

Interactional Competence in Multiparty University Student Meetings



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What do we know about IC so far?

Communicative Competence —> Interactional Competence:

- From SLA to wider contexts of social interaction
- From an individual's contribution to a jointly-achieved endeavour
- From a focus on linguistic structures/social conventions to (multimodal) interactional resources for action

IC as 'the abilities displayed by participants to mobilise the whole set of multimodal resources for the joint construction and development of courses of social actions through talk-and-bodies-in-interaction'

What do we know about IC so far?

A more general view on IC:

“Developing expertise in a new practice is a task that faces adults throughout a lifetime of learning, and it is particularly pertinent to those who enter a new community where practices differ from those they know.”

(Young and Miller 2004, p. 520)

Developing IC: a socialisation process

Data

Data source*:

- six undergraduate students working on their final-year group project
- video/audio-recordings of eight group meetings (10 hrs) over four months

Analytic focus and collection of cases:

- the assembly/reconfiguration of interactional resources on multiple temporalities and sequentialities
- a collection of broader sequences of speaker transitions amongst multi-parties

*Data comes from Newcastle Corpus of Academic Spoken English

Initial impression as I build the collection...

- a speaker transition is organised in a much more complicated way as we understand it according to the turn-taking system;
- it may start as early as the very first display to orientation toward a shift of participation framework;
- it may go through several shifts of participation framework by multiple co-participants through their display of embodied orientations;
- ‘transformative interactional project’ — — emerges over broader sequences of speaker transition, observable according to the successive and progressive development of the unfolding courses of actions

The way I approach IC...

A larger-scale view — — transformative interactional project:

- development of a “stream” of courses of actions — — ‘project’ (Levinson 2013)
- mobilisation of multimodal resources — — ‘the complex multimodal Gestalt’ (Mondada 2014)
- emerge over broader sequences in talk-in-interaction — — ‘the co-operative transformation zone’ (Goodwin 2013)

‘project’

“**plans of action**...at least one participant is pursuing, which may at first be opaque to others then **retrospectively discernible**, and then **prospectively projectable**...when the other buys into the project, it is likely to **surface as a sequence**; when not, its invisible hand will anyway have directed the talk.”

(Levinson 2013, p. 122)

‘the complex multimodal Gestalt’

“a web of resources formatting an action”

(Mondada 2014, p.139)

‘co-operative transformation zone’

A single action is formatted on an accumulative basis within **a chain of actions**, by **assembling, reusing, decomposing, transforming** the resources made publicly available by the prior action as the ‘substrate’.

As such, **the prior action makes available a ‘substrate’ for the current, and the current for the next.**

(Goodwin 2013)

4 Cases

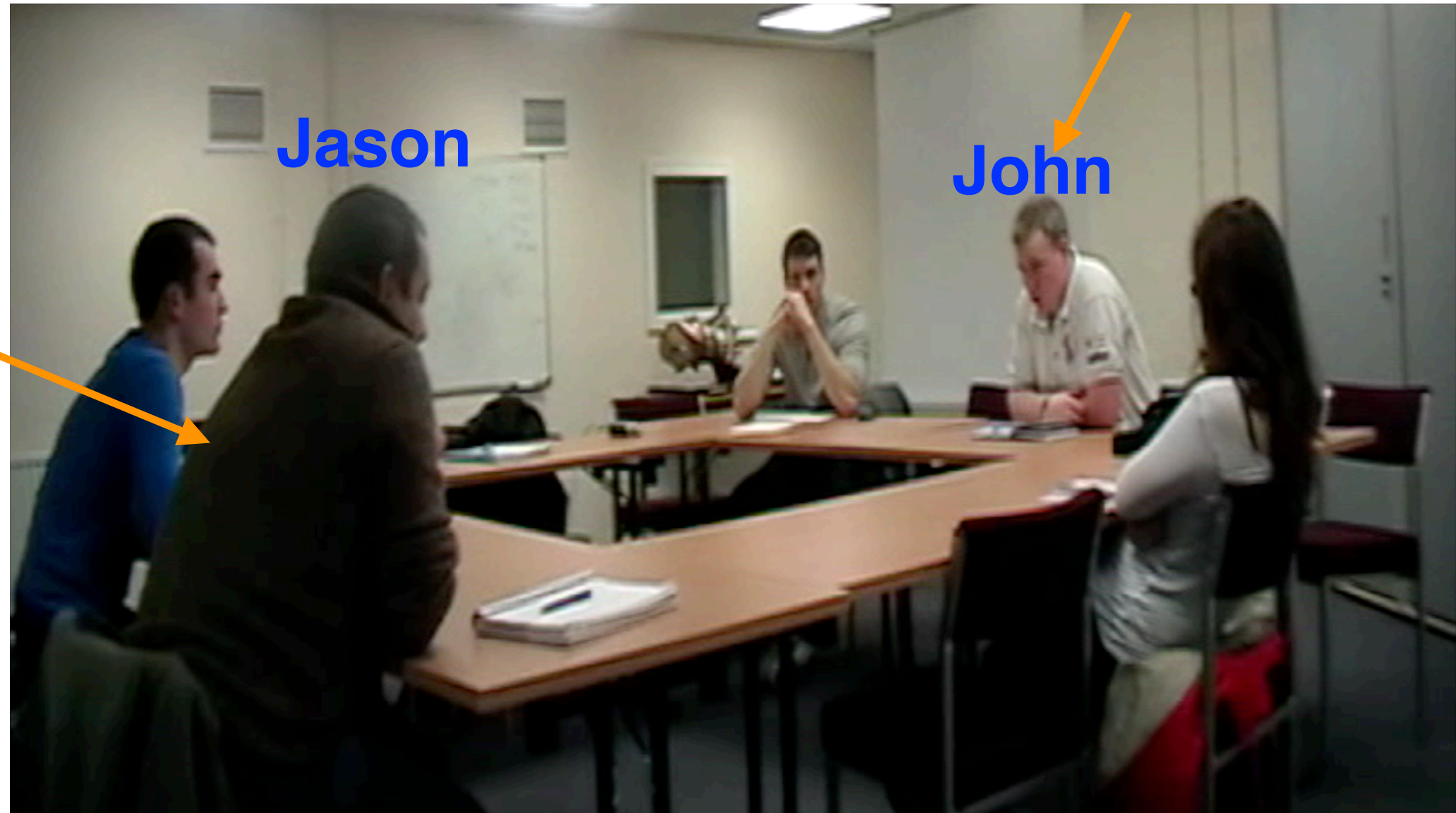
- Case 1: a mutual gaze initiates an interactional project
- Case 2: a verbal claim initiates an interactional project
- Case 3: withdrawal of gaze puts an interactional project on-hold
- Case 4: a meeting chair's interactional project over a broader sequence

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Case 1

Lowered-front gaze Raised gaze



Leaning back

Leaning forward,
mutual gaze
established

Verbal self-
selecting turn,
pointing gesture

- 3 JOH: £I'll see how the three blade compares\ (0.4) £u:m: (0.5) bu-
£JOH gaze down £JOH gaze front
- 4 £I:::& (0.3) in my mind £&had °a two: blade design
£JOH gaze down £JOH gaze front
&JAS lean back &JAS lean forward, R hand under chin
- 5 JOH: Δthat we were going [for]°Δ
- 6 JAS: [°fo-°] f-
- 7 from &my research so far ·hh uh- (.) but this is the companies
&JAS R hand gesture

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2

PAU:

trying to think of this\

(0.6) duct↗ # &twenty meter duct\

PAU hands touch eyes

PAU gaze front

&JAS lean backward

3

JOH:

& (.) yeah

&JAS lean forward

4

£ (1.2)

£JOH gaze PAU

5

JOH:

Δ° &£it's a twenty two meter #duct £but yeah\°Δ≈

&JAS lean backward

PAU gaze JOH

£JOH gaze JAS

£JOH gaze PAU

6

PAU:

≈ twenty two #meter duct\≈

PAU gaze front

7

JOH:

≈ yeah\

8

& (0.5)

&JAS lean forward

Jason

Paul

John

1st repositioning of upper body

2nd repositioning of upper body

Case 2

9 PAU: is there ANY:↑ twenty two meter duct in the world↘≈
10 JAS: ≈ #°huh-uh°
#PAU gaze JOH

11 (0.7)
12 JOH: u[h::]
13 JAS: [well] there &must #£be↘≈
&JAS gaze PAU
#PAU gaze JAS
£JOH gaze JAS

14 JOH: ≈yeah↘≈
15 PAU: ≈°what's [that↗°]
16 JAS: [the]re must be £Δbecause there'sΔ some

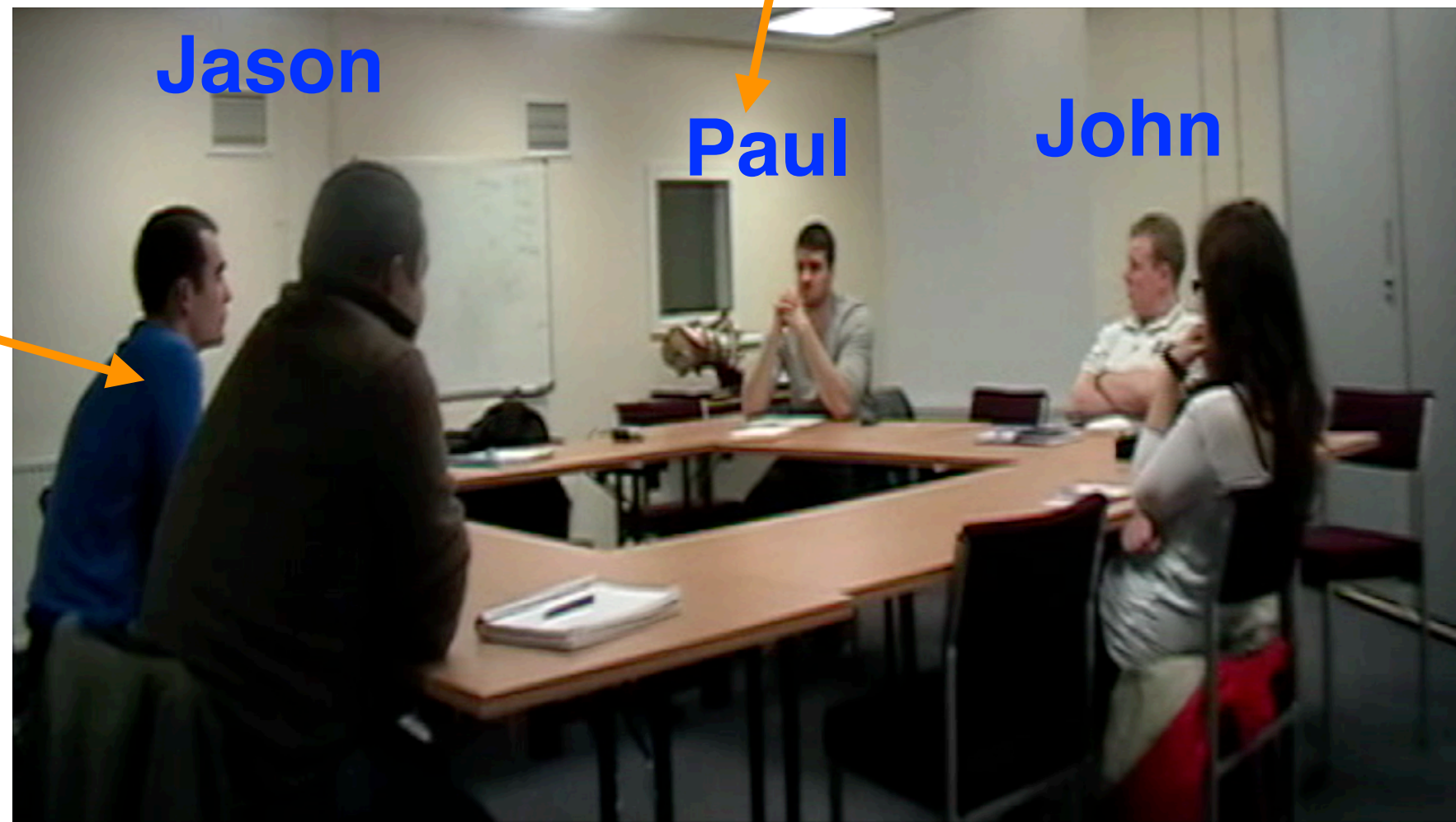
Gaze shift toward John

Gaze shift toward Jason
verbal 'go-ahead'

1st verbal claim

2nd verbal claim

Case 2 ctnd.



4 Cases

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3 MAR: ≈ and the:n↗ obviously if &maybe [we'd have]≈
 4 JAS: [°we'll do°]
 &JAS R hand gesture

5 MAR: ≈ &¥enough ¥details [I ¥ca]:n↗≈
 6 PAU [t!]
 &JAS nod, gaze downward front, lean backward
 ¥MAR gaze JAS ¥MAR gaze PAU ¥MAR gaze downward front

7 JAS: ≈ &muddle th[¥em↗]
 8 MAR: [¥ask] for mo::¥&re↘
 &JAS gaze front, lean forward
 ¥MAR gaze JAS ¥MAR gaze PAU
 &JAS gaze downward front

Vocalisation, bid for floor

Upper body re-
positioning, gaze
withdrawal

Gaze shift toward
Paul, then down

Gaze shift toward
Jason, then Paul

Case 3



9

¥# (0.5)
#PAU hands rub eyes
¥MAR gaze PAU

10 MAR: °uhh°
11 PAU: (.) [yeah↘]
12 MAR: [adjus-↘] ¥#adjust↘ the: ana[#lysis↘]
13 PAU: [#t!]
¥MAR gaze downward front
#PAU gaze downward front
hold hands front
MAR
14 MAR: [#°based on:°]
15 PAU: [#·hhh] ¥I mean I don't know if it's going into too much details
#PAU gaze downward front
¥MAR gaze PAU

Hands in front of face, gaze down

Hands touch eyes

Mark Jason

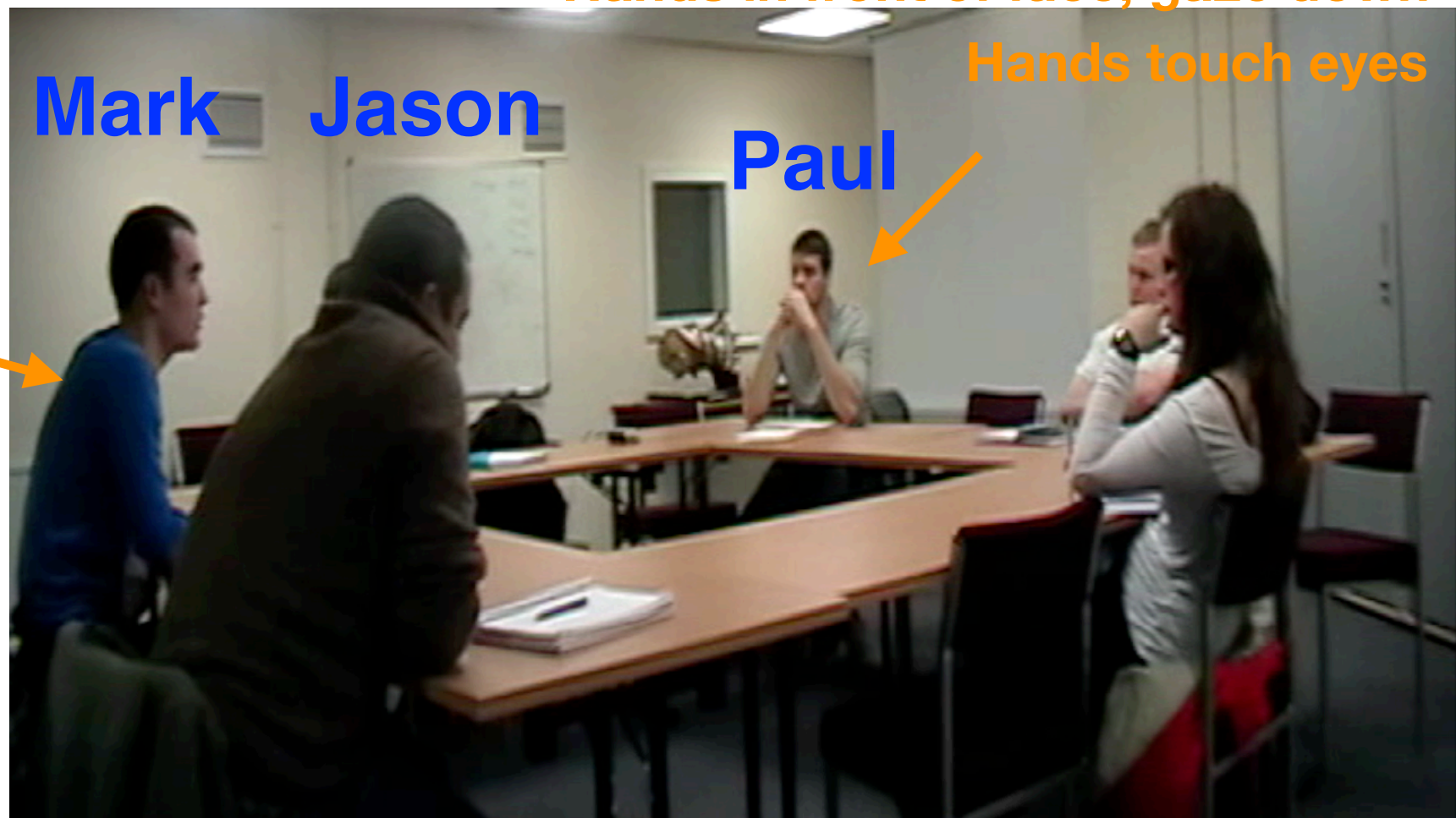
Paul

Gaze Paul

Gaze downward

Gaze Paul

Case 3 ctnd.



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Case 4

Note-taking

Puts on pen cap
Upper body re-
positioning

Gaze shifts
between John and
Mark

Gaze toward desk
(meeting notes)

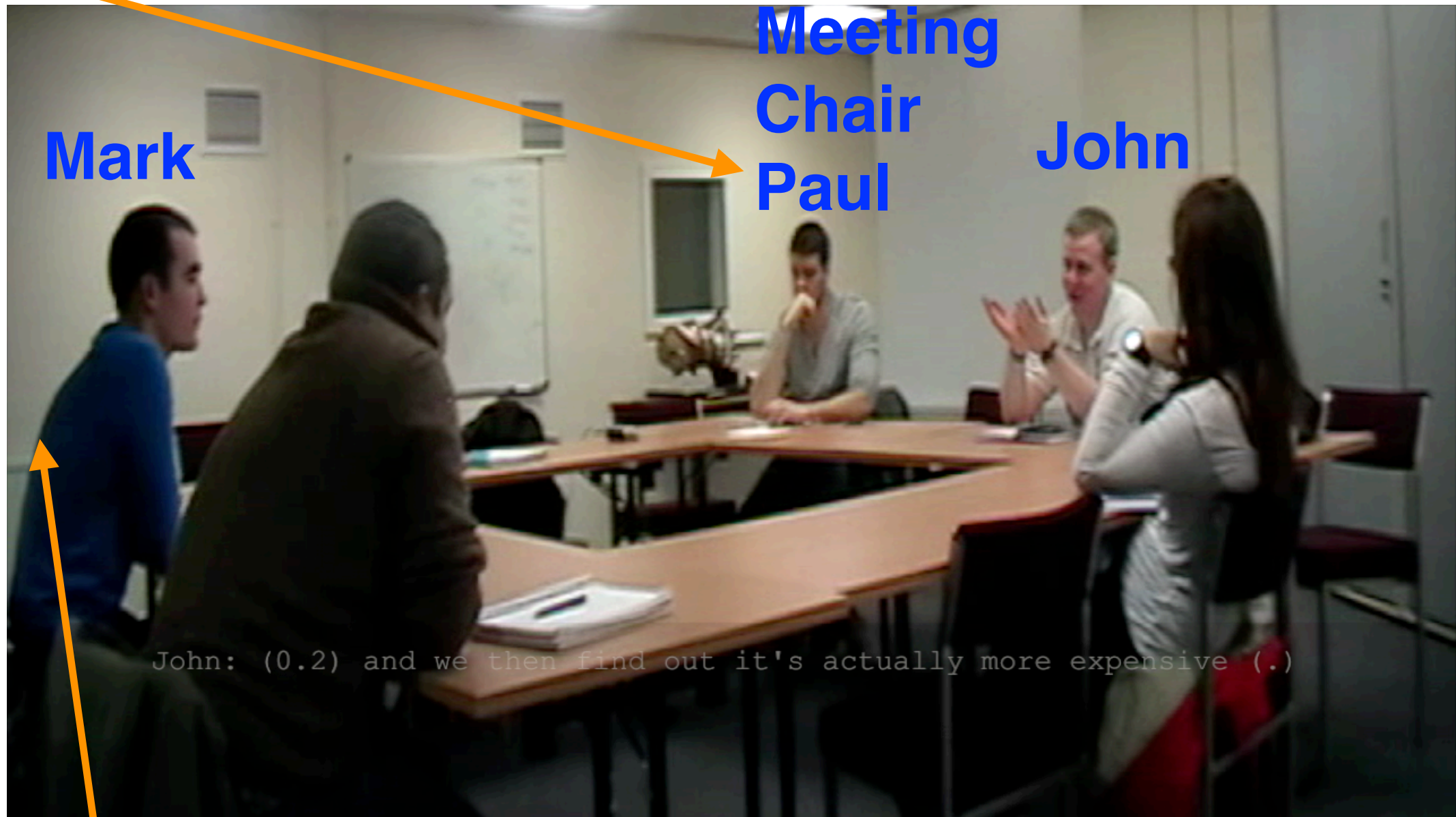


Case 4 ctnd.

Re-do pen cap,
lean backward

Initiate turn
beginning,
overlapping John's
utterance, gaze at
Mark

lean forward



Lean backward

Verbal claim for
the floor

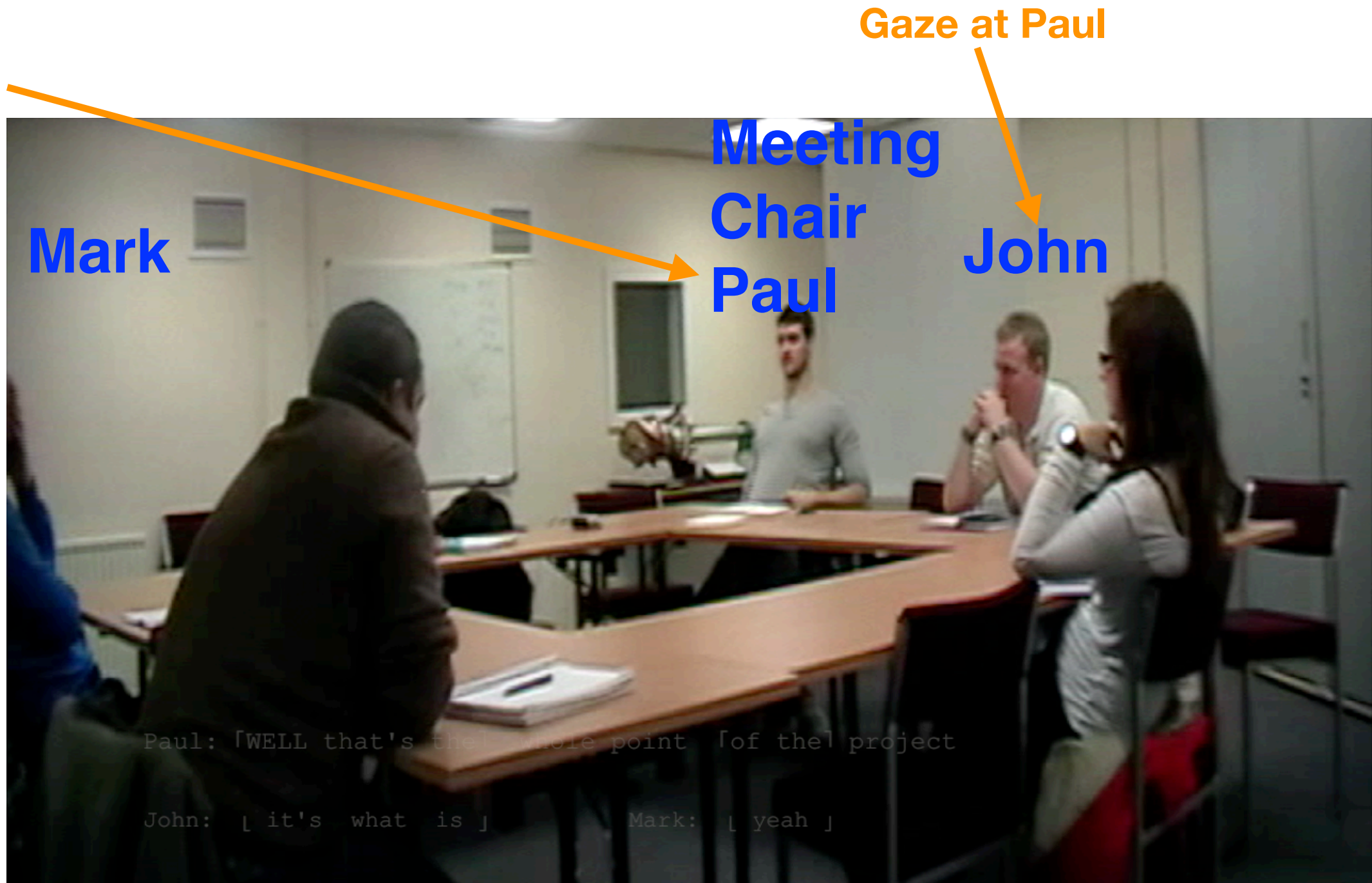
Drop-out

Case 4 ctnd.

Abandon previous
turn

Initiate new verbal
turn, shift gaze
toward John

Establish mutual
gaze with John



Case 4

Switch task

Progressive re-direction:

- projects the end of John's interactional project
- blocks Mark's interactional project
- transforms his own interactional project



‘transformative interactional project’

A larger-scale view on action formation and ascription

- multimodal resources
- multiple temporalities and sequentialities
- successivity and progressivity

Implication for educational interaction

Behind a transformative interactional project:

- to bring up a counter-statement
- to facilitate a decision-making process
- to raise an enquiry
- to prevent a potential conflict
- to resolve a conflict
- ...

Implication for educational interaction

Rich empirical evidence to inform future practice:

- know the 'racetrack' and possible 'hurdles' (Stokoe 2014)
- know the interactional resources
- to facilitate/smooth the socialisation process

Future study: longitudinal data collection - how the socialisation process of IC development evolve overtime?

Thank You :)

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