An interactional approach to proper names: working with a corpus of 'natural' data

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1. The study of naturally occurring talk-in-interaction
2. Recording and working with natural data
3. Some examples
4. Values and problems of this approach
5. Conclusions
1. The study of naturally occurring talk-in-interaction

> Ethnomethodology (Garfinkel 1967)
  Conversation Analysis (Sacks, Schegloff: 1960s)
  — emic perspective
  — "seeks to describe methods persons use in doing social life" (Sacks 1984: 21)
  — study of situated interaction (in context)
  — study of the resources interactants use (vocal and bodily)
  — investigation of how social actions are organised and accomplished

> Interactional Linguistics (a.o. Selting & Couper-Kuhlen 2001)
  — investigates how linguistic structures are used in interaction
2. Recording and working with data

> Recording what:
  — spontaneous situations captured with camera/sound recorders
  — maximal visibility of interactional resources (faces, gestures, body posture, artefacts)

> Recording how:
  — in movement: do not direct but follow the interactant's movements
  — while recording you make choices → this is a first analysis

> Transcription
  — AUDIO (cfr. transcription conventions in the handout)
    almost no phonetic symbols
    inbreaths, pauses (e.g. 0.2 seconds), loudness, speech rate, intonation, sound duration
    'jeffersonian' vs. GAT (GesprächsAnalytisches Transkriptionssystem)
Transcription:
- VIDEO (cfr. examples in the handout)
  gesture, gaze, body posture, artefact manipulation

Working with the data
- data sessions: 'brainstorm' meetings with other researchers
- analysis on the basis of video data and transcriptions
- analysis of single cases (on the basis of a single excerpt)
- or analysis on the basis of collections, but no quantification
The toponym contributes to the description of the road, it is not used to make specific reference to the geographical site of Toricella.

It is used in coordination with other resources (i.e. pointing gesture) to describe a landmark (the road).

The landmark’s construction is a social action that is situated within the activity of indicating the direction.
- the toponym Lugano is used in the co-construction of the direction indication, in the display of understanding (L. 07)
- the reference to the town is not relevant here but the direction it helps to describe: lugano is here used as equivalent to destra ('right') (L. 06)
- INS points at a road sign while saying *direzione vezia*
  → reference is not made to the town Vezia but to the road sign

- reference to the road sign is used
  - within a direction indication
  - within an instruction about a driving practice (looking for the road signs)

→ Here too, the toponym Vezia is not used for referring to the geographical site but as a resource to: (1) indicate direction and (2) to explicitate a driving skill (orienting in the surrounding space)
prendiamo un po' di telefonate io direi: e lo chiedo anche a 
let's take some calls i would say and i ask it also
stefano chiarelli chi' è da^altra parte del vetro sta^sera di
stefano chiarelli who is at the other side of the glass this evening to
prenderne una: ondata d- magari una decina così racco[gliamo] un
take some of them a (fistful) d- maybe about ten so we collect a
[HOS] [si\] [yes]
po' di domande ''h e poi e rispondiamo\ ce ne sono già ↑due in
few questions ''h and then e we answer there are already two
at↑tesa ''h catania e poi roma catania\ waiting ''h catania and then rome catania
(1.0)
''h buona sera\
''h good evening
buona s[era il suo n]ome\
good evening your name
[HOS] [buona sera]
 [good evening]
(1.0)
io- io sono luca: chiamo da catania .. e:^hm:.: .. 'h vorrei
i- i am luca i am calling from catania e:^hm 'h i'd like to
... chiedere una cosa ai radicali\ .. 'h che si occ:upino di una:
ask something to the radicali* 'h that they would deal with a
.. rinnovo della legge psichiatrica di assistenza psichiatrica io
renewal of the psychiatric law of psychiatric assistance i
sono psichiatra\ ''h=
am a psychiatrist
=si\  
*<radio radicali = the radio broadcast
4. Values and problems of this method

Difficulties of this approach:
> time consuming
> emic point of view
  — description first, also of 'evident' features
  — as less interpretation as possible, unmotivated looking
→ findings might not always be that impressive

BUT: Values of this approach:
> a strong methodology allows for a detailed, well founded description of the phenomena
> 'unmotivated looking' allows to discover unperceived methods for everyday social action
5. Conclusions

> Working with corpora of naturally occurring talk-in-interaction allows to synchronically examine names and observe how they are used as resources in interaction.

> How can the interactional approach contribute to the study of names?
   - The analysis showed that the interpretation of toponyms used in talk-in-interaction can go beyond the pre-established and static referential meaning to which they are commonly associated.

> Toponyms become 'ad hoc' resources mobilised to accomplish relevant actions (giving direction indications, teaching, etc.) within a broader activity (driving).