How to End an Explanation

Vivien Lohmer [1,2] Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Friederike Kern [1,2]

[1] Faculty of Linguistics and Literature, Bielefeld University, Germany, [2] SFB/TRR318 Research Center "Constructing Explainability"

Theoretical background:

Everyday explanations following a certain *interactive* structure (Quasthoff et al., 2017)
➢ all participants are equally involved in performing the interactive tasks ("jobs")

Research Question:

How do participants co-constructively organize the closing of the activity?

Hypotheses:

"Job" 4 (Closing) is especially relevant for explanation (Ensuring of understanding)
➢ One participant indicates the end of the explanation (pre-closing; Shegloff & Sacks, 1973)
➢ two different ways of successfully accomplishing an explanation
   a) Extended "Job" 4 *Closing* includes formulation
   b) Short "Job" 4 *Closing*

The interactive structure of everyday explanations: Operationalization of the interactive jobs

(1) *Establishing topical relevance*	Negotiation of the **activity explanation**
(2) *Constituting an explanandum*	Negotiation of the **explanandum**
(3) *Explication procedural, conceptual and/or causal relation*	**Core job** of an explanation
(4) *Closing*	Negotiation of the **end of the explanation**
(5) *Transition*	Negotiation of **next topic**

➢ Pre-Closing signals
➢ Closing (with or without formulations)

Example 1: negotiating mutual understanding: **re-establishing topical talk**

```
001   EX   GENAU eh es gibt,
           exactly eh there is
002        =jede stein is uNIQUE,
           each stone is unique
003        aber die [über] EIGENSCHAFTen,
           but the properties
004   EE            [ja, ]
                    [yes ]
005   EX   über[SCHNEIDEN] sich;
           over[lap        ]
006   EE       [oKEE,    ]
007   [SCHAUen wir mal;
           Let us see
008   EX   [((unverständlich ca. 1 Sek.))]
           [((Unintelligible 1 sec.)).   ]
009   EE   HM_hm
010   EX   man müsste ja eigentlich immer ACHT,
           one should (have) actually always eight
011        von jeder EIGENschaft  immer geben;
           of each property
012        also acht RUNDE,
           thus eight round
013        acht ECKIGE,
           eight squared
014        acht HELLE,
           eight light ones
015        acht DUNKLE,
           eight dark ones
016        und so WEITer;
           and so on
017   EE   O:kay (1.2)
018   EX   ((schnalzt)) (0.9)
           ((chirrups))
019   EE   dann SPIELen wir doch mal,
           then let`s play
020   EX   ja DANN [sind wa,]
           yes then we are
021   EE           [wenn wi]r das SPIELCHEN hätten; (0.5)
                   [if we  ] had that little game
```

Pre-Closing and re-establishing topical talk

➢ EE: 1st pre-closing signal (l. 06–07)
➢ EX skips back to "Job" 3 (l. 10–16)

Co-constructively accomplishing closing

➢ EE: 2nd pre-closing signal (l. 17)
➢ ratified through next action proposal (l. 19)
➢ simultaneously accomplishing Job 4 *Closing* and 5 *Transition* (l. 20–21)

Method:

➢ Transcription (GAT 2.0; Selting et al., 2009) and annotation of video-recordings between Explainer (EX) and Explainee (EE)
➢ Coding of conversational "jobs" described by Quasthoff et al. (2017) in all 22 dyadic explanations (Cohens Kappa 0,69 "substantial"; Landis & Koch, 1977)
➢ Micro-analyses follows the principles and systematics of ethnomethodological conversation analysis (Garfinkel, 1984; Bergmann, 2019; Schmitt, 2015)

Corpus & Setting:
- 22 dyadic explanations (Explainer (EX) & Explainee (EE);
➢ Researchers were informed to not interrupt or stop the explanation

The Explanadnum: Quarto!

Example 2: negotiating mutual understanding: **self-initiated formulation of the main rules of the game**

```
007   EX   ja.
           yes
008   EE   ja,
           yes
009        aber ICH2 (.)
           but I
010        KANN mir das ganz gut vorstellen;
           I can quite well imagine that
011   EX   ja?
           yes
012   EE   JA_ha,
           yes
013   EX   hast du noch (.) FRAgen,
           do you have any questions
014        zu DEM, (.)
           concerning the
015        zu dem SPIEL?
           concerning the game
016   EE   ich glaube NICHT,
           I don`t think so
017        du hast das SEHR gut erKLÄRT;
           you have explained this very well
```

Pre-Closing Signal
➢ EX: 1st pre-closing signal (l. 7) and EE responds with "yes" (l. 8)

Pre-closing with account: displays understanding
➢ EE makes accountable: good imagination of the game (l. 9 - 10)
➢ EX replies with a question (l. 11); EE responds with a stretched "yes" (l. 12)

Formulation performed by EE
➢ EX offers EE to ask questions concerning the game (l. 13 - 15)
➢ opening up closing by asking questions
➢ EE negates (l. 16) and begins to formulate the main rules of the game (l. 18 - 46) with support by EX (l. 26ff)

```
Omission 46 seconds

067   EE   dachte du GRAD du hättest das irgendwie MITgebracht,
           i thought you just brought that somehow with you
068   EX   NE:E_nee_nee;
           no_no_no
069   EE   [ACH so;           ]
           [oh, i see          ]
070   EX   [also hab ich heute] AUCH,
           [so today i         ]also did
071        aber das gehört mir NICHT;
           but that is not mine
072   EE   ja;
           yes
073   EX   ja;
           yes
074        (0.2) ich WEIß gar nicht,
                 i do not know at all
075        wie LANge wir jetzt hier;
           how long we have to (sit) here now
076   EE   ich AUCH nicht,
           me neither
078        die kameras sind noch AN;        ((lachen))
           the cameras are still turned on ((smilling))
```

Pre-Closing and co-constructively accomplishing closing
➢ EE: 2nd pre closing signal (l. 72) and EX ratified closing through "yes" (l. 73)

Accomplishing Job 5
➢ "Job" 5 *Transition* to a proposed next topic: end of experiment (l. 74ff)

Conclusion:
- Closing an explanation requires all participants
- Pre-closing is most likely performed by the participant with the lower epistemic stance (Heritage, 2012a, 2012b)
- EX can jump back into "Job" 3 *Explication procedural, conceptual and/or causal relation* (e.g. Example 1)
- Formulation by the EE are a practice in order to display understanding (e.g. Example 2)

Discussion & Future Work:
- Some instances (Example 1) showed, that the EX could jump back into job 3: How and when does this happens? Is this in some way systematically or just an artifact of the corpus and setting?
- How do participants use gestures to close the activity explanation?
- How do participants open up an explanation and use gestures and other interactive relevant modalities?

References:

Transcripts:

Please contact me
vivien.lohmer@uni-Bielefeld.de