"How was your day?"

Development of Interactional Competence located in Today Narrative sequences

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Based on longitudinal conversation data between a father and child collected over the period of eighteen months, this study examines "today narrative" where the father asks the child "how was your day" when they meet after being apart during the day. The routine provides a recurrent sequential structure, which is both located within and itself occasions further talk. Examining the talk between this father and child longitudinally reveals how the initial sequential structure, where the child lists activities in short run-on sentences, goes through transformation and elaboration. Indices for development include the emergence of three-part structure in the child's list construction, more details incorporated in the list, story prefaces, and the emergence of assessment response (or personal voice). The overall sequential organization of the routine moves from heavy reliance on the father's questions to more volunteered talk by the child. This paper considers the generalizability of longitudinal conversation analytic data.

Keywords: longitudinal CA, Interactional Competence, today narrative, bilingual acquisition, list construction, parent-child interaction, assessment response, story prefaces

1. Introduction

Children learn how to talk by participating in social interaction with their parent and other members of the society. These "'parent'-'child' interactions" are regularly mediated by routinized activities such as bedtime story reading (Tolmie and Rouncefield 2013), dinner time conversations (Blum-Kulka 1997; Keel 2016), playing with toys, getting dressed, washing hands before meals, etc. By participating in these activities with their parent or some other members of the family, children learn language as well as interactional procedures, i.e. how to participate in

social interaction. One learning mechanism that operates here is the commonplace and recurrent activity and observability of the structures of routine actions. In this sense, one can say that routinized activities provide instructional features. By examining one routinized sequence in "'parent'-'child' interaction" over time, what we aim to do in this paper is to document the development of Interactional Competence of one child, which we hope will contribute to our understanding of the complex relationship between social interaction and children's development.

In topicalizing the conversations, as "'parent'-'child' interaction", we are following a procedure outlined by Jefferson (2004), which allow the data to set identities rather than impose them onto the analysis.[1] Within transcripts of data, for instance, the father is designated 'D' for Dad because that is his son's term of reference.

2.   Interactional Competence

While Dell Hymes' (1972) influential proposal of communicative competence in the backdrop of Chomsky's notion of linguistic competence made a significant shift in our understanding of language and language learning by enabling a holistic and context-sensitive understanding of language and language learning, and had a far-reaching consequences in pedagogical practice (Richards and Rodgers 2001), language assessment (Bachman 1990), and research interest (Kasper and Dahl 1991), the framework gradually started to be criticized for its monologic and individualistic nature in its conceptualization of competence. One of the criticisms was that it still carried the traditional SLA (Second Language Acquisition) thinking paradigm by conceptualizing it as something "'enclosed' in the individual's mind/brain" (Pekarek Doehler 2019,30). The early conceptualization of Interactional Competence (henceforth IC) was most prominent in the work of Joan Kelly Hall (1993, 1999) and Richard Young (2008). As the conceptualization of IC was conducted in this background, it naturally embodied an attempt to address this issue by incorporating dynamic and locally contingent nature of competence that is both required to engage in social interaction and a product of participating in interaction. IC was seen as "ability for joint action that is contingent upon the details of the social interaction people participate in" (ibid.).

IC's central concern with procedural details of social interaction made IC research increasingly draw on Conversation Analysis. Most typically, researchers interested in IC research adopted longitudinal CA as an approach to examine the development of Interactional Competence (Pekarek Doehler, Wagner, and

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1. We return to this issue throughout the paper.

González-Martínez, 2018). The idea is to see if there is observable change in the way participants achieve particular social actions such as disagreement or storytelling, which can be regarded as an index for development.

The routine sequence under examination in this study is "today narrative", which is roughly defined as an episode that starts with the parent's query of "how was your day?" or "what did you do at school today?". The sequence has received a substantial amount of research attention (Aukrust 2002; Blum-Kulka 1993, 1997; Greer 2019), probably due to the formulaic nature of the query that has made the sequence easily identifiable, and the significant status of the sequence it generates – sharing the news of the day's activities with family or close friends.

3.   Longitudinal CA research on development of interactional competence

The suggestion that researchers use "longitudinal CA" is not new (Carlin and Kim 2021). It was advocated by Zimmermann (1999) as "vertical" comparative research, to address topics such as language acquisition among young children. CA's analytic apparatus, which enables granular examination of interactional procedures, is particularly suited to studying changes in members' practices over time (Berger and Pekarek Doehler 2018). While caveats on the legitimacy and challenges of doing comparison in CA have been expressed (Watson 2008; Zimmerman, 1999), it is only recently that the debate has become more active and visible in relation to language learning research (Hellermann and Lee 2014; Kasper and Wagner 2011; Koschmann 2013; Wagner, Pekarek Doehler, and González-Martínez 2018).

Wootton's (1997) study is an invaluable reference point for this line of research. Based on longitudinal data of one child, Amy, collected over 27 months, Wootton (1997) demonstrates how she starts to show sensitivity to the sequential context in designing her conduct. Through painstaking analysis of one child's behavior in interaction over time, Wootton shows how the child starts to recognize the significance of local understandings established in sequential contexts and incorporate them in designing her own actions, which allows more finely tuned forms of calibration. Forrester (2008) presents longitudinal documentation of the emergence of self-repair in one child's interaction with her father. Based on a longitudinal case study, Filipi (2015) proposes a developmental trajectory for establishing recipient design in bilingual family interaction; as well as for the use and comprehension of the response token *yes* (Filipi 2018). While Filipi (2009, 2015, 2018), Forrester (2008), and Wootton (1997) examine younger groups (toddlers and preschoolers), Cekaite (2007) provides a longitudinal analysis of

one school-aged child's emergent second language interactional competence in a classroom setting by delineating her changing participation in dyadic exchanges and whole group activities with a focus on turn-taking practices.

Longitudinal CA research has recently been found to be a productive form of inquiry in L2 acquisition research (Hall, Hellermann, and Pekarek Doehler 2011; Hellermann and Lee 2014). In second language learner's data, the age range of the target group is more diverse – from toddlers to adult. Brouwer and Wagner (2004) trace the opening sequences of telephone conversations between business partners and show how they establish smoother opening sequences in later telephone conversations. Pekarek Doehler and Pochon-Berger (2016) demonstrate how one au-pair (L1 German learning L2 French) develops her way of projecting and initiating a story during lunch or dinner table conversations. In educational settings, Hellermann's (2008) book-length study that shows second language learners in a classroom setting employing increased use of prefatory devices in storytelling, and Pekarek Doehler and Pochon-Berger's (2011) study on disagreement, are noteworthy. Waring (2013) analyzed routine sequences of greeting-type inquiries such as "how are you?" and weekend inquiries "how was your weekend?" in ESL classrooms over the course of nine weeks, and shows how learners come to adapt their responses to the inquiry as they gradually develop their understanding of the socio-pragmatic expectation of the inquiry. Greer (2019) analyzes a similar routine, "how was your day?" with a focus on how a guest L2 English speaker at the host family's dinner table is socialized into this particular interactional routine.

Overall, the studies reviewed above suggest that developments in interactional competence involve diversification of interactional practices as well as context-sensitive design of their action.

4. Data and methods

The current study is based on longitudinal data of interaction between one child and his father, which is part of a larger database of 39 hours of bilingual children's interaction collected over 18 months. Five bilingual families who had a child around three years old were recruited and five families consented to participate in the study. The child whose data we have analyzed in this paper is Harry (pseudonym). Harry is an English-Malay bilingual child, with English as his dominant language. Harry learns Malay in Saturday Muslim school and learns Mandarin Chinese in class at a preschool that he attends.

The recording was made by the father at home. The father recorded his daily conversations with his son every two weeks for eighteen months that covered the time when Harry was three and a half to five years old, which amounted

to six hours of audio-recording in total. The interactions took place face-to-face, but for privacy concerns the father felt more comfortable with self-administered audio-only recordings. We felt that honoring the participants' preference for privacy was more important than any preference for video-recording. Due to the self-explicating nature of talk (participants describing to each other what they were doing) these data were analytically transparent. Plus, the audio-recording was of high quality as the father and child were engaged closely in focused talk. Colleagues who heard the recording at data sessions and conferences confirmed these views. Despite criticisms on the deficiency of using audio recorded data (of face-to-face interactions) in comparison with video recorded data (Lester and O'Reilly, 2018; Markee 2007), the literature on research ethics shows that this parent's reservations are not only understandable but entirely justified (Mackay 1995). Putting all these considerations together, we realized these recordings provided us with a very rich source of materials for studying parent-child interaction.

Today narratives, initiated by inquiries such as "how was your day?" "what did you do at school today?", etc., did not occur in every recording. Indeed, elsewhere (Kim and Carlin 2019) we refer to the "occasioned" character of these sequences as "a corpus within a corpus" (see also Carlin and Kim 2021). Eighteen instances of "today narrative" sequences were mundanely apparent, and the highlighted parts of Table 1 indicate the sessions where this target routine sequence was found.

Each extract presented in the analysis section comes with a code. H is an abbreviation of Harry and the number following H is the ordinal number for the session. The first set of three numbers indicate the date of recording, while the second set are Harry's age at the time of the recording.

5.   Analysis

The target sequence usually occurred in earlier parts of the recorded conversations, as a topic initiator (Button and Casey 1984; Greer 2019), though occasionally, it would occur in the middle of the conversation as they were talking about something else – e.g. a pet the child has brought from the school, a toy he is holding at the moment.

It was in the second recording that we encounter the first occurrence of "what did you do at school today?". Extract 1 appears at the very early part of the recording. After talking about the device with which the conversation was being recorded, Dad issues this inquiry, "what did you do at school today?" first prefaced with "so, why don't you tell me" (line 1).

Table 1.

H1-15.3.12 (3;6.3)	H2-15.4.1 (3;6.23)	H3-15.4.6 (3;6.28)	H4a-15.4.15 (3;7.6)	H4b-15.4.15 (3;7.6)	H4c-15.4.15 (3;7.6)	H5a-15.4.23 (3;7.14)	H5b-15.4.24 (3;7.15)	H6-15.5.4 (3;7.25)	H7a-15.6.4 (3;8.26)
H7b-15.6.4 (3;8.26)	H8-15.6.4 (3;9.13)	H9-15.6.29 (3;9.20)	H10-15.7.2 (3;9.23)	H11-15.7.23 (3;10.14)	H12-15.7.29 (3;10.20)	H13a-15.8.7 (3;10.29)	H13b-15.8.7 (3;10.29)	H14-15.9.5 (3;11.27)	H15-15.9.12 (4;0.3)
H16-15.9.15 (4;0.6)	H17a-15.9.27 (4;0.18)	H17b-15.9.27 (4;0.18)	H18a-15.9.29 (4;0.20)	H18b-15.10.2 (4;0.23)	H19-15.10.16 (4;1.7)	H20-15.10.18 (4;1.9)	H21-15.10.31 (4;1.22)	H22-15.11.5 (4;1.26)	H23-15.11.21 (4;2.12)
H24-15.12.8 (4;2.29)	H25-16.1.19 (4;4.10)	H26-16.2.16 (4;5.7)	H27a-16.4.1 (4;6.23)	H27b-16.4.1 (4;6.23)	H28-16.5.24 (4;8.15)	H29-16.6.15 (4;9.6)	H30-16.7.17 (4;10.8)	H31-16.8.17 (4;11.8)	

Extract 1.

H2-15.4.1(3;6.23)

```
1   D:    Huh huh,  so why don'[t you]   tell me=
2   H:                     [how  ]
3   H :   =hmm=
4   D:    =what did you do [at] school today.
5   H:                    [.h]
6   H:    I  .h recordant, .h then I play .h compu:ters.  I (0.3)  eat
7         pandas, .h then I sepray, .h then I drink .h water, .h then
8         I play, .h I go home, .h then I see with mommy, I s:leep.
9         (1.0)
10  D:    okay, so you just told me what you  [were doing]  all da:y.
11  H:                                        [h:        ]
12        We: -
13  D:    Whe- when you were at school today,  >what d-< what did you
14        play?
15        (1.2)
16  H:    no when we-
17  D:    Harry come over here!
18  H:    I- I- I- play wid (0.5)  s:choo:l?
19  D:    yeah what did you play at school. What  [did you do.]=
20  H:                                            [re::co:r  ]der
21  D:    =[w- w- what] what recorder.
22  H:     [recorder, ]
23         recorder cam- (0.3) computer.
24  D:    oh the computer.
25  H:    the one like this one. Recorder.
26  D:    what did you do on it.  Did you:   (1.0)  what did you do on
27        the computer.
28  H:    I type some- (0.7) svideo fo:r you.
```

Extract 1 presents a rather "typical"[2] pattern of sequential organization of today narrative in earlier sessions of the recordings of this pair of "'parent'-'child' interaction"[3]. In response to the father's initiating query (line 4), the child starts by providing a list of activities he did at school[4] in the format of run-on sentences (line 6–8). The sequential order of the activities is marked with an adverb "then" and description of the activities does not go beyond enumeration. The father, while first acknowledging Harry's response with "okay", provides a characterization of Harry's response (you just told me what you were doing *all* day) (line 10)

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2. We identify its "typicality" as both a feature of the corpus of recordings and as an indicator of Interaction Competence. We return to this issue in the Conclusion.

3. As mentioned in the Introduction, following Jefferson (2004) we continue to use this format to avoid reifying talk as a particular "type" of talk, for purposes of generalization; and to emphasize how categorial designations are not a matter of discretion but are organized by the participants, in each and every occasion of talk. These are not analysts' but members' matters. We return to the issue of generalization in the Conclusion.

4. It has been reported in the literature that very young children show a preoccupation with narrating the routine order of life events (Ochs and Capps 2001). While not pursued in this paper, how children learn to respond to the 'today narrative' inquiry with a tellable rather than listing the routine activities might serve as a productive area for examining development of Interactional Competence.

and asks his original question again in a reformulated format, which further narrows down the scope of the activities the inquiry is seeking (lines 13–14). Harry's ensuing response (line 18) remain vague, not providing more information than was already included in the question, which seems to trigger the father to issue the inquiry again (lines 19–20). Notably, the question is self-repaired from "what did you play at school?" to "what did you do?", which finally elicits one specific activity that can be expanded on, "recorder" (line 20). Sequential details of how this specific piece of information gets developed into further talk goes beyond the scope of this paper. Extract 1 presents a typical pattern of this child's response to "what did you do at school today"? inquiry in earlier sessions of the observation period and how the parent's inquiry serves to elicit more specific details.

This pattern of responding, i.e., providing a list of activities, continues during the first half of the recorded period with some variations. In fact, we see this pattern of listing continues as a main framework for Harry's response to the father's inquiry of his day until the end of the corpus of recordings, with the only change being each activity becoming more elaborated in the later period (See Extract 10). The extracts from early recordings also evidence that the child orients to both queries "what did you do at school?" and "how are you today?" in a similar way: Consider Extract 2.

Extract 2.

H7-15.6.4 (3;8.26)

```
1   D:   [Kay (0.3) so,  (0.4) how are [you today?
2   H:   [hm                          [yea
3   H :  Er:: (1.3) I_:: (0.6) being play (.) (round/run) by the
4        school (when/en) I ↑just, pass ↑urine and I ↑just, run it by
5        and eat xxxxxxx and I [learn them=
6   D:                         [alright alright. Slow down
7        slow down. [Yeah?
8   H:              [and I  ↑just ran it by and eat and lof of, like
9        (.) five minutes and (.) I sleep and I go home and whatever
10       I like and [just<
11  D:              [Alright, ok I'll ask you- you- you're ranting. I
12       don't know why you're ranting, you're [talking very fast.
13  H:                                         [ranting means what?
14  D:   Ranting mean::s, when you're talking very very fast (0.4) for
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Extract 2 is from the very beginning of the recording of H7. In response to Dad's question "kay, so, how are you today?", Harry responds by listing the activities he did during that day, which is preceded by the non-lexical vocalization "er::" (line 3–5). In comparison with Extract 1, linguistic devices used show change which might possibly be characterized as development: the use of the conjunction "and" instead of the adverb "then", and the use of "just" before the action verb are observed. Dad first suggests Harry to slow down (line 6–7), but Harry continues the listing (lines 8–10). One can notice more details such as "loffs off" (lots of) (line 8) and "five minutes" incorporated in Harry's listing though it is not

clear exactly which activity these details elaborate upon. Dad provides an assessment (line 11) by characterizing Harry's response. This leads to a side sequence (Jefferson 1972) where Harry asks what ranting means and Dad provides a definition of the word (line 14). The side sequence is closed down as Dad picks up his request to slow down (line 15). Extract 2a presents a continuous portion of the Extract 2.

Extract 2a.

H7a-15.6.4 (3;8.26)

```
15   D:   some reason. So, we slow down yeah?=
16   H:   =neah
17   D:   I'll ask you some question[s
18   H:                             [I pass urine
19        (0.5)
20   D:   What? >No n-<,  whaddya mean you pass u:rine? At school?
21   H:   Yeah and I just  (0.7) bathe,
22   D:   O(h)k(hh)ay you don't have to list all of the things you did at
23        school today. Ok.  (0.4)  Right. (0.9)  w:hat,  didju- When you
24        went to school today,[didju:  did you see Linda?
25   H:                        [yeah
26   H:   Yes
```

After repeating the request to slow down (line 15), Dad announces that he will ask some questions (line 17), which can be heard as questions about his day. Without waiting for Dad to ask a question, however, Harry, continues to list his activities (line 18), which elicits a series of repair initiation from Dad (line 20): first with an open-class repair initiator (Drew 1997) followed by repeated "no, n-" and a full form of repair initiation "what do you mean by you pass urine?". The final increment, "at school?" turns the immediately preceding repair initiation inquiry into a yes/no question. Harry briefly responds to this via "yeah" (line 21) and continues his listing (line 21). Dad's acknowledgement of Harry's contribution with aspirated "okay" along with another assessment on Harry's form of answer ("you don't have to list all of the things you did at school today", lines 22–23) serves to put an end to Harry's listing and from this point on, Dad's question steers the direction of the conversation. Note that Dad's question is based on his prior knowledge of the child's day at school, i.e. the history with a particular teacher, "when you went to school today, did you see Linda?".[5]

Extract 2 and Extract 2a show that the child orients to the question "so, how are you today?" in a similar way that he does to the question "what did you do at school today?" (Extract 1). He provides a list of activities that he did at school. The father asks further questions which serve to focus on one particular activity or one particular aspect of his school life. The father's questions serve a critical role both as a topic-elicitor ("what did you do at school today?" "okay, so, how are

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5. The name of the child's teacher.

you today?") and as a topic-nominator (e.g. "Did you see Linda?") (Button and Casey 1984, 1985).

6.   Providing candidate answers

The role of the father's question does not stop at nominating a topic. It also often contributes to engendering more details in the talk as can be seen in Extract 3.

Extract 3.
H7-15.6.4 (3;8.26)

```
41   D:   And what did you do at school?
42   H:   Uh::m, [I-
43   D:          [Did you make anything.
44   H:   I make, uh:m, flowers?
45   D:   you made flo↑wers?
46   H:   Yea::h, and I ((tongue clicking)) colou:r?
47   D:   You coloured? Did you use paint or did you use uhm pencil?
48   H:   Er:::: (1.4) pencil.
49   D:   Oh::, pencil
50   H:   And (0.8) tch I:: (0.5) learn for Chinese (0.5) and I- (1.2)
51        erm time for bathe, I bathe
```

Extract 3 occurs around twenty seconds after Extract 2. After having talked about the particular teacher, Dad elicits more talk about the child's day at school by asking what he did at school (line 41). As the child is filling up some pause with vocalization, "Uh::m" (line 42), Dad follows up his original question with a candidate answer (Pomerantz 1988) "did you make anything?" (line 43), which successfully elicits Harry's answer (line 44). Note that Harry's turn in line 44 ends in a rising intonation, which is hearable as if he has more to say. Dad's repeat of Harry's answer in a rising intonation (line 45) elicits Harry's confirmation. After this, Harry adds one more activity, "I colou:r?" (line 46). Again, Dad repeats this new information and asks another question that concerns the details of the newly provided information (*paint or pencil*) (line 47). The child provides an answer to Dad's question (line 48) and Dad repeats his answer, preceded by a change-of-state token "oh::"[6] (Heritage 1984) (line 49).

    Extract 3 contains instantiations similar to an Initiation-Response-Feedback (IRF) (Mehan 1979) structure where Dad asks a question and the child provides an answer, which is repeated by Dad. This repetition seems to serve to provide an opportunity for the child to elaborate on it if he wants (line 46) by passing the

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6. As pointed out by one of the reviewers, there seems to be a performative aspect in Dad's response of "oh::" here given that he himself suggested a candidate answer "pencil" in his prior question. See Takada and Kawashima (2019) for further references on caregiver strategies to solicit storytelling from 2–3 year old children.

turn to the child but staying on the same topic (line 45). Extract 3 clearly show-cases how the "today narrative" is a conjoint production of the child and the father and how the father's questions, based on his "educated guesses" (Higgins 2009) serve a pivotal role in producing "today narrative" as a collaborative and assisted telling (Lerner 1992).

In Extract 3, the father's questions were based on his member's knowledge of what the child does at preschool – age-appropriate and domain-relevant activi-ties. Sometimes, however, the story is unpacked through contingent and occa-sioned attempts at repair initiation by the parent who lacks precise knowledge. The repair initiation (lines 28–29) is attuned to the lack of recipient design in the child's report:

Extract 4.
H8-15.6.4 (3;9.13)

```
18   D:   Okay (0.5) anyway, (0.4) did you go to school today?
19   H:   Yeah
20        (0.5)
21   D:   En how was it?
22        (0.4)
23   H:   I wander by the (.) playground, en after this, I- (.) I visit
24        him again, en af[ter
25   D:                   [Harry, sit down please
26   H:   En after (.) this, he just run, I visit him then, ((sniffing))
27        he g[o toilet
28   D:       [who who who
29        Who you talking about?
30        (1.0)
31   H:   A bo:y, boy
32   D:   You visit a boy?
33   H:   A boy who- who who who trow the tissue paper, that one Jeremy
34   D:   Jeremy?

35   H:   Yeah
36   D:   Why did he throw the (.) tissue paper?
37   H:   He throw [the
38   D:            [Harry, sit down
39   H:   He throw the (.) all the, f- all the the- all ((coughing)) all
40        over them (.) ((sniffing)) floor becuz (0.4) he he has a snot,  (.)
41        so he he decided to take tissue pa(.)per then he throw throw all
42        over ((sniffing)) the floor there then, after this he suddenly,
43        then he got blood= en after this blood (put it like this)

44   D:   He's got blood. Where?
45   H:   Mouth becu he throw throw all over the floor then he sleep I
46        Put
47        (1.9)
48   D:   Okay, okay. strange. What did the teacher do?
```

In response to Dad's question, "how was it?" (line 21), Harry lists some of the activities that he did at school (line 23–24, 26). In terms of linguistic devices, we note that, compared to "then" (Extract 1) and "and" (Extract 2), a more explicitly

temporal marker, "after this"[7] is added to connect the activities. More importantly, though, one unidentified character is repeatedly mentioned as part of one activity, "I visit him again" (line 23–24) "he just run" (line 26), "I visit him then" (line 26), and "he go toilet" (line 27), which eventually elicits the father's repair initiation on this unidentified pronoun, "who, who, who, who you talking about" (line 28–29). Harry provides repair (line 31), not in the form of a "recognitional" (Sacks and Schegloff, 1979), but in the format of an indefinite noun phrase, "a boy" (line 31). This prompts another repair initiation from Dad, "you visit a boy?" (line 32) in the form of full repetition of Harry's previous utterance (line 23–24, 26). In response to Dad's "recipient-initiated recognition search" (Sacks and Schegloff 1979, 20), Harry provides more information about the boy, "a boy who- who who who trow the tissue paper, that one, Jeremy". Referential choices deployed in the Harry's turn are interesting in that it shows a reverse order. It begins with a description consisting of an indefinite noun phrase modified by a relative clause "A boy who- who who who trow the tissue paper", which is progressively revised to "that one", and finally to "Jeremy". The name *Jeremy* could have been a preferred choice (Sacks and Schegloff 1979). Whether this reversed order in the appearance of referential means (description followed by a name) reflects the lack of recipient design in three-year old's interaction or indicates salience of the event to the speaker – the boy throwing a tissue paper – goes beyond the scope of this paper. In either case, this particular choice of referential expression served to elicit a story from the child assisted by the father's question, "why did he throw the tissue paper?" (line 36). Harry describes how the boy had been bleeding, and assisted by the father's question, the story is elicited further (line 39–48).

7.   Emergence of three-partedness in list construction

So far, we have been showing how Harry's response to "how was your day?" or "what did you do at school today?" was formed around the basic structure of listing a series of activities. While this list construction constitutes a major format for the child's response throughout the observed period, we note variable changes accompanying it. We note elsewhere (Kim and Carlin 2019) that one of the significant changes concerned the way that he organized lists: there was a noticeable

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7. While we will not go into the details of how different linguistic devices for time reference (e.g. "then", "and" and "after this") are used in this particular sequential context in Harry's talk, readers are referred to Deppermann (2011a, 2011b) for discussions of how semantic properties of linguistic items interact with their sequential position in interaction in same-speaker formulations.

shift from enumerating random activities to organizing them, and this internal organization aligns with what are referred to as three-parted lists (Jefferson 1990).

Extract 5.

H9-15.6.29 (3;9.20)

```
1   D:    okay how w- >ha- c-< hello Harry?
2   H:    yea hh
3   D:    how was your day today.
4   H:    I (.) mt I run to play the playground and a:fter
5         that I .hi go(t) outdoor then.h en I- I (·)
6         play in the hot sun, then after thi, I bathe
7         and I pass urine and after (ti) I slee::p.
8         And after this, I learn more rno:re catfish and
9         after this like [that (cockroashes)
10  D:                    [hey wh-
```

Extract 5 occurs at the very beginning of the recording session. Dad, after self-repairing his initial attempt at the question "how wa-?" to a greeting, "hello Harry?" (line 1), issues the question "how was your day today?" (line 3). Harry's response comes in a similar format of producing a list of activities: *run to play the playground, go outdoor* and *play in the hot sun*. A close inspection of the list suggests that these three activities might be compressed into, or glossed as one single activity, though here we see that Harry is disambiguating one into three discrete activities. A simplistic approach to looking at child development might conclude this to be 'child-like': that IC may be shown by using a single, recognizable description. However, such a view is located in forms of theorizing that actively conceal the phenomenon of IC (Mackay 1974). The first description "run to play the playground" may be an account of running from the classroom along the corridor to the playground door,[8] which is followed by him going outdoors onto the playground and playing under the hot sun. In regard to list construction, Jefferson notes that

> *three-partedness appears to have 'programmatic relevance' for the construction of lists.* That is, roughly, lists not only can and do occur in three parts, but *should* so occur.   (Jefferson 1990, 66; emphasis in original)

Three-part lists may be regarded as more than "rhetorical" devices because there is a "unity or completeness about them" (Atkinson 1984, 57). The use of three-part lists is notable in various settings, as they are used to elicit applause in political speeches (Heritage and Greatbatch 1986), in courtroom testimony (Drew 1992) and interrogations of suspects by police officers (Watson 1990). Documenting the occurrence of three-part lists is not confined to institutional or solely "adult" settings, however: Lerner (1995) explicates how three-part lists provide

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8. Especially given that in the area where Harry goes to school, the playground is outdoors.

turn-completion spaces in classroom activities; and Jefferson (1990) demonstrates that the construction of three-part lists is an ordinary, quotidian practice, a routine feature of everyday conversations.

We argue that Harry's list construction in Extract 5 shows the speaker's orientation to the relevance of three-part structures in list construction. The subsequent three activities listed ("after that, I bathe and I pass urine, and after ti, I sleep") also form recognizably coherent activity that is associated with the end of break time. Break time is appropriately followed by "class time" during which Harry apparently learned about catfish and cockroaches (line 6–7).

The "programmatic relevance" of three-partedness "appears to be the product of an oriented-to procedure by which lists are properly constructed" (Jefferson 1990, 68). Remarkably, given the normative cast that Jefferson (ibid., pp. 66 and 68) attaches to the three-parted structure, the fact that these start to emerge in Harry's list constructions is a possible yet surprising index of the development of Interactional Competence.

8.   Providing more details, which leads to volunteering unsolicited stories

A couple of characteristics that may serve as signs of development are found toward the later sessions of recordings, more specifically around the time Harry turned 52 months. First, overall, we see an increase in the amount of child-initiated talk in "today narrative" sequences. More specifically, the child starts to provide more details even within the list construction format:

Extract 6.
H25-16.1.19 (4;4.10)

```
176   D:    Harry, [so after kindergarden today, you went to (.)=
177   H:           [yeah
178   D:    =the uh:: (. )
179   H:    Toy uh- [.hh
180   D:            [Kaycare?
181   H:    Uh- uh- (.) kindergarden means what?
182   D:    Okay kindergarden is when-
183         (0.7)
184   H:    Oh oh the coriander one [you mean?
185   D:                            [Yea k- k- k- yeah
186   D:    Kindergarden is where you have the coriander classroom.
187   H:    Yeah
188   D:    And after that's finished, [you ] go to play (.) [with=
189   H:                               [yeah]                [i::n]
190   D:    =the other children.
191   H:    I- i- i go play then i go to another work place. I go
192         to to- to to- to to kate- i go to Kcare then i- then then
193         i walk there then after that i'll- then i drewn a bird
194   →     nest and after that, we- we- we- we- i- i- i rush >to to<
195   →     to go there. I rush I- I- I- I s:, I- I tried to smash my
```

```
196   →      feet on the ground.
197   D:     right.
198   H:     .hh .hh Yeah=
199   D:→    =is your friend Ryan in kcare?
200   H:→→   Ur:m yes i- i smashed my f- feet because i was really
201          Urgent. I wanted to (.) pee but the teacher didn't let me.
202   D:     Why didn't she let you pee?
203   H:     Because it was GOing home time. So- so i was so URGent.
204   D:     So you ra:n to kcare and you went to the toilet.
```

In the beginning of Extract 6, Dad invites Harry to talk about his routine after his kindergarten (line 176). This triggers Harry's repair initiation on the word 'kindergarten' (line 181), which in turn engenders a side sequence on identifying what kindergarten is (lines 182–187). After this side sequence has run its course, Dad resumes the original inquiry on what the child does after the kindergarten (line 188, 190). The utterance which is our analytic focus begins from line 194 where the child describes his move from one place to the next with the verb "rush". Characterized by recurring repetitions of the beginning of TCU, Harry's turn in lines 194–196 exhibits considerable effort in producing it and conveys a sense of emotional involvement and urgency. After repeating the verb "rush" and three times of self-repair on "I", Harry produces "I s-", which is once again repaired to "I tried to smash my feet on the ground". Note that more elaborate detail is added to the initial action description of "rush". Dad acknowledges this description with "right", which in turn is acknowledged by Harry with an affirmative response token "yeah" (line 198). Now Dad asks an ancillary question, "is your friend Ryan in K care?" (line 199) which is still related to the current topic *K care*, but not the particular point that Harry was detailing in the immediately prior turn. Interestingly, after providing a rather short answer to this inquiry, Harry quickly picks up the point that he was elaborating, "I- I smashed my f- feet", this time adding the reason "because I was really urgent" which, in turn, is further explicated as he says "I wanted to (.) pee but the teacher didn't let me".

This segment is important since contrary to previous cases where Dad's questions influence the way a story is elicited and developed,[9] here it is Harry the child who maintains consistency of topic and steers the direction of the conversation, by focusing in on a particular detail.

"Today narrative" as it was defined in the current study, a sequence that begins with Dad's question "what did you do at school today?", "how was your day?" or a few variants of "tell me about your day" was not found in every session. Sometimes, Harry and his father were engaged in fantasy play or other activities such as working on the worksheet or storybook reading. In fact, around H16 onward, the explicit inquiry "how was your day?" or "what did you do at school today?"

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9. See Kim and Crepaldi (2021) for further demonstration of how the father's questions and comments contribute to co-construction of the sequential trajectory of storytelling.

appeared less regularly and utterances such as "let's talk about …" (H) or "what do you want to talk about?" (D), "tell me what arng (are) we going to talk about" (H) were increasingly found in the beginning part of each recording, which shows an explicit orientation to topic search as collaborative work in making this conversation between Dad and Harry an instance of "'parent'-'child' interaction".

9.   Providing an assessment response

One last feature that was identified as a noticeable change or a possible index for development in "today narrative" sequences between Harry and Dad, was Harry starting to preface his list construction response with an assessment. We found occurrences of an assessment response such as "it was awesome" before the child lists out his activities in response to variants of Dad's initiating query toward the later sessions of the observed period:

Extract 7.
H26 16.2.16 (4;5.7)

```
1    D:    .hh anyway .h ehm (.) why don't you tell me about
2          school today
3    H:    yeap s:choo:l? (.) i' was <awesome>
4    D:    [was it-
5    H:    [we we we .h we- we- we- went out and we sit on
6          the floor. and we drink water .h (but when take a
7          break and) .h went out to the sun and do some work
8          .h then at the end of the school, we went
9          to kaycare then we .hh went home .h for dinner
10   D:    oh did you:?
11   H:    yeah then we (.) .h s- see Tayo and watch (.)
12         and mummy vacuums and .h[ and we
13   D:                           [yeah you don't need
14         to summarize the day
15         (.)
16   D:    yeah?
```

Prior to Extract 7, Dad and Harry were talking about meteor showers; this extract commences as Dad initiates a topic-shift with "anyway" (line 01), followed by a gentle request to tell him about his school. After acknowledging the father's request with "yeap" and repeating the topic "school" with a rising intonation, the child provides a positive assessment with the adjective "awesome", which is followed by the list of activities (*we went out and we sit on the floor and we drink water*, in line 5–6)[10] similar to the three-part pattern observed before (Extract 5).

Extract 7 presents the first occurrence of assessment in Harry's response to variants of Dad's question/request to tell him about his day. We take the appearance of assessment response as a significant step in the developmental trajectory

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10. Again, we see the three-part structure in Harry's list construction.

of "today narrative". By beginning his response with an overall assessment and following it up with details of what he did, not only Harry's response demonstrates more structure, but also Harry's voice is located in it. By "voice" we mean that assessment response evidences the speaker's active participation in the talk, through which the speaker can clarify or set the determinations of what is being talked about. It is in this sense that we argue that providing an assessment response constitutes a more advanced version of response compared with merely listing what one did. That is, the significance of the provision of assessment in terms of indexing Interactional Competence is how "assessments are produced as *products* of participation" (Pomerantz 1984, 57, emphasis in original). Another example of assessment-prefaced response is provided below. Note that the very initial assessment provided by the child is negotiated in the course of unfolding interactional structure in this example:

Extract 8.

H28_16.5.24 (4;8.15)

```
1   D:   okay come here. tell me about your day.
2   H:   it was ↑goo:d.
3   D:   was it good?
4   H:   yes.
5   D:   why was it good.
6   H:   it was ↑good. .h hhh .h hhh m- w-
7   D:   yeah why was it [g(h)ood
8   H:                   [it wasn't good.
9   D:   it wasn't good.
10  H:   yes.
11  D:   it was bad.
12  H:   it was ba:d luck, it was bad luck.
13  D:   bad luck?,
14  H:   yes.
15  D:   what was bad luck.
16  H:   my school(h) day{h).
17  D:   tell me about it.
18  H:   It (h)was bad. .h luck (because the fa:
```

Extract 8 occurs at the very beginning of the recording, in which we can see how turn-taking is expressed through a series of "chained actions" (Pomerantz 1978, 82). In response to Dad's request to tell him about his (Harry's) day, Harry provides a positive assessment response, "it was good" with emphasis placed on the adjective "goo:d". Dad repeats this response in a question form (line 3), which provides Harry with an opportunity to revise or elaborate upon his original answer. After Harry's confirmation (line 4), Dad asks why (line 5), which seems to be designed to invite more talk from Harry. First, Harry merely repeats his initial answer (line 6), which is followed by rather loud breathing and an indication that the boy is about to say something else "m- w-" (line 6). Dad acknowledges his response with an affirmative response token "yeah" and issues a 'why' question again (line 7). In overlap with the last word of Dad's turn, Harry produces an answer that negates his previous answer, "it wasn't good" (line 8). First,

Dad marks his receipt of the changed response by repeating it[11] (line 9). After obtaining Harry's confirmation of an assessment contrary to his initial assessment (line 10), Dad proffers reformulation of this negated response into "it was bad" (line 11). Harry partially confirms this formulation (line 12) by clarifying "bad" as "bad luck"; and he upgrades this clarification through repetition.

It is interesting to note that repeating the child's response and thereby seeking confirmation from the child provided an opportunity for the recipient to revise the initial response. Harry takes up this opportunity by changing his initial [+] subset response to [−] response (Sacks 1975). This change is significant in that as Sacks (1975) observes, an answer from the [−] subset response makes further inquiry more relevant.[12] The father repeats Harry's revised response, "bad luck?" one more time (line 13) and pursues what he means by this by asking a further question (line 15). In Gail Jefferson's (1978) terms, the "today narrative" routine initiates turns at talk that occasion a story (line 18 onward: not presented in this paper) in which Harry describes being scolded by the teacher.

Along with the incipient emergence of a three-part structure in Harry's list construction, the provision of assessment before listing activities marks a significant change in Harry's participation within sequentially organized talk that has been occasioned by "today narrative" routines. From the longitudinal data examined for this study, we suggest that assessment response displays how the child is developing the ability to determine the relevance of the day's activities, and what sense should be made of these by his father.

10.   Discussion

Inquiries such as "how was your day?", "tell me about your day" have a special currency as they mark the relationship within which this formulaic query occurs as a close relationship (Blum-Kulka 1993, Pomerantz and Mandelbaum 2005; Searles 2019). The character of such inquiries implicates their recurrent nature.

While the ways in which "today narrative" sequences are organized showed a range of variation in the course of the observed period of eighteen months, there were features that may be taken as signs of development. First of all, while one of the essential characteristics of "today narrative rituals" under investigation in this study was their status as co-constructed stories (Kim and Crepaldi 2021), asymmetries of interactional work were more balanced toward the later instances of the

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11. Readers are referred to Strauss and Kawanish (1996) on negotiative nature of assessment in interaction instantiated via repetition of assessment adjectives.

12. However, note that Dad asks this further inquiry even in response to the [+] subset response (line 5).

sequence within the data corpus. In the initial phase of the observed period, the sequences relied heavily on the parent's questions (Extract 1, 2, 2a and 3), which were often based on Dad's local (Extract 2a) and common sense knowledge about children's life at kindergarten[13] (Extract 3). Stories were also incidentally generated by contingent and occasioned instances of repair-initiation by the father (Extract 4). Toward the later part of the recording period, the child provided more details, and also showed more initiative in steering the direction of the talk. While providing a list of activities that he had done at the kindergarten, Harry provided a particular detail, e.g., how he smashed his feet on the ground, in describing his movement from the kindergarten to the second day care center (Extract 6). This detail was not taken up in the next turn by his father, who asked an ancillary question that could have served to direct the talk into a different direction. However, by providing a minimal response to this question asked by the father, and going back to the detail he was describing, the child manages to get his story told. As analysts, we hear the repetition of this utterance in the recording (and read it in the transcript), in which Harry describes the detail "I tried to smash my feet on the ground", as a story-format device to claim the rights to determine the ensuing talk. Dad treats this as a story preface in allowing Harry conversational 'space' to elaborate this, before formulating the upshot of Harry's story. Providing story prefaces may be used to define a preferred hearing of stories (Sacks 1974). Hence, this serves as another index for developing sophistication in the child's narrative skills.

Another significant feature considered for the development of Harry's interactional competence was found in the way Harry's list was constructed in his response (Extract 5). Compared to the initial list where random activities were enumerated ("I recordant, then I play computers, I eat pandas, then I spray, then I drink water, then I play, I go home, then I see with mommy, I sleep") in Extract 1, Harry's later list showed an emerging three-parted structure (Jefferson 1990). We have shown how Harry's later list maps one disambiguated activity into three description components in it. It is quite remarkable and significant that a preference surrounding list construction is demonstrated in Harry's language use, who is three years and nine months old by the time the recording was made.

Lastly, the emergence of assessment response with assessment adjectives was discussed as another index for development of Harry's Interactional Competence. Compared to the initial practice of enumerating a list of activities he had done at school, prefacing his response with an overall assessment was deemed a more mature form of responding to the "today narrative" inquiry in that it shows

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13. See Kim and Crepaldi (2021) for how the caregiver local, membership knowledge informs and shapes inquiries, which in turn steer the unfolding trajectory of storytelling.

the child making his own evaluation of the day and taking up a position to it (Extract 7–8). Furthermore, providing an assessment response enabled a negotiation of that particular assessment in the course of sequential development (Extract 8). We argue that providing an assessment is to be taken as a sign of more active involvement in interaction (Goodwin and Goodwin, 1987; Ohta 1999), which is also closely related to the growth of the child as a person – able and willing to provide an assessment of his day.

11.   Conclusion

Parents regularly ask their children "how was your day?" or "what did you do at school today?" when reunited with their children in the evening after the hours at work and childcare respectively (Aukrust 2002). Today narrative sequences provide an important site where the parent and child can talk about what happened to the child during the day. The daily experience of the child is given shape through the discursive practice of telling (Ochs and Capps 2001). Hence, today narratives constitute an important site for socialization (Keel 2016), not only in guiding children to make sense of their experience, but also helping them learn how to talk about it – cultivating their interactional competence[14] (Carlin and Kim 2021; Kim and Carlin n.d.). A "today narrative" routine provides a recurrent sequential structure where change in one individual child's method of organizing social interaction over time can be observed (Wagner, Pekarek Doehler, and González-Martinez 2018). The procedural logic for our focus on "today narrative" routines is located in the recordings of their talk: these routines both initiate and are positioned within turn taking. The data show that these routines are both "*locally occasioned*" by and "*sequentially implicative*" for the practices of turn taking (Jefferson 1978, 220; emphasis in original). By looking at how the so-called "today narrative" sequences are organized across the timeline of eighteen months in interaction between one father and son, the current study suggested one possible developmental trajectory of one child's Interactional Competence with a focus on the way he organizes his response to the topic-initiating query asked by his father, "how was your day?" or "what did you do at school today?".

By repeatedly engaging in routinized activities, children learn how to participate in interaction. Interactional routine provides a structure. The nature of social action – always contingent upon local context and sequentially based understanding – imposes variation upon structure and makes each participation "another first time" (Garfinkel 1967, 9). While children may be doing similar things when

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14. We thank one of the reviewers for this phrase.

they are engaged in routinized activities, no interaction is isomorphic with another one. We argue that this tension between repetition and variation provides a powerful learning mechanism that is afforded by routine sequences.

Within this paper, we have described occurrences of "today narratives" as "recurrent", "routine", "structured", and "typical", but our assessment of "typicality" is a characteristic occasioned by and within these data. We are aware of the analytic pitfalls of attempting to reify particular structures of talk and instead use "typicality" as a gloss for a "family of *practices* and their properties" (Zimmerman and Pollner 1970, 97; emphasis in original). Our familiarity with research methods texts and doing research with conversational data has convinced us that arguments regarding generalization, as dependent upon sample size, are not methodic but arbitrary, "let it pass" judgements (Garfinkel 1967) according to the requirements of disciplines, rather than located within the data of inquiry. We highlight our divergent use of "typicality" in recognition of a paradox within CA: emphasizing the uniqueness of each interaction in its concrete details yet flattening this uniqueness in order to collect comparable examples across corpora of data, in the service of abstracting generalizations. This is why we have continued to enclose "'parent'-'child'" interaction within quotation marks, as this format reminds us that any generalizations that are made elsewhere are based upon aggregated analyses of single instances.

Harry *might* have picked interactional practices up from his parent, e.g. prefacing a list with an assessment adjective – observing what his parents do and experimenting with it. While some other children might not express certain practices that Harry displays (e.g. listing all the activities), those features observed within this particular child's interaction activities, here taken as data (e.g. adding more details, prefacing a story with an assessment) corresponds to a general developmental direction: more active engagement in interaction.

We have been very cautious in presenting our findings not as a reified pattern but as a series of instances of concrete details, which might shed light on our understanding of the development of Interactional Competence. In suggesting this, we are aware that we are not arguing for a developmental pattern (such as relative clause acquisition hierarchy suggested in older versions of SLA) that can be applied across all "typically developing" children. Having said that, we also believe that a few features such as asymmetries of interactional work becoming more balanced in later recordings, or starting to preface the list of activities with an assessment adjective, might stand as good indicators for development: more active engagement in interaction.

Our identification of "today narrative" sequences, recognizing these as "routines", and reference to "typicality", are not geared towards setting up typologies, which distance analysis from the concrete details of interaction. Instead, our

approach is "grounded in and constructed from the data under inspection" (Jefferson and Lee 1992, 524). Hence, the generalizing potential for this study is located not within aprioristic theoretical commitments, or substantive identifications such as "parent-child interaction" (as a reified object), but with the speakers' own practices that exhibit changes.[15] These changes are made visible through the procedures of longitudinal CA, which shows how differences within "typical" occurrences are incarnate to "'parent'-'child' interaction".

It may be helpful to place concerns with generalization in abeyance, as in overemphasizing generalization we may pass over incidental details and not see children's interactional practices as having potential significance. We look forward to reading further case studies that would identify and bring to our attention similar or some other features observed in the developmental trajectory of children's interactional competence.

Funding

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15. Elsewhere (Carlin, 2003, 18) we refer to these as "sensitizing practices".

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Publication history