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Multilingualism in interaction: report from a thesis in progress

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Kevad - spring!



Painting by William Henry Holmes, *Cherry blossoms* [cropped]. https://americanart.si.edu/artwork/cherry-blossoms-10646, Public domain, https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=70873614



This presentation – the structure

- introduction: how it began
- method: conversation/interaction analysis a very brief introduction
- the material/data
- **the present stage** candidate phenomena: *suggestions for future actions* & *storytelling sequences*
- why this thesis: aim, the possible and the (yet) unknown
- show and tell: sample transcripts & a sample illustration of candidate phenomena

This presentation is based on the thesis in progress (Talvineva; unpublished)



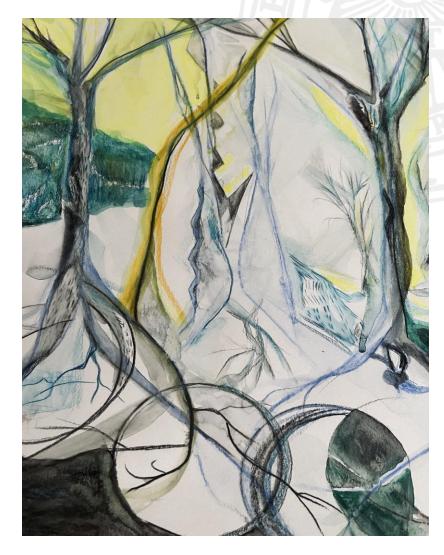
Introduction: the beginnings

- PhD-candidate since autumn 2021
- thesis work began with an application for ethical review + amendment (*Etikprövningsmyndigheten*/Sweden's Ethical Review Authority 2024)
- fieldwork in 2022 and 2023
- method: interaction/conversation analysis (Broth & Keevallik 2020, Hutchby & Wooffitt 2008; Sidnell 2010; Sidnell & Stivers 2013); a qualitative method
- research material: three multilingual families' own video recordings of everyday interaction (Estonian/Swedish & other language/s)
- monograph, due to go to print in spring 2026



Introduction

- earliest idea: interaction analysis of everyday, naturally occurring interactions in multilingual families where one language is Estonian; another early idea also included combining this with semi-structured interviews on families' view on their multilingualism (interpretative phenomenological analysis, Smith Flowers & Larkin 2022);
- one of the early ideas remained interaction analysis.



Research: a path. L Talvineva 2023.



Conversation/interaction analysis: a very brief introduction

- Conversation/interaction analysis: qualitative micro-analysis of everyday interaction which pays close attention to interaction as it unfolds sequentially, turn-by-turn. Pioneered by Harvey Sacks, Emanuel Schegloff and Gail Jefferson at UCLA in the 1960s and 1970s (Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson 1974), who drew inspiration from Harold Garfinkel's ethnomethodology (1967/1984) and Erving Goffman's (1967/2005) ideas on interaction (Sidnell 2010:6)
- the *next-turn proof procedure*: in each turn, we display our understandings to each other (Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson 1974: 728-729).
- naturally occurring interaction can't be arranged in an experiment or otherwise simulated (Heritage & Atkinson 1984: 2-5, Hutchby & Wooffitt 2008: 12, Stokoe 2013)
- Conversation/interaction analysis is

a radical departure from other forms of linguistically oriented analysis in that the production of utterances, and more particularly the sense they obtain, is seen not in terms of the structure of lan-guage, but first and foremost as a *practical social accomplishment*

(Hutchby & Wooffitt 2008: 12; emphasis mine).

 very close relatives: ethnomethodology (Garfinkel 1984/1967) and discursive psychology (Tileagă & Stokoe 2016; Wiggins 2017)



The material/data

- I looked for participating families through various channels; three families agreed to participate. All were two-parent households with one or two children;
- for this thesis, *fieldwork* meant lending each family a video camera for a period of time and let them record themselves at home (Lindström 1999, Said & Zhu 2019)
- participants' recordings now comprise a corpus of approximately 13 hours (excluding interviews)



The present stage: candidate phenomena

- analysis beginning in 'unmotivated examination' (Sacks 1984:27)
- Candidate phenomenon 1: Suggestions for future actions; (Stevanovic & Peräkylä 2012; 'deontic authority')
- Candidate phenomenon 2: Storytelling sequences (Mandelbaum 2013, Sacks 1986)
- at present: transcribing examples of these (both embodied behaviour and talk): building a collection
- conversation/interaction analysis transcription is done by hand, aided by Audacity (https://www.audacityteam.org/) and ELAN annotation tool (https://archive.mpi.nl/tla/elan) for timing pauses, embodied behaviour/talk
- transcription follows Mondada (2018, 2022) for embodied actions, verbal transcription is Jeffersonian (Jefferson 2004)
- moving between the transcripts and the recordings
- data sessions



The possible/the yet unknown the thesis...

- searches for more knowledge on social interaction in multilingual (Estonian-speaking) families; a small 'slice of reality' (Keevallik 2023);
- contributes by examining codeswitching sequentially, unfolding in interaction
 (Auer 1995/2007, Wei 2002); focus on social action. Also investigates
 sequences' multimodality; embodied behaviour can be part of a turn-at-talk
 (Keevallik 2013)
- contributes to interaction analytic research on multimodality: gaze, gestures, the body (Mondada 2014), touch (Čekaitė & Mondada 2021) and how participants use these resources together in situated interaction; 'complex multimodal Gestalts' (Mondada 2014: 140, emphasis in the original);
- our research may also contribute in ways we aren't yet aware: no crystal ball!



Phenomenon 1. Suggestions – future actions. The egg hunt/munajaht

```
01.
       MOT kuidas sa tahad teha
02.
            oma lihavõttemunaga
03.
       mot >> qz to Adeele
04.
       adee >> gz to mum
       fath>> gz to mum, Adeele
05.
06.
            (0.3)
07.
       FATH .hhhh= ((sandwich in hand, eating))
08.
             (0.5)
       FATH hh[hhhhh] ((eating))
09.
       ADEE: = [e++eh]
10.
11.
       mot ---->++ gz down ->
12.
             (4.0) ((eating, smiling))
             tahaksin t|eha seda äggjak++ti::
13.
                       |...brings fork towards mouth
14.
15.
       mot qz down ->
                                         ++gz to adeele->
16.
             (1.2)
                          |(0,7)
                                          l (0,9)
                          |,,,,lowers fork |gz down smiling ->
17.
       adee gz at mum
18.
             kus
19.
             (0.5)
20.
       adee->|gz to mum -> ((smiling))
21.
       ADEE °Ees|tis°
22.
                 |...brings fork towards mouth
       adee
23.
              (0.4)
24.
       MOT: Eestis
              °mm+h: °(0.3)
25.
       ADEE
```



'tahaksin teha seda *äggjakti...'*'I'd like to do the egg hunt...'



Illustration: L Talvineva 2024

GH020889 # 03 min 27 sec.



Phenomenon two: opening a storytelling sequence/šokolaad

```
(mis on vaata)
49. K/M
50. MOT
           ja vaata vaata
51.
           (kui) lahe+dasti
52. mot
                     + opens, displays chocolate wrapper
53.
           on tehtud pakk
54.
           ma vaatas+in (.)
55. mot.
                    +closes it again
56.
           e[t lah+ti] ja
57. mot
                  +opens wrapper
58. KER
             [°ooh°: ↑]
59.
         vaata siin
         on selline ilus
60.
                           ((admires illustration))
61.
         (0.9)
62.
         illustratsioon
63.
         veel sees (.)
64. MIR m[hm
65. MOT
          [Eero A+lev]
66.
         (0.8) + (0.2)
67. mot
                 + opens wrapper->
68. MOT + look + this is
        + lifts wrapper up->
70. mot
                 +twists->
                            ((displays illustration))
71.
         really cool (.)
72. FATH mm:
73.
         (1.4)
                       ((everyone admires the illustration))
74. KER (°oo[oh°)]
75. MOT
             [ja s|e[e:]
76. ker
                  |...extends hand->
77. FATH
                    [mm]
78. MOT
          vaata (.)
79.
          see on üks: uh
80.
          Tiiu uh
81.
          (there) was
82.
          °eh° (.) you know
          E[st ]onian
84. FATH
          [°mm°]
```



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