she uses an expression *tämän hetkinen tilanne* 'the existing situation'[6], which recontextualizes the expression *nykytila* 'the current state' used on both slides[7] and describes the configuration of the customer services not as an abstract mode of being, but as specific and tangible conditions situated in time and in a place. The latter can be seen as more transient and fleeting, and therefore, difficult or unimportant to capture, thus backing up the new conceptualization of the task as an overly difficult or perhaps even irrelevant work-related duty. In this way, the speaker is also using the recontextualizing practices as a means for stance-taking.

Sequentially, as an answer to the project leader's initiative, Henna's turn is ambivalent. On the one hand, she produces an answer that meets the requirements expressed in the prior turn of the project leader in that she does tell the meeting participants the central results of the meeting of the work group. Thus, in a general sense, she aligns with the situated, ongoing activity. On the other hand, however, she disaffiliates (see Stivers 2008) with the actual task, and more broadly, with the whole ongoing project.[8]

After group three has finished, the secretary of group one (Sanna) produces their answer. As the following extract 3 shows, there is a similar turn-initial narrative in the beginning of her turn.[9] However, here it is used to display a different kind of orientation towards the task.

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[6] A literal translation would be 'this moment's situation'.
[7] The project leader also uses this expression in her prior turn.
[8] This interpretation is also supported by the fact that group three rushes straight to the last part of the task, namely, listing the risks: they lists various 'fears' concerning the ongoing project, but do not present solutions for them.
[9] Group three answers first, then group one and finally group two – the order is decided and verbalized by the project leader. The secretary of group two (Vera) constructs their answer in a similar manner as a combination of a turn-initial narrative and the actual answer.

Extract 3

Work group 1

01 Sanna: **↑joo. (0.5) kiitos (1.0) hyvistä pohdinnoista (1.3) ry- ryhmä kolmoselle**
↑yes. (0.5) thank you (1.0) for the good thoughts (1.3) to grou- group three

*OPENS UP A POWERPOINT PRESENTATION

02 **(1.2) me omassa tota *(9.0) ↑me työryhmä ykkösessä (0.8) <tuota>**
(1.2) we in our own (9.0) ↑we in group one (0.8) <uhm>

03 **olimme koolla tällä viikolla ↑maanantaina.**
gathered together this week on ↑monday.

((words omitted: Sanna mentions that whilst attending to a task they also encountered problems due to the heterogeneous work group))

04 **<mutta tuota> (1.0) ↑sitte. (1.0) ansiokkaasti kirsi oli tehny (1.0)**
<but uhm> (1.0) ↑then. (1.0) kirsi had praiseworthily done (1.0)

05 **kaupungin seudun matkailun (0.3) osalta tämmösen (1.3) tämmöstä**
this (1.3) this kind of ↑charting task related to (0.3) the city region's tourism

06 **↑kartotustehtävää ja (.) anto sillä tavalla meille muille**
and (.) in this way she also gave us others a few hints about

07 **vähän vinkkiä siitä ↑rakenteesta miten me muutki sitte**
the ↑structure we could also use as we others then

08 **lähdettiin tätä (0.6) asiaa ↑tekemää**
began to (0.6) ↑do this thing

((words omitted: Sanna explains that all the information on the PowerPoint slides will be written down in a memo afterwards))

09 **↑oikeestaan kirsi (.) me sovittiin sillä tavalla**
↑actually kirsi (.) we in a way agreed

10 **$kollektiivi[n(h)en hehe kollektiivisesti että .hhh mä voin olla vähä**
$collecti(h)ve hehe collectively that .hhh I can kind of act

11 Kirsi: [he he

12 Sanna: **esilukij[ana tässä hommassa mutta$ (0.3) mutta tota (.)**
as a loud reader in this job but$ (0.3) but uhm (.)

*NODS
13 Kirsi: [***joo.**
yes.

14 Sanna: **↑haluaksä kirsi sanoa tähän (1.0) tähän jotkut (0.5) terveiset**
↑would you kirsi want to say here (1.0) here some (0.5)greetings

15 Sanna:　**nyt tässä vaiheessa kun m<u>uut</u> näkevät nämä (0.4)**
　　　　　now at this point when <u>o</u>thers see this (0.4)

16　　　　**näm[ä tiedot tässä?**
　　　　this information here?

　　　　　　　*NODS
17 Kirsi:　　　[*(-)

18 Kirsi:　**siinä on ↑varma- taikka <u>on</u>: siinähän me ↑toimitaan**
　　　　there is ↑sure- or <u>is</u>: we ↑operate there in that

19　　　　**k<u>au</u>niissa talossa (1.1) öö siinä ala↑kerrassa (0.3) ja niin että**
　　　　beautiful house (1.1) uhm there down↑stairs (0.3) and so that

20　　　　**meillä <u>on</u> se <n<u>eu</u>vontaosio> siinä ikään kuin ku as-**
　　　　we h<u>a</u>ve the <s<u>e</u>rvice desk> kind of when one ste-

21　　　　**<u>a</u>stutaan keskuskatu ↑kuutosesta sisälle ja**
　　　　st<u>e</u>ps inside from the high street number ↑six and

　　　　((turn continues))

　　　　This time the speaker uses a very specific time definition *tällä viikolla ↑ma<u>a</u>nantaina* 'this week on ↑M<u>o</u>nday' in her turn-initial narrative (line 3). This is combined with an expression *olimme koolla* 'gather together', which carries a connotation of a deliberate activity – together these two can be taken to display dedication to the given task. As the turn continues, the speaker mentions that their group also encountered problems due to the group members representing different service sectors, but then explains how these problems could be overcome (lines 4-8). Here, the task is referred to with the word *asia* 'thing' (line 8). Importantly, the speaker explicates that this 'thing' is something that is 'done' (line 8), continuing to conceptualize the task as a set of actions carried out by the work group. Moreover, the speaker treats the task as a representative of a broader genre of 'charting tasks' (cf. Lehtinen and Pälli 2011), invoking a conventional 'structure' (line 7) related to this linguistic activity and explaining the achievement of the group through discovering this inherent structure. In this way, the task is conceptualized more specifically as a difficult, yet achievable duty.

　　　　Once the turn-initial narrative is completed and the actual answer begins, the turn is constructed differently. Here, the secretary ceases to speak on behalf of the group and gives the turn to another group member, whose service sector the following answer describes (lines 9-16). This is because although the secretary has been in the group meeting and can also see the PowerPoint slides recapitulating the gathering, she does not have primary epistemic access to the discussed matter. The other group member (Kirsi) has, for her part, both a right and a responsibility to know about her work and because of this she is not only interactionally, but also morally obliged to take the offered turn.[10] In her turn, there is no explicit reference to the written assignment.

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[10] However, by allocating the turn to another speaker the secretary seems to diverge slightly from the original plan concerning the group work presentation and is thus producing a potentially delicate request – she tries to downplay this with accompanying laughter (line 10) (cf. e.g. Kangasharju and Nikko

However, the turn is constructed so that the speaker can be seen to cover the themes presented on the bottom of the second slide – as can be seen from the above extract, her turn begins with a description of the building where the customer services are provided (lines 18-21) ('premises' on the slide). It can also be seen how she is 'doing' the required describing in her turn. Thus, the description of the building is accomplished by adopting an eye-level perspective and offering a virtual tour around the speaker's customer service environment: *meillä on se <neuvontaosio> siinä ikään kuin ku as-astutaan keskuskatu ↑kuutosesta sisälle ja* 'we have the <service desk> kind of when one ste- steps inside from the high street number ↑six and' (lines 20-21).[11]

The sequential position of group one's contribution is consequential in two ways. First of all, like group three's contribution, it is an answer to the project leader's initiative. Secondly, however, as it is a second answer, it will also be interpreted in relation to the first one, group three's answer. This is especially interesting in that group one's answer clearly displays a better achievement of the task than group three's answer. In her turn, Sanna explicitly refers to the first answer through thanking group three in the beginning of her turn (lines 1-2). However, she avoids a direct comparison between the groups and shows that the greater performance of their group is not because of any innate abilities of their group members; rather, it is a result of a 'praiseworthy' model set by Kirsi (lines 4-8). In this way, it can be seen how the recontextualization practices are used in order to navigate the complex expectations and affiliations connected to the ongoing activity. By employing them the secretary of group one is able to acknowledge the stance put forward by the previous group and affiliate with it, *while* affiliating diversely with the task itself.

To conclude, despite the differences related to the actualization of the given task and the stance adopted towards it, all the work groups recontextualize the written task similarly as a work-related duty given to them as employees of the city organization and as a duty that they are accountable for. It is this that establishes their professional identity as city employees. It also brings about an element of being assessed and evaluated, and the project members orient to this in their two-piece answers, in which they make the realization of the given task transparent and therefore assessable before actually accomplishing the task.

4.3. *The task as an indication of the understanding concerning the new service model*

The previous sections presented two distinctive conceptualizations of the institutional task of the meeting, both of which were situated in the sequential flow of the encounter. The third conceptualization of the task is constructed as a part of the turn, in which the innovation manager of the city (=IM) comments on the answer of group one after the project leader opens the floor for questions. As seen in extract 4 below, the turn of the

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2009). This unexpected request may also be prompted by the narrative, in which the secretary mentions how this particular group member – Kirsi – was able to help the others in completing the given task. Kirsi also orients to her own turn as somehow problematic – there is for example a cut-off and a self-repair in the beginning of the turn (line 18).

[11] Later on, the turn is allocated to another group member altogether four times. During these turns different group members produce a detailed description of their own customer service environment, so that the answer of group one is a compilation of these individual reports.

innovation manager consists of two main components. First, the speaker makes his turn interactionally relevant by connecting it to the prior answer (lines 3-6). Here, he refers to the detailed pieces of information that group one has provided – these have included an estimation of the number of telephone calls the customer service call-center of the city usually receives. Importantly, the speaker not only iterates this information, but also re-organizes the given figures so that he can construct various time-scales and convey an image of very fast-paced customer service. Secondly, this image is then contrasted with another perspective (lines 7-14). The forthcoming contradiction is made visible with a turn-initial particle *mutta* 'but' (Sorjonen 1989), after which the speaker notes that his view advocates 'integrity' (lines 7-8) and thus implies that this is something that has been missing from the previous contributions.

Extract 4

01 PL: **kiitos sanna ja (0.8) ryhmä ykkönen (.) oisko (0.9)**
          thank you sanna and (0.8) group one (.) would (0.9) there be

02   **sannalta tai ryhmältä kysyt°tävää°.**
          questions to sanna or the group.

          ((words omitted: another participant is given a turn unrelated to this topic, as she has to leave the meeting earlier))

03 IM: **ihan (0.3) hhh näit keskiarvojuttuja tossa (0.7) kuulin**
          just (0.3) hhh a few things about the average figures (0.7) I was just hearing

04   **noita puhelin (.) tietoja niin tota: (1.2) jos laskin oikein**
          that information (.) about the telephones so: (1.2) if I counted right

05   **(0.5) niin se merkitsi kymmenentuhatta (0.7) puheluu**
          (0.5) it meant ten thousand (0.7) telephone calls

06   **viikossa niin noin neljää (ja) puolta puhelua minuutissa (1.0) <tahtia>.**
          a week so about four (and) half calls a minute (1.0) <kind of speed>.

          ((words omitted: the speaker elaborates the prior figures))

07   **mut mää (0.5) mää itte oon koko ajan mie- miettiny tän**
          but I (0.5) I myself have all the time tho- thought about this

08   **kokonaisuuden kannalta sitä et me puhu- puhutaan**
          in terms of integrity that we ta- talk about

09   **niinku uudesta asiakaspalvelu<mallista> (0.7) joka on enemmän**
          like the new customer service <model>(0.7) which is more of a

          *PUTS A HAND ON HIS HEART
10   ***siellä ↑sydämestä tuleva juttu (0.4) kun (.) että se on (0.4)**
          thing coming from the ↑heart (0.4) than (.) that it is (0.4)

          *MAKES A SQUARE WITH HIS HANDS

                                                          *MOVES HIS HANDS BACK AND FORTH
11   *joku (0.6) betoninen rakennus jossa (0.7) *hoidetaan asiakkaita
            some (0.6) concrete building where (0.7) customers are served

12   niinku hihnalla tuosta eteenpäin. (0.5) (niin) se kun pidetään
            like on a factory line just forward. (0.5) (so) if one keeps that

                                                          *MAKES A CIRCLE WITH HIS HANDS
13   mielessä (0.3) niin me (0.4) aletaan niinku   *lähestyä sitä
            in mind (0.3) then we will (0.4) start to approach the

14   kokonaisuutta.
            centre of it.

The turn of the innovation manager does not make clear *what* it is that is being thought about in terms of 'integrity'. The pronoun *tän* 'this' (line 7) the speaker uses, could be understood to refer to the institutional task of the meeting, but also to the more overarching project. The latter interpretation is in fact supported by the expression *koko ajan* 'all the time' (line 7), which implies that the speaker is referring to a longer stretch of time. Apart from the pronoun, there are no other explicit references to the task – unlike the previous speakers who noticeably recontextualized the words and expressions presented on the slides, the innovation manager does not seem to refer to the written assignment. Rather, he refers to prior talk about a 'new customer service model', specifically stressing the word *malli* 'model' by different prosodic means. Developing such a model has been constructed in various preceding documents as the main goal of the project. This stress is, in a more general sense, also compatible with the way this task has been described in the second slide (figure 3), in which the description of the current state is presented as a basis for planning 'the operating model'. Thus, in his turn, the innovation manager is able to remind others about the agreed aims and the value basis of the project, and reaffirm their relevance for the task at hand.

       However, in this new sequential context these are not neutral remarks, but as a response to the answer of group one, they suggest that the orientation of other participants is somehow dislocated. This is elaborated in the continuation of the turn, where the speaker constructs two possible conceptualizations of the 'model': The one that understands it as an attitudinal change (lines 9-10) and the one that sees it as a quick and effective transaction (lines 10-12). These conceptualizations are not introduced as equal to one another, but the speaker clearly mentions that the new 'model' is more like the first one (line 9). The superiority of the first conceptualization is also accomplished by creating a stereotypically bleak image of effective, but impersonal customer service activity – the iconic gestures of square buildings and fast-moving production lines also contribute to composing the unfavorable image. Moreover, the speaker completes his turn by adding a caution to keep the perspective he has just offered in mind (lines 12-14).

       Even though the focus of the innovation manager is on the overall project, his turn is clearly relevant for how the task at hand is and should be conceptualized. In his talk, these two things are intertwined. Therefore, in his turn, the innovation manager treats the preceding conversation and the way the institutional task of the meeting has been handled – as seen in the focus on work-related details and the way they allegedly

quantify effectiveness – as an implication of the way the whole customer service project is conceptualized. At the same time, he shows that the conceptualization made is not compatible with the original aims of the project, which were about developing a new model for the high-quality future customer service. By doing so, his turn checks and corrects the shared understanding of the participants for the sake of successful actualization of the project.

The turn also makes visible the professional identity of the speaker. The innovation manager does not take part in the meetings as a member of any of the work groups. Instead, his role in the project can be seen as one overseeing the actualization of the new service model, which has been initially developed and promoted by the innovation services of the city.

4.4. *The task as an instrument to measure work performance and to plan a next stage*

The task-based activity of describing the current state of the customer service is finally brought to a closure by a consultant, who is given a turn once all the groups have presented their group work results. As shown in extract 5, after introducing himself and making his professional background known (lines 5-6), the consultant moves on to the actual meeting agenda. This transition is indicated by the use of a turn initial particle *elikä* 'so' (cf. VISK § 1031): *elikä ↑nykytilan läpikäynnin merkitykses* 'so the meaning of going through the ↑current state' (line 7). By employing the word *nykytila* 'current state' used both on the slides and in the turn of the project leader, the speaker connects his own turn explicitly to the preceding activity and the pre-planned agenda of the meeting. However, in his turn he also adds an expression *läpikäynnin merkitykses* 'the meaning of going through', which shifts the focus from doing the task to reflecting how it has been undertaken. This new orientation is again generated by the sequential position of the turn, and more specifically, its location in the overall structure of the task-based activity – the consultant is given a place to conclude the group work, providing him with a right to recap the previous turns and to define their main points (cf. Drew 1992).

Extract 5

01 PL: **hieno esitys venla. (1.0) kiitoksia ja ((sanoja poistettu)) ajattelin**
       wonderful presentation venla. (1.0) thank you and ((words omitted)) I thought

02   **että $iiro salmi pääsee antamaan teille koti↑läksyä$ jonka**
       that $iiro salmi can give you home ↑work$ that

03   **hän on (.)   miettinyt eli olkaapa ↑tarkkoina nyt tulee**
       he has (.) thought about so pay ↑attention now there are

04   **hehe .hh (0.3) hyviä ohjeita.**
       hehe .hh (0.3) good advice coming up.

       ((words omitted: PL asks the project members to save any comments concerning
       Venla's presentation for later))

05 C: **joo (.) hyvää iltapäivää kaikille (0.3) oon iiro salmi**
      yes (.) good afternoon everybody (0.3) I am iiro salmi

06   **(0.4) nieminen ja ↑kumppaneilta.**
      (0.4) from nieminen and ↑partners.

      ((words omitted: C tells about his professional background))

07   **>elikä ↑nykytilan läpikäynnin merkitykses< tos tuli**
      >so the meaning of going through the ↑current state < there were

08   **vähän kahta eri (0.7) eri ↑ilmaa siitä nykytilan**
      kind of two different (0.7) different ↑views about going through

                                        *WAVES BETWEEN HIMSELF AND PL
09   **läpikäynnistä. (0.3) se mitä ollaan *keskenään puhuttu (0.5)**
      the current stage. (0.3)what we have talked between ourselves (0.5)

10   **ni on se että et varmaan täs on haasteena se että (0.6) et**
      is that here the challenge probably is that (0.6) that

11   **(0.5) <teillä on niinkun porukat menossa**
      (0.5) <you have like people going at

      *MOVES HANDS AT DIFFERENT RATES
12   ***↑vähän eri vaiheissa>. (0.8) ja (.) varmaan sitä kannattaa**
      ↑slightly different stages>. (0.8) and (.) it would probably be a good idea

13   **vähän miettiä että (0.5) et ruvetaan tekemään niitä töitä**
      to think that (0.5) that as we work we will

              *MOVES HANDS AT DIFFERENT RATES
14   **sillä lailla että *↑vähän eriytetään niitä että (.) ne jotka on**
      kind of differentiate the tasks a ↑bit so that (.)those who are

              **MOVES HIS BODY RIGHT
15   **pitemmällä tekee *↑vähän eri asioita (.) ne jotka on**
      further will do ↑slightly different things (.) those who are

      **MOVES HIS BODY LEFT
16   ***vähän eri kohassa tekee vähän eri asioita**
      at a slightly different place will do slightly different things

        In his turn, the consultant summarizes the previous activity by mentioning that
there have been two different orientations towards the task: *tos tuli vähän kahta eri (0.7)
eri ↑ilmaa siitä nykytilan läpikäynnistä* 'there were kind of two different (0.7) different
↑views about going through the current stage' (lines 7-9). Thus, similar to the
innovation manager, the consultant assesses the way the work groups have dealt with
the task. However, his assessment does not contemplate the realization of the task in
terms of the content of the answers, but in terms of the stance the work groups have
displayed towards having to engage in the task of describing the current state. More

specifically, the focus of the consultant is explicitly on the way the project members may or may not affiliate with the task, and as the previous extracts 2 and 3 demonstrated, this is also the feature that sets the work groups apart. At this point, the consultant does not treat the differences between the groups as a problem. However, in the next component of his turn he orients to these disparities as potentially precarious by referring to the situation as a 'challenge' and by offering an analysis of the reasons behind the variation (lines 10-12). Although the discrepancies between the groups and their achievements have already been detectable during the meeting, they are now made prominent by asserting that the project members have proceeded at different rates. Apart from highlighting the differences between the work groups, the turn of the consultant also establishes the project as a developmental process, where the participants are expected to move from one step to another. In this sequential environment, the institutional task of the meeting thus becomes conceptualized as an instrument to measure project members' work performance, and consequently, the way the project is advancing. Thereupon, in the final component of his turn, the consultant introduces a more suitable way to proceed with the project, namely, to assign the subsequent tasks differently between the more and less advanced groups (lines 13-16). This further conceptualizes the task as an instrument to plan a next stage in the ongoing project.

The consultant's turn is fundamentally contingent on its sequential position as it functions as an explicit evaluation of the work described in previous turns. It should be noted, though, that the consultant does not actually mention which one of the groups is 'further'. In fact, by conceptualizing the task this way, the speaker is able to summarize the previous activity in a discreet way. Thus, instead of simply noting that some groups have produced a better answer, he explains that the project members are at different points on their developmental journey.

Through his turn, the consultant also constructs his role in the project as the one who looks at the project and the different tasks that are conducted within it from the outside. Moreover, he teams with the project leader both verbally and multimodally (cf. Djordjilovic 2012), by using the pronoun *me* 'we' and by waving his hand back and forth between them (line 9). In this way, he further builds himself an identity as someone who assists in leading the project. This role of the consultant is also implicated in the project leader's turn, in which she allocates the concluding turn to the consultant and presents the speaker specifically as someone who gives 'advice' (line 4).[12]

5. Discussion

In this article, we have presented a case of recontextualization in an organizational meeting. In order to study this, we connected the concept of recontextualization to the conversation analytical method and to the notion of intersubjectivity. By doing so, we investigated how the participants, in their sequentially occasioned turns of talk, display and negotiate their understanding of what they are doing and what should be

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[12]However, advice giving is a potentially sensitive action (see e.g. Heritage and Sefi 1992) which can be seen in the way the project leader refers to the upcoming new task in a jocular manner. Thus, the word *kotiläksy* 'homework' (line 2) belongs to the discourse of school. Haakanen and Sorjonen (2011) have studied interdiscursive joking at kiosk encounters and shown how speakers can downplay potentially delicate requests by using a lexicon associated with some other social encounter.

accomplished in the meeting. Our analysis concentrated on how different meeting participants orient to the main task of the meeting. The task in question has been expressed in writing beforehand. The study raises various implications for the study of recontextualizing practices in meetings, and in this discussion, we will focus on three specific, yet interrelated, issues: Institutional tasks, sequentiality and professional identities.

As discussed before, previous studies have treated the interactional achievement of managing the agenda as a primordial feature of all meeting interaction. It has also been shown that the agenda is often based on a written document, and this written agenda can be a significant resource for the actual topical progression in the meeting (see Svennevig 2012b). Our contribution, however, is to show how the meeting agenda and the institutional tasks it lays out can be diversely perceived by different participants and consequently re-negotiated in and through interaction. As our analysis illustrated, despite the public and artefactual nature of the meeting's institutional task, different meeting participants do not necessarily display a shared orientation toward it. Instead, they produce different readings of the original written text as they make the pre-planned task interactionally relevant during the course of the meeting. As a result, the institutional task of the meeting is accomplished step by step while its meaning is transformed through the participants' contributions to the meeting interaction and through the development of the task-based activity.

Secondly, our study highlights the importance of sequential structure in investigating recontextualizing practices. Accordingly, our analysis showed in detail how the different conceptualizations of the institutional task are generated by their sequential position in meeting interaction. The task-based activity begins as the project leader introduces a new agenda-item into the conversation. In this turn, she conceptualizes the task as a means to enhance group cohesion and employee engagement. This recontexualization can be seen as motivational, thus supporting the initiation of a new activity. As this conceptualization is produced as a part of a request addressed to the work groups, it also projects an answer from them. The work groups, for their part, orient to these sequential implications that the prior turn has established, and conceptualize the task in their responses as a duty to provide information about their own work. The third conceptualization of the task arises after this, as the innovation manager utilizes the place reserved for questions and comments concerning the answer of group one and treats the evolvement of the preceding task-based activity as an indication of how the overarching project is conceptualized. In his turn, he also checks and corrects this understanding, reminding other participants about the aims of the project. Finally, the consultant is given a place to conclude the meeting, providing him with an opportunity to summarize the answers of the work groups and to compare them with each other. This specific location in the overall structure of the task-based activity results in the conceptualization of the task as an instrument to measure project members' work performance and to plan the next stage in the project.

Therefore, all the conceptualizations of the written, pre-planned task emerge in and through the chain of social actions that, in turn, form this particular encounter and its recognizable sequential structure. It is particularly noteworthy that these conceptualizations are related to the original written assignment in different ways. As the analysis showed, the first recontextualization of the written task appearing in the turn of the project leader forms an intertextual link to the text on the slide. However, the

following conceptualizations of the task are both intertextually connected to the written task assignment and intratextually related to the earlier conversation, so that they do not only recontextualize the written task, but also the prior conceptualizations of it constructed during the meeting. Therefore, it can be said that the recontextualization practices also contribute to marking alignment and affiliation towards the given task and the way it has been recontextualized, positioning the participants diversely towards this specific task, the ongoing project and each other.

Finally, analyzing recontextualizing practices offers a new perspective on the construction of professional identities in meetings. It makes it possible to compare how different participants of the meeting display an orientation to the same issue. In our article, we analyzed recontextualizations by four participants: a project leader, an innovation manager, a consultant and employee work groups. They are illustrated in figure 5.

When we compare their orientations towards the task, we can say that the first three integrate the given institutional task into the larger customer service model project. This is particularly clear in the turn of the innovation manager, but the project leader and the consultant similarly treat the meeting's task as a part of a broader process – relating to the written task description on slide two, they all orient to it as an instrumental enabler of a wider longitudinal process. However, they differ with regard to how they understand the expected outcome of the task, focusing on different aspects of the process: The project manager on the creation of a collectivity, the innovation manager on the development of a new customer service concept, and the consultant on the step-by-step realization of the planned project. Despite these differences there is something common to all of these participants: They want something out of the fourth party, the employee work groups. In other words, they all treat the institutional task of the meeting in terms of organizational change, which is, in turn, related to a change that should take place in the city employees. Therefore, for the successful actualization of the project, the employee groups are expected to enhance their shared knowledge about each other, to develop a new kind of attitude towards customer service and to proceed steadily in the project and in their developmental journey. In this light, the employee work groups differ from other participants in a significant way, as they take part in the meeting as subjects who should accomplish the given task and who are thus assessed and evaluated with regard to their accomplishment. In accordance with this, they themselves do not treat the given task as part of the wider project, but rather orient to it as a separate work task.

Project leader
Group orientation >
The meaning of the task in terms of
group cohesion

Innovation manager
Societal orientation >
The meaning of the task in terms of
future customer service

Consultant
Project orientation >
The meaning of the task in terms of
developmental process

Orientation to the task
as a part of a larger process

Change in the city employees
as a prerequisite for the
completion of the process

Employee work groups
Work task orientation > The
meaning of the task in terms of
job responsibilities

Orientation to the task as a
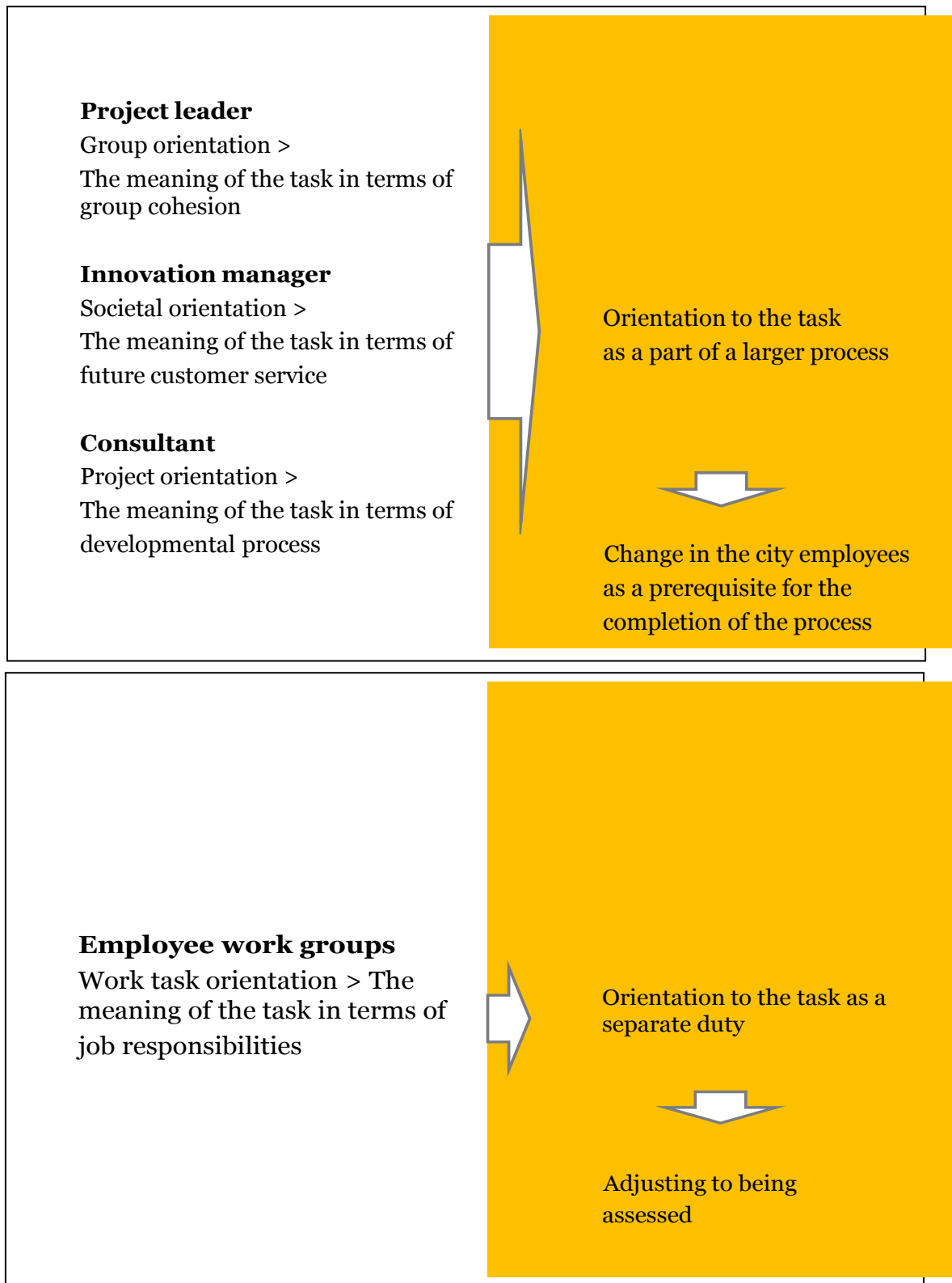separate duty

Adjusting to being
assessed

Figure 5. Different orientations of the participants

In conclusion, we would like to draw attention to the connection between recontextualization and wider organizational practices. As mentioned earlier, the meeting analyzed in this article is a starting point of a longitudinal process of strategic planning. We could also see that the different conceptualizations display an orientation to the meaning of the task as part of that process. In that sense, the negotiation of the meaning of the task described in this article can also be seen as potentially instructive as to how the larger project and the organizational change it promotes should be understood. In a more general sense, in meetings that have to do with strategic planning – including goals such as defining the key areas of the organization and outlining its future directions – the participants' socialization into their practices may be varied. These kinds of activities used to be the territory of management personnel, but recently it has been seen as important to involve also staff members in planning activities (Pälli et al. 2009). However, as our analysis has shown, despite the physical opportunity to take part in such meetings, the attendants may still have rather different ways to engage themselves in the meeting activities. This is not to say that these positions would not change over time. Thus, the roles and identities of the participants may be reconstructed during projects like the one investigated in this article, as members of projects are socialized into 'strategic' language use and practices of shared planning, inventing and generating ideas. Our study points toward the importance of investigating the patterns of participation and possible changes that occur in them in the course of organizational processes.

Aknowledgements

Appendix. Transcription symbols

.	Falling intonation
?	Rising intonation
↓	Fall in pitch
↑	Rise in pitch
w<u>o</u>rd	Emphasis
>word<	Faster pace than surrounding talk
<word>	Slower pace than surrounding talk
WORD	Loud talk

°word°	Quiet talk
wo:rd	Lengthening of the sound
wo-	Word cut off
#word#	Creaky voice
@word@	Change in sound quality
$word$	Smile voice
hehe	Laughter
.hhh	Inbreath
hhh	Outbreath
hh(h)h	Outbreath produced through laugh
[	Beginning of overlapping talk
*	Beginning of overlapping nonverbal action
=	No pause between two adjacent utterances
(0.5)	Pause in seconds
(.)	Micro pause (less than 0.2 seconds)
(word)	Item in doubt
(-)	Talk not heard by transcriber
((word))	Transcriber's remarks
TURNS HIS HEAD	Nonverbal action

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