

Embodiment of activity progress: The temporalities of service evaluation

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1. Introduction

Time is an inherent concern for organizations. While we have predetermined and fixed tools to arrange temporality in interaction (e.g. leaving the interaction to catch a train, finishing a workplace meeting as scheduled), such temporalities only become tangible and factual as interactants orient to them as relevant in their interactions. This perception of time – that time is a discursive and interactional matter – has been exemplified and firmly established through studies of various organizational settings (e.g. Boden 1997, Potter and Hepburn 2010, Clayman 1989). What these studies show is that members' orientations to temporal frames, i.e. how they negotiate and manage time by interactionally invoking time constraints and affordances, reveal the nature of the activity they are engaged in, and the larger, organizational order (Boden 1997). Thus, it is in their orientations to durational boundaries by which a particular institution is constituted (Clayman 1989).

This paper examines the participants' negotiation of temporality in one type of time-sensitive event, namely the service-assessment activity in haircutting sessions. Clayman (1989) suggests that investigating the closing process of professional encounters is fruitful, as it often shows how members' practices are adapted to the relatively fixed temporal boundaries on which such occasions operate. Time management is also a concern among professional hairdressers (e.g. Cohen 2010, Oshima 2014, Eayrs 1993), but what makes its closing temporality more dynamic and perhaps unpredictable is the fact that a haircutting session is generally brought to closure through the service-assessment sequence. Here, a hairstylist and a client negotiate the quality of the service that has been provided. In their study of an assessment sequence at a fashion retailer, Fasulo and Monzoni (2009) point out that "producing a response to an assessment on a present and mutable object" involves establishing epistemic access to it (367). Similarly, the customer in a haircutting session must display their own knowledge of a new haircut before making an informed assessment, or the assessment may not be considered valid. Thus, the first action of this sequence is generally the stylist's question and/or explanation of the new cut, which invites the client's assessment/(dis)agreement. This is further accompanied with embodied actions that project an imminent self-inspection of the client's hair (e.g. handing over a hand-held mirror to the client). The relevant course of responding action includes not only a verbal component, but also the client's physical inspection of the new cut (e.g. looking at and/or touching the new cut).

In alignment with earlier works, I argue that the temporality of haircut evaluation is discursively constructed, and my analysis of four examples focuses on how the stylist and the customer negotiate the progress of the service-assessment activity through micro-actions. As this is the final place to agree on the quality of the service before they depart from each other, stylists may make sure that customers take an adequate amount of time in examining their haircut. Yet, if customers spend "too much" time, stylists may treat it as a sign of dissatisfaction and deal with the potential issue, or as a possible perpetuation and work on activity closure. Similarly, a customer's behavior of looking at a mirror for five seconds may be at times treated by the stylist as not enough, or other times as unnecessarily dragging things out. Encountering such phenomena raises a question

of how participants in an activity orient to and negotiate what counts as activity progression. How do the participants take “enough” time for sufficient physical inspection so that the evaluative comments are regarded as valid and authentic, while not making it appear as they are taking “too much” time?

2. Negotiation of activity progress

Scholars have explored several meanings and aspects of activity progression, as well as various sophisticated practices used by interactants for advancing activity. One way to understand the mechanism of activity progression is the general preference for progressivity, a well-documented principle in the study of social interaction (e.g. Stivers & Robinson, 2006). In general, a talk progresses as interactants fill what has been made conditionally relevant next with the previous turn, or in other words: “[m]oving from some element to a hearably-next-one with nothing intervening is the embodiment of, and the measure of, progressivity” (Schegloff 2007, 15). For instance, activity participants frequently make moves in favor of responsive actions (e.g. an answer to a question, a greeting in return for a greeting, and an agreement to an assessment, cf. Schegloff and Sacks 1973), and its normative nature in social interaction has been argued for, such as when an adjacency pair is completed by a non-selected next speaker in order to advance the conversation (Stivers and Robinson 2006), and when the sequence progression is prioritized over the prominent security of intersubjectivity (Heritage 2007).

However, as in the present case of service-assessment activity in hair salons, the cost of securing the progressing nature of conversation may risk jeopardizing other social rules and contextually-relevant orientations. Previous studies have shown how people carefully and efficiently harmonize sequential/structural progression and other, possibly conflicting social tasks, through diverse practices: the story-recipient demonstrates understanding without disrupting the progress of the story-telling activity by way of choral co-production and gestural matching (instead of, for example, making a verbal move that requires the teller’s acknowledgement, thus suspending the ongoing story-telling) (Joh 2013); a child with autism deploys a number of verbal practices that systematically contribute to both intersubjectivity and progressivity of the conversation (Sterponi and Fasulo 2010); non-selected next speakers first attend to and reserve the questioners’ and selected next speaker’s rights, before they take an action of advancing the sequence in-progress (Stivers and Robinson 2006), just to name a few. These studies show that participants do not blindly follow the general preference for progressivity; on the contrary, they coordinate the sequence progression with their orientation to the larger activity they are engaged in. Thus, the business of prioritizing one social preference over another concerns not only the local, immediate, and structural progress of the conversation, but “the activities that the sequences are implementing to be carried to their conclusion” (Heritage 2007, 277).

Therefore, seemingly “disruptive” actions often cater to the larger activity ends. As seen in Heritage’s analysis (2007), speakers sometimes invest in managing absolute security of reference, which – via the speaker’s practices of self-repair or turn-expansion – disrupts the sequence progression in a structural sense. However, this does not mean that the participants abandon the activity in progress. In fact, the speaker can possibly prevent a more serious, time-consuming disruption that could take place later in the activity. Other scholars such as Keevallik (2012) and Heinemann and Steensig (forth.) highlight that certain particles are employed by participants to legitimately depart from the action in the ongoing turn, i.e. the local sequential context. According to them, while the use of these particles functions to interfere with the ongoing sequence, it helps an interactant achieve the aim of the overall activity as quickly as possible. In other words, some

actions that seemingly violate progressivity, only locally halt the sequence and are used to ultimately advance the activity in a larger context. In sum, people do not mechanically attend to sequence/structural progression, nor do they unduly advance activity on insufficient grounds. What counts as valid progression is often embedded in their shared orientation to the aims and related social issues of the larger activity.

The members' concern for moving forward the main activity has become a growing focus among studies of institutional interactions, where the realization of certain, often pre-determined, activity goals and outcomes can be more normatively shared and expected among the participants. In many client-professional activities, for example, conversational progression is the aim of interaction, such as when efficient information gathering from a certain participant is normatively oriented to as the main goal of interaction. Here, professionals' practices for advancing sequence often also contribute to realizing another (and often more significant) institutional goal of creating a trusting client-professional environment. This combined task could be achieved, for example, when nurses (call-takers) at a cancer helpline clearly demonstrate their acquired (already-known) knowledge about the caller at the beginning of call interaction (Leydon, Ekberg, and Drew 2013), or when a sushi chef passes on repeating an order of Japanese-word items from his non-Japanese customers, demonstrating trusted (versus secured) intersubjectivity (Kuroshima 2010). At times, the professional may even forcefully work on sequence progression despite the client's unwillingness to do so, as seen in a case treated in Fogarty et al. (2013) of a child sexual abuse interview. What they find, however, is that while forcing an uncomfortable and reluctant interviewee (i.e. the child who has been sexually abused) to continue could be seen as being an insensitive interviewer, doing so ultimately helps the very aim of the activity, namely getting sufficient information so that the court will make a determination in favor of the child (and to a lesser degree, help the interviewee out of a painful interview sooner). Accordingly, interviewers may purposefully ignore the interviewee's signs of reluctance and discomfort for the benefit of accomplishing an ethical and higher institutional goal.

On the other hand, similar to the observations made in the studies of everyday interactions, professionals may also use locally-disruptive actions that contribute to the smooth development of the overall activity. Taking a case of professional therapeutic work, Muntigl (2013) explains that risking the social bond with clients over progressivity can be a serious concern. Here, the counselor may more implicitly prompt conversation progress through carefully-tuned practices (e.g. they may refrain from asking additional questions when faced with client resistance to answering questions, providing the client with more room for speaking), in order to minimize the chance of risking affiliative context. Similarly, a call-taker on a child protection helpline may provide "take-your-time" receipts in accounting for the time taken by crying callers and affiliating with them (Hepburn and Potter 2007). Thus, again, those professionals do not just work on advancing their activity; instead, they adjust local progression (i.e. the progress of the conversational sequence or physical action in which they are presently engaged) with various concerns and needs that arise at each moment, which ultimately contributes to the overall outcome of the activity (e.g. the client may need assurance that they are in a supportive environment before proceeding). In such cases, taking "extra" time is a meaningful part of activity progress.

While much of the reviewed literature on client-professional interactions reveals the professionals' normative orientations to certain activity goals, the outcome cannot be realized without the collaborative work of both parties. Accordingly, other studies have illustrated the clients' sophisticated skills in satisfying the concerns for both sequence progression and institutional goals. For example, Ignasi (2009) shows that child patients – when experiencing difficulty in answering the doctor's questions – orient to sequence progression by allowing parental override (i.e. by inviting their parents to answer). Yet, upon the parents' answers, the children

quickly embed themselves in the answering turn to be the last person to speak (e.g. approving the parent's answer by repeating it toward the doctor). In this way, while maintaining the smooth progression of the clinical information gathering, the children also orient to the higher aspect of such activities, namely fulfilling the role and rights of primary symptom informants. On the other hand, the client's competence may be seen in their abandonment of the principle of sequent progression, as seen in Lee's (2011) study of airline service calls. Here, skilled customers deviate from providing information requested by the agents, but their nonconforming responses indeed promote and expedite the larger activity in which the question is embedded. Both cases show how clients competently orient to the aim of the larger activity.

Studies on activity progression have shed light on the complex interplay between the structural preference for progressivity (i.e. turn or sequential progress) and the interactants' concern to move the primary business of the interaction forward. What it means to advance activity is embedded in the participants' intense work of negotiating which business to take care of at which moment, sometimes prioritizing one over the other, and other times solving a possible conflict between local/sequential and overall progress of the activity. This negotiation simultaneously involves a question of normativity: to what extent the participants hold and share the normative process and goal of a given activity. Unpacking how the participants go about moving forward an activity therefore makes public the normative model that they are taking into account (e.g. a certain understanding of conversational progress in a specific counseling event, which marks practices for relationship building as disrupting), thus how a specific organization or institution is brought about through interaction.

The current study also uncovers the multiple layers that compose the order of activity progression and the participants' orientations to and negotiation of the activity normativity; however, contrary to the abovementioned studies that mainly focus on the verbal-dominated *or* physical-dominated activity, this study pursues the mechanism of progression in an activity in which *both* verbal and practical/physical activities have necessary involvement (e.g. Oshima and Streeck 2015, Mondada 2011, Arminen, Koekela, and Palukka 2014). In so doing, the study also responds to an emerging call for revisiting basic conversation analytic notions within a multimodal activity framework (Deppermann 2013). The aim is to reveal exactly how hairstylists and their customers negotiate and embody *valid* activity progress so that they can realize the goal of *taking enough time for evaluation without taking too much time*, and to gain a better understanding of the temporalities of this specific type of service evaluation.

3. Data

The four examples in this paper – from four recorded sessions in three different U.S. salons – have been drawn from a larger set of recorded data consisting of 60 sessions at 20 different beauty salons in the U.S. and Japan. Conversation analysis is adopted to analyze various communicative practices that co-participants attend to and employ in advancing the service-assessment activity. For transcripts, this paper employs the system developed by Gail Jefferson (see Have 1999).

The use of ethnographic inquiry to significantly enrich interaction analysis has been advocated among many scholars, as it “provides a critical resource not only for developing one's understanding of the setting, but also in refining analytical observations and insights” (Heath and Hindmarsh 2002, 109). The same is true in studying the present case, as my fieldwork at various salons revealed a normative procedure specific to the overall setting. In general, the course of a haircutting session proceeds as follows: greetings and consulting; hair washing (which is often skipped at hair salons that are more focused on convenience or costs); haircutting; drying and

styling; evaluation of the new cut (i.e. the service-assessment activity); and payment. The service-assessment sequence may also be found in the middle of a haircutting session, such as when a stylist moves from cutting one area of the head to another, or before drying and styling the new cut. However, even when the participants have already gone through a few assessments, the activity normally takes place before the formal session closure and payment. The current paper focuses on this final one where the customer is given the opportunity to assess the overall service outcome.

One ethnographic aspect that is worth mentioning is the time frame of each session. Many of the participants in my data make an appointment in advance (with the exception of Example 1, where many clients are serviced on a walk-in basis). Here, they agree on the time to begin their session, but not necessarily when to end it (e.g. they agree on meeting at 10 o'clock, instead of agreeing that the session runs from 10 to 11 o'clock). Although stylists usually calculate a time frame for each client and coordinate appointments accordingly, the examples documented in the current paper do not implicitly show that this program is transparent to clients. However, what is clear to both parties in all examples is that by the time they reach the service-assessment activity, the next client is waiting for their turn in the waiting area. This is not only visibly accessible to both the stylist and the client, but the stylist often publicly acknowledges their presence by, for example, greeting them and at times telling them that their turn will come shortly. Such conditions – where the stylist must serve the next client as soon as possible – may add another delicate factor in negotiating the temporal duration of the service-assessment activity.

4. Analysis

The following section offers a close look at how participants negotiate the *sufficient yet efficient* time spent for the activity with multimodally-organized courses of action. The analytical points with each of the four examples include: 1) what happens once the stylist initiates the activity; 2) how the customer's self-inspection is organized and negotiated; and, 3) how the activity is brought to closure. In the first example, the participants smoothly negotiate their shared orientations to the activity. However, the next three examples later on demonstrate various cases where participants depart from orientation to activity progression. Here, their orientations to activity progression are displayed differently, requiring adjustments to the local progression of sequence in order to re-negotiate the development and close of the overall activity.

4.1 *Aligned progress of the activity*

The following example shows the participants' consistent and shared orientation to activity progress, thus smoothly completing the whole sequence in as short as 2.8 seconds. Despite the short time taken for this activity, the stylist (Nita) and customer (Chaz) also successfully reach an understanding that they have taken *enough time* for their service evaluation. The segment begins as the stylist has just finished cutting and styling the customer's hair, and initiates a service-assessment sequence through verbal and embodied actions.

(1)

01 Nita: >show you the back ()<
|
((Nita walks off-camera))

02 (1.5) ((Nita grabs a portable mirror off camera; Chaz gazes towards her))

03 (1.4) ((Nita comes back to Chaz, lightly touches the back of his hair and slightly raises the portable mirror as she walks toward the back of Chaz; Chaz looks at the large mirror and pulls his chin in toward his chest, fig. 1))



Fig. 1

04 (0.7) ((Nita places the portable mirror behind Chaz, and adjusts its position))

05 (1.0) ((Chaz looks at the back of his hair through the two mirrors))

60 Chaz: o::: a:::[::
|
((Chaz moves his head slightly upwards, fig. 2))



Fig. 2

07 Nita: [>everything's good back the[re:??<
| |
((Nita nods)) ((Chaz pulls his chin in towards his chest))

08 Chaz: [yeah, (.)it's good.=
((Chaz looks up))↓ |
((Nita lowers the mirror and shifts her gaze from Chaz in the mirror to the back of his hair))

09 Nita: =°okay, good°((walks off-camera, lightly touching the back of Chaz' hair))
|
((Chaz looks to the side, fig. 3))



Fig. 3

This example is remarkable in that this particular customer coordinates his actions so that they are constantly aligned with the ways the stylist moves the activity forward. Firstly, it is noteworthy how Chaz shows his understanding of when to properly begin the self-inspection. Nita initiates the service-assessment sequence by indicating that Chaz ought to inspect the back of his hair (line 01). However, the material aspect for performing the inspection is not yet arranged, thus creating a gap between Nita's initiation (line 01) and the moment the condition for its actual performance is properly arranged (line 05). How the participants organize this time period shows their aligned orientation to activity progress. Chaz shifts his gaze away from the large mirror and looks toward Nita, who goes to pick up a portable mirror, displaying that he is not yet – and should not be – engaged in the inspection (line 02). As soon as Nita picks up the mirror, he looks to the front, and when she comes close to him, he pulls his chin in, starting his inspection (line 03). Thus, Chaz orients to Nita's verbal initiation in line 1 to start preparing for the imminent inspection, and actively displays his understanding that it is not yet time to begin the inspection. Accordingly, he monitors Nita's actions and synchronizes his bodily orientations to aim for the proper timing to begin self-inspection.

Secondly, Chaz embodies the increased amount of information regarding the new cut, collected through self-inspection. As Nita marks the beginning of inspection by placing and adjusting the mirror behind him (line 04), Chaz performs inspection (line 05). Having done so, he vocally and bodily provides his reactions (line 06). Two observations about his turn here are of further interest: 1) vocally, he creates two distinguishing units with the tone of his voice (the vowels *o:::* and *a:::~:*); 2) in terms of bodily behavior, he moves his head up as he utters the second unit of the turn (i.e. as he says *a:::~:*). With these vocal and embodied actions, Chaz makes explicit his process of gathering relevant information for service evaluation, and displays the change of his knowledge status regarding the new cut.

Finally, the way the participants close the service-assessment activity reflects its proper progression. Nita treats Chaz's action as an indication that there are no issues, moving on to solicit a final assessment (line 07). Chaz provides an affirming response in a preferred turn-shape format, as he looks up and marks the end of his inspection (line 08). This combination of verbal and embodied practices validates his response as a relevantly positioned and informed assessment, and accordingly, Nita closes the sequence (line 09). Beyond this point, Chaz *actively* avoids looking at himself reflected in the large mirror, showing his understanding of the inspection being no longer relevant (line 09).

The participants' actions in this example demonstrate their aligned orientation to how this activity is to progress: 1) as soon as Nita announced the beginning of the sequence, Chaz simultaneously coordinated his physical movement with those of Nita, arranging together the material condition for the inspection and determining when to begin the actual performance (and just as important, avoiding the mistake of an inspection performance beginning too soon); 2) once the inspection began, Chaz made visible the process of gathering information, embodying the

process of increasing his knowledge about the new cut; and 3) upon providing the definitive assessment, he avoided making any bodily moves that might be regarded as continuing the inspection, thus altogether embodying the completed status of inspection and the relevantly positioned, informed assessment.

Therefore, progression of this activity was determined by a shared, unique understanding of temporality, in other words: close attention to the different temporal orders that are in play during the event. The customer did not mindlessly start performing the inspection upon the stylist's initiation, but rather determined the appropriate timing to start the self-inspection. The satisfactory organization of the inspection, which validated the assessment that followed, was negotiated by the participants not through how long the participants spent on it, but how the customer successfully displayed his practice of enriching the self-inspection experience through gaining different types of knowledge about the cut.

4.2 Misaligned progression: the hairstylist's work of closing the activity

The two examples in this section differ from the former, in that the customer continues with his self-inspection after having provided a seemingly definitive assessment of the new cut (Examples 2 and 3 include the same customer, but with two different stylists/salons). The stylists in these examples work with the issue in different manners. In Example 2, the stylist adjusts her bodily behavior to temporarily align with the customer's course of action. In Example 3, the stylist interacts with a third party to close the activity. Importantly, in both cases, the stylists' practices transform the post-expansion (Schegloff 2007) into a progressing part of the overall activity, instead of marking it as a deviation from the ongoing activity.

Turning to Example 2, the main focus (i.e. what distinguishes it from Example 1) is what appears to be post-expansion seen in line 9 and onwards. The example starts, however, at the point where the participants initiate the service inspection, organizing the sequence in the same way as the participants did in Example 1. Here, the sequence begins as the stylist, Kay, hands a portable mirror to her customer, Ethan, so that he can hold it himself to inspect the cut.

(2)

01 Kay: ((Hands a portable mirror to Ethan))

02 (2.6) ((Kay turns the chair 90 degrees; Ethan holds up the mirror))

03 Eth: ((Brings up another hand to support the mirror when Kay stops the chair, fig. 4))



Fig. 4

04 (1.0) ((Kay starts turning the chair an additional 45 degrees to the right))

05 Eth: hm, °yep° ((Kay stops the chair and retracts her hand from the chair))

06 Kay: (°do you like that°)

((Kay shifts her gaze from Ethan to camera, and moves off camera))

07 (1.5) ((Ethan turns his head, looking at the mirror; Kay wipes her hands on a towel))

08 Eth: ((nods)) very nice.

((Kay puts down the hand towel))

09 (2.0) ((Ethan touches and feels the back of his head, continuing to look at the mirror; Kay steps toward Ethan with her hand reaching the hand-held mirror, opening her mouth, fig. 5))



Fig. 5

10 (1.0) ((Kay withholds the hand and shifts her gaze from Ethan to the large mirror, but keeping her arm up, Fig. 6))



Fig. 6

11 Eth: ((Finishes feeling the back of his cut, but continues to hold up and look at the mirror, fig. 7))



Fig. 7

12 Kay: okay? ((Lowers her left arm/hand))

13 Eth: uh-huh.=

|
((Ethan looks up at Kay and slightly lowers the mirror))

14 Kay: =alright.

|
((Kay shifts gaze to Ethan and steps toward him to receive the mirror with her right hand, fig. 8))



Fig. 8

15 Eth: thank you.

|
((Ethan gives the mirror back to Kay))

16 Kay: thank yo:u.

Similar to Example 1, the participants' aligned bodily coordination prepares for the upcoming self-inspection (lines 01-02). When Kay stops the chair, Ethan brings up another hand to support the mirror (line 03), displaying his understanding of the appropriate moment to begin inspecting. Now that they have successfully arrived at the relevant place to start inspecting the service outcome, Ethan looks at a side profile of his haircut in the two mirrors, and provides a positive reaction (line 05). By then, however, Kay has also turned the chair again, now showing the back profile of the cut in the two mirrors (lines 04-05). As she presents a new piece of visual information to her customer, she moves forward the activity through a combination of multimodal actions. First, she makes a verbal move (line 06). This utterance is produced in a very low volume, making it difficult for the analyst (and possibly for the co-participant as well) to identify its content. It is possible, however, to observe that Kay's move makes some sort of verbal response from Ethan conditionally relevant, and likely a positive evaluation of the new cut. Secondly, as she makes this utterance, she orients to the relevance of Ethan's further inspection by shifting her gaze and stepping away from him (line 06). With this combination of verbal and bodily practices, she advances both the verbal sequence and that of physical inspection. Ethan also embodies his orientations to both of these aspects; he does not immediately answer her question, first taking time to inspect the back of the cut (line 07) before moving the verbal sequence forward (line 08).

Up to this point, Example 2 resembles Example 1. The participants' shared understanding of, and orientation to, the aim of the overall activity is evident: 1) Kay and Ethan coordinated their bodily moves to arrange the proper setting for the imminent inspection and to align when to begin its performance; and, 2) the participants embodied a deepened knowledge of the new cut. In other words, it is not just about providing a verbal assessment when it is solicited; rather, the proper assessment must be coupled with the display of his increased knowledge about the service outcome. With this reasonably positioned assessment, the sequence can now proceed to its closure, and, in fact, Kay seemingly prepares to receive the hand mirror back by emptying her hand (line 08).

What happens next, however, is that Ethan continues his self-inspection by looking at and touching the back of his head (line 09). At this moment, Kay is already on her way to retrieve the mirror from Ethan, as seen in her physical behavior of stepping and reaching her arm toward him (line 09). In looking at how Kay works with this post-expansion initiated by her customer, it is necessary to highlight two observations: 1) what Ethan does in this expanded time; and, 2) how Kay works with Ethan's action and gets back to the business of activity closure in a timely manner. These points allow us to see how the participants eventually transform the expanded sequence into a coherent progression of the activity.

The first observation reveals that Ethan's bodily behavior indicates more than a mere continuation of his inspection. It is noteworthy because he has been only *looking* at the cut so far. In other words, *touching* is a new inspection-practice that provides him with a different type of information on the cut. Rather than simply prolonging the inspection, this can be regarded as Ethan upgrading his inspection experience. Kay seems to work along with this interpretation; she changes her course of action and joins the inspection by shifting her gaze from Ethan's face to his haircut reflected in the large mirror (line 10). However, as she does so, she keeps her arm and hand raised in a particular position, exhibiting the ongoing but suspended status of the activity. Such action from the stylist – as opposed to fully abandoning and renewing the preceding course of action by lowering her arm – could pressure Ethan into ending his inspection (a number of studies have demonstrated that interlocutors use suspension of a visible conduct for projecting – or promising – a resumption, e.g. Oloff 2013; Keisanen et al. 2014; Suitnen 2014; Deppermann 2014); in fact, Ethan does quickly finish touching the cut; he still looks at the mirror, but stops advancing the inspection process (line 11). Following this, Kay resumes her initiation of closing the activity by verbally recycling the conditional relevance of an assessment (line 12); however, Kay's move here is potentially problematic. It risks Kay appearing not to provide enough time for the customer's self-inspection, and can depict her as forcing the customer to end his inspection.

What she does subsequently with her bodily action is noteworthy: it not only manages the above-mentioned dilemma, but also retrospectively organizes the expanded sequence as an integral, progressing part of the activity (instead of marking it as “expansion” or “add-on”). As she advances the verbal sequence, she lowers her left hand (line 12). She could have used the left hand to resume her intention to receive the portable mirror back from Ethan; instead, upon Ethan's completion of touching action, Kay lowers her left hand, using her right hand to receive the mirror (lines 14-15). As subtle as this action may appear, it deemphasizes the possibility that Kay has been *suspending* the course of closing the activity and waiting for Ethan (and thus pressuring him) to finish his inspection. Her practice of using a *new* hand renews the sequential environment, and retrospectively organizes the extended part of the inspection as a part of the *coherently* progressing course of inspection, portraying a sense that the participants have been aligned regarding the timing of the proper activity closure.

The following is another example, where the customer continues with his inspection beyond the seemingly definitive assessment given. Here, the same customer, Ethan, is receiving a haircut in a different salon from another stylist, Tia. Ethan's fiancée (referred to as FIA in the transcripts) observes the session off-camera, while Tia and Ethan carry on a conversation about their work and personal lives. Having finished styling the new haircut, Tia ends their conversation about a camping trip and moves on to the service-assessment sequence.

(3)

01 Tia: how does that look.
((Tia is wiping the table, looking down))

02 (1.2) ((Ethan turns his head to right))

03 Tia: °make sure you have° (.) the mirror.
((Tia takes out a mirror from a drawer))

04 (0.5) ((Ethan brings his head back to a forward position))

05 Eth: .hhhhh=

06 Eth: =hhh:::m,
((Ethan smiles))

07 Tia: >°is tha[t° okay?<
((Tia frowns))
((Tia hands a hand-held mirror))

08 Eth: [I like it. yeah, (.) tha[t's cool.

09 Tia: [okay.

10 Tia: thAt (.) "hhh:m" scared me hh-for-hh a
((Tia starts turning the chair; Ethan positions the portable mirror in front of himself))

11 Tia: sehhco[nd, (0.2) .hhhhh=

12 Eth: [hh heh heh heh

13 Tia: =I was like, (0.2) .hhh what does that mEan, hhh
((Tia stops the chair at about 90 degrees, looking at his haircut in a large mirror, fig. 9))



Fig. 9

14 Eth: cuz I was looking at this (.) (thing [here]
((Ethan points to the top of his head))

15 Tia: [oh=uh-huh.
((Tia starts turning the chair again))

16 (0.5) ((Tia continues turning the chair))

17 Tia: °kay, (.) in the back.°
 ((Tia completes turning the chair for another 90 degrees))

18 (2.5) ((Ethan moves his head and the portable mirror and observes the back of his cut))

19 Eth: °↑yeah,°=

20 Tia: =it's a lO[t smalle-,r=>I think it was like,< (.) dOUble?
 ((Tia extends her hand to the back of Ethan's hair, looking at him, fig. 10))

21 Eth: [>how's it look to you?<
 ((Ethan lowers the portable mirror and looks at/talks to the fiancée)) ((Ethan looks back at the mirror))



Fig. 10

22 (0.4)

23 Tia: when you came i[n?
 ((Tia again extends her hand, framing the back of Ethan's cut))

24 Eth: [oh yeah, it w[as-
 ((Ethan reaches the back of his cut))

25 Tia: [RI:ght?=
 ((Tia nods repetitively))

26 Eth: =it was like this, (.) maybe.
 ((Ethan places his left hand to his neck and measures the length that it was before the cut, fig. 11))



Figure 11

27 (0.3)

28 Tia: nnYEAh and then it was like (.) poofing out (.)

((Tia again extends her hand to the back of Ethan's hair to make poofing motion, showing thickness before the cut))

29 Tia: r[ight here I thi-hh-nk. .hhhhh

((Tia shifts her posture and gaze away from Ethan to pick up a towel from the counter))

30 Eth: [hhh hhh hhh hhhh

31 (0.4) ((Ethan continues smiling and feels through the back of his hair, slightly turning left))

32 Eth: .hh (0.2) o:hh (.) feels nice.

((Ethan continues feeling through the hair and looking into the hand-held mirror, slightly turning the chair to his right))

((Tia looks at Ethan in the large mirror, fig. 12))



Fig. 12

33 Tia: hhhh=kay, .hh

34 (0.4) ((Ethan continues to feel through his cut and look into the hand-held mirror, and slightly turns the chair to his right))

35 Tia: is that okay? (.) [s- >is-it?<

((Tia turns her head and body to look at the fiancée, fig. 13))

36 Fia: [uh-huh, y[eah!

37 Tia: [okahhy.

((Tia shifts her bodily orientation to Ethan and starts turning the chair))



Figure 13

respond; Ethan subsequently expresses a slightly different point of view on how they differ (lines 24 and 26). Tia reaffirms her perspective via verbal and embodied practices (lines 28-29), and they laugh together (lines 29-30). While this negotiation merits further analysis, it is sufficient here to highlight that they work together to bring up the quality of the inspection experience, thus enhancing the value of the service. Ethan further develops his inspection by obtaining new information: feeling the cut (line 31). As he does so, he uses a change-of-state token (Heritage 1984), displaying his increased status of knowledge in providing another positive service-assessment (line 32). His utterance here contributes to maturing the service-assessment activity, and Tia accordingly initiates completion by accepting Ethan's assessment (line 33). In this way, they have collaboratively enriched the inspection process and the value of the new haircut. However, the problem emerges when Ethan continues to engage in self-inspection even after the sequence closure has been made relevant.

In response, Tia launches another service-assessment sequence; however, this time she addresses a third party, namely Ethan's fiancée (line 35). In this episode, Ethan's fiancée actively involved herself at the beginning of the haircutting session, and, as seen in line 21, Ethan also made the fiancée's evaluation a relevant part of the activity by soliciting her opinion. Therefore, Tia's pursuit of Ethan's fiancée's approval here is appropriate and no one orients to it as deviant or extraordinary. Nonetheless, using this as a resource, Tia accomplishes a number of things. Firstly, she upgrades the inspection-experience; the haircut now gets a different type of evaluation, i.e. an approval from the customer's fiancée. Had she solicited another, possibly final assessment from Ethan instead, it would have likely worked as a tool to close the activity, but would not have upgraded the inspection, nor the value of the service (no new information would have been generated here, since Ethan had already given his approval based on the sufficient inspection). Moreover, such action would have marked Ethan's continuous inspection as prolonged, and as a consequence, Tia's move as a rather forceful one. Secondly, Tia's practice of enlisting a third party transforms Ethan's continuous inspection into a space for a meaningful, coherent progress of the activity. Here, similar to Example 2, the stylist succeeds in diluting the customer's continuation as expansion. As soon as Ethan's fiancée responds (line 36), Tia acknowledges it and begins to turn the chair (line 37). As the chair is turned back to its original position, she officially announces the completed status of the session (line 39).

The participants' practices of enriching the process of inspection (i.e. by collecting multiple types of information, each providing distinct experiences and knowledge) help to re-organize the possible expansion as an integral part of the activity. In Example 2, when the customer continued his inspection, he demonstrated that he was obtaining new information that contributed to his increased knowledge about the cut, as opposed to its mere prolongation. The stylist also treated it as non-expansion, i.e. as not departing from activity progression. In Example 3, the stylist used a third party to advance the inspection event, nullifying the appearance of prolonged/expanded inspection practice. Such arranged actions may help participants manage the sensitive aspects that extended/prolonged inspections may bring about. Marking a potential expansion as an expansion is problematic, since it can imply that the stylist has failed at providing the client with enough time for service inspection, or, for that matter, enough care. In a similar fashion, this may signal problems with the service outcome on behalf of the customer, or a customer that takes too much time. But by organizing such actions as elements of an ongoing, growing activity, the participants successfully transformed the expansion into a meaningful part of activity progression which contributes to taking sufficient time for inspection instead of wasting or spending too much time.



Fig. 15

7 Eri: >it's good. °()°<

((Eri slightly tilts her head down, looking at the hand-held mirror; Tia continues to move closer to the back of Eri's hair))

8 (3.2) ((Tia runs her fingers through Eri's hair while facing towards the large mirror; Eri continues to stare at the mirror, fig. 16))



Fig. 16

9 Tia: this () has more volume than=

((Tia continues to run her fingers through Eri's hair, facing towards the large mirror))

10 Tia: =what you usually have so I blow-dried it.=

| L((Tia looks at Eri))
((Eri looks up towards Tia))

((Tia shakes her upward-facing palms, fig. 17))



Fig. 17

11 Eri: =right, right.

| ((Eri looks at the hand-held mirror))

12 (0.6) ((Eri strokes through her hair with her fingers, from her forehead moving upwards; Tia shifts her gazes from Eri to the large mirror, fig. 18))



Fig. 18

- 13 Tia: °yea:h°=
 ((Tia steps back, looking at the large mirror))
- 14 Eri: =>okay<, (.) than[k yo:u
 ((Eri runs her fingers through her hair and drops her hand, resting on her lap))
 ((Eri looks at Tia))((Eri looks at the mirror))
- 15 Tia: [do you l:iike i:[:t?
 ((Tia stays still, looking at the large mirror on wall))
 ((Eri momentarily looks at Tia))
- 16 Eri: [yes >thank you.< =
 ((Eri looks at the hand-held mirror, shaking her head from side to side, fig. 19))



Fig. 19

- 17 Tia: =is that length okay?
 ((Both keep looking at Eri's hair in the large mirror, as Eri keeps shaking her head from side to side))
- 18 Eri: ((Lifts a second hand to support the hand-held mirror, and looks intensely at it, fig. 20))



Fig. 20

19 Tia: is it, feel through your hair and tell me if it feels
20 thin enough or thick enough, if you need mo:re taken o:ut
21 like.

The service-assessment activity begins when Tia hands a portable mirror to Eri, starting the sequence (line 01). At first, Eri displays a lack of knowledge in how to use the mirror (and possibly, for what purpose it serves); however, as soon as Tia starts turning the chair, Eri demonstrates her understanding of the ongoing activity (line 02). Having turned the chair, Tia steps back and looks at the large mirror, marking the beginning of self-inspection (line 03). Eri aligns with this by overtly moving the mirror (line 04), but also jokingly expresses her lack of skill in conducting a proper inspection (line 05). Seeing that Eri is not prepared for the immediate self-inspection, Tia moves back closer to Eri (line 06); halfway through Tia's move, however, Eri finally succeeds in adjusting the mirror to see the back of her cut (line 06).

Although the activity started out with a rather rough form of progression – with Eri's limited knowledge in how the activity should unfold, the participants successfully communicated the appropriate moment to begin self-inspection (lines 03-04). The scene is now set to aid Eri with gathering enough information to display her increased knowledge of the new cut. Accordingly, she slightly moves her head to examine the cut, but immediately before engaging in this action, she makes an assessment (line 07). Her assessment is designed as premature, because she is still continuing her inspection process during her utterance (i.e. she continues looking at the back of her haircut from a different angle). Likewise, Tia treats Eri's assessment as non-definitive by disorienting to it: instead of acknowledging Eri's assessment, Tia runs her fingers through Eri's hair, adding new visual information for Eri to consider (line 08). In other words, Tia embodies her orientation to the development of the self-inspection process through the combination of her physical behavior and disorientation to the verbal sequence progression.

However, the negotiation of activity progress gets problematic when Eri merely keeps looking at the mirror, not showing any state of her increased knowledge. Tia then attempts to verbally build on Eri's inspection experience: she further guides Eri on how to evaluate the cut by explaining about the volume of the new cut (lines 09-10). Eri immediately registers the information (line 11). Although her response does not demonstrate any change of state in her knowledge, she now orients to the relevance of further inspection by looking back at the mirror and running her fingers through her hair (line 12). Accordingly, Tia shifts her gaze from Eri to the large mirror and steps back (line 13). With their bodily orientations, Eri can now be expected to advance her inspection.

However, what immediately follows is a verbal move by Eri that initiates a sequence closure (line 14). During this utterance, she initially looks at Tia but then promptly looks back at the mirror. Thus, while she hints verbally at the forthcoming session closure, her embodied actions contradictorily indicate the continuation of self-inspection. Moreover, she is not using any new

inspection practices; a mere continuation of looking does not supply her with more knowledge about the service outcome. Tia now has two options for her next action: she can either go with the flow of the verbal sequence structure and close the activity, or attend to Eri's bodily behavior and make relevant a continued inspection.

She goes with the latter by disregarding Eri's verbal turn and proposing a new question (line 15). This question is formulated with the stretched sounds of "like" and "it", displaying a certain degree of uncertainty she orients to in terms of Eri's response. During her utterance, she also continues to look at Eri's haircut in the mirror. While this question makes a linguistic act relevant (i.e. an answer), her packaged action more strongly orients to the relevance of the development of Eri's self-inspection. Eri still orients to the structural aspect of sequence by immediately agreeing with Tia, but finally advances the inspection by adding a new practice to it, namely shaking her head from side to side (line 16).

Tia again disregards Eri's verbal component, but picks up on the embodied advancement of the inspection and further works on developing it by aiding Eri with a certain point of reference for inspecting the cut (line 17). This is where Eri more clearly shows her orientation to the relevance of not "mere continuous" inspection but its valid progress, that is: the relevance of publicly displaying that she is developing her self-inspection with a new practice, instead of continuing with "old" practices (i.e. looking and touching the cut) without any noticeable progress. She embodies this by lifting another hand to support the mirror and displaying her intense examination of the cut (line 18). Tia then further directs Eri with a specific request for physical action (lines 19-21).

In this case, the sufficient self-inspection and the meaning of progressing the activity was negotiated gradually through various practices, which included dismissing the local, verbal sequence progression. The stylist's effort in pursuing matured inspection for the service evaluation paid off in the end, as it has turned out that this sequence was followed by another consultation in which they decided to have another haircutting session to further thin out the customer's hair.

5. Conclusion

In response to the emerging understanding of activity progression as demonstrated by the participants' orientation to the overall, higher goal of the activity (as opposed to the local and structural progression), this study has pursued the mechanism of activity progression that necessarily involves both verbal and physical components. What it meant to move the service-assessment activity forward was revealed in coordinated actions at three different points of the activity. Firstly, at the time of initiating the activity, the meaning of successful progression resided in the participants' collaborative arrangement of the adequate material setting for the service inspection, and in determining the appropriate moment to commence it (Examples 1, 2, and 4). Thus, immediately following the stylist's announcement of the upcoming inspection was regarded as *too soon* and deviating from the appropriate temporality (Example 3). Secondly, the inspection progression meant not just fulfilling a given slot for self-inspection, nor a mere dramatization of the act of inspection; rather, it was about embodying the process of enriching the inspection by demonstrating the customers' increased knowledge about the cut. Participants achieved this by mobilizing multiple resources in a clear display of increased knowledge of the cut, such as making new observations and exercising bodily practices that provide the customer with new experiences with the cut (Examples 1, 2, and 3). These different practices provided distinct experiences, information, and knowledge of the cut, and were also invoked to move the evaluation activity forward, thus deepening the inspection process as a whole. When the customer did not sufficiently mobilize such resources, the stylist helped to intensify the customer's inspection by pointing out

how better the haircut had become (Example 3), or through a suspension of certain actions and the asynchronous mobilization of multimodal resources (Example 4).

Thirdly, the participants' orientation to the activity goal was made visible in the ways they negotiated the activity closure. Here, the relevant completion point was determined not only based on whether the assessment was relevantly positioned (i.e. followed by self-inspection), but more importantly, on how the experience of self-inspection had been enhanced and how the customer had displayed their *increased* knowledge of the service outcome. This orientation sometimes resulted in the stylist's expansion of the sequence despite a customer's definitive assessment and initiation of sequence closure (Example 4), or, on the contrary, the stylist's subtle moves toward the activity closure despite a customer's continuous (but not developing) engagement in self-inspection (Examples 2 and 3). In the latter case, the stylists' work was noteworthy in that they concealed the possibly problematic moment of prolonged inspection and smoothly integrated it into an essential part of activity progress.

The analytical findings of this study align with the previous works' claim that the structural preference for progressivity and the participants' concern to move the main business forward are complexly interrelated. However, examining this complexity in a multimodal, activity-rich interaction suggests an additional perspective toward the notion of progressivity. Much of the previous studies have captured various relevances that participants orient to in negotiating the valid progress of an activity, as different levels of progressivity (e.g. turn/sequence/activity-level, as demonstrated by Lee 2011). This perspective allows us to understand how participants balance the multiple contingencies that the activity is subject to, and how their orientation to a higher activity goal informs their coordination of local actions. Regardless, this distinction is not always there for the participants to "orient to". In an activity that necessarily involves multimodal engagement (and where progressivity is not only about conversational progress), a first action can invoke several types, modes, and temporalities of conditional relevances. Accordingly, respondents negotiate which next-one to orient to, and/or realize multiple next-ones by arranging various modalities simultaneously or singly, in a synchronous or asynchronous fashion. During this process, participants pay close attention to the temporal unfolding of one another's physical and verbal/vocal actions so as to embody their contributions as part of meaningful activity development. This can also be done retrospectively, when they entrain their own or the other's previous action as an integral part of an activity progress. Here, the distinction between actions that contribute to the local progress and those that expedite the overall activity is not apparent, but is subject to moment-by-moment negotiation – or can even be an irrelevant matter from a member's perspective. Participants orient to multiple scales of temporal, physical, and social constraints (and affordances) in negotiating what counts as valid activity progression at each moment. In this case, progressivity is not a multi-level phenomenon, but multidimensional and multi-temporal.

In the latest case, it was through the participants' engagement in this multidimensional/multi-temporal progress that they accomplished *taking enough time without taking too much time*, or *efficient yet sufficient* service. This accomplishment seems to help manage two things in particular. The first is the negotiation of what it means to perform an adequate evaluation. As opposed to services that may be assessed by well-defined measure of success (e.g. whether something now works properly after mechanical service and repair), the haircutting evaluation does not operate on clear, public criteria but rather on subjective perspectives; consequently, the negotiation of how long it should last is a sensitive matter. On one hand, attentive stylists usually secure enough time for their customers' self-inspection to ensure their satisfaction with the service outcome. Customers also have to perform inspections adequate enough to validate their independent appraisal in such a way that their assessment is not taken as a response produced out of mere social courtesy, all without unnecessarily prolonging the inspection. On the other hand,

efficient progression of this activity is crucial, as there are often subsequent customers waiting, and, after all, this is a commercial space where revenue (and often the stylists' own income) is determined by the number of clients seen each day (Gimlin 1996). This dilemma of taking enough time without taking too much time seems to be managed by embodying how time is efficiently spent instead of being wasted. What counts as a *valid* progressing move in a given activity is negotiated with the participants' embodiment of advancing (as opposed to merely continuing) the inspection. Such orientations were especially salient in the ways the stylists dealt with the customers' continuous inspection. For them to mark the customer's action as *prolonged* risks not only embarrassing the customers but also presenting the stylists as forcefully closing the activity. By diluting the expansiveness and transforming it into a coherent course of developing action, the stylists sufficiently and efficiently brought closure to the activity.

The second is what an adequate inspection should lead to. The multidimensional orientation to activity progress does not only allow participants to embody the meaningful (versus wasted) consumption of time, but also helps to secure the customer's enhanced appreciation of the service outcome. In other words, the service-assessment sequence does not just offer a moment for evaluating and assessing the new cut, but also gives participants a chance to work together to enhance the value of the given service through communicative work (in addition to the obvious technical work). This way of organizing the service-assessing activity can also directly contribute to the increase in client appreciation and perceived value toward the stylist's work as well, since what usually follows this activity is the exchange of money, and (in the case of salons documented in this study), additional remuneration in the form of tipping and repeat patronage. Increasing a customer's appreciation of the stylist's work, thus increasing the commercial value of the service provided, might be *the* significant means for making the transaction more meaningful to all parties.

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