



# Linking Clauses and Actions in Social Interaction

Edited by

Ritva Laury, Marja Etelämäki and Elizabeth Couper-Kuhlen

**Studia Fennica**  
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Linguistica 20



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P.O. Box 259

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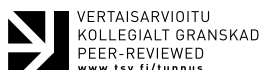
Ritva Laury, Marja Etelämäki, and Elizabeth Couper-Kuhlen





## STUDIA FENNICA LINGUISTICA 20

The publication has undergone a peer review.



The open access publication of this volume has received part funding via Helsinki University Library.

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Cover Design: Timo Numminen  
EPUB: Tero Salmén

ISBN 978-952-222-858-1 (Print)  
ISBN 978-952-222-900-7 (PDF)  
ISBN 978-952-222-899-4 (EPUB)

ISSN 0085-6835 (Studia Fennica)  
ISSN 1235-1938 (Studia Fennica Linguistica)

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.21435/sflin.20>

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or by scanning this QR code with your mobile device.

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# Transcription symbols

.	falling intonation
;	slightly falling intonation
,	level intonation
?	rising intonation
↑	step up in pitch
↓	step down in pitch
[space] -	unfinished intonation unit
s <u>pe</u> ak	emphasis
`speak	emphasis (in some Estonian extracts)
>speak<	faster pace than in the surrounding talk
<speak>	slower pace than in the surrounding talk
°speak°	quiet talk
SPEAK	loud talk
sp-	word cut off
sp'k	vowels omitted from pronunciation
spea:k	lengthening of a sound
#speak#	creaky voice
£speak£	smiley voice
@speak@	other change in voice quality
.h	audible inhalation
h	audible exhalation
.speak	word spoken during inhalation
he he	laughter
sp(h)ea:k	laughter within talk
[	beginning of overlap
]	end of overlap
*+ ^	timing of embodied demonstrations
#1	point when image is taken
=	latching of units
(.)	micropause (less than 0.2 seconds)
(0.6)	pause length in tenth of a second
(speak)	item in doubt



(-)	item not heard
(( ))	comment by transcriber (sometimes concerning gaze or embodied behavior)
--	talk continues, data not shown
->	target line
=>	target line
<b>boldface</b>	focused item in the transcript
ʔ	glottal stop (IPA symbol)
*	point when still image is taken

## Gaze and embodiment<sup>1</sup>

SPEAKER EMBODIMENT:	(DESCRIPTION)
SPEAKER GAZE:	(SEE THE SYMBOLS)
01 Speaker:	turn
RECIPIENT GAZE:	(SEE THE SYMBOLS)
RECIPIENT EMBODIMENT:	(DESCRIPTION)
gaze to recipient	_____
gaze elsewhere	---- (TARGET SPECIFIED) -----
eyes meet	X
gaze shift away from recipient	„
gaze shift towards recipient	...
change in gaze direction	GAZE>NAME
onset (and end) point of embodied behavior	
point when still image is taken	#1 (in transcription line)

## Symbols in the translation line

(item)	item that is not expressed in the original language but that belongs grammatically to the English equivalent
((item))	item not expressed in the original language, added for the sake of clarity
V	verb, not specified
/	alternative translations in the translation line

<sup>1</sup> Adapted from Goodwin, Charles 1981: *Conversational Organization: Interaction Between Speakers and Hearers*. New York: Academic Press.

## Glossing symbols

### Case

ACC	accusative
ABL	ablative ('from')
ADE	adessive ('at, on')
ALL	allative ('to')
COM	comitative ('with')
ELA	elative ('out of')
GEN	genitive (possession)
ILL	illative ('into')
INE	inessive ('in')
PAR	partitive (partitiveness)
TRA	translative ('to', 'becoming')

### Verbal morphemes

1SG	1 <sup>st</sup> person singular ('I')
2SG	2 <sup>nd</sup> person singular ('you')
3SG	3 <sup>rd</sup> person singular ('she', 'he')
1PL	1 <sup>st</sup> person plural ('we')
2PL	2 <sup>nd</sup> person plural ('you')
3PL	3 <sup>rd</sup> person plural ('they')
COND	conditional
FREQ	frequentative
GER	gerund
IMP	imperative
IMPS	impersonal
INF	infinitive
PAS	passive
PPC	past participle
PPPC	passive past participle
PST	past tense


### Other abbreviations

ADJ	adjective
ADV	adverb
ART	article
CLI	clitic
CONJ	conjunction
COMP	complementizer
CMP	comparative
DEM	demonstrative
DEM1	demonstrative ('this')
DEM2	demonstrative ('that')
DEM3	demonstrative ('it', 'that over there')
LOC	location
MAN	manner




NEG	negation (particle in Estonian, verb in Finnish)
PL	plural
POSS	possessive
PREP	preposition
PREP.ART	fusion of preposition and article
PRT	particle
SG	singular
Ø	zero person


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## Introduction

This collection of papers arises out of the Finland Distinguished Professor research project entitled “*Grammar and interaction: the linking of actions in speech and writing*”, funded by the Academy of Finland 2009-2013. From its inception the project focused on the syntax, pragmatics, and prosody of clauses and clause combinations using genuine, naturally occurring data from spoken and written interactions in Finnish, Swedish, English, and related languages. The methodology was empirical and inductive, with close micro-analysis of audiotaped, videotaped, and written materials being considered a privileged means of access to the data. To the extent possible, hypotheses were generated and validated through observable evidence provided by the participants themselves.

To mark the end of the FiDiPro project, a retreat was organized in May 2013 at which project members and other associated researchers presented a sampling of their findings on the research topic. The present volume unites a selection of the papers presented on that occasion. With its diverse yet focused contributions, this “Billnäs” volume thus provides a state-of-the-art reflection on current thinking and at the same time embodies the quintessence of FiDiPro research on the subject of linking clauses and actions in interaction. Most of the papers included here employ Conversation Analysis and Interactional Linguistics as a basic theoretical framework.

In preparation for the Billnäs retreat, the research team met in advance to discuss the underlying assumptions of the symposium theme and to anticipate potential problems in dealing with it. This led to agreement on a number of terminological fundamentals as well as to the formulation of a series of open questions, for which it was hoped the empirical research presented at the symposium might provide first answers. Accordingly, in the following sections we present (1) some fundamentals concerning the technical terms used in this volume, (2) short summaries of the papers collected here, and (3) open questions together with possible answers suggested by our findings.

## *Terminological fundamentals*

The theme of the symposium and of this volume presents three terms in need of clarification: *clause*, *action*, *linking*. We discuss our conceptualizations of each of these in turn.

### WHAT DO WE MEAN BY “CLAUSE”?

Many of the papers in this volume deal with clauses and, moreover, many of the linking elements are understood as combining clauses in traditional grammatical descriptions. Therefore we will first discuss the notion of a clause. Surprisingly, “clause” is not a universal grammatical category (see also Thompson, Forthc.; Laury, Ono & Suzuki, Forthc.). In fact, what counts as a clause can differ significantly from language to language. Traditionally, *English* grammar defines a clause as a unit constituted (minimally) by a verb and its obligatory complements together (typically) with its subject. Independent clauses, by definition finite, form simple sentences. Dependent clauses can be finite or non-finite, including infinitival and participial clauses (Quirk et al. 1985). In the *Finnish* grammatical tradition, clauses are referred to as *lause*. A *lause* is by definition finite (Hakulinen et al. 2004: 827). Non-finite verbal constructions are classified as *lauseenvastike* (roughly ‘clause equivalents’). Therefore, as this comparison shows, we must exercise extreme caution in transferring what look like equivalent terms from one language to another.

Rather than relying on grammatical labels, typologists recommend using basic conceptual-semantic notions to talk about grammatical categories cross-linguistically (for enlightening discussions see, e.g., Dryer 1997; Croft 2001; Haspelmath 2010a). For example, Haspelmath (2010b: 697) defines the clause as “an expression that contains one predicate and potentially at least some of its arguments and that can be independently negated”, that is, without reference to categories such as verb or subject, which many standard definitions rely on, but which may not be/are not cross-linguistically valid. We shall follow the typologists’ recommendation in our general discussion of linguistic categories. For the single-language studies reported on here, the term *clause* – and *a fortiori* other grammatical labels – should be understood as defined in the grammatical tradition of the language being examined.

Are clauses relevant for interaction? There has been such a claim made in the literature (Thompson & Couper-Kuhlen 2005; Helasvuo 2001): participants have been said to orient to clause-type units and to use them as resources for social action, for instance, in turn-taking, incrementing, and action formation. Yet clearly, if the clause is not a universal, there will be restrictions on the validity of this claim. More radically, it could be argued that it is not the clause but the turn-constructive unit that is the relevant unit for interaction (Schegloff 1996). This of course would not necessarily exclude the pertinence of its morphosyntactic or conceptual-semantic make-up for interactional analysis. The chapters that follow come down on different sides of this debate; in particular, those dealing with nonverbal social actions (see below) would seem to harbor the biggest challenge to the relevance of the clause as a basic interactional unit. The challenge lies in determining whether

a nonverbal action can function as an interactional unit equivalent to a clause.

#### WHAT DO WE MEAN BY “ACTION”?

Since we are dealing here with the linking of clauses and actions in social interaction, our understanding of action must be narrow enough to capture actions implemented with words, i.e., *verbal* speech acts (roughly, things we do with words (Austin 1962)). Indeed we start from the assumption that speaking is a vehicle for action (see, e.g., Schegloff 2007). But at the same time our understanding of action must be broad enough to capture ‘wordless’ or nonverbal actions.<sup>1</sup> Although many speech acts can be described with vernacular labels such as “question”, “answer”, or “proposal”, “request”, this is not necessarily the case with nonverbal acts (Levinson 2013). The latter may require instead paraphrastic description. Yet, regardless whether they have conventionalized labels or not, the verbal and nonverbal actions we are talking about here must be conceptualized at a similar level of *granularity* (cf. Schegloff 2000): this is especially needed if we wish to speak meaningfully of their being combined with one another. (Combining requires the linkage of like objects.) Finally, nonverbal actions – just like verbal actions implemented through turns at talk – must be thought of as *social* actions, i.e., ones that involve the other, since our inquiry concerns their deployment in interaction, which is always dialogic (Linell 2009). Purely physical actions such as, e.g., leaving the room or executing a dance step, are made interactionally relevant in the data examined here.

#### WHAT DO WE MEAN BY “LINKING”?

Although *linkage* may be thought of vernacularly as a kind of combining, here we wish to make a terminological distinction between the two. When two objects are *combined*, they are commonly understood to result in a ‘combination’, which is an object in itself. Thus, combining two clauses produces a clause combination, a larger unit composed of smaller parts (see, e.g., Matthiessen & Thompson 1988). In the same vein, when two actions are combined, the result might be said to be a single (complex) action combination. When two objects are *linked*, by contrast, one is simply put in relation to another: they do not necessarily form a larger unit together. Anaphoric pronouns, for instance, link to prior antecedents but do not form a unit with them. Linkage can occur between incomplete or only partially complete pieces, while combining conventionally takes place between two or more wholes. Finally, combining requires that two or more parts be commensurate with one another, while things that are linked can be vastly different in terms of type, size, and/or scope. Combining then can be thought of as a special type of linkage. In language evolution, combining elements can develop into linking elements, as when conjunctions come to be used as particles (Mulder & Thompson 2008; Koivisto 2011).

1 One anonymous reviewer suggested ‘embodied’ instead of ‘nonverbal’ but since language is always embodied when used, we prefer ‘nonverbal’ for reasons of clarity. Despite this label, we are not implying that these resources lack anything.

In conversation analysis, the linking of turns is typically referred to as “tying” (Sacks 1992a; 1992b). The simple contiguity of turns, i.e., their adjacency in focused interaction, is considered to be the most basic form of relating turns to each other. For Sacks, the adjacency pair is a formal means for harnessing the power of adjacency between turns at talk. Adjacent turns need no explicit tying: “for adjacently placed utterances, where a next intends to relate to a last, no other means than positioning is necessary in order to locate which utterance you’re intending to deal with” (1992b: 559). Explicit “tying devices”, e.g., conjunctions or repetition, when deployed within adjacency pairs, are therefore accomplishing more than the underlying relation created through adjacency (see, for instance, the ‘format tying’ described by M. H. Goodwin 1990).

### *The papers collected here*

With the above understanding of *clause*, *action*, and *linking*, the papers collected in this volume will be seen to fall rather naturally into three groups:

#### I. LINKING OF CLAUSES AND PHYSICAL ACTIONS

This group encompasses papers that deal with linkage between clausal verbal actions and nonverbal actions, and with verbal linkage between nonverbal actions.

##### 1. Maria Frick, Combining physical actions and verbal announcements as “What I’m doing” combinations in everyday conversation

Frick’s paper examines a particular type of announcement in spoken interaction, one in which a speaker verbalizes what they are about to do next. These announcements are accompanied/followed by the speaker’s executing the announced action. Therefore, they are said to form an ‘action combination’: clausal verbal announcement + physical action, constituting a “What I’m doing” combination. This type of action combination is an initial (i.e., non-responsive) but not an initiating action, as it does not make a response conditionally relevant. It is distinct from an informing (and is thus not epistemically driven), and also distinct from a directive (thus is not deontically driven). It is appropriate when participants are about to do something that departs from a social norm: break out of a group unilaterally, leave the room, take more than one’s share of food, use a boarding-house reach to help oneself at the dinner table, etc. The paper thus makes an original contribution to the understanding of (one kind of) announcement and its use in everyday Finnish conversation, while at the same time pointing to a hitherto unexplored action combination. It demonstrates that declarative clauses are combined with simultaneous or following physical actions within the social action of treating the physical action as accountable and as a departure from social norms.

## 2. Leelo Keevallik, Linking performances: The temporality of contrastive grammar

Keevallik's paper investigates how dance teachers combine nonverbal behavior with linguistic means in order to build pedagogical activity in real time. The paper targets contrastive conjunctions and prepositions that are regularly used to link clausal constructions with upcoming non-verbal actions, hence linking clause and action. More specifically, it describes a practice for bringing about a combination of incorrect and correct bodily performances for pedagogical purposes, and the grammatical linking devices between them that mark the contrast. Keevallik's paper demonstrates how grammatical elements are used for organizing temporally unfolding nonverbal actions, and in that way, points to the possibility of an emergent and multimodal grammar.

## II. LINKING OF QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

The second group of papers encompasses verbal actions such as, e.g., questions and answers, and their linkage to one another, including not only linking an answer to a question but also linking a question to another question, linking an answer to another answer, and linking a question to a prior answer.

## 3. Katariina Harjunpää, Mediated questions in multilingual conversation: Organizing participation through question design

Harjunpää's paper examines sequences in multilingual conversation (Brazilian Portuguese-Finnish) where a question is orally translated, i.e., repeated or re-said in a different language, for the benefit of a recipient who would otherwise lack access. This situation can arise in three different sequential environments: (1) when the original question is not addressed to the ultimate recipient but lies within his/her epistemic domain, (2) when the original question is a topic proffer indirectly addressed to the ultimate recipient through third-person reference, and (3) when the original question is a topic follow-up directly addressed to the ultimate recipient. The argument is that the design of the translatory turn reflects these different participation frameworks. Harjunpää distinguishes full resayings, or first sayings – which are clausal – from partial ones, or second sayings – which can be phrasal. The former are done as independent, autonomous turns: the translator passes on the question as his/her own inquiry. The latter are designed in a way that displays their secondness: the autonomy of the speaker is diminished because the question is marked as deriving from someone else's talk. The phenomenon described in this paper is a prime example of action linking by means of adjacency and different tying devices, undertaken here to overcome a language barrier. The establishment of a different participation framework is the result of the social action of translation and its design.

#### 4. Saija Merke, Tackling and establishing norms in classroom interaction: Student requests for clarification

In her paper, Merke shows how student requests for clarification and confirmation create learning occasions in a university-level foreign language classroom. She shows that such requests emerge when students are confronted with a violation of expectations. Linguistically, the turns are formatted as questions with negative polarity, as adversative declaratives, or as causal questions that imply contrast; all these clausal formats evoke a competing or conflicting state of affairs and thus express resistance. Also important in the analysis is the sequential embedding of the questions: requests for clarification and confirmation in first position tend to object to untoward 'behavior' by the language, while expressions of an opposing viewpoint in sequence-final position concern the epistemic identities of the participants and their access to knowledge.

#### 5. Aino Koivisto, On-line emergence of alternative questions in Finnish with the conjunction/particle *vai* 'or'

Koivisto's paper addresses the use of Finnish *vai* 'or' as a link to build, extend, and/or readjust questions and question-formatted turns in talk-in-interaction. It begins by pointing out that the canonical distinction between conjunction-like *vai* (after interrogative clauses) and question-particle *vai* (after declarative clauses and phrases) is too simplistic. Instead, one type of *vai* can be transformed into the other in enchronic time. The examples analyzed here reveal that *vai* is used incrementally at TCU junctures (in turn-final, turn-initial, and post-possible completion positions) when questions or question-formatted turns do not receive adequate responses or are in danger of receiving dispreferred responses. *Vai* does this by projecting a second question that offers a more agree-able alternative, masked as an extension of the original question rather than as a reaction to its (incipient) failure. The study thus provides more empirical evidence that many clause combinations in conversation emerge on-line in response to interactional contingencies.

### III. LINKING OF GRAMMATICAL STRUCTURES

The third group of papers encompasses grammatical structures, often clausal in size, and their linkage to one another both within one speaker's turn as well as across speakers and contexts.

#### 6. Anna Vatanen, Delayed completions of unfinished turns: On the phenomenon and its boundaries

Vatanen's article concerns delayed completions, cases in which a response starts before a clause-sized turn has reached a transition-relevance place and in which the initiating speaker cuts off but, after hearing some part of the response, subsequently completes her turn. Vatanen examines the grammatical, prosodic, and embodied resources used by speakers to



This volume is intended as a reader for students and scholars working in the field of grammar and interaction. It deals with ways in which verbal and non-verbal actions are combined and linked in everyday conversation, in institutional contexts, and in written journalism. The papers employ Conversation Analysis and Interactional Linguistics as a framework and examine data from Finnish, English, Estonian, French, Brazilian Portuguese, and Swedish. The introduction examines fundamentals such as the understanding of the terms “clause”, “action”, “linkage”, and “combining” in different grammatical traditions and in the present collection. It also addresses open questions concerning the recognition, emergence, and distance of linkage and outlines what answers to these questions are provided by the contributions to the volume.



STUDIA FENNICA  
LINGUISTICA 20  
ISBN 978-952-222-858-1  
87  
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