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Interactional functions of invoking procedure in institutional settings

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Abstract

When people interact in institutional settings, they frequently invoke procedure. Professionals invoke procedure in order to set or negotiate the frame for the interaction: how it can, will, should or usually does proceed. This paper identifies an instance of invoking procedure (InP) by five criteria: a participant projects a forthcoming action or series of events, and accounts for the projection; the account conveys institutional reasoning (e.g. purpose, conditions) for projecting the forthcoming action(s), and often invokes membership categories, tacit norms and rules. Through a conversation analytic study, we outline a typology on the functions of invoking procedure and what is accomplished in situ. Our analyses show six local functions of InP in institutional talk-in-interaction: (1) announcing procedure, (2) forcing procedure, (3) negotiating procedure, (4) dealing with criticism of procedure, (5) distancing oneself from procedure, and (6) leaving procedure. Overall, invoking procedure appears to be an important feature of institutional interaction used by professionals in order to deal with asymmetries, negotiate procedure and orient to membership competence acquisition and socialization practices.

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Keywords: Conversation analysis; Professional practice; Socialization; Acquisition of membership competence; Invoke; Procedure

1. Procedure in institutional interaction

This article investigates the usage of professionals invoking procedure (InP¹) in institutional talk-in-interaction. InP occurs when a participant, in a turn-at-talk or through a series of turns-at-talk, explains to the other participants how the interaction can, will, should or usually does proceed.

The phenomenon is very common in institutional interaction. Instances are frequently found in the literature on institutional interaction. To note a few: doctors frequently inform patients when it is time to conduct a physical examination during a consultation (Heath, 1992; Heritage and Stivers, 1999); emergency call takers may find it necessary to inform prank callers that jokes are inappropriate (Zimmerman, 1998:88–89); and courtroom counsel may instruct witnesses to provide only yes or no answers to questions (Atkinson and Drew, 1979). But there are also examples of expert professionals informing novice professionals; for instance learning to be an anthropologist (Goodwin, 1994) and learning to be a doctor (Koschmann et al., 2007). These and numerous other instances document how professional/expert participants inform lay/novice participants about the purpose and the characteristics of the ongoing procedure.

In a recent insightful study of surgery at a teaching hospital Koschmann et al. (2011) found “procedure work” pervasive embedded in talk and action. For instance, bringing up a topic may project a step, returning to some matter by prefacing a statement with a temporal deictic like “now” a projected step may be presented as having had arrived, and an announcement may serve to align a procedural account with some institutional procedure in progress, marking its place in

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¹ We use the abbreviation InP also as noun, referring to it as a social action and a practice. See section 1.2.

the unfolding procedure, because such “effort is required when doing a procedure together to keep everyone on the ‘same page’ (...). This might be termed *procedure work*, not the work of carrying out the procedure itself, but the work of locally producing the procedure as procedure” (Koschmann et al., 2011:534; our italics). Our study contributes to the understanding of procedure work. It explores the phenomenon in a wider area of settings, and it seeks to systematize its variety of important functions.

Whereas Ethnomethodology (EM) examines the methods members use to produce intelligible action, conversation analysis (CA) targets the mechanisms by which talk-in-interaction is organized. Both disciplines have increasingly focused their studies upon work place practices. EM was from its starting point in the 1950s critical of organization theory that rests upon notions of individuality, power and blind adherence to rules and norms (Bittner, 1965). Instead EM emphasizes that organizations are continuously constructed and reproduced through members’ active and mutual orientations towards expectancies as embedded in practical action. These characteristics have been documented in settings such as suicide prevention centers (Garfinkel, 1967), rehabilitation organizations (Wieder, 1974), schools (Mehan, 1991), and many more. From the perspective of CA, countless studies have illuminated the conversational practices that, to a large extent, constitute institutional work and reality (see for instance Sidnell, 2010). Conversational practices are employed ‘goal-oriented’ in institutional interaction, albeit to varying degrees (Drew and Heritage, 1992).

In contribution to the mentioned EM and CA work, this paper provides materials and analyses of how people orient to interaction types, genres, big packages, activity types, etc. as normative frameworks of how institutional interaction should proceed. It aims at contributing to the study of how people make larger (normative, routine) structures of interaction locally relevant. It is, thus, also a contribution to the micro/macro-issue in research on social interaction.

The first part of the article presents the object of analysis, the data, the method and discusses the relevant literature. The second part of the article documents what we find to be six central functions of InP. The third and final part of the article discusses consequences of invoking procedure in regard to interactional asymmetries and acquisition of procedural membership competence.

1.1. ‘Invoking procedure’ as a social action

We are not studying procedures as such. Our research object is part of the larger endeavor of conversation analysis; we aim to study the interactional use of interactional strategies to invoke procedure. In the following, we define our key concepts and show the reflexive character of the phenomenon.

We use the term ‘procedure’ to denote the series of goal-oriented actions that participants employ to carry out their institutional businesses. Procedure, thus, refers to members’ mutually assumed understandings of *who* is to do *what* and *when* during institutional interaction. By invoking procedures we do not mean following official written protocols (Lynch, 2002) or following instructions (Armerine and Bilmes, 1988), but the tacitly understood and in some way displayed orientation towards certain ways of doing things here-and-now. Thus, by analyzing the ways in which professionals (tacitly or non-tacitly) invoke shared tacit knowledge² about procedures in their routinized practice, this article makes explicit an important part of these professionals’ knowledge regarding the logic of actual didactic work practices (Schmidt, 2012).

We do not look at procedures as mental states, or as surgical procedures, but as prescribed courses of action, or sets of step, designed to exert control over outcome, often regularized or standardized (Koschmann et al., 2011), and which may accomplish different things in different settings. Such procedures are, of course, often flexible, dynamic and subject to local negotiation between participants.

By the term ‘invoking’ we refer to a wide range of (explicit or implicit) interactional practices used to make something relevant to and for the interaction. Participants invoke procedures in order to let them become procedurally relevant, i.e., for managing local tasks, problems and conflicts of action. Invoking procedure is producing a plea for, a claimed relation to, an allusion to or a naming of an ongoing or potential activity referring to a purpose, an order of events, a plan or participant roles as stated or negotiable reasons for the activity. Invoking procedure therefore constitutes a way of referring to an established practice or convention. Invoking procedure is an interactional choice aimed at accomplishing something in and for the interaction. Procedures may be more or less schematic/explicit (cf. Heritage, 2007; Schegloff, 1972) or norm based, but *the invocation* of procedures may independently of such features accomplish something locally and interactionally. Similar to some kinds of references, a statement of procedure is a second order action, accomplishing more than stating a procedure.³

² For a thorough discussion of the concept of ‘tacit knowledge’, see Schmidt (2012).

³ Compare, how previous conversation analytic research has explored ‘references’ to persons, places and objects (Enfield and Stivers, 2007; Goodwin, 2003; Heritage, 2007; Sacks and Schegloff, 1979; Schegloff, 1972, 1996), and shown how a reference may be ‘only’ a reference, and sometimes more than ‘only’ a reference (cf. Schegloff, 1996). For instance, place terms can be used to formulate objects other than place, e.g. activities (“he’s at the ballpark”) or do other work in addition to referring to places, e.g. name-dropping/bragging/showing off (“I was on the ranch”) (Schegloff, 1972).

Professionals' understandings are tacitly embedded in practical action, but may be invoked in order to establish progressivity or other types of conduct, or it may be voiced in order to inform less knowing participants (e.g. novices, other professionals or lay participants). The understandings are changeable, that is, participants expect of one another willingness to alter procedures if demanded by the circumstances. The latter aspect is important because it describes a major theoretical difference between contrasting ways of regarding organizational work.

As Suchman demonstrated in her pioneer study (Suchman, 2007), the notion of 'plans' is overestimated. Plans are rarely carried out the way they were planned. Participants may plan to conduct meetings in distinct ways, but in practice a variety of events usually interfere with the plans, and participants will have to alter the course of events. This is often accomplished by invoking the relevant procedures in order to maintain a local order.

We look at this as an institutional phenomenon that is embedded in an institutional environment. Invoking procedures in this environment is enacted because of the difference between participants' familiarities with the settings' "normal" procedures, which on the other hand in large measure distinguishes the professional from the lay person.

We define professions as "somewhat exclusive groups of individuals applying somewhat abstract knowledge to particular cases" (Abott, 1988:8). Professionals are conceptualized as 'reflective practitioners' (Schön, 1983) with vast taken-for-granted knowledge that drives routinized practice. Professionals can both be novices as for instance employees who participate in a new meeting format or 'intuitive experts' as for instance doctors (Dreyfus and Dreyfus, 1986). Their tacit expert knowledge is based on a repertoire of experience (Polanyi, 1966; Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995; Wackerhausen, 1998), and it is cognitively structured as intuition and is therefore rarely articulated (Schön, 1983; Dreyfus and Dreyfus, 1986).

Expert professionals do not act based on rational decision models. They do it based upon a mental stock of routine and experience. The expert professional does not constantly reflect upon all options available for action in a given situation, but reacts as experience has taught them appropriate. When confronted with lay participants or novice professionals, expert professionals need in some way to invoke procedures to make sense of the situation. The paper will focus on how this is accomplished in situ.

1.2. Data and method

In order to see InP as a robust phenomenon, we look at different kinds of institutional settings. Furthermore, we see professionals acting as professionals due to their institutional position, role behavior, their acquired knowledge of their profession and their acquired knowledge of the specific interaction they are to participate in. Institutional interaction is defined by the way one or more of the participants orient to the institutional character of the interactional setting. It is not beforehand given whom and in what precise way a participant can be said to be a professional. What is institutional about institutional interaction is to be defined by the in situ interactional accomplishment of context by members via here and now interactional, conversational methods and activities (Housley, 2003; Clayman and Heritage, 2010).

Procedures are often invoked by some kind of member, insider or expert (e.g. a member of a team or a doctor), thereby doing an institutionally contingent action. The interesting questions are how this is done, and what it helps participants accomplish. Epistemic asymmetries are salient in institutional interaction "due to the fact that lay people seek professional services precisely because they lack epistemic access to the relevant domain (e.g., legal knowledge, medical knowledge, tax knowledge, psychological knowledge)" (Drew, 1991; here referred via Stiver et al., 2011:8).

This makes it relevant to study procedures in different types of institutional interaction: professionals with longer or shorter experience and/or positioned differently in an organizational hierarchy; professionals coming from different professions; professionals interacting with lay persons; professionals together in familiar setting with well established practice; and professionals together in an unfamiliar setting; a variety of participant types (with respect to knowledge, rights and duties) interacting in settings with a wide range of acceptable behavior as well as in settings with highly standardized interaction format. There is a broad variety of ways doing being a professional, but on a rough scale we define two main positions: being an expert professional and being a novice professional.

Likewise, lay persons interact with professionals in order to solve a private matter (e.g. regarding health or asylum), and they are often unfamiliar with the specifics of the interaction they participate in. Lay participants may, however, be expert-lay-persons, having acquired more knowledge about a particular institutional interaction format than a novice professional (e.g. a patient receiving dialysis twice a week). This phenomenon is not to be mistaken with professionals-as-lay persons (e.g. a cancer patient with a professional background as a doctor). Lay participants may also display understandings of procedure, or initiate negotiation of procedure. However, we do not examine this phenomenon in this article: we only talk about lay participants.

We seek to provide a systematic account of professionals invoking procedure in institutional interaction and what these InPs accomplish interactionally.

We have therefore made data runs in five different corpuses: department meetings (expert and novice professionals with longer or shorter experience and/or positioned differently in an organizational hierarchy in a familiar setting with well established practice but with a wide range of acceptable behavior), geriatric case conferences (expert professionals from different professions interacting with lay persons with different levels of familiarity to the interaction format), innovation workshop group sessions (expert and novice professionals from different professions in an unfamiliar setting and with different levels of familiarity to the interaction format), semi-structured research interviews (novice professionals from different professions interacting in a highly standardized interaction format to which both parties are novices⁴) and police interviews with foreigners applying for citizenship (expert professionals interacting with lay persons in a highly standardized interaction format).

In the selection of extracts for this article, we have attempted to balance two considerations: showing the phenomenon in a range of settings and showing the prevalence of the phenomenon in certain stretches of talk. Although there are many differences between a doctor–patient activity type and a business meeting between employees (for instance the amount of employed people), we are interested in the general characteristics.

The data has been analyzed from a conversation analytic perspective. Excerpts have been transcribed in accordance with the general conversation analytic standards (see e.g. *Atkinson and Heritage, 1984*). English translations are presented in italics. Pseudonyms have been introduced to keep the participants' identities confidential, and all recordings were made with the informed consent of every participant.

1.3. Results

We have found five criteria to be common for InP, which makes it possible to recognize instances of InP:

1. A participant projects a forthcoming action or series of events
2. The participant accounts for the projection
3. The account conveys institutional reasoning (e.g. purpose, conditions) for projecting the forthcoming action(s)
4. The account often invokes membership categories
5. The account often invokes tacit norms and rules.

The criteria are not equally distributed in all the examples, but are nonetheless possible to identify throughout the corpus. The criteria are not necessarily tied to one turn at talk by one participant. More than one speaker in a sequence may meet these criteria, and interlocutors may collaborate in conveying institutional reasoning, categories, norms and rules.

Our study show that invoking a procedure is a strategic action, 'doing X by doing Y' (*Arminen, 2005:43, 136–138*). We suggest six different types of actions accomplished locally in talk-in-interaction by invoking procedure:

1. Announcing procedure
2. Forcing procedure
3. Negotiating procedure
4. Dealing with criticism of procedures
5. Distancing oneself from procedure
6. Leaving procedure

Invoking procedure is sensitive to topic, activity, participants, location and timing. Therefore, they are found in many varieties. And a thorough investigation must deal with not only the explicit occurrences, but also with the more implicit ones, to a larger degree appealing to participants' tacit understandings. Hence, our analysis of the InPs becomes an explication of an important part of the professional practitioners' routinized practice. It should be noted that actions quite often invoke more than one aspect of procedure at the same time (see example (1) below).

The following short example from a geriatric case conference shows how the five criteria are unfolding by InP. The interchange occurs halfway through a 40 minute long conference. In the first 20 minutes, the participants (including the adult daughter, DA, of the patient, PA) have agreed that the patient should be referred to a residential home. Upon this big decision, the doctor (DO) gets ready to leave. In this example an expert professional interact with lay participants.

⁴ An experienced media journalist/interviewer is being interviewed by a (at the time of recording) novice research interviewer, a role preallocation and interaction format unfamiliar to both participants.

(1) Congratulations on your decision

(Geriatric case conference, SBNielsen, 2007)

- 1 DO: =>så: der vist kun papirarbejdet tilbage=så tror jeg
=>*I gather then there's just the paperwork left now=so I think*
- 2 lige jeg vil liste u:d. <=
I'll just sneak out.<
- 3 DA: =j:a. (0.7) °det lyder° (.) for↑nuftigt.
=yeah. (0.7) °that makes° (.) sense.
- 4 DO: men ø:h tillykke [med] din beslutning.
but erhm congratulations [on] your decision.
- 5 PA: [som]
[as]
- 6 PA: som sædvanligt tak for hjælpen.
as usual thank you very much for your help.

We see here 1) how the doctor (professional expert participant) projects a forthcoming action, namely taking departure of the meeting (l. 1–2). This projection is 2) accounted for with the assertion that there is nothing but paperwork left after the decision has been made (l. 1); the assertion works as an account because it is tied by the means of the conjunctive 'so' to the following declaration that the doctor is about to leave. The account 3) not only lays out the purpose of the remainder of the conference, but also 4)–5) establishes the participant roles: by announcing that only paperwork is to follow, the doctor also establishes that a doctor can/should take part in the medical matters, not the paperwork. This InP is first received with the acknowledgement token 'yeah' (Gardner, 2002), and it is subsequently overtly oriented to as a sensible disposition of the doctor's schedule by the patient's daughter (l. 3). By producing her turn, the doctor (l. 1) invokes a whole procedure, not only a hospital procedure including this particular meeting, but also an interactional format for the unfolding of this meeting. At the same time, the doctor negotiates procedure (does she have to participate?) and forces procedure (it's time to get on with the paperwork!), two functions of InP.

2. Social actions accomplished through invoking procedure

In the following, we show the 6 interactional functions of InP. We have in this paper prioritized to show how InP occur within the whole course of a given procedure (announcing, negotiating, executing and leaving a procedure), and is used to create such course of events in a given procedure as a course of events, rather than to explore any of these interactional functions by showing several examples of each.

2.1. Announcing procedure

By far, the most frequent usage of InP in our corpus is that of projecting what is to come in the interaction, either what immediately follows, that is, in the next turn(s) of talk or what is about to follow throughout a longer stretch of time. This might cover a trajectory of focused interaction or even the rest of the meeting, interview or other forms of institutional interaction. In other settings where professionals and lay persons engage in a series of sessions (e.g. formal meetings with agenda), professionals may lay out what will happen repeatedly in the following days/weeks/months (see e.g. Noordegraaf et al., 2009). We refer to such actions as formulating plan or purpose. Central to the understanding of this type of InP is that they construct what is about to follow as an appropriate and relevant, that is, goal oriented, part of achieving an overall institutional purpose of the interaction.

In the following, we shall see an example of a plan or purpose InP formulation which projects what is about to be said in the following trajectory of talk-in-interaction as goal-oriented discourse. The extract is from a geriatric case conference where a patient (PA) (lay participant) is discharged from the hospital. A doctor (DO) (expert professional participant) initiates the case conference with these words:

(2) Why you were hospitalized

(Opening of geriatric case conference, SBNielsen, 2008)

- 1 → DO: nu er vi her alle sammen så nu ↑starter jeg med a
we're all here now so I'll begin by
- 2 → fortælle l_idt (.) om ↑hvorfør du blev indlagt på
telling a bit (.) about why you were hospitalized

- 3 → sygehuset (.) hvad jeg kan læse mig til i journalen.
(.) *what I can read from the file.*
- 4 (0.5)
- 5 → og hvad der er sket undervejs (0.2) mens du har ↑været
and what has happened along the way (0.2) while you've
- 6 → her.
been here.
- 7 (0.9)
- 8 → DO: så ((navn på kommunal repræsentant)) (.) fra
so ((name of municipal representative)) (.) from
- 9 → hjemmeplejen oss, (.) får en ide om
the home help service also, (.) gets an idea about
- 10 PA: ja.=
yes.=
- 11 → DO: =hva der=↑hva det handler om ikk?
=what there=what this is about right?

This InP is produced by the doctor and addressed to the patient. It is hearable as the doctor's introductory remarks, informing the patient what is about to happen, making it relevant for the patient to agree with the procedure (as she does in line 10). With an emphasis on the verb (l. 1), the doctor stresses the importance of the presence of all the participants. This presence is treated as a condition to commence the conference. What follows after this extract is a resume of the patient's medical record. Such information may of course be of great interest to the patient. But it could also be conceived by the patient as well known information with little or no newsworthiness and tellability. For the municipal representative, however, the information is considered necessary in order to assess the needs of the patient and the need to perhaps refer her to in-home assistance service. These are exactly the reasons why a municipal representative participates in geriatric case conferences. In the extract above, the doctor makes it clear that the information about to be given is of particular interest to the municipal representative (l. 8–9). So, this InP, although explicitly addressed to the patient, makes it clear that the information about to be delivered is also conveyed to the municipal representative as an important overhearing audience (Drew, 1992). Thereby, this InP highlights the relevance of the representative's presence, and alerts her of the importance of the information that is about to be revealed.

We find that many, if not most, InPs that are used to announce procedure also establish participant roles, that is, propose *who* is supposed to do *what*, and *when* they are supposed to do it. This was apparent in (1) and (2) where the doctors not only clarified the purpose of the interaction to come, but also who were supposed to fulfill its goals and how.

2.2. Forcing procedure

InP also occurs when professionals need to force procedure. Here the InP is used to signal: "Let's get going". Either the professionals want to begin an activity or they want to get an activity back on track again, turning a 'time off' into a 'time on' (Goffman, 1967:162–163). This InP type typically occurs either in the opening of a conversation, interview or meeting, or when beginning a new activity in the conversation, for instance, a brainstorm or a discussion.

Extract 3 provides an example. This conversation takes place in a Danish firm at a project group meeting between, among others, Robert ('Ro') and Anna ('An'). Robert is the CEO and Anna is a project manager (both professionals).

(3) (You are actually project manager)

(Opening of innovation project group meeting; Nielsen et al., forthcoming)

- 1 Ro: så:, >lad os gentag' succesen<
so:, >let's repeat the success<
(Robert sits back in the chair and
moves his hands up toward his face,
Anna turns her head toward Robert))
- 2 ((sound of waterglass being put on table))
- 3 (0.7)
(Robert hides his face in his hands,
Anna gazes at Robert and away again))

- 4 Ro: ↑o↓kay,
5 (1.9)
((Robert moves his hands away slowly
and looks toward Anna.
Anna with a serious facial expression,
straightens her upper body up a little
and reaches out toward her papers,
adjusts her stack of papers
leans even further toward the table
and adjusts the top edge of papers))
- 6 Ro: Anna >du egen'lig projektleder
Anna >you're in fact project leader
((Robert looks at Anna,
Anna stops touching paper
and pulls her hand back))
- 7 på det[her< mæ] :=
of this [here< with] :=
((Robert looks at Anna,
Anna in movement toward Robert))
- 8 An: [↑jar,]
[↑yes,]
((Robert looks at Anna,
Anna back in chair))
- 9 ((rustling with paper))
10 (.) ((Anna turns her head toward Robert))
- 11 Ro: ka' du ikk' li::ge,
could you plea::se,
((Robert gazes at Anna, Anna gazes at Robert))
- 12 ((rustling))
13 (0.4)
- 14 Ro: >det jo nok mig der ska' placér det<
>it's probably me that'll have to explain it<
15 men) ø:h li øh
but) e:h just eh
((Robert gazes at Anna, Anna gazes at Robert))
- 16 An: ↓ja.
↓yeah.

In this excerpt, Robert invokes procedure in order to shift the conversation from pre-meeting talk to project group meeting talk as he points out to Anna that she is “actually project manager” (l.6) on this project. This explicit membership categorization emphasizes Anna's participant role as project manager and makes it relevant for her to perform certain category bound activities such as chairing the meeting and introducing the project (Sacks, 1972). The meeting starts under circumstances in which it is unclear as to who is in charge. By shuffling her papers Anna perhaps displays her readiness for the meeting to begin, but defers to Robert, the more senior party, to get things rolling. By this reading, Anna's behavior is not negligent, but rather attentive to protocol. Robert, however, dispels the ambiguity by making it clear to her and all present parties that it is her meeting to run. The InP in line 6 implies that Anna is responsible for these things, and that she has to start doing them now. In this extract Robert embodies his attempt to shift to another activity or participation mode (l. 1–5), both by changing physical position and by use of eye gaze.

It is interesting to observe how much time Anna is actually given to start chairing the meeting. When she does not, Robert interferes and tells her to begin leading the meeting: in l. 1, Robert makes a shift of footing from something prior to what they are about to do now. After this there is a pause. Robert says “okay” and then there is a pause again. These two pauses could be opportunities for Anna to start talking and chairing the meeting. But when she refrains from doing so, in l. 3–5, Robert makes a new attempt with an explicit membership categorization, producing yet another InP. This is not

news telling. The particle “actually” presupposes this as given information to her, and nobody responds to the utterance with news marking. By stating the obvious and attributing to her a leadership category, Robert makes relevant for Anna to perform a category bound activity: chairing the project group meeting. And she treats the InP as such and starts rustling with her papers. Even prior to this, Anna shows with her bodily orientation that she is anticipating Robert to ask something from her (l. 1, 5) and that his address is relevant and makes it necessary for her to make a shift in discourse identity (l. 6–11) (Zimmerman, 1998).

After this Anna answers by saying “yeah” (l.8) and she begins talking about the purpose of this particular meeting (not shown).

2.3. Negotiating procedure

Reference to procedure may also be used to negotiate procedure.

An example of this is seen in the next excerpt taken from a weekly department meeting where negotiation of local procedure for chairing the meeting is accomplished by two references to a more global procedure. Present at the meeting are the department chair Hans (Ha), Karen (Ka), Klaus (Kl), Sigurd (Si), Jón (Jó), Louise (Lo) and Jonna (Jo) (professionals with different epistemic rights).

(4) (Any other business I)

(Department meeting; MFNielsen, 2010)

- 1 Kl: [bare]
[simply]
- 2 Ha: → [vi stryger] fra dig=
[we rapidly move on] from you=
- 3 Kl: =↑vedtaget
=↑agreed to
- 4 Ha: → hvis du ikk' had' mer'=
if you didn't have anything else=
- 5 Jó: =jeg har ikk=
=I can not=
- 6 Lo: =>↑jeg ve e [gentlig] ↑godt< spør' om noed,
=>↑I would a[actually] ↑like< to ask about something,
- 7 Jó: [present]
[recollect]
- 8 Ha: °↓ja°,
°↓yeah°,
- 9 ?M: hr hrm
- 10 Lo: [ø:h]
[e:h]
- 11 Ha: → [hvis de] :t te ↑det her,
[if it]'s about ↑this,
12 (0.5)
13 → ellers er det under eventu↑elt,
otherwise it is under any other ↑business,
14 (0.2)
- 15 Lo: ↑nå,
↑oh,
- 16 >så må [venter jeg]< [med det]
>then I'll have to [I'll wait]< [with that]

In this excerpt, the participants are negotiating the agenda for the meeting. In l. 2, the chair of the department is closing Jón's extended turn at talk, which Jón agrees to (l. 5–7) by stating that he cannot think of anything to add. Hans designs the initiative as an InP (announcing plan or purpose), l. 2, retrospectively constructing it as an if-then condition (l. 4), presupposing that if Jón has more to add, they will not move on from him. Their normal (more global) procedure is here presupposed to be adhering to the rule that ‘when you have the floor during a tour de table at the weekly department

meeting, it is yours until you have completed your list of mentionables'. At this point, Louise comes in, making a bid for a turn (l. 6). She designs it as an announcement of an intended future social action for her to produce, a preliminary to a preliminary (Schegloff, 1980). Hans acknowledges her attempt (l. 8), and Louise seems to be ready to begin her turn (l. 10) and then he formulates a condition for her (l. 11): it has to be related to the preceding topical talk. There is a pause in which Louise does not respond (l. 12), and then the chair continues with the then-part of a now recognizable new if-then construction (l. 13): otherwise it has to be postponed to "any other business". He is denying her a not locally occasioned turn at talk (e.g. beginning a new topic), and he is doing it by reference to procedure (it has to be on topic, otherwise it has to be under any other business, since she does not have the floor). Louise produces a change-of-state token (Heritage, 1984) and accepts to wait (l. 15–16), designing the acceptance as an announcement. In short, Hans and Jón are collaborating in closing one turn at talk down in order to proceed to some new activity, and Louise and Hans are collaborating in her not getting an extended turn at this point.

2.4. Dealing with criticism of procedure

InP is often used to deal with criticism. We will show how this includes pre-empting criticism, doing criticism, responding to criticism as well as to perform tell-offs or sanctions. The section on this category is longer than the sections on the other five categories since it covers a set of subcategories.

2.4.1. Dealing with criticism I: pre-empting criticism

InP is used to pre-empt criticism. It may be done as a first turn vaccination of potential critique in next turn, pre-empting criticism and possibly protecting the speaker's own face.

The following excerpt is from a research interview in a series of interviews with newspaper journalists on their practices for deciding on news salience. Present is the interviewer (I) (one type of professional but novice in the setting) and an informant (B3) (another type of professional but novice in the setting).

(5) (It is not because)

(Research interview, data behind Gravengaard, 2008)

- 1 B3: ↑JEG ↑tror oss jeg kom nogenlunde,
↑I also ↑think I got more or less,
- 2→ I: jam jeg tænker på, ka' du, ka' du ↑gi'
Yeah but I'm thinking, can you, can you ↑give
- 3→ no'n eksempler du-,
some examples you-,
- 4→ (.)
- 5→ det' ikk' fordi du be↑høver å nævn andre aviser=
it's not because you ↑have to mention other newspapers=
- 6→ =det' ikk' det jeg' ↑ude efter=
=that's not what I'm ↑after=
- 7→ =men ka' du gi' no'n eksempler på nogle historier
=but can you give some examples of some stories
- 8→ som I har sagt ↓nej til
that you have said ↓no to
- 9 B3: ↑ja det [det kan jeg sagtens]
↑yes that [that I can for sure]
- 10 I: [((uforst.)) nogen gange]
[((incompr.)) some times]
- 11 B3: altså,
(really/sort of) ((particle))
- 12 I: ↑det vil jeg meget gerne
↑that I would like very much
- 13 (.)
- 14 B3: ø:::h,
e:::h,
- 15 (1.0)

16 altså,
 (really/sort of) ((particle))
17 (0.8)
18 der er så'n ↑en me:d,
 there is such ↑one wi:th,
19 der er så'n et ↑gødt ek↓sempel °øh°
 there ↑is such a ↑gøod ex↓ample °eh°
20 (0.5)
21 .HH ((continues))

In her turn, l. 2–8, the interviewer poses a new question, asking the interviewee to provide examples of stories, which he has declined. Built into the question is a disclaimer. He does not have to mention other newspapers; that is not what she is after. She treats attempting to have him mention other newspapers as something he potentially may object to. It could also be a candidate understanding of her question, which she seeks to prevent him from adopting. But her “not because you ↑have to”, with “have” marked by raised pitch, indicates that he could do that and that she would not mind him doing that but that he might not be willing to. By this maneuver, the interviewer pre-empts potential criticism from the interviewee of what he can or cannot do in his answers to her questions. She accounts for her question, treating a potential objection to prescribed procedure as an accountable. The interviewee has not said anything about this earlier in the interview; the interviewer is pre-empting criticism. She is not just asking him to give some examples of some stories, which he has said no to. She is forestalling a possible mishearing of an implicit procedure for him to follow.

2.4.2. Dealing with criticism II: doing criticism

InP is also used to perform criticism of something prior, e.g. a social action performed in a previous turn.

The following extract is from the same exchange as the continuation of extract 4, where Louise made a bid for a turn. Although she accepts to wait, other participants present at the department meeting point out that the behavior of the chair has been out of the ordinary, even if he did claim his refusal of allocating a turn to her as being a matter of his adhering to procedure:

(6) (Any other business II)

(Department meeting; MFNielsen, 2009)

15 Lo: ↑nå,
 ↑oh,
16 → >så må [venter jeg] < [med det]
 >then I'll have to [I'll wait] < [with that]
17 Si: [↑A ↑HA] [HAH ↑he]
18 Jó: [↑*A: :RH]
19 Kl: → hvor er den=
 where is that=
20 Jó: → =↑det har vi aldrig ↓haft.
 =↑that we haven't ever ↓had.
21 Jó: → ↑før,
 ↑before,
22 Lo: → ↑hvor er ↑dag[sorden]
 ↑where is the a↑[genda]
23 Jo: [huh huh]
24 Lo: den har [↑jeg ↓ikk] s(h)et^U,
 that have [^UI ↓not] see(h)n^U,
25 Ha: [ha ha ha]
26 Lo: ↑heh huh, .H HH (H)
27 (.)
28 Ha: Si (h)g (h)urd,?

The chair intervention (see l. 11–13 in extract 4) leads to Louise's acceptance (l. 15–16). Sigurd treats it as a joke by laughing at it (l. 17). But now Jón, Klaus and Louise question the chair's social action of referring to “any other business” by exposing it as a breach of their usual procedure of not having a formal agenda for the meeting (l. 18–24), with Louise

coming in after Jón and Klaus, retrospectively changing her response to the chair intervention from acceptance (l. 11–13) to non-acceptance (l. 22–24). Both Jonna, Louise and Hans himself treat this as a laughable (l. 23–28), taking the edge off the conflict. In l. 28, the chair allocates a turn to another participant, showing this incident to be over and dealt with. Even though they collaborate in treating the matter jokingly, they do perform criticism of the chair intervention, and they perform it by referring to (and thereby invoking) the normal procedure of their weekly department meeting (not having an agenda). They end up treating the situation as if they had caught the chair in the act and through InP (l. 18–24) exposed his InP (l. 11–13) as a bluff. The chair has invoked a procedure (ex 4 l. 11–13), but Sigurd treats it as a laughable (l. 17), and Klaus and Jón counter it by suggesting that this is without precedent in the past workings of the department (l. 19–21), thereby challenging the legitimacy of Hans' rule. Louise is after her initial compliance (l. 15–16) challenging the organization of the meeting itself (and Hans' running of it) by stating that it lacks an agenda (l. 22–24).

Often, an InP is only recognizable as being used to 'do criticizing' because the InP is responded to in next turn by accounting work, with the recipient treating the InP as criticism. This is especially evident in the next excerpt.

2.4.3. Dealing with criticism III: responding to criticism

An InP may be used to respond to criticism. It often occasions an account from the recipient in next turn, and this account may also be designed as an InP. The response in second position treats the first pair part as criticism and the response in third turn from the first speaker may confirm that understanding.

The following extract is from another exchange at the same department meeting as in extracts 4 and 6.

(7) (The edge of the table)

(Department meeting; MFNielsen, 2010)

- 1 Kl: ikk (0.5) øh (0.7) SPILD af penge
right (0.5) erh (0.7) WASTE of money
- 2 (.) å så videre:: DE [::t selvfølgelig
(.) and so on:: i::t' [s of course
- 3 Ha: [ø::m
[er::h
- 4 Kl: også rigtigt=
also true=
- 5 Ha: =oKAY (1.0) ø:h (.) nyt (0.5) skal vi
=oKAY (1.0) er:h (.) news (0.5) we are to
- 6 ta(h)le om (0.5) om de: i: farver
ta(h)lk about (0.5) if it's i:n colour
- 7 eller ikk farver (0.7) ø::hm: (0.5)
or no colour (0.7) e::rh (0.5)
- 8→ magasinet (0.5) vender vi tilbage te
the magazine (0.5) we'll return to
- 9→ (.) kommentarerne (0.5) vi skal i
(.) the comments (0.5) we have to get
- 10→ gang med det næste magasin (1.5) der
started with the next magazine (1.5) that's
- 11→ hedder magasin (.) ET (0.5) { - - - }
called (.) magazine ↑one (0.5) { - - - }
- 12 (1.2) me:get hurtigt (.) hvert fald
(1.2) ve:ry quickly (.) at least
- 13 (.) før jul (.) ska: vi:: (0.7)
(.) before Christmas (.) we: shou::ld (0.7)
- 14 begynde og: (0.7) og jeg ve ikk
get started wi:th (0.7) and I don't know
- 15→ Kl: er det miq (.) der taler? (0.5)
am I (.) to talk? (0.5)
- 16→ eller er det dig der taler.
or are you talking (0.7)
- 17 (0.7)

- 18→ Ha: ja: m[en (.) hvis du ikk selv tager det op
ye:s b[ut (.) then if you don't address it
- 19 ? : [heh hah heh heh he he
- 20→ Ha: så må je:g jo: ta (.) ordet
then I guess I: have to (.) take the words
- 21→ Ha: ud[af munden på dig
out [of your mouth
- 22 Kl: [jam jeg
[but I

Before the extract, Klaus has been talking about the employee periodicals News and The Magazine. In line 5–14, Hans responds to Klaus' previous turn, progressing the topic from Klaus' focus on the first publication to a discussion about planning the next edition of The Magazine. Implicitly, he is challenging Klaus' turn and topic administration when he takes over and argues that there are more urgent matter to discuss. This in itself is a procedural claim (l. 8–14). Hans responds with another InP (l. 15–16) with explicit criticism, challenging Klaus by treating his prior turn as an attempt to take over Hans' report, countering Hans' intervention by referring implicitly to a tacit rule ('task owner and floor owner is to do the report'), as initial speaker he has privilege. So there are conflicting procedural warrants. Hans' rejoinder essentially rejects Klaus' procedural claim. Here, another InP is used (l. 18, 20–21) to respond to criticism.

Thus we see references to procedure used to deal with different aspects of criticism: preempting or avoiding criticism (ex 5), negotiating participating rights by doing criticism (ex 6) and responding to criticism (ex 7). Even tell-offs and sanctions can be produced as InPs (a subset of our collection not represented in this paper).

2.5. Distancing oneself from procedure

Reference to procedure in professional interaction can also accomplish professionals distancing themselves from the procedure and thereby from their professional role. This does not mean that the professionals do not follow the procedure; on the contrary, they simultaneously go through with the procedure.

In the following extract, a Danish policeman (Pol) (professional expert) interviews a foreigner applying for citizenship in Denmark (Apl) (lay participant). The sample illustrates a tendency that has also recently been documented in British settings: police officers may quite often categorize their own questions as "silly" (Stokoe and Edwards, 2010):

(8) (Do you have any problems with the Danish language)

(Citizenship application conversation; Fogtmann, 2007)

- 1 Pol: så stiller jeg dig lige et spørgsmål her det kan godt
now I am going to ask you a question here it might be
2. det er (.) det er lidt fjollet (.) øh i din forbindelse
(.) it a little silly (.) ah in your case
3. men har du nogen problemer med det danske sprog
but do you experience any difficulties with the Danish language
- 4 Apl: nej
no
- 5 Pol: nej (.) godt
no (.) good
- 6 Apl: det føler jeg i hvert fald ikke
i do not think so anyway
- 7 Pol: nej
no

This policeman has a standardized questionnaire with questions he has to ask all applicants. Obviously, the questions are not formulated by the policeman himself but by government officials. The policeman therefore occupies the professional role of being an official representative.

In l. 1–3 the policeman produces an InP. Besides showing the applicant that the policeman is about to ask a new question, this InP also points to the institutionalized procedure for this conversation and to the policeman's professional role as the person asking questions on behalf of a legal system. Furthermore, the policeman evaluates his question and

calls it “a little silly”. This negative evaluation both shows that the policeman *has* to ask this question because of a standardized procedure and the policeman’s dissociation from the question.

This policeman constructs a local identity for himself that is not identical with the professional and institutional role he occupies. When using this kind of InP the professional clearly shows that he as an animator and as an individual is not identical to the author or the principal (Goffman, 1981) who has decided the procedure and the content of the questionnaire. However, to create distance to procedure does not imply rejecting procedure – it is a way of achieving execution of procedure and showing that that is what you do.

Calling it “silly” to ask the foreigner about his language skills indicates that after having talked to the applicant it is obvious that this person can easily speak and understand Danish. In an everyday conversation, it is very unlikely for a person to ask questions about obvious characteristics. Such could be understood as for instance blame or criticism (Schegloff, 1988). As the policeman’s question would appear strange in an everyday conversation this account marks *why* what he says is locally relevant as part of the interview protocol. At the same time the policeman’s InP makes it unnecessary for the applicant to initiate repair because of an apparent lack of local relevance, asking the policeman what he means by this question.

By pointing out procedure and the institutional anchoring of the conversation, the policeman also establishes proximity to the applicant (Fogtman, 2007). The policeman can easily see that the applicant speaks Danish very well, but because they are both attached to the institutional setting, the policeman has to ask this question. In this way, by means of this particular InP distancing themselves from their professional role, professionals may affiliate with an interlocutor.

2.6. Leaving procedure

InP is used to leave procedure. In this case, the InP is used to signal that the interlocutors are finished with their endeavor, and perhaps also that the interaction as a consequence of that may come to an end.

The following excerpt is from the data set of research interviews with newspaper journalists. Present here is the interviewer (I) and an informant (P2). As we enter the sample, P2 is describing how they have covered the same news story for quite some time:

(9) (That much more to ask)

(Research interview, data behind Gravengaard, 2008)

- 1 P2: så nu er det ligesom, nu begynder der at komme en bevægelse, ik
so now it is as if, now a movement is beginning to form, right
- 2 og det var da på tide
and that was really/PT about time
- 3 nu har den kørt i halvanden uges tid
now it has been running for about a week and a half
- 4 IR: jeg tror ikke jeg har så meget mere at spørge om
I do not think I have that much more to ask about

The interviewer projects closure of the research interview by offering the account that she has no more questions to ask the interviewee (I. 4). Invoked are the membership categories interviewer and interviewee, and the tacit norms that IR is to ask the questions, the IE to answer them, and these social actions not only shape but also determine their interaction, conveying institutional reasoning.

3. Implications

Participants may have longer or shorter experience as professionals, be positioned differently in an organizational hierarchy, come from different professions or may be professionals and lay persons interacting and thus have different levels of context-specific knowledge about and entitlement to the procedures. In the following, we will discuss how InP is an important feature in institutional interaction across these differences. Invoking procedure may deal with asymmetries in the interaction and are incorporated in socialization practices, two situations making negotiating procedure among participants relevant.

3.1. Reducing and confirming asymmetry

Institutional interaction typically embeds an uneven distribution of epistemic and practical responsibilities among participants (Linell, 1998:221).

Asymmetry in knowledge and entitlement makes invoking procedure relevant, especially in cases of formulating plan or purpose, establishing participant roles or distancing from procedure. The InP functions as a way of managing ordinary everyday affairs in the institutional context. The InP as activity is embodied in specific social actions and sequences of social actions.

Where there is power, there is resistance (Foucault, 1979). As shown in ex 6, the participants do not accept the action accomplished by the department chair by use of an InP, their resistance is achieved by yet another InP, the argument being that no legitimate and relevant procedure exists for the chair to refer to. This example, thus, shows how an asymmetrical relation between a department chair and a group of employees is constructed by mutual and ongoing cooperation, not built into the chair's formal authority, but open to negotiation and leveling by employees as participants in the interaction. Thus, resistance may be shown on a very local, turn-by-turn basis when invoking procedure is used to negotiate procedure and/or participation rights and/or participant roles.

Likewise, professionals and lay persons are mutually dependent and interrelated in their asymmetrical relationship, producing and reproducing it (Heath, 1992). When professional experts produce InPs, they may both accomplish reducing and (re)producing the asymmetrical nature of the relationship in order to involve the lay person and construct the lay person as 'a lay person meeting a professional'; as two different roles with different 'manuscripts'.

These functions of InP may also be found in professional-professional interaction, and they may be used to force or negotiate procedure, or even expose a ruse (ex 4+6).

If the objective of the interaction is that laypeople contribute in a qualified way or receive a qualified outcome of the interaction, it is appropriate for professionals to introduce laypeople and novice professionals to the form and purpose of the conversation. This may be seen as facework (ex 5), as a legal rule (ex 8), and as a normal practice (ex 2). The InPs are different but all accomplish to inform and involve the lay person.

However, by invoking procedure in order to inform the lay person or the professional novice, the professional (or the professional authority) at the same time constructs the procedures as relevant, important and routine to them. The very articulation, which informs and thereby to some extent levels the degree of knowledge, at the same time maintains the power relationship among the participants. When people act, they bring structures and events into existence and set them into action, they *enact* a social situation (Weick, 1988). Similarly, InP may enact the procedure as relevant, important and legitimate. By invoking procedure to involve lay persons or professional novices, the professional experts confirm their position as the ones who know best, have the right to define reality, and who can judge talk and actions to be legitimate or illegitimate. Hence, a given procedure for a specific situation is determined by the professionals through turns-at-talk, ensuring them the power (Maynard, 1991).

3.2. Acquisition of procedural membership competence

Socialization in institutional contexts, broadly defined, is the process through which a novice or lay person acquire the knowledge that enables them to participate effectively and appropriately in the situation (Garrett and Baquedano-Lopez, 2002; Schieffelin and Ochs, 1986). This process is realized through the use of language and, as we have indicated in the analysis, partly accomplished by InP.

The assumption of competence is a precondition in many kinds of work related situations. Potentially, this rules out the need for InPs, and when, for instance, surgeons jointly perform surgery, their common understanding of procedure is enacted tacitly and embodied (Hindmarsh and Pilnick, 2002). On the other hand, when professionals meet other professionals or lay persons in an assumed highly unfamiliar situation, InPs are very much needed; for instance, when social workers initially meet prospective adoptive parents during adoption assessment sessions (Noordegraaf et al., 2009).

So, when doctors interact with patients, policemen with citizens, journalists with interviewees, facilitators with teams, and so on, they may use InP to, at the same time, reduce and produce an asymmetrical relationship between professionals of different professions, experience and authority and/or lay persons. Through InP participants may be socialized to a certain local-for-the-interaction procedure.

Professional novices and lay participants are socialized into institutions, interaction types and formats, becoming members of a social community by becoming accustomed to the procedures of the trade (cf. Goodwin, 2003). The social situation is familiar to professional experts because they have a complex expert knowledge about their routinized practice. This is, however, often a tacit practical knowledge closely connected to everyday actions and cognitively structured as intuition (Dreyfus and Dreyfus, 1986; Schön, 1983). The analysis of InP is an explication of important parts of this tacit practical knowledge.

Through the explication of procedures novices and lay persons acquire knowledge of the situation, and over time membership of social categories or procedures may be established. The novice may move from the category 'novice' into the category 'advanced beginner' or 'competent' (Dreyfus and Dreyfus, 1986).

Through the acquisition of 'procedure competence' the participants orient themselves to certain aspects of a particular membership category, making them relevant for the interaction (Sacks, 1972; Schegloff, 1972). The professional may act naturally and informed, thereby doing being professional, while the lay person may be socialized through InP to be a competent member of the specific context. Not because it is presumed *a priori*, but because each member acts that way (Schegloff, 1997). They may enact their roles as knowing professionals, novices or lay persons by being producers or recipients of InP.

4. Conclusion

In this study we explored the notion of procedure work by *identifying five criteria*, making it possible to recognize instances of invoking procedure in institutional interaction: (1) a participant projects a forthcoming action or series of events; (2) the participant accounts for the projection; (3) the account conveys institutional reasoning (e.g. purpose, conditions) for projecting the forthcoming action(s); (4) the account often invokes membership categories; and (5) the account often invokes tacit norms and rules. The analysis has shown how these five criteria to different degrees and in various ways is made relevant when professional experts interact with professional novices or lay participants in order to make sense of the situation. Participants do not orient to these criteria (they just act 'naturally'), but the criteria can be seen as definable and recognizable phenomena constituting the procedure work being done.

Participants must find ways of initiating a procedure, of marking their place within the unfolding procedure, and of ultimately bringing it to completion. This is the nature of 'procedure work.' By producing a turn in a certain way, we can see that it is analyzable (both for us and for the interlocutors) as a specific kind of procedure work. The organization of a tacitly referenced structure serves as a resource, not only for, say, a doctor's leave taking (ex 1), but also for the group's joint activity. Constructed in the way that it was, his/her proposal to take his/her leave makes explicit what still remains to be done before the meeting/procedure can be completed.

Furthermore, we have found *six interactional functions of invoking procedure*: (1) announcing procedure, (2) forcing procedure, (3) negotiating procedure, (4) dealing with criticism of procedure, (5) distancing oneself from procedure, and (6) leaving procedure.

Thus when professionals invoke procedure, they may be dealing with interactional asymmetry, ensuring others influence as well as determining their own definition rights. Handling this asymmetry by InP enables socialization, since they may make it possible to obtain membership competence of the interaction format or professional practice in question. This membership may help the recipient achieve a status as professional or knowing participant, being themselves able to reproduce professional practice by invoking procedure.

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